



Howard County Community Plan for  
Children, Youth and Families

FY 21 - FY 25

## A Message From the County Executive



We know that during troubling times, communities preserve dignity and compassion by caring for their most vulnerable family members, friends and neighbors. We are pleased to present the Local Children's Board Community Plan for Children, Youth and Families as a roadmap for how public agencies and the private sector can work together to improve the quality of life of its residents, even in the midst of uncertainty. The tenets of this framework are, at their core, the strengths of our county and its residents. Education, diversity and access to quality resources for healthcare and wellness are those areas in which our community investment has established Howard County as one of the nation's great places to grow, live and thrive.

The plan's goals and strategies align with HoCo S.T.R.I.V.E.S. (Strategies To Reach an Inclusive Vision and Equitable Solutions), an education initiative that supports children's mental and behavioral health programs, academic, social and emotional learning supports and community capacity building. This initiative provides greater depth to our deployment of attention and resources in support of children's social and educational success. We believe that education is enhanced by encouraging regular attendance and emphasizing workforce development opportunities. We know that diversity's real value is reached when barriers to equity are eliminated in systems and their entry points.

Moreover, we affirm that behavioral health resources can help families in reducing the impact of maladies like substance misuse disorder, suicidal ideation, homelessness and more. Through collaboration, training and accountability, we will create new pathways for all residents to experience the benefits of living in this great county – health, stability and mobility. I want to thank our team at the Department of Community Resources and Services, the Local Children's Board and all of our community partners for their time and expertise in developing this important framework.

We look forward to joining you for the work and success of the future.

Truly Yours,

Dr. Calvin Ball, County Executive

## A Message From DCRS and the Local Children's Board



On behalf of the Howard County Local Children's Board (LCB) we are proud to present our Community Plan for Children, Youth and Families. Howard County is an immensely diverse community, racially, economically and socially. As a community, we pride ourselves on providing a vast array of opportunities for our children, youth and families to thrive – yet we recognize that for many, these opportunities remain out of reach. This plan reflects the seeds of change. The goals discussed on the pages that follow demonstrate our commitment to creating an equitable, healthy, safe and economically stable Howard County where all of our children, youth and families thrive.

We believe that together, through public and private partnerships, interagency coordination and community support, we can collectively grow and nurture these seeds of change. We understand that this work is complex and will take time. To that end, we shaped this process by investing time in engaging in an inclusive, yearlong

effort to develop a common agenda and commitment to creating pathways forward for our most vulnerable. This document represents the beginning of a multi-sector, collaborative approach developed to foster the use of data-driven strategies to achieve a set of shared results. We are invested in the promise of our community and will work together to invest in and achieve results that will measurably improve people's lives.

In the face of the COVID-19 global pandemic, the actions outlined within this plan are more critical than ever. This is not just the Local Children's Board's plan – this is our community's plan for the children, youth and families living in Howard County. It will take all of us to accomplish the bold goals and transformational results it envisions. We invite our full community to join us in the quest for a more equitable future for all.



Jacqueline R. Scott, Director  
Department of Community Resources and Services



Dawn Duignan, Chair  
Local Children's Board

The Department of Community Resources and Services (DCRS) is Howard County's Human Service Agency. The Department is comprised of nine offices. We work to address needs across the lifespan in a culturally competent and proficient manner and promote full inclusion for individuals living with disabilities.

This is a living plan that is designed to be nimble and responsive to the changing needs in our community. In February 2020, HCLCB held the first of what will be an ongoing series of community conversations to invite feedback on this plan. In response to COVID-19, we halted these in-person gatherings and hope to resume them as soon as it is safe to do so.

## About this Plan

The Local Children's Board (LCB) is committed to creating equitable services and opportunities across the county, especially for those who are the most vulnerable. In 2018, the LCB developed the Equity Report using qualitative and quantitative data to tell the story of opportunity, across race, ethnicity and income levels in Howard County. This Community Plan for Children, Youth and Families draws on data from that report and other county needs assessments to lay out an actionable plan for collective impact that ensures **ALL children, youth and families in Howard County are safe, healthy and have equitable opportunities to thrive.** We are grateful to our Board, Guiding Coalition and community stakeholders who helped to inform and shape this plan.

