

Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development

Environmental Justice (EJ) Strategic Equity Plan

FY27 - FY29



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Letter from Secretary Jacob R. Day

The work beginning here today is a critical component of Governor Moore’s work of repair – the State’s effort to drive equitable growth in historically disinvested communities and ensure that every town, city and neighborhood in Maryland has the opportunity to thrive.

Repairing Harm

Maryland’s development decisions and policies mean that all communities in Maryland have not benefited from state resources equally, particularly [historically underserved and overburdened communities](#).

The most marginalized and longest standing communities often lack the capital and resources needed to catalyze the kind of multistakeholder collaboration required to have their needs centered in government applications for state and federal infrastructure and development funds.

The work of repair acknowledges that history, and our charge from the Governor is to do something about it. At its core, I believe this effort is rooted in a moral imperative.

Together, the work outlined below can enable DHCD to target our collective resources to expand the state’s engagement of, and impact in, communities, and ensure that our capital investments, community engagement, and evaluation are restorative: that they create equitable racial, economic, and health outcomes for all of Maryland’s people and places.

People Centered Placemaking

For too long, opportunity in our state has been unevenly distributed.

While some communities have benefited from decades of sustained investment, others have been shaped by decades of disinvestment – whether through policy choices, infrastructure decisions, or simply a lack of coordinated attention.

In many cases, communities have the vision needed to transform their neighborhoods, downtowns and commercial corridors. What they often lack are the resources and collaboration necessary to bring those visions to life.

Stronger Together

Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) FY27 - FY29 Environmental Justice (EJ) Strategic Equity Plan is a living document and a starting point for what success will look like. A Maryland where diverse communities of every size have access to the tools they need to shape their own futures. A Maryland where equitable growth and development are something people can see, feel, and interact with in their everyday lives.

Bringing together Maryland’s Valuing Opportunity, Inclusion, and Community Equity (V.O.I.C.E) Executive Order and HB-90 AFFH (Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing) are critical frameworks to strengthen our deployment of HB-241/ SB-308 Just Communities Act. Through mission-aligned partnership, we can amplify the impact of state investments and ensure that the communities most in need of support – particularly underserved, overburdened, and climate vulnerable – are not left behind.

The work we all do together will help move us toward that future.

Secretary Jake Day

Called to Act

Maryland Department of Housing Community Development's (DHCD) inaugural Environmental Justice (EJ) Strategic Equity Plan is the launch pad to think creatively about how DHCD can take coordinated and collective action to leverage the State of Maryland's:

- Executive Order 01.01.2025.17: Valuing Opportunity, Inclusion, and Community Equity (VOICE) (2025)
- HB-241/SB-308 Just Communities Act (2024)
- HB-90 Affirmatively Further Fair Housing (AFFH) (2021)

Using data tools to understand past policy decisions that disproportionately affect community conditions for underserved, overburdened, and climate vulnerable communities aligns with the restorative mission of DHCD's [Just Communities Act](#). Additionally, the strategic actions in this plan reflect the Department's commitment to administering its programs in a manner that affirmatively furthers fair housing as required under the HB-90 legislation.

Just Communities Act

The Just Communities Act, signed into law by Governor Moore in 2024, calls on us to confront the legacy of historical disinvestment and to actively work to reverse it. This means building new systems that direct investment, opportunity, and resources to the places that have too often been overlooked. This specifically includes many of Maryland's disproportionately affected communities and jurisdictions, where capacity is often limited and where navigating state programs can be particularly challenging.

Our Division of Just Communities (DJC), led by Assistant Secretary Cat Goughnour, DHCD's Interagency Environmental Justice and Equity Advisory Council Representative, and Interim Environmental Justice (EJ) Officer, marks a focused effort by DHCD and the State of Maryland to use geographic data to help reverse decades of disinvestment and target future investment.

