

Maryland Council on Open Data

Annual

Report

Easy and direct access to data
created by governments
within the State of Maryland

Explore More
→

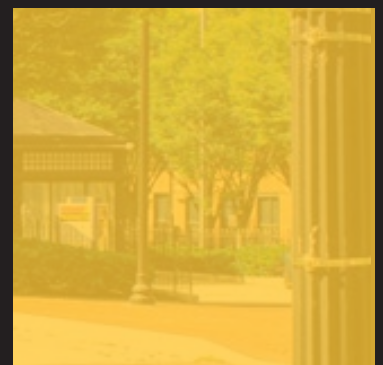
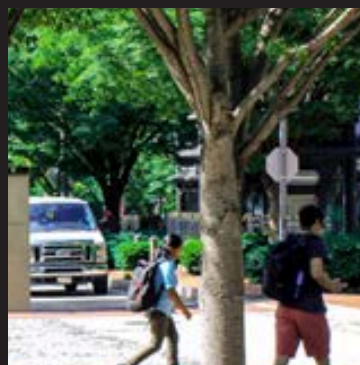
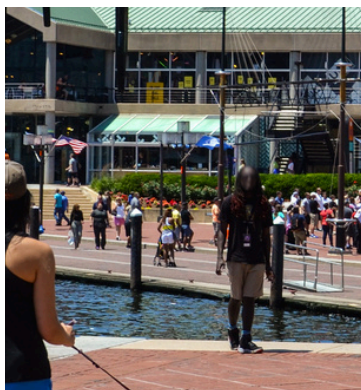




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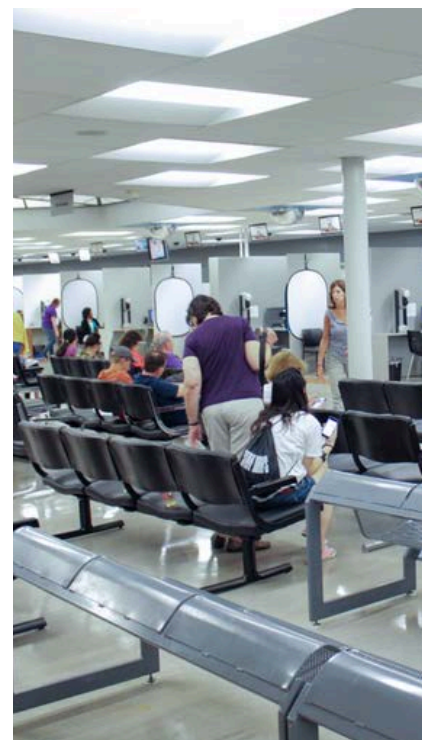


INTRODUCTION

Open Data is Marylander's data. Open data not only offers transparency in how the State serves residents and communities, but is a vital tool in innovation and empowerment. Through Open Data we connect people and communities, build a stronger State, and improve the quality of life and opportunities for Marylanders. To accomplish this, our duty is two-fold: ensure that Open Data is useful to and representative of all Marylanders in all communities; and manage data responsibly, protecting privacy while increasing availability and quality of data. People and communities are at the core of our effort; data is how we make an impact.

Over the course of the year, Governor Moore unveiled the 2024 State Plan,¹ emphasizing a renewed commitment to leverage data to enhance the lives of all Marylanders. That commitment was underscored by the appointment of Natalie Evans Harris as the State's new Chief Data Officer (CDO). Ms. Evans Harris has quickly assembled a team of data professionals within the newly established Office of Enterprise Data (OED), which now oversees the Open Data program. OED's mission is to collaborate with agencies to effectively manage critical State data assets, providing democratized access to high quality, reliable, and trustworthy data that powers efficient and effective delivery of government services. With this focus, we are embarking on an initiative to enhance data quality and accessibility on the Open Data Portal. This renewed purpose positions us to fulfill the Governor's vision of being both data-driven and heart-led, ensuring that our work positively impacts every Marylander.