### LCB Board Members

Sharon Afework  
Tonya Aikens  
Charmayne Anderson  
Fayth Bowie  
Erica Byrne  
Kelly Cimino  
Bita Dayhoff  
Raul Delerme  
Co-Tu Doan  
Dawn Duignan  
Father Leandro Fazolini  
Rich Gibson  
Brianna Hughes  
Stephen Liggett-Creel  
Timothy Madden  
Michael Martirano  
Mike Mitchell  
Lisa Myers  
Edisa Padder  
Maura Rossman  
Melissa Rosenberg  
Jacqueline Scott  
Francine Trout

### Staff:

Candace Ball  
Benjamin Barnwell  
Sucora Best  
Triston Cooper  
Marsha Dawson  
Kim Eisenreich  
Valerie Harvey  
Marchelle LeBlanc  
Jasmine Wigginton

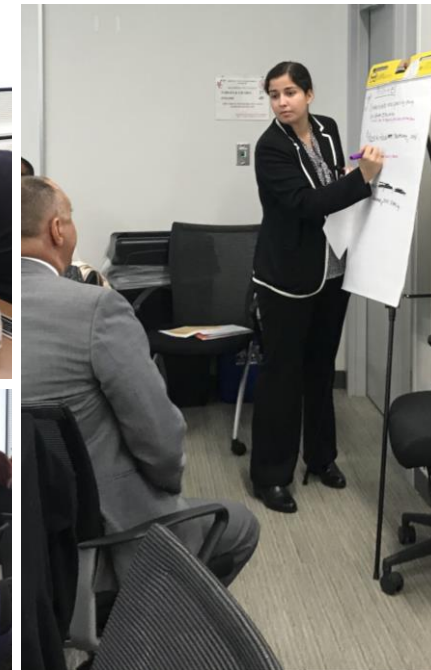
### Guiding Coalition:

Seema Agarwal-Harding	Cynthia Nicodemus
Toni Bailum	Shereima Smith
Lisa Bowie	Donna Sturdivant
Barbie Johnson-Lewis	Lanlan Xu
Andrew Masters	

Beyond those listed here, we are grateful to the residents and community leaders who helped shape this plan by attending our first Community Conversation.

If you need this information in an alternate format, contact Maryland Access Point of Howard County at 410-313-1234 (voice/relay) or [map@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:map@howardcountymd.gov).

## Acknowledgements



## VISION

All children, youth and families in Howard County are safe, healthy and have equitable opportunities to thrive.

## MISSION

To improve the lives of all children, youth and families in Howard County by convening community stakeholders and aligning resources for measurable impact.

## INCLUSION

The LCB advocates and supports all members of the Howard County community regardless of age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, disability and immigration status.



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We are focused on becoming the best county not just overall – but *for all* – by being data informed, people driven and expanding opportunity for all.

.....



Dr. Calvin Ball, Howard County Executive



## AFFORDABLE AND QUALITY EDUCATION AND TRAINING

**1** Over the next 5 years, Howard County Local Children's Board is focusing on affordable and quality education and training. We will invest in setting children and youth on a life-long path to success by working to improve early education access and opportunities, decreasing rates of chronic absenteeism and increasing access to job training.



## INCREASE INCLUSIVENESS, AWARENESS AND COORDINATION OF RESOURCES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF EACH COMMUNITY

**2** Howard County is a caring community that is committed to making its resources available to all residents. These connections are difficult to make for some families with access challenges, even for the most basic needs. By increasing awareness of resources for food, housing and healthcare within hard-to-reach communities, we can support families' efforts to increase their self-sufficiency and financial stability through education, training and affordable, quality childcare.



## ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE AND QUALITY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE

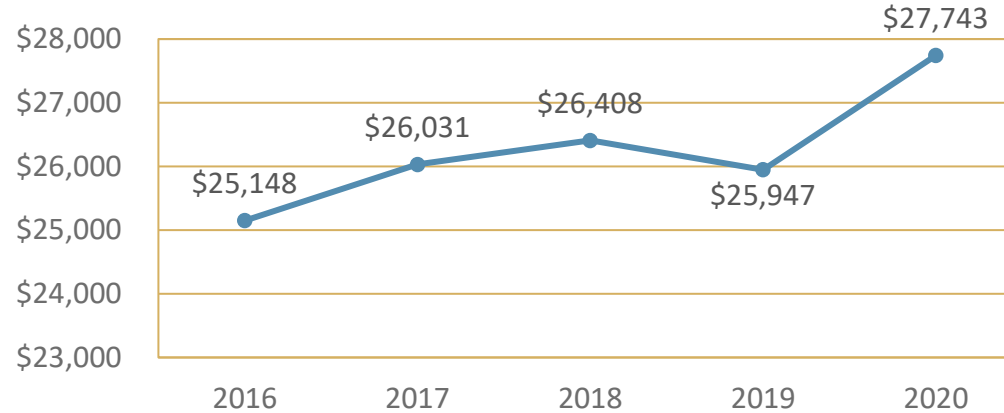
**3** Behavioral health care for all residents in Howard County is a major focus for the county. Many behavioral health indicators in Howard County are trending in the wrong direction. With this priority, the HCLCB will reduce youth rates of hopelessness and suicidal ideation while addressing the effects of intergenerational traumas by increasing access to mental health services.



**AFFORDABLE AND QUALITY  
EDUCATION AND TRAINING**



**Estimated Childcare Costs in  
Howard County Per Year**



**Children who receive early childhood services:**

- **Have higher scores** on cognitive, reading and math tests;
- Are **more than twice as likely** to attend a four-year college and to delay parenthood; and
- Are **five times more likely** to be law abiding adults than those who did not.

•Maryland Family Network Child Care Demographics. Maryland Child Care Resource Network , 2016-2020.  
 •Bosland, Julie, et al. "Supporting Early Childhood Success Action Kit for Municipal Leaders." NLC Institute for Youth, Education, and Families, no. 6, 2008.

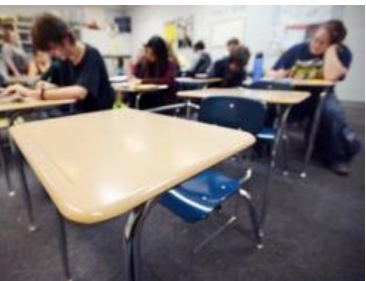
**Priority 1**

Early learning is critical to establishing healthy habits and knowledge that put children on a path to success. The cost of childcare in Howard County is one of the top three highest household expenses. The high and increasing cost of childcare leads to inequitable outcomes for children from low-income areas. These children are left without access to early learning opportunities that leads to significant achievement gaps and fewer opportunities to succeed throughout life.



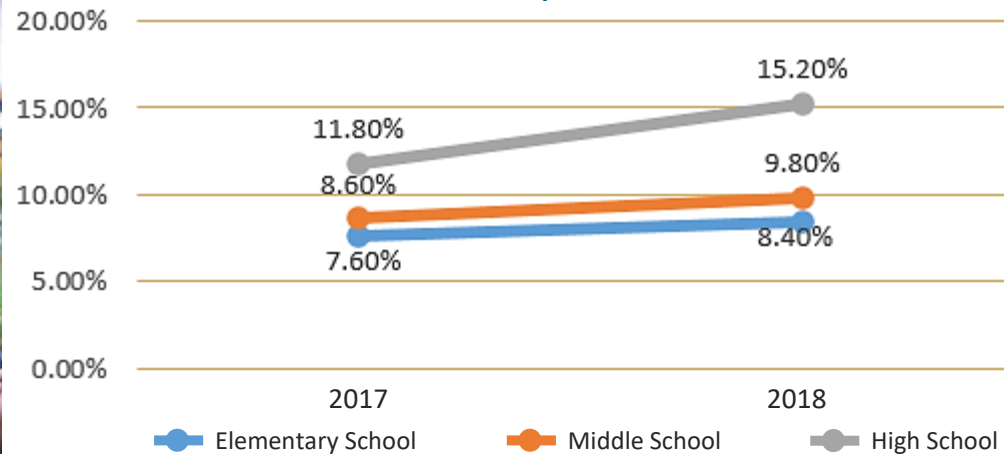


AFFORDABLE AND QUALITY  
EDUCATION AND TRAINING



Class attendance is **eight times more predictive** of class failure than test scores.

