



Agency Climate Implementation Plan

Maryland Department of Human Services

November 1, 2024





Climate Implementation 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 Human Services 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.

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) 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

Maryland's Climate Pollution Reduction Plan calls on the Maryland Department of Human Services to:

Apply for federal funding - Under the leadership and coordination of the Governor's Federal Office, all agencies will apply for federal funding to implement actions that support the achievement of this plan. State agencies will work closely with local governments, nonprofits, and community-based organizations to ensure Maryland is competitive for federal climate action implementation funds and to build capacity for local-level implementation. State agencies will offer support to Maryland's businesses and private sector to ensure they are competitive for historic federal investments.

DHS completes this action as part of ongoing work to identify funding sources through the DHS Policy Team, DHS Office of Governmental Affairs, and DHS Administration Executive Directors.

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.

We are 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.

DHS will:

- Support residential weatherization and energy efficiency among our customers. At DHS, the Office of Home Energy Programs (OHEP) provides bill assistance to low-income households in Maryland to make their energy costs more affordable. OHEP will support the following actions to support statewide greenhouse gas reduction goals.
 - In our electric universal service program (EUSP) proposed operations plan for state fiscal year 2025, we requested approval from the Maryland Public Service Commission to complete \$2,500,000 in weatherization measures in partnership with the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). These measures are intended to reduce the long-term energy burden for low-income households.
 - Weatherization and energy efficiency measures include: assessment, health and safety measures necessary in order to safely install equipment, repair/replace existing ductwork or other distribution systems to facilitate work to be completed in order to meet a no heat crisis. For example, funds may be used to install new ductwork to enable the installation of a central heating system when converting from a solid fuel appliance. In accordance with the State's climate goals, DHCD may consider converting fossil fuel systems to electric heat pump systems when technically possible, and if the fuel type conversion does not increase the customer's cost for heating.
 - We also look forward to new opportunities for partnership, such as on community solar subscriptions. With recent federal guidance changes, we are excited about the possibility of supporting community solar beginning in state fiscal year 2026. We look forward to learning from the existing pilot jurisdictions of Washington, D.C., Illinois, and New Mexico, and adding this new tool to our toolbox. Our focus is to learn how to implement community solar into our workflow.
 - Current OHEP enrollment practice allows applicants to easily opt in to receive more information on weatherization. Further, DHS partners with DHCD on community outreach, for example at resource fairs which are jointly staffed by Local Departments of Social Services, OHEP local administering agencies, and DHCD.

- Finally, DHS participates in the state's Green and Healthy Taskforce, chaired by DHCD, which brings together state agency partners to advance residential energy efficiency.
- Ensure procurement practices support greenhouse gas reduction efforts and address climate change. Follow Green Purchasing Guidelines, including both best practices and State Finance and Procurement regulations, for procurement officers and purchasers/buyers to follow to determine specifications for solicitations/purchases for green purchasing. The Guidelines include approved environmental standards and certifications, a step-by-step guide to green purchasing, and a green purchasing checklist. DHS will continue to pursue training for procurement officers to specialize in green procurement.
- Ensure buildings and any new lease agreements implement the latest in energy efficiency standards, in partnership with the Department of General Services (DGS). Ensure those engagements are in line with the most current state building performance standards and specifications ([General Performance Standards and Specifications for the State of Maryland Leased Facilities](#)). Further, DHS will:
 - Continue to partner with DGS to complete audits on state-owned buildings. Consistent with the Governor's Executive Order 01.01.2023.06, Leading by Example in State Government, DGS analyzes State-owned buildings and identifies facilities with the highest energy usage and the greatest greenhouse gas emissions. The facility is then audited in accordance with the Executive Order.
 - Continue to implement the Statewide Recycling Program. DHS works directly with the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) through its' [All StAR \(All State Agencies Recycle\)](#) Program to ensure that DHS' jurisdictional facilities throughout the State are compliant with the goals set forth in the Maryland Recycling Act (MRA). The DHS Recycling Administrator provides technical support to each agency designated coordinator and submits an annual online report to MDE that details each facility's recycling data.
- Update vehicle fleet, used by DHS employees, to align with energy efficiency standards. DHS Fleet Management is actively working to increase fuel and energy efficiency in the coming years, while at the same time ensuring the vehicles meet the programmatic needs of DHS - such as the availability to reach necessary communities and the need to transport numbers of children.

- The Department has a fleet of 423 vehicles. The fleet consists of 22 alternative fuel vehicles (vehicles that use gasoline and E85 fuel), 30 hybrid vehicles (uses gasoline or can be plugged-in) and 19 partial zero emission vehicles (PZEVs).
- In accordance with House Bill 550 (HB 550), the Zero-Emission Bus Transition Act, passed during the 2022 legislative session, and Senate Bill 528 (SB 528), the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022, DHS is mandated to purchase electric and hybrid vehicles moving forward. There are exceptions for some counties that currently lack the infrastructure for charging capabilities. In making fleet decisions and purchases, DHS Fleet Management will also ensure it can continue to meet the mission of DHS, such as by ensuring we have adequate ability to respond to specific DHS program needs.
- DHS Fleet Management conducts regular fleet maintenance, replacement, and upgrades with a focus on improving energy efficiency. All vehicles in the fleet are serviced every 5 months or 5,000 miles, whichever comes first.
- Regarding vehicle replacement, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) allocates funds annually for purchasing replacement vehicles. Priority is given to local offices with vehicles that have the highest mileage or vehicles lost due to accidents. DHS Fleet Management utilizes these allocations to ensure that the fleet remains efficient and aligned with energy efficiency goals.

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, the Maryland Department of Human Services is taking the following steps to meet these requirements.

DHS programs are provided statewide and driven by the needs of individuals or families. DHS will continue to provide services and benefits to the individuals and families who qualify based on existing eligibility criteria or needs. The many communities identified with the MDE Climate Vulnerability Score Tool with the highest vulnerability scores have significant overlap with the communities that have the greatest concentration of Maryland residents who engage with DHS. Furthermore, DHS will focus its efforts and resources on the communities identified via the Governor's ENOUGH initiative to ensure that services reach the highest need areas.

Part 4: Resources for Implementation

Implementing Maryland's Climate Pollution Reduction Plan

As required in the Maryland Climate Pollution Reduction Plan, DHS will apply for federal funding under the leadership and coordination of the Governor's Federal Office. DHS does not require additional resources to implement this required action, as it is a part of the ongoing work of the DHS Policy Team, DHS Office of Governmental Affairs, and DHS Administration Executive Directors.

Implementing this Climate Implementation Plan

DHS's Climate Implementation Plan activities fall within the scope of its current and planned funding.

Part 5: Outcomes from Implementation

- Increased energy efficiency in homes: Through partnership with DHCD, weatherization efforts will improve overall energy efficiency in homes. Further, this should also reduce energy burden for DHS customer households.

- Increased energy efficiency in DHS buildings: Through partnership with DGS, DHS will be able to continue to implement the latest energy efficiency standards in its leases.
- Reduced vehicle emissions: Updating DHS's fleet to more fuel-efficient and zero-emission vehicles will reduce transportation-related emissions.