Maryland's Open Data portal offers an insightful glimpse into our State – our residents, workers, communities, infrastructure, economy, natural resources, government services, and more. It provides valuable data points that highlight the everyday experiences of Marylanders, from the 890,000 students in Maryland public schools² to the 1.8 million customers served in Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration's Branch Locations.³ You can find the latest information about COVID-19 cases across the State.⁴ And you can learn that the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development's Mortgage Program has helped thousands of Maryland families purchase a home.⁵ All of this is due to our renewed focus on data-driven decision making.



1.8 million
customers served in
Maryland MVA
Branch Locations

Open Data Strategy

VISION

Curate and make readily available all useful, relevant, and releasable data created by the State of Maryland and select Local Governments to businesses, residents, visitors, and civil servants of the State.

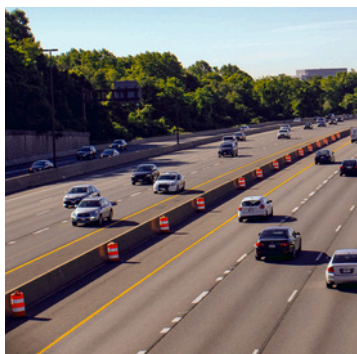
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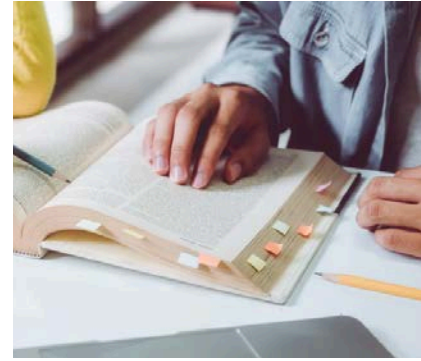
Being data-driven means anyone striving for a better Maryland has the data and insights necessary to invest in our communities, our people, and our services. Open Data is a way to responsibly and reliably tell our stories, to celebrate our wins and guide our continued growth. Realizing data's true power to build collaborations, increase awareness, and connect resources – Empowering all.

– Natalie Evans Harris, Maryland State Chief Data Officer

MISSION

- To promote easy and direct access to data created by governments within the State of Maryland
- To empower Marylanders to effect change, make better and more informed decisions
- To enable State Agencies and coordinating offices to better deliver services to constituents, businesses, and visitors to the State of Maryland



890kstudents in
Maryland public schools

YEAR IN REVIEW

Our new home in the Office of Enterprise Data offers greater opportunities to integrate seamlessly into the statewide data program and engage more effectively with Agency Data Officers (ADOs), a legally mandated role within agency data programs. This closer collaboration has enhanced our ability to connect with data programs across State Agencies and engage directly with subject matter experts. The ADO Advisory Groups have provided a valuable platform for direct communication with agency data professionals, allowing us to understand their needs for open data, how they are using the portal, the challenges they face, and their future plans. This increased collaboration has enabled us to make significant progress in advancing the goals of the Maryland Open Data program.

The transition of the Open Data program under the umbrella of the new Office of Enterprise Data (OED) also provides greater integration with Governor Moore's 2024 State Plan and the statewide data strategy and vision of the Maryland State Chief Data Officer. The Key Initiatives from previous years' annual reports are being seamlessly integrated into the new Strategic Priorities of the statewide data strategy: Streamlining Data Access, Standardizing Data Practices, and Advancing Data Literacy. While this reporting framework may evolve, the essence and objectives of these initiatives remain intact, ensuring continuity and alignment with our overarching goals. This integration allows us to build on our past successes and drive forward with a unified and cohesive strategy.

Strategic Priority #1:

Streamline Data Access through Enterprise Data Platform

As part of our mission to facilitate and improve the management of open data, we have made it easier for agencies to use the Open Data Portal. We've implemented portal features this year such as data federation, which makes it easier to combine our data with assets from the federal level as well as more granularly from the county level. The Maryland Open Data Act⁶ charges us to ensure that open data is machine readable and released to the public in ways that make the data easy to find, accessible, and usable, and we've been working toward improving access to open data that best serves the interests of our portal visitors.

We aim to take that a step further by also delivering high-quality, real-time, or near-real-time data, which can be used for various purposes like business intelligence, analytics, and decision-making. We are leveraging platform tools to increase and ease collaboration, making it easier for agency staff to collaborate on designing a dataset directly on the portal, and offering one-click data publishing when assets have been finalized.



