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## Battles Over Data Centers Intensify in the Maryland State House and Communities

Across Maryland, activists and data center supporters are battling over where and how proposed facilities will be built. Meanwhile, in the State House, lawmakers this session debated how to regulate them and the possible impact they could have on the electric grid.

By IAN FERRIS  
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (April 21, 2026)—Taylor Frazier McCollum had never been deeply involved in local politics until she learned of plans for a data center at the site of the former Landover Mall. She started a petition to fight the proposal and just two weeks after posting it on Instagram, more than 20,000 people signed it.

Frazier McCollum, whose family lives less than a mile from the site in Prince George's County, said she's worried about the noise, light and environmental impacts, which she called "war weapons."

"We already deal with so many issues with pollution and things of that nature inside the Beltway," Frazier McCollum

### Here are Maryland's data centers

Frederick County has the highest number of facilities, at 22, followed by Baltimore.



Map: Olivia Borgula • Source: Data Center Map • Created with Datawrapper

said. "It would be unfortunate to bring even more of that to our community."

Across Maryland, activists and data center supporters are battling over where and how proposed facilities will be built. Meanwhile, in the State House, lawmakers this session debated how to regulate them and the possible impact they could have on the electric grid. State Democratic leaders, including Gov. Wes Moore, have backed efforts to govern them.

"I'm not saying data centers shouldn't be built in Maryland, but if they are going to be built, we need more safeguards," said Del. Julie Palakovich Carr, D-Montgomery.

At least 17 bills related to data centers were introduced this session, according to the Maryland General Assembly. Of those, only two passed.

One of the bills, the Utility RELIEF Act, aims to hold utilities and data centers accountable, strengthen the long-term reliability of the state's energy system and expand clean energy, said House Speaker Joseline Peña-Melnyk, who introduced the legislation.

"Electric demand is rising

rapidly—driven in part by the growth of data centers and the digital economy," Peña-Melnyk, D-Prince George's and Anne Arundel, said at a press conference in March.

The legislature passed the bill Monday. It was sent to Moore who will sign it into law, according to his office.

### Lawmakers want "real path" for data centers

Moore has said that he would support data center projects if they hire local workers and support their own power needs.

"Data centers are done dictating what rules they will follow," Moore told reporters Monday. "Under this law, data centers will pay for the grid upgrades that they need, and not the people of the state of Maryland."

The bill would also expand which data centers qualify as a "large load customer," an entity with high energy demands and subject to stricter regulations.

The bill also incentivizes data centers to bring their own new clean energy, adhere to an energy efficiency program and give

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## Prince George's County Council Passes Council Member Blegay's Resolution Supporting a National Infrastructure Bank

By PRESS OFFICER  
Prince George's County Council Media

The Prince George's County Council, on Tuesday, April 21, passed CR-16-2026, a resolution proposed by Council Member Wala Blegay (At-Large) to officially support the federal establishment of a National Infrastructure Bank, a new financing tool designed to help meet the county's growing infrastructure needs.

Council Member Blegay believes a National Infrastructure Bank is the solution to the many challenges posed by aging transportation systems, water and sewer infrastructure, public facilities, housing shortages, and the rising costs associated with major capital projects. Traditional options, such as bond financing and competitive grant programs, according to Council Member Blegay, often

limit the county's ability to deliver projects in a timely, equitable, and cost-effective manner.

The resolution endorses the federal proposal known as the National Infrastructure Bank Act of 2025, which aims to create a large-scale financing institution capable of supporting infrastructure investment, stimulating economic development, creating local jobs, and promoting equitable growth.

"Our residents deserve infrastructure that matches the needs and potential of our communities," said Council Member Blegay. "This resolution strengthens our ability to pursue equitable, long-term investments that improve transportation, housing, public safety, and quality of life for every Prince Georgian."

## Prince George's County DHCD Announces Preservation of 126-Unit Senior Affordable Housing Community in Laurel

By ALEXIS REVIS YEOMAN  
Department of Housing and Community Development

LARGO, Md. (April 22, 2026)—The Prince George's County Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) today announced the successful preservation of Selborne House of Laurel, a 126-unit senior housing community located at 501 Main Street. This milestone ensures that all units will remain affordable for an additional 30 years, allowing seniors to continue living in a walkable, stable and accessible community.

Originally developed in 1998, Selborne House was approaching the expiration of its affordability restrictions in 2028. Utilizing the Right of First Refusal Loan Program, DHCD partnered with Urban Atlantic to secure the long-term affordability of the property. Urban Atlantic will maintain all 126 units as affordable for seniors

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## Laurel Historical Society Presents "Saddle Up, Laurel: 115+ Years of Laurel Park Racing" Exhibit

Exhibit Runs May 1–31, 2026

By PRESS OFFICER  
Laurel Historical Society

In celebration of Preakness 151 coming to Laurel Park on May 16, the Laurel Historical Society (LHS) is creating a special exhibit, "Saddle Up, Laurel: 115+ Years of Laurel Park Racing." This temporary exhibit will be on display in the City of Laurel Municipal Center from May 1 to May 31, 2026.

The exhibit provides a glimpse into the history of horse racing in Maryland and explores the 115-year-long history of Laurel Park, beginning with its inception at the 1911 Four County Fair, the many improvements and changes made by the owners, and the tumultuous years before it was saved for future use. Visitors will learn about the recognizable faces and names that have graced the track, such as Elizabeth Taylor and the Aga Khan, while discovering more about those who make up the diverse backstretch community, including famous trainers and horses. Additionally, visitors will find out more about the relationship between the city and the race track, with displays featuring local businesses that depended on and supported Laurel Park.

Check out the exhibition in person at the City of Laurel Municipal Center (8103 Sandy Spring Rd, Laurel, MD 20707) throughout the month of May to view a display of racing artifacts from the LHS collection. Objects showcased include a program from the first Washington, DC International Race, a jockey's



COURTESY PHOTO

Laurel Park Race Track, 1911—Laurel Historical Society, Sadler Photograph Collection

leather racing brassard from A.M. Kroop & Sons, historic photos, and more!

The exhibit will be complemented by a new online exhibit that features a more in-depth look at the history of racing, its people, and impact on Laurel. The exhibit is an update to the LHS's 2011 exhibit celebrating Laurel Park's 100th Anniversary, "And They're Off: 100 Years of Laurel Racing." Take a look online at [www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org) starting May 1 to view additional materials related to Laurel Park, such as educational videos and unseen panels.

The Laurel Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit founded in 1975 with the mission to deepen the understanding of the past and cultural heritage of Laurel, Maryland to connect and inspire, for today and the future. To learn more please visit [laurelhistoricalsociety.org](http://laurelhistoricalsociety.org).

## PGCPS Launches "Attendance Ambassador Program" to Combat Chronic Absenteeism Through Community Partnership

By PRESS OFFICER  
PGCPS

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (April 27, 2026)—Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) officially launched its new Attendance Ambassador Program today during a news conference at Andrew Jackson Academy. The community-driven initiative aims to reduce chronic absenteeism by fostering a shared responsibility among families, educators, and local partners to ensure every student is present, engaged, and prepared for success.

The launch comes at a time of signifi-

cant momentum for the district. Andrew Jackson Academy, the site of today's announcement, has seen an attendance increase of 5.5% since 2022. This mirrors a district-wide trend of progress where chronic absenteeism dropped from 30% to 27.4% over the last year. Despite these gains, district officials emphasize that the Attendance Ambassador Program is vital to further accelerating this progress.

