

**Governor's Office for Children
Fiscal Year 2027 Operating Budget
Response to Department of Legislative Services Analysis**

Carmel Martin, Special Secretary

House Appropriations Committee
Education and Economic Development Subcommittee
Delegate Stephanie Smith, Chair
Delegate Sarah Wolek, Vice Chair
February 4, 2026

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Education, Business and Administration Subcommittee
Senator Nancy King, Chair
February 5, 2026

Introduction: Overview of the Governor's Office for Children

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee in support of the proposed operating budget for the Governor's Office for Children (GOC) for fiscal year 2027. We thank our assigned DLS analyst Ms. Madelyn Miller, for her thoughtful and thorough analysis. Two years ago, the GOC was reestablished by Executive Order 01.01.2024.05 and codified through Chapters 408 and 735 of 2024. The GOC was established as the centralized hub of Maryland's efforts to improve the well-being of all children and is the coordinating entity tasked with carrying out the #1 Goal in the Maryland State Plan established by the Moore-Miller administration – ending child poverty in the State of Maryland.

To strive towards the State's goals of supporting the well-being of children and families and reducing childhood poverty, the office administers grant programs designed to support children's well-being, chairs and manages the Governor's Children's Cabinet, and supports the development of a state-wide policy agenda designed to combat child poverty and drive economic mobility.

GOC Highlights and Overview of Accomplishments

Critical to the work of the GOC is the office's role as a "force multiplier". Rather than building another independent department, GOC is designed to build and enhance cross-agency partnerships, initiatives and programs to employ the full resources of the Moore-Miller administration to support neighborhoods that have experienced historic disinvestment. Over the last year, the GOC has worked to break down barriers and enhance coordination in state government to make sure that the approximately \$7 billion in annual spending on programs that combat childhood poverty is allocated effectively, efficiently, and reaches the communities who need it most. This work has resulted in a more effective use of State resources AND more Marylanders being served by the State's programs. Highlights include:

- Increasing Marylanders' access to benefits through cross-agency initiatives



- Expanding and improving the delivery of state programs and resources into Community Schools
- Leveraging additional state and philanthropic dollars to generate sustainable investment opportunities in high-poverty communities

ENOUGH Initiative Programming

FY25 marked the first full year of the ENOUGH Initiative – a pioneering grant program that aims to reduce the number of children living in poverty through targeted grants to communities with high concentrated rates of childhood poverty. In the first year of ENOUGH, Marylanders have seen and felt the impact of the Initiative's work. Using grant funding, recipient communities have **gathered partners and engaged community residents** – strengthening communities' abilities to meet pressing needs; they have **administered evidence-based programs that are successfully serving children and families** and addressing the root causes of child poverty; and already, **the program is showing early progress in its ability to maximize the impact of state dollars by sending additional, sustainable sources of capital to high-poverty communities.**

To ensure the program remains rooted in addressing child poverty and increasing economic mobility, ENOUGH's program activities and measured outcomes are focused on three pillars: **1) High Quality Child Care and Education; 2) Healthy and Economically Secure Families; and 3) Safe and Thriving Communities.**

The ENOUGH program also consists of a separate funding stream, the ENOUGH Capacity-Building Grant. This grant supports Maryland's Local Management Boards (LMBs) in leveraging their local infrastructure to support high-poverty (ENOUGH) communities and to extend the reach of the ENOUGH program to counties who may not be eligible for the ENOUGH grant program, ensuring that ENOUGH resources reach every jurisdiction in the state.

Key successes of ENOUGH in its first full year include:

Building Partnerships: 28 ENOUGH Communities have built over **550 sustainable community-led, cross-sector partnerships** across the state, including health care institutions, K-12 Community Schools, major employers, small businesses, and community and faith-based organizations

Number of Organizations in the ENOUGH Partnership Network: 558	Average Number of Partners per Community: 21	Number of K-12 School ENOUGH Partners: 154	Number of Partners in formal MOU Agreements: 307
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Engaging Marylanders: ENOUGH grantees have established deep levels of community engagement, holding **1,314 community events and engaging over 12,000 Maryland community residents in ENOUGH activities and programs.**