The Just Communities Act supports the State in:

- Affirmatively advancing equity, civil rights, racial justice and equal opportunity in the State
- Creating opportunities for the improvement of communities that have been historically underserved, with anticipated benefits for the entire State
- Righting the wrong of the past when the State systematically excluded certain groups from equal participation in the benefits of public resources
- Prioritizing state funding to increase racial, economic, and health equity in the State

The restorative strategy we are launching is about changing systems in ways that are thoughtful and community-driven. This kind of people-centered placemaking cannot succeed in silos. No single agency, division, or office – no matter how well-intentioned – can do this work alone. It is fundamentally collaborative.

People, Place, Planet-Centered Programs and Policy

Housing, transportation, economic development, infrastructure, arts and culture, environment and sustainability – are all part of the same ecosystem. And that means our solutions must be interconnected, too.

Each of us brings unique expertise, tools, and resources to the table. When our efforts operate independently, communities can often experience them as fragmented or difficult to navigate. But we have the power to create a system that works for communities instead of asking communities to work around the system.

Through this collaborative effort, we will not just talk about placemaking and placekeeping in the abstract. We will take actions - internally and externally - to build the foundation for a coordinated, statewide strategy that supports people-centered development across Maryland.

Environmental Justice (EJ) Recommendations: [Agency Scorecard Report](#)

- Develop an environmental justice strategic plan
- Take an intersectional approach by examining places where forces of power (white supremacy, misogyny, class, etc.) overlap and intersect, and what those effects look like
- Prioritize meaningful community engagement in all agency actions
- Require environmental justice and anti-racism training workshops for agency employees
- Develop screening methodologies to ensure actions do not create or exacerbate health, environmental, or racial inequities
- Directly acknowledge environmental racism and introduce policies that center restorative action
- Utilize tools such as MDEnviroScreen, Just Communities Viewer, and Maryland EJScreen Mapper to micro target areas in greatest need of program and policy intervention
- Scale the Justice40 Initiative to the state level for Maryland, with 40% of investments benefiting underserved, overburdened, and climate vulnerable people and places

Maryland's Environmental Justice Mandate

Guided by SB-528, Maryland formally defines [Environmental Justice](#) (EJ) as "equal protection from environmental and public health hazards for all people regardless of race, income, culture, and social status." However, applications of equal protection remain a challenge, particularly in communities disproportionately affected by environmental and public health hazards.

[Maryland Sustainable Growth Equity Principle](#)

Engage all sectors of the community in plan development to ensure diverse voices are heard and the needs of underserved populations are prioritized.

Just Communities Investment

Engage DHCD leaders, staff and stakeholders in a strategic planning process to guide the transformation of DHCD's work according to principles and best practices from the fields of racial equity and social justice advocacy.

Goal: Prioritize formerly underserved areas in state funding decisions to affirmatively transform [separate and unequal neighborhoods](#) into Just Communities.

Definition: The [Just Communities Viewer](#) is an interactive tool designed to visualize outcomes from past development and address economic and health disparities by proactively targeting investments in Maryland's historically underserved communities.

This equity key performance indicator (KPI) will measure the amount and percentage of statewide program expenditures in Maryland's designated Just Communities, as defined by the [Just Communities Act of 2024](#), including financial investments across multiple departments, divisions, and agencies. This map serves as a tool for users – policymakers, community leaders, and residents– to use data to inform [applications](#), **community engagement, policy, and partnerships.**

Target: The DHCD and sister agencies will use the first year of metrics tracking data to establish a baseline to benchmark and target investment in future years.

Measurement Method: The analysis to identify Just Communities combines multiple [indicators](#)—including housing affordability, property values, historical discrimination, environmental hazards, and public health outcomes. The Just Communities investment measurement method will be developed by the DHCD and sister agencies.

Division of Just Communities

Vision: *Repair historic harms caused by past policy decisions to create lovable, just and equitable places in Maryland.*

Mission: Adopt and develop targeted public investment strategies for underserved and overburdened populations to right the wrongs of the past and prioritize state resources using data-driven decision making.

Pursuant to the 2024 Just Communities Act (HB-241/ SB-308), the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has developed a state-wide geographic data layer to identify census tracts that have borne the brunt of Maryland's legacy inequalities—including redlining, segregation and disproportionate exposure to environmental and health hazards—to guide the prioritization of investment in designated Just Communities census tracts to increase racial, economic, and health equity in the State.

