



**Anne Arundel County
Community Reinvestment & Repair Commission (CRRC)**

Monday, October 21, 2024

5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Independence Room

2664 Riva Road; Annapolis, MD

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84396509110>

I. Call to Order & Introductions

Dr. Ashworth, Chair, CRRC

In attendance:

Dr. Shawn Ashworth (Chair), Latica Hicks (Voting member), Erin Karpewicz (ACDS), Theresa Wellman (Voting member), Courtney Davis (OSE), Ahsun Powell (Voting member), Amber Barnett (ex. Officio member), Hannah Dier (CE), Bekki Leonard (ex. Officio member), Joshua Freeman (Voting member), Laurie Benner (Voting member), Maggie Staudenmaier (ACDS), Elisha Harig-Blaine (ACDS), Randall Stites (Voting member)

II. Review of Agenda & Approval of September Minutes

Dr. Ashworth, Chair, CRRC

- Review and approval of the minutes from the September meeting of the CRRC
 - Motion to approve by Dr. Ashworth
 - Moved by Ahsun Powell
 - Seconded by Laurie Benner
 - Unanimously approved
- Review of proposed agenda
 - Motion to accept as is by Dr. Ashworth
 - Moved by Theresa Wellman
 - Seconded by Amber Barnett
 - Unanimously approved

III. Presentation on and updates from the MD Office of Social Equity

Courtney Davis, Deputy Director, MD Office of Social Equity

- Topics Discussed Included (See [Slides](#)):
 - Background/ mission of OSE
 - OSE Key Objectives and Responsibilities
 - Distribution of tax revenue
 - Information on CRRF
 - What is it?
 - How was it determined?
 - How is it enforced?
 - Community Reinvestment and Repair Fund Disbursements
 - CRRF Guidelines
 - OSE Reporting Requirements
 - OSE 2023 CRRF Survey Results

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- Questions
 - What wasn't accurate about the cannabis tax revenue distribution graph?
 - Courtney: The colors aren't accurate in the key, the light yellow and dark yellow should have been switched, but the numbers are correct.
 - Laurie Benner: Why the distinction on the two time periods of the cannabis possession data? Instead of a 20-year period, why does it break it down into two chunks of July 1, 2002-December 31, 2009 and January 1, 2010-January 1, 2023?
 - Courtney: It is based on the way the information was given to us by the judiciary.
 - Ahsun Powell: Was the data only looking at cannabis possession charges or did it include convictions as well?
 - Courtney: The charge data is the data that was used.
 - Ahsun: What made them choose to go with the charge data rather than the conviction data?
 - Courtney: That was a decision by the Legislature in negotiating the terms of the bill that was passed.
 - Erin Karpewicz: Not knowing what the reasoning was behind it, I think arrests could be a proxy for the disproportionate impact on this community and sometimes getting trumped up charges that are unprovable can be just as harmful.
 - Ahsun: If we are looking at charges, some of these zip codes that have been identified could be in areas with colleges where there may be higher rates of charges that never lead to convictions for example.
 - Courtney: There were things we wish we could have changed as well but ultimately the Office of Social Equity is supporting the Governor and the Legislature in this iteration of the bill, but the program and the bill can only improve from here.
 - Ahsun: Will we ever revisit the decision to use charge data rather than conviction data?
 - Courtney: We could definitely reevaluate that.
 - Are the sales tax distribution quarters fiscal year quarters or calendar year quarters?
 - Courtney: Fiscal year quarters.
 - Latica Hicks: What was the target audience for the survey and what information were you seeking?
 - Courtney: The Office of Social Equity was looking to target the entire state of Maryland and tap into all the diverse communities within it. We were looking for demographic information of respondents including location of residence. We also wanted to get feedback from elected officials.
 - Latica: If I wasn't aware of the website or of your social media, how would I have gotten the survey?
 - Courtney: Possibly through your elected official.
 - Latica: Did you guys investigate some of your vulnerabilities with the outreach for the survey?
 - Ahsun: Adding on to Latica's point, the survey was sent out to 256,000 people and only 1285 completed it. Did you or would you

consider sending out the survey to the targeted audience directly? Maybe even via text? When I looked at the responses, I noticed that some of the targeted counties didn't receive any responses. Elected officials were a targeted group, but largely the responses came from white respondents, and it was their input as to what repair would look like, while the group that was harmed may not have received the survey at all.

- Courtney: The Office of Social Equity tried to create a comprehensive outreach plan with what was available to us at the time. We all joined the office in July and this report had to be done in November so we tried to push it out as much as possible, but we are now building our network and databases which can be utilized in the future for sending out information. We are improving this process and moving in the direction of gathering more community feedback.
- Dr. Shawn Ashworth: What I'm hearing is that there is room for improvement with this process and we can go back and gather additional data.
- Erin Karpewicz: We are also starting to get involved and determining how we can help get the word out.
- Erin Karpewicz: I think I heard you say that these funds are meant to be used in Disproportionately Impacted Areas or in low-income communities. Is it either/or?
 - Courtney: It is either/or. There are some counties that have no DIAs and in their Request for Proposal's they just create their own definition of low income.
- Hannah Dier: Was there anything that stood out to you from the one town hall you have already hosted?
 - Courtney: The town hall on the Eastern Shore was pretty regionally specific but some of the same concerns about distribution of the survey and other public service campaigns were raised.

