



THE OFFICE OF GOVERNOR
WES MOORE

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE FOR CHILDREN

Children's Cabinet Annual Report of 2024

ENOUGH Act of 2024 (SB 482)

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Maryland's Children's Cabinet Membership

The Children's Cabinet provides a forum for state agencies to lead interagency initiatives and produce policy recommendations aligned with reducing poverty and improving services and supports for children. The Children's Cabinet is chaired by the Special Secretary for the Governor's Office for Children and includes the following Secretaries:

Carmel Martin
Special Secretary for the Governor's Office
for Children

Helene Grady
Secretary for the Department of Budget and
Management

Carol Beatty
Secretary of the Department of Disabilities

Laura Herrera Scott
Secretary for the Department of Health

Jake Day
Secretary for the Department of Housing and
Community Development

Rafael López
Secretary of the Department of Human
Services

Katie Savage
Secretary of the Department of Information
Technology

Vincent Schiraldi
Secretary of the Department of Juvenile
Services

Paul Monteiro
Secretary of the Department of Service and
Civic Innovation

Portia Wu
Secretary of the Department of Labor

Sanjay Rai
Secretary of the Maryland Higher Education
Commission

Carey Wright
Secretary of the Maryland State Department
of Education

Ex-officio members

Rebecca Flora
Secretary of the Department of Planning

Jonny Dorsey
Deputy Chief of Staff, Governor's Office

Asma Mirza
Chief Performance Officer, Governor's Office

Dani DiPetro
Policy Research Director, Comptroller of
Maryland

Pat McLoughlin
Executive Director, MD Think

Introduction

On May 9, 2024, Governor Moore signed into law the Engaging Neighborhoods, Organizations, Unions, Governments and Households (ENOUGH) Act of 2024 (SB 482), making Maryland the first state in the nation with a state-led, place-based investment strategy for ending child poverty. The ENOUGH Act also re-established the Children's Cabinet, requiring the Special Secretary for the Governor's Office for Children, Special Secretary Carmel Martin, to chair the Children's Cabinet, requiring the Governor's Office for Children to staff the Children's Cabinet, and requiring the Children's Cabinet to meet not less than four times a year.

In addition, the law stated: "On or before December 1, 2024, and each December 1 thereafter, the Children's Cabinet shall submit a report, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, to the General Assembly on the Children's Cabinet meetings in the prior year and activities planned in the upcoming year." Pursuant to this provision, the GOC is hereby submitting an annual report summarizing the Children's Cabinet's activities during the past year and previewing activities the Cabinet will pursue in the upcoming year.

Because the Children's Cabinet was only re-established in May of this year, this is necessarily a preliminary report, providing a high-level overview of the Children's Cabinet's structure, priorities and meetings held during the 2024 calendar year, and a brief description of upcoming activities in 2025. The Children's Cabinet is also required by law to develop a 3-year strategic plan, to be submitted to the General Assembly by December 1, 2025. That forthcoming plan is currently in development and will provide a detailed set of priorities, projects and processes to govern the Children's Cabinet work for the 3-year term.

Children's Cabinet Structure and Priorities

The Children's Cabinet provides a forum for state agencies to identify, develop and implement interagency initiatives and produce policy recommendations aligned with reducing child poverty and improving services and supports for children and families. The Children's Cabinet as currently constituted first convened on May 10, 2024, and has met five times as of the date of this report. A brief summary of the dates, agendas, and attendees for those meetings is attached in the appendix. Over the course of these meetings, and between meetings through agency-to-agency engagement, the Children's Cabinet worked toward two goals:

- 1. Tackling root causes of poverty in communities with the deepest concentrations of child poverty through place-based initiatives like the ENOUGH Grant.**
- 2. Identifying, developing and implementing statewide interagency efforts to reduce poverty and increase mobility for children and families.**

Under the first goal, the Children's Cabinet agencies engaged in a comprehensive review of their This whole-of-government approach to supporting high-poverty neighborhoods is crucial in order to augment the investments made under the ENOUGH Act. In addition, the Children's Cabinet agencies have identified overlapping place-based strategies, including Safer Stronger Together, Just Communities, and Sustainable Communities, and are working to ensure that these strategies are coordinated and aligned.