Chronic Absenteeism Rates at County Title I Schools by Grade Level



Chronic Absenteeism: Missing 10% or more of school days due to absence for any reason, both excused and unexcused.

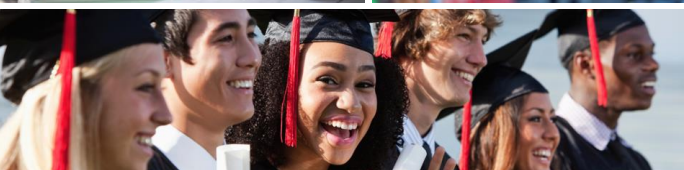
- Allensworth, Elaine M., and John Q. Easton. What Matters for Staying On-Track and Graduating in Chicago Public High Schools. 2007, pp. 1–68.
- Maryland State Department of Education Report Card. 2017-2018
- [www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org)

## Priority **1**

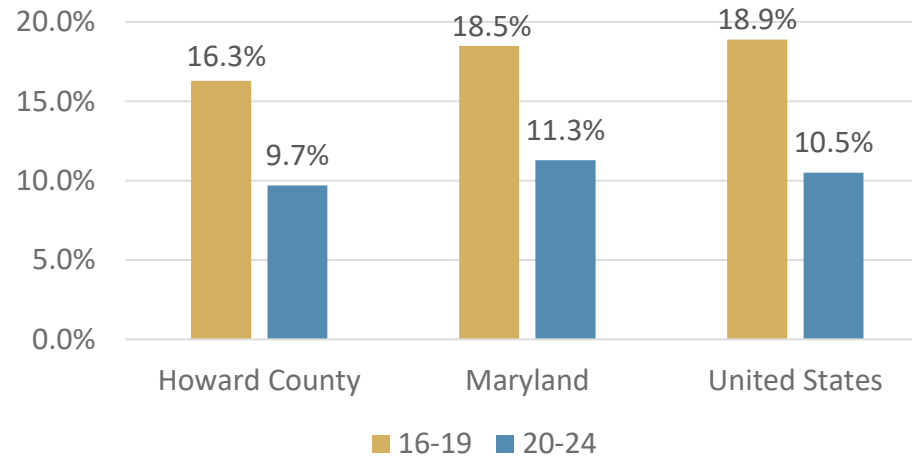
It is critical for youth to obtain a high school diploma to achieve success after high school. Regular class attendance is essential for success in school and life. Research reports that chronic absenteeism is one of the most accurate predictors of high school graduation and post secondary completion. One to two weeks of absence per semester significantly decreases the probability of a student graduating. Good attendance is a key first step to improve student learning and academic performance.



AFFORDABLE AND QUALITY  
EDUCATION AND TRAINING



2014-2018 Estimated Youth Unemployment Rate



High school graduates are **more likely** to be employed, make higher taxable income and aid in job generation.

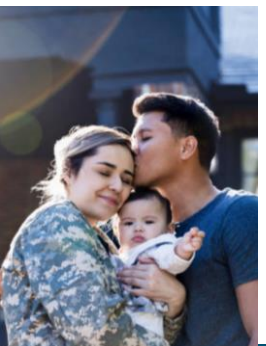
Priority **1**

Youth need assistance obtaining a high school diploma or GED **and** occupational skills training. When these opportunities are provided, youth experience increased income, security, self-confidence, mental health and personal development. Youth need preparation and nurturing to have a bright and productive future. Without this foundation, youth not only suffer today but throughout life as they are more likely to depend on public services, abuse substances and take part in illicit activities.