The Attendance Ambassador Program brings together a diverse coalition, including business leaders, faith-based organizations, nonprofit partners, law enforcement, county representatives, parents, and students.

Joining the launch were County Executive Aisha Braveboy, State's Attorney Tara Jackson, district leaders, students, parents and community partners.

"Absenteeism is not a behavior problem," said Interim Superintendent Shawn Joseph. "It is a signal that a child may be struggling or that a family may need support. As a system and a community, we must respond differently. The launch of the Attendance Ambassador initiative signals our collective commitment to support our children and families."

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The disturbing pattern in each of these cases is a group of men not just struggling with mental health, but a general lack of value for the lives of their loved ones.

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Honoring the Life and Legacy of Eric Reese, Visionary Behind House of Soul

Prince George's County Department of Social Services Announces Jennifer Amaya Thompson as Agency Director

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# TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

## Brandywine-Aquasco by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

### FREDERICK DOUGLASS HIGH SCHOOL

Frederick Douglass High School has a rich history, and there are a few institutions with the same name. Let's break it down: Frederick Douglass High School in Baltimore: Established in 1883 as the Colored High and Training School, it's one of the oldest American public high schools for African American students. Initially located at the Peale's Baltimore Museum, it moved to several locations, including East Saratoga Street and Calhoun and Baker Streets. The school was named after Frederick Douglass, a prominent abolitionist, in 1925, and its current location is on Gwynns Fall Parkway. Notable alumni include Thurgood Marshall, the first African American Supreme Court Justice. The school has undergone renovations, including a recent one that started in 2024 and is expected to be completed by 2026.

Frederick Douglass High School in Prince George's County founded in 1922 as Marlboro High School, was the first high school for African Americans in Prince George's County. Renamed Frederick Douglass High School in 1935, it's currently located in a building that opened in 1959. The school offers various academic programs, including the IB Diploma Programme and a Career Academy in Communications and a broadcast Technology.

### HAWAIIAN LUAU PARTY

Aloha! Pomonkey High School Alumni Association invites you to a Hawaiian Party Saturday, May 23, 2026. Time: 1–5 p.m. Benefit: Building Fund. Catered Hawaiian Cuisine. DJ, Raffle Drawings, Limbo Contest and a special surprise. Tickets: \$50. No tickets will be sold at the door. Contact Beverly Coger: 202-378-7891, Yvonne Taylor: 301-753-8662, Philip Thomas: 301-751-1823. The event will be held at Indian Head Village Green Pavilion, 100 Walter Thomas Drive, Indian Head, Maryland.

### TUESDAY JUST DANCE FITNESS CLASS

Tuesday Just Dance Fitness Class presented by Adventist HealthCare at National Harbor, 165 Waterfront Street, National Harbor, Maryland. Recurring weekly on Tuesdays from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.

### BULLDOG RUN/WALK 5K

Runners! Lace up your sneakers and join us for the Bulldog 5K Walk/Run in memory of Clyde Doughty, Jr. Public event by Bowie State University. In support of our student-athletes May 17, 2026, from 2–5 p.m., 14000 Jericho Park Road, Bowie, Maryland 20715. This year's walk/run is held in memory of the late Clyde Doughty, Jr. whose legacy of leadership and dedication to Bowie State athletics continues to inspire the Bulldog community. Proceeds from the Bulldog 5K will benefit the Department of Athletics by supporting academic resources and services that empower our student-athletes to succeed both in the classroom and in competition. The Bulldog 5K will occur rain or shine. Early Bird Registration: \$40. Day of Registration: \$50. Walk. Run. Donate.

### MEMORIAL CHARITY BANQUET

Join EDNA's Love, Inc. for our 5th Annual Memorial Charity Banquet as we reflect on the service rendered over the past year, recognize our scholarship recipients, and our community mother of the year winner. Sunday, May 3, 2026, from 2–6 p.m. at the American Legion Post 259. The address is 9122 Piscataway Road, Clinton, Maryland 20735. Tickets can be purchased at Zeffy. Donation \$80. Event by Venus Drummond Jones and EDNA'S Love,

Inc. Duration 4 hours. Please join us as we celebrate another year of work in the community, thank all of our community partners, recognize our community advocates, and provide working adults with scholarships. For more information contact: INFO@EDNASLOVE.org

### BSU: THE JONES LEGACY FAMILY

"Our Bowie State legacy began in 1984 as high school sweethearts with a shared dream of attending what was then Bowie State College. Kevin ('88) enrolled first, and I, Nicole ('89), followed the next year, where our bond grew stronger."

"After marriage and starting our family, we shared our Bowie experiences with our daughters. Our oldest daughter Shannon graduated from Bowie State University in 2017, and in 2025, our youngest daughter, Kortlyn, chose to also attend Bowie State University. With additional family members who are alumni, our legacy reflects generations of pride and Bulldog spirit.

### BSU: THE DUNLAP LEGACY FAMILY

Collin comes from a long legacy of Bowie State University graduates. This fall, he will be the 4th generation to attend BSU and prayerfully will graduate in 2028. His mom, both grandmothers, grandfather and great grandfathers are BSU alumni. Not to mention that he has an aunt, an uncle, godparents, and cousins that all graduated from Bowie State University.

### BSU: THE JOHNSON-BAKER-WILSON LEGACY FAMILY

"Our BSU Legacy Family started with my grandmother, Bernice Elizabeth Johnson, who graduated from Bowie State with an educational degree in 1951. I, Donte Wilson, was next to graduate from BSU in 1997 with a bachelor's degree in psychology. My sister, Tanisha Baker, graduated in 2016 with a master's in counseling psychology. My daughter, Taylor Wilson, currently attends BSU and will graduate with the class of 2026. That's three generations of Bulldogs."

### 2026 SUMMER DEVELOPMENT CAMPS

Bowie State head football coach Dawson Odums has announced a series of football development camps this summer, providing student athletes the opportunity to train with one of the top programs in the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association. The Bowie State Football Development Camps will feature three sessions; all held at Bulldog Stadium: May 30: High School Development Camp. June: 6 Middle School Development Camp. July 13 Youth Development Camp. Each camp is designed to provide middle school, high school, and youth athletes with elite instruction, skill development and competitive drills in a high-energy environment. Participants will receive instruction from Odums, the Bowie State Coaching Staff and current Bulldogs students-athletes while refining techniques and showcasing their abilities. All camps are open to any and all entrants, limited only by number, age, gender and grade level. Registration 9–10 a.m. Online \$50, in person \$65 on the day of camp. Check-in will take place from 9–10 a.m. in the lobby of the Leonidas S. James Physical Education Complex on the campus of Bowie State University.

## In & Around Morningside-Skyline by Mary McHale 301-735-3451

### Morningsider Peggy Nanney dies at 81

Margrette Loretta Nanney, longtime Morningsider, died April 6 with family at her side, at The Hermitage Assisted Living in Solomons. She was 81.

Margrette, also known as Peggy, was born in Washington September 30, 1944. For years she lived on Maple Road in Morningside. She attended St. Philip the Apostle Church in Camp Springs and was treasurer of their Ladies' Sodality.

She worked at the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) for 37 years, retiring May 31, 1999, as the Chief of the Employment Branch. She took pride in her work and was recognized for her many accomplishments.

Peggy enjoyed long rides in the country and shopping at the farmers' market. Also, keeping in touch with family and friends through letters, cards and phone calls, doing cross stitching on plastic canvas, and gifting them.