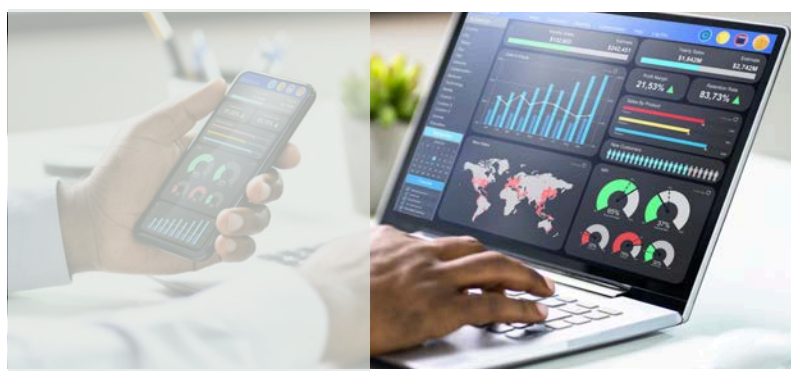
1,000+
data assets curated and
available for public use

We aim to take that a step further by also delivering high-quality, real-time, or near-real-time data, which can be used for various purposes like business intelligence, analytics, and decision-making.

The data will be funneled through the same technology that hosts the Open Data portal. This technological approach will provide multiple benefits that will enhance the Open Data Program including:

- Automated data exchange. It will facilitate the process of connecting data to the open data portal, which can be an obstacle for smaller agencies with smaller IT teams. While OED is working closely with agencies to ensure automated, interoperable data, we are also ensuring that the data is high quality and fit for purpose.
- Streamlined data publishing. With high-quality, automated data already flowing through the technology that powers Open Data, it will be easier to publish these new datasets for public consumption. As always, we must take care to ensure that sensitive data is not made public, and that privacy remains an important consideration in whether a dataset is published publicly or not. The Open Data team is working with Agencies to ensure that eligible datasets from this work will be published on the Open Data portal in the months ahead.

Through this effort we will implement strong governance for security and compliance as well as robust data quality standards that will elevate the usefulness of our State data assets.



Strategic Priority #2:

Standardize Data Practices to Mature Agency Data Programs

Across the State, the Office of Enterprise Data (OED) has been helping State Agencies perform maturity assessments of their data management programs. This crucial endeavor provides a benchmark for Maryland data, allowing us to measure progress over time and demonstrate improvement. We learned that State Agencies are at various stages of data maturity, with the majority operating at a “conceptual” level. This means that while they may not yet have a robust data governance program in place, they are planning to develop one.

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The Open Data team has also been evaluating the maturity of the data assets that State Agencies publish on the Open Data portal. We have focused on assessing and improving data quality dimensions such as accessibility, timeliness, reliability, and completeness. For example, one aspect of our accessibility metric will be the approval of newly published datasets. Timeliness and reliability are captured through our Dataset Freshness Dashboard,⁷ and we actively collaborate with agencies to help them meet their scheduled commitments.



360k+
API calls

We have made significant progress this year in measuring data completeness. Our goal is to develop automated assessment methods, but measuring the completeness of a dataset can be challenging. For instance, how can we automate the knowledge of whether we have the full set of records without knowing what the full set is? If a field in the dataset has many blanks, how do we determine if this is a problem or is intentional because the field is optional?

As we solidify our methodology, we are exploring multiple approaches. One approach is to examine the metadata. We are exploring a definition of completeness that measures metadata completeness, with scores affected by missing required metadata. We are also quantifying the amount of blank or null values in the dataset, with consideration for metadata indicators of optional fields. Additionally, we are examining using natural language processing of the metadata to check if keywords in column names, for example, appear in the dataset description and ensuring that those column names are in natural language rather than computerized jargon.

