

## Ready By 21 Overview

The Ready By 21 Team, chaired by former Department of Human Resources (DHR) Secretary Brenda Donald, was established in January 2008 to oversee the implementation of the Maryland Children's Cabinet's Ready By 21 Action Plan.

The following are the goals outlined in the Ready By 21 Five Year Action Agenda:

1. All Marylanders will understand the urgency of providing supportive services and resources, are aware of existing gaps, and are supportive of investments that will improve the odds for youth to be Ready By 21.
2. All Maryland's youth, especially older youth (14+), will have the support of capable, competent and caring adults.
3. All Maryland's transition-aged youth, with an emphasis on youth transitioning out of public systems, will have access to safe and affordable housing that is convenient to services, supports, transportation, schools, employment and other youth.
4. All Maryland's youth, especially transition-aged youth, will receive necessary supports to ensure health and well-being.
5. All Maryland's youth, with an emphasis on vulnerable youth, will be prepared to successfully transition into post secondary education, advanced training and the workforce.
6. Maryland's social service and juvenile service systems will treat all young people equally and fairly.
7. Maryland will have an infrastructure that promotes sufficient funds and is held accountable for the preparedness of transition-age youth for college, work and life.

The Ready By 21 Leadership Team convened four subcommittees whose membership included local providers, stakeholders and state child serving agency staff to develop benchmarks in the areas of Education, Employment, Health, and Housing. Cross-cutting issues, which cross multiple age groups and subject areas, and corresponding benchmarks, were also identified. The Ready By 21 Action Plan is the compilation of all five areas, with corresponding strategic action steps. The Action Plan is intended to benefit all youth.

Action Steps – Education Benchmarks	MD State Responsible Agencies	Timeframe	Implementation in Harford County
(1.1) Update information regarding graduation requirements posted on the MSDE and local school system websites.	MSDE, LSS	October 2009	
(1.2) A) MSDE and state child serving agencies to develop and distribute sample academic and career plans that are a part of the MSDE Career Development Framework B) School-wide personnel trained to administer and track plan	MSDE – DSE/EIS, Partner Technical Assistance agencies, MSDE-DORS	October 2009	
(1.3) Complete the 2009 certification process for COMAR 13A.04.10 Career Development.	MSDE	October 2009	
(1.4) MSDE will provide DHR caseworkers with a copy of each student’s academic and career plan.	MSDE	October 2009-ongoing	
(1.5) MSDE – DSE/EIS will continue to work with local school systems to ensure that every student with a disability, beginning at age 14, participates in transition planning. This planning includes post-secondary employment goals and the course of study that will reasonably enable the student to attain these goals.	MSDE-DE/EIS, MSDE-DORS	October 2009-ongoing	
(1.6) MHEC and USM will encourage institutions of higher learning to partner with schools in their area to create opportunities for youth to visit campuses, earn college credits, learn about admissions and financial aid application procedures or otherwise explore or learn about post secondary options.	MHEC, USM, MSDE	October 2009	
(1.7) Identify foster youth who have applied for the FAFSA and those youth who have not in order to inform service delivery to youth, e.g. encouragement to pursue higher education or assistance in navigating critical next steps in the college admission and financial aid processes.	DHR, DJS, MHEC	October 2009	
(1.8) Develop Standard Operating Procedures for each State agency regarding the referral of disconnected youth to the appropriate sister agency; b) Provide manual to Community based organizations; and c) Connect youth and Community based organizations to LMB system	Children’s Cabinet	December 2009	