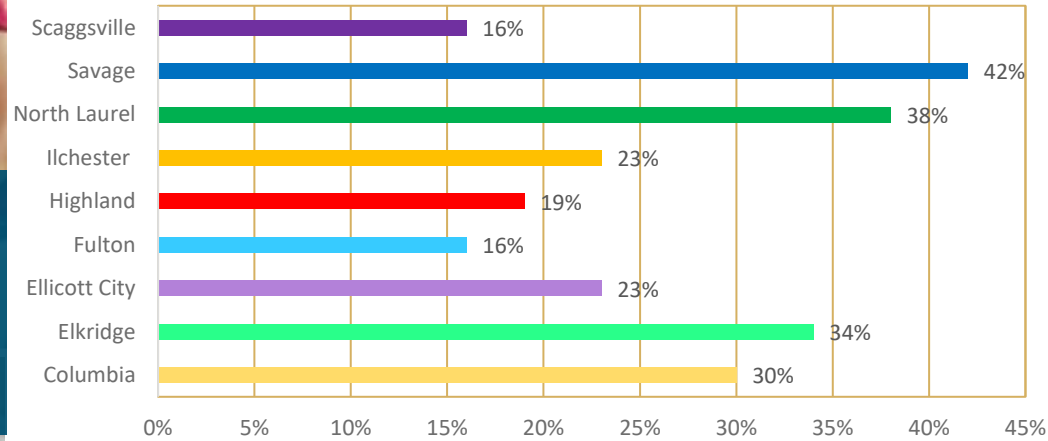
•Robinson, Shanks, Meehan, Hallmarks of Effective Youth Employment Programs from Research and Programs Across the United State. Detroit Employment Solutions Corporation, 2017.  
 •[American Community Survey 5-year Estimate](#)  
 •America's Promise, <https://www.americaspromise.org/high-school-graduation-facts-ending-dropout-crisis>



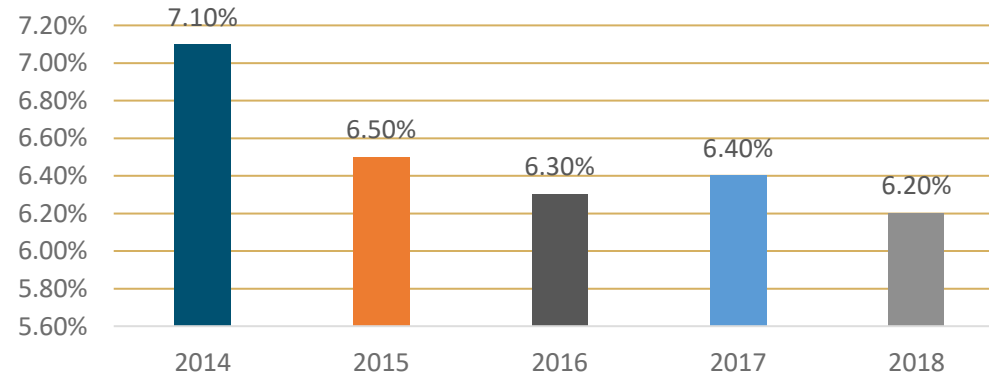
**INCREASE INCLUSIVENESS,  
 AWARENESS AND  
 COORDINATION OF  
 RESOURCES TO MEET THE  
 NEEDS OF EACH COMMUNITY**



### Percentage of Households in Howard County Living at or Below ALICE and Poverty Threshold by Location



### Percentage of Children Living in Poverty



## Priority 2

The average cost of living in Howard County for a household of four is \$101,772. This threshold often places families in a position to make tough choices about investing in educational supports for their children and paying bills. Additionally, the stress of financial concerns on a family leads to instability in the home environment, which impacts academic performance and social/emotional well-being. Two-generation, early interventions helps families achieve financial and educational stability that allows parents and children to thrive together.

