

Maryland Youth Advisory Council 2021-2022 Annual Report



August 31, 2022

Submitted by: Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth,
and Victim Services on behalf of the
Maryland Youth Advisory Council

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Letter From The Chair



As the Chair of the Maryland Youth Advisory Council, I am honored and humbled to be able to present the Council's 2021-2022 Annual Report. The Annual Report is a summary of the Council's plans and initiatives that have taken place over the duration of the past year. Amidst a global pandemic, this Council was still able to strongly advocate for and accomplish many of our legislative priorities throughout the 2022 Legislative Session. I want to give heartfelt thanks to our wonderful Council members for their diligent advocacy, our amazing Advisor, Ms. Christina Drushel Williams, for her brilliant leadership and unwavering support, and the youth leaders in the beautiful state of Maryland for making this year an unforgettable one.



A handwritten signature of James Mu in cursive, written in a light blue or grey ink. The signature is elegant and matches the name in the caption below.

James Mu, Chair
Maryland Youth Advisory Council

Executive Summary

The Maryland Youth Advisory Council (the Council) has allowed for a group of youth representing the diversity of the State to voice opinions on legislation pertaining to youth; as well as give feedback on various programs and informational materials that benefit the youth of Maryland. By taking on these leadership roles and putting conviction to action, the Council has been able to make a valuable impact.

During the 2021-2022 term, members participated in various activities to voice their opinions and affect change:

- Held nine meetings, exceeding the required four meetings;
- Adopted three connected legislative priorities: youth justice, youth mental health and well-being, and student member of the board voting rights;
- Guest-lectured for the Teen Public Health Seminar course at American University;
- Served as panelists at the Baltimore City Healing City Summit, B-More (You)th Day;
- Hosted a virtual Community Conversation for youth across the State;
- Served as Community Champions for the Children's Mental Health Matters! Campaign; and
- Tracked and supported bills of interest, and provided written and oral testimony during the 2022 Legislative Session.

All meeting minutes and bill testimony are available upon request from the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services - Children and Youth Division (Office).

Background and Mission of the Council

BACKGROUND

The Council was established by the General Assembly in 2008 ([Chapter 559 of 2008](#), [Chapter 69 of 2009](#), and [Chapter 620 of 2016](#)) to ensure that Maryland youth are given the opportunity to provide feedback and recommendations regarding public policies and programs that affect their future and to take a leadership role in creating meaningful change.

Council members are appointed by the:

- Governor of Maryland;
- President of the Maryland Senate;
- Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates;
- Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services (the successor for the Governor's Office for Children) based on nominations made by the:
 - Maryland Association of Student Councils;
 - University System of Maryland Student Council;
 - Maryland Higher Education Commission Student Advisory Council; and
 - Maryland Association of Local Management Boards.

Council members must be 14-22 years of age and serve a two-year term. The Council year is from September 1st to August 31st of the following year.

MISSION

As a coalition of diverse young advocates and leaders from across the State, the Council addresses relevant issues by influencing legislation, spreading public awareness, and serving as a liaison between youth and policymakers.

VISION

The Council strives to be an effective voice that:

- Incites change for the betterment of Maryland youth;
- Ensures equal opportunity for all youth regardless of background or circumstance;
- Initiates political conversations with youth;
- Educates youth on political issues; and
- Is respected by legislators and other stakeholders on youth issues.

RESPONSIBILITIES

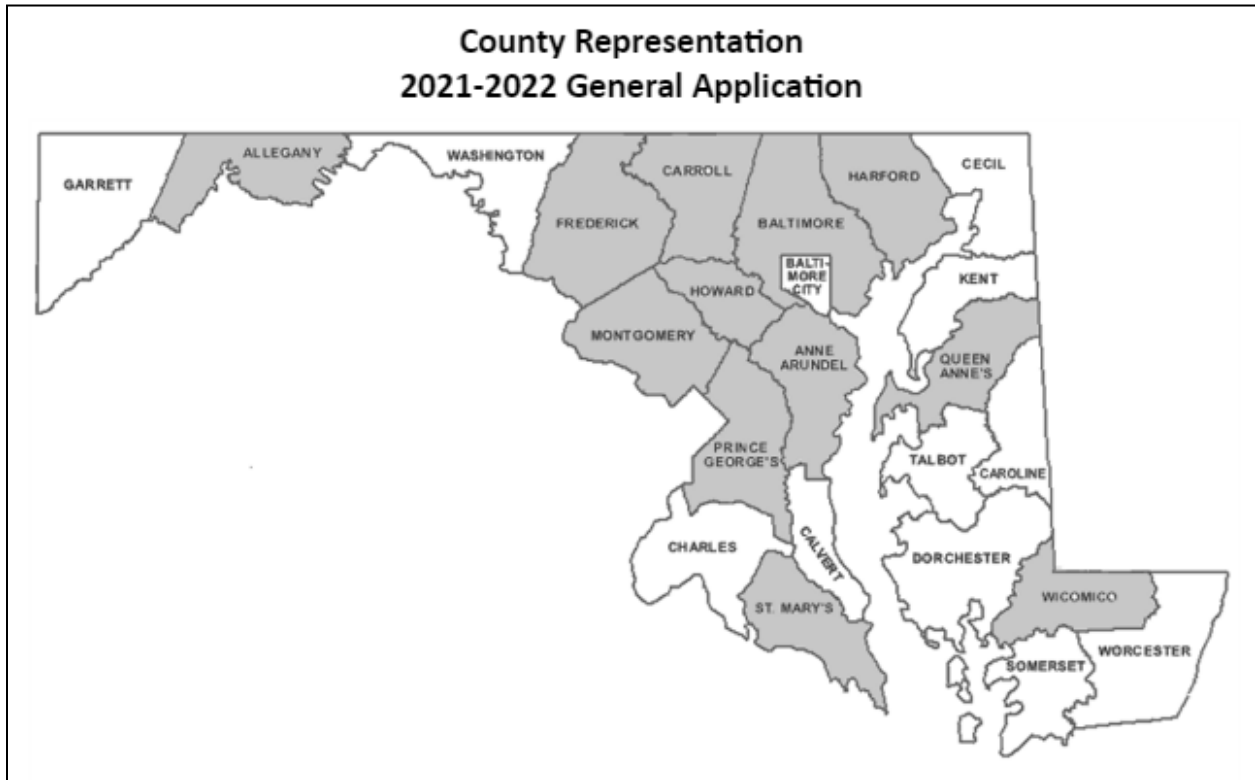
- Inform the Governor and the General Assembly of issues concerning youth, including offering testimony on these issues before legislative bodies;
- Examine issues of importance to youth, including: education, a safe learning environment, employment opportunities, strategies to increase youth participation in local and State government, health care access and quality of care, substance abuse and underage drinking, emotional and physical well-being, the environment, poverty, homelessness, youth access to State and local services, suicide prevention, and educational accessibility issues for students with disabilities;
- Recommend one legislative proposal each legislative session concerning an issue of importance;
- Conduct a public campaign to raise awareness of the Council among Maryland youth;
- Participate in local youth activities or organizations;