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navigators.			
(1.9) Support efforts to redefine definition of “Drop out” as part of the scope of the upcoming Dropout Prevention Summit.	MSDE	December 2009	
(1.10) Ensure that scholarship, grant , and financial aid information is include on the website for youth.	Children’s Cabinet	December 2009	
(1.11) Create draft language to expand tuition waiver statute to include youth leaving the system for legal guardianship (in addition to adoption) to be vetted with legislators, etc.	MHEC, USM, DHR	December 2009	
(1.12) Each student with an IEP will have an IEP transition activity and/or career development goal that focuses on preparation for post-secondary education and employment.	MSDE – DSE/EIS, MSDE-DORS, MANSEF, LSS	December 2009-ongoing	
(1.13) Graduating disabled youth will receive an exit document that summarizes their academic achievement, functional performance and supports and accommodations needed to be successful in post-secondary education and employment.	MSDE-DES/EIS, MSDE-DORS, MANSEF, LSS, MHEC	December 2009-ongoing	
(1.14) A) Determine what types of financial aid counseling are being provided to students receiving financial aid awards B) Engage with post-secondary institutions to examine gaps in services.	MHEC, USM, Higher Education institutions that are not part of USM	December 2009	
(1.15) Child-serving agencies will formally involve community based organizations in the transition planning process for youth with disabilities, e.g. Community based organizations will be involved in the process of developing and implementing IEPs and discharge/transition plans.	DHR, DJS, MSDE, DLLR, DDA	December 2009-ongoing	
(1.16) Continue to enhance alternative ways for students to earn credits, i.e. night and weekend school, on-line, externships, credit recovery programs.	MSDE, Community based organizations	March 2010-ongoing	
(1.17) A) Identify education services that have delivered significant cost-	Children’s Cabinet	March 2010	

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savings. B) Establish compacts to fund service provision by using expected cost-savings.			
(1.18) Enhance students’ access to high quality, comprehensive programs designed to improve literacy and numeracy through the following: A) Encourage local SES providers to infuse approved reading programs into their programs; B) Determine if there are MSDE approved numeracy programs; C) Encourage SES and OST programs to work together to provide wrap around services; D) Determine if tutoring can be built into summer youth employment programs.	MSDE	MSDE	

Action Steps – Employment Benchmarks	MD State Responsible Agencies	Timeframe	Implementation in Harford County
(2.1) Support the work of the Career and Technology Education Taskforce of the P-20 Council as it deliberates and makes recommendations regarding the expansion of Career and Technology, Education programs, as recommended by the Emerging Workforce Committee of the Governor’s Workforce Investment Board.	Children’s Cabinet	Ongoing	
(2.2) Review programs of instruction within Maryland’s school systems to ensure that requirements are aligned with 21 <sup>st</sup> century workplace skills, as recommended by the Emerging Workforce Committee of the Governor’s Workforce Investment Board	MSDE	Ongoing	
(2.3) Starting at age 14, eligible youth will be referred for participation in their local summer youth employment program.	Children’s Cabinet, LWIBs	Immediately	
(2.4) Connect youth who have participated in the summer youth employment program to year-round employment opportunities through	MSDE, LSS, DHR, DLLR, DJS, DSS, LWIB/One	September 2009	

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the local one stop centers. Caseworkers and case management staff will refer foster youth and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) youth to summer and/or year round training and employment opportunities through MD RISE (Reaching Independence and Stability through Employment).	Stop Centers		
(2.5) DLLR and the Workforce Investment network will promote the services of One Stop Centers and the LWIBs’ youth coordinators to education and human services agencies in their respective jurisdictions. Agencies will encourage collaboration through partnerships, i.e. DHR-DLLR partnership grants.	Children’s Cabinet, DLLR, Workforce Investment Network	October 2009	
(2.6) Engage local businesses through the LWIB/WIA One-Stop Centers and local Chambers of Commerce that align with youth’s career interests to increase work experience and job shadowing opportunities for youth and ensure that LWIB/WIA One-Stop Centers connect with local school systems so that youth are informed about their services.	MSDE, DLLR. DJS, DSS	October 2009	
(2.7) Starting no later than age 14, utilize MBRT’s <a href="http://www.BeWhatIWantToBe.org">www.BeWhatIWantToBe.org</a> website to develop career awareness and explore careers.	MSDE, MD Business Roundtable	October 2009	
(2.8) Ensure that WIA Youth Coordinators participate in the transition planning team from DOD youth.	MSDE, MHEC, DOD	October 2009 – ongoing	
(2.9) Connect youth to their local WIA One Stop Center through the MSDE Career Development Framework.	MSDE, DLLR, DJS, DSS, LWIB/One-Stop Centers	October 2009 – ongoing	
(2.10) A) Develop a standard template for the Career Development Framework for students without an IEP; B) Utilize the student’s IEP, wherever applicable, and place the	Children’s Cabinet	December 2009	

