



THE OFFICE OF GOVERNOR
WES MOORE

FACT SHEET

Governor Moore's Economic Growth Agenda

Introduction

Maryland boasts an abundant number of assets that other states would envy, including its highly-educated population, world-class institutions, strategic location, and leadership in industries and sectors such as life sciences, information technology, defense, and aerospace. Despite these advantages, Maryland's economic growth has remained stagnant – consistently below most of our neighboring states and our competitors, and compared to national averages.

From 2017 to 2022, the U.S. economy grew by 11%, compared to 3% for Maryland's economic growth. In addition, Maryland's population rapidly declined after the COVID-19 pandemic, impacting the availability of talent and a significant reduction to state revenues. In an analysis conducted by the Economic and Business Research Center at the University of Arizona, in 2022, Maryland [lost more than 14,000 residents](#) with a bachelor's degree or higher. In addition, Maryland's population outflow during the Great Migration (65,000) ranks [fifth in the nation](#) – behind California, Illinois, New Jersey, and New York. The largest share – about 28,000 or 14% – moved to Virginia. Our stagnant economic growth and population loss are leading factors to significant fiscal challenges the state is facing over the next few years.

Progress has been made during Governor Moore's first two years in office to reverse this prolonged state of economic decline. Since taking office in January 2023, more than 50,000 jobs have been created. In addition, more than \$4 billion in private sector investments have been generated since Governor Moore took office, supporting various economic development projects across the state, including business attraction and expansion, housing, community development, and transit-oriented development projects. The Department of Commerce's successful efforts to attract and expand businesses in Maryland alone have generated 6,810 new jobs in the state.

In partnership with the General Assembly, the Governor has also successfully enacted pieces of legislation geared at improving Maryland's business climate, strengthening our competitive advantage in key industries and sectors, and bolstering our talent eco-system.

These include:

- Passage of **The Critical Infrastructure Streamlining Act** which aims to streamline the regulatory process for approving industries that rely on backup power generators during power outages and will usher in the technology infrastructure industry – namely the data center industry – in Maryland and bolster the state’s economic competitiveness.
- Passage of the **Transparent Government Act**, which aims to streamline state permitting, licensing, and certifications and create reliability, accountability, and predictability for the permitting process.
- Passage of the **Housing Expansion and Affordability Act**, which seeks to expand the availability of affordable housing across our state to help Maryland attract, retain, and grow talent and strengthen our competitiveness.
- Passage of the **Pava LaPere Legacy of Innovation Act**, which drives investments in programs aimed at bolstering Maryland’s startup ecosystem and innovation economy.

While collectively, the Moore-Miller Administration and the Maryland General Assembly have taken meaningful steps to bolster our economic competitiveness, more is required to position our state for short-term economic gains and long-term, sustainable growth. Starting with an executive order that he signed in December 2024 and culminating with his FY 2026 budget that features historic investments in economic and workforce development, and an ambitious legislative agenda, Governor Moore’s economic growth agenda will build upon the progress made to date under his administration to continue the momentum occurring in our state.

Details of the Executive Order

Governor Moore’s sweeping executive order bolsters Maryland’s business climate by making state government more effective and responsive to the needs of the private sector. More specifically, the Order includes key initiatives such as a new Governor’s Economic Competitiveness Subcabinet, a new business concierge office, a site readiness program to produce more shovel-ready sites for development, a new council to promote interagency coordination on permitting applications, and promotes an all-of-government approach to economic development by bolstering partnership and coordination with local governments.

1. **Establishment of a Governor’s Economic Competitiveness Subcabinet.** The Order creates a new Subcabinet that is inclusive of all agencies of the executive branch of state government that touch or influence Maryland’s economic development. Chaired by the Secretary of Commerce, the Subcabinet will advise the Governor on policy and regulatory recommendations and interagency strategies, track performance metrics, and will be required to produce a biannual consolidated economic growth strategy for the state.

