



2019 Public Policy Priorities

Overview

Maryland Philanthropy Network's strategic framework charges it to lead, with and for its members, efforts to influence critical issues and improve community conditions.

Each year, the Public Policy Committee of the Network's Board of Directors convenes and connects across funder affinity groups, fiscally hosted initiatives, funder collaborations and individual members to understand the landscape of member policy interests and distill those interests and issues into an agenda. This agenda outlines for the Board and Membership how the Network and its staff are likely to focus policy effort and action in the new calendar year.

Through these articulated priorities generated by the work of our membership, and in public response to issues arising and affecting Maryland communities, the Network will stand for its core values as a philanthropic membership organization, seek to build stronger communities across Maryland, leverage the resources of private philanthropy for greater impact, and promote giving and the philanthropic sector as a whole.

Policy Priorities for 2019

The Board of Directors of Maryland Philanthropy Network (MPN) has established the following public policy priorities as identified by its membership, member-lead affinity groups and its fiscally sponsored projects, initiatives and collaborations. These priorities are managed, and activities implemented, by the MPN President and Staff with oversight by the Public Policy Committee of the MPN Board of Directors.

CENSUS 2020

In response to funders concerned about the financial impact of an inaccurate count on communities across Maryland, and calls from federal, state and local government seeking collaboration and support, MPN will take actions to promote a complete 2020 census count. A complete and accurate count is critical for the over six million Marylanders who receive resources from programs directly resourced via census-based formulas. For each uncoun­ted resident there is an \$1800 loss of funding. The Department of Health and Department of Human Services accounts for 80% of these dollars. Programs that would be directly and negatively affected include the following:

- Medical Assistance Program (Medicaid)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers
- State Children's Health Insurance Program (S-CHIP)
- Head Start/Early Start
- National School Lunch Program



Moreover, jurisdictions that would be most affected by an inaccurate count include those with high concentrations of marginalized community members such as:

- Baltimore City
- Baltimore County
- Montgomery County
- Prince George’s County
- Harford County
- Washington County

Public Policy Actions:

Local

- With Md Nonprofits and other partners, develop key messaging that all stakeholders can use to promote the importance of a complete count. Language will be tailored for various audiences including our local nonprofit/grantee community.
- Participate on Baltimore City’s Complete Count Committee
- Promote and support the development of clear plans and implementation strategies aimed at historically undercounted populations.
- Promote philanthropic investments in Census-related outreach strategies.

State

- Call for increased state funding aimed at increasing and diversifying messaging to ensure historically undercounted populations are informed and participate in the Federal Census.
- Promote philanthropic investments in Census-related outreach strategies statewide.

Federal

- Advocate for adequate Census funding and resources allocated to the Federal Census Bureau to ensure historically undercounted communities are fairly represented
- Continue advocating for removal of the “citizenship question” as a potential barrier to an accurate count in historically undercounted communities.

EDUCATION

Following the lead of more than 90 MPN members funding education across Maryland, MPN recognizes that Maryland has a once in a generation moment to take action and make a bold investment in the future of our children. MPN will partner with Strong Schools Maryland and others to advocate for the shared belief that we can create a world-class education system for every student, especially those who are disproportionately affected by policies because of race, poverty, language and disability.

MPN supports full funding and implementation of the recommendations from the Maryland Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education (“Kirwan Commission”) which include investment in:

- Early childhood education
- High-quality teachers and leaders
- College and career readiness pathways
- More resources for at-risk students



- Governance and accountability

Public Policy Actions:

Local

- Coordination with our colleagues and donors of the Baltimore Community Foundation, and other local stakeholders, to advocate broad community support for the Commission's recommendations.

State

- Coordination with Strong Schools Maryland as a partner in information dissemination.
- Outreach to our donor communities across the state to provide briefings – through our community foundation members - ensuring that information reaches our donor and stakeholder communities across the state.

Federal

- None identified at this time.

TAXES, ENDOWMENTS & CHARITABLE GIVING

In support of our members at large MPN advocates on behalf of philanthropy for an environment in which charitable giving can thrive and realize its maximum impact on community life. MPN will advocate for public policies that promote giving and volunteerism, such as tax incentives for charitable giving, or that prevent excessive regulation of philanthropic and nonprofit organizations that could impede the ability of the sector to carry out charitable activities.

Public Policy Actions:

Local

- None identified at this time.

State

- Advocate for continuation of the **Endow Maryland** tax credit program providing incentives for donors to give locally through community foundations.

Federal

- Advocate for protection and expansion of existing federal, state and local tax credits received in return for charitable contributions.
- Oppose any repeal to the **Johnson Amendment** which is the provision in the U.S. tax code, since 1954, that prohibits all 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations from endorsing or opposing political candidates.