Lastly, we are refining our quality assessment process and developing an improvement plan to be implemented next year. These measures will help us identify areas for change and improvement while also celebrating our successes. This work is not just about assigning numbers and scores but also about improving our documentation of the assessment process and fostering conversations with agency partners about quality improvements. Our early efforts have shown that many of our agency partners are already doing an excellent job, and we look forward to reporting on our collective progress next year.

150+
government entities
publishing data



Strategic Priority #3:

Advance Data Literacy to Foster a Statewide Data-Driven Culture

In addition to the State's focus on building internal foundations for data governance, OED also recognizes the importance of promoting data literacy across the State. This ensures that data is not only accessible and reliable, but users have the ability to fully leverage it as a strategic asset.

Over the summer, the Office of Enterprise Data (OED) launched a pilot literacy program featuring an Introduction to Data Management Course, followed by a Data Stewardship Roles and Responsibilities. These asynchronous, online courses offer the Maryland workforce an overview of Data Management, enhancing their overall data literacy. The training aims to improve data management and governance practices across all data and includes sections dedicated to Open Data practices. In the coming year, OED will focus on scaling the rollout of these courses to all Maryland employees.

In December, the Office of Enterprise Data (OED) hosted a Lunch and Learn for Maryland government data professionals to provide an interactive session learning about the power of data sharing and tools to develop valuable solutions for agency teams. Attendees learned about incorporating a human-centered perspective into their work and received hands-on training in technical infrastructure options.

Some State Agencies have also provided their own training. The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) hosts a series of internal events to improve skills and promote a culture of treating data as an asset. The GIS team at DoIT participates every year with TUGis: Maryland's Geospatial Conference. The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) collaborated with the US Census to administer a hands-on workshop training attendees in the use of population and demographic data.

These initiatives push the State forward in adopting a data-driven culture, and we aim to increase these educational opportunities going forward. Our goals for the next year include strengthening our connection to State Agencies through their ADOs via the OED communities of practice and increased engagement and education opportunities. We also aim to engage more effectively with the general public through improved social media interaction and direct engagement through public events.

Data Events Across the State

Baltimore Data Day⁸

A free event hosted by the Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance where residents, community leaders, government representatives, and others learn how to move from data to stories to action.

Maryland State Geographic Information Committee (MSGIC) Quarterly Events⁹

MSGIC was formed in 1992 to help better serve the GIS community in Maryland. MSGIC members represent all levels of government academia, regional organizations, and private industry.

TuGIS: Maryland's Geospatial Conference¹⁰

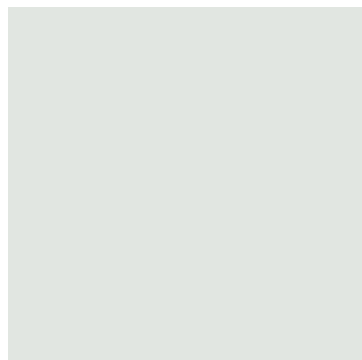
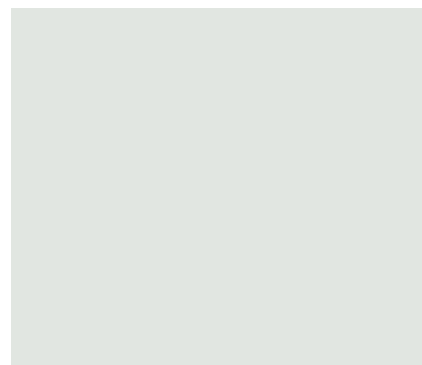
Provides the regional GIS community with engaging sessions, hands-on training, and networking opportunities.

UMD GIS Week¹¹

A series of events showcasing the dynamism of geographic information systems.

Harford County Community College GIS Day¹²

A celebration of Geospatial Information Systems and Geospatial Technology, aiming to show attendees not only what Geospatial Technology is, but how it is used in business, industry, communities, and government.



FEATURED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since the Maryland Open Data Act was passed in 2014, we have worked with State Agencies to ensure that all public data is shared in a machine readable way and released to the public in ways that make the data easy to find, accessible, and usable. We would like to highlight some of the great efforts from the past year by State Agencies to make their data more accessible and usable and to provide examples of agencies continuing their core program initiatives and goals by providing or maintaining data and key performance indicators (KPIs) that support their mission. In turn, we have been recognized nationally for leading the nation in our work to enforce this transformative legislation. We were not just recognized for putting data out there, but for the way we put it out there and how we've adopted a data driven culture across the State.