2. **Establishment of a Governor’s Office of Business Advancement.** The Order creates a new unit within the Department of Commerce – known as the Governor’s Office of Business Advancement – which will provide concierge, white-glove service to businesses seeking to relocate or expand in Maryland. The Office will provide a wide range of services, from assistance with navigating state permitting requirements to troubleshooting issues with state agencies, and identifying financial incentives to close deals. Every executive branch department or agency will be required to identify a point of contact for this Office to interface with to support its work.
3. **Establishment of the Maryland Coordinated Permitting Review Council.** The Order establishes the Maryland Coordinated Permitting Review Council, which mirrors the very successful FAST-41 Permitting Council at the federal level, which seeks to streamline permitting processes for major projects by bringing together the relevant agencies who have a permitting or environmental review role for that project. In Maryland’s case, the relevant agencies who could potentially have a role in covered projects will be permanent members of the Council, along with the relevant local government agencies who will likely play a role at the local level. This section of the Executive Order places the Maryland Coordinated Permitting Review Council under the purview of the Department of Planning and defines eligible projects requiring environmental review or permitting authorization that involves infrastructure construction. The Department of Planning is required by the Executive Order to establish the Council no later than July 1, 2025.
4. **Creation of a Government Loaned Executive Program at the Department of Commerce.** The Order establishes a Government Loaned Executive Program, which aims to enhance collaborations between government and the private sector through temporary assignments of private sector executives to the Department of Commerce to cultivate a culture of innovation and excellence and bring private sector best practices to the Department to more effectively execute its mission and goals.
5. **Directs an all-of-government approach to supporting priority industries and sectors.** The Order identifies the target industries and sectors as identified by the Economic Strategic Plan: life sciences, information technology, aerospace and defense; as well as computational biology, quantum technology, and search and navigation. This section directs state government agencies to leverage existing resources to support the growth and success of these target industries and sectors.
6. **Coordinated economic development, marketing, and branding efforts with local governments.** The Order directs the Department of Commerce to develop strategies to establish formal economic development, marketing, and branding campaign plans in concert with local governments to promote industries and sectors.

7. **Review of Business Tax Credit, Financial Assistance and Incentive Programs.** The Order requires agency members of the Governor’s Economic Competitiveness Subcabinet to develop methodologies and Return-On-Investment (“ROI”) analyses of business tax credits, business assistance, and business incentive programs.
8. **Creation of a Certified Sites Program at MEDCO.** The Order requires the Maryland Economic Development Corporation to establish a Certified Sites program, which will engage state, local, and private partners to make infrastructure improvements that build operations-ready sites for investment and business locations in the State. The purpose of the program is to identify commercial and industrial sites that offer significant economic development value; make investments that ready identified sites to accommodate impactful, sustainable, and equitable business expansion, investment, and attraction opportunities; and market readied sites across the state and the country to affirm Maryland as a prime place to invest, locate, and grow business.
9. **Evaluation and review of Certain Business Licensing Programs.** The Order requires the evaluation and review of two “front door” business licensing processes critical to doing business in Maryland: Charter Business Services at the State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT) and the Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Certification Program at the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT). Both of these licensing and certification processes have been identified by the business community as pain points and impact the state’s business climate. The Order requires SDAT and MDOT to review business processes related to their Charter Business Services and MBE certification process and identify recommendations, including potential automation, of certain process flows to promote efficiencies.

FY 2026 Economic and Workforce Development Investments

Governor Moore’s FY 2026 budget includes over **\$750 million** in investments towards economic and workforce development, of which **\$128.5 million** are targeted and strategic investments aimed specifically at strengthening Maryland’s business climate, bolstering key industries and sectors, and growing our talent ecosystem. According to analysis by the Jacob France Institute, these targeted and strategic investments will generate \$515.6 million in economic activity in Maryland and support 2,599 jobs earning \$210.2 million in labor income.

Strengthening Maryland’s Business Climate

- **\$10 million** for the Strategic Infrastructure Revolving Fund, which will provide short-term loans to developers to stimulate transformative placemaking, transit-oriented development, community development and/or inclusive and equitable economic growth objectives, with a focus on bringing underutilized assets into performance and generating revenue.

- **\$7 million** for a Certified Sites Program, which was established by Gov. Moore through executive order in December 2024, and will serve as a matching grant program for local governments or private developers to derisk or leverage additional public/private investment to hasten infrastructure investment and bring strategically valuable commercial or industrial sites online faster and available to new or expanding businesses.
- **\$1.2 million** to modernize the state’s permitting and licensing systems, in order to deliver greater efficiencies, improved customer experience, and reduced processing times for permits and licenses for businesses and workers.
- **\$800,000** to modernize the Department of Commerce’s information technology systems to equip the agency with the technology and resources needed to more effectively fulfill its mission.

Bolster Key Industries and Sectors

- **\$25 million** for the Economic Development Opportunities Program Fund, more commonly known as the Sunny Day Fund, which will make Maryland more competitive in attracting major economic development and business relocation and expansion opportunities to the state.
- **\$17.5 million** to support the Capital of Quantum Initiative, a landmark \$1 billion public-private partnership that will cement Maryland’s global leadership in quantum technology, research, and science.
- **\$10 million** for the Build Our Future Innovation Economy Infrastructure Program, which provides grants to support companies’ innovative infrastructure projects that stimulate growth and expansion in key technology sectors, including wet laboratories, cyber ranges, and prototype manufacturing centers.
- **\$6 million** for the Maryland Manufacturing 4.0 Program, which provides financial assistance to small and mid-size manufacturing companies to invest in Industry 4.0-related technologies, machinery and robotics, and digital business practices in order to remain competitive and drive growth.