Valuing Opportunity, Inclusion, and Community Equity (V.O.I.C.E.) Code of Maryland Regulations:

Unified Approach: To ensure consistent, equitable, and fair distribution of State resources, all State Agencies that are Members of the Interagency Environmental Justice and Equity Advisory

Council, shall use the Environmental Justice Mapping Tool, created by the Department of the Environment, to track and address disparities related to environmental hazards, exposures, risks, health outcomes, investments, and benefits.

Unified Approach: State Agencies shall identify and implement mechanisms to increase resources and opportunities for historically underrepresented communities, rural and urban, by reducing barriers for entry, such as land access, and financing.

Unified Approach: State Agencies shall prioritize opportunities for meaningful engagement with impacted communities on policies and priorities related to Environmental Justice and that enable these communities to meaningfully inform State Agency decision-making.

Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development: FY27 - FY29 Strategic Actions and Metrics

DHCD FY27: Discover – Capacity Building and Assessment

Assess community needs using GIS tools to gather and analyze data on community demographics, socioeconomic factors, and existing resources to enhance equity-focused analysis and community engagement efforts.

FY27 Internal Actions and Metrics

- **Action:** Build internal staff capacity to use the Sustainable Communities Indicator Mapper, Just Communities Designation Viewer, and MDEnviroScreen to support data-informed application review and decision-making.
 - **Metric 1–** # of staff trained on using data tools for application review and funding recommendations
 - **Metric2–** # of applications using data tools for application review and funding recommendations
- **Action:** Conduct Trauma-Informed Community Development training for DHCD staff and interagency partners.
 - **Metric 1–** # of state agencies with at least one participating staff member
 - **Metric 2–** # of state staff who joined the Train-the-Trainer program or core team
 - **Metric 3–** % of trained staff who report implementing lessons learned at their own agencies
- **Action:** Provide guidance and training on Fair Housing principles (including Environmental Justice) to agency staff.
 - **Metric 1–** # of staff educated on fair housing/ environmental justice
 - **Metric 2–** # of divisions with at least one participating staff member
 - **Metric 3–** % of total agency staff participating in a training

- **Action:** Conduct a review of DHCD educational and public-facing materials, including brochures, webpages, and outreach content, to identify opportunities to incorporate clear, accessible, and appropriate environmental justice, affirmatively furthering fair housing, and just community language.
 - **Metric 1–** # of DHCD public-facing educational materials, brochures, and webpages reviewed for environmental justice language and messaging integration
 - **Metric 2–** % of DHCD public-facing educational materials, brochures, and webpages reviewed for environmental justice language and messaging integration
 - **Metric 3–** # of updated or newly developed materials that incorporate affirmatively furthering fair housing, just communities, and environmental justice-related language, concepts, resources, or community impact information aligned with DHCD priorities and audiences
- **Action:** Map eviction data against Just Communities (JC) and high Environmental Justice (EJ)/ Climate Vulnerability Score (CVS) tracts to identify “eviction-prone communities.” Map eviction prone-communities against current Access to Counsel in Evictions (ACE) and Community Schools Rental Assistance Program (CSRAP) funding allocations.
 - **Metric 1–** # of evictions in targeted communities
 - **Metric 2–** # of renter households in eviction-prone communities
 - **Metric 3–** # of properties situated within Just Communities census tracts
- **Action:** Use MD Enviroscreen to identify state-funded homeless shelters located in tracts with a high EJ Score or CVS Score.
 - **Metric 1–** # of shelter residents in a high EJ or CVS score tract
- **Action:** Develop an agencywide EJ baseline framework to support equitable policy development and program evaluation across DHCD.
 - **Metric 1–** # of DHCD programs with baseline EJ-related demographic and geographic data identified
 - **Metric 2–** # of DHCD staff completing EJ, equity, or data-informed decision-making training
 - **Metric 3–** # of DHCD program areas incorporating EJ screening tools or criteria into planning, reporting, or review process
- **Action:** Develop a Broadband Strategic Plan to coincide with the DHCD EJ Strategic Equity Plan.
 - **Metric 1–** # of homes lacking Broadband access within the Just Communities (JC) designation locations