Launching Programs: ENOUGH Implementation grantees have launched **81 evidence-led programs to increase access to good jobs, good schools, quality health care, and safe neighborhoods.** Highlights of programs in Year One include:

- **112 youth receiving mentorship** from trained adults in Park Heights
- **54 families receiving housing stabilization services** in Hagerstown
- **148 students receiving intensive math tutoring** in Cherry Hill

The completion of these activities has led to a tangible impact on Marylanders' lives. One year into the Initiative, programs implemented by ENOUGH grantees and funded by the ENOUGH Grant program are making a difference:

→ **From a single mother of two children in Hagerstown who faced eviction from public housing. Working with an ENOUGH-funded housing and job counseling program, she received employment and was able to stay in her home:** *"I'm so thankful for the ENOUGH program, the assistance it provided and the immense relief for my housing worries while I was looking for a job."*

→ **From a mother in Park Heights, Baltimore enrolled in the ENOUGH-funded Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters Program (HIPPY) program, a home-visiting program that equips parents with tools to prepare preschool-aged children for academic success:** *"I enrolled in HIPPY to get additional help for my disabled, non-verbal son. Now, thanks to HIPPY, he's talking and is doing extremely well. With the ENOUGH program, HIPPY will help even more families AND it's been able to offer my family additional support that we desperately needed."*

→ **From a college student in Hagerstown who is now studying sociology and playing football after a "Cash N' Dreams" Scholarship, which provided him with hands-on academic and financial coaching, as well as athletic training. The program is now funded by ENOUGH grant dollars:** *"I probably wouldn't be where I am now without Cash 'N Dreams. It was really a blessing. The people I met at Cash 'N Dreams really care about what I'm doing. They helped me get to this point."*

ENOUGH consists of three distinct program pathways for grantees: Partnership Development, Plan Development, and Implementation. Upon successful completion of the activities in their assigned pathway, grantees may apply for subsequent (higher level) pathways in future funding cycles. The activities in each pathway are designed to support communities over time to build and strengthen their capacity to lead and sustain impactful programs.



A key benchmark of success for the ENOUGH Initiative in Year One is the number of communities that have successfully implemented the ENOUGH theory of action and demonstrated readiness to “move up” to the next pathway in the program. **15 Plan and Partnership Development grantees will be progressing to the next pathway of the ENOUGH program.** Remaining grantees applied for “bridge” grants to continue to build their partnerships and plans over the next year of the program.

In Year Two of the program, an additional six communities will be moving from Plan Development to implementing their Neighborhood Action Plans – up from only three in year one. For example, one of these communities, the Latin American Youth Center (Adelphi, East Riverdale, and Beltsville) will launch a completed plan to **serve over 2,200 youth, adults, and families in the next 11 months.**

Of the \$13,119,900 dedicated to 27 ENOUGH grantees in the first year of the program, by December 30, 2025, \$10,906,234, or 83 percent, has been completely expended by communities. This amount indicates that **communities are on track to completely spend down funds by the end of the award period for Plan and Partnership Development grantees** on June 30, 2026. The three ENOUGH Implementation grantees, whose award period was finalized at the end of 2025, **have expended over 98 percent of their grant funds by the end of the award period.**

This successful spending of funds by communities in just the first year of the program is indicative of strong community participation, understanding of budgetary requirements, and proven ability to quickly mobilize resources in line with the program’s associated activities.

The ENOUGH Initiative is not designed to duplicate existing services. Over the past year, the ENOUGH Initiative has also demonstrated a proven ability to **increase service-providing capacity of the State’s existing investments in fighting child-poverty – most notably, in Maryland’s Community Schools.**

As a requirement for participation in the ENOUGH program, grantees are required to forge partnerships with at least one Community School. These partnerships have resulted in communities and schools identifying and filling gaps in services, leading to more effective implementation of the Community Schools model.