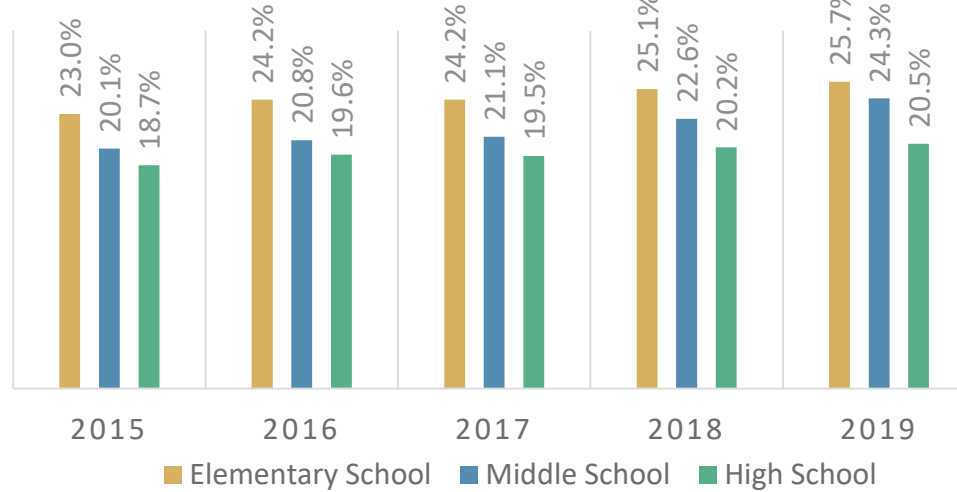
- Annie E. Casey, Kids Count Data Center: <https://datacenter.kidscount.org>.
- United Way ALICE Report 2018
- ACS Self-Sufficiency Indicators Howard County, MD 2019
- [www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org)
- 2019 CHNA
- Chien, Nina C; Mistry, Rashita S. "Geographic Variations in Cost of Living: Associations with Family and Child Well-Being." Child Development. 84 (2013): 209 – 225.



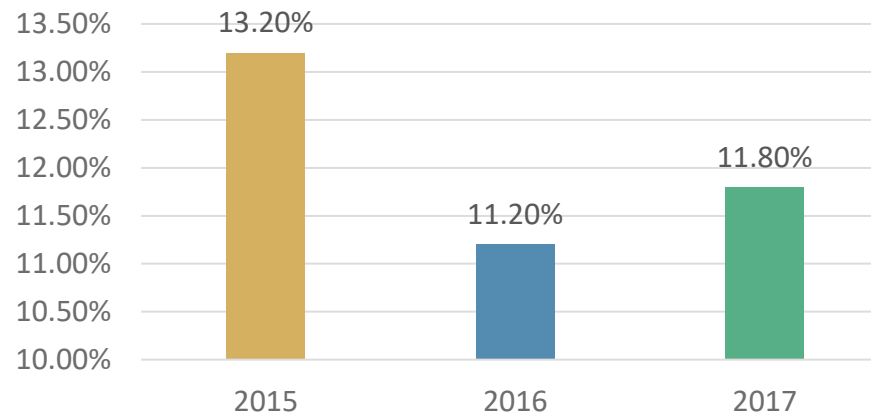
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Percentage of Students Receiving FARMS



Percentage of Howard County Children Who Are Food Insecure



Priority **2**

For many children in Howard County, getting the nutrients and energy needed to grow and learn is a day-to-day challenge. Not having enough healthy food impacts a child's physical and mental well-being as well as their ability to achieve academically. In order for all Howard County residents to thrive, they must have access to nutritious food.

“A child’s chance for a bright tomorrow starts with getting enough food to eat today.”

Feeding America

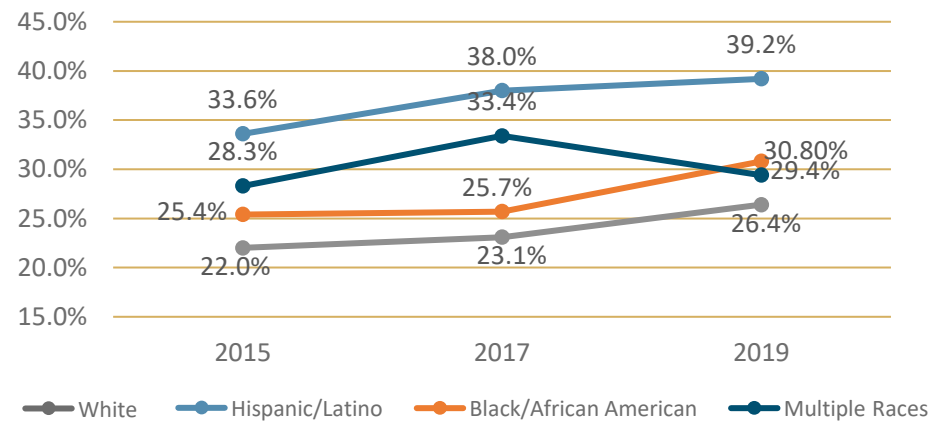
- Feeding America; <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2017/child/maryland/county/howard>
- 2019 CHNA
- 2019 Feeding American
- 2018 Community Action Council



