

**MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF DISABILITIES
AGENCY RESPONSE
FISCAL YEAR 2019 OPERATING BUDGET HEARINGS**

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE
HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
Delegate Kirill Reznik, Chair
Delegate Theodore Sophocleus, Vice Chair
February 21, 2018**

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE
SENATE BUDGET & TAXATION COMMITTEE
Senator Richard S. Madaleno, Jr., Chair
February 22, 2018**

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee today as you review the proposed budget for the Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) for FY 2019. We would like to thank our assigned DLS analyst, Ms. Anne Wagner, for her thorough analysis and are pleased with the recommendation to concur with the Governor's allowance.

Recommended Actions

1. Concur with the Governor's Allowance.

We respectfully support this recommended action.

Discussion

1. The Secretary should provide an update on ongoing Access Maryland construction projects and new projects beginning in fiscal 2019.

There is ongoing activity on Access Maryland projects as far back as the FY15 funding round. A summary of projects for FY15-FY18 is as follows:

- FY15 - Twelve projects were awarded in for a total of \$1.6 million. Nine are completed or near completion, three are entering the construction phase and two are ineligible because of non-activity.
- FY16 – Eleven projects were awarded for a total of \$1.6 million. Six are in the construction phase, four are in the design phase and one is ineligible because of non-activity.
- FY17 - Eight projects were awarded in for a total of \$750,000. Four are in the construction phase, one is in the design phase and there has been no activity on three of the projects.
- FY18 – Eight Projects were awarded for a total of \$750,000. Those funds will be made available at the conclusion of the 2018 Regular Session. As a result, there has been no activity on these projects.

MDOD received applications from five institutions of higher learning and three state agencies in the FY19 application round. We postponed any award decisions until we determine the amount of surplus funding from previous fiscal years that will be available for new projects. As of January, 2018, the unencumbered amounts for fiscal years FY15-17 were \$1.4 million, \$517,000 and \$675,000 respectively.

2. The Secretary should: A) comment on whether the department will offer PROMISE services again in the future, and B) provide any preliminary findings on the effectiveness of the PROMISE grant program.

A) PROMISE is a federally funded demonstration research grant with a 9 year national longitudinal study being conducted by Mathematica to conclude in 2022. The services and/or required interventions were made possible through a significant federal investment. While participation in the grant does not make it possible to sustain these services at their current level, we are putting in place plans to use the experience we have gained under PROMISE to improve our State service delivery system.

Activities already underway, include:

- Partnering with the Maryland State Department of Education/Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) to develop an online tool, based on one used by PROMISE staff, as a means to bridge the gaps that occur as youth transition out of high school;

- Working with the University Of Maryland Department Of Counseling, Higher Education & Special Education, to create the Center on Data Driven Policy and Employment. The Center will serve as a repository for all of the State data collected through PROMISE that will be used to establish best practices and improve service coordination among State agencies; and
- Conducting close-out activities designed to provide ongoing connections for transitioning youth and their families. These include maintaining the PROMISE website, establishing a customer service line to serve as an ongoing resource portal to participating youth and stakeholders, and hosting a close-out event that will include training sessions for parents and youth on topics such as self-advocacy and identifying transition resources.

MDOD's participation in PROMISE has helped us develop a national profile as a leader in this arena. We will continue to ensure we are well positioned to attract and secure grant and research funds for the purpose of improving State level transition services.

B) MDOD's primary focus since the beginning of the PROMISE research grant has been on engaging as many youth as possible in as many of the core interventions as possible. The No cost extension year combined with Mathematica's longitudinal study will allow us an opportunity to analyze the data and lessons learned which will then be used to effect state level system change. Mathematica has not informed us when they will release their preliminary findings but we will make those available to the sub-committee when we receive them. Today's written testimony includes a document highlighting the effectiveness of our engagement efforts under the MD PROMISE program.

MDOD's participation in PROMISE has also highlighted several areas for systems improvement which are summarized as follows:

- 1) There is a need for more local schools to be aware of the services available through America's Job Centers, since many youth with Individual Education Plans (IEP's) are not likely to be eligible for DORS or MD Developmental Disabilities Administration services on the basis of disability; and
- 2) Youth with disabilities receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) can, for a variety of reasons, not be eligible for IEP's and, as a result, miss out on any sort of transition services. These youth often have non-obvious disabilities and do not qualify at age 18 for adult SSI. There is need to better connect these youth with the federal 301 Plan that allows youth to continue to receive their SSI benefit while they are engaged in post-secondary education or training.

MDOD will continue to work with our State partners to raise awareness of available resources in these two areas.