- Advise local officials and community leaders on youth issues;
- Collect information from other youth groups in order to inform the activities of the Council; and
- Report its activities to the Governor and General Assembly before the last day of the Council year.

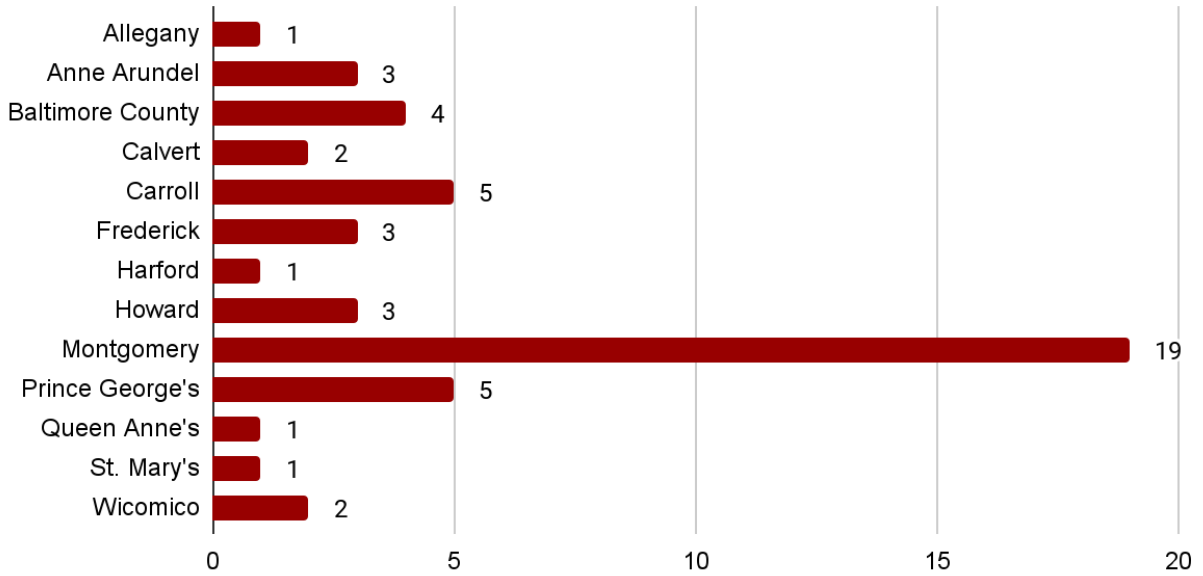
2021-2022 Applications at a Glance

For the 2021-2022 term, applications were available online on the Council’s website from March 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022. Fifty (50) applications were received from youth residing in 13 counties, representing 41 high schools, colleges, and universities. Of these applicants, 70% identified as female, 20% identified as male, and 2% did not identify as male or female. The majority of applicants were from Montgomery County. In addition, 68% of the applicants identified as a person of color, of which 30% identified as Black or African American; 2% of the applicants did not disclose their race/ethnicity.

