



# Agency Climate Implementation Plan

Maryland Department of Aging

November 1, 2024





# Agency Climate Implementation Plan

Department of Aging, Climate Implementation Plan required by Executive Order, “Leadership by State Government: Implementing Maryland's Climate Pollution Reduction Plan”

In accordance with Governor Moore’s [Executive Order 01.01.2024.19](#), “Leadership by State Government: Implementing Maryland's Climate Pollution Reduction Plan,” the Maryland Department of Aging (MDOA) affirms its commitment to:

- Work to address climate change and ensure a just transition to a clean economy;
- Advance environmental justice by working to address the disproportionate impacts of climate change for underserved and overburdened communities, including the application of Justice40 goals, initiatives, and funding;
- Equitably implement all existing laws, regulations, and policies related to climate change, incorporating robust community and stakeholder engagement; and
- Continue to maximize federal funding opportunities on climate.

MDOA hereby submits its own Climate Implementation Plan (CIP) to demonstrate its commitment to a whole-of-government approach to addressing climate change and fully implementing Maryland’s Climate Pollution Reduction Plan.

## Part 1: Agency Actions Under the Climate Pollution Reduction Plan

As MDOA does not directly own any of the policies set forth by Maryland's Climate Pollution Reduction Plan, MDOA will provide a supportive role to the state agencies that own policies by advocating for Maryland's aging population.

As part of Maryland's Climate Pollution Reduction Plan, MDOA will:

1. Collaborate with other state entities who hold key roles in MDE's Climate Pollution Reduction Plan to ensure their plans, actions, regulations, and policies are equitable to older adults in Maryland.
2. Assist with identifying unique stressors that older adults face related to **housing** such as extreme heat and safe housing standards and provide insight to agencies working on climate-related housing plans to ensure planning is equitable for and accessible to older adults.
3. Assist with identifying unique stressors that older adults face related to **transportation** use, training, accessibility, and planning and provide insight to agencies working on climate-related transportation plans to ensure planning is equitable for and accessible to older adults.
4. Lead by example in reducing our carbon footprint by making procurements through our green purchasing specialist and transitioning all internal combustion engine fleet vehicles to EVs according to the Department of General Services (DGS) transition requirements and procedures. MDOA will work with DGS to create a facility operations policy that maximizes energy efficiency.

## Part 2: Recommending Actions to Address Climate Change

State law (MD Code, Environment, § 2-1305) requires that each State agency shall review its planning, regulatory, and fiscal programs to identify and recommend actions to more fully integrate the consideration of Maryland's greenhouse gas reduction goal and the impacts of climate change. The review shall include the consideration of (i) sea level rise; (ii) storm surges and flooding; (iii) increased precipitation and temperature; and (iv) extreme weather events. Furthermore, each State agency shall identify and recommend specific policy, planning, regulatory, and fiscal changes to existing programs that do not currently support the State's greenhouse gas reduction efforts or address climate change.

In compliance with the law, MDOA is taking or recommending the following actions to more fully integrate the consideration of Maryland's greenhouse gas reduction goal and the impacts of climate change.

MDOA will:

1. Play an active role in educating, supporting, and catalyzing older adults around environmental justice and environmental standards through Maryland Access Point locations around the state and other outlets within MDOA's network.
2. Provide education, outreach, and promotion of climate change standards and practices to our constituents.
3. Collaborate with the Department of Housing and Community Development to facilitate supportive communities with multigenerational housing and share resources with older adults related to home modifications, weatherization programming, and energy efficiency programs.
4. Integrate climate change goals into the state's 10-year multisector plan for aging, Longevity Ready Maryland. This plan links Maryland's Climate Pollution Reduction Plan with areas of economic opportunities, affording longevity, workforce development, and building an age-friendly ecosystem.
5. Collaborate with the Maryland Department of Labor and Maryland Department of Service and Civic Innovation to facilitate older adult transitions for those workforces impacted by Maryland's CIP plans and encourage older adult participation in the climate change workforce.
6. Connect older adults with available transportation opportunities and provide education and guidance on public transportation use and accessibility.
7. Continue expanding our Durable Medical Equipment Re-Use program which diverts mobility equipment from landfills for reuse, offsetting over one thousand metric tons of CO2 annually.
8. Work with the Maryland Department of Transportation to receive and disseminate materials that help state employees understand the alternative transportation options available to them which align with the State's goal of reducing vehicle miles traveled and harmful air pollution.
9. Analyze programs and services that MDOA monitors to identify areas to improve plastic-reduction, minimize food waste, recycle, reduce energy demand, and further reduce greenhouse gases.
10. Continue to work with the Department of the Environment to address climate change with Maryland's whole of government approach. MDOA will stay in communication with MDE in order to monitor and track progress and, in compliance

with the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022, MDOA will continue to make climate a key consideration in our long-term planning of policy and the agency's operations.

