



THE OFFICE OF GOVERNOR  
**WES MOORE**

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE FOR CHILDREN

Children's Cabinet Annual Report of 2025  
ENOUGH Act of 2024 (SB 482)

**Wes Moore**  
Governor

**Aruna Miller**  
Lt. Governor

**Carmel Martin**  
Special Secretary, Governor's Office for Children

Submitted by the Governor's Office for Children, on behalf of the Children's Cabinet

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# Maryland's Children's Cabinet Membership

The Children's Cabinet provides a forum for state agencies to identify, develop, and implement 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 (GOC)

*Yaakov "Jake" Weissmann*  
Acting Secretary for the Department of  
Budget and Management (DBM)

*Carol Beatty*  
Secretary for the Department of Disabilities  
(MDOD)

*Meena Seshamani*  
Secretary for the Department of Health  
(MDH)

*Jake Day*  
Secretary for the Department of Housing and  
Community Development (DHCD)

*Rafael López*  
Secretary for the Department of Human  
Services (DHS)

*Katie Savage*  
Secretary for the Department of Information  
Technology (DoIT)

*Betsy Fox Tolentino*  
Acting Secretary for the Department of  
Juvenile Services (DJS)

*Jonny Dorsey*  
Acting Secretary for the Department of  
Service and Civic Innovation (DSCI)

*Portia Wu*  
Secretary for the Department of Labor (MD  
Labor)

*Sanjay Rai*  
Secretary for the Maryland Higher Education  
Commission (MHEC)

*Carey Wright*  
State Superintendent for the Maryland State  
Department of Education (MSDE)

## Ex-officio members

*Rebecca Flora*  
Secretary for the Department of Planning  
(MDP)

*Pat McLoughlin*  
Executive Director, Maryland Benefits

*Francesca Ioffreda*  
Chief Innovation Officer

*Asma Mirza*  
Chief Performance Officer, Governor's Office  
of Performance Improvement (GOPI)

*Natalie Evans Harris*  
State Chief Data Officer

# Introduction

The mission of the Moore-Miller Administration is “Leave No One Behind,” and central to that mission is a commitment to reduce the number of children living in poverty in the coming decade. Aligned with this mission, in January 2024, Governor Moore signed an [executive order](#) to re-establish the Children’s Cabinet, a governing body charged with coordinating cross-agency strategies to support children and families and reduce the number of children living in poverty. Later that year, the Moore-Miller Administration partnered with the Maryland General Assembly on the passage of the Engaging Neighborhoods, Organizations, Unions, Governments and Households (ENOUGH) Act, a [law](#) intended to tackle the root causes of poverty in Maryland by addressing inequities and working with impacted communities to develop local solutions.

In addition to establishing the ENOUGH initiative, the law states: “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 Governor’s Office for Children is hereby submitting an annual report on behalf of the Children’s Cabinet, highlighting activities during the past year and previewing activities the Cabinet will pursue in the upcoming year. The cabinet submitted its [first Children’s Cabinet Annual Report](#) on December 1, 2024.

Since its reestablishment, the Children’s Cabinet has made progress on various policies and programs that support children and families, including by developing strategies for existing and emerging Moore-Miller Administration priorities. This 2025 annual report provides a high-level overview of the Children’s Cabinet priorities, activities, and meetings held since the last annual report, as well as an overview of activities planned in the upcoming year. The Children’s Cabinet has also developed and submitted a three-year strategic plan, which serves as a roadmap for the Children’s Cabinet to build a network of supports, programs, and services for children and their families, with a focus on reducing child poverty and advancing economic mobility over the next three years.

## Children’s Cabinet Priorities and Activities

The Children’s Cabinet provides a forum for state agencies to identify, develop and implement interagency initiatives and produce policy recommendations aligned with supporting children and families, including by reducing child poverty and promoting economic mobility. The Children’s Cabinet as currently constituted first convened on May 10, 2024. Since the 2024 annual report was published on December 1, 2024, the cabinet has convened seven times. A brief summary of the dates, agendas, and attendees for those meetings is included in the appendix.