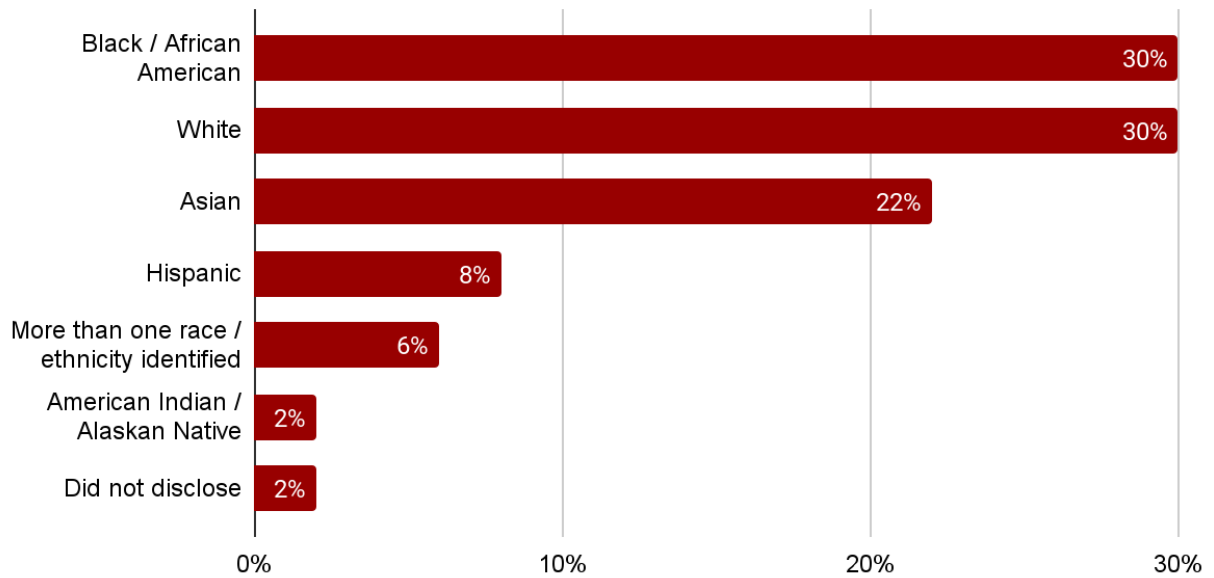
Applications were reviewed by Office staff and submitted recommendations for appointment to the appointing bodies as needed.



