

Anne Arundel County Partnership for Children, Youth and Families Case Study

Mission of the Partnership for Children, Youth and Families:

The mission of the Partnership for Children, Youth and Families (the Local Management Board for Anne Arundel County, Maryland) is to assess community human services needs and identify gaps in service, convene a neutral group of diverse stakeholders to build partnerships and develop solutions, fund services for children and families by leveraging state funding and increasing local resources, and advance the Governor’s priorities of reducing the impact of parental incarceration on children, families and communities; improving outcomes for disconnected youth; reducing childhood hunger; and reducing youth homelessness.ⁱ

Brief History

Local Management Boards (LMBs) were first established in Maryland during the mid-1990s in an effort to change the way services were provided to children and families in their communities.ⁱⁱ The major focus was to increase local authority to plan, implement, and monitor children and family services. Each county in Maryland was charged by the Governor’s Office for Children to convene a collaborative board to manage the implementation of a local, inter-agency, community based human service delivery system for children, youth and families. Now, the core functions of the LMBs are to create a community plan, perform a local needs assessment, identify priorities of their community, target resources, and serve as the county’s neutral convener to coordinate children’s services. Board members are appointed by the County Executive, with each Board Member serving a four year term.

The Anne Arundel County Partnership for Children, Youth and Families (the Partnership) was created in 1993. Not all LMBs in Maryland operate the same. The Partnership is an instrumentality of county government, 100 percent grant funded, whereas other LMBs operate under non-profits or within county government agencies. As well as acting as a neutral convener for the LMB, the Partnership’s team of full time staff assesses community needs and identifies gaps in services, funds services for children and families, builds partnerships throughout the

Location: Anne Arundel County, Maryland

Target age group: Children and youth

Established: 1993

Method of establishment: Legislation

Organizational home: The Maryland Governor’s Office for Children

Funding: The Children’s Cabinet Interagency Fund was authorized by legislation and includes dedicated grant funding for Maryland Local Management Boards. The Anne Arundel County Partnership also receives other public and private funding.

Full-time employees: Executive Director, Finance Manager, Compliance Director, Youth Coordinator, Family Homelessness manager, five family navigators, special projects directors, Community of Hope Director, Community Conferencing Coordinator, two administrative coordinators

Members: Directors of all child-serving agencies. Private citizens, service providers and parents of children with special needs comprise up to 49% of the membership.

Meeting schedule: Monthly

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community and state, seeks grants, and develops the Community Plan. Partnership funded activities are driven by the needs outlined in a comprehensive Community Needs Assessment that is updated every three years.

How are Local Management Boards unique?

LMBs are state funded local children's cabinets that focus on collective impact.

Local Management Boards are unique to Maryland and operate as the local children's cabinets throughout the state. There is one in every county and jurisdiction in the state (24 in all). By design, they marry state and local work. LMBs have a designated state fund that is administered by the Governor's Office for Children (GOC), but also apply for federal, state and other funding depending on community needs. They are held accountable for promoting statewide strategies outlined by the Governor's Office for Children. However, as Executive Director of the Partnership and Chair of the Association of Local Management Boards Pamela Brown states, "Everything (about LMBs) is local. They are driven by the local needs, structure, personalities, etc. LMBs are best at knowing the local level".ⁱⁱⁱ

LMBs play an important role in driving collective impact throughout the state, including within the communities, between communities, and between the state and local level. The Partnership for Children, Youth and Families and many other LMBs act as the backbone organization for collective impact strategies within their local communities. By mandate, the heads of local child serving government agencies are required to serve on the board and have the highest level of leadership at the table, but they are joined by representatives from the community. All members work together to create cross-sector strategies that fit the needs of the community. The Association of Local Management Boards exists to help LMBs share best practices and problem solve on how to keep local issues at the forefront. There are twenty-four jurisdictions in Maryland (including Baltimore City) that range in wealth and span from very rural to very urban.^{iv} Therefore, as Pamela Brown noted, LMBs have to manage an inevitable balancing act between state priorities and requirements with local needs and priorities.

Why the Partnership for Children, Youth and Families stands out?

The Partnership uses diverse funding to make a big impact.

The Children's Cabinet Interagency Fund (the Fund) is authorized by the Human Services Article § 8-501–506 and includes dedicated grant funding for Maryland Local Management Boards. The fund is divided between the twenty-four LMBs in the state by a formula, and each year, the LMB must write a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) to say how they are spending the money on priority populations and the community plan, on measures of child-wellbeing, and on measuring progress. Each LMB is able to seek other local, state and federal grants in addition to what they receive from the Fund. The Partnership matches GOC

funding with other funding so that GOC dollars are only one third of the entire funding bucket. All funds are braided and blended to ensure comprehensive services without duplication.

The Partnership uses diverse funding strategically and mindfully to make a big impact on the community needs in Anne Arundel County. For all decision making, including writing grants, forming strategies, and designing initiatives, the Partnership uses a Results Based Accountability (RBA) framework. Alli Holstrom, the Partnership's Compliance Director, stands firmly behind the state required use of RBA, saying that it works naturally inside a collective impact model and ensures the best investments to meet community needs by asking and answering two key questions: "1. Are we doing the right things? 2. Are we doing things right?"^v

An example of the Partnership's great impact in their community using RBA is the planning and construction of a youth center for disconnected and unaccompanied homeless youth in northern Anne Arundel County. In order to advance Governor Hogan's priority of reducing the number of unaccompanied homeless youth, the Partnership established a cross-sector working group that included agencies, subject matter experts and people with lived experience. Then, using RBA and human centered design processes, the work group created a plan for the drop-in center that included programmatic and physical space elements that were relevant and imperative to meet the needs of the youth. This includes that the space is easily accessible by bus or walking, and the center offers services ranging from showers and lockers, to resume building courses, and assistance obtaining birth certificates. Even though the original plan was slightly delayed in order to educate the community and gather community input, the Partnership has funding and plans in place, with the goal of opening the center in about two years. In the meantime, a pop-up center funded by the Partnership is operating at the local library.

Key Takeaways

Even though Local Management Boards are distinct to Maryland, other states can learn from the model if they are interested in creating a cohesive state-local partnership and strategy for children's services. Maryland also proves that this model is successful in a diverse state! The Anne Arundel Partnership for Children, Youth and Families is an example of a thriving local children's cabinet. From its conception in 1996, the Partnership planned strategically to be able to use both the dedicated state funds and other grants. The Partnership, and all Local Management Boards, use RBA as its decision making model to use their funds with fidelity and to truly keep the needs and voices of their community members at the forefront of their work.

ⁱ <https://www.aacounty.org/boards-and-commissions/partnership-for-children-youth-families/index.html>

ⁱⁱ <https://goc.maryland.gov/history-of-lmbs/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Quote from interview with Pamela Brown 2/19/19

^{iv} https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_counties_in_Maryland

^v Quote from interview with Alli Holstrom 2/19/19