As described in the 2024 Children’s Cabinet Annual Report, two core goals of the Children’s Cabinet are:

- 1) Tackling root causes of poverty in communities with the deepest concentrations of child poverty, including in partnership with the ENOUGH grantees, Local Management Boards, and other partners; and

- 2) Identifying, developing and implementing statewide interagency efforts to support children and families, with a focus on efforts to reduce poverty and increase economic mobility for children and families.

Under the first goal, Children's Cabinet agencies have worked to break down silos and facilitate connection between state government and communities through an all-of-government approach. This includes prioritizing high-poverty communities in funding opportunities, which helps to unlock funding opportunities that some high-poverty communities, including ENOUGH communities, have historically struggled to access. It also includes working directly with communities to problem-solve and quickly address community needs. Children's Cabinet agencies are visiting communities, working side-by-side with them to tackle complex problems - from additional academic support, more accessible transportation, workforce development, and healthy food access.

Regarding the second goal, both through interagency activities and through agency-led initiatives, the Children's Cabinet has collectively prioritized tackling poverty and creating pathways for children and families to prosper across three key pillars that are aligned with the ENOUGH Initiative's Theory of Action:

1. **Providing High-Quality Child Care and Education** to unlock children's potential from birth until working in a career, including by ensuring smooth transitions across K-12 to college and career;
2. **Nurturing Healthy and Economically Secure Families** by increasing community members and families' access to high-quality health care - with goals of decreasing infant mortality, increasing life expectancy, and improving mental health - and by working to create higher rates of employment in living wage jobs and stable, thriving households where families can provide necessities, weather hard times, and build wealth; and
3. **Creating Safe and Thriving Communities** by fostering communities where residents feel safe and can thrive through high-quality, affordable housing, a robust commercial core, and access to recreational spaces, nutritious food, and transportation.

This past year, the Children's Cabinet identified, developed, and implemented policies and strategies across these pillars. These are described in greater detail in the Children's Cabinet three-year strategic plan, but cross-cutting priorities include:

- **Community Schools:** Community schools work in collaboration with community partners, local governments, and other stakeholders to provide resources to students and families that need them the most by offering wraparound services that allow students to be successful. To further the goals in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future of making Maryland's community schools the best in the nation, the Children's Cabinet is building new ways for agencies to support students and families in these schools. These efforts include partnering with community schools to align agency services with schools and ensure that coordinators and staff are trained on addressing key barriers to student achievement (Community Schools Delivery Program); providing resources and technical assistance to districts and schools to support high-quality community school implementation; and providing critical emergency rental assistance to student households enrolled in community schools who are experiencing housing instability and homelessness (DHCD's Community Schools Rental Assistance Program).

- **Benefits Access:** A core objective of the Moore-Miller Administration is to achieve reductions in child poverty through economic benefits assistance to families across the state. By quickly and efficiently delivering benefits and economic assistance to eligible Marylanders when they need them, we can help families move out of and stay out of poverty. The Children's Cabinet is working to expand benefits access, including by increasing Marylanders' awareness and uptake of the state Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit (Earned It campaign); launching a new mobile-friendly tool that is helping eligible Marylanders apply for vital benefits (Maryland Benefits One Application); and helping families with school-aged children buy groceries during the summer break when school meals are unavailable (DHS' SUN Bucks initiative).
- **Racial Wealth Gap:** We cannot tackle concentrated, intergenerational poverty in this state without addressing the racial wealth gap. The Children's Cabinet and the entire Moore-Miller Administration are taking a multi-pronged approach to tackling the racial wealth gap, which includes strengthening community wealth (including through programs like the ENOUGH initiative and DHCD's Just Communities initiative), promoting asset accumulation, building savings, and reducing debt.
- **Uplifting all of Maryland's young people, with a focus on young men and boys,** by strengthening supports and services in particular areas of need, including mental and physical health, family and community engagement, and workforce readiness.