## Between 2014 and 2017, suicide was the leading cause of death for ages 15-19 in Howard County



Percentage of Students Who Felt Sad or Hopeless, By Race – High School



- Howard County Local Children's Board. Access to Opportunity in Howard County: Making the Case for Equity. 2019.
- Maryland Department of Health. Youth Risk Behavior Survey/Youth Tobacco Survey. <https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/ccdpc/Reports/Pages/YRBS-Main.aspx>.
- Community Health Indicators Report Card. Howard County Health Department 2019.

### Priority 3

Declining youth behavioral health is a silent crisis. In Howard County, one in five high school students seriously considered committing suicide. Youth depression affects growth, development, school performance, engagement and relationships. Howard County is at a critical point in youth behavioral health and does not have enough services or supports to meet the need. Without adequate mental and behavioral health services and supports, our youth will continue to struggle.

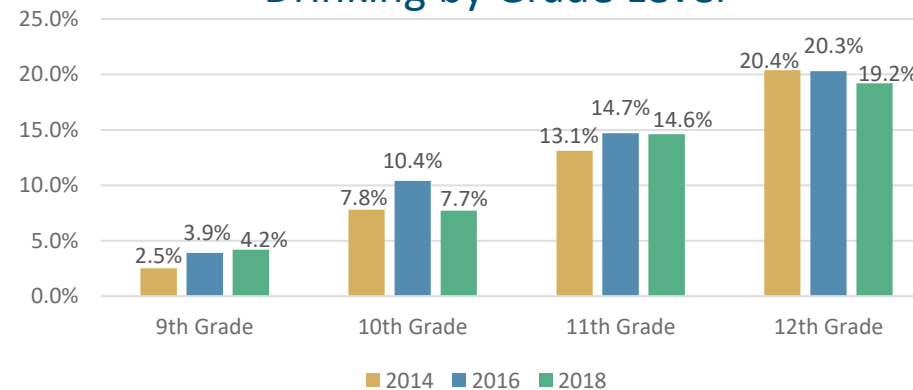


ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE  
AND QUALITY BEHAVIORAL  
HEALTH CARE



A 2016 study of 10,000 adolescents found that **two-thirds of those who developed alcohol or substance use disorders** experienced at least one mental health disorder

Percentage of those who reported Binge Drinking by Grade Level



Binge drinking: 5 or more drinks on one occasion for males, 4 or more drinks on one occasion for females

- 2019 Howard County Community Health Needs Assessment
- 2018 Howard County Health Assessment
- Miller, Caroline, and Child Mind Institute. "[Mental Health Disorders and Teen Substance Use](#)." Child Mind Institute
- American Psychological Association, American Psychological Association, [psycnet.apa.org/record/1994-09966-001](https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1994-09966-001).

Priority **3**

Youth who engage in substance abuse are more likely to drop out of school and consider suicide. Children and youth who have social and emotional support learn vital coping strategies and positive ways of managing life challenges, which improves their overall health, well-being and resiliency.

# Planting the Seeds of Change



- 1 Affordable and quality education and training
- 2 Increase inclusiveness, awareness and coordination of resources to meet the needs of each community
- 3 Access to affordable and quality behavioral health care

