



Governor's Office for Children

Strategic Plan

2015

Introduction

Since 1978, the Governor’s Office for Children (GOC) and the Children’s Cabinet have worked to ensure that Maryland’s children, youth and families can flourish and achieve their potential. GOC has historically accomplished its work through a firm commitment to bringing together senior officials from State agencies, community organizations, and local jurisdictions to overcome barriers and establish clear outcomes for improving the lives of children, youth, and families across the State. In developing this set of common results, GOC and the member Agencies of the Children’s Cabinet acknowledged a set of fundamental interests we share with our community based and local partners. The well-being results we seek to attain together are:

- Babies Born Healthy
- Healthy Children
- Children Enter School Ready to Learn
- Children are Successful in School
- Youth will Complete School
- Youth have Opportunities for Employment or Career Readiness
- Communities are Safe for Children, Youth and Families
- Families are Safe and Economically Stable

Today, GOC operationalizes Governor Hogan’s vision for economic opportunity for all. The Governor charged the Children’s Cabinet with advancing his vision by focusing on four Strategic Goals: reducing the impact of parental incarceration on children, families, and communities; reducing the number of youth, aged 16-24, who are not working and not going to school; reducing childhood hunger; and, reducing youth homelessness. Focusing on these four goals will lead to a stable, safe, and healthy environment for children and families. Working at the direction of the Governor, GOC facilitates the work of the Maryland Children’s Cabinet and supports child well-being by:

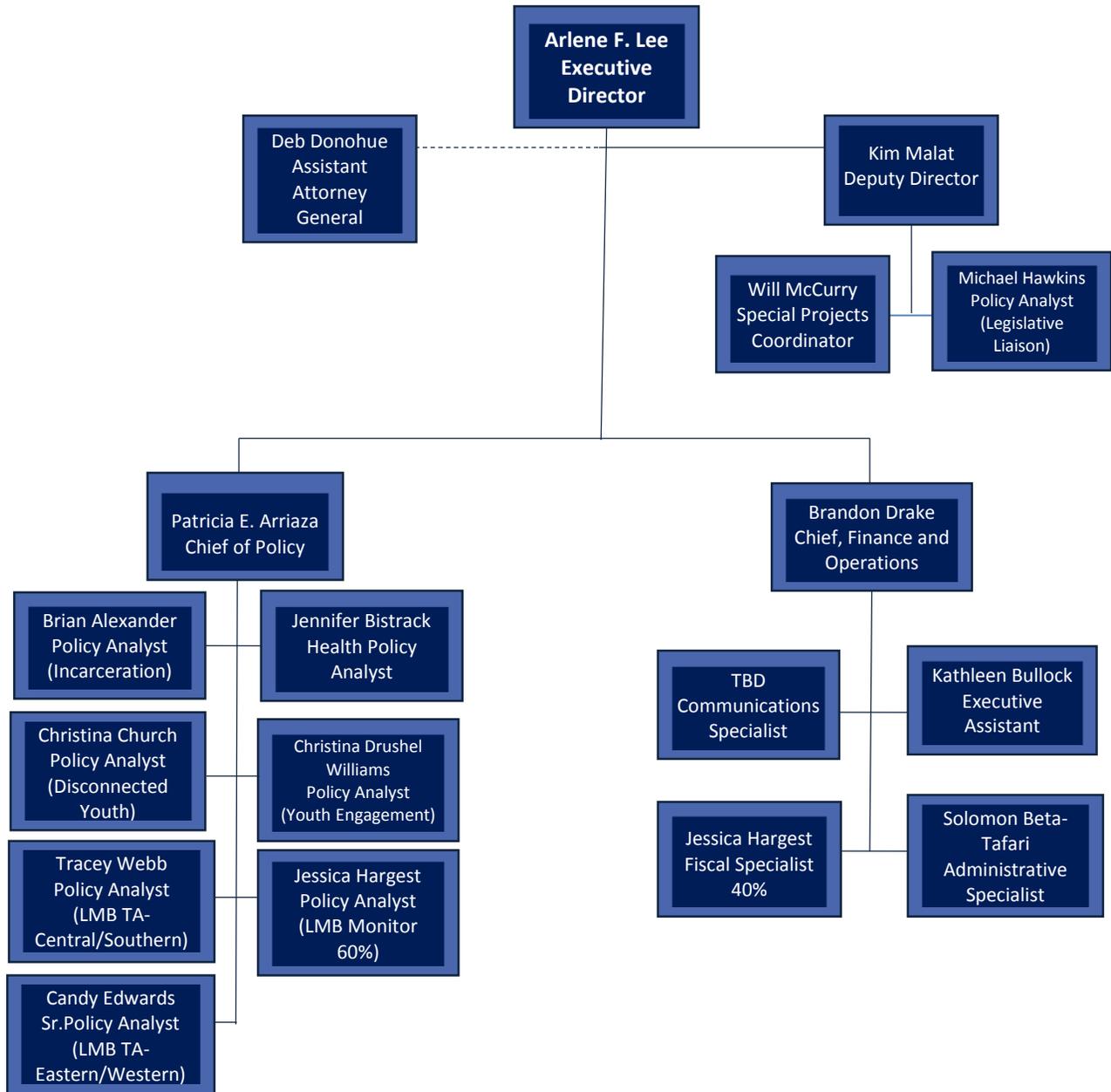
- Promoting sound child and family policy;
- Using Maryland’s child well-being Results in planning, decision-making, and evaluation;
- Collaborating with the Local Management Boards (LMBs) and other partners;
- Using data and technology to continuously evaluate and measure outcomes; and
- Ensuring fiscal accountability.



