

Overview

Maryland Philanthropy Network's (MPN) strategic framework charges it to lead, with and for its members, efforts to influence critical issues and improve community conditions. MPN's role and actions can take many forms, most often seeking to leverage the resources and expertise of its membership to work directly with government and policy decision makers to increase collective impact. MPN connects its members and broader network to policymakers and acts as a collective voice on local, state, and federal policy issues that promote effective philanthropy and build stronger communities.

Philanthropy is affected by public policies that relate directly to charitable giving and the nonprofit sector, as well as those relating to specific social issues its members seek to address. Maryland Philanthropy Network (MPN) advocates on behalf of philanthropy for an environment in which charitable giving can thrive and realize its maximum impact on community life. The Board of Directors of MPN has established advocacy priorities as identified by its membership and Public Policy Committee of the MPN Board of Directors.

- ***Promoting Philanthropy***
MPN advocates for public policies that increase charitable giving and volunteerism, such as tax incentives for charitable giving, or that prevent excessive regulation of philanthropic and nonprofit organizations that could impede the sector's ability to carry out charitable activities. MPN frequently partners with other philanthropic associations, coalitions, and advocacy groups to make public statements, meet with elected officials, and engage in other activities to inform public discourse on the importance of a thriving social sector.
- ***Building Stronger Communities***
Building strong communities requires engagement with the public sector in ways that increase opportunities for partnership, leverage public-private resources, foster effective civic leadership and shed light on complex issues and the potential to bring promising solutions to scale. MPN cultivates opportunities for members to engage with policymakers as well as deepen their understanding of foundation advocacy regulations and best practices.
- ***MPN Affinity Groups, Initiatives and Collaboratives***
The Association Public Policy Committee and Staff support the work and interests of its membership through the neutral convening of partners to understand and define opportunities for advocacy that will support and advance the goals of its members, member affinity groups and fiscally sponsored initiatives.

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 forecast is presented to the MPN Board of Directors each year with any intended public agenda presented for approval. 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. Priorities are organized by the following categories:

2021 Priorities

These priorities are organized by the following categories: 2021 Public Policy Priorities, Systems Change Monitoring Areas, 2021 Affinity Group Monitoring Areas, and 2021 Initiative Public Policy Priorities.

2021 Public Policy Priorities

Topics under this category are legislative, regulative, or administrative areas that have impacts across all our affinity group issue areas.

- ***COVID-19 Response: Vaccination schedules and locations, housing, and food access***
Deepen local and regional collaboration to influence COVID-19 vaccine and therapy strategies to be more equitable towards those who have suffered the most during COVID-19, particularly low-income communities, and communities of color. This priority will also track decision making within COVID-19 Response in areas such as vaccinations, housing, and access to food during the pandemic.
- ***Digital Equity across Maryland***
COVID-19 has increased the visibility of the already growing digital divide, especially in low income and communities of color. The Abell Foundation commissioned a [report](#) that found 40% of Baltimore City's households lacked internet access. Due to this disproportionate statistic, families facing this challenge often lose access to support from services such as education, health care and employment. This priority is part in response to those signs of digital inequity.

Digital equity funds have played a role in supporting and meeting the short term and long-term goals around digital access in communities. MPN will engage and organize funders to build and support digital equity programs across the state. Baltimore Digital Equity Coalition (BDEC) has been instrumental in advancing digital equity throughout Baltimore City. We hope that there will be more strategy around digital equity for Maryland that addresses the needs of the different parts of the state and how state and federal legislation plays a role in identifying opportunities for advocacy.

In the efforts to bridge the digital divide, the Maryland General Assembly introduced The Digital Connectivity Act of 2021 (HB97) that would establish an Office of Digital Inclusion in the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. This office would work to ensure that every resident of the State is supported by high-quality broadband Internet service at an affordable price and has the tools necessary to use and take advantage of the Internet. This is of particular interest to our members focused on education, workforce development and older adults.

- ***Overturning Governor Hogan's veto of the Kirwan Blueprint***
The Kirwan Commission recommendations include investments in early childhood education, high-quality teachers and leaders, college and career readiness pathways, resources for

underserved students, and governance and accountability. MPN will partner with others to advocate for the creation of a world-class education system for every student regardless of race, poverty, language, and ability.

Governor Hogan has vetoed the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. However, the legislature is working to overturn the veto. A veto override happened during the 2021 General Assembly session. The Blueprint for Maryland's Future bill became a law on February 12th with the Senate support of the override.

MPN supports the implementation of the Kirwan Commission's funding Blueprint.

- ***Racial Equity and Reconciliation / White Supremacy in Funding Groups***

Applying an anti-racism frame on policies and practices through the public acknowledgement of a history of violence rooted in racism, an evaluation of present-day occurrences of racism-informed systems, and collective healing and transformation. MPN will continue to monitor potential areas of impact and advocacy that can be made given the capacity of the staff and public policy committee.