After retirement, Peggy was a loving caregiver for her mother Melma for 19 years. She provided rides to doctors' offices and comfort for family members over the years. And she helped neighbors with grocery shopping and meals, setting a beautiful example for family and friends.

Following this example of caring, her cousins stood by her during her time of need—in fact, it was an honor to spend time with her. She expressed her appreciation constantly. Her cousins Joyce, Francis, Linda, Michelle, Anna, and (her favorite) Rosemary were with her through her illness.

Peggy is survived by many cousins and extended family members in Maryland, Mississippi, Texas and California. She is preceded in death by her father, Harold Nanney, her mother Melma Nanney, and many aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Services were on April 16 at St. Philip the Apostle Catholic Church, 5416 Henderson Way, Camp Springs. Interment was at Cedar Hill Cemetery.

### Morningside Election coming up

Every year, Morningside holds elections on the first Monday of May. This year, election day falls on May 4, and two town council seats are up for election. Those seats are currently held by Sharon Fowler and John Anthony.

Since they were the only candidates to turn in petitions by the deadline, they are running unopposed. If you're hoping to challenge them, you'd better get working on your write-in campaign. You can vote at Town Hall between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. on May 4. The winners of the election will be sworn in two weeks later, on May 18.

### Speed Cameras are working!!

This is one more reminder that, as of April 11, the new speed camera on Allentown Road at Andrews Manor Shopping Center is issuing citations. That means there now are cameras in both directions.

Also, keep in mind the speed limit now is 35 miles per hour in both directions. And the fines on those tickets will follow the tiered system that Maryland implemented last October. The faster you go, the more you pay:

12–15 mph over = \$40 fine  
16–19 mph over = \$70 fine  
20–29 mph over = \$120 fine  
30–39 mph over = \$230 fine  
40+ mph over = \$425 fine

Prior to April 11, Morningside turned on the new camera for a two-hour test. Although the town didn't issue any citations based that test, the camera did record over a hundred violations in that short span.

### No soliciting in Morningside

Morningside Police Chief Daniel Franklin wants you to remember that soliciting is not permitted in the town of Morningside. It is illegal for anybody to go door-to-door in Morningside selling items and services or requesting money.

Chief Franklin notes that, no matter how

legitimate they may seem, solicitors could well be scammers or even criminals gathering information to plan burglaries. If you see someone soliciting, avoid interacting with them. Instead contact the police through Prince George's County Dispatch as quickly as possible, at 301-352-1200. And, of course, if you believe they might commit a crime or you feel at all unsafe or threatened by them, call 911 immediately. Help the Morningside Police keep town safe for everyone.

### Vacation time!

I'm going on vacation, so you're not going to hear from me for a couple weeks. My grandson Conor and I are driving to Cincinnati to visit daughter Kathleen Shearer en route to my childhood hometown of Saginaw, Mich. I look forward to spending time with my surviving siblings, Rosie Nickodemus, Stella Thelen, and Tom Mudd. So, you'll just have to find a way to do without me for the rest of April. But I'm sure I'll have a full report of my adventures when we get back.

### Milestones

Happy Birthday to Edna Lucas, April 24; Sue Stine McConkey-Mason, Daisy Young, Kenia Spivey, and grandson David McHale, April 25; G.A. DeFelice, April 26; Michael Call, April 27; Hazel Ball, Beverly Gotshall Marquis, DJ Fowler, and Jessica Phipps, April 28; Lael McCune and Todd Mullins, April 30; Kathryn Deaver, May 1; Ann Lacey, Ernestine Taylor Wood, Dante Ross Jr., and Janet Booth Kaye, May 2; daughter Sheila McHale Mudd and Lori Williams, May 3; India Goodall and Ruby Haines, May 4; Jim Henderson, May 5; Dwight Holloway Jr., May 7.

Happy Anniversary to Jan and Cindy Smith, April 28.

*Editor's Note: This column was submitted for the 4-23 edition after the deadline.*

## Around the County

### Semiquincentennial Family Day at Marietta

Please join us on **Saturday, May 2**, 11 a.m.–3 p.m., for the Semiquincentennial Family Day at Marietta. Prince George's County is a special place to live, rich with history, culture, and community. Join us for a fun-filled day to help mark the nation's 250th anniversary. From 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., everyone will enjoy the featured musicians who will perform American Revolutionary-era music and African Drumming.

All ages welcome, and children must be accompanied by an adult. This is a free event. The historic buildings will be open to visitors. A children's craft tent will offer easy make-n-take projects, and the Uhuru Quilters will be on site to show their hand-made quilts. Visitors can meet a wood-turner and a wood carver who will demonstrate their skills. There will be history presentations, a children's book reading about the Underground Railroad, and a poetry reading by Diane Wilbon Parks at 12:30 p.m.

The Farmers Market will be on site from 9 a.m.–1 p.m. Walk-ins are welcome. Register on [www.pgparksdirect.com](http://www.pgparksdirect.com) and use ticket code: MHM-SPEC-GA20260502

Bring a blanket or lawn chair to relax on the grounds.

For more information, please call 301-464-5291 or email [mariettahouse@pgparks.com](mailto:mariettahouse@pgparks.com). Marietta Historic Site & Museum is located at 5626 Bell Station Road, Glenn Dale, MD, and is a property of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

### Gateway Arts District Open Studios Tour

The public is invited to explore the vibrant art community located in the four towns of Mount Rainier, Brentwood, North Brentwood, and Hyattsville that comprise Maryland's Gateway Arts District. On this one day, the artists have their studios open at the same time and visitors can explore the depth and breadth of this unique community.

The 2026 GATEWAY OPEN STUDIOS TOUR happens on **Saturday, May 9, 2026** from 12–5 pm. The event is FREE and open to the public. Visit <https://www.gatewaycdc.org/ost2026> for a map of participating artists and studios to plan your self-guided tour.

The Gateway Arts District is the largest in the region, but it is easy to underestimate as many of its artists work in spaces tucked away or without public hours. An exciting element of this event is that visitors can see spaces not always open, view artists' work and workspaces, and talk to the artists about their practice on this special day of open houses.

The district roughly encompasses a two mile stretch from Mt. Rainier to Hyattsville with most locations on or around Route 1/Rhode Island Avenue. While some intrepid art goers choose to walk, free shuttles will be operated along the corridor to help people cover more ground. All day parking is available at the Hyattsville Judicial Center garage (5000 Rhode Island Avenue).

In addition to visual art, many neighboring businesses will be poised to welcome visitors for food, drink, and further discovery of the many small and creative places within the Gateway Arts District. Enjoy locally brewed beer at Franklin's or Streetcar 82, grab lunch at Pennyroyal Station or one of the food trucks popping up for the day.

After touring, all are welcome to the Pyramid Atlantic Members show opening in Hyattsville and to join the 3711 Studios team for an opening at Station 3510 in Mount Rainier.

Thank you to our sponsors Prince George's Arts and Humanities Council, Prince George's County Revenue Authority, M-NCPPC, and Gateway CDC.

### Prince George's Community College to Celebrate Class of 2026 at 67th Commencement Ceremony

LARGO, Md. (April 20, 2026)—Prince George's Community College (PGCC) will host its 67th Commencement ceremony on **Saturday, May 16, 2026**. The ceremony will begin at 10 a.m. at Show Place Arena in Upper Marlboro, Maryland.

"Our graduates are stepping into the world prepared, confident, and unstoppable," Falecia D. Williams, Ed.D., president of Prince George's Community College, said. "The Class of 2026 has demonstrated what it means to persevere, to rise, lead, and to succeed. Their journey is just beginning, and their impact will be felt far beyond this moment."