FY27 External Actions and Metrics

- **Action:** Educate state-funded shelters with high Environmental Justice (EJ)/ Climate Vulnerability Score (CVS) scores and learn about their agency-level climate resiliency and disaster preparedness plans. Provide training and technical assistance on creating an agency-level plan. Include targeted focus groups with shelter residents and/or Continuum of Care (CoC) lived expertise committees.
 - **Metric 1–** # of shelters educated on EJ/ CVS score
 - **Metric 2–** # of shelters with agency resiliency/preparedness plan
 - **Metric 3–** # of shelter residents and CoC lived experience committees engaged
- **Action:** Increase outreach and funding deployment to small businesses serving underserved, overburdened, or high-need communities.
 - **Metric 1–** # of investment dollars deployed to underserved or High Need communities defined by the Maryland Community Business Compass
 - **Metric 2–** % of funding deployed to underserved or High Need communities defined by the Maryland Community Business Compass
 - **Metric 3–** % of funded projects located in food deserts with high Fresh Food Gap Scores, or other priority geographies
- **Action:** Launch the [Community Investment Storymap](#) as a toolkit for Just Communities (JC) Involvement, including guidance for adapting approaches to unique local needs, cultures, and context.
 - **Metric 1–** # of unique visitors to the Community Investment Storymap
 - **Metric 2–** # of applications from Just Communities (JC) census tracts
 - **Metric 3–** # of EJ census tracts with a score at or over 75th percentile engaged
 - **Metric 4–** % of investments in Just Communities (JC) census tracts
 - **Metric 5–** % of investment in EJ census tracts
- **Action:** Launch updated Access to Counsel in Evictions (ACE) Taskforce with diverse membership and stakeholders, including tenants with lived experience. Engage taskforce and Access to Counsel in Evictions (ACE)/ Community Schools Rental Assistance Program (CSRAP) grantees with eviction data findings to develop tenant outreach strategies.
 - **Metric 1–** # of CSRAP tenants who live in an eviction-prone community
 - **Metric 2–** % of ACE and CSRAP funds allocated to eviction-prone counties
- **Action:** Map Broadband access overlays with the Just Communities (JC) designations, and begin mapping digital equity access.
 - **Metric 1–** # of homes lacking Broadband access in Just Communities (JC) census tracts
 - **Metric 2–** # of "unconnected" homes within Just Communities (JC) census tracts
- **Action:** Build external community capacity by launching and providing training on the Sustainable Communities Indicator Mapper, Just Communities Designation Map Viewer, and MDEnviroScreen to support data-informed State Revitalization Programs (SRP) applications and Sustainable Communities (SC) Action Plans.

- **Metric 1**– # of training sessions with integrated data tools
- **Metric 2**– # of training session attendees

DHCD FY28: Design – Implement Solutions

Set priorities by identifying key areas where interventions are needed most and establish benchmarks for success/implement solutions: develop and deploy location-based solutions that address identified inequities, ensuring that resources are allocated effectively.

FY28 Internal Actions and Metrics

- **Action:** Develop a comprehensive DHCD Community Engagement & Outreach Toolkit designed to establish clear standards and best practices for community engagement across DHCD. The toolkit will distinguish between outreach and engagement, promote trauma-informed and equitable engagement practices, identify engagement resources and strategies, and provide staff with guidance to strengthen meaningful, consistent, and community-centered interactions throughout the Department.
 - **Metric 1**– # of DHCD outreach program staff completing Community Engagement & Outreach Toolkit training annually, with participation tracked across Divisions and Offices
 - **Metric 2**– % of DHCD outreach program staff completing Community Engagement & Outreach Toolkit training annually, with participation tracked across divisions and offices
- **Action:** Identify and establish a framework to track the impact of DHCD investments in improving selected “work, wages, and wealth” indicators.
 - **Metric 1**– # of investments tracked
 - **Metric 2**– # of Just Communities (JC) census tracts engaged
 - **Metric 3**– # of EJ Communities engaged
- **Action:** Develop a plan with the Office of the Attorney General to identify severe health and safety risk properties with 50 units or more per requirements of the 2026 SB-941 Safe and Healthy Homes for All Act, and publicly name affected properties.
 - **Metric 1**– # of properties and units deemed severe health and safety risk
 - **Metric 2**– # of properties located in Just Communities (JC) census tracts
 - **Metric 3**– # of properties located in EJ Communities
- **Action:** Compile Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) data on homelessness counts, disaggregated demographics, and shelter/housing inventory for Maryland Emergency Management Association (MEMA) and local governments to support emergency, extreme weather, climate hazard, and disaster planning.
 - **Metric 1**– # of unsheltered people
 - **Metric 2**– # of sheltered people
- **Action:** Integrate data tools into the application review processes to facilitate data-informed funding decisions.