Growing Maryland’s Talent Ecosystem

- **\$5 million** in additional funding for the EARN Maryland Program to support apprenticeship and workforce training programs for target industries and sectors, bringing the total FY 2026 investment to \$24.5 million.
- **\$5 million** for the Cyber Maryland Program, designed to help address workforce vacancies in the state by helping create and build a diverse talent pipeline in cybersecurity; serve as a hub for State workforce development programs in cybersecurity; and coordinate cybersecurity and research innovation in the State.
- **\$2.2 million** in additional funding for the Child Care Capital Revolving Fund, which provides financial assistance for child care providers in the state, bringing the total FY 2026 investment to \$10 million.

- **\$2 million** for the BioHub Maryland Program, a skills-first workforce development initiative of the Maryland Tech Council, with a mission to accelerate growth in the life sciences industry by expanding the state’s biopharma manufacturing talent pipeline with skills-ready Marylanders.
- **\$1.5 million** to the Baltimore Cyber Range and the Maryland Association of Community Colleges, for the purpose of building cyber ranges at Maryland’s community college campuses to boost the state’s cybersecurity workforce.

Transformative Economic Development Projects

- **\$15 million** to support Tradepoint Atlantic’s Terminal Container Project, a 168-acre redevelopment project will generate over \$1 billion in private sector investment, produce more than 1,000 new union jobs, and strengthen the Port of Baltimore's dominance as one of the most competitive ports on the East Coast.
- **\$7.5 million** to continue state support for the Downtown Frederick Hotel and Conference Center project, a public-private partnership and a transformative economic development project for the City of Frederick that is expected to generate \$1.5 billion in new private sector expenditures over the next 25 years.
- **\$2 million** to Johns Hopkins University to support the construction of a new Multidisciplinary Design Center in Baltimore, which will serve as a bridge between the university’s design focused undergraduate curriculum and its new data science and artificial intelligence initiatives and its vision for creating an innovation and entrepreneurial hub in Remington.

2025 Legislative Agenda

The DECADE Act

The Delivering Economic Competitiveness and Advancing Development Efforts (DECADE) Act is the legislative component of a broad-based effort to reinvigorate the State’s approach to economic development. The DECADE Act will alter, increase funding for, and/or remove restrictions on certain state programs that have successfully supported high-growth sectors or improved Maryland’s business attraction efforts, and revise or sunset existing state programs that have either served their purpose or are no longer directly benefiting state development initiatives.

To provide support for high-growth industry sectors, the DECADE Act will, among other provisions:

1. Standardize target industry sectors across relevant programs to ensure concentration of effort of economic incentives;
2. Move the Build Our Future Program to MEDCO and extend the sunset date to 2030;
3. Revitalize the RISE Zone Program and move administration to MEDCO;
4. Alter the Innovation Incentive Tax Credit (“IITC”) and the Biotechnology Investment Incentive Tax Credit (“BIITC”) to make them more appealing for investors;

5. Revamp the Buy Maryland Cyber Tax Credit to maximize its effectiveness;
6. Extend the sunset for Research and Development Tax Credit from June 30, 2025, to June 30, 2030;
7. Revamp and rebrand the Advantage Maryland Program as the Maryland Economic Competitiveness Fund to better align with economic development best practices and State investment priorities;
8. Build upon the success of the Child Care Capital Support Revolving Loan Fund to better incentivize desired outcomes and increase the number of child care slots available;
9. Expand MEDCO's Tax Increment Financing ("TIF") powers to include target innovation sector infrastructure; and
10. Authorize TEDCO to keep investments in non-MD qualified businesses for a longer period of time after becoming disqualified to protect TEDCO's investment portfolio.

The Housing for Jobs Act

The Housing for Jobs Act aims to release constraints on the State's economic growth by addressing the largest line item on Marylanders' budgets: housing costs. The legislation seeks to tackle this housing affordability and supply crisis by setting goals for regions and local jurisdictions as a semi-permanent "bridge" solution to maintain sufficient housing to support jobs available in the region.

The Housing for Jobs Act will require certain local governments within regions where there are more than 1.5 jobs per housing unit available to approve all projects for new housing units within their jurisdiction until enough units are created to close the gap to <1.5 jobs per housing units within that specific jurisdiction. Once this target is reached, this legislation no longer applies to that jurisdiction.

Unless there is a reason for denial that outweighs the community's need for housing. Even in this circumstance, local jurisdictions are obligated to find ways to modify a housing project that rectifies any reason for denial and allows it to proceed.