More than 1,300 graduates are expected to cross the stage this year, with the College awarding 1,463 degrees and 339 certificates. The Class of 2026 includes 508 students graduating with honors and 164 graduates from the Early and Middle College Programs.

The College will recognize London M. Hudnall as the 2026 Distinguished Graduate. Hudnall has excelled academically and contributed to campus life through leadership, STEM research and service. She is a member of Phi Theta Kappa, the National Society of Leadership and Success, and the National Society of Collegiate Scholars. She plans to transfer to the University of Maryland to study biochemistry and pursue a career in dentistry. A returning adult learner and student parent, Hudnall balanced her academic work with family responsibilities, reflecting determination and clarity.

"Returning to school showed me that it's never too late to pursue your purpose," Hudnall said. "This journey has taught me the importance of believing in yourself even when the path looks different than you imagined."

Maryland Lt. Gov. Aruna K. Miller will serve as commencement speaker. As the 19th lieutenant governor of the state, she is the second woman, and the first woman of color and immigrant, elected to statewide office in Maryland.

Additional speakers include Board of Trustees Chair Tomeka C. Bumbry and Chief Academic Officer and Provost Patricia J. Armstrong, Ph.D.

For more information, visit the College's commencement webpage: <https://www.pgcc.edu/commencement/>.

# HEALTH *and* WELLNESS

## Herbs, Tea, and Potpourri: A Wellness Month Program

By STACEY HAWKINS  
 Marietta Historic Site & Museum

Please join us at Marietta Historic Site & Museum for a hands-on presentation on **Saturday, May 16**, 1–2:30 p.m. for “Herbs, Tea, and Potpourri: A Wellness Month Program.” Guests will learn about herbs for food and medicine, and how women, free and enslaved, used herbs and tea. Light refreshments of teas and herb shortbreads will be served, and guests will make herb-related crafts. \$5/county resident & \$7/non-county. Registration is required. Please register on [www.parksdirect.com](http://www.parksdirect.com) and use the ticket code: MHM-SPEC-GA-20260516

The L.H. Farmers Market is on site from 9 a.m.–1 p.m. for those who wish to come early and visit the market. Tours of the historic house are at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., and 3 p.m.

For more information, please call 301-464-5291 or email [marietta-house@pgparks.com](mailto:marietta-house@pgparks.com). Marietta Historic Site & Museum is located at 5626 Bell Station Road, Glenn Dale, MD, and is a property of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

## Maryland Invests \$1.5M to Address Primary Care Shortage in Prince George's County

CCI Health Services to train new doctors locally starting this summer

By PRESS OFFICER  
 CCI Health Services

SILVER SPRING, Md. (April 14, 2026)—Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) CCI Health Services will receive \$1.5 million in state funding to support its Family Medicine Residency Program, included in the Fiscal Year 2027 Maryland State Budget signed by Governor Wes Moore.

“Expanding access to care is a priority I care strongly about, as it plays a critical role in improving health outcomes. I am grateful for the ongoing partnership with CCI Health Services and for their commitment to serving residents in Prince George’s County.”—Maryland House Speaker Joseline Peña-Melnyk

“This program is about preparing the next generation of physicians to meet the real needs of our communities. With training in areas like geriatrics, language access, and global health, our residents will be equipped to deliver high-quality care to all patient populations and expand access where it is needed most.”—Dr. Sonya Bruton, CEO and President, CCI Health Services

Prince George’s County faces a significant shortage of primary care providers, with approximately one physician per every 2,020 residents

and an estimated shortfall of more than 1,000 physicians. Many communities lack sufficient medical services, making it difficult for residents to access timely care.

CCI’s Family Medicine Residency Program is designed to help address the gap by training physicians in medically under-resourced communities. The program will welcome its first cohort of four residents this summer and will grow to include twelve resident physicians by 2029.

Residents will train at CCI’s Greenbelt health center, gaining experience across primary care, pediatrics, women’s health, behavioral health, and infectious disease services. As a Federally Qualified Health Center, CCI provides services to all patients, thereby directly strengthening access to care.

Research shows that physicians are more likely to practice in the areas where they complete their residency training. By establishing a residency program in Prince George’s County, CCI is creating a long-term pipeline of primary care providers to serve the region.

*CCI Health Services is a Federally Qualified Health Center providing comprehensive primary care and supportive services across Maryland, with a focus on advancing health care for all communities.*

## 2026 Maryland Infant Safe Sleep, Equity and Prevention Summit

By PRESS OFFICER  
 Roberta's House Inc.

Healthy Beginnings: Infant Safe Sleep, Equity, and Prevention Summit is a full-day, statewide convening designed to inform, connect, and equip those working to reduce preventable infant deaths across Maryland. Hosted at the Maritime Conference Center, the Summit will feature research-informed presentations, panel discussions, and practical strategies grounded in equity, prevention, and community voice.

Attendees can expect a dynamic agenda that brings together healthcare providers, public health professionals, policymakers, child-serving organizations, and families with lived experience. The program will be anchored by a keynote address from Rachel Y. Moon, M.D., Harrison Distinguished Teaching Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Virginia School of Medicine and a nationally recognized leader in infant safe sleep research and policy.

The Summit includes breakfast, lunch, and refreshments, along with

**Event Details:**  
 Healthy Beginnings: Infant Safe Sleep, Equity, and Prevention Summit  
**Thursday, May 28, 2026**  
 8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.  
 Maritime Conference Center  
 692 Maritime Boulevard  
 Linthicum Heights, MD 21090

ample opportunities for networking and cross-sector collaboration. On-site overnight accommodations are available at the conference center for participants who wish to stay, making it easier to fully engage in the experience.

The Summit is convened by Maryland Department of Health in partnership with Roberta’s House, reflecting the state’s commitment to advancing infant safe sleep, health equity, and prevention statewide.

Registration is free and required (on eventbrite). For more information contact Dr. Tracy Turner, Maternal and Infant Loss Director, Roberta’s House by email at [tturner@robertashouse.org](mailto:tturner@robertashouse.org) or call (410) 235-6633.

## Luminis Health Celebrates Groundbreaking of New Women's Health Pavilion and Campus Modernization at Doctors Community Medical Center

By PRESS OFFICER  
 Luminis Health

LANHAM, Md. (April 22, 2026)—Luminis Health marked a major milestone in expanding access to comprehensive care with the official groundbreaking of the new Women’s Health Pavilion at Luminis Health Doctors Community Medical Center (LHDCMC). The ceremony, held April 22, brought together health system leaders, local and state officials, clinicians, and community stakeholders to celebrate the future of women’s healthcare in Prince George’s County.

The 67,000-square-foot pavilion will serve as a centralized hub for a full spectrum of services designed to meet the unique healthcare needs of women and families. The facility will include inpatient obstetric care, such as labor, delivery, and postpartum services, along with expanded specialty care offerings to support patients before, during, and after pregnancy.

“This groundbreaking represents our commitment to improving the health and well-being of the communities we serve,” said Tori Bayless, CEO of Luminis Health. “The Women’s Health Pavilion is more than a building, it is a promise to deliver compassionate, high-quality, and equitable care for women and families across our region. We are proud to invest in a future where every woman has access to the care she deserves, close to home.”