Some of the new datasets made available this year:

- Maryland Total New Parcels for Residential Development 2010–2023¹³
 - Maryland Total Residential Sales 2010 – 2022 Zip Codes¹⁴
 - Number of opioid-related overdose deaths 2013–2022¹⁵
 - Racial and Equity Impact Notes 2024¹⁶
 - Land Use Acres by County¹⁷
-
-



Awards and Recognition

RFA 2024 Invest in What Works State Standard of Excellence

Maryland recently achieved silver certification as part of Results for America's 2024 Invest in What Works State Standard of Excellence,¹⁸ which recognizes states for their evidence and data efforts. This recognition is a testament to the noteworthy leadership provided by the Open Data Council and our state's faithful execution of the Maryland Open Data Act (2014). This accolade not only acknowledges our state's commitment to data-driven governance but also sets a benchmark for other state governments to aspire to.

Outstanding Achievement for Data Governance and Use

The State of Maryland won the Digital State Survey Outstanding Achievement Award for Data Governance and Use.¹⁹ This honor was awarded for "systematic governance and use of the State's data resources to support the strategic plans of agencies and departments for effective service delivery", a core objective of the Maryland Open Data portal. By earning this award, Maryland serves as a model for other state governments, exemplifying the successful coordination of cross-agency data practices to deliver data-driven services to Marylanders.



Project Highlights

Maryland's Open Data portal offers a unique opportunity for Marylanders to gain a deeper understanding of their State, equipping them with valuable data and insights. Our mission has always been to ensure awareness of available data and provide access to data that is relevant. Over the course of this year, many of our State Agencies have leveraged Open Data to power curated data products that provide better insight into Maryland's communities. These data tools increase the utility and transparency of open data by enabling the public to more easily understand agency data and insights, and it can even decrease the workload of agency data professionals who must respond to requests for data from the public by providing self-serve visualization and interactive analysis.

“

By launching advanced self-serve dashboards, MDH enabled seamless access to granular and comprehensive data within the public domain. This initiative not only minimized the reliance on ad-hoc data requests but also ensured that the data is consistently and readily available to users, fostering transparency and informed decision-making.

- Katy Bhide, Chief Data Officer (MDH)

We continue to celebrate data driven work led by State Agencies and fueled by open data. The following are two examples of Agency transparency that help to demonstrate public insights derived from Agency data.