To support implementation and track progress of these and other priorities, offices and agencies coordinate through various forums, such as Children's Cabinet meetings and staff working groups, including:

- **High Quality Childcare and Education Working Group**
  - Participating agencies: MSDE, MHEC, MD Labor
  - Frequency and format of meetings: This working group launched in the Fall of 2025 and will meet virtually at least once a quarter.
- **Access to Benefits Working Group**
  - Participating agencies: DHS, DHCD, DJS, DoIT, DSCI, DSCI, MDH, MD Benefits, MDOD, MHEC, MSDE, MD Labor, the Office of the Comptroller
  - Frequency and format of meetings: The full working group meets virtually at least once a quarter. Beginning this summer, the group began meeting in smaller groups on concrete benefits access projects, including an all-of-government strategy to raise awareness for Maryland's Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit.
- **State Coordinating Council/Working Group for Children with Complex Needs**
  - Participating agencies: DHS, MDH, DJS, MSDE, MDOD, DBM
  - Frequency and format of meetings: This working group meets virtually approximately once a month.
- **ENOUGH All of Government Working Groups**
  - Participating agencies: DHS, MDH, MHEC, MD Labor, DSCI, MDOD, MSDE, DJS, DHCD
  - Frequency and format of meetings: This working group meets virtually as needed to advance key ENOUGH grantee priorities.

# Activities Planned in 2026

In 2026, the Children's Cabinet will build on the work outlined above and continue to drive policies, programs, and other actions forward that support children and families, in alignment with the three-year strategic plan. These activities include, but are not limited to:

- Continuing to support community schools, including in their efforts to meet students' and families' basic needs through improved delivery of state agency programs and resources;
- Ensuring every school - including those serving the highest number of kids in poverty - have access to a high-quality educator;
- Expanding interagency efforts to increase awareness of, access to, and use of public benefits and other economic assistance;
- Supporting efforts to build a more inclusive economy, such as ensuring every resident can access high-quality training pathways that lead to good jobs;
- Developing and implementing strategies focused on addressing Maryland's racial wealth gap, including by improving access to community wealth building, asset accumulation, savings-building, and debt reduction resources;
- Uplifting all of Maryland's young people, including young men and boys, by strengthening supports and services in particular areas of need, including mental and physical health, family and community engagement, and workforce readiness;
- Partnering with Local Management Boards and Local Care Teams - who are funded through the Children's Cabinet Interagency Fund - in alignment with Children's Cabinet priorities;
- Continuing to document federal, state, and county level investments in services and programs for children and youth in Maryland ([fiscal mapping](#)); and
- Coordinating across government agencies around place-based strategies, and surging relevant agency resources, supports and programs to high-poverty jurisdictions.

## Appendix: Children's Cabinet Meetings: December 2024 - November 2025

The Children's Cabinet met seven times between December 2024 and November 2025, and is planning to reconvene one more time this calendar year. Below is a list of these meetings with location, topics of discussion, and attendees.

### 1. December 17, 2024

- **Location:** Walter S. Mills-Parole Elementary School
- **Topics of Discussion:**
  - Community Schools
  - ENOUGH Initiative
  - Earned It Campaign
- **Attendees:**
  - Members of the Children's Cabinet: Carmel Martin (GOC); Dr. Carey Wright (MSDE); Katie Savage (DoIT); Vincent Schiraldi (DJS); Carol

Beatty (MDOD); Rafael López (DHS); Dr. Sanjay Rai (MHEC); Dr. Laura Herrera-Scott (MDH)

