

ABAG Key Public Policy Updates – January 2019

2020 CENSUS

Citizenship Question

On Tuesday, January 15th, The Honorable Judge Jesse M. Furman of the United States District Court in Manhattan blocked the Commerce Department from adding a question on American citizenship to the 2020 Census. ABAG joined other stakeholders on a national briefing hosted by the NY Attorney General's office, The Leadership Conference Education Fund, ACLU, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, and MALDEF and learned the following:

- The appearance of the question violated the federal Administrative Procedure Act that governs the process by which federal agencies develop and issue regulations.
- It departs from long-standing Commerce practices.
- The ruling does not prohibit a "citizenship" question from appearing given proper research and protocols are followed.

This decision will likely be appealed to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals and possibly to the Supreme Court. However, it isn't clear on timing especially since there are several other lawsuits that are proceeding asking for the citizenship question to be removed. Additional information on the ruling can be accessed at:

<http://www.nysd.uscourts.gov/cases/show.php?db=special&id=678>

Maryland State 2020 Census Grant Program

ABAG was recently appointed a seat by Governor Hogan on the 2020 Census Grant Program Panel. Stemming from the Maryland General Assembly's 2018 passage of a \$5M matching grant program, this panel has been tasked with developing the RFP and selection of eligible municipalities and nonprofits purposing to conduct Census outreach in low-responding areas. Among the areas to be prioritized are Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Montgomery County and Prince George's County. The RFP is scheduled to be released March 1, 2019 with awards made by April 1, 2019.

Baltimore City Complete Count Committee

ABAG continues to participate on the Neighborhoods Subcommittee of Baltimore City's Complete Count Committee. The goal of the Subcommittee is to implement an engagement strategy to address barriers to completing the online Census questionnaire and support access to alternative formats when needed. The Subcommittee has identified the following barriers to Census participation: illiteracy, digital illiteracy, no internet access, transience/non-permanent residence, language barriers, and lack of understanding of the purpose and function of the Census.

Beginning in the Spring of 2019, the Subcommittee will work to increase awareness of how important the Census is by recruiting ambassadors from community- and faith-based organizations. To begin addressing digital divide challenges, the Subcommittee will work with partners to establish Census technology stations at libraries, public markets, faith houses, recreation centers, community organizations, PAL centers, public housing, and schools.

KIRWAN COMMISSION

On Friday, January 18, 2019, The Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education (Kirwan Commission) approved its recommendations for \$3.8B in new school spending. However, the Commission also agreed to delay full

implementation in 2019 - citing it was too late to get such comprehensive education legislation through this year's 90-day Assembly session. They also cited Republican Gov. Larry Hogan's resistance to the amount of spending.

In its proposal, the Commission has called for an increase of \$325 million in state spending in the budget for the coming year that would be focused on specific priorities, including providing more money for pre-kindergarten and a 3 percent increase in pay for teachers. The Commission still must decide how much of the added cost it thinks should be paid by the state and how much by local governments.

ABAG's Education Funders Affinity Group and Public Policy Committee held a joint meeting on January 9, 2019 in anticipation of the Commission's vote. The Association will continue to support the recommendations outlined and will work closely with the Strong Schools Maryland to support budget requests that line up with the Commission.

UPCOMING ABAG POLICY RELATED PROGRAMS

[ABAG Goes to Annapolis 2019 - Wednesday, February 13, 2019, 9:45am to 2:00pm](#)

Join your fellow ABAG members as they travel to Annapolis to learn about the legislative process and meet with key legislative offices including a confirmed meeting with Secretary Busch's office to highlight ABAG's 2019 Public Policy Priorities.

[Economic Security Funders Budget and Tax Briefing Watch Party - Thursday, February 21, 2019, 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM](#)

Come to the ABAG offices on February 21st to learn about and discuss pressing political developments, federal and state budget and tax issues, and emerging advocacy and communications strategies for protecting programs and policies that support struggling families, workers and communities.

[Education and Policy: What's the Focus for 2019? - Monday, February 25, 2019, 9:30am to 11:00am](#)

Join ABAG for a conversation with City Schools and the ACLU to discuss the education policy agenda for this legislative session. Specifically, the Kirwan Commission's final recommendations will be discussed.

[A Conversation with Baltimore County Executive Johnny Olszewski, Jr. - Thursday, February 28, 2019, 10:00am to 11:30am](#)

On February 28th, ABAG welcomes Baltimore County Executive Johnny Olszewski, Jr. for a conversation with members. We will discuss the County Executive's vision, priorities and opportunities for collaboration.

[Foundations on the Hill 2019 - Monday, March 11, 2019 to Wednesday, March 13, 2019](#)

Foundations on the Hill (FOTH) is presented by United Philanthropy Forum. FOTH is a two-day event that brings together foundation leaders from across the country to DC for meetings with Congress about key issues.