Number of Applications by County 2021-2022 General Application

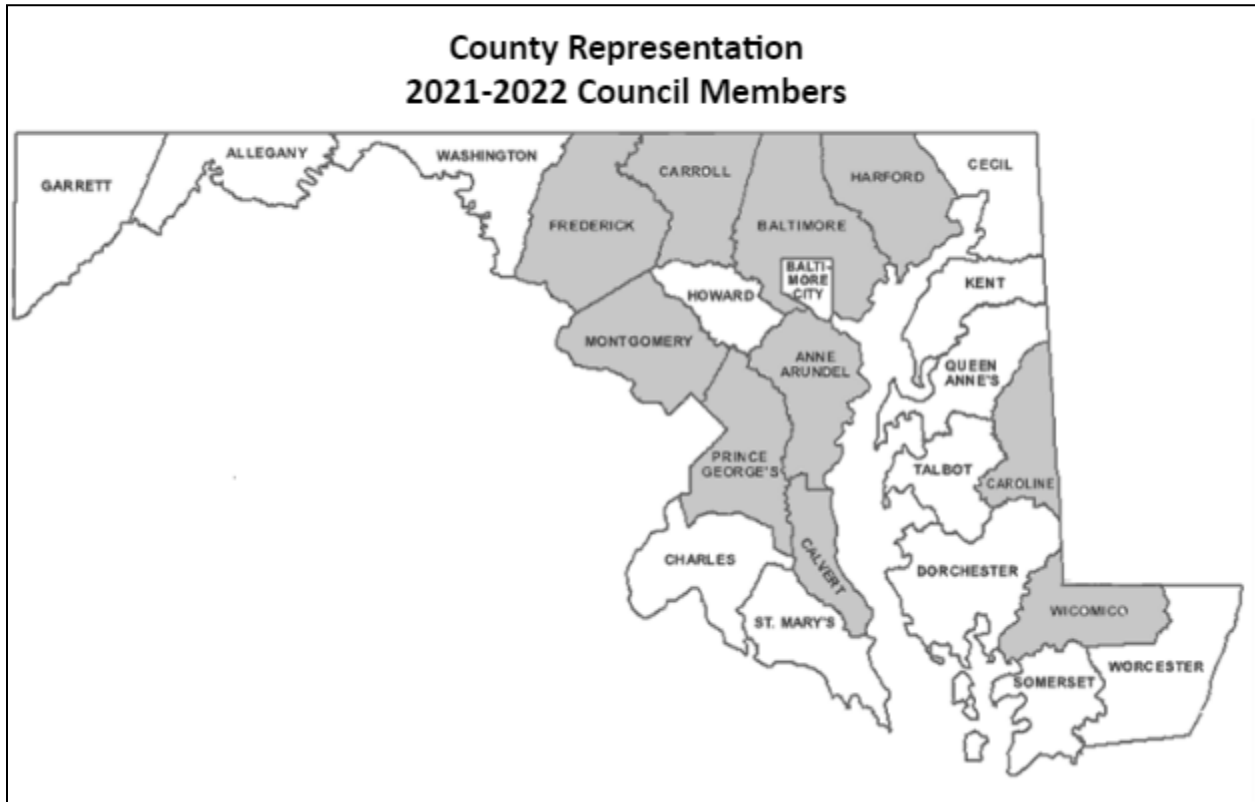


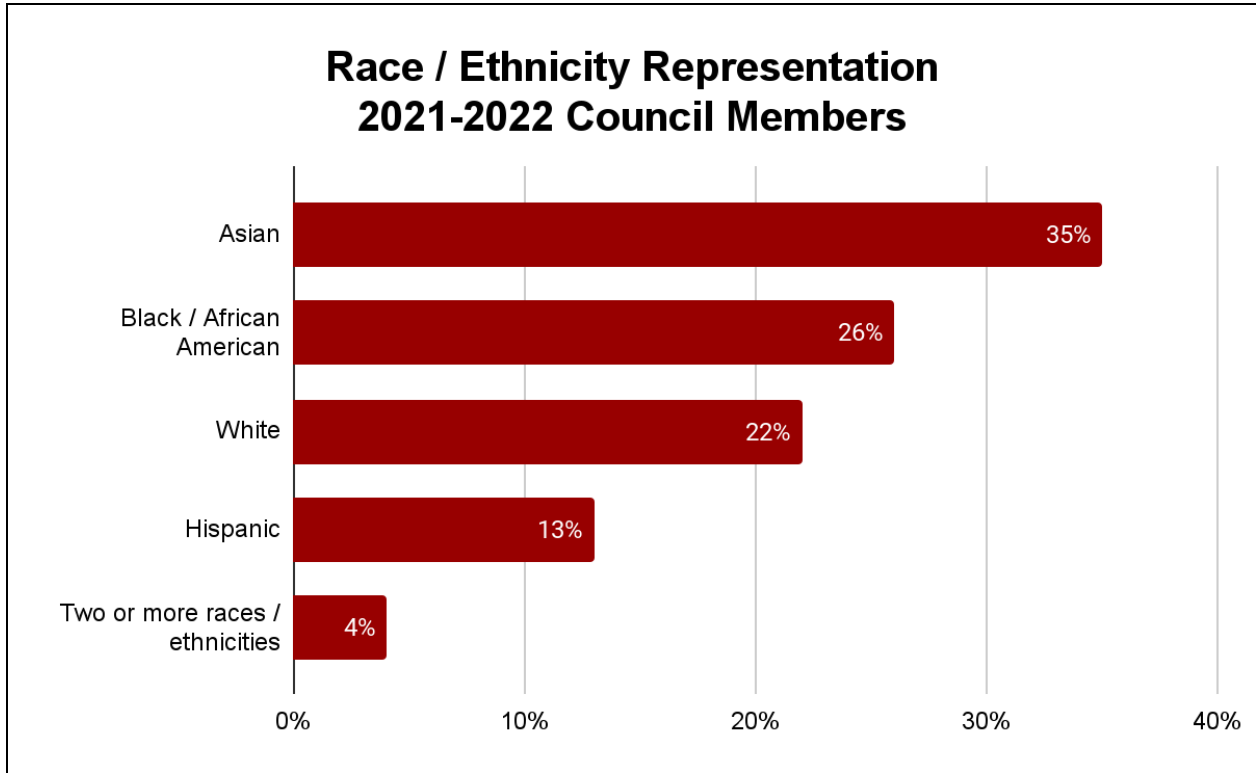
Race / Ethnicity Representation 2021-2022 General Application



2021-2022 Council at a Glance

The 2021-2022 Council is composed of 23 members, representing 10 counties, 14 high schools, seven colleges/universities, and one homeschooler. The Council includes 13 (57%) members who identify as female and 10 (43%) members who identify as male. Of the 23 members, 10 are returning second-year members and 13 are first-year members. In addition, 78% of Council members identify as a person of color, with Asians representing 35% of the Council.





2021-2022 Maryland Youth Advisory Council Roster

2021-2022 MARYLAND YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL EXECUTIVE BOARD (elected by Council members)

Chair: James Mu

Vice Chair: Ricky Bridges

Secretary: Jason Park

Legislative Committee Chair: Jayden Shiflett

Public Awareness Committee Chair: Emily Shrieves

Executive Board Members: Melany Benites, Shelbi Briggs, Meghna Chandrasekaran, Samuel Desai, Maja Durkovic, Dhruv Girish, Derek Mu, Sumiya Rahaman

Historian: Melany Benites

Technology Officer: Dhruv Girish

Parliamentarian: Shelbi Briggs

APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR

Appointed in 2020

Jason Park: Baltimore County - Gilman School

Appointed in 2021

Elijah Cockey: Wicomico County - Homeschooled

Samuel Desai: Montgomery County - Richard Montgomery High School

Dhruv Girish: Frederick County - Urbana High School

APPOINTED BY THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Appointed in 2020

Ricky Bridges: Baltimore County - Franklin High School

Rosiland Marfo: Baltimore County - Franklin High School

James Mu: Montgomery County - Thomas S. Wootton High School

Appointed in 2021

Hailey Smith: Prince George's County - Bowie High School

APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

Appointed in 2020

Jayden Shiflett: Anne Arundel County - Old Mill High School

Appointed in 2021

Shelbi Briggs: Caroline County - Colonel Richardson High School

Meghna Chandrasekaran: Baltimore County - University of Maryland, Baltimore County

Derek Mu: Montgomery County - Montgomery Blair High School

NOMINATED BY THE MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT COUNCILS

Appointed in 2020

Lauren Raskin: Montgomery County - Poolesville High School

Appointed in 2021

Melany Benites: Prince George's County - Oxon Hill High School

Maja Durkovic: Baltimore County - Eastern Technical High School

Henry Meiser: Calvert County - St. Mary's Ryken High School

NOMINATED BY THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF MARYLAND STUDENT COUNCIL

Appointed in 2020

No appointments were made

Appointed in 2021

No appointments were made

NOMINATED BY THE MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION—STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Appointed in 2020

Shreeyam Mishra: Harford Community College

Marie Oluebube Ofoegbu: Stevenson University

Sal Suarez: Goucher College

Appointed in 2021

No appointments were made

NOMINATED BY THE MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL MANAGEMENT BOARDS