- Ex-officio Members: Rebecca Flora (MDP); Asma Mirza (GOPI); Pat McLoughlin (MD Benefits); Francesca Ioffreda (Innovation Team)
- Designees, Staff, and Other Attendees: Stuart Campbell (DHCD); Colin Murphy (DHS); Mary Gable (MSDE); Alex Reese (MSDE); Derek Anderson (MSDE); Dr. Mark Bedell (Anne Arundel County Public Schools); Cheryl Cox (Walter S. Mills-Parole Elementary School); Dr. Michelle Walker (Walter S. Mills-Parole Elementary School); Ada Carter (Anne Arundel County Public Schools); Eboni Barksdale-Smith (Walter S. Mills-Parole Elementary School); Alyssa Lowman (Walter S. Mills-Parole Elementary School); Susan Inman (GOC); Cleo Hirsch (GOC); Pickett Slater-Harrington (GOC); Moses Valle-Palacios (GOC); Leopold Spohngellert (GOC); Andrea Barnes (GOC); Semeredin Kundin (GOC)

## 2. February 10, 2025

- **Location**: Virtual
- **Topics of Discussion**:
  - FY 2026 Local Management Boards NOFA
  - Local Care Teams
  - ENOUGH Initiative
  - Fiscal Mapping
  - Youth Homelessness System Improvement
  - Community Schools Delivery Pilot
  - SSA Grant on Barriers to Supplemental Security Income
- **Attendees**:
  - Members of the Children's Cabinet: Carmel Martin (GOC); Carol Beatty (MDOD); Dr. Carey Wright (MSDE); Dr. Sanjay Rai (MHEC); Jake Day (DHCD); Paul Monteiro (DSCI)
  - Ex-officio Members: Asma Mirza (GOPI); Jonny Dorsey (GOV); Pat McLoughlin (MD Benefits); Francesca Ioffreda (Innovation Team)
  - Designees, Staff, and Other Attendees: Carnitra White (DHS); Danielle Meister (DHCD); Suzanne Korff (DHCD); Stuart Campbell (DHCD); Kristen Fleckenstein (MDP); Anne Blackfield (MDOD); Laura Torres (MDH); Colin Murphy (DHS); Alex Reese (MSDE); Mary Gable (MSDE); Maisha Davis (DJS); Jason Perkins-Cohen (MD Labor); Kelsey Soderberg (GOV); Ashley Brooks (Children's Funding Project); Susan Inman (GOC); Cleo Hirsch (GOC); Chelsea DeJesus (GOC); Leopold Spohngellert (GOC); Andrea Barnes (GOC); Semeredin Kundin (GOC); Christina Drushel (GOC); Pickett Slater-Harrington (GOC)

## 3. April 4, 2025

- **Location**: Chesapeake College
- **Topics of Discussion**:
  - ENOUGH Initiative
  - Children's Cabinet Priority Initiatives
- **Attendees**:
  - Members of the Children's Cabinet: Carmel Martin (GOC); Portia Wu (MD Labor); Vincent Scharldi (DJS); Dr. Carey Wright (MSDE); Carol Beatty (MDOD); Paul Monteiro (DSCI); Dr. Sanjay Rai (MHEC)



- Ex-officio Members: Rebecca Flora (MDP); Asma Mirza (GOPI); Jonny Dorsey (GOV); Pat McLoughlin (MD Benefits); Francesca Ioffreda (Innovation Team)
- Staff, Designees, and Other Attendees: Jason Perkins-Cohen (MD Labor); Kristen Patterson (MD Labor); Colin Murphy (DHS); Carnitra White (DHS); Stuart Campbell (DHCD); Ryan Moran (MDH); Laura Torres (MDH); Alex Reese (MSDE); Derek Anderson (MSDE); Mary Gable (MSDE); Maisha Davis (DJS); Anne Blackfield (MDOD); Rachael Parker (GWDB); Emily Dow (MHEC); Jessica Schrank (Innovation Team); Sophie Bergmann (GOPI); Kelsey Soderberg (GOV); Jason Heo (GOV); Nicolas Zevallos (GOV); Erica Williams (GOC); Sarah Mehrotra (GOC); Cleo Hirsch (GOC); Susan Inman (GOC); Andrea Barnes (GOC); Semeredin Kundin (GOC); Pickett Slater-Harrington (GOC); Justis Antonioli-Zigubu (GOC); Kimberly Miller-Tolbert (GOC)