## STRATEGIES

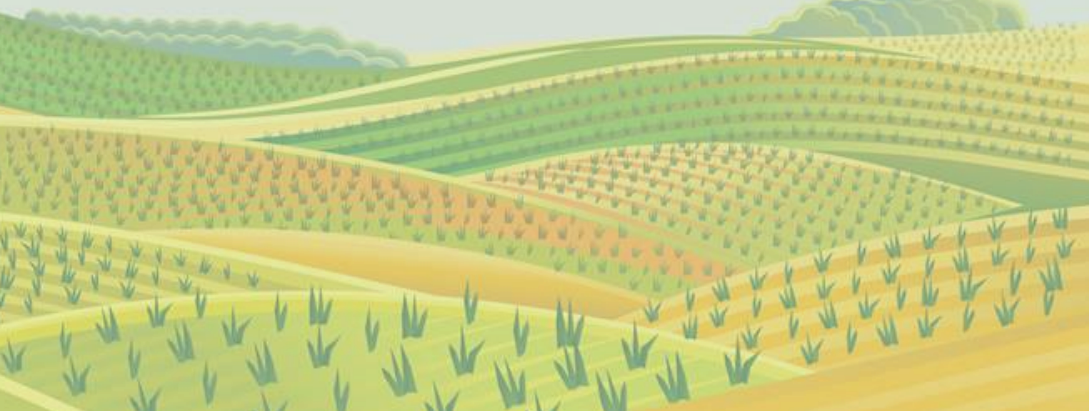
- Increase awareness and capacity to access resources
- Family-focused, *equitable* policies
- Youth engagement
- Access to training
- Empower, support and amplify the voices of historically underserved communities
- Cross-sector collaboration
- More \$\$\$ for children and families
- Racial equity training
- Life and job skills for youth
- Childcare
- Community-led solutions
- Data sharing + accountability for results
- Advocacy for family and foster youth housing

## RESULTS

Children and youth will be successful in school and life

Children, youth and families are healthy and thriving

Families are safe and economically stable





**COUNTY EXECUTIVE**  
Howard County



- LCB BOARD**
- Autism Society
  - Child Advocate
  - Community Action Council
  - Dept. Community Resources and Services
  - Department of Housing
  - Dept. of Juvenile Services
  - Department of Social Services
  - FIRN

- Health Department
- Hope Counseling Center
- Howard County Library
- Howard County Police Department
- Howard County Public School System
- Maryland State Dept. of Education
- Office of Workforce Development
- Recreation and Parks

- St. John the Evangelist Church
- State's Attorney Office
- Voices for Children
- Youth Advisory Council

- GUIDING COALITION**
- Community Advocates
  - Enterprise Community Partners
  - House Howard
  - Howard Community College
  - Howard County Public School System
  - Oakland Mills Local Leadership Team
  - Parents

**RESULTS**



**Children and youth will be successful in school and life**



**Children, youth and families are healthy and thriving**



**Families are safe and economically stable**



**RESULTS**

**Children and youth will be successful in school and life**

**Children, youth and families are healthy and thriving**

**Families are safe and economically stable**

**PROGRESS INDICATORS**

- #/% of children demonstrating Kindergarten readiness
- #/% proficiency on the Maryland State Assessment
- #/% of students chronically absent from school
- #/% of unemployed youth

- #/% of Howard County youth who felt sad and hopeless
- #/% of Howard County youth who seriously considered attempting suicide during past year

- #/% of families and children receiving childcare subsidies
- #/% of children living in poverty
- #/% of individuals facing food insecurity
- #/% of residents living at or below the poverty and ALICE thresholds
- #/% FARMs participation

\*Progress Indicators will be set annually by the Local Children's Board

**PRIORITIES**

1

**Affordable and quality education and training**

2

**Increase inclusiveness, awareness and coordination of resources to meet the needs of each community**

3

**Access to affordable and quality behavioral health care**

**STRATEGIES**

- Empower, support and amplify the voices of historically underserved communities
- Build awareness of and capacity to access resources, including food, housing and other basic needs
- Advocate for family-focused and equitable policies (i.e. increased eligibility for early childhood services)
- Attract more funding for children and families
- Increase LCB capacity to foster cross-sector collaboration among government, business, nonprofits, faith and civic groups
- Advocate for expansion of childcare options
- Advocate for affordable housing options for families and youth aging out of foster care
- Empower and support community-led solutions
- Increase youth engagement in community solutions that affect their lives and futures
- Engage businesses to work with youth to build life and job skills
- Expand access to training (job, life skills, trauma-informed)
- Promote equity and expand racial equity training
- Broaden adoption of Results-Based Accountability and data-sharing

**Vision:**

All children, youth and families in Howard County are safe, healthy and have equitable opportunities to thrive.

**Mission:**

To improve the lives of all children, youth and families in Howard County by convening community stakeholders and aligning resources for measurable impact.