We anticipate this collaboration and coordination to continue in 2025, particularly once the ENOUGH grantee neighborhoods are announced.

Under the second goal, the Children's Cabinet has been guided by the ENOUGH theory of action, which identifies four areas of focus for increasing economic mobility and ending child poverty:

- **Cradle to Career Education** - Unlocking children's potential through early care and education from birth until working in a career, including ensuring smooth transitions to and through kindergarten, middle school, and high school graduation with a pathway to college and/or career.
- **Healthy Families** - Ensuring community member and family access to high-quality, comprehensive healthcare with goals of decreasing infant mortality, increasing life expectancy, and improving behavioral health, which includes mental health.
- **Economically Secure Families** - Ensuring higher employment and entrepreneurship resulting in livable and family-sustaining wages, and stable, thriving households where families can provide for necessities, weather hard times, and build wealth.
- **Safe and Thriving Communities** - Creating communities where residents feel safe and where the built environment supports their ability to thrive, including high-quality, affordable housing; a thriving commercial core; and access to recreational spaces, nutritious food, and transportation.

Over the course of the past six months, the Children's Cabinet has identified some potential strategies under a few of these focus areas. These strategies are under development and will be described in greater detail in the Children's Cabinet 3-year strategic plan, but at a high level include:

- Developing and launching an interagency strategy to expand the delivery of state resources, programs and supports to **community schools** (Cradle to Career Education)
- Reviewing the activities of the **Local Care Teams** and other agency programs designed to support children with complex needs, to improve the delivery of supports "upstream" to reduce non-kinship, out-of-home placements (Healthy Families)
- Increasing awareness of and **access to benefits and economic assistance**, including the child tax credit and earned income tax credit (Economically Secure Families)

In addition, the Children's Cabinet agencies have brought key opportunities for collaboration to Children's Cabinet for discussion and development, most notably:

- The Youth Homelessness System Improvement grant, which the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), in the amount of \$2 million. This grant is designed to improve connections, coordination and information sharing between agencies and systems that serve **youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness**.
- A pilot to increase participation in Supplemental Security Income (SSI) led by the Department of Disabilities and funded through the U.S. Social Security Administration. The pilot will validate a predictive model to identify **children with disabilities who may be eligible for SSI**, inform enhanced outreach to them and their families to enroll in SSI, and connect them with wraparound services to improve health, education, and workforce outcomes.
- A Department of Human Services-led strategy around **older youth**, roughly identified as youth ages 13 - 24, which would involve identifying the unique barriers faced by this population and subpopulations within this group (such as foster youth, justice-involved youth, or disconnected youth who are neither employed nor in school), and developing a targeted set of interagency initiatives to better serve the needs of this population.

To explore and further develop these ideas, the Children's Cabinet has launched several working groups. Specifically:

- Access to Benefits Working Group
 - Participating agencies: Comptroller, DHS, DHCD, DJS, DoIT, DOL, DSCI, MDH, MDThink, MDOD, MHEC, MSDE
 - Frequency and format of meetings: Meets virtually at least once a month. Beginning in November, the group began meeting in smaller groups to begin examining opportunities to expand outreach to new and expecting parents.
- Community Schools Working Group
 - Participating agencies: DHS, DHCD, DJS, DOL, DSCI, MDH, MDOD, MHEC, MSDE
 - Frequency and format of meetings: Meets virtually at least once a month.
- ENOUGH Liaisons Working Group
 - Participating agencies: DHS, MDH, MHEC, MDL, DSCI, MDOD, MSDE, DJS, DHCD
 - Frequency and format of meetings: Meets virtually as needed.
- State Coordinating Council/Working Group for Children with Complex Needs
 - Participating agencies: DHS, MDH, DJS, MSDE, MDOD, DBM
 - Frequency and format of meetings: Meets virtually, approximately once a month, but convened more regularly in the fall as part of an outreach plan to LCTs.