IV. Presentation & Discussion of Decision Points & Recommendations

Dr. Ashworth, Chair, CRRC & Elisha Harig-Blaine, ACDS

- Dr. Ashworth: Reminder that we are just making a decision for this current pot of money, and we can revisit this data and some of these ideas in future years
 - Brandon Davis: We don't have to necessarily spend all of the funds this year, right?
 - Dr. Ashworth: That is correct. We can use this year as a pilot and make changes from there.
 - Elisha Harig-Blaine: For every funding source that we administer here at ACDS, the demand outstrips the availability of funds. While I acknowledge the point that we don't have to spend all of the funds, there will be no shortage of ways we will be approached by existing and new organizations on how they could expend these funds. We will continue to gather community feedback and analyze data to continue to improve this process.
- Elisha Harig-Blaine: There are three main decision points that the commission needs to decide on tonight: What? How Much? And Where?
 - "What" refers to the strategic priorities of the fund. The three priorities identified by the OSE survey were mental health and substance abuse

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- services, education and after-school programs, and housing and homelessness prevention. These are the categories that ACDS and other county agencies consistently hear as the greatest needs all over the county. It is the ACDS staff recommendation that these are the strategic priorities that the commission adopt for the FY26 grant cycle.
- Erin Karpewicz: There are a lot of other needs assessments conducted in the county and these needs and priorities are also showing up in those.
 - Brandon Davis: Are there other funds that are addressing those needs? Could there be overlap?
 - Erin Karpewicz: There is overlap in eligibility for different funds but there is not nearly enough funding to meet the needs.
 - Elisha: When cross-referencing all of these funding sources, there is overlap in grant recipients because organizations must braid together different funding sources to remain operational. This is going to be a substantive pot of money
 - Ahsun Powell: Is there a reason why we have to spend the initial \$1 million in FY25?
 - Hannah Dier: The County Council and the County Executive set up this system this year. The County has this money which is just sitting. Some of it is one time from the conversion fees so the administration's strategy was to allocate \$1 million to ensure that the County is getting some of this money out of the door before the end of the fiscal year and addressing the current needs.
 - Ahsun: So the commission is just spending the \$1 million because the county just wants to spend it, it isn't in the state legislation but the County has just decided it wants to spend those funds by March 1st?
 - Hannah: It is by the end of the fiscal year so the end of June. We will discuss this further, but the County isn't trying to "just" spend the funds, but we do want to get the money out of the door to the programs it was intended to benefit because it was not the intention when the legislation was set up to have money just accumulating in an account.
 - Ahsun: This question is for Courtney about the social equity licensees. Would those social equity license recipients be eligible to access these funds in Anne Arundel County to move forward with setting up their business.
 - Courtney: If that is what the commission decides it wants to spend the money on, they can, but there are other pots of money for those businesses and these dollars were intended to go to community efforts, not necessarily business owners.
 - Brandon Davis: I am a license holder, and I would not want to use these funds to build my business.
 - Dr. Ashworth: Returning to the decision point on the table, do we think this is where the commissions priorities should be?
 - Theresa Wellman: I think it should.
 - Erin Karpewicz: Returning to the discussion of why the County wants to spend these funds now, the County received a ton of funding during Covid that was spent on mental health programming, housing, and related programs and those funds have now largely dried up but the need has not so there is some urgency with getting these funds to the community.

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- Elisha Harig-Blaine: The Anne Arundel County CRRC is a step ahead of most counties in the state, so this offers a good opportunity to set a precedent that when a county is provided with these funds, we are able to utilize them.
 - Laurie Benner: So, if the commission decides on these priorities they aren't set in stone permanently, correct?
 - Dr. Ashworth: That is correct.
 - Amber Barnett: The County partners with Anne Arundel County Community College conduct a bi-annual community attitudes survey and these come up, but there is also a consistent trend of concerns around the economy. So, we may want to consider some sort of workforce development training being incorporated into the priorities
 - Latica: I wanted to know are these umbrella categories that can be broadly interpreted.
 - Elisha Harig-Blaine: Pragmatically, the applicants will self-select their category and ACDS will review these and set aside any that we have questions about regarding an applicant's eligibility in a category.
 - Bekki Leonard: To Latica's point, I have found that the term "education" can be limiting so if the commission intends to make that category broader, we might want to change that language.
 - Elisha: Is there a particular word that could be used in place of "education"?
 - Workforce development, enrichment, education and career services, etc.
 - Erin Karpewicz: ACDS has a larger strategic priorities document for the LDC that provides more details and examples of eligible programs and services.
 - Hannah: Based on the conversation, it might be beneficial for the commission to add a fourth category for workforce development.
 - Education and training?
 - Erin: ACDS will flesh that document out and bring something to the commission.
 - Ahsun Powell: Baltimore City has decided to set aside part of their CRRC funds for a reparations fund and this will be voted on in the November 5th election. Is that something that this body would be interested in considering?
 - Brandon Davis: What would that look like? Would that be just residents?
 - Ahsun: The commission would have to build the criteria around it, as we are doing here. We could use the data coming from the Office of Social Equity. I did research prior to this meeting on the origins of the war on drugs and the scope of that is larger than the scope of the data that OSE was using but we could compile that data and look at the areas that were directly impacted by the war on drugs and then look at those people in those areas that were impacted. Rather than repairing whole communities in 2023, we need to be considering everything that has happened before now. The commission needs to make sure that we are actually reaching the communities we are intending to repair.