As far as steps towards addressing systemic racism, there will be collaboration between Bowie State University and University of Baltimore - Schaefer Center with the General Assembly to compile nonpartisan racial impact statements for criminal justice bills during the 2021 legislative session. In response to the impacts of civil unrest for Black communities, this will serve as a space for undoing system inequities through an analysis and expanding on work in 2019 of Del. Jazz M. Lewis in [HB1016](#).

For these topics, our association will conduct advocacy by:

- Educating our members through programming that focuses on building advocacy skills and developing advocacy strategies so that membership organizations have the tools that they need to engage in advocacy work
- Elevating the work of advocates working on the policy areas that are most pressing to the nonprofit sector by communicating with elected officials and public sector staff where possible and safe to do so (virtually, in writing and or in person)
- Communication strategies including written op-eds, press releases, and informational newsletters
- Convening discussions with elected officials, public agency heads, and our members
- Participating as a representative of the association on relevant state commissions, task forces, or committees

Systems Change Monitoring Areas

Topics under this category are considered underlying causes of systemic social issues. Due to the long-term nature, and complexity, of addressing these topics, our association will monitor and inform our members on developments being made and respond to emerging advocacy actions.

- ***Childhood Adversity and Trauma Responsiveness***

Mitigating and remediating the harmful impacts of adverse childhood experiences by using a trauma-informed lens on policies and practices while creating conditions for people to thrive. In Baltimore City, the Elijah Cummings Healing City Act went into effect on March 10, 2020. This included the appointment by the Mayor of a 16-member task force.

As of January 2020, all Senior level cabinet employees will be trained on the Healing City Act within the next 30 days. In partnership with Zeke Cohen and the trauma informed task force there will be the full implementation of the Healing City Act. It will be started as a citywide initiative along with 11 city agencies and starts with educating Baltimore City employees.

There has also been legislation to create a state-level Trauma-Informed Care Task Force in a bill [HB0548](#), introduced by Sen. Jill Carter and Del. Robyn Lewis which includes coordinating efforts around an initiative that prioritizes trauma responsive and trauma-informed delivery of human services that involve children, families and older adults in Maryland.

Due to the possible effects of COVID-19 on childhood trauma, MPN will continue to monitor the efforts of enforcement for trauma related legislation in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and the state of Maryland.

- ***Equitable and Fair Use of Census 2020 Data and Legislative Redistricting***

Due to COVID-19, the 2020 Census self-response and field data collection was extended by the Secretary of Commerce to a target date of October 5, 2020. The Census Bureau has begun processing the data collected to ensure the best data quality. Since the December 31st delivery deadline for the apportionment counts was not met, April 30th will be the new target date for the transmitting apportionment data to the [President from the Commerce Secretary](#).

To ensure that the integrity of Census data is maintained if the current administration remains in power and attempts to exclude communities or residents from apportionment, we will continue to monitor the Census data collection as it relates to possible redistricting that might come as a result.

- ***Police and Immigration Reform***

The committee is still fleshing out what monitoring this area would look like starting with policies and potential legislation that might lead to reform in law enforcement and immigration affairs.

- ***Social Determinants of Health and Economic Mobility***

Addressing social determinants of health, such as food, housing, transportation, employment, and education access, security, and affordability as cross-cutting issues affecting health and economic outcomes for children and families across Maryland communities.

Health equity continues to be important during this year's legislative session including support and resources that are provided to those impacted by health inequities as well as race, location, etc. [HB 463/SB 172](#) has passed the Senate to create and fund Health Equity Resource Communities for additional health care resources to communities with poor health outcomes.

- ***Tax Law and Charitable Giving***

With the extension of the 2020 CARES Act Provision related to tax deductions for charitable contributes, there is a unique opportunity this year in giving. A notable extension into 2021 includes measures that will allow for charitable deductions of up to 100% of adjusted gross incomes as well as allowing corporations to deduct charitable contributions up to 25% of taxable income. There will need to be the monitoring of legislations such as the Tax Cuts and Jobs Acts of 2017 and other efforts relating to tax law and charitable giving within the new administration.

2021 Affinity Group Monitoring Areas

Topics under this category are the respective public policy issues identified by the Arts Funders, Health Funders, Affinity Group on Aging, Community Investment Funders, Education Funders, and Green Funders affinity groups. MPN will monitor and inform our members on developments and emerging advocacy actions.

These affinity group monitoring areas are still under development and will be updated soon.

2021 Initiative Public Policy Priorities

Topics under this category are the public policy priorities of the Baltimore Workforce Collaborative, the Baltimore Regional Anchor Collaborative, the School-Centered Neighborhood Investment Initiative, and the Funders together to End Homelessness Baltimore – MPN initiatives and collaborations that by design advocate for systems change via collaboration across sectors.

- *Baltimore Workforce Collaborative*- To be determined
- *Baltimore Regional Anchor Collaborative* – To be determined
- *Funders Together to End Homelessness, Baltimore* – housing through eviction prevention including right to counsel and expanding housing vouchers