Appointed in 2020

Issac Colbert: Anne Arundel County - Anne Arundel Community College

Appointed in 2021

Sumiya Rahaman: Carroll County - Westminster High School

Emily Shrieves: Calvert County - St. Mary's College of Maryland

Yashita Thalla: Frederick County - Urbana High School

Council Meeting Overview

[Chapter 559 of 2008](#), [Chapter 69 of 2009](#), and [Chapter 620 of 2016](#) require the Council to meet at least four times each year and each meeting must be open to the public. However, the Council determined that meeting only four times a year was not sufficient to complete the Council's intended work; therefore, the members decided to meet on a monthly basis. During the 2021-2022 term, the Council met virtually once a month from September to May, due to COVID-19 health and safety considerations. Meetings were held on Saturday afternoons. All meeting dates and times are available on the Council's website at <https://goccp.maryland.gov/myac/>.

MEETING #1: SEPTEMBER 11, 2021

Council members started the 2021-2022 session by welcoming the first-year members and a warm welcome back to second-year members. After introductions, the Council members reviewed the responsibilities of the Council and Maryland's legislative structure. Council members then held elections to select the officers for the year.

MEETING #2: OCTOBER 19, 2021

The Council received welcoming remarks from Glenn Fueston of the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services. The remarks consisted of announcements such as Project Bounce Back, Handle with Care Maryland, and the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services' efforts in addressing Adverse Childhood Experiences. The Council also listened to a presentation from the Maryland Department of Health regarding Mind Health, which shared an introduction to a Youth Suicide Prevention Toolkit, and provided feedback on the toolkit. Following the presentation, leadership positions were announced to the Council. The Council also learned how to facilitate a Community Conversation and how it is used to engage with other young people to discuss issues/areas of concern and inform the legislative priorities of the Council. Ms. Christina then led a community conversation exercise with the Council.

MEETING #3: NOVEMBER 6, 2021

In preparation for identifying the 2021-2022 Legislative Priority, the Council hosted a virtual community conversation, inviting members of the public to discuss key issues that are in their communities. The conversation began with a review of the Hand, Head, Heart, Human exercise, showing what members of the public can offer to provide change to their communities to solve the key issues that they identify. Next, the conversation shifted to identifying key issues in the Maryland youth community, and providing

solutions to these issues. At the end of the meeting, the Council explained why community conversations are important and how this information would be used to identify the legislative priority and inform policy recommendations.

MEETING #4: DECEMBER 11, 2021

The Council was joined by the Maryland Higher Education Commission to discuss informing students of their rights in college and the various available resources. The Council learned about the role the Commission has in aiding Maryland college students and recent high-school graduates entering college such as assuring college credits are properly transferred from institution to institution. The Maryland Department of Health also presented information about the health dangers present in young tobacco use and the Council provided feedback for a toolkit to prevent and stop youth tobacco use. The Council discussed and voted on a legislative priority for the 2021-2022 session. The Council approved three branches of legislative priority, including Youth Justice, Mental Health and Well-Being, and Supporting SMOB Voting Rights. At the end of the meeting, the Council recognized Samuel Desai's submission of his opinion to Bethesda Magazine and announced a monthly newsletter and Facebook takeovers from the Public Awareness Committee.

MEETING #5: JANUARY 15, 2022

At the start of the meeting, the Council announced reaching out to Maryland House Delegate Guyton regarding House Bill 418. The Council received an overview on how to navigate the Maryland General Assembly website and how the Maryland legislative process works. The Council introduced the bill tracker and the bills identified by the Legislative Committee, based on the legislative priority. The Council then voted to support or oppose bills that were on the bill tracker.

MEETING #6: FEBRUARY 5, 2022

In collaboration with the Emerging Leaders Committee, the Council planned its participation in the Healing City Summit to give advice to Maryland youth on how to be more involved in their communities. The Council also announced a proposal for MYAC Instagram and YouTube accounts to increase public outreach to platforms that are mainly used by the Council's target demographic of Maryland's youth. The proposal consisted of systems that included admins for the accounts and a process for posting onto the platforms. The Council also considered options on how future applicants to the Council can submit applications during the opening of the 2022-2023 application.

MEETING #7: MARCH 5, 2022

The Council announced the full operation of the Instagram account. The Council also debriefed on the Healing City Summit Presentation in collaboration with the Emerging Leaders Committee. The Council was then introduced to the release of the application for the next council year. At the end of the meeting, the Council started planning for the Teen Health Seminar presentation at American University and Children's Mental Health Awareness Month.

MEETING #8: APRIL 19, 2022

The Council successfully submitted written testimony for the bills regarding Mental Health Day Excused Absence and School Resource Officer Data Collection. The Council continued its efforts on creating

content for social media outreach. The Council also received a preview of the Teen Health Seminar presentation at American University and continued to discuss ideas for Children's Mental Health Awareness Month. At the end of the meeting, the Council recognized Maja Durkovic for winning the presidency of the Maryland Association of Student Councils.

MEETING #9: MAY 14, 2022

With the last meeting of the 2021-2022 MYAC Session, Council members made final announcements regarding the end of the Maryland Legislative Session, social media outreach for the application and Application Q&A Session, and the release of another MYAC Monthly video. The Council also debriefed on the Teen Health Seminar presentation that was held at American University and had a final review of the results of the Maryland Legislative Session. To conclude the final meeting of the 2021-2022 session, the Council reflected upon the progress made, and participated in an end-of-year celebration.