A set of workforce priorities for the Children's Cabinet are still in development, but we anticipate launching a working group or smaller set of interagency teams to collaborate around some high-impact initiatives in the months ahead. The Children's Cabinet agencies have also started a preliminary process to identify opportunities to address the racial wealth gap, which could include strategies to expand access to financial services and home ownership.

Activities Planned in 2025

In 2025, building on the work outlined above, the Children's Cabinet will finalize and release a 3-year strategic plan, building out the Cabinet's priorities and identifying a specific set of interagency projects that the agencies will prioritize over the term of the plan. As required by statute, the strategic plan will also inform and drive the activities of the county level Local Management Boards (LMBs), and will complement the efforts of community-based organizations under the ENOUGH Act, to ensure a whole-of-government approach to ending child poverty and increasing economic mobility across the state.

The Children's Cabinet will continue to meet regularly and the Children's Cabinet working groups will continue to convene to lead interagency projects in key priority areas.

In addition to finalizing the strategic plan, the Children's Cabinet will continue to develop and implement priority activities, including but not limited to:

- Continue to coordinate across the government around place-based strategies, and surge relevant agency resources, supports and programs to high-poverty jurisdictions;
- Expand interagency efforts to increase awareness of, and enrollment in, benefits and economic assistance;
- Support community schools to meet students' and families basic needs through improved delivery of state agency programs and resources;
- Recognizing that a central strategy to ending child poverty involves ensuring older youth and families in poverty have access to good-paying jobs, identify opportunities to expand workforce development for families, particularly in ENOUGH jurisdictions;
- Develop and implement strategies focused on breaking intergenerational cycles of poverty and improving access to income and wealth building programs and resources; and
- Ensure alignment of Children's Cabinet activities and priorities with LMB and community-based organization activities and priorities.

Appendix: Children's Cabinet Meetings in 2024

The Children's Cabinet met five times between May 2024 and November 2024, and will reconvene one more time this calendar year, in December. Below is a list of these meetings with attendees, locations, and agendas.

1. **May 10, 2024 Meeting**

- **Attendees:**
 - Special Secretary Carmel Martin (GOC); Secretary Laura Herrera Scott (MDH); Secretary Katie Savage (DoIT); Superintendent Carey Wright (MSDE); Secretary Carol Beatty (MDOD); Secretary Helene Grady (DBM); Secretary Paul Monteiro (DSCI); Secretary Portia Wu (MDL); Secretary Rafael López (DHS); Secretary Sanjay Rai (MHEC); Secretary Vincent Schiraldi (DJS)
- **Ex-officio attendees:**
 - Asma Mirza (GOV); Jonny Dorsey (GOV); Mollie Byron (GOV); Pat McLoughlin (MD Think); Jennie Kobuck (DHCD); Stuart Campbell (DHCD); Dani DiPietro (Office of the Comptroller); Cleo Hirsch (GOC); Andrea Barnes (GOC)
- **Location:** Baltimore, MD (in-person); virtual available
- **Topics of Discussion:**
 - Establishing the mission of the Children's Cabinet
 - An overview of the ENOUGH Act
 - Improving access to benefits through MDThink

2. **June 14, 2024**

- **Attendees:** Special Secretary Carmel Martin (GOC); Secretary Katie Savage (DoIT); Secretary Sanjay Rai (MHEC); Superintendent Carey Wright (MSDE); Secretary Carol Beatty (MDOD); Secretary Helene Grady (DBM); Secretary Jake Day (DHCD); Secretary Paul Monteiro (DSCI); Secretary Portia Wu (MDL); Secretary Rafael López (DHS); Secretary Vincent Schiraldi (DJS); Secretary Laura Herrera Scott (MDH)
- **Ex-officio attendees:** Asma Mirza (GOV); Jonny Dorsey (GOV); Pat McLoughlin (MD Think); Stuart Campbell (DHCD); Susan Inman (GOC); Cleo Hirsch (GOC); Andrea Barnes (GOC)
- **Location:** Denton, MD (in-person); virtual available
- **Topics of Discussion:**
 - Proposal for Children's Cabinet 3-year strategic plan
 - Update on ENOUGH data dashboard