Highlights:

- Restructuring the office to focus on policy development, analysis, and research
- Reprogramming Children’s Cabinet funds to support Governor Hogan’s vision for jobs and economic opportunity
- Recommitting to local authority and local decision-making
- Transitioning to quantifiable, transparent results
- Streamlining boards, commissions, and Office functions
- Transferring operational programs
- Conducting outreach to elected officials and philanthropy

Governor's Office for Children: New Organization Chart



History and Current Context

The Governor's Office for Children originated in 1978. It was reorganized twice, first in 1990 to focus on interagency issues and systems reform; and again in 2005 to focus on child and family policy. The role of the Office has been to assist the Governor and the Children's Cabinet with establishing policies to support child and family well-being; support agencies, local governments, and organizations to effectively carry out their responsibilities for children and youth; and help families and the general public learn about programs and services for children and youth.

Since 1990 much of this work occurs through the Local Management Boards (LMBs). Each county in Maryland is required to establish an LMB to plan, implement, and monitor child and family services. Each Board determines what services are needed within the parameters of the eight Results the Children's Cabinet has set for child well-being in Maryland. Each Board enters into a Community Partnership Agreement (CPA) with the Office, which assists with training and technical assistance to LMBs to develop resources, implement programs, and be fiscally accountable. Reflecting the interagency nature of services for children and families, each Board may include representatives from the local health department; the local office of the Department of Juvenile Services; the local Core Service (mental health) Agency; the county public school system; and the local Department of Social Services. Other members representing public entities, private organizations, families, and youth also may serve on a Board.

In addition to the work with LMBs, historically the Office identifies inefficiencies, duplications, and gaps in services and resources for programs and services affecting children and their families. The Office then analyzes departmental plans and budget requests; reviews federal, State, local, and private funds used by and available to the State; and identifies items in the Governor's budget that affect programs and services for children and their families. Additionally, the Office issues impact statements and makes planning and expenditure recommendations to the Governor and department heads. The Office also advises the General Assembly on the needs of youth and their families.

The Executive Director oversees the general policy for children, youth, and family services in Maryland. As head of the office and Chair of the Children's Cabinet, the Executive Director coordinates the work of government agencies to provide care through prevention, early intervention, and community-based services with priority given to children and families most at risk. The Executive Director maintains liaison with State agencies and local governments to coordinate services and the use of existing resources.ⁱ



A top-to-bottom review of GOC confirmed that the Office is structured around the components research has shown are necessary to ensure successful interagency collaboration:

- a mandate that requires both the cross-system effort and the desired outcomes (Human Services Article, COMAR, Executive Order);
- commitment by the leadership;
- dedicated staff support;
- commitment to local decision-making and authority (LMBs);
- an accountability system (Child Well-being Results and Indicators, the Results Scorecard™); and,
- neutrality.

Collaboration does not occur easily. Resistance to change within agencies can be strong and difficult to overcome. Overcoming that resistance requires strong leadership that both demonstrates and requires collaboration down through the line staff. With Governor Hogan’s leadership, GOC and the Children’s Cabinet not only demonstrate collaboration across the State Agencies (horizontally) but also in collaboration with the local jurisdictions (vertically) - which is where families and children live, where they receive services, where services are delivered, and where we will see the outcomes we are striving to achieve. Therefore, the current structure of the Children’s Cabinet, GOC, and the LMBs reflects the best research on child well-being and interagency collaboration, presenting the greatest likelihood of success.