Committees

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

The Legislative Committee focused on preparing for the 2022 Legislative Session by researching legislation and determining the bills that correlate with the Council's legislative priorities for the 2021-2022 session. The committee held additional meetings to decide which bills would be presented to the full Council for a vote (support, support with amendments, oppose, or make no motion). Each month the committee presented different bills and kept Council members informed through the use of a spreadsheet. The spreadsheet included general bill information (i.e., number, status/hearing dates, sponsors, and bill history), the legislative priorities the bill aligned with, the parts of the legislative platform the bills aligned with, and more. The bills listed on the spreadsheet were organized in a color-coded system to signify urgency. Legislation highlighted in green represented high priority for the council, yellow represented medium priority, and red represented low priority. Committee members were eventually assigned specific bills to monitor due to lack of specificity in fiscal and policy notes, and gave updates to the Council as needed. In total, the committee presented the Council with 42 bills and the Council took votes on 40 of the bills.

The Legislative Committee also created a Sign-Up Genius giving all members an opportunity to draft testimony (oral and/or written) on behalf of the Council. This year, the Council submitted testimony on two pieces of legislation. Legislative Committee member Sumiya Rahaman drafted testimony for House Bill 23 regarding data collected on school discipline and resource officers. Legislative Committee member Samuel Desai drafted testimony for House Bill 118 regarding school approved absence for mental health reasons and encouraged Maryland General Assembly members to vote in favor of the bill. House Bill 118 eventually passed both Chambers and received the Governor's approval.

Lastly, the committee also focused their efforts on creating a legislative workshop event for all youth members in Maryland. Council members Samuel Desai, Sumiya Rahaman, Jayden Shiflett, and Yashita Thalla drafted a tentative schedule/outline for the event and listed three workshops attendees could participate in along with their designated time slots. The legislative event would be an opportunity for the Council to reach out to youth members and provide information on how to draft testimony, breakdown the legislative process and understand its impact at the local level, and how to advocate for causes in a community setting along with proposing solutions and developing outreach plans. Each of

the workshops included a presentation that attendees would review after participating in an interactive group assignment. Council member Yashita Thalla created a presentation for the workshop dedicated towards teaching youth members ways to advocate and gather support for a cause/issue. Due to virtual meetings and difficulty with setting meeting times outside of the general meetings, the Legislative Committee preserved the legislative workshop idea for the following year. All materials created for the event would be given to the Council's advisor to pass down to the next Legislative Committee for the 2022-2023 session.

Overall, even with the virtual struggles, the LC continued to assist the Council throughout the legislative session and submitted testimony for two bills, one of which passed the Maryland General Assembly. The Legislative Committee produced a spreadsheet to keep all Council members updated on the bills and a Sign-Up Genius to encourage members to submit testimony. Lastly, the Legislative Committee started the work for a legislative workshop event and will reserve materials for the 2022-2023 session. Throughout the year, the Legislative Committee helped the Council in continuing to have an impact in the legislative session; and will provide the Council with available workshop materials to help the Council with educating youth and forming connections across the State.

PUBLIC AWARENESS COMMITTEE

The Public Awareness Committee continued to adapt to the new norms of communication strictly in the digital world. Because the 2021-2022 session was completely virtual, there were limitations in the way the Council could communicate with the general public. Alongside the usual production of Council materials, such as event flyers and other promotional materials, the Public Awareness Committee felt that more action needed to be taken. For many terms of the MYAC, the Public Awareness Committee has struggled to expand its online presence. Using feedback from the Council, the Public Awareness Committee produced a social media proposal that outlined the expansion of its online presence, including the creation of a Google account, YouTube Channel, and an Instagram page. The proposal was adopted unanimously by the Council.

Since the proposal was adopted, the Council has had many new opportunities to communicate digitally. The Public Awareness Committee was able to use videos to promote events, an example being our promotion for the Council's involvement in Healing City's BMORE Youth Day Summit, which reached over 3,500 views on Instagram. The Public Awareness Committee also used social media to promote and spread the word about specific bills the Council was supporting and why they were important. Finally, the Public Awareness Committee launched its "MYAC Monthly" video and newsletter series. The series aimed to promote one of the Council's legislative priorities each month, including specific Maryland General Assembly bills the Council was supporting and why the priority was important to Maryland youth. While this series was on and off since its launch, due to the busy calendar of Public Awareness Committee members, it still proved to be one of the Council's most successful public awareness campaigns with over 385 accumulated views of both MYAC Monthly videos and over 430 impressions of the newsletter.

Overall, the Public Awareness Committee set the foundation for Council communications in the digital world. As the State continues to gradually open back up, following the COVID-19 pandemic, MYAC can use these digital skills learned in future council years to enhance its public awareness strategies.

2022 Legislative Session

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

During the 2014-2015 session, the Legislative Committee spearheaded the development of a legislative platform as a way to solidify the views of the Council. The platform spans seven broad subjects: Youth Representation, Youth Leadership, Education, Health and Social Issues, Youth Safety and Student Discipline, Environmental Issues, and Youth Employment. Contained within the platform are over 100 statements to ensure that youth and young adults are supported and thrive in Maryland.

The platform allows the Council to share its views and recommendations for Maryland through a central, easy to follow document. Additionally, this document serves as a testament to the abilities of youth to be informed on a wide array of subject matters. The platform promotes informed advocacy, future Council discussions, and ultimately a better defined and organized Council. As a living document, the platform evolves with the needs of youth and continues to influence change for years to come.