In one example of this, Child First Authority (CFA), an ENOUGH grantee heard from parents in community schools that transportation was a major cause of chronic absenteeism. CFA identified that one community partner had access to three fleet vehicles – unused in the hours of school drop-off. **Because of coordination enabled through ENOUGH, the coalition will now provide morning transportation for over 100 students from a high-need area.**

Across communities, partnerships built by ENOUGH are resulting in powerful collaboration that would not otherwise exist without these grant dollars to support them. Actors are working



together across sectors and issue areas, often for the first time. The impact of this collaboration is tangible:

- **For Example**, Central Baltimore Partnership, an ENOUGH grantee, is traditionally a community development organization. Using ENOUGH grant funding, they formed partnerships and held regular meetings with local principals and childcare providers to form a plan on how to increase childcare access. Now, as a result, they will soon launch a childcare implementation strategy that meets the needs of local families.

Taking an All-of-Government approach to addressing child poverty: The ENOUGH program identifies and helps ENOUGH communities access additional resources from public and private sources. This strategy is both maximizing the State's investment in the highest-poverty communities (tripling the State's initial investment in the ENOUGH grant program) and helping generate the sustained investments needed to truly transform neighborhoods where poverty has gone uninterrupted.

Through additional State and philanthropic support, Maryland has seen a 3:1 return on investment of the state dollars initially invested in the ENOUGH grant program.

Over the past year, GOC staff have conducted robust inter-agency coordination to bridge the gap between state agencies and ENOUGH communities. State agencies have supported ENOUGH communities with technical assistance and prioritized them in grants and programs where possible.

State government agencies offered priority status to ENOUGH communities in 24 grants across nine agencies in FY25 and committed to provide application support to ENOUGH grantees, reducing barriers for historically disinvested communities to tap into state resources. ENOUGH grantees were awarded 67 state agency grants for a total of **over \$23 million in awards**. Several ENOUGH grantees successfully received state dollars for the first time, demonstrating how ENOUGH provides a direct pathway for State agencies to reach communities with the highest rates of concentrated poverty.

This work drives significant investment in historically underserved communities, oftentimes bringing much-needed capital to communities who have historically lacked the infrastructure and resources to competitively solicit state dollars. For example, Dwyer Workforce Development, a nonprofit organization, worked with ENOUGH grantees and partners in Cherry Hill to apply for and receive an EARN Maryland award, granted by the Maryland Department of Labor (MDL). To streamline awareness, GOC facilitated small group office hours between the Maryland Department of Labor and ENOUGH grantees. The Cherry Hill community will now receive funding to address workforce needs by creating formal career paths to good jobs and sustaining or growing middle class jobs.



Complementing additional State support to ENOUGH communities, to date, private philanthropic partners have invested over \$106 million in programs that will impact ENOUGH communities and address poverty across the state of Maryland through the **ENOUGH Alliance** – a coalition of local and national philanthropy and private sector organizations dedicated to investing in children and families to end child poverty and boost economic mobility in Maryland.

Notable examples of how philanthropies are supporting ENOUGH communities include:

- **Building New Affordable Housing:** In 2025, the Weinberg Foundation committed \$4,625,000 to four affordable housing and mixed use projects located within Park Heights, Baltimore City. These commitments will enable the development of over **193 affordable rental units and 5 retail/commercial units within the next several years.**
- **Building a New Child Care Facility:** Using ENOUGH grant funding, San Mar Family and Community Services, was able to source a location and license for an additional child care center. However, there was a small funding gap for renovations that prevented the center from opening. To fill this need, the Bainum Family Foundation committed \$100,000 in funding enabling the completion of a new child care center and **increasing the community's child care capacity by 46 spots.**
- **Expanding high-dosage tutoring:** Due to a \$1.5M philanthropic investment from Blue Meridian Partners, **more than 350 students in Cherry Hill and Park Heights are receiving 1:1 tutoring** with the goal of improving middle school math scores.
- **Communities in Schools:** In 2025, Blue Meridian Partners invested in Communities in Schools to support statewide implementation of evidence-based community schools models. Communities in Schools is providing technical assistance and training to community school coordinators across the State and deep assistance to several school districts with ENOUGH communities.