- **Metric 1**– # of applications reviewed using data-informed scoring criteria
- **Metric 2**– # of applications recommended for funding using data-informed scoring criteria
- **Action:** Integrate Just Communities (JC), Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH), Environmental Justice (EJ) and data-informed analysis into DHCD policy design, program grant/ funding criteria, and strategic planning processes.
 - **Metric 1**– # of new or revised DHCD Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs), applications, or guidance documents incorporating EJ, JC, and AFFH criteria or considerations
 - **Metric 2**– # of DHCD policy, planning, or reporting processes updated using MDEnviroScreen, Just Communities data, or other EJ-related analysis
- **Action:** Use the MDEnviroScreen, and Just Communities Viewer to microtarget data and inform DHCD policy.
 - **Metric 1**– # of DHCD program elements (e.g., reporting forms, applications, community involvement strategies) changed following Division of Just Communities (DJC) recommendations
 - **Metric 2**– # of Racial Equity/ Social Justice Assessments (RE/SJ) completed
 - **Metric 3**– # of staff engaged in equity strategic planning processes (e.g., via meetings)

FY28 External Actions and Metrics

- **Action:** Leverage the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) Sustainable Growth Principles (Equity and Place) in the Just Communities Act: People-Centered Placemaking Approach to align with statewide initiatives that center disproportionately affected communities.
 - **Metric 1**– % change in the baseline number of successful funding applications from stakeholders within Just Communities (JC)
 - **Metric 2**– % of DHCD programmatic investments allocated to Just Communities (JC)
 - **Metric 3**– % of DHCD programmatic investments allocated to underserved, overburdened, and vulnerable EJ communities
- **Action:** Engage renters, renter advocates, property owners, housing providers, housing associations, and other stakeholders to develop the plan for Safe and Healthy Homes for All, and identify affected properties using focus groups, key stakeholder interviews, and public town halls.
 - **Metric 1**– # of public stakeholders consulted
 - **Metric 2**– # of county/ city code enforcement offices reporting violations to DHCD
 - **Metric 3**– # of focus groups, interviews, and public town halls
- **Action:** Provide training to local Continuums of Care (CoCs), shelters, street outreach programs, and emergency management departments on best practices for

homelessness response before, during, and after a disaster and support them in creating and updating local response plans (ex: use the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) toolkit or Abt Global). Conduct targeted focus groups with lived expertise committees.