Based upon this context, GOC established the following vision and mission:

It is GOC’s vision that ***All Maryland children, youth, and families will live and prosper in healthy, safe, and thriving communities.***

Mission: ***The Governor’s Office for Children promotes the well-being of Maryland’s children, youth, and families through data-driven policies and collective solutions.***

The guiding framework for GOC’s work is Results-based Public Policy, which is uses the desired outcome to drive the actions taken by government to address a particular issue. GOC will develop policy by starting with the desired result or outcome to be achieved, assessing current circumstances, identifying policy options with demonstrated effectiveness, and evaluating progress through data and performance measures. The framework requires consideration of the following:

1. **What result do we want?** (What condition of well-being do we want to achieve for families and children, how will we measure progress)

Vision

Mission

Guiding
Framework

2. **What do we know?** (What does the data and research tell us, what is the progress to date, what is the story behind the data)
3. **What works?** (What are the policies/strategies that work to improve the result)
4. **How can we ensure success?** (What partners do we need, what are the conditions needed for success, how will we monitor implementation)
5. **How do we sustain success?** (Financing strategies)

Based on *Trying Hard Is Not Good Enough* by Mark Friedman

GOC will use the following guiding principles and questions as the basis for all decisions and actions. The principles that guide our work are:

- **Maximize State Resources:** Invest State resources in coordinated, research-based approaches that support improved outcomes for children and families, consistent with child and public safety needs;
- **Focus on Measurable Outcomes:** Ensure system-wide technical assistance, training, coordination and accountability with identified results and indicators of success;
- **Support Local Authority:** Increase local capacity to plan, implement and monitor children and families’ services on an interagency basis; and
- **Target Funding:** Ensure the interagency budget for children and family services reflects the priorities of the Governor and the Children’s Cabinet and has the flexibility to address these priorities through the development of new funding sources and partnerships.

The questions that will steer all GOC’s efforts are simple and designed to clarify the potential for success and the role of the Office:

1. Will this policy have a measurable, positive impact on child and family well-being and on the goals we seek?
2. Is it practical, affordable, and feasible?
3. Do we have the resources to carry-out this work?
4. What role can GOC play? (Leadership, Partnership, Policy Advisor, Training/Monitoring/Tracking)

During his inaugural speech Governor Hogan declared that “Our administration will chart a new course; one guided by simple, common sense principles. Our focus will be on jobs, struggling Maryland families, and restoring our economy.”

The Governor challenged his administration and partners to recognize and support the aspirations of all families by addressing the myriad of barriers they face in reaching their dreams.

GOC is dedicated to strengthening vulnerable children and families, whose slide into poverty has worsened in recent years. With 14% of Maryland’s children living under the poverty level, and 36% of Maryland’s children living with parents

Guiding Principles



Guiding Questions

Long-term Goals and Strategic Directions

unable to find stable employmentⁱⁱ, GOC must work to develop new, creative, and effective approaches to ensuring economic opportunity for all.

Governor Hogan charged GOC and the Children’s Cabinet with four Strategic Goals, to reduce:

- The impact of Incarceration on Children, Families, and Communities;
- Disconnected Youth;
- Childhood Hunger; and
- Youth Homelessness.

GOC’s work to advance these goals will include analysis of the research and data, investigating best practices, and developing policy recommendations for the Governor and the Children’s Cabinet. Two areas of best practice that will be highlighted due to their importance in each of the four Strategic Goals are Youth Engagement and Home Visiting. For example research suggests that engagement of young people can reduce the likelihood of a youth becoming disconnectedⁱⁱⁱ, improve youth outcomes^{iv} and enhance a region’s economic resilience.^v GOC will share research and information on the value of Youth Engagement as well as effective Youth Engagement strategies.

A re-imagined GOC requires adapting both the way the Office conducts its work and relates to its partners. To advance the Governor’s vision, GOC will work with the Children’s Cabinet and the LMBs to build human capital using a two-generational strategy that will equip parents and children with the tools they need to thrive. GOC’s vertical and horizontal collaboration is designed to elicit common-sense tactics devised by committed partners that begin by building on or integrating existing approaches, using data and research for decision-making, and focusing on results.

GOC will assist the Children’s Cabinet by gathering and sharing any data or research on children at risk for or who are already disconnected, homeless, experiencing hunger or with incarcerated parents. The information may help connect the youth to resources in each of the Agencies, e.g., school breakfast and lunch (MSDE), TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) (DHR), and Behavioral Health Services or Medicaid (DHMH), as well as highlight opportunities for cross-agency services and supports. GOC will also assist the State Agencies and LMBs to augment existing effective programs. For example, maternal and early child home visiting is a two-generation approach proven to improve the maternal and child outcomes of vulnerable families. Through coordination, technical assistance and partnerships, programs can be enhanced to link disconnected young mothers with workforce development opportunities or to maximize nutritional programs to reduce childhood hunger.