The three-story, state-of-the-art facility will include:

- Private labor and delivery rooms
- Dedicated C-section operating rooms
- Midwife supported birthing suites
- Postpartum and nursery units
- Level II Special Care Nursery
- Future shell space for expanding women’s services
- Rooftop helipad with direct access to the Emergency Department

Prince George’s County is home to nearly one million residents, yet 8 in 10 women leave the county to deliver their babies due to limited access to obstetrical



COURTESY IMAGE

Artist’s rendering of the Women’s Health Pavilion at Luminis Health Doctors Community Medical Center.

care. Black women in the region also face disproportionately high maternal mortality rates, approximately 50% higher than the national average.

“Delivery is just one part of a much larger journey,” said Deneen Richmond, president of Luminis Health Doctors Community Medical Center. “The Women’s Health Pavilion reflects our commitment to a coordinated approach to maternal care, supporting women before pregnancy, guiding them through high-quality prenatal care, and ensuring that support continues during the critical postpartum period.”

Construction is underway, with expanded women’s health services scheduled to launch in late 2028. Once fully operational, LHDCMC expects to deliver approximately 2,000 babies each year.

The project also features major upgrades to core clinical and support areas of the hospital, including:

- Modernized operating rooms, interventional radiology, and sterile processing
- Redesigned Emergency Department
- Expanded laboratory and food & nutrition spaces
- Major utility and infrastructure improvements

In addition to enhancing care, the Maternal Health and Campus Modernization

Initiative is expected to bring meaningful economic benefits to Prince George’s County by creating jobs, supporting local businesses, and driving economic activity throughout the construction process.

The groundbreaking ceremony concluded with a ceremonial turning of the soil, marking the official start of construction on a project that will shape the future of healthcare in the region.

For more information about Luminis Health and the Women’s Health Pavilion project, visit this website: [https://www.luminishealth.org/en/maternal-health-and-campus-modernization-initiative?language\\_content\\_entity=en](https://www.luminishealth.org/en/maternal-health-and-campus-modernization-initiative?language_content_entity=en).

*Luminis Health is a non-profit regional health system headquartered in Annapolis, Maryland. Comprised of Anne Arundel Medical Center, Doctors Community Medical Center (DCMC), J. Kent McNew Family Medical Center, Pathways, DCMC Rehab, and Luminis Health Clinical Enterprise, the system serves a population of 1.5 million people. As one of the area’s largest charitable organizations—with 880 licensed beds, 100+ sites of care, and 8,700 team members—Luminis Health contributes more than \$120 million in community benefit annually. Visit [LuminisHealth.org](http://LuminisHealth.org) and connect with us on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.*

## Chesapeake Life Center to Host One-Day Retreat for Grievors and Caregivers

By ELYZABETH MARCUSSEN  
 Hospice of the Chesapeake

PRINCE FREDERICK, Md. (April 22, 2026)—Chesapeake Life Center invites community members to step away from the demands of caregiving and grief to focus on healing, reflection and renewal during a special one-day retreat this June.

The “Looking Back, Living Now, Leaning Forward” retreat will take place **Saturday, June 13**, beginning at 9 a.m. at the Burnett Center for Hope and Healing, 4559 Sixes Road in Prince Frederick.

Designed for individuals navigating loss or caring for a loved one, the retreat offers a supportive environment to rest, learn and connect with others who understand the emotional and physical challenges of these journeys.

Participants will experience a full day of meaningful activities focused on wellness and self-care, including yoga, music therapy and guidance on nutrition. Attendees can create a personal remembrance item and share with others walking similar paths. A nutritious lunch will be provided.

“Caregiving and grieving can be overwhelming, often bringing emotional strain, physical exhaustion and uncertainty about what lies ahead,” Chesapeake Life Center Manager Alena Dailey



PHOTO BY NEIL RUBINO

The Burnett Center for Hope & Healing, located at 4559 Sixes Road in Prince Frederick, Maryland, is a welcoming space where Hospice of the Chesapeake provides compassionate community services, support and resources for those navigating life’s most challenging moments.

said. “This retreat offers space to pause, reflect and find strength in both personal healing and shared experience.”

The retreat is part of Hospice of the Chesapeake’s ongoing commitment to supporting individuals and families through serious illness, caregiving and loss with compassionate, comprehensive care.

The cost is \$15. Space is limited, and early registration is encouraged. To re-

serve a spot, call 888-501-7077 or email [griefinfo@chesapeakelifecenter.org](mailto:griefinfo@chesapeakelifecenter.org).

*Chesapeake Life Center, a program service of Hospice of the Chesapeake, serves hospice family members and the community with bereavement services and activities aimed at enhancing the quality of life for those grieving the loss of a loved one. For details, visit [www.chesapeakelifecenter.org](http://www.chesapeakelifecenter.org).*

## Monica Shaniece Dixon Awarded Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine Degree From National University of Health Sciences

LOMBARD, Ill. (April 27, 2026)—In a commencement ceremony held April 24, Monica Shaniece Dixon of Fort Washington received the Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine degree from Na-

tional University of Health Sciences.

“We are very proud of Monica Shaniece Dixon, as National University’s Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine program is one of the most demanding

of its kind,” says President Joseph Stiefel of National University.

—National University of Health Sciences

# COMMENTARY

## Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



### To Be Equal:

## The Crisis Calling From Inside the House

Dr. Cerina Fairfax. Vice Mayor Nancy Metayer Bowen. Shayla Elkins, 5; Kayla Pugh, 6; Layla Pugh, 7; Markaydon Pugh, 10; Sariahh Snow, 11; Khedarrion Snow, 6; Braylon Snow, 5; and Jayla Elkins, who was just 3 years old. Each of these women and all eight of these children died at the hands of men who were supposed to protect and provide for them in the last month.

Unfortunately, these murders aren't happening in a vacuum. Stories of angry, despondent men violently killing their wives, girlfriends, and children are occurring in our community at an alarming rate. And far too often, we're left asking why.

In the mass shooting in Shreveport, the nation's deadliest since 2024, the family of the shooter,

Shamar Elkins, stated he was struggling with his mental health in the midst of a divorce before killing his family. Former Lt. Governor of Virginia Justin Fairfax was also said to have been experiencing isolation and depressive episodes before killing his wife and himself days after being requested to appear at a divorce hearing. And after murdering his wife, Nancy, Stephen Bowen told his uncle that he "couldn't take it anymore."

The disturbing pattern in each of these cases is a group of men not just struggling with mental health, but a general lack of value for the lives of their loved ones. Taken together, these cases reveal something larger than individual tragedy; they reveal a crisis hiding in plain sight.

Researchers have documented the rise of a male loneliness epidemic that was sweeping the country, and its effects on emotional stability, ability to connect with others, and even how men perceive reality. Researchers also found that in the absence of meaningful relationships, men who spent more time online often found themselves targeted by algorithms that promote toxic podcasters and influencers who spout negative tropes and stereotypes about women. This world, called the "red pill," encourages men to dehumanize and assert power over women socially, at home, and in the workplace.

While there's no direct correlation between these tragedies and toxic internet culture, the risks of isolation and the inability or refusal to engage with mental health supports are evident. But for many men of color, accessing mental healthcare isn't easy.

There are financial barriers that keep Black men out of care. Stigmas associated with therapy, like being labeled "crazy" or "weak," encourage men to compartmentalize and use self-soothing tactics like drinking or substances that raise the risk of violent outbursts. And with only 4% of mental health professionals being Black, finding professionals that men can connect with is also a challenge.

The combination of feeling like finding help is impossible, compartmentalizing that leads to isolation, and predatory algorithms that spew hatred towards women has created a perfect storm for violence and self-harm. According to the National Library of Medicine, suicide has become the third leading cause of death among Black people, and for younger men, most vulnerable to alienating internet culture, rates of mental health decline are rising.