- **Metric 1**– # of county/ city governments incorporating homelessness into disaster and extreme weather plans
- **Metric 2**– # of staff/ partners trained
- **Metric 3**– # of local response plans developed
- **Metric 4**– # of focus groups with lived expertise communities
- **Action:** Conduct Community-Based Technical Assistance, Housing Resource, and Engagement events using the MDEnviroScreen and Just Communities Viewer to microtarget areas to increase awareness of DHCD housing and community development programs, services, funding opportunities, and resources.
 - **Metric 1**– # of regional technical assistance and/ or community engagement events conducted in partnership with local stakeholders, including the number and type of participants engaged (e.g., residents, nonprofits, local governments, community organizations)
 - **Metric 2**– # of direct community feedback surveys administered
 - **Metric 3**– # of surveys received regarding the types of housing and community development technical assistance, resources, and support that would be most meaningful and beneficial within their communities
- **Action:** Provide training to eligible target areas defined as overlapping Sustainable Communities (SC) and Just Communities (JC) areas with high Environmental Justice (EJ) scores to support State Revitalization Programs (SRP) grant applications from historically overburdened and underserved communities.
 - **Metric 1**– # of applications submitted from target communities
 - **Metric 2**– # of grants awarded to target communities
 - **Metric 3**– # of investment in targeted communities
- **Action:** Expand engagement and outreach efforts to improve access to DHCD funding opportunities within underserved, overburdened, and climate-vulnerable communities.
 - **Metric 1**– # of applications submitted from overburdened, underserved, or climate-vulnerable communities
 - **Metric 2**– # of awards in overburdened, underserved, or climate-vulnerable communities
 - **Metric 3**– % of DHCD awards directed to overburdened, underserved or climate-vulnerable communities
 - **Metric 4**– % of DHCD investments directed to overburdened, underserved or climate-vulnerable communities
 - **Metric 5**– change in # of applications
 - **Metric 6**– change in % of investments

DHCD FY29: Test – Evaluate and Adjust

Continuously monitor the impact of implemented strategies and make necessary adjustments based on feedback and data analysis.

FY29 Internal Actions and Metrics

- **Action:** Expand capacity and expertise to triage and respond to health and safety property complaints and take enforcement action.
 - **Metric 1–** # of staff dedicated to health and safety complaints and enforcement
 - **Metric 2–** # of properties and units deemed severe health and safety risk
 - **Metric 3–** # of properties in overburdened, underserved or climate-vulnerable communities
 - **Metric 4–** % of properties in overburdened, underserved or climate-vulnerable communities
- **Action:** Assess results of data-informed review and scoring processes.
 - **Metric 1–** # of improvement opportunities identified to refine scoring criteria for future funding rounds
 - **Metric 2–** # of improvement opportunities implemented to refine scoring criteria for future funding rounds
- **Action:** Align DHCD funding streams with Justice40 40% investment target.
 - **Metric 1–** # of funding streams aligned with Justice40
 - **Metric 2–** % of funding in communities with EJ Score over 75th percentile
 - **Metric 3–** # of 40% funding streams in Just Communities (JC)
- **Action:** Evaluate the effectiveness of prior-year EJ-related community engagement efforts and public educational material updates to identify successful strategies, assess opportunities for improvement, and inform future outreach, engagement, and communications approaches that better support DHCD goals and community needs.
 - **Metric 1–** % of identified recommendations or improvement opportunities implemented to strengthen the effectiveness, accessibility, or community relevance of EJ outreach and educational efforts
 - **Metric 2–** # of improvement opportunities implemented to strengthen the effectiveness, accessibility, or community relevance of EJ outreach and educational efforts
- **Action:** Work across DHCD Divisions and Offices to disaggregate data by demography and geography to enable effective policy evaluation.
 - **Metric 1–** # of DHCD programs with clean, disaggregated data available
 - **Metric 2–** # of DHCD programs incorporating demographic data into their review of funding applications to ensure racially equitable evaluations
 - **Metric 3–** # of interagency data-sharing agreements or partnerships established to support demographic and geographic disaggregation

- **Action:** Strengthen agency wide Environmental Justice (EJ) accountability through coordinated reporting, data disaggregation, and program evaluation practices.
 - **Metric 1–** # of DHCD programs reporting disaggregated demographic and geographic investment data
 - **Metric 2–** # of DHCD programs incorporating demographic or geographic analysis into funding or policy evaluation processes
- **Action:** Deepen partnerships with community organizations, local jurisdictions, Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs), and other stakeholders to strengthen pipeline development and ensure programs continue reaching communities with the greatest need.
 - **Metric 1–** # of sustained partnerships supporting underserved communities
 - **Metric 2–** # of eligible project referrals received through community or partner networks
 - **Metric 3–** % of pipeline generated from overburdened, underserved, or high-need areas
- **Action:** Conduct feasibility studies for Just Communities (JC) designation communities and needs assessment for digital access.
 - **Metric 1–** # of homes that are unconnected or digitally unsupported by census tract
 - **Metric 2–** # of organizations that provide digital services within Just Communities (JC) designations

