



Briefing for Public Health and Minority Health Disparities Subcommittee

Developmental Disabilities Administration
Maryland Department of Health

February 10, 2026

Agenda

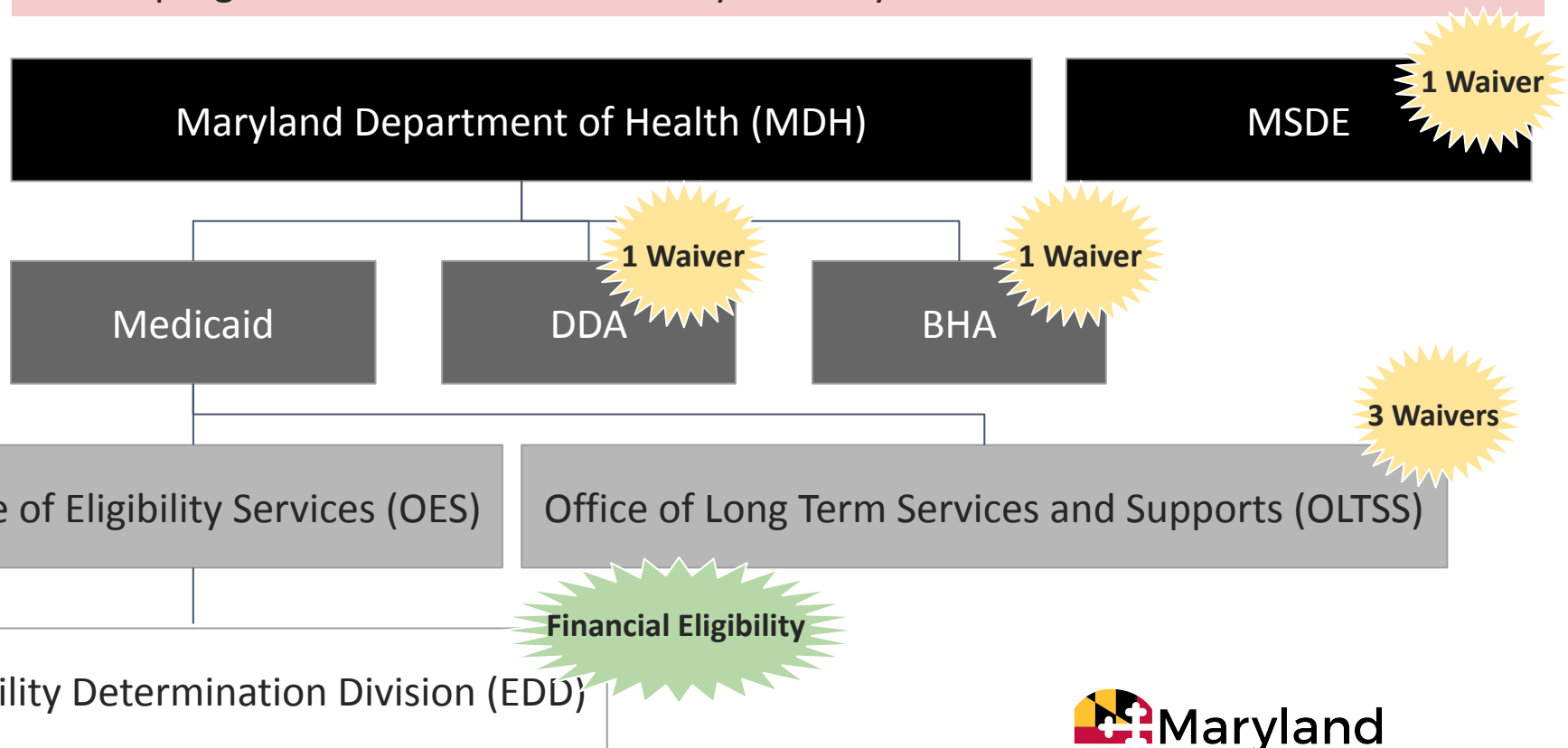
1. DDA Overview: Who we are and what we do
 - a. Our participants
 - b. Our services
 - c. What is a waiver and what does it do?
2. Community Engagement: Fiscal Year 2026 and Beyond
3. Discussion

Who we are and what we do

DDA Overview

MDH HCBS Waiver Operating Structure

DDA administers one of six Medicaid HCBS waiver programs in Maryland. DDA's waiver program is known as Community Pathways.



DDA Overview

- The Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) supports children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities so they can live, work, and thrive in their communities.
- Each year, DDA connects nearly 21,000 Marylanders, with services that support daily living, employment, health, and independence.
- DDA's work helps people remain in their homes, stay active in their communities, and achieve improved health outcomes and quality of life.

Who We Are: DDA's Participants

As of February 2026:

- Total Marylanders in DDA services: **19,380**
 - Community Pathways waiver: 18,576
 - State-only funded: 804
- Total people on waiting list: **3,767**
- Total people in future needs registry: **2,373**

What We Do: DDA's Services

- DDA operates a Medicaid Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) 1915(c) waiver program, known as Community Pathways.
- HCBS waiver programs are overseen and approved by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.
- The overarching goal of an HCBS waiver program is to help meet people's needs in their home or community, rather than an institution.

What is a Medicaid Waiver Program?

Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waivers allow states to use Medicaid funds to provide long-term services **in homes and community settings** rather than institutions (e.g., nursing homes or hospitals).

Authorized under **Section 1915(c) of the Social Security Act**, waivers allow states to **waive certain Medicaid rules** to design more flexible, community-based supports.

HCBS waivers give states flexibility in:

- **Who** can be served
- **What** services are offered
- **How** services are delivered

For people with **intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD)**, HCBS waivers are the **primary mechanism** for delivering long-term services and supports.

Goal: Support individuals to live in the community with services **tailored to their individual needs**, rather than in institutional settings.

Medicaid State Plan vs. Medicaid Waivers (At a Glance)

State Plan	Waiver Programs
Core Medical benefits	Targeted, specialized programs
Statewide entitlement	Enrollment can be limited
Standard eligibility	Flexible service design
Broad eligibility	Population-specific eligibility
Less flexibility	Greater flexibility with federal approval

Medicaid waivers trade entitlement and uniformity for flexibility, allowing states to design targeted, community-based services within federal oversight

Community Pathways Waiver

- DDA's current waiver amendment was approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services on September 19, 2025, and was implemented beginning October 6, 2025.
- The waiver amendment consolidated DDA's three (3) previous waiver authorities into a single waiver: the Community Pathways Waiver. This streamlines things administratively and should make it easier for participants to access services.
- Additional details on the waiver amendment can be found on the DDA website, on the October 2025 [Waiver Changes and You](#) page.

DDA Waiver Services

Through Community Pathways, DDA pays for three (3) kinds of services

	What The Services Do	What The Services Look Like
Day & Employment Services	Help participants get ready to work, find a job, and do a good job at work, or to receive support during the daytime if they are not working.	• Career Exploration • Community-Based Day Services
Support Services	Wide range of services to help with needs such as learning new skills, becoming more independent and active, and taking care of health needs.	• Assistive Technology • Family Caregiver Training and Empowerment Supports • Personal Supports
Residential Services	Support participants in living as independently as possible in the community.	• Community Living - Group Home • Supported Living

Fiscal Year 2026 and Beyond

Community Engagement

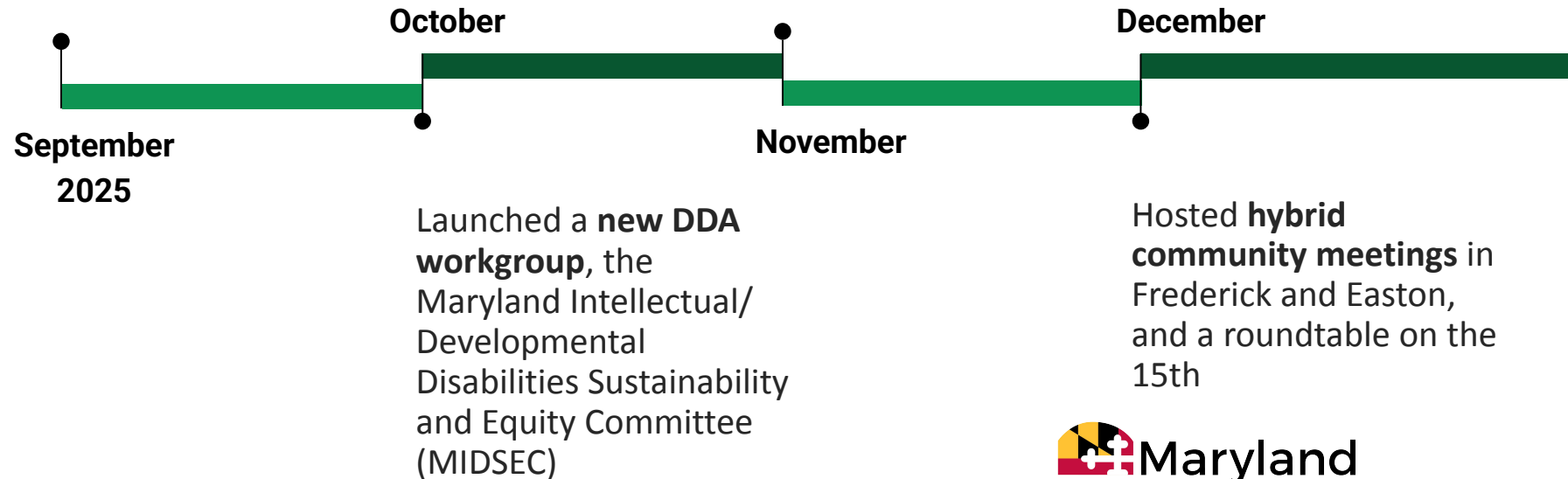
DDA Community Engagement Highlights

In Fiscal Year 2026, DDA has focused on engaging with the stakeholder community.

Held hybrid community listening sessions in all four regions

Held statewide town hall

Held **first-ever** Spanish-language DDA community listening session (virtual)



Waiver Amendment Stakeholder Engagement

- To prepare stakeholders for the October 2025 waiver amendment:
 - In June/July, DDA hosted **five (5) webinars** to help the community provide input during the public comment period.
 - In September/October, DDA hosted **seven (7) webinars** to prepare the community for upcoming changes.
- Not one provider or participant was negatively impacted by the implementation of the waiver amendment. **DDA is extremely proud of this achievement**, as this is only the second time MDH has ever undergone a waiver consolidation.

MIDSEC - Advancing Access, Sustainability, and Equity

- The Maryland Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Sustainability and Equity Committee (MIDSEC) was established in FY2025 to bring together DDA and stakeholders to examine waiver operations and provide feedback on data-driven recommendations that strengthen equity, sustainability, and federal compliance.
- The MIDSEC gives Maryland, for the first time in recent years, a structured, data-driven, and stakeholder-led forum to address the growing financial and operational pressures on the developmental disabilities system.

MIDSEC - Advancing Access, Sustainability, and Equity

- 11 formal working meetings (October–December 2025)
- Comprehensive statewide waiver data reviewed, including: spending trends, service utilization, acuity levels, and regional patterns
- Major cost drivers identified
- Prioritized set of short- and mid-term options selected for deeper analysis and future recommendations

FY27 Priorities: Transformation, Alignment & Partnership

Strengthen Engagement & Access

- Expand and deepen FY26 engagements with participants, families, and providers
- Use feedback to inform near-term improvements
- Increase outreach to underserved populations and reduce language/communication barriers
- Improve accessibility of information and engagement opportunities

Inclusive & Flexible Participation

- Host in-person engagements with virtual participation options
- Ensure statewide flexibility for participants, families, and providers
- Key touchpoints: March DDA Roundtable, tentative April Community Meeting, ongoing stakeholder collaboration

Support & Communication

- Deliver targeted case management trainings and clearer guidance for participants/applicants
- Implement a coordinated strategic communications plan, including explanatory video vignettes

Discussion