Under the proposed legislation, local jurisdictions may deny a housing project if:

1. A specific adverse impact to the health/safety of residents of the proposed development exists;
2. There is insufficient school capacity (Excess of 100% capacity within the project's school district and adjacent schools);
3. There are inadequate water or sewer facilities;
4. Necessary for compliance with State or Federal law;
5. The development is located in an area zoned for heavy industrial use, conservation, or agricultural land; or
6. The development does not comply with objective development standards at the time of application submission. (Objective development standards are defined as those that are not subject to discretionary judgment and facilitate development at the density permitted on the site.)

When denying a housing development, local jurisdictions must provide in writing the specific reasons for denial. Should these reasons comply with allowable denials for jurisdictions with gaps, the denial is final.

The RAISE Act

The Registered Apprenticeship Investments for a Stronger Economy (RAISE) Act seeks to expand and create new career pathways to good, middle class jobs through high-quality Registered Apprenticeships in Maryland. Registered Apprenticeships (RAs) combine paid, hands-on training with classroom instruction, enabling workers to earn valuable skills, increase their earning potential, and gain nationally recognized credentials with little to no student debt. This model supports career readiness, enhances workforce productivity, and helps employers build a skilled talent pipeline tailored to industry needs. Specifically, the RAISE Act proposes to:

- 1. Establish the Maryland Office of Registered Apprenticeship Development (MORAD) within the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program of the Department of Labor:** MORAD will be charged with developing, sustaining, and tracking RA opportunities and will be empowered to do so by other RAISE Act programs, listed below;
- 2. Establish the Registered Apprenticeship Qualified Intermediary Program:** This program seeks to create bridges to employers by identifying opportunities for apprenticeships and providing initial assistance to reduce barriers to entry. This Program will be a tool of MORAD to attract stakeholders to the RA model.
- 3. Establish the Maryland Apprenticeship Incentive Program (“MAIP”):** MAIP seeks to ease initial expenses for employers to start an RA program by offering financial assistance in the form of grants to employers to offset these costs. Grants will be issued on a rolling basis and are designed as reimbursements to ensure that the funds are appropriately and effectively deployed.
- 4. Grant automatic Licensure Upon Completion of Designated Registered Apprenticeships:** Despite demonstrating proficiency under the guidance of an on-the-job journey person, many Registered Apprentices are still required to sit for a written licensing exam, which often unnecessarily delays Marylanders who are ready to contribute their workforce skills.
- 5. Expand and Protect Journey person-to-Apprentice Ratios:** This section (1) establishes a default statewide minimum ratio of one journey person for each apprentice, in anticipation of the incoming federal administration repealing guidelines that protect against expanded ratios for hazardous occupations, and (2) creates an expedited pathway through the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Council for ratio expansion considerations upon request for certain nonhazardous occupations.

The Procurement Reform Act

The Procurement Reform Act (PRA) aims to modernize and enhance the State's procurement system to ensure efficiency, effectiveness, and equity. The PRA is a complement to the Procurement Reform Executive Order signed in December 2024, and will accomplish the following if passed into law:

- 1. Streamlining and Efficiency:** Eliminate the \$50,000 floor for Small Business Reserve (SBR) contracts, allow Procurement Officers to modify contracts within the small procurement threshold, and mandate oral presentations for high-value procurements to improve evaluation.
- 2. Methods of Source Selection and Workforce Diversity:** Empower the Chief Procurement Officer (CPO) to establish procurement source selection methods, enhance the efficiency of the master contracting process, allowing Procurement Officers to focus on a more manageable number of task orders, and Require Workforce Diversity Plans for contracts over \$500,000 and Supplier Diversity Plans for those over \$250,000.
- 3. Procurement Preferences:** Permit amendments to Minority and Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise (MBE/VSBE) participation schedules when submitting them as required for competitive procurements, create a Veteran-Owned Small Business Reserve program, and reduce reporting burdens for MBEs. Currently, errors or discrepancies in MBE/VSBE participation schedules, however minor, will lead to disqualification for a competing vendor.
- 4. Prompt Payments:** Require payments under SBR contracts within 15 days of invoice approval (50% reduction in vendor wait time), and explore automated payment solutions through the 21st Century Financial Systems Enterprise (21CFSE) Workgroup.
- 5. Clarification of Terms and Delegation:** Expand the delegation authority of the Department of General Services (DGS) Secretary to the CPO, and Centralize procurement laws within Division II of the State Finance and Procurement (SF&P) Article.
- 6. Internship and Apprenticeship Preferences:** Require internship and apprenticeship programs to be included as part of contracts over \$1 million, fostering skills development and workforce growth in Maryland.