3. **July 16, 2024**

- **Attendees:** Special Secretary Carmel Martin (GOC); Secretary Katie Savage (DoIT); Secretary Rafael López (DHS); Superintendent Carey Wright (MSDE);

Secretary Carol Beatty (MDOD); Secretary Helene Grady (DBM); Secretary Jake Day (DHCD); Secretary Paul Monteiro (DSCI); Secretary Sanjay Rai (MHEC); Secretary Vincent Schiraldi (DJS); Secretary Laura Herrera Scott (MDH)

- **Ex-officio attendees:** Asma Mirza (GOV); Jonny Dorsey (GOV); Colin Murphy (DHS); Pat McLoughlin (MD Think); Stuart Campbell (DHCD); Dani DiPietro (Office of the Comptroller); Susan Inman (GOC); Cleo Hirsch (GOC); Andrea Barnes (GOC)
- **Location:** Virtual
- **Topics of Discussion:**
 - Update on benefits access work on the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit
 - Sub-population group focus for services and resources
 - Upstream interventions for children with complex needs

4. **September 6, 2024**

- **Attendees:** Special Secretary Carmel Martin (GOC); Secretary Katie Savage (DoIT); Superintendent Carey Wright (MSDE); Secretary Carol Beatty (MDOD); Secretary Portia Wu (MDL); Secretary Rafael López (DHS); Secretary Vincent Schiraldi (DJS)
- **Ex-officio attendees:** Asma Mirza (GOV); Secretary Rebecca Flora (MDP); Colin Murphy (DHS); Alex Reese (MSDE); Stuart Campbell (DHCD); Danielle Meister (DHCD); Dani DiPietro (Office of the Comptroller); Jason Heo (GOV); Natalie Evans Harris (DoIT); Pat McLoughlin (MD Think); Susan Inman (GOC); Moses Valle-Palacios (GOC); Leopold Spoghngellert (GOC); Andrea Barnes (GOC)
- **Location:** College Park, MD (in-person); virtual available
- **Topics of Discussion:**
 - ENOUGH grant program updates and interagency coordination
 - Families first approach to Children's Cabinet work
 - Department of Housing and Community Development's Youth Homelessness System Improvement Grant

5. **October 18, 2024**

- **Attendees:** Special Secretary Carmel Martin (GOC); Secretary Sanjay Rai (MHEC); Superintendent Carey Wright (MSDE); Secretary Carol Beatty (MDOD); Secretary Jake Day (DHCD); Secretary Paul Monteiro (DSCI); Secretary Portia Wu (MDL); Secretary Rafael López (DHS); Secretary Vincent Schiraldi (DJS); Secretary Laura Herrera Scott (MDH)
- **Ex-officio attendees:** Secretary Rebecca Flora (MDP); Asma Mirza (GOV); Jonny Dorsey (GOV); Francesca Ioffreda (GOV); Sophie Bergmann (GOV); Jason Heo (GOV); Jason Perkins-Cohen (MDL); Colin Murphy (DHS); Lilly Madigan (DoIT); Natalie Evans Harris (DoIT); Pat McLoughlin (MD Think); Stuart Campbell (DHCD); Khia Poteat (MHEC); Alex Reese (MSDE); Pickett

Slater-Harrington (GOC); Moses Valle-Palacios (GOC); Leopold Spohngellert (GOC); Andrea Barnes (GOC)

- **Location:** Baltimore, MD (in-person); virtual available
- **Topics of Discussion:**
 - Access to Benefits
 1. Department of Disabilities' grant to examine and expand uptake of Supplemental Security Income
 2. Discussion on developing interagency priorities
 - Workforce training
 - Continued discussion of possible Children's Cabinet focus on older youth