Tackling this crisis that is tearing our families and community apart will take acknowledging the structural issues that are breaking down the mental health of Black men while holding men accountable for their actions.

Making mental health the center of these stories risks minimizing the decisions that these men made to take the lives of their loved ones. And imposing accountability without investing in preventative measures to ensure that these acts of violence don't happen again is also short-sighted.

This means calling it what it is: a structural decline in the value of human lives. And these cases, in our community, are examples of the devaluing of Black lives.

If you or a loved one needs support with anxiety, depression, or thoughts of self-harm or harm against others, call or text 988 for help today.

—April 25, 2026

# BUSINESS AND FINANCE

## Prince George's County Native Launches "The Meet Up Podcast" Amid Rising Burnout Among Young Professionals

By PRESS OFFICER  
The Meet Up Podcast

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, Md. (April 24, 2026)—As burnout, career uncertainty, and mental health challenges continue to impact young professionals nationwide, Prince George's County native Juwan Blocker is launching The Meet Up Podcast—a new platform designed to create honest, solution-driven conversations around career, purpose, and personal growth.

According to recent workforce studies, a growing number of Gen Z and millennial professionals report feeling disengaged and uncertain about their career paths, highlighting a need for spaces that offer both relatability and practical guidance.

A graduate of Bowie State University and former student leader within Prince George's County Public Schools, Blocker has long been committed to advocacy and community impact. As a former student member of the Prince George's County Board of Education, he played a role in efforts to preserve the Creative and Performing Arts (CPA) program at Hyattsville Middle School—an experience that shaped his passion for creating

platforms that uplift and empower others.

"I started this podcast because I know what it feels like to navigate uncertainty and be in between seasons. So many young professionals in Prince George's County and across the DMV are figuring things out in real time. This platform is about real conversations that help people move forward with clarity, confidence, and purpose." —*Juwan Blocker, Founder, The Meet Up Podcast*

**Launching on May 1, 2026**, The Meet Up Podcast will feature weekly episodes with leaders, professionals, and changemakers from Prince George's County and the broader DMV region. The podcast will explore topics including career transitions, mental wellness, faith, and identity—while offering actionable tools listeners can apply to their own lives.

The debut episodes will highlight conversations centered on navigating career pivots, maintaining mental health in high-pressure environments, and building purpose-driven careers during uncertain times.

Listeners can expect:

- Authentic conversations on career growth

and transitions

- Insight into maintaining mental wellness in high-pressure environments
- Discussions on faith, identity, and purpose
- Tools and strategies for personal and professional development

More than a podcast, The Meet Up Podcast aims to build a community rooted in accountability, growth, and legacy-building—starting in Prince George's County and expanding across the DMV.

**Episodes will be available beginning May 1 on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and YouTube.** For updates, follow @The\_Meet\_Up\_Podcast on social media.

For media inquiries, interview requests, or collaboration opportunities, please contact Juwan Blocker at meetuppod1@gmail.com.

*The Meet Up Podcast is a platform dedicated to honest conversations with leaders and professionals navigating career shifts, personal growth, and purpose. Through storytelling and practical insight, the podcast empowers young professionals—especially those in Prince George's County and the DMV—to build meaningful careers while prioritizing mental wellness and faith.*

## 2026 NARFE Maryland Mini-Conference

By PRESS OFFICER  
NARFE

The Maryland Federation of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE) will host Maryland Comptroller Brooke Lierman and LWVMD President Linda Kohn. Both leaders look forward to answering your questions.

**NARFE CHAPTER Members:** Are to register through their chapter president as soon as you can.

**NARFE national only Members:** Are to register through NARFE MD President Edward Holland as soon as possible. President Holland can be reached at hollandnmd@aol.com.

**PUBLIC:** Questions for the speakers...feel free to contact us above. To learn about NARFE MD, visit us at <https://mdnarfe.org/>

**Event Details:**  
NARFE Maryland at Bowie Comfort Inn  
4500 Crain Hwy, Bowie, MD 20716  
**May 5, 2026, 9 a.m.**  
Maryland Comptroller Brooke Lierman and League of Women Voters of Maryland President Linda Kohn

*NARFE, since 1921, is the only organization dedicated solely to protecting and preserving the pay, and earned benefits of America's active and retired federal employees. NARFE Maryland Federation represents almost 300,000 federal and postal employees, annuitants and their survivors statewide and through the State Legislative Initiatives, more than 800,000 seniors across the State.*

### Preservation from A1

and the property with undergo comprehensive renovations later this year under its new ownership.

"Closing on this Right of First Refusal Loan with Urban Atlantic marks a critical step in our commitment to preserving affordable housing for Prince George's County residents," said Jonathan R. Butler, Director of DHCD. "At a time when rising costs are placing increased pressure on our most vulnerable populations—especially seniors—protecting existing affordable homes is just as

important as building new ones. This action ensures that more of our neighbors can continue to live in safe, stable, and accessible communities without fear of displacement."

This preservation effort would not have been possible without the critical financial support provided by DHCD. Urban Atlantic will begin renovations later this year when it closes on a new tax credit syndication using Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) equity. The transaction reflects the County's proactive approach to safeguarding affordable housing before it is lost to market conversion.

The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (MD-DHCD) also supported the effort and reaffirmed its commitment to the project's long-term success. "Maryland needs more housing that supports aging residents and evolving household needs," said Gregory Hare, Assistant Secretary of MD-DHCD's Community Development Administration. "We are encouraged by this acquisition and remain committed to its renovation and preservation as part of a diverse and inclusive housing stock."

The purchaser, Urban At-

lantic Development, was able to successfully acquire the property through a competitive process by utilizing DHCD's Right of First Refusal Loan program, which provides crucial gap financing to prioritize long-term affordability outcomes for the community.

"Selborne House is exactly the type of community we are committed to preserving," said Brant Snyder, CEO of Urban Atlantic. "With support from Prince George's County and the state of Maryland, we look forward to substantially renovating the property through the LIHTC program, thereby preserving its

affordability for years to come."

Located in downtown Laurel, Selborne House provides residents with convenient access to public transportation, healthcare services, and neighborhood amenities, making it a vital component of the County's

housing landscape.

This transaction underscores Prince George's County's continued leadership in preserving affordable housing and ensuring that residents—particularly seniors—can remain in their communities for years to come.

### Absenteeism from A1

Participants in the program signed a pledge card today, committing to serve as visible champions for the message that "Every Day Counts." Attendance Ambassadors have committed to:

- **Champion Attendance:** Promoting it as a key driver of academic success.
- **Leverage Influence:** Using their voices and services to encourage families to prioritize daily attendance.
- **Collaborative Problem Solving:** Working alongside schools to address attendance challenges with empathy and coordination.
- **Remove Barriers:** Supporting strategies

and partnerships that create clear pathways for students to attend school consistently.

The district believes that regular, on-time attendance is a powerful predictor of student success. By expanding this network of community champions, PGCPs intends to move beyond traditional discipline, instead focusing on empathy-based solutions that address the root causes of why students miss school.

"Our children's success is the foundation of our county's future," said County Executive Aisha Braveboy. "The Attendance Ambassador Program isn't just about filling seats; it's about wraparound support. By bringing together faith leaders, businesses,

and families, we are creating a culture where every student feels seen, supported, and motivated to show up."

State's Attorney Tara Jackson said, "Real public safety starts long before a crime occurs; it begins with prevention, early intervention, and keeping young people connected to school and opportunity. Showing up matters, because when students stay engaged, we strengthen families, build accountability, and help change life trajectories to create safer communities."