Local Management Boards

- In FY26 Local Management Boards funded 121 programs and initiatives through CCIF funding.
 - (29) new programs and initiatives and (92) continuing programs propelling anti-poverty efforts, expanding services, and creating resource rich communities
- LMBs in nine jurisdictions allocated a total of \$351,000 for the expansion of Big Brothers, Big Sisters – a community-based mentoring model with strong evidence showing improved outcomes for youth. This partnership between the Department of Juvenile Services, Governor's Office for Children, and Arnold Ventures will **triple the investment in this program and expand its reach to an additional 1,000 youth across the state** over a 4-year period.
- Additionally, through the ENOUGH Program, LMBs deployed \$5 million in capacity building efforts to support organizations, communities and families in communities experiencing concentrated poverty across all 24 Maryland counties and Baltimore City. The LMB ENOUGH Capacity Building program included efforts spanning neighborhood



action planning, enhancing after school programming, forming parent and youth action groups and more.

Children's Cabinet and Policy Initiatives

In its second year, the Children's Cabinet has continued to work to develop and coordinate cross-agency strategies to support children and families and reduce the number of children living in poverty. This work has successfully supported the Moore-Miller Administration in achieving its maximum impact by breaking down silos and targeting resources to those with the greatest needs.

In December, GOC submitted, on behalf of the Children's Cabinet, 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 driving progress toward our north star of reducing child poverty and increasing economic mobility. This work has taken new urgency in recent months as actions and policies at the federal level threaten the well-being and prosperity of Marylanders. As articulated in the strategic plan, we are aiming to make Maryland a state where we are: providing high-quality child care and education; nurturing healthy and economically secure families; and creating safe and thriving communities.

In 2025, the full Children's Cabinet convened **seven times** and led four subcommittees focusing on child care and education, access to benefits, children with complex needs, and ENOUGH as an 'all-of-government' approach.

Examples of policy initiatives supported by and/or launched under the Children's Cabinet over the last year include:

- Developing a 'Fiscal Map', in partnership with the Children's Funding Project, to aid government and communities in breaking down silos and provide community leaders with the information they need to implement solutions and create lasting change. The map documents over **534** federal, state and county level funding sources totaling over **\$78 billion** invested in services and programs for children and youth in Maryland (over fiscal year 2019 - fiscal year 2023);
- Expanding the 'Earned It' campaign, co-led by the GOC and the Maryland Comptroller's Office, to **increase awareness and uptake of the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit**. With the support of Children's Cabinet agencies, the GOC has grown participation in the campaign from 5 agencies in 2025 to 13 agencies in 2026— DHCD, DHS, DSCI, Maryland Benefits (DoIT), MD Labor, MDH, MDOD, MHEC, and MSDE along with DVMF, MDOA, and MDOT.
- Supporting the launch of the Maryland Benefits One Application, **making it easier for Marylanders to apply for benefits** like Medicaid, SNAP, Temporary Cash Assistance, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) programming, and energy assistance in a single application from a computer or smartphone;
- Matching eight state agencies with local education agencies (LEAs) across 10 counties through the Community Schools Delivery Program, where they are **expanding and improving the delivery of state programs and resources into Community Schools**, assisting students and families with services such as stable housing support, enrollment in benefits, helping schools set up health centers, providing mental health resources, and workforce and job training to parents. Lessons learned from this pilot are informing a



statewide partnership between MSDE and LEAs regarding effective community school implementation;

- Providing **critical emergency rental assistance** to student households enrolled in community schools who are experiencing housing instability and homelessness through the Community Schools Rental Assistance Program (CS RAP) housed at DHCD;
- Strengthening the pipeline of qualified educators, including early childhood educators, by establishing paid apprenticeship programs that enable educational support staff and community members to pursue teacher preparation opportunities that might otherwise be out of reach;
- Tackling Maryland's racial wealth gap through a **“Work, Wages, and Wealth” strategy** focused on building community wealth, asset accumulation, building savings, and debt reduction;
- Launching a \$2.5M Maryland Community Investment Venture Fund (MCIV) to enhance access to capital, funding, and financial services for small business owners in low-to-moderate-income communities as part of the 2023 Access to Banking Act through a partnership between MD Labor's Office of Financial Regulation (OFR) and the Governor's Innovation Team;
- Announcing the Just Communities Initiative under DHCD, which designates 419 census tracts in Maryland that have been disproportionately impacted by historic disinvestment and discriminatory policies and actions, as well as prioritizes them for state funding;
- Launching funding programs and the Maryland Community Business Compass, a neighborhood development platform designed to support essential small businesses, starting with child care providers and fresh food entrepreneurs in a partnership between the Governor's Innovation Team, MD Labor OFR, Commerce, and DHCD.
- Exploring interagency strategies to address the biggest challenges facing young men and boys in Maryland, including strategies that strengthen mental and physical health, promote family and community engagement, and improve readiness to compete in a dynamic economy.
- Supporting MSDE's deployment of Grow Your Own programs (\$19M in new grant funds) so that we can address the teacher shortage and increase diversity of the workforce, with a focus on increasing male educators.

