

**MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF DISABILITIES
AGENCY RESPONSE
FISCAL YEAR 2020 OPERATING BUDGET HEARINGS**

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE
HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
Delegate Kirill Reznik, Chair
Delegate Geraldine Valentino-Smith, Vice Chair
February 06, 2019**

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE
SENATE BUDGET & TAXATION COMMITTEE
Senator Guy Guzzone, Chair
February 22, 2019**

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 2020. 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 describe the housing programs that are listed in the Housing Registry and discuss the steps that are being taken to increase available and accessible affordable housing.

The Housing Registry includes individuals on the waitlists for the Section 811 Project Rental Assistance program, Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Affordable Rental Housing Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities Initiative, and the Money Follows the Person Bridge Subsidy program.

The **Section 811 Project Rental Assistance Program** makes a home in the community accessible and affordable for people with disabilities with low income. This is a "project-based" rental assistance program. The tenant pays 30% of their income for rent and utilities, and the program pays the rest of the rent directly to the landlord.

The **Affordable Rental Housing Opportunities Initiative for Persons with Disabilities** is the result of a partnership between The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation and the State of Maryland created to provide affordable rental housing options for persons with disabilities. Designed to build upon the strengths of the Foundation and the State's Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program (LIHTC), this initiative seeks to increase accessible, affordable, and independent housing opportunities in the community.

The **Maryland Money Follows the Person (MFP) Bridge Subsidy Program** provides a State-funded rent subsidy for up to three (3) years to eligible individuals. Participants transition to a Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) or public housing at the end of the MFP Bridge Subsidy term.

MDOD is in the process of adding the **Community Choice Homes (CCH) Program** to this database. CCH is a new program that provides affordable rental homes in Montgomery County for people with disabilities who have extremely low income.

For the upcoming fiscal year, the Department plans to:

- Increase the number of accessible units available to individuals on the waitlist by requesting an additional grant from Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation and working with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to apply for additional Sec 811 funds when HUD makes them available;
- Work with DHCD to ensure that the Qualified Allocation Plan provides a balanced approach for encouraging the development of housing for all special needs populations including people with disabilities;
- Enhance outreach and education to the ID/DD community, including families and case workers, with the goal of ensuring people who are placed on the Registry are interested in and prepared for independent renting when they are contacted about an available unit;
- Partner with the Maryland Department of Health to maximize Medicaid reimbursement for housing related activities based on recent guidance from CMS; and

- Work with Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) to provide ongoing case management for housing program tenants with behavioral health needs and/or access to peer support and other similar services, and (2) finalize a policy/procedure for how State Psychiatric Hospital residents can access the Section 811 waitlist.

2. MDOD should comment on whether it refers individual with disabilities to participate in employment services and programs.

The Maryland Department of Disabilities refers individuals with disabilities to the wide array of employment services available, including the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) based on their needs. MDOD is aware of the capacity issues being experienced by DORS, and is developing an analysis with recommendations. Because not all individuals with disabilities are eligible for DORS, MDOD, for many years, has been referring individuals with disabilities to their local America’s Job Centers as well as the MD Behavioral Health Administration and the Developmental Disabilities Administration. The PROMISE youth who were not eligible for DORS were connected to their local AJCs and MDOD is working closely with DLLR to improve the capacity of AJCs to serve job seekers with disabilities.

3. The Secretary should provide an update on PROMISE grant activities since the implementation stage has ended and if there are any plans to offer the intervention services again.

MD PROMISE Update

Of the 2006 individuals enrolled in MD PROMISE, 1010 were randomly assigned to receive Usual Services, while 997 received the Enhanced Services.

The core interventions and final engagement rates for youth are:

88% completed three or more of the interventions with 59% completing all 6.

Family Plan	94%
Positive Personal Profile	87%
Individual Job Development Plan	87%
Work Experience	81%
Paid Work	73%
Benefits Assessment	81%
Financial Education*	52%

*Financial education was not a core fidelity point but was expanded as a result of demand from families.

Systems Change and Sustainability

As a result of the Workforce Investment Opportunities Act, WIOA, Pre-Employment Transition Services are now available via DORS to any youth with a disability, which offers similar interventions, although not at the same intensity and lacking the staffing to ensure engagement

and resources to address the broader issues experienced by families in poverty. However, MDOD has undertaken a number of steps to build capacity and sustainability of many aspects of PROMISE throughout the existing system. All activities listed below are active through September 30, 2019.

The partners include:

University of Maryland College Park: To support creation of a Center for Transition and Career Innovation, building off of existing resources and subject matter experts and enhancing Maryland's competitiveness for future federal grants. Data from MD PROMISE will be housed at the Center to allow for further study and analysis. In addition, the Center will create an online training curriculum based on key planning tools used under PROMISE for educators, providers and others working with youth to enhance their ability to provide paid and unpaid work experiences, a series of webinars, research briefs, manuscripts as well as provision of technical assistance.

DLLR: To provide financial education training, one of the PROMISE interventions, to staff at America's Job Centers in alignment with one of the WIOA Benchmarks. In addition paying for Global Career Development Facilitator certification for a co-hort of AJC staff with additional training specific to serving youth with disabilities, as well as Motivational interviewing training. Local staff will also have access to the full array of training resources being developed by the Center at UMD-CP as well as access to the Transition Tracker in development.

DORS: To develop an online Transition Tracker tool, in partnership with MSDE and UMCP, that will allow sharing, with parental consent, information between schools and adult agency partners regarding student's paid and unpaid experiences, and ensuring linkage to DORS, AJCs and DDA. Development of an analysis that looks at DORS capacity issues in order to improve access to services. DORS staff and providers will also have access to the full array of training resources.

MSDE: To develop an online Transition Tracker tool, , which all local school systems will be required to use to improve transition services and to assist in connecting youth and families to post school services and to add a staff person skilled in Employment to provide technical assistance to local school systems. MSDE and local staff will also have access to the full array of training resources being developed by the Center at UMD-CP.

DHS: In partnership with Allegany County government and local Social Services, to pilot provision of PROMISE interventions to align with 2GEN goals, for youth on SSI in Kinship and Foster Care, to improve their educational and employment outcomes. Federal changes to Title IV would support sustainability and replication when PROMISE funds. MDOD and DHS are also exploring ways for benefits counseling to be provided to encourage individuals on SSI to pursue employment.

DDA and BHA: Access to the full array of training resources being developed by the Center at UMD-CP for staff and providers as well access for state agencies to the Transition Tracker in development.

Parent's Place: To develop a training curriculum for parents and youth with non-obvious disabilities to increase Parent's Place capacity to service a broader constituency of families.

Website: Transitioning the MD PROMISE website to www.mdtransitions.org with resources and information for youth, family, educators and professionals. Included on the website are a series of video and fact sheets.

In addition to the activities noted above, PROMISE is submitting proposals to present on findings and lessons learned at conferences through September, engaging in collaborative research across the six (6) PROMISE sites, and pursuing several additional systems change activities where program funds may be utilized for the timeframe July-September 2019. As the long term outcomes and additional analysis become available, MDOD will determine if additional steps should be taken to enhance services to align with those interventions that proved the most successful in increasing employment outcomes.