To learn more about becoming an Attendance Ambassador, go to <https://www.pgcp.org/offices/student-services/attendance-awareness/attendance-ambassador>.

## The Prince George's Post

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# BUSINESS AND FINANCE

## Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

### Should I collect SS now or wait two years until age 70?

By RUSSELL GLOOR,  
National Social Security Advisor at the AMAC Foundation,  
the non-profit arm of the Association of Mature American Citizens

**Dear Rusty:** I am 67 and 9 months old, collecting a modest SS survivor benefit with plans to collect my own much larger benefit at age 70. I was confident this plan was a good one; but recent turbulent events make me nervous that cuts could come to Social Security at any time without warning. Would it be prudent to file for my own Social Security as soon as possible so that my benefit might be “grandfathered” in before any sudden and drastic cuts occur? I do not generally panic, but these are unprecedented times. I would be quite comfortable with the benefit listed on my 2024 statement for my current age; I was just hoping to maximize the benefit by waiting.

When I go to the Social Security website to view my 2025 annual statement to see the personalized monthly retirement benefit estimates for ages 68, 69, and 70, that section no longer shows. This omission makes me uncomfortable. Can I find out what my current benefit estimate would be for ages 68, 69, and 70? Or should I just rely on the 2024 statement? **Signed: Nervous in Portland**

**Dear Nervous:** Please do not be nervous that recent “turbulent events” pose a threat to your future Social Security benefits. Those events do not, in any way, jeopardize your future Social Security benefits, because Social Security is completely separate from all other federal political issues and finances. The primary problem with Social Security became an issue long before the current administration took office.

The Trustees of Social Security have been warning Congress for decades that Social Security’s finances require Congressional attention. The fact is that Social Security revenue (as predicted decades ago) became insufficient to pay all benefit obligations in about 2021. Since that time, money from Social Security’s reserved funds (Trust Funds) has been used to pay full benefits to all. In 2020, there was nearly \$3 trillion in SS reserved funds, but that has now dwindled to about \$2.5 trillion as reserves are used to supplement SS payments. And that problem continues. The Trustees of SS now predict that the reserves will be fully depleted in about 2032, at which time—lacking program reform by Congress—Social Security will be forced to pay out only what it receives in revenue. And that would mean an estimated cut of about 23% to everyone’s monthly SS benefit. In the unlikely event that happens, wouldn’t a 23% reduction to your larger age 70 benefit be better than a 23% cut to your lower age 68 benefit?

No one wants those cuts to happen—least of all politicians—because it would amount to political suicide (seniors are, after all, a very large voting bloc). Thus, we believe that Congress will act to reform Social Security to prevent any general benefit cuts from happening. It will, however, require Congressional bipartisanship because the reforms needed for Social Security are likely unsavory to some. Those reforms may include SS tax increases and changes to the basic structure of the SS program to align it with today’s demographic reality. The program needs reform, which Congress has, unfortunately, neglected to provide for many years. And this neglect will likely also continue, at least through the forthcoming mid-term elections. It seems the nature of Congress is to wait until the last possible moment to offer corrective legislation.

Here’s what to keep in mind: Congress already knows how to reform Social Security to avoid any future benefit cuts—they just lack the bipartisanship to accomplish that reform. For our part, the Association of Mature American Citizens (AMAC) has offered to Congress a commonsense reform plan via its “Social Security Guarantee (SSG).” AMAC’s proposal has received a positive reception in Congressional circles, and we are optimistic that the proposal will provide financial stability to the program for generations. AMAC continues to advocate for SS reform in Washington, D.C. on a regular basis, even more intensely as the depletion of the SS Trust Funds grows closer.

We do not suggest changing your strategy for claiming Social Security benefits based upon fear the program will cut benefits. That’s because it’s unlikely that all benefits will be cut because we believe Congress will eventually enact reform. And even in the unlikely event that Congress neglects to reform the program by 2032, the percentage of reduction to a higher monthly SS benefit amount would be better than a similar reduction to a lower benefit amount. In other words, your original plan is still a prudent one.

Regarding your question about your estimated benefits, I expect your most recent SS statement didn’t include future benefits because you are already collecting SS survivor benefits. You can contact SSA at 1.800.772.1213 to obtain the future SS retirement estimates you seek.

*This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation’s staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.*

*The 2.4 million member Association of Mature American Citizens [AMAC] www.amac.us is a vibrant, vital senior advocacy organization that takes its marching orders from its members. AMAC Action is a non-profit, non-partisan organization representing the membership in our nation’s capital and in local Congressional Districts throughout the country. And the AMAC Foundation (www.AmacFoundation.org) is the Association’s non-profit organization, dedicated to supporting and educating America’s Seniors. Together, we act and speak on the Association members’ behalf, protecting their interests and offering a practical insight on how to best solve the problems they face today. Live long and make a difference by joining us today at www.amac.us/join-amac.*

## Honoring the Life and Legacy of Eric Reese, Visionary Behind House of Soul

By MONICA BISCOE  
House of Soul

LANHAM, Md. (April 20, 2026)—The Prince George’s County community is mourning the loss of Eric Reese, a visionary entrepreneur and one of the driving forces behind House of Soul, a beloved Black-owned restaurant and lounge known for its culture, cuisine, and community impact.

Reese played an instrumental role in establishing House of Soul as more than a dining destination, it became a vibrant gathering space where community, music, and celebration intersect. Through his leadership and vision, House of Soul has created jobs, supported local talent, and provided a consistent platform for live entertainment and community-centered events.

Located in Lanham, Maryland, House of Soul has earned a reputation for delivering exceptional service, flavorful cuisine, and a dynamic atmosphere that reflects the richness of the community it serves. In

recognition of its excellence and community support, the establishment was recently honored with the BusinessRate Best of 2025 award.

“Eric Reese didn’t just help build a business, he helped create a space where people feel connected, celebrated, and at home,” said Tamara Ouckama. “His impact will continue to live on through House of Soul, it’s staff, and the countless lives he touched.”

Beyond his entrepreneurial contributions, Reese will be remembered for his warmth, generosity, and unwavering commitment to uplifting others. His legacy is reflected not only in the success of House of Soul, but in the opportunities he helped create and the community he helped strengthen.

As the community reflects on this loss, House of Soul stands as a living testament to Reese’s vision, one that will continue to thrive and bring people together for years to come.

House of Soul is located at 9430 Annapolis Road, Lanham, MD.



Eric Reese

COURTESY PHOTO

## Prince George’s County Department of Social Services Announces Jennifer Amaya Thompson as Agency Director

Highlighting Director Amaya Thompson’s First 100 Days Leading PGCDSS

By JORDAN ANDERSON  
Prince George’s County Department of Social Services

LANDOVER, Md. (April 17, 2026)—On January 7, 2026, the Prince George’s County Department of Social Services (PGCDSS) welcomed Jennifer Amaya Thompson, MSW as the new agency Director. In this role, Director Amaya Thompson leads the quasi-State agency with a 500+ member staff and manages a \$70M+ combined agency budget, providing crucial services and resources to families and individuals living in Prince George’s County, Maryland. PGCDSS is a local agency of the Maryland Department of Human Services, administering State services across Prince George’s County at 5 service buildings in Landover (3), Hyattsville (1), and Temple Hills (1).