Maryland Youth Advisory Council (MYAC)

Last year, MYAC incorporated the Moore-Miller Administration's ENOUGH Theory of Action into all council operations and community initiatives. For example, the Council enhanced their Youth Grant Opportunities Initiative—an open call for Maryland youth-led organizations to receive small grant funds (\$1000)—by aligning and prioritizing communities with the highest concentration of poverty - 3/5 grants served communities with 20%+ childhood poverty.

In addition, the Council co-led Youth Advocacy Day, in partnership with the Maryland Out-of-School Time Network (MOST), virtually training over 100 young people on civic engagement strategies and understanding the MD General Assembly. The success of this program led to partnership with the University of Maryland's Civic Engagement Center to provide statewide youth advocacy trainings.



Agency Responses

BALTIMORE CHILDREN AND YOUTH FUND

Page 7: As the funds are no longer mandated and in light of the State's fiscal condition, the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) recommends deleting the \$2.0 million general fund appropriation for the Baltimore City Children and Youth Fund grant.

Agency Response: GOC respectfully disagrees.

The Baltimore Children and Youth Fund (BCYF) was created to fill an urgent need to support programs for Baltimore's young people. Baltimore City has the largest proportion of Maryland children living in poverty at 19.1%, representing more than 30,000 children. BCYF remains a critical pillar to the GOC's work to address and tackle childhood poverty. The impacts of this funding have been tangible and its purpose remains relevant and necessary.

BCYF was established by the Baltimore City Council in late 2016, in response to the unrest in Baltimore following the death of Freddie Gray while in police custody, an event that further illuminated the disparities in public funding in Black communities and the need to fund programs that uplift children and youth. The state-funded Baltimore Children and Youth Fund was established by the General Assembly in 2019 with the purpose of ensuring Baltimore's children and youth are healthy, are ready to learn and succeed in school, and live in stable, safe, and supportive families and communities.

This funding continues to address the critical needs of Baltimore City children and families by layering additional services and financial support to existing programs, ensuring a holistic approach to serving families.

The results of this fund have a demonstrated ability to make an impact:

- In fiscal year 2025, BCYF funding offered an innovative enhancement to current home visiting programming including Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY), Healthy Families America (HFA), Healthy Start, and HFA HOPE, by providing partners with the opportunity to support participants' housing-related needs with housing stipends. As a result, 356 new participants were enrolled in the housing support program, 47 percent of participants who were unstably housed when they received their first housing stipend were *stably housed* after 90 days, and 90 percent of participants who were stably housed when they received their first housing stipend *remained* stably housed after 90 days.
- The BCYF funding supported quality out-of-school time programming operating out of seven high school Community Schools, resulting in 312 youth being served.



- Additionally, FY26 will be Year 4 supporting the Family League's Thriving Youth strategy. The organizations provide youth-justice diversion programs and support to keep youth engaged with school and/or work and include program expansion into more schools and opportunities for program graduates to return as mentors. This strategy is aligned with Mayor Brandon Scott's administration focus area "Prioritizing our Youth" with a goal of decreasing the number of justice-involved youth and increasing opportunities for education and employment. In FY25, 231 young people were served and 71% of youth who create a Community supports plan within 90 days of enrollment completed the plan by the end of services.

Recent publicly available data suggests a positive shift in outcomes in Baltimore City: crime has decreased significantly in the last several years and Baltimore City has the lowest homicide numbers on record in nearly 50 years. Since 2022, opioid deaths have decreased by nearly 50 percent.