2022 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

For the previous legislative session, the Council's legislative priorities consisted of three different sub-priorities: Youth Justice; Mental Health and Well-being, and Student Member of the Board (SMOB) Voting Rights. The Council addressed topics ranging from racial discrimination and environmental education to mental health and school discipline. These priorities comprehensively covered the needs of youth in Maryland.

2022 LEGISLATIVE BILLS

In the 2022 Legislative Session, the Council discussed 41 different bills. The Council supported 32 bills, supported one bill with amendments, made no motion on six bills, and opposed two. Additionally, we submitted testimony on two different bills. The first one, House Bill 118, was about allowing mental health days to be excused absences for students. The second one, House Bill 23 mandated the publication of school discipline data to create a more transparent school system.

Other Meetings, Events, and Activities

VIRTUAL COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

The work of the Council is to serve the public and to meet their needs. In an effort to meet the needs of Maryland's youth, the Council hosted a virtual community conversation. Through this, the Council was able to attain its legislative priorities, laying the foundation for the work of the Council. The Council learned about the discrimination students face and how the effects were magnified by the pandemic. This student led conversation gave the Council a chance to interact with and understand the public it serves.

YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION TOOLKIT

The Maryland Department of Health, Behavioral Health Administration, Office of Suicide Prevention

partnered with the Council, along with the [Maryland Association of Student Councils](#), [Carroll County Local Management Board](#), and the [Boys and Girls Clubs of Metropolitan Baltimore](#) to develop the Youth Suicide Prevention Toolkit. The new toolkit is designed to be disseminated among adults who work with youth and offers extensive resources, guidance, and fact sheets on a variety of topics:

- Engaging youth and young adults in suicide prevention
- Best practices in LGBT+ youth suicide prevention
- Substance use disorders and suicidal behaviors in adolescents
- Depression screening
- Preventing suicide as a teacher and school mental health professional
- Social media and suicide prevention
- Advice for teens to check in with friends and peers
- Guidance to support students who lose a friend or classmate to suicide
- Targeted local and national resources

The Council also supported the Maryland Department of Health's launch of MD Young Minds, an extension of the mental health outreach texting program [MD Mind Health](#). Texts are sent through the program to provide supportive, youth-focused mental health messages and remind recipients that immediate access to mental health services is available statewide.

[Download the Youth Suicide Prevention Toolkit here](#), and sign up for MD Young Minds by texting "MDYOUNGMINDS" to 898-211.

TOBACCO-USE PREVENTION AND YOUTH ADVOCACY

On December 11, 2021, the Council met with the Maryland Department of Health to have a discussion on youth tobacco prevention. The mission of the discussion was to prevent and protect Maryland residents from tobacco related health issues. The Maryland Department of Health presented current tobacco prevention resources and the dangers of nicotine in youth. Following the presentation, the Council advised the Maryland Department of Health on items they are passionate about and how those items relate to the anti-tobacco campaign. The Council also advised the Maryland Department of Health on their model toolkit for tobacco prevention.

HEALING CITY SUMMIT 2022 PRESENTATION - "YOUTH LEADERSHIP IN ACTION"

The annual Healing City Summit was held on February 28 through March 5, 2022. Dozens of organizations and 1,600 youth and community leaders organized and participated in panels, workshops, resource fairs, entertainment, and off site activities. The 2022 summit included five days of virtual and in-person community building and healing focused on moving Baltimore forward, together.

The Council in partnership with the Emerging Leaders Committee led a breakout session called "Youth Leadership in Action" at the 2022 Healing City Summit B-more (You)th Day. Sessions for this day of the summit were led by young people and focused on youth participants. The Council's session was a way for young people to learn more about the work of the two groups and how young people can take action in their communities. A [recording of the session](#) is available online.

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY TEEN HEALTH SEMINAR

On April 13, 2022, the Council participated in a virtual seminar with a public health class at American University in Washington D.C. Council members Samuel Desai, Dhruv Girsh, and Jason Park, along with Ms. Christina, discussed the Council's impact on youth public health policy. Topics included:

- Impacts of COVID-19
- Health Education
- Trauma-Informed Care
- Project Bounce Back
- Youth Suicide Prevention Toolkit
- Tobacco-use Prevention
- Children's Mental Health Matters!
- 2021 Legislative Session - Support House Bill 205/Senate Bill 427 - Public Schools - Provision of Menstrual Hygiene Products - Requirement - PASSED
- 2022 Legislative Session - Support House Bill 118 - Mental health excused absence

The Council also shared how the members advocate for youth-led policy-making and the role of the Council in Maryland. The Council also gained valuable connections in the public health field and a further understanding of national public health policy.

2022-2023 APPLICATION Q&A SESSION

On June 2, 2022, the Council hosted a virtual Q&A session for potential applicants in the upcoming year. Overall, this session was attended by 27 participants including interested applicants and current members. This was an opportunity for applicants to learn more about the role of the MYAC and the experiences of current members. Council members presented their responsibilities and the accomplishments of the 2021-2022 year. Council members also answered questions from participants about the Council and its application process.

Recommendations for 2022-2023 Council

At the final meeting of the year, Ms. Drushel Williams facilitated a reflection activity for members to think about the Council year, focusing on: (1) what worked, (2) what did not work, and (3) recommendations for improvement next year. Below are the results of the reflection activity. The Council recommends to the 2022-2023 Council to review and consider these ideas for the improvement of the Council and related activities during the 2022-2023 term.