#### 4. May 16, 2025

- **Location:** Annapolis, Maryland
- **Topics of Discussion:**
  - Task Force to Protect Children from the Harms of Deportation
  - Young Men and Boys
  - Service Year Option
  - Local Care Teams
- **Attendees:**
  - Members of the Children's Cabinet: Carmel Martin (GOC); Portia Wu (MD Labor); Vincent Scharldi (DJS); Paul Monteiro (DSCI); Rafael López (DHS); Dr. Sanjay Rai (MHEC)
  - Ex-officio Members: Asma Mirza (GOPI); Jonny Dorsey (GOV); Pat McLoughlin (MD Benefits); Francesca Ioffreda (Innovation Team)
  - Designees, Staff, and Other Attendees: Katherine Feldman (MDH); Alyssa Lord (MDH); Emily Berg (MDH); Stuart Campbell (DHCD); Alex Reese (MSDE); Mary Gable (MSDE); Maisha Davis (DJS); Anne Blackfield (MDOD); Carnitra White (DHS); Elena Quiroz-Livanis (MHEC); Sapna Mehta (MD Labor); Jason Perkins-Cohen (MD Labor); Charlie Rixey (Innovation Team); Kamal Essaheb (GOV); Jason Heo (GOV); Kelsey Soderberg (GOV); Sophie Bergmann (GOPI); Sadegh Eghadmi (GOC); Kimberly Miller-Tolbert (GOC); Sarah Mehrotra (GOC); Cleo Hirsch (GOC); Susan Inman (GOC); Andrea Barnes (GOC); Semeredin Kundin (GOC); Justis Antonioli-Zigubu (GOC); Deepika Ramachandran (GOC)

#### 5. July 11, 2025

- **Location:** Annapolis, Maryland
- **Topics of Discussion:**
  - Fiscal Mapping
  - Local Care Teams and Children's Cabinet Interagency Fund
  - Community Schools Delivery Pilot
  - Benefits Access
  - Young Men and Boys
- **Attendees:**

- Members of the Children's Cabinet: Carmel Martin (GOC); Betsy Fox Tolentino (DJS); Paul Monteiro (DSCI); Carol Beatty (MDOD); Dr. Meena Seshamani (MDH); Jake Day (DHCD)
- Ex-officio Members: Jonny Dorsey (GOV); Pat McLoughlin (MD Benefits); Natalie Evans Harris (DoIT); Francesca Ioffreda (Innovation Team)
- Designees, Staff, and Other Attendees: Derek Anderson (MSDE); Jenny Torres (MSDE); Anne Blackfield (MDOD); Cat Goughnour (DHCD); Sonia Chessen (MDH); Alyssa Lord (MDH); Christopher Thompson (MDH); Caleb Weiss (MDOT); Tess Hetzel (DSCI); Issac Frumkin (DSCI); Danielle Meister (DHCD); Suzanne Korf (DHCD); Jason Perkins-Cohen (MD Labor); Colin Murphy (DHS); Alex Reese (MSDE); Aria Miles (Innovation Team); Lynda Blancato (Government Performance Lab); Stephanie Wilcoxon (Government Performance Lab); Gabe Malek (GOV); Jason Heo (GOV); Kelsey Soderberg (GOV); Kimberly Miller-Tolbert (GOC); Sarah Mehrotra (GOC); Cleo Hirsch (GOC); Susan Inman (GOC); Christina Drushel (GOC); Andrea Barnes (GOC); Semeredin Kundin (GOC); Justis Antonioli-Zigubu (GOC)