While not the only cause, investments in supporting children and young people is part of the proven all-of-the-above strategy that results in these positive citywide outcomes. The work is not over and we still have a long way to go to support children living in poverty. We must continue to prioritize delivering for communities with a sense of urgency through continued investments in programs like the Baltimore Children and Youth Fund.

ENOUGH INITIATIVE

Page 10: GOC should clarify how much funding ENOUGH communities received in the program's first year from other State agencies.

The GOC has calculated that ENOUGH communities have received approximately \$23 million in awards during the program's first year from other state agencies.

The figure reported in the GOC's Managing for Results (MFR) measure 'Total additional state funds outside of the ENOUGH grant program awarded to ENOUGH Communities', was compiled via self-reported quarterly submissions from ENOUGH grantees of the total value of all state grants awarded to ENOUGH partnership tables through September 30th, 2025. That number is \$20,5988,348. While this number gave a good indication of awards, it did not reflect awards received from October 1 through December 31 and was also likely an undercount, given it relied on grantee self-reporting.

To obtain a more accurate number, since submitting the MFR, the GOC began requesting agency data upon award announcement to cross reference against ENOUGH quarterly reports. In comparing state reports and ENOUGH grantee reports, the GOC has refined the data and identified state grants won not just by ENOUGH Community QBs, but also by documented ENOUGH partner organizations within ENOUGH communities. Additionally, the GOC noted instances in which grantees failed to update their reports after pending awards were successfully secured. This new cross-referencing methodology revealed a higher dollar amount



of awards won, \$23,158,348. GOC plans to continue coordination across state agencies to obtain timely and precise state award information within ENOUGH communities.

Page 12: GOC should discuss its use of 22-month awards and whether it intends to offer awards of this length in fiscal 2028 or future fiscal years. In this discussion, GOC should clarify if grantees receiving awards that end in September 2027 will be eligible to apply for additional funding before fiscal 2028.

The GOC opted to award 22-month grants this year to provide communities with the flexibility to design and launch activities with a guarantee that those activities would be sustained for two years. This provides more certainty to communities as they plan activities and make spending decisions – particularly low-income communities with large funding disparities and community-based organizations who rely heavily on inconsistent grants and changing funding decisions.

To ensure grantees can continue momentum and are able to progress to the next phase of the work, grantees with funding through September 30, 2027 will still be given the opportunity this year to apply for ENOUGH awards. While these awards would overlap in time periods with their current grants, they would not overlap in scope. Rather, grants would support grantees ready to move onto the next phase of ENOUGH (i.e., activities that have not been funded to date). For example, a grantee with funds through September 30, 2027 to implement education strategies (early implementation) may receive funding for housing strategies this year. Or, grantees who completed their planning phase (Plan Development) could continue to support governance and partnership organization activities with their planning grant, while leveraging new dollars to begin to implement strategies outlined in their finalized neighborhood action plan. All grantees will be required to show how remaining unspent funds will be integrated with and not duplicative of requested funds this year.

As there is no statutory funding mandate for ENOUGH, the GOC may elect to provide 22-month awards in FY 28.

Page 13: GOC should comment on when it will determine which communities will be eligible to apply for funding in fiscal 2027 through 2029 and communicate this information to local governments.

The process to determine eligible communities for FY 27 through FY 29 is dependent on data released annually. The GOC is actively in the process of assessing eligibility for FY 27, following the recent release of 2024 poverty and school data, which was released in January 2026 and December 2025, respectively.

Per ENOUGH Statute, eligibility is based on determining Maryland Census tracts with at least a 30% child poverty rate, provided via the American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, that intersects with the most up to date school boundary of a Maryland public school with at least a



75% listed school poverty rate (lowered from 80% to 75% for 2026.) A prospective ENOUGH grantee must indicate at least one eligible census tract that they serve in their service area.

Census tract eligibility is updated annually, based on the annual release of both the Maryland School Poverty Rates for each Maryland School and the ACS Child Poverty Rates by Maryland Census Tract.