FY29 External Actions and Metrics

- **Action:** Implement a targeted citizen outreach process to inform the development of Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant strategic reports.
 - **Metric 1–** # of overburdened/ underserved persons engaged
 - **Metric 2–** % of overburdened/ underserved persons engaged relative to total survey/ outreach responses
- **Action:** Technical assistance (TA) capacity building to increase community health and wealth by increasing the quantity and improving the quality of grant and loan applications to underserved, overburdened, and vulnerable communities (People, Place, Planet).
 - **Metric 1–** # of TA sessions or engagements delivered to local stakeholders, including the number and type of participants engaged (e.g., Nonprofits, Public Housing Authorities (PHAs), Local Small Businesses/ local developers, residents, local governments, community organizations)
 - **Metric 2–** # of grant/ loan applications submitted that include applicants, development team members, local stakeholders (e.g., Nonprofits, Public Housing Authorities (PHAs), Local Small Businesses/local developers, residents, local

governments, community organizations) in the planning, development, management, ownership, or ongoing oversight (when applicable)

- **Action:** Deliver technical assistance (TA) to communities with a high number of unsheltered people to identify barriers to shelter/housing, gaps in local resources, and housing policy and process improvements needed.
 - **Metric 1–** # of local gaps analysis
 - **Metric 2–** # of technical assistance plans completed
- **Action:** Implement collaborative property enforcement process and policies with local code enforcement, Office of the Attorney General (OAG), and legal services.
 - **Metric 1–** # of violations that were resolved
- **Action:** Assess results of targeted outreach and technical assistance efforts in increasing participation and investment in target communities through programs.
 - **Metric 1–** % increase in the number of competitive awards made to target communities compared to prior years
 - **Metric 2–** # of opportunities identified to refine outreach and technical assistance (TA) strategies for future funding rounds
- **Action:** Use program outcomes and partner feedback to refine funding tools, outreach strategy, and project prioritization for long-term community impact.
 - **Metric 1–** # increase in sustained partnerships supporting underserved, overburdened, and climate vulnerable communities
 - **Metric 2–** % of funded and pipeline projects located in overburdened, underserved, or high-need areas
 - **Metric 3–** % year-over-year change in funding deployed to projects advancing healthy food access, child care, small business growth, or community revitalization
- **Action:** Conduct Community-Based Technical Assistance, Housing Resource, and Engagement events using the MDEnviroScreen and Just Communities (JC) Viewer to microtarget areas to increase awareness of DHCD housing and community development programs, services, funding opportunities, and resources.
 - **Metric 1–** # of regional technical assistance and/ or community engagement events conducted in partnership with local stakeholders, including the number and type of participants engaged (e.g., residents, nonprofits, local governments, community organizations)
 - **Metric 2–** # of direct community feedback surveys administered
 - **Metric 3–** # of surveys received regarding the types of housing and community development technical assistance, resources, and support that would be most meaningful and beneficial within their communities

Strategic Alignment

The DHCD FY27–FY29 Environmental Justice Strategic Equity Plan represents more than a roadmap. It reflects our department's commitment to understanding and furthering environmental justice, equity, and people-centered placemaking into the way we serve Maryland's communities. By aligning each division's work with the V.O.I.C.E. Executive Order, the Just Communities Act, and Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing, DHCD is strengthening its ability to make informed, data-driven decisions that expand opportunity, reduce barriers, and direct resources where they are needed most.

Over the next three years, this strategic equity plan will guide the Department through a course of discovering community needs, designing responsive solutions, and testing and refining our approaches based on measurable outcomes and community feedback. Success will depend on collaboration across divisions, partnerships with state agencies and meaningful engagement with the people and places most impacted by historic disinvestment, and environmental Injustices

This document will continue to evolve as we learn, adapt, and strengthen our practices. Through accountability, innovation, and sustained partnership, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development will continue building systems that support healthier, more loveable, more connected, and more just communities across Maryland ensuring that every resident has the opportunity to thrive and that every investment contributes to a more equitable future.