100k+
downloads



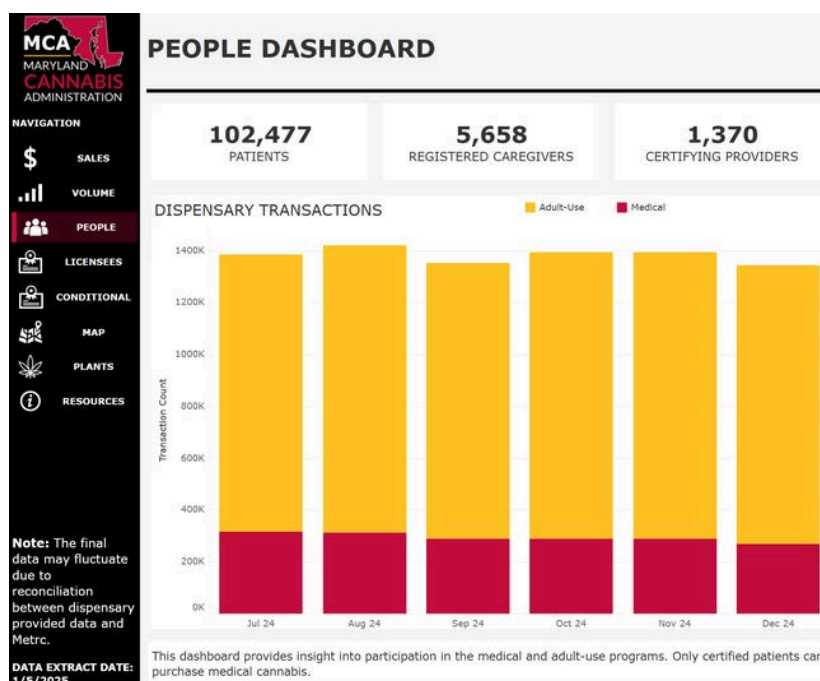
MDH - Overdose Dashboard²⁰

The Office of Overdose Response at the Maryland Department of Health released their updated Overdose Data Dashboard this year, compiling key statistics and maps of overdoses, emergency department visits, and Narcan administration across the State. The dashboard consolidates various substance use data to better demonstrate overdoses and healthcare services delivered across Maryland communities. The data can be downloaded from the dashboard directly and we are working toward making it available through the Open Data portal as well. Building on the utility of the previous version of this dashboard, it now provides more current data allowing for more proactive monitoring and response, and facilitates detailed historical analysis across different demographics enabling the examination of community trends over time. Through this effort, Maryland offers situational awareness to a dynamic and challenging issue so that prevention and treatment can adapt and address the needs of Marylanders and their communities.



Maryland Cannabis Administration Medical and Adult-Use Data Dashboard ²¹

This year, the Maryland Cannabis Administration (MCA) has updated their Medical and Adult-Use Cannabis Data Dashboard to add several improvements and enhancements including the “conditional license” tab which displays the newly awarded conditional licenses for 188 new cannabis businesses from the recent Social Equity Lotteries conducted in March and June of 2024. The interactive dashboard was designed with accessibility in mind and MCA also created an “Accessible Data Extract” excel file that the public can download that contains plain text tables for each visualization or tab on the dashboard. There are future enhancements in development to display laboratory and compliance data and we are working with MCA to develop an automated data pipeline that will publish the monthly updates to the Open Data Portal.





Ongoing Projects

In addition to the featured projects above, Maryland offers a few ongoing data products that are foundational to our data-driven decision making. Here are some highlights from those programs over the past year.

The Maryland Next Generation 911 Initiative

The Next Generation 911 effort is the next iteration in the evolution from the Enhanced 911 system. In early 2025, all Maryland Counties will have migrated to an IP-based network, known as the ESInet, to support geospatial call routing where GIS is the foundation. Additionally, MD iMap hosts the aggregated Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) boundary²² that is publicly available for use by cellular providers and other third-party entities supporting NG911 efforts.

The Maryland Imagery Program

The Data Services Team within the Department of Information Technology (DoIT) has made high-quality images available for emergency response dispatch, surveying, environmental conservation and planning.

Aerial Imagery

The 3-inch pixel imagery is now available.²³ Our 6-inch pixel orthoimagery project is in the final stages of review and will be available in early 2025.

LiDAR

With the Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative (ESRGC), we completed lidar processing and resulting LiDAR services for Charles County and Calvert County.²⁴ Currently, Anne Arundel county is being processed. We anticipate completing Montgomery and Prince George's county in early 2025. And we will continue to work toward inclusion of the four Eastern Shore counties: Talbot, Kent, Caroline and Dorchester. This year, we will also be acquiring QL -1 lidar for St. Mary's, Baltimore County, Baltimore City, Carroll County and Garrett County via Fugro with delivery expected in early 2026.

Maryland Data

In the News

More broadly, we aim to inspire interest from the general public and civic technology community. Here are selected news items that highlight Maryland data.

Maryland Gov. Wes Moore reveals state plan with focus on safety, affordability²⁵

- CBS News, February 8, 2024

Maryland governor signs online data privacy bills²⁶

- AP News, May 9, 2024

Maryland Dashboards Aim to Be Economic Shock Absorbers²⁷

- GovTech, May 14, 2024

Biden Called on States to Create Violence Prevention Offices.²⁸

Maryland Answered.