Following the release of data, the GOC then works with the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) to incorporate updated child poverty and school poverty rates into a new eligibility map. The GOC also works with MDP to confirm and review all school boundary/catchment zones across all 24 Maryland jurisdictions and update any zones that have changed over the course of the last year (zones change often due to school closures, mergers, etc.). This intensive process, including retrieving school catchment zone files from LEAs in all 24 jurisdictions as well as building a custom GIS map, takes 4-6 months. Once complete, this eligibility map will be published on the GOC's website, shared with local governments, and all interested applicants as part of the Notice of Funding Opportunity published by the GOC in early Summer, 2026.

While this analysis for FY27 is ongoing, the GOC anticipates that there will be new communities eligible for the program following the expansion in eligibility. The GOC will work proactively with local governments to notify them of their new eligibility to ensure newly eligible communities have the opportunity to apply.

P. 13 In light of the State's current fiscal condition, DLS recommends reducing the general fund appropriation for the ENOUGH Grant Fund account by \$15 million and the special fund authorization by a corresponding amount to level fund the program at the fiscal 2026 general fund appropriation. GOC may choose how it allocates the remaining funding between its ENOUGH grant program and the ENOUGH LMB Capacity Building Grant.

Agency Response: The GOC respectfully disagrees.

The ENOUGH grant fund is designed to increase in funding over time to support communities as they move through the three pathways of the program. Communities move from creating and establishing robust, cross-sector partnerships (**Partnership Development**), to conducting a comprehensive needs assessment and developing a Neighborhood Action Plan (**Plan Development**), to implementing data-informed, evidence-based programs to support the well-being of children and families in their community (**Implementation**). These activities support communities to build and strengthen their capacity to lead and sustain impactful programs over time.

Only communities that meet high standards by successfully completing grant activities are eligible to advance to the next pathway. After the first year of ENOUGH, 15 of 24 grantees eligible to move up will be progressing to the next pathway of the ENOUGH program. This



indicates strong grantee compliance with activities. Remaining grantees applied for “bridge” grants to continue to build their progress and will likely be ready to move up at the end of Year Two.

As DLS correctly notes in their analysis (page 12), “As ENOUGH grantees continue to advance in their capacity and receive additional competitive awards, the awards also increase in size.” To accommodate this increase and support communities as they complete larger-scale activities, the ENOUGH Grant Fund requires the increase in funding for Fiscal Year 2027 included in the Governor's Allowance. This funding increase is necessary to sustain the impact and effectiveness of the program by allowing communities to maintain the momentum they’ve built and scale their work.

Based on an assessment of the successful completion of activities in Year One and the strength of continuation applications for Year Two, the GOC estimates that the overwhelmingly majority, if not all, of the 28 ENOUGH communities will be ready to move to the next pathway in the program after Year Two. \$30 million for the ENOUGH Grant Fund reflects a prudent increase that would give every community the opportunity to receive additional funds to scale their work.

In scaling their work, more Marylanders will be served by the program. For example, based on the Neighborhood Action Plans they submitted at the end of year one, funding four new communities as Implementation Grantees would equate to **an additional 7,300 children in high-poverty areas directly served** by child care centers, apprenticeship opportunities, out-of-school time programs, and other critical programs funded by the ENOUGH program.

It is through the sustained operation of these programs where ENOUGH will see results, and Maryland will see a systemic reduction in child poverty. However, the successful operation of these programs is entirely dependent on the increased funding for the grant program included in the Governor's Allowance.

In FY26 the ENOUGH Grant Fund received less than half of the funding proposed by Governor Moore in order to operate in year two. In response, the GOC was able to shift our funding approach to be equitable and aligned with community needs. However, this approach is not sustainable long term. Flat funding for ENOUGH in Fiscal Year 2027 would result in communities being forced to stall progress.

This would not only compromise the program’s ability to make an impact, it would also diminish trust in communities. ENOUGH communities have spent extraordinary time and effort to bring partners and residents living in poverty together to design community-driven and evidence-based plans that will address the root causes of poverty in their neighborhood. They are counting on – and have demonstrated they are capable of – being able to scale their work and implement the plans they have put a collective effort into developing.