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- Joshua Freeman: Looking at this list of priorities, is there a poverty piece that the commission could look at and consider when looking at these decision points?
 - Erin Karpewicz: Any grant recipient would have to meet one of the strategic priority areas and also be serving low-income households as a requirement.
 - Erin: To the point about reparations, that is something that the commission should consider including in the grant criteria, and potentially conducting a study to ensure that the effort would stand up in court.
 - Ahsun Powell: We know that the commission can't base it on race so we would have to look at class status or potentially the criteria used by the Office of Social Equity to determine eligibility for social equity licenses. I am suggesting using the \$1 million initial investment for a reparations fund and then looking at building the long-term programming for the CRRF fund.
 - Erin: As the administrator for this, ACDS is not equipped to administer a program like this at the moment. If there is a non-profit that would like to come in and administer that program, we would be open to that. ACDS is really interested in implementing a similar program to what you are describing for a Universal Basic Income program, and we are bringing in people from the University of Maryland to work out how that might work. But realistically, we will not be able to do that right now with these funds on this timeline.
 - Ahsun: OSE has been successful with identifying the people in the community that would fit the criteria for a reparations fund, so if the commission were to use the existing criteria from OSE, would that simplify the process and allow us to administer the funds to those people.
 - Brandon: Baltimore City is getting 35% of this fund and we are getting 7%. What would the reparations actually look like, how much would each person actually be able to receive?
 - Ahsun: The reparations fund would look like what we as the commission want it to be, it doesn't need to be a onetime payment, but would be sustained through the CRRF as there is no end date for this fund.
 - Dr. Ashworth: This is something we definitely want to continue to talk about and think about as we move forward.
 - Elisha: Everything that you have said, Ahsun, could fit under the umbrella of a Universal Basic Income which, as Erin discussed, is something ACDS is very interested in and actively exploring. But it is a different whole thing to administer such a program and at the moment we do not have the administrative capacity to take that on. However, that could change down the line if the commission decides it wants to invest in that.
 - Dr Ashworth: It sounds like the commission likes these priorities and we want to flesh out education to include training, economic development, and workforce development as well, and we want to make sure we are including poverty as a consideration.

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- Latica Hicks: I think it is important to make the distinction between youth programming and enrichment and adult workforce training.
 - Elisha Harig-Blaine: Moving to decision point two, how much. ACDS considered the feedback of Donald Whitehead to ensure that these grants were having a real impact and so the ACDS staff recommendation is a minimum grant amount of \$20,000 and a maximum of \$75,000.
 - Latica Hicks: This is for FY26, not the FY25 funds, correct?
 - Hannah Dier: That is correct.
 - Joshua Freeman: What will we use to determine who is receiving which amounts?
 - Elisha: You as the commission will decide that.
 - Erin Karpewicz: Some applicants will only apply for the minimum amount, but ultimately you as a commission will decide the amounts that each grantee will receive.
 - Elisha: We will bring all the applications to you including how many applications there are for each category, and you can decide if you want to prioritize some over the others.
 - Bekki Leonard: How does this range compare to the LDC?
 - Elisha: For the LDC community grants the minimum is \$15,000 and the maximum is \$40,000.
 - Erin: The LDC has less funding to distribute for the community support grants.
 - Elisha: Hearing no opposition we are adopting decision point two regarding funding ranges.
 - Elisha Harig-Blaine: Moving to decision point three, having considered the discussion from the last meeting regarding the data around DIAs, ACDS would like to draw your attention to the fact that the identified DIAs largely match up with the areas of need identified through other needs assessments and reports including the Neighborhood Revitalization Communities from the County's consolidated plan and Sustainable Communities from the MD DHCD and the County.

V. Update on Fiscal Year 2025 funding and projects
Hannah Dier, Deputy CAO, Office of the County Executive

VI. Schedule of future meetings & Adjourn
Dr. Ashworth, Chair, CRRC