Justice Reinvestment Advisory Board Meeting

Wednesday, May 7 · 12:00 – 1:00pm
Google Meet joining info
Video call link: https://meet.google.com/iyn-hfrp-irf

Board Attendees

- Ama Frimpong, *Casa de Maryland*
- Yanet Amanuel, *The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Maryland*
- Judge Carlos Acosta, *Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA) Criminal Law & Practice Section Council*
- Victoria Reaves, *Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV)*
- Lindsey O'Neill, *Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA)* (designee)
- Jen Corbin, *Anne Arundel County Crisis Response System*
- Cailey Locklair, *Maryland Retailers Association*
- Bill Gaertner, *Gatekeepers Inc.*

Agenda

- **Welcome and Introductions - Bethany Young, Director of Policy and Legislation, GOCPP**

- **GOCPP Updates - Brandi Cahn, Assistant Director of JRA, GOCPP**
    - FY25 PIGF
        - Total Awarded: approx. $13 million
        - Q3 reports due on 4/30/25
        - Will assess any modifications needed to make for subrecipients that are underspending
        - FY25 grantees will have until May 31st to make any budget modifications to the current award.
    - FY26 PIGF
        - 100 applications received; $24 million requested
            - Most since the inception of this program
        - The appropriation for this year is $11.1 million, and $9.9 million are available for grants
        - $1 million is set aside to fund psychiatrists to support the implementation of Parole legislation passed in session and eliminate risk assessment backlog.
        - The application scoring process is in progress. Some review teams include external reviewers from this board.
    - **Legislation: Corrections and Reentry - Director Bethany Young**
        - Presents legislation passed in session, described in groups based on theme
        - Parole and addressing over-incarceration

        - HB 1123/SB 181 – Correctional Services – **Geriatric and Medical Parole**
        - HB 853 - Postconviction Review – Procedure to Reduce Duration of Sentence (**Maryland Second Look Act**)
        - SB 432 – Criminal Records – Expungement and Maryland Judiciary Case Search (**Expungement Reform Act of 2025**)
    - Improving reentry outcomes and strengthening families impacted by incarceration
        - HB 415/SB 378 – Creating the **Family Literacy Pilot** for Incarcerated Parents
        - HB 634/SB 295 – Establishing the Income Tax Reconciliation Program (**Maryland Fair Taxation for Justice-Involved Individuals Act**)
    - Data transparency and oversight
        - HB 22/SB 84 – Requiring DPSCS to Study **Individuals' Locations Before and After Incarceration**
        - HB 877 – Extending the **Prison Education Delivery Reform Commission**
        - HB 646/SB 811 – Extending the **Task Force on the Creation of a Division of Returning Citizens and Expanded Reentry Services**
    - There is also a slide on bills that did not pass, which members can view on their own. Young will send out detailed summaries of the legislation discussed.

- **Maryland Equitable Justice Collaborative Presentation - Christian Gant, Assistant Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General**
    - Presented along with Kirsten Downs, Office of the Public Defender
    - MEJC is a first-of-its-kind partnership between the Maryland Office of the Public Defender and the Office of the Attorney General.
    - MEJC brings together over 40 stakeholders. It is aimed at addressing mass incarceration in Maryland and the racial disparities in its criminal legal system.
    - Black Marylanders make up about 30% of the population but 71% of the state's prison population. These racial disparities demand structural solutions.
    - The collaborative has grounded its work in data, lived experience, and a consensus-driven approach.
    - 7 work groups create recommendations, each focusing on a key stage of the legal system: Policing, Law and Sentencing, Health, Prisons and Jails, Reentry, Workforce and Education, Youth Justice.
    - The MEJC Report, "Breaking the 71%" was released in March 2025 and contains 18 recommendations with implementation steps and anticipated impacts.
        - Recommendations focus on law enforcement, sentencing, incarceration, reentry, and youth justice.
        - Each workgroup created 2-3 recommendations