## 6. August 25, 2025

- **Location:** Annapolis, Maryland
- **Topics of Discussion:**
  - Presentation from Georgetown Beeck Center on Student Parents Research
  - Presentation from Children's Funding Project on Fiscal Mapping Tool
  - Children's Cabinet Strategic Plan
  - ENOUGH Initiative All-of-Government Approach
- **Attendees:**
  - Members of the Children's Cabinet: Carmel Martin (GOC); Paul Monteiro (DSCI); Carol Beatty (MDOD); Dr. Meena Seshamani (MDH); Rafael López (DHS)
  - Ex-officio Members: Asma Mirza (GOPI); Jonny Dorsey (GOV); Pat McLoughlin (MD Benefits); Natalie Evans Harris (DoIT); Francesca Ioffreda (Innovation Team)
  - Designees, Staff, and Other Attendees: Alyssa Lord (MDH); Sonia Chessen (MDH); Alex Reese (MSDE); Mary Gable (MSDE); Maisha Davis (DJS); Anne Blackfield (MDOD); Cat Goughnour (DHCD); Danielle Meister (DHCD); Suzanne Korff (DHCD); Amy Louttit (DHCD); Jason Perkins-Cohen (MD Labor); Kristin Fleckenstein (MDP); Alfred Sundara (MDP); Colin Murphy (DHS); Elena Quiroz-Livanis (MHEC); Maya Mechenbier (Beeck Center); Megan Hauser (Beeck Center); Ashley Brooks (Children's Funding Project); Sophie Bergmann (GOPI); Lynda Blancato (Government Performance Lab); Kelsey Soderberg (GOV); Kimberly Miller-Tolbert (GOC); Sarah Mehrotra (GOC); Cleo Hirsch (GOC); Susan Inman (GOC); Christina Drushel (GOC); Andrea Barnes (GOC); Semeredin Kundin (GOC); Justis Antonioli-Zigubu (GOC)

## 7. November 7, 2025

- **Location:** Prince George's County Community College, Center for Performing Arts
- **Topics of Discussion:**
  - Children's Cabinet Strategic Plan

- Safer Stronger Together
- Young Men and Boys
- Earned It Campaign
- **Attendees:**
  - Members of the Children's Cabinet: Carmel Martin (GOC); Paul Monteiro (DSCI); Carol Beatty (MDOD); Dr. Meena Seshamani (MDH); Rafael López (DHS); Dr. Carey Wright (MSDE); Jake Weissmann (DBM); Dr. Sanjay Rai (MHEC)
  - Ex-officio Members: Asma Mirza (GOPI); Jonny Dorsey (GOV); Pat McLoughlin (MD Benefits); Rebecca Flora (MDP); Natalie Evans Harris (DoIT); Francesca Ioffreda (Innovation Team)
  - Designees, Staff, and Other Attendees: Jason Perkins-Cohen (MD Labor); Seema Gajwani (DJS); Candra Jaxson (DJS); Maisha Davis (DJS) Harry Spikes (DHS); Colin Murphy (DHS); Alyssa Lord (MDH); Amy Louttit (DHCD); Danielle Meister (DHCD); Anne Blackfield (MDOD); Mary Gable (MSDE); Alex Reese (MSDE); Lisa Sandlin (DPSCS); Lynda Blancato (Government Performance Lab); Kelsey Soderberg (GOV); Sophie Bergmann (GOPI); Sarah Mehrotra (GOC); Teresa Wilke (GOC); Kate Frades (GOC); Cleo Hirsch (GOC); Kimberly Miller-Tolbert (GOC); Eric Morrisette (GOC); Andrea Barnes (GOC); Semeredin Kundin (GOC); Peter Willenborg (GOC); Vincent Harrington (GOC); Madeline Pawlak (GOC); Justis Antionioli-Zigubu (GOC)