- The Trace, May 14, 2024

Making Public Benefits More Convenient and Still Secure²⁹

- GovTech, September 24, 2024

Digital States Survey 2024 Results Announced³⁰

- GovTech, September 25, 2024

Maryland Launches Cannabis Public Health Data Dashboard to Track Impact of Legalization³¹

- The MoCoShow, November 14, 2024

Maryland launches dashboard to track cannabis use a year after recreational legalization³²

- CBS News, November 18, 2024

D.C. Pioneers Data System Linking Education to Workforce Outcomes³³

- GovTech, December 13, 2024





LOOK FORWARD

The Open Data program experienced a lot of change this year – expansion of the team into the new Office of Enterprise Data (OED), new leadership from Chief Data Officer Natalie Evans Harris, and extended engagement with all State Agencies through the communities of practice set up by OED. This new foundation and growth positions us to push Open Data to the next level. In 2025, we will leverage this momentum and energy to broaden our goals and deepen our impact.

The future of Maryland Open Data will advance the statewide Data Strategic Priorities while delivering our program vision:

Delivering High Quality Data

Increasing Open Data Users' Competency and Understanding of Maryland Data

- New Tools & Features: explore tools and innovations that make it easier to visualize and analyze data assets within the Open Data Portal
- Data Quality Certification: ensure published data meets high quality standards and indicate prominently that certified data is ready for any Marylander to use without specialized knowledge of government processes or data cleaning techniques
- Enhanced Metadata: supply users with more detailed explanation of what the data means and how to use it

Improving Quality and Timeliness

- More Frequent Data: foster access to real-time or near-real-time data to promote greater utility for business intelligence, analytics, and decision-making
- Expanded Automation and Efficiency: increase efficiency and ease in data sharing by implementing tools for State Agencies that will facilitate high quality data publishing, expand one-click publishing and automate quality monitoring procedures

Promoting Standard Data Management Practices

Strengthening Governance

- Updated Guidance: develop a foundation of strong governance over Open Data assets that will ensure high quality trusted data is made available on an ongoing basis
- Stronger Collaboration: strengthen agency adherence to existing Open Data policy through additional data publishing support

Championing Success

- Meaningful Reports: define metrics to track data quality and impact of data use across the State
- Highlight Agency Achievements: encourage knowledge sharing on ways agencies leverage open data to deliver on critical priorities and convey the state of our communities

Enhancing Data Literacy Across All Audiences

Building Data Confidence

- Dataset Nutrition Labels: create quick reference guides on data quality and contextual information to promote informed use and transparency on high priority datasets
- Better Documentation: integrate more natural language features in API documentation to remove barriers to data consumption and increase ease of data access

Offering Training for Multiple Audiences

- Supporting different Needs & Goals: provide educational opportunities that address specific goals and needs of data providers, data practitioners, agency leaders, and community users



Strengthening Data Culture through Deepened Community Connections and Engagement

Detailing our Ecosystem

- **Aligning Data With Our User Base:** study and create profiles and mindsets to understand user needs, address real community challenges, and ensure we are delivering meaningful data products
- **Prioritizing Open Data Initiatives:** solicit community feedback and identify new offerings to increase our reach and uptake within different communities of users
- **Identifying Open Data Advocates:** expand the reach and feedback loop of our programs through strategic relationships with community-based Open Data advocates that support community data use and source community success stories

Renewing Local Engagement and Impact

- **Stronger Community Insights:** develop event programming that enables broader data use and adoption of the Open Data platform
- **Increasing Local Data:** Work with our county and municipal partners to include more local data in the portal to centralize data discovery and expand potential analysis
- **Minimizing Data Gaps:** collaborate with communities to identify areas of underrepresentation in data and mitigate potential data bias

Building Partnerships and Expertise

- **Coordinating with the Open Data Council:** collaborate with Council members to leverage professional expertise in data best practices and share approaches through community events
- **Launching a Community of Practice:** gather data professionals across the State (state, county and local) for peer-to-peer learning opportunities around using Open Data to make Maryland a better, safer place to live and work



Acknowledgements

We can't do this alone. To expand our audience, we are looking for partners with community engagement programs to help us use data as a bridge for collaboration and cooperation. We will work closely with all of our State Agency partners, leverage the expertise of our Open Data Council, and incorporate the insights of Marylanders. We eagerly anticipate taking all of Maryland on this journey toward a more equitable, inclusive, accessible, and transparent data future.