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICTS

Following the lead of Arts and Community Investment Funders, MPN will seek to promote and strengthen a dynamic Baltimore arts scene and engage with local stakeholders to support existing and emerging opportunities that bolster a thriving arts community. Artists add vitality to the local economy and communities – as entrepreneurs and as investors in community place-making.

Public Policy Actions:

Local



- Identify initiatives supporting the capacity for state designated arts and entertainment districts to lead the city’s cultural renaissance
- Identify national models for cultural districts
- Promote public discourse in support of “safe spaces” for artists across the city
- Convene funders to consider impact investment in artists housing/ spaces

State

- Strengthen current tax incentive programs
- Advocate for clarification of the definition of “work of art” to expand the potential benefit for artists and their work across mediums

Federal

- None identified at this time

HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Each MPN affinity group and many members individually, have identified housing access and affordability as a cross-cutting issue affecting outcomes for children and families across Maryland communities, MPN will begin to continue to convene members with a housing specific focus.

Public Policy Actions:

Local

- Engage, inform and support local efforts to examine and address the availability of affordable housing in Baltimore.
- Support funders in convening with a focus on housing for the homeless
- Continue engaging our funders and partners together around the potential of the Opportunity Zone designations.

State

- Maintain relationship with State office overseeing Opportunity Zone administration.

Federal

- None identified at this time.

Projects’ Priorities

MPN hosts initiatives and collaborations that by design advocate for systems change via collaboration across sectors.

BALTIMORE INTEGRATION PARTNERSHIP (BIP)

The BIP mission is to leverage the economic strength and investment of Baltimore anchor institutions to increase access to economic inclusion opportunities for low income predominately African-American Baltimore City residents.

Potential Actions:

Local

- Continue the promotion of local hiring and purchasing best practices by city anchor institutions, big businesses and city government.



State

- None identified at this time.

Federal

- None identified at this time.

BALTIMORE WORKFORCE FUNDERS COLLABORATIVE (BWFC)

The Baltimore Workforce Funders Collaborative (BWFC) is a public/private partnership dedicated to advancing the labor market prospects of unemployed and underemployed Baltimore City residents while meeting the needs of our region's employers for a skilled workforce. The Collaborative aims to build pathways to well-paying jobs with career advancement possibilities in targeted industries in the Baltimore region.

Potential Actions:

Local

- Identify transportation solutions providing expanded access to jobs for Baltimore residents.
- Identify opportunities to increase city funding for training programs to offset decreases in federal allocations.
- Monitor data collection and analysis policies related to race, equity, inclusion and impact to better inform the work of philanthropy.

State

- None identified at this time.

Federal

- None identified at this time.

MARYLAND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH NETWORK (MdEHN)

MdEHN works to protect human health by addressing environmental policies and practices that shape the conditions for health in Maryland. This is accomplished through broad application of an equity lens and consistently raising the question of who is most harmed by pollution and environmental degradation. MdEHN promotes equity in three primary policy areas:

- Climate & Energy – addressing the impacts of energy choice policy related to climate change and health;
- Vulnerable Population Health – addressing the shifting nature of environmental threats at the population level and evaluating the pollution burden of related policy on specific communities;
- Toxics and Chemical Exposure Protections – evaluating policy that impacts exposure to chemicals and pesticides in industrial and consumer use.

Potential Actions:

Local

- None identified at this time.

State



- Monitor Health Impact Assessments to be conducted by jurisdictions judging the impact of a policy, program, or project and its potential effects on the health of a population, and the distribution of those effects within the population.
- Monitor notifications from the Maryland Public Service Commission to ensure that rates, terms, and conditions established for public service companies are just, reasonable, and transparent.
- Advocate for a Green Amendment supporting the constitutional right of people in the state to a clean and healthy environment.
- Support the Healthy Air Act aimed at bringing Maryland into attainment with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone and fine particulate matter.
- Support the Community Solar Bill to expand customer choice and access to solar for all American households and businesses through community solar arrays.

Federal

- None identified at this time.

SCHOOL-CENTERED NEIGHBORHOOD INVESTMENT INITIATIVE (SCNII)

SCNII is an Initiative intended to leverage the historic \$1.1 billion investment in Baltimore City school construction and renovation through the 21st Century Schools Buildings process. This once in a lifetime investment is an opportunity not only for schools in Baltimore City but also for their surrounding neighborhoods.

Potential Actions:

Local

- Increase alignment of private investment within communities currently planning for new or renovated school buildings.
- Increase the capacity of community-based organizations to play a leadership role in the execution of new investments and with the City's INSPIRE planning process.
- Advocate on behalf of community-based organizations for authentic and consistent engagement in community decision making processes and projects.

State

- None identified at this time.

Federal

- None identified at this time.