- Law Enforcement Policies & Practices Recommendations
    1. Conduct a statewide needs assessment for crisis response
        a. Reduce police presence in crisis responses
    2. End non-safety-related traffic stops
    3. Mandate cognitive behavioral theory training for officers
- Criminal Law & Sentencing Reform Recommendations
    4. Analyze the criminal legal process for disparities
        a. Comprehensive analysis to identify geographic and racial disparities and biases
        b. Standardizing prosecutorial guidelines and eliminating biases in risk assessments
    5. Pilot needs-based sentencing program
        a. Include case management aspect
    6. Reduce unnecessary pretrial confinement
- Health & Human Services Recommendations
    7. Trauma-informed mental health services in jails
    8. ACE screening by primary care physicians
        a. Black and brown children face higher rates of ACEs due to systemic issues like generational poverty and racial discrimination
- Prison, Jail & Detention Facility Reform Recommendations
    9. Expand geriatric and medical parole
        a. Work has been done on this in legislature during the past session
        b. These efforts are proven to be safe and effective
    10. Increase parole transparency and access
        a. Requiring detailed reasons for parole denials
        b. Providing incarcerated individuals with access to materials at intake
    11. Support emerging adults (age 18-25) with targeted services
        a. Age group has 44% recidivism rate
        b. Developmentally appropriate interventions and cultural competency training for staff
- Promoting Successful Reentry Recommendations
    12. Expand access to community-based reentry programs
    13. Review and reduce long sentences
        a. Enact a comprehensive Second Look Act, which has been accomplished in the past session
        b. Black and brown individuals are serving disproportionately long sentences compared to white counterparts
    14. Study and reform probation/parole fines and fees
- Education, Workforce Development & Economic Opportunity Recommendations
    15. End criminalization of school-based behavior
        a. Tracking school-based arrest data, enhancing implicit bias training for SROs, and revising discipline policies
        b. Maryland lacks clarity on what defines a delinquent act
        c. Black students constitute 33% of the school population, but account for 57% of arrests

16. Improve GED access for justice-involved youth
    a. Allow them to complete GED without needing to withdrawal from school, which affects many youth after leaving DJS
    b. Suggests that the general assembly waive compulsory school attendance for DJS-involved youth and allow them pursue GED courses post-custody

- Youth Justice Recommendations
    17. End automatic charging of youth as adults
        a. Currently, black children who make up 31% of Maryland's youth population account for 81% of the automatic adult charges
        b. limit the offenses eligible for automatic adult charges and require mandatory judicial review for cases involving children
    18. Require judicial training on implicit bias and youth development
        a. Training for judges and magistrates
        b. Research indicates that when judicial discretion is exercised, Black children face harsher outcomes
- Now entering the implementation and engagement phase where MEJC will support key decision policy makers, community advocates, and agencies as they work to adopt and fund these changes.
- Director Young asks how MEJC plans for legislative sessions and what they will be focusing on next year. She also asks about how it is determined whether a solution is more programmatic or if it requires a statutory fix.
    - MEJC aims to view recommendations in different groups, either legislative, administrative, or programmatic.
    - Currently in the process of creating a list of priorities for next session
    - Distinguishing 1) the issues that the collaborative is in a position to take the lead on from 2) other issues containing enough momentum and coalitions around them that MEJC can just provide support
- Yanet Amanuel asks if MEJC has any plans to support the implementation of these recommendations. She is with the Second Look Coalition and they are focusing on educating states attorneys on the bill and their alignment with petitioners.
    - They would support this, but MEJC is in a position to bring people to the table and create an environment where these conversations can be held. MEJC will need to determine where they will be most helpful in these steps. They do not want to supplant the work already being done by these coalitions.
    - They intend to talk to agencies and encourage them to adopt recommendations. In this, they will also collaborate with the agency throughout implementation to ensure the plan can be successful.
- Downs brings up an accountability component to MEJC, as the collaborative contains people from all different spaces that would be able to understand what is or is not working and should voice if there is a need to pivot.
- Young asks how MEJC tracks outcomes – what will data tracking and reporting on outputs/outcomes look like?
    - Lots of discussion still to be had on that, but creating a dashboard has been

discussed. Need to make sure data is supportive, transparent, and deliberate.
    - Cahn asks if MEJC is planning to continue their work with the Crime Justice Institute for technical assistance.
        - Downs thinks so, MEJC is really trying to figure out where they can get the most useful and effective assistance. They aim to continue delivering these presentations to reach individuals in a position to implement these changes.
        - Cahn will follow up with Downs regarding this topic.
    - Cahn also asks what this advisory board and GOCPP can do to help promote these recommendations.
        - It is important to have a good understanding of what MEJC is aiming to accomplish.
        - Once next year's priorities are established, MEJC will be reaching out to individuals who are equipped to move these priorities forward.
        - Sharing the report with those that fit into the recommendations will be helpful. Also share it with those who do not care about these issues to hopefully change the narrative surrounding these topics.
    - Cahn reminds Gant and Downs that GOCPP is the state administering agency, and therefore has funds to support public safety initiatives.

- **Member Updates**
    - No updates.

- **Open Discussion and Next Steps**
    - Cahn will send the MEJC report out to board members.
    - The next meeting is scheduled for July 30th.
    - Members should reach out to Cahn with any agenda items they would like to discuss or any presentation ideas.