As we set out on this journey to improve our Open Data program, we want to thank the incredibly hard-working and dedicated teams across Maryland State Agencies, without whom the Open Data portal would be empty.

We would also specifically like to acknowledge the contribution of the following stakeholders: The Maryland Open Data Council, The Maryland Department of Health, the Maryland Cannabis Administration, and a special thanks to JB Churchill, Seemab Kazmi, Helen Bai, Julia Fischer, Kate Cahill, Logan Werschky, Cynthia Nicklin, and the staff at Voyatek.

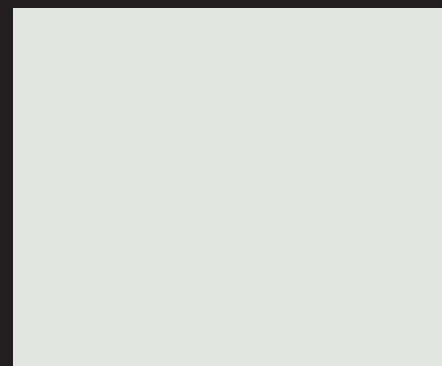
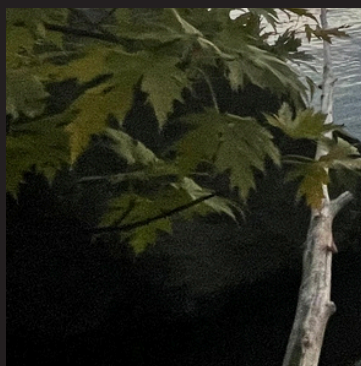
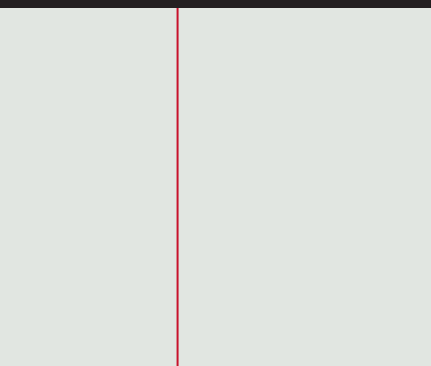
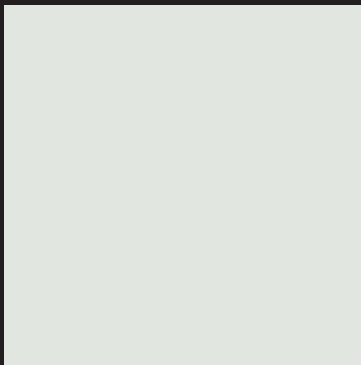
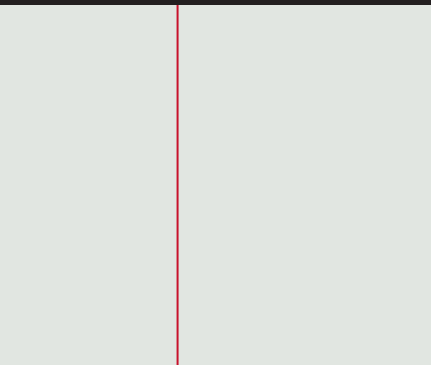
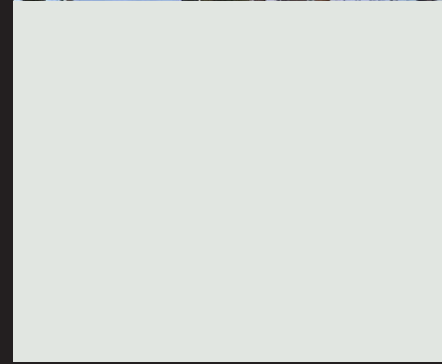
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Endnotes

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Thank You

Follow our progress throughout the year at opendata.maryland.gov and on X (@datamaryland), and reach out to the Office of Enterprise Data³⁴ with any questions.

The Honorable Wes Moore Governor State House Annapolis, MD 21401-1925

The Honorable William C. Ferguson IV
President of the Senate
State House, H-107
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones
Speaker of the House
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