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<p>template in the student’s official school record to inform service plan development by providers and to serve as a repository of services delivered, as appropriate.</p>			
(2.11) IEP Teams, as appropriate, will identify a paid employment strategy for each student with an IEP.	MSDE-DSE/EIS, MSDE-DORS, DLLR, MANSEF, LSS	December 2009-ongoing	
(2.12) MSDE-CTAL will provide professional development to local school system transition coordinators on the use of the individual academic and career plan as part of transition planning for students with disabilities.	MSDE-DSE/EIS; MSDE-DORS; MSDE-CTAL	March 2010	

Action Steps – Health Benchmarks	MD State Responsible Agencies	Timeframe	Implementation in Harford County
(3.1) Encourage mental health providers’ adoption of the Transitioning into Independence (TIP) Program, an evidence-supported set of principles and practices for working with youth age 16-25 who have mental health conditions.	DHMH	September 2009	
(3.2) A) Support statewide efforts to ensure portability of medical records; B) Require DHR and DJS caseworkers to review medical records as part of transition planning process.	DHR, DJS, DHMH	October 2009	
(3.3) A) Present the Healthy Adolescent Development Guide to the Children’s Cabinet; B) Infuse the guide into established trainings for state child serving agencies; C) Assist in the dissemination of the Healthy Adolescent Development Guide to youth serving agencies and; D) Require state contractors to participate in this training.	Children’s Cabinet	October 2009-March 2010	

Action Steps – Health Benchmarks	MD State Responsible Agencies	Timeframe	Implementation in Harford County
(3.4) A) Map out potential providers of free or low cost insurance for specific groups of youth (dependent minors, college youth, independent out of school youth, etc.) and determine which youth are not covered; B) If there is sufficient capacity, identify methods of outreach needed, e.g. a state sponsored web based database, informational packet, Medicaid training, etc; C) If there is insufficient capacity, indentify funding for expansion, and entities to provide insurance coverage, e.g. community colleges	RB21 Health Subcommittee	October 2009- March 2010	
(3.5) A) Identify existing health resource websites and arrange importation of data into the youth resource website; B) Work with the Employment Subcommittee to supply the health related content for the proposed website.	a) RB 21 Health Subcommittee b) B) RB 21 Health & Employment Subcommittee	December 2009	
(3.6) Determine whether plans are underway to expand the school based health and mental health services. If not, recommend that MSDE and DHMH increase capacity and outreach.	DHMH, MSDE	December 2009-June 2010	
(3.7) Make the Voluntary State Curriculum the “Mandatory State Curriculum” in order to ensure that every child has access to physical and health education programs, including information regarding substance abuse, mental health, and HIV/AIDS.	MSDE	June 2010	
(3.8) Coordinate efforts with the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) Children’s Mental Health Initiative grant for federal fiscal years 2009-2014 entitled MD CARES, which will develop a service delivery model to address the mental health needs of youth in foster care in Baltimore City, and fund policy and fiscal	DHR & MD CARES staff	Ongoing	

Action Steps – Health Benchmarks	MD State Responsible Agencies	Timeframe	Implementation in Harford County
analysis, training, and infrastructure development to support adaptation and replication of the model statewide.			

Action Steps – Housing Benchmarks	MD State Responsible Agencies	Timeframe	Implementation in Harford County
(4.1) DHR will advise DJS regarding rapid clearance procedures for kinship caregivers.	DHR, DJS	October 2009	
(4.2) Investigate school curricula and life skills training taught by caregivers, i.e. ILPs, DJS, RTCs.	RB21 Housing Subcommittee	October 2009	
(4.3) Require transition plans to include housing and to specify when youth will make contact with a permanent housing option.	DHR, DJS	October 2009	
(4.4) Children’s Cabinet agencies will request a prominent link on each of their respective websites to the Governor’s website ( <a href="http://www.problemsolver.maryland.gov">www.problemsolver.maryland.gov</a> ) so that members of the public can assess their eligibility for entitlement benefits and services. The link will also be featured on the youth website (see benchmarks for cross-cutting issues)	Children’s Cabinet	October 2009	
(4.5) Provide information on alternative housing options through roommate sharing resources and affordable housing: <a href="http://www.mdhousingserach.org">www.mdhousingserach.org</a> in established professional development trainings, school settings, the youth resource website (see benchmarks for cross cutting issues), local CBO’s and libraries.	DHR, DJS, DHMH	December 2009	
(4.6) Identify and train System Navigators to provide targeted case management to assist homeless youth.	DHR, DJS, DHMH	December 2009	
(4.7) A) Request the National Alliance to End Homelessness to provide language from other states regarding housing for youth under the age of 18;	RB21 Housing Benchmark Subcommittee	March 2010	



Action Steps – Housing Benchmarks	MD State Responsible Agencies	Timeframe	Implementation in Harford County
B) Housing Benchmark group will recommend language for new regulations.			
(4.8) Adapt Legal Aid document, “Homeless Youth and Young Adults in Baltimore: An Overview of Law”, to the statewide population and distribute through state agencies, including DHMH, DJS, and DHR and their contractors.	RB21 Housing Subcommittee, BHYI, Legal Aid	March 2010	
(4.9) Train caseworkers and analogous staff in the administration of tenant training modules as a supplement to existing housing related content during the transition planning process.	DHR, DJS	June 2010	
(4.10) Incorporate tenant training into programs for homeless youth such as Restoration Gardens and City Steps and into the youth resource website (See benchmarks for cross-cutting issues).	DHR, DJS, DHCD, DHMH	June 2010	
(4.11) Review life skills curricula utilized by providers.	DHR, DJS	June 2010	
(4.12) Engage MHEC and institutions of higher learning in discussion regarding current housing options for youth during college breaks and the possibility of expanding housing options.	MHEC, USM, DHCD, DHR	June 2010	
(4.13) Establish “host” families programs for the holidays and summer.	DHR	June 2010	
(4.14) Implement model transitional housing options.	DHCD, DHR	June 2010	
(4.15) Develop the National Youth in Transition Database for youth in the child welfare system.	DHR	October 2010	

**Acronyms**

BHYI	Baltimore Homeless Youth Initiative
CBO	Community-based organization
DDA	Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration
DHCD	Maryland Department of Housing & Community Development
DHMH	Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
DHR	Maryland Department of Human Resources
DJS	Maryland Department of Juvenile Services
DLLR	Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation
DOD	Maryland Department of Disabilities
IDA	Individual Development Account
IEP	Individualized Education Plan
ILP	Independent Living Program
LMB	Local Management Board
LSS	Local School System
LWIB	Local Workforce Investment Board
MANSEF	Maryland Association of Non-Public Special Education Facilities
MHEC	Maryland Higher Education Commission
MSDE	Maryland State Department of Education
MSDE-DORS	Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Rehabilitation Services
MSDE-CTAL	Maryland State Department of Education, Career technology and Adult Learning Services
MSDE-DSE/EIS	Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services
MVA	Motor Vehicle Administration
OST	Out of School Time
RTC	Residential Treatment Center
SES	Supplementary Education Services
USM	University System of Maryland
WIA	Workforce Investment Act