Strategies/ Implementation



To support local efforts, GOC will provide technical assistance to the LMBs as they prioritize Results and Indicators, perform assessments of community needs, and conduct local resource analyses in order to create jurisdictional community plans. Funding will be provided to the LMBs through the Interagency Fund, and GOC will establish fiscal and program accountability in the implementation of the Community Partnership Agreements. The transition to results-based funding that is focused on the four Strategic Goals will present significant challenges in both the near and long-term future, particularly for local partners for whom this will include new activities.

GOC will phase-in the new approach over the next four fiscal years, providing technical assistance and incentives so limited resources are maximized to ensure vulnerable children and families become more economically stable and successful. This phased approach will include:

Phase One - FY16:

- Provide intensive technical assistance and training to LMBs in areas that include board development, addressing poverty, cultural competence, the four Strategic Goals, how families and young people can be engaged as partners in the discussions on the development of quality services by the LMBs, and building on existing effective tactics such as Home Visiting.
- Implement use of the Results Scorecard™ web-based application for accountability.
- Conduct onsite monitoring of LMBs on fiduciary responsibilities.
- Develop a new grant application process for LMBs that includes a focus on the four Strategic Goals and accountability.
- Transition two programs to operational agencies that were piloted at GOC and demonstrated success:
 1. Leadership of the Childhood Hunger program activities will reside with MSDE and DHR; and
 2. The Care Management Entity (CME) program will reside in DHMH (including \$2.8 million to support services) as DHMH integrates the CME with two other case management programs for the same population. This will streamline services to families and create efficiencies in funding.
- Reprogram a percentage of the funding currently used for the CME program to support planning, data collection, and needs assessments by the LMBs related to the four Strategic Goals.
- Eliminate unnecessary, obsolete or defunct boards, commissions, and office functions.
- Discontinue the State Children, Youth, and Family Information System (SCYFIS) database due to the system's outdated programming, the reliance on older versions of Internet Explorer, and its inability to capture the information the State needs to speak to the well-being of children in its care. This action will save the state millions in redevelopment, hosting,

maintenance, and staff support costs. A small portion of the savings will be used to support technical assistance for LMBs.

- Radically reduce a University contract, which will free up resources for more effective technical assistance and training approaches for LMBs.
- Establish partnerships with philanthropic organizations to generate resources and develop new financing approaches to support the LMB services and programs in the four Strategic Goals.
- Conduct outreach to LMBs through regional visits to share information about the Governor’s Strategic Goals and learn about the work of each LMB in the state.

Phase Two - FY17:

- Continue local visits, intensive technical assistance, onsite monitoring and implementation of Results Scorecard™ with the LMBs. (through FY19)
- Issue the new application process for LMB funding to include:
 1. Level funding for the LMB base allocation and administration (with flexibility built-in for local priorities as LMBs convert funding from old programs to new ones).
 2. Flexibility for LMB to determine funding needed for administration, up to 30% of the allocation.
 3. New funding for the four Strategic Goals.
- The new funding will be reprogrammed from CME resources (based on FY16 CME budget), minus transition funding (\$2 million) to DHMH to support year-two services during integration.
- Eliminate the contract with the University in favor of more effective training resources.

Phase Three - FY18:

- Issue the LMB grant application process for:
 1. A single pool of funding for administration and services (based on the FY17 allocation) with LMB flexibility to determine administration, up to 30% of the funding.
 2. Additional new funding to support the four Strategic Goals that will be available competitively to LMBs based upon the results achieved in FY16 and FY17.
- New funding will come from the total CME resources (based on FY16 CME budget) reprogrammed to support the Governor’s four Strategic Goals.

Phase Four - FY19:

- Issue the LMB grant application process for a single pool of funding. The total award to an LMB will be focused on the four Strategic Goals and based upon results achieved in FYs 16-18.

Specific data will be used to determine whether the strategies by the LMBs and the Children’s Cabinet are making a difference in the lives of Maryland’s families. Maryland’s Results for Child Well-Being articulate the desired outcomes the

**Indicators of
Success**

Children’s Cabinet and the GOC work to achieve, and our progress is measured by the corresponding indicators.