Furthermore, per the ENOUGH Act statute, in FY27 the eligibility for ENOUGH communities is set to expand and based on the large number of applications received in the first year (83), we



know demand for funding will be high. To grow the program to new jurisdictions, ENOUGH must receive an increase in funding. \$30 million in the ENOUGH Grant Fund provides adequate funding for a select number of new communities who demonstrate readiness to participate in ENOUGH activities to join the program without spreading funds too thin and hindering existing communities' ability to progress.

In its first year, ENOUGH inspired private investment in our state's fight against child poverty. As a result of the State's investment in ENOUGH, private and philanthropic partners have committed 5 times the public investment in the first year alone. However, these commitments rely on continuing public commitment to the ENOUGH strategy. Level funding for ENOUGH at the state level would likely kneecap philanthropic funding for the program.

In their grant activities over the last year, ENOUGH communities have demonstrated their willingness and ability to realize the vision set forth in the ENOUGH Act. However, truly realizing ENOUGH's vision to create sustainable progress depends on the increase in funding included in the Governor's Allowance to allow communities to scale and grow their work.

P.15 GOC should comment on its involvement with the Community School Delivery program, including planned activities in fiscal 2026 and 2027.

The Community Schools Delivery Program is one of many initiatives the GOC spearheads through the Maryland Children's Cabinet to ensure existing programs deliver enhanced results. Through the program, state agencies are expanding and improving the delivery of state programs and resources into schools and communities – assisting students and families with services such as stable housing support, enrollment in benefits, setting up health centers, providing mental health resources, and workforce and job training to parents.

The GOC oversees the program in partnership with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). The GOC serves as a coordinator, aligning agency services with schools serving students in communities facing concentrated poverty. The GOC is responsible for bringing agencies together and working with each agency to identify how they can increase service delivery in Community Schools. MSDE is responsible for coordinating directly with LEAs and “matching” participating schools to agencies. The following agencies are partners in the Delivery Program in Fall 2025: MDH, DHS, DHCD, MDL, DJS, and DSCI.

The program was first piloted in 2024. In this pilot year, GOC staff conducted the following activities:

- Support design, planning, coordination, and implementation of a Delivery Pilot to strengthen school-agency collaboration
- Lead ongoing work with participating agencies to track progress
- Design and deliver a school coordinator training guide (ie toolkit or resource hub) to empower schools to better leverage agency services. The training guide was then administered by MSDE to 700+ community school coordinators.



A survey of participating schools in year one indicated strong demand from participating schools; 95% of schools surveyed indicated they wanted to continue participating in year two of the program. In its second year, the program will be expanding from 23 schools to 35 schools. Currently the program has 26 participating schools, and 6 agencies that began implementation in November 2025. GOC and MSDE work together to ensure agencies stay in contact with their school partners and oversee data collection of program-wide metrics. GOC plans to onboard the remaining agencies and additional schools during Spring 2026. GOC will also invite any Fall Cohort agencies (that confirm they have capacity to take on more school partners) to be available for new school partner matches in the Spring.

Specifically, in FY26 and FY27, GOC is:

- Expanding the participating agencies in the program to MHEC and MDOT
- Connecting state agency staff with schools
- Supporting state agencies in developing metrics to measure progress and success
- **Creating a tool to scale this work across Community Schools. The GOC worked with agencies to create a toolkit that teaches community school staff how to get students and their families access to critical programs, including WIC, SNAP, homeless supports, job training and support, and childcare.**

While the partnership between agencies and LEAs is not in every Community School, this program is informing the State's knowledge of the needs of Community Schools, creating relationships of trust, and enhancing all future work between the State and Community Schools.

YOUTH PLACEMENT DATA:

P. 18 DLS therefore recommends that \$100,000 in withheld general funds for each of DHS, DJS, DDA, and MSDE be released and will process a letter to this effect if no objections are raised by the committees during the hearings.

Agency Response: GOC takes no position on the withholding of funds.

P. 18 DLS recommends adding a section to the budget bill restricting funds in each of the data contributing agencies pending the submission of the 2026 OOH report.

Agency Response: GOC takes no position on this recommendation, and adds clarification that the Agency does not contribute data to the report, but is a conduit of this information.