## Part 3: Considering Greenhouse Gas Emissions

### Reductions and Impacts on Disproportionately Affected Communities

State law (MD Code, Environment, § 2-1305) requires that each State agency, when conducting long-term planning, developing policy, and drafting regulations, shall take into consideration: (1) the likely climate impact of the agency's decisions relative to Maryland's greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals; and (2) the likely impact of the agency's decisions on disproportionately affected communities identified according to the methodology adopted under § 1-702 of the Environment article. Furthermore, Governor Moore's Executive Order 01.01.2024.19 requires each agency to report on how the agency will advance environmental justice by working to address the disproportionate impacts of climate change for underserved and overburdened communities.

In compliance with the law and Executive Order 01.01.2024.19, MDOA is taking the following steps to meet these requirements.

1. Through our current programs, multisector planning efforts, and inter-agency collaborations, MDOA will continue to ensure older adults are being represented and considered as this population is often disproportionately affected by climate change. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Climate Change and Health of Older Adults, notes:
  - As we age, our bodies are less able to compensate for the effects of certain environmental hazards, and more likely to have health conditions that make us more sensitive to climate hazards, such as heat and air pollution, which can worsen existing illnesses.
  - Many older adults have limited mobility, increasing their risks before, during, and after an extreme weather event.
  - Aging and some medications can change our body's ability to respond to heat, putting older adults at more risk for heat illnesses and death as the climate warms.
  - Many older adults have compromised immune systems, which make us more prone to severe illness from insect- and water-related diseases that may become more common with climate change.

- Older adults may depend on others for medical care and assistance with daily life, increasing our vulnerability to extreme weather events.
2. A primary role of MDOA is funding and oversight of the 19 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) who provide direct services in their communities. In the Area Plan review process, MDOA will continue to ensure all AAAs are actively targeting services to meet the greatest social and economic needs. MDOA’s funding formula for programs that are required under the Older Americans Act is based on the population of older adults (60 and older) and minorities with emphasis on those below the federal poverty level. Other state programs administered by MDOA outside of the Older Americans Act use eligibility guidelines that include age, poverty levels, and rural factors.
  3. Many intersections exist between geographic regions that represent high climate vulnerabilities in Maryland and high needs for aging services. MDOA will use its current funding formulas and MDE’s Climate Vulnerability Score Tool to continue to focus its funding and oversight on these overburdened and underserved communities.
  4. MDOA will use Maryland Access Point (MAP) as a catalyst to educate and support older adults on resources related to climate change, weatherization, and energy efficiency programming. MAP is an existing resource that works with caregivers, professionals, and all individuals with long-term care needs to plan, identify, connect, and assist with accessing private and public resources for long-term services and supports.

## Part 4: Resources for Implementation

### Implementing Maryland’s Climate Pollution Reduction Plan

MDOA’s primary roles include funding and monitoring our 19 local AAAs who provide direct services to their constituents. As a small agency, our current infrastructure, fiscal climate, and need for climate change expertise supports the need for one full-time MDOA climate change staff person to meet the above goals and emergency preparedness requirements for older adults. This staff person is necessary for MDOA to fully assess climate impact among older adults, make climate change-related recommendations, set requirements for grantees, monitor grantees, and represent Maryland’s older adults – a disproportionately affected population – as state-level CIP plans unfold.

### Implementing this Climate Implementation Plan

MDOA is able to perform portions of the collaborative work noted above that do not require climate change expertise with current funding. All other actions require additional funding, thus

the anticipated gap between current funding and the total resources required to implement the agency's CIP is funding for one full-time MDOA climate change expert.

## **Part 5: Outcomes from Implementation**

By prioritizing Maryland's older adults in climate change decisions, the proposed plan will improve health benefits, increase job creation, and reduce energy costs. These outcomes support MDOA's ongoing efforts to enable healthy longevity and become a state where all Marylanders lead healthy, financially secure, socially connected, and purposeful lives.