Results are the fundamental desires of a community for itself that are matters of common sense ... that everyone, in every part of our community, no matter their occupation, political affiliation or belief system can stand behind and support. No one state agency or program is solely responsible for a result. By definition, they cross over agency and program lines and are impacted by every segment of our community. In order to assess how well we are progressing towards a particular result, a set of indicators has been selected. An indicator is a measure, for which there is data that helps to quantify the achievement of a desired result.^{vi}



The focus on results helps build consensus, mobilizes public support for change, and allows us to use progress to lead to more progress. **The following data points represent a sample of the Results and Indicators collected each year in Maryland’s Results for Child Well-Being report:**

 Babies Born Healthy		
Indicator	Definition	Five Year Trend
Infant Mortality	The number of deaths occurring to infants under one year of age per 1,000 live births.	↓
Births to Adolescents	The rate of births to adolescent females ages 15 through 19 years, per 1,000 of the population.	↓

 Healthy Children		
Indicator	Definition	Five Year Trend
Health Insurance Coverage	The percent of children who have health insurance coverage	↑

 **Youth will Complete School**

Indicator	Definition	Five Year Trend
Program Completion	The percent of high school graduates who successfully completed the minimum course requirements needed to enter the University System of Maryland, to complete an approved Career and Technology Education program, or who completed requirements for both.	
University of MD		↗
Career & Technology		↘
Both		↗
Total		↘
Educational Attainment	The percent of young adults 18 to 24 years old who have attained a high school diploma, associate's degree, or higher degree.	
Less than high school		↘
High school		↘
Some college or Associate's		↗
Bachelor's		↘

 **Youth have Opportunities for Employment or Career Readiness**

Indicator	Definition	Five Year Trend
Youth Employment	The percentage of young adults ages 16 through 24 who are in the labor force	↘



Families are Safe and Economically Stable

Indicator	Definition	Five Year Trend
Hunger	The percentage of families who are food-insecure because of the lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members; limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods.	↗
Homelessness	The percentage of children enrolled in the public school system that lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence or who are awaiting foster-care placement.	↗
Child Poverty	The percent of children under 18 whose family income is equal to or below the federal poverty threshold.	↗

Government policies and funding streams have an enormous impact on the well-being of citizens and no single financing approach will support the change required to achieve ambitious goals for improving children’s lives. The best results are accomplished with financing packages that draw from a wide array of resources, such as grants from foundations that provide seed money for shifting investments. As we reallocate resources to support Governor Hogan’s vision, GOC will ask:

- How can we invest in proven interventions?
- Have we maximized federal funds?
- Can we leverage private funding?
- Have we maximized State resources by coordinating funding in different agencies and departments?
- What evidence do we have that shows this is a good investment of State general revenue?

Fiscally-responsible approaches are those that are accountable to taxpayers and focus on spending existing funds in more effective ways. To that end, GOC will work to ensure that Children’s Cabinet funds are invested only in those programs or services that achieve measurable results. GOC will also assist LMBs

Financing

in diversifying funding sources. Finally, GOC will work to engage the philanthropic and business communities in advancing Governor Hogan’s vision.

GOC is committed to working with a wide-array of partners who are determined to work together to “change Maryland for the better,” based upon a shared purpose, with defined outcomes and objectives. The range of partners includes the Children’s Cabinet, individual State Agencies, the Legislature, the LMBs, nonprofits, foundations, the business community, the faith community, families and others who are determined to realize new and better conditions for children, families and their communities.

As part of implementing this plan, GOC will expand outreach through a dynamic listening and feedback process to share and learn about best practices and emerging ideas. The best answers to critical policy questions come from mobilizing the unique and brilliant ideas of all potential partners. So, GOC will overhaul all communications tools (website, social media, newsletter, mailing database, etc.) to both share our activities and engage stakeholders to learn from them. The strategic shift will be to purposefully and aggressively move to a more outwardly-facing and engaging communication approach.

Partners



Outreach and Communications

ⁱ Adapted from the Maryland Manual- <http://msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/08conoff/coord/children/html/07chf.html> and <http://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc2900/sc2908/000001/000186/html/am186--147.html>

ⁱⁱ 2015 Maryland KidsCount Profile, www.aecf.org

ⁱⁱⁱ Opportunity Nation (2014). Connecting Youth and Strengthening Communities: The Data Behind Civic Engagement and Economic Opportunity.

^{iv} Peter Z. Scholet, “National Job Corps Study: The Short Term Impacts of Job Corps on Participants’ Employment and Related Outcomes.” U.S. Department of Labor. February 9, 2000.

^v National Conference on Citizenship (2012). Civic Health and Unemployment II: The Case Builds.

^{vi} Kids Count Factbook, by The Maryland KIDS COUNT Partnership, The Baltimore City Data Collaborative The Safe and Sound Campaign, and The Family League of Baltimore City