

**Maryland Commission on Climate Change  
Adaptation and Resiliency Working Group  
2025 Work Plan**

**PURPOSE**

The Adaptation and Resiliency Working Group (ARWG) is charged with developing and implementing a comprehensive strategy for reducing Maryland’s climate change vulnerability, and providing state and local governments with tools to plan for and adapt to climate impacts such as extreme weather and sea level rise. At the same time the state moves forward with actions that are reducing greenhouse gasses, increasing energy efficiency, and improving air quality, we must also adequately adapt or climate impacts will remain a concern into the future.

The ARWG builds its annual work plan around the identified priority recommendations, ongoing activities and identified adaptation needs from members and partners to help move the needle forward on adaptation across Maryland throughout the year.

**2025 PRIORITIES FOR ARWG ACTION**

Priorities are activities that the ARWG will have an active role in developing, tracking, or otherwise providing major input.

1. *Next Generation Adaptation Plan (NextGen) Progress:* The Adaptation and Resiliency Working Group (ARWG) along with state, local and non-governmental partners will continue to work on the integration of NextGen into statewide priorities and will report on progress towards milestones so far.  
**Deliverable:** The ARWG will develop a system for reporting and tracking progress towards NextGen priorities.
2. *Compensatory Community Engagement:* Building on efforts made in 2023 and 2024, the ARWG recognizes the need to include mindful, compensated community engagement in all aspects of adaptation and resilience. The ARWG will focus in 2025 on making existing state mechanisms clear while also identifying areas where there may be room for improvement.  
**Deliverable:** The ARWG will work with DBM to create a guidebook that details existing mechanisms of compensatory community engagement (e.g. transportation stipend, child care, direct payment) and community liaison recruitment options.
3. *Supporting Local Governments:* Using the priorities identified in the Next Generation Adaptation Plan as a guide, ARWG agencies will work to increase the utilization of the

adaptation and resilience resources they offer to support local governments. Priorities to focus on in 2025 will include building in more flexibility in state grant processes for low-resourced communities, including resiliency measures in local comprehensive plans and updating guidance documents and language for tools to make them more accessible.

**Deliverable:** The ARWG will devote future meeting time to discuss tool accessibility and best practices for increasing their usability for resilience planning.

4. *Conservation of Natural and Working Lands:* ARWG agencies that oversee land use decisions should focus attention on best practices for sustainable development, renewable resource management, and community-led equity as identified milestones from the Next Generation Adaptation Plan.

**Deliverable:** The ARWG will devote future meeting time to host a panel discussion on Maryland natural and working land use policies and communications to include participants from public and private entities and identify progress towards Next Generation Adaptation Plan priorities.

## ONGOING WORK FOR 2025

Ongoing work refers to agency or partner work that ARWG will have a supporting role to help develop.

- A. *Maryland Office of Resilience:* The Maryland Office of Resilience (MOR), established in 2022 within the Maryland Department of Emergency Management, hired three positions and fully staffed its office in 2024. The MOR was established to better coordinate statewide resilience efforts, develop a statewide resilience strategy, provide technical assistance to local governments, and ensure that resilience resources prioritize environmental justice. MOR's scope includes climate resilience, as well as resilience to a broader range of hazards identified in the State Hazard Mitigation Plan.

For 2025, MOR will focus on developing a state resilience strategy in partnership with other agencies, updating and sharing the [Resilience Toolkit](#), and exploring opportunities for agencies to collaborate on place-based resilience. As MOR develops the resilience strategy and leads other coordination efforts, the ARWG will support its efforts and provide a platform for collaboration. The ARWG will also communicate any related efforts – such as the NextGen Adaptation Plan – that could inform MOR's work and provide feedback on relevant topics.

- B. *Healthy Soils Initiative:* In January 2022, the MDA Soil Health Advisory Committee approved recommendations to advance conservation practice adoption through Maryland's Healthy Soils Program. The Program recognizes that improving soil health

increases on-farm climate resilience in our most productive soils, and promotes adaptation measures for marginal lands, such as conservation cover on fields impacted by saltwater intrusion. To-date, MDA has piloted 2 initiatives through its Healthy Soils Program to improve health and yield of soils and increase soil carbon sequestration. *Cover Crop Plus* expands on Maryland farmer's adoption of cover crops in order to promote a 3-year commitment to cover crops with a soil health focus for increasing diversity and a living root, combined with conservation tillage to minimize soil disturbance. The second initiative, the Healthy Soils Competitive Fund (HSCF), has awarded 39 grants totalling \$1.64 million in funding support directly to operators. Programs are designed to be innovative and accessible to all Maryland producers regardless of crop rotation or farm size. Interest in both the programs and practices are increasing. The ARWG will continue to engage with the Healthy Soils Program to align outreach/actions/priorities and share new knowledge.

- C. *Targeted Resilience Area (TRA) Initiative*: This pilot project concluded in March 2024. Two Comprehensive Water Quality and Climate Resilience Project Portfolios were produced for the City of Hagerstown and Pocomoke City. The portfolios function at a landscape-scale and were developed in partnership with local governments and vulnerable, underserved communities. The Chesapeake and Coastal Service continued engagement with the communities to build upon the results and work towards fundable options for the projects identified. One recommended project in the Pocomoke TRA, the Cypress Park Flood, Stormwater, and Visioning Study, was financed for an in depth site assessment and concept design with NOAA Coastal Zone Management funds. Of the projects identified for the City of Hagerstown, land ownership and new development pressures were barriers to immediate implementation. The Army Corps of Engineers Silver Jackets team have met with Hagerstown and DNR staff to evaluate how these projects and others could be advanced.
- D. *Integrating Climate Change into the Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan*: The ARWG and partners will continue to work with government agencies, nonprofits and other interested and impacted parties implementing the WIP to advance practices that generate resilience co-benefits. A particular area of emphasis will be aligning the draft Next Generation Adaptation Plan and WIP priorities.
- E. *Climate Change Education*: Mid-Atlantic Climate Change Education Collaborative (MACCE-C) will continue to engage monthly to prioritize the development and implementation of the resulting climate change education vision. Community climate resilience requires that climate education be considered among the myriad of pathways to both mitigation and adaptation strategies. MACCE-C has developed meaningful mapping of actionable pathways for the Collaborative to continue growing.

In addition to these actionable pathways, the MACCE-C met for the 5th time virtually in the summer of 2024. The MACCE Conference is an affordable, high-quality, one-of-a-kind teacher professional development opportunity specific to the Mid-Atlantic. The ARWG will use its robust network of adaptation and resilience professionals to host discussions on the state of climate change education in Maryland, and support initiatives identified by the Collaborative.

- F. *Maryland Department of Transportation* will continue to implement climate adaptation and resilience initiatives across the enterprise. In 2024, MDOT received approval from FHWA on the first ever Transportation Resilience Improvement Plan. This plan will be used in 2025 to support resilience project prioritization, and provide a framework for enhanced resilience assessments and decision making. Additional initiatives including deploying tree planting programs, updating design manuals, maintaining and updating the Climate Change Vulnerability Viewer to inform decision making across MDOT, integrating sustainability and resilience considerations throughout the project process, among other initiatives. In 2025, MDOT will continue to coordinate across modal administrations on resilience initiatives through the Office of Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation at TSO, and utilize the ARWG members and network to support and enhance resilience and adaptation programs.
- G. *Collaborative research and application*: The ARWG in collaboration with the STWG, University partners and others will continue to collaborate on research priorities and application opportunities, including but not limited to, expansion of sea level rise projections utilization guidance and adaptation, pooled monitoring initiative restoration research, blue carbon and ghost forests.

## **ARWG Meeting Schedule for 2025**

All meetings will be run hybrid with both in-person and virtual attendees. Meetings will run from 2:00 - 4:00pm with individual meeting details provided ahead to the ARWG contacts list. Please email Ryland Taylor, [ryland.taylor@maryland.gov](mailto:ryland.taylor@maryland.gov) to be added to the ARWG email contacts list.

- February 26
- May 28
- August 27
- December 3