WHAT WORKED? WHAT DID YOU LIKE? WHAT SHOULD WE KEEP NEXT YEAR?

- I liked the breaks in the meetings. Additional work/opportunities to talk/work with other organizations.
- Despite being all virtual this year, the Council made major progress when it came to reaching out on social media, providing testimony, and holding community conversations.
- I really liked how open we were able to talk at each of the meetings, and how we were able to conduct extra committee meetings in between to complete more work. I think we were successfully able to work as one committee to set the goals we wanted to accomplish, and we also began to do them. I also liked that we voted on bills and decided our sides on each one because it gave more insight into what was happening and gave us chances to provide testimony. I liked how organized each of the meetings were as well.
- Keep the good vibes within the Council.
- Loved seeing members of the public join us for our meetings!
- More Team Building activities for next year! So, we can become familiar with Council members.
- I loved how encouraging the leadership team was especially when helping new members who were unsure about things.
- The communication with each other and seeing everybody try their best to interact with one another.
- I like how accessible the program was. I liked how the second year members helped out and the community that was created. I especially enjoyed the communication we had throughout the meeting and the organization of the meetings.
- I appreciated the brain breaks throughout meetings, so we could regroup since meetings usually last around four hours.
- What worked: Expanding presence of Council digitally (both on social media and utilizing Google Hangouts).
- Each committee did great providing updates and really directing the actions of the Council.

WHAT DID NOT WORK? WHAT DID YOU NOT LIKE?

- I don't think that Slack worked as a communication tool. Many members didn't understand the platform.
- I think virtual really hurt the Council staying connected and participating in more activities. If possible, have more in-person meetings.
- Communications through Slack had too many expectations at the beginning of the year and people did not use it as much as we were going to. I think that the GroupMe group text was a better form of communication.
- I feel like next year it would be beneficial to take more action on the bills we vote on and get more participation to make testimonies. Also, since I was a part of the Legislative Committee, I

think that we should encourage more participation in the extra meetings so that we can get more done. For example, we were planning the workshop, but we were not able to accomplish it this year since it was coming to an end.

- More team building activities. Possibly additional optional meetings mainly for team bonding so Council members can become more familiar and comfortable with each other.
- Executive board meetings being a little late in the evening.
- Reach out more to other local organizations to build community connections.
- The time gap between each executive board meeting.
- Slack wasn't the best to use to reach out to each other. Being virtual and trying to maintain the best focus. Team activities and bonding.
- Not being able to do work with the Council in person was not ideal.
- I believe maybe having more frequent, shorter meetings. I think there should be a better communication method. I would say having more delegation of opportunities (at times I would be confused what my roles are, so having options to choose what they would like to do and understanding what activities entail).
- Aligning schedules was really difficult, especially for committee breakouts/meetings.

WHAT CAN BE BETTER NEXT YEAR? WHAT SHOULD BE DIFFERENT?

- Slack was a good idea, but was poorly executed.
- Having small group activities in each general meeting.
- Slack because it wasn't the best thing to use and it still confused me a little. Trying to get everybody comfortable with each other.
- Incorporate more icebreakers for meetings.
- If we continue to be virtual: fostering more comfort both in the digital platform and with each other. A lot of people weren't comfortable speaking up this year.
- I think having more opportunities to reach out to the public. And having resources and time to learn more about the different subcommittees before breaking out into the different groups.
- Participation would have improved but this may be remedied next year with in-person meetings.
- Possibly consider GroupMe for communications.
- Maybe weekly check-ins (Google form or conversation in group message) just to see where everyone is at so we stay connected.
- I hope that the Council can meet in-person at least once next year.
- I believe that as a Council, we should encourage each other to take more action on each of the bills, such as providing testimony. I also feel like we should take up Council projects and spread awareness to the public in different ways because I noticed that many individuals in Maryland had no way of knowing about the Council.

WHAT IS SOMETHING THAT YOU LEARN OR GAINED THROUGH YOUR EXPERIENCE ON THE COUNCIL

- How to organize a group and prioritize legislation based on group priorities.
- I was able to overcome my quietness when it came to sharing my opinion and contributing to the Council. I definitely feel that the Council helped me become a better person overall and made me more ambitious when it comes to using my voice to help others in my community.
- I was able to learn a lot about the legislative process and how the Council affected legislation. I feel like the discussions we had as a Council allowed me to grow as a person because I began thinking from alternate perspectives when approaching discussions or problems. I learned about providing testimony and organizing different events, such as the workshop.

- How to research legislation and interpret bills in their wording.
- Teamwork is an integral part of getting anything done, and the virtual environment this year really helped train my collaboration skills.
- I learned how to navigate the Maryland General Assembly website!! Thanks to the Council members who gave tutorials and help for this!
- Learned how to follow legislation and use the Maryland General Assembly website. Learned how to be a better team member and delegate tasks effectively.
- I learned about the power of my voice and how important it is to speak.
- I learned about the legislative process and writing good testimonies.
- I learned about how much I can make a difference and communication between different mindsets and how to approach work moving forward.
- Learned about the potential of how the Council can have a large presence in the community through social media and community events.
- I enjoyed my experience on the Council and everything I have learned will help me throughout my future endeavors. I'm so grateful to have had this opportunity. I wish all the best for continuing and future Council members.