In the Director’s first 100 days, she has hit the ground running. In less than 90 days, Director Amaya Thompson created a Community Affairs Latino Liaison position in the Office of the Director, teamed up with Governor Wes Moore and the Comptroller of Maryland Brooke Liernan to promote the Maryland Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), navigated major winter storms with the Prince George’s County Office of Emergency Management, and hosted a collaborative tabletop exercise on immigration activity preparedness with the Governor’s Office, the Maryland Department of Human Services, Howard County Department of Social Services, and Prince George’s County Department of Social Services. She has begun supporting families that have been impacted by deportation by working with faith-based and community-based organizations to coordinate resources, services, and next-of-kin placement for children. Within this time, the

Director has participated already in over 330 meetings to connect and collaborate with partners and elevate the work and outcomes of the agency.

“I am honored to be leading the County’s top social services provider with such a knowledgeable team within the Prince George’s County Department of Social Services,” said Jennifer Amaya Thompson, Director of the Prince George’s County Department of Social Services. “As the second-largest jurisdiction in Maryland, Prince George’s County is home to nearly 1 million residents and PGCDSS is responsible for being there for each of them should they ever need our support. I look forward to working with County Executive Aisha Braveboy in elevating Prince George’s County and working with our State agency partners to better serve and positively impact more Prince George’s County families with data-informed and culturally competent strategies.”

Additionally, Director Amaya Thompson sprang into action on the Safer Stronger Together (SST) initiative, a cross-agency, place-based collaboration between the Maryland Department of Human Services, Maryland Department of Juvenile Services, and Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. SST has recently provided grant funding to eight Prince George’s County based community partners to support County families who touch all three of the state agencies to improve outcomes with personalized support from family navigators.

Internally, Director Amaya Thompson has completed listening sessions across every PGCDSS building to hear directly from staff about solutions to bring improved customer experiences, update systems, and streamline services to ultimately better serve Prince Georgians seeking support from the department. In honor of Women’s History

Month, we have also hosted the 9th Annual P.A.V.E.R. Awards, an internal celebration of women staff members going above and beyond in their roles, leaving a lasting impact on staff and customers.

Laser-focused on data-driven and trauma-informed solutions, Director Amaya Thompson is leading the Prince George’s County Department of Social Services team in developing an agency strategic plan that reflects the current state of human services in the County. Under her leadership, PGCDSS is building career pathways for residents seeking to serve others by expanding partnerships with higher education institutions in the County. We are also building on our internal capacity by providing professional development for staff to grow in the field of social work.

Director Amaya Thompson has a strategic vision for PGCDSS that involves building and enhancing the culture of the department internally and externally, enhancing infrastructure across each division as well as internal and external communication systems. This vision positions PGCDSS as a data-informed agency to build public trust and shift public perception toward the agency being a resource to our community, supporting youth development, and investing in family wellbeing.

Read more about Director Amaya Thompson’s background on the agency website at: socialservices.mypgc.us.

*The Prince George’s County Department of Social Services is in the business of providing opportunities for residents of the County to become independent, responsible and stable members of the community. We do this by providing intervention services that strengthen and protect families, children and adults through encouraging self-sufficiency, and promoting personal responsibility.*

## Data Centers from A1

some protection to ratepayers, Mariah Davis of the Marylanders for Data Center Reform Coalition, said during a webinar earlier this month.

The coalition and some lawmakers supported other bills that would have further regulated data centers, including one proposed by Palakovich Carr that aimed to repeal tax exemptions for data centers.

Del. Lorig Charkoudian, D-Montgomery, had introduced legislation she said would have allowed “good” data centers that create their own power to “jump ahead in the line” of data centers to be built. Some of the language in her bill was included in the energy legislation.

There’s a “real path” for getting the “good stuff” out of data centers without harming communities, the planet or ratepayers, Charkoudian said.

### ‘We’re going to be in for a fight’

Supporters of data centers point to economic benefits.

Kelly Schulz, CEO of the Maryland Tech Council, said some benefits of data centers include job creation, local tax revenue,

the likelihood of innovation and the importance “to move forward in a technology-centered society.”

The council has promoted data centers through its coalition, the Data Center Alliance of Maryland.

Schulz said the council’s goal is “to educate people on what actually happens in the data center world,” and help them understand “the good, positive things that do come out of data centers.”

Elizabeth Bauer, a community activist in Frederick County, called the council’s position that property values near data centers rise “hogwash.”

“I just can’t imagine that having a data center near your house is going to increase your property value,” she said.

Bauer said state legislators should consider more than just generating revenue. “It’s all about the revenue, but they’re not paying any attention to the expenses that go along with it,” she said.

Frederick County issued an ordinance in January allowing data centers to be built on rural legacy and priority preservation land, according to Bauer. Bauer and Envision, an activist group, organized a petition to allow citizens to vote on the ordinance.

The petition has more than 20,000 signatures, according to Envision’s website.

“Our farmers are being attacked in so many ways by the state of Maryland,” Bauer said.

Schulz, who said she was placed on a work group for an ongoing data center construction project in Frederick County, said the local government will reap benefits.

The county “will receive estimated amounts of over \$200 million annually in tax revenues from that one project,” she said. That’s about 40% of the county’s overall budget, she said.

Bauer said she expects a legal battle with Frederick County over the referendum.

“We’re going to be in for a fight,” she said.

Meanwhile, Frazier McCollum, the activist from Prince George’s County, said she wants politicians to pay attention to the 23,000 people who signed her petition.

“We are going to use our voting power to vote for those that support our cause, which is to put a moratorium or ban data centers for a longer period of time statewide,” she said.

Sam Gauntt contributed to this report.

# EarthTalk® Q&A Is Allergy Season Getting Longer & Worse? Here's What the Science Says

By Rachel Berliner | April 21, 2026

Dear EarthTalk:

Why is allergy season longer and more intense lately?

—Sneezing in Snohomish

During springtime, many people develop a series of symptoms generalized as seasonal allergies: coughing, sneezing, itchy eyes and congestion, just to name a few. These symptoms are widespread; in 2024, the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America reported that some 81 million people in the U.S. suffer from seasonal allergies. This number is growing as symptoms are becoming more intense and allergy season is getting longer.

The cause of these allergies comes down to one product of flowering plants: pollen. This substance becomes more prevalent during the springtime, when the warm weather triggers flowers to open up. When pollen accumulates to high levels in the air, humans can develop an immune system response that leads to a physical reaction. The problem is that the air is getting warmer, and plants are producing pollen for a longer duration and in larger amounts than before. "A longer growing season means the plants have more time to produce pollen," says Dr. Rana Misiak, an allergy specialist at Henry Ford Health. "And that results in pollen circulating in the air for a longer period of time." In addition, droughts and dry weather can cause more pollen production, along with higher levels of carbon

dioxide in the atmosphere. Air pollutants such as carbon dioxide damage the surface of the pollen, making it more allergenic.

Pollen production is heightened by climate change. Human activities are causing global temperatures to rise, subsequently worsening allergy season for many. "To me, [worsening allergies] highlight the fact that our health—even if you just have a pollen allergy—is being impacted by climate change," says Mary Margaret Johnson, MD, PhD, a research scientist of environmental health at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. "And some have much more severe health consequences from climate change." This means that the health of an individual is somewhat out of their hands—it is up to climate change to determine the severity of their allergies.

Taking action to reduce collective carbon emissions and effectively slow the rise of global temperatures will help minimize symptoms felt by allergy season. There are also many studies now being conducted, like the Citizen Science HD's Pollen Nation Project at Emory University or the National Phenology Network, that allow civilian participation. If you are interested, you can learn more about