

29<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNUAL

MARYLAND BLACK CAUCUS FOUNDATION

LEGISLATIVE  
WEEKEND

NOVEMBER  
22-23, 2024



**"ADVANCING ACCESS & OPPORTUNITY FOR BLACK MARYLANDERS"**

## *2024 Legislative Weekend Workshop Overview*

These workshops are designed to foster dialogue, share best practices, and develop actionable strategies to advance equity in Maryland and beyond.

**Health Workshop Moderators: Senator Malcolm L. Augustine  
Delegate Joseline Peña-Melnyk**

**Session Time: 9:00 – 10:15 AM**

**Webinar Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82615425393?pwd=3ZniLxTifG1PZ4nkeLB7RaBDYWUCJ5.1>**

**Session Title: Black Maternal Health Equity: Prioritizing Solutions for Health Disparities**

This workshop will address the critical issue of Black maternal health disparities in the U.S., focusing on Maryland. Participants will explore the systemic factors contributing to the higher maternal mortality rates among Black women and discuss strategies for advancing health equity. Health professionals, policymakers, and community advocates will engage in dialogue on culturally competent care, access to quality healthcare, and the role of public policy in supporting better outcomes for Black mothers. Attendees will leave with actionable steps to promote maternal health equity and improve healthcare services for Black women.

### **Panelists:**

- **Dr. Yvonne Bronner**, *Professor, School of Community Health & Policy, Morgan State University*
- **Tenele Bruce**, *Maternal Health Coordinator and Doula at Baltimore Healthy Start*
- **Rebecca Dineen**, *Assistant Commissioner, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Baltimore City Health Department*

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**Wealth Workshop Moderators:** Senator Antonio L. Hayes  
Delegate N. Scott Phillips

**Session Time:** 10:15 – 11:30 AM

**Webinar Link:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82195551691?pwd=g3vJDnasey3VberPWqKjahf8V2tJte.1>

**Session Title: Protecting DEI and Race Programs in Small Business: The Case for Supplier Diversity**

In light of current political and legal challenges, this workshop will focus on strategies to safeguard diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives in small businesses, particularly around supplier diversity programs. Participants will explore the essential role of race-conscious business programs in driving economic growth and inclusion for Black and Latino communities. Attendees will learn about best practices for supporting DEI in procurement and how businesses can protect and expand race-based initiatives to ensure fair access for minority entrepreneurs and suppliers.

**Panelists:**

- **Sharon Pinder**, President and CEO of the Capital Region Minority Supplier Development Council (CRMSDC)
- **Nigel Stephens**, Founder and CEO Phoenix Strategies

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**Education Workshop Moderators:** Senator Alonzo T. Washington  
Delegate Stephanie M. Smith

**Session Time:** 11:30 – 12:45 PM

**Webinar Link:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89567996581?pwd=yonNZuUdOFGsIlmlbZl2lRF4CM3RPj.1>

**Session Title: Creating an Education Equity and Economic Pipeline: From Pre-K to Postsecondary Success**

This session will explore how equitable access to education is essential for economic empowerment, focusing on the full educational spectrum—from early childhood to postsecondary opportunities. The workshop will highlight strategies for closing opportunity gaps that disproportionately affect Black students, including access to quality Pre-K, K-12 resources, and higher education pathways. Special attention will be given to the role of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), including the resources needed to support their research expansion and innovation efforts.

Participants will discuss how schools, communities, and policymakers can collaborate to create stronger, continuous pipelines that lead to long-term economic mobility. The session will also explore the critical role of equitable policy reforms and community-driven initiatives in ensuring that future generations have the tools needed to succeed academically and economically.

**Panelists:**

- **Dr. Carey M. Wright**, State Superintendent of schools, Maryland State Department of Education
- **Jennifer Ricks**, Director of Youth Services, Employ Prince George's

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**Housing Workshop Moderator:** Delegate Marvin E. Holmes Jr.

**Session Time:** 1:00 – 2:15 PM

**Webinar Link:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82565468497?pwd=ILnjHoJDujWJdvuSNnsW3wT1mA5QXP.1>

**Session Title: Strengthening the Vitality of Black Homeownership: Addressing Appraisal Bias and Barriers**

This workshop will tackle the systemic barriers to Black homeownership, with a focus on combating appraisal bias and discriminatory lending practices. Participants will examine the historical context of housing inequities and discuss actionable policies and community-based solutions to increase Black homeownership rates.

Topics include reforming appraisal standards, expanding access to capital, and creating pathways for sustainable homeownership to build generational wealth.

**Panelists:**

- **Delegate Kym Taylor**, District 23, [Prince George's County](#)
- **Jacquelyn Priestly**, Principal, Oak Hill Strategies and Chair of the Maryland Task Force on Property Appraisal and Valuation Equity
- **Christian Jackson**, Certified Residential Appraiser and Principal, Jackson Appraisal Group
- **Claudia Randall**, Executive Director, Community Development Network of Maryland
- **Melanie Gamble** - Principal Broker/Owner 212 Degrees Realty, LLC; Maryland Association of Realtors Secretary

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**Public Safety Workshop Moderators:** Senator C. Anthony Muse  
Delegate Debra M. Davis

**Session Time:** 2:15 – 3:30 PM

**Webinar Link:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87190103922?pwd=09qFDCUaFil0aGBiuLiev78qfzUP8j.1>

**Session Title: Public Safety and Economic Opportunities: Addressing Disparities in Maryland's Black Incarceration Rates**

This session will explore the alarming rates of incarceration within Maryland's Black communities and their impact on economic mobility. Maryland has one of the highest Black incarceration rates in the nation, a challenge that both deepens and perpetuates disparities in public safety, economic opportunities, and community well-being. This workshop will examine key drivers of these disparities, including systemic racial biases in policing, sentencing, and access to legal resources.

We will also discuss proven strategies to address these inequities, such as criminal justice reform, diversion programs, community investment, and workforce development initiatives tailored to formerly incarcerated individuals. Participants will hear from experts, advocates, and policymakers dedicated to reducing incarceration rates and creating sustainable economic opportunities for Maryland's Black communities. Join us for a powerful discussion on reimagining public safety and creating pathways for economic success for all.

**Panelists:**

- **Senator Nick Charles**, *District 25, Prince George's County*
- **T. Sheebah Braveheart**, Advocacy Associate, Justice Policy Institute
- **Heather Warnken**, Executive Director, Center For Criminal Justice Reform at the University of Baltimore School of Law
- **Natasha M. Dartigue**, Maryland State Office of the Public Defender

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**Environment Workshop Moderators:**

**Senator Benjamin T. Brooks Sr.**

**Delegate Regina T. Boyce**

**Session Time: 3:30 – 4:45 PM**

**Webinar Link:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81284280723?pwd=P0DirREjmmmpsRHXUImFUUnlhXyDF2P.1>

**Session Title: Environmental Justice in Maryland: Equitable Access to Renewable Energy**

This session will focus on the intersection of environmental justice and economic inclusion, specifically in relation to Maryland's infrastructure projects. Participants will explore the importance of ensuring equitable access to renewable energy projects as a way to foster economic growth in both urban and rural communities. A critical aspect of the discussion will be the rising burden of high energy bills, which disproportionately impacts low-income and marginalized communities. By addressing this issue through investments in clean, renewable energy, we can help lower costs for families while promoting sustainability.

The workshop will also highlight the essential role of connectivity in ensuring that all communities, especially underserved and marginalized ones, can fully benefit from renewable energy and sustainable infrastructure development. From policy reforms to community-led projects, we'll explore solutions that promote environmental justice while reducing energy burdens and improving economic opportunities for all.

**Panelists:**

- **Aneca Atkinson**, Assistant Secretary, Maryland Department of Environment
- **Josh Feldmark**, SVP, CI Renewables
- **David Lapp**, Director, Maryland Office of People's Counsel
- **Brett Sproul**, PSC Commission, Technical Advisor
- **Brittany Baker**, Maryland Director, Chesapeake Climate Action Network
- **Josh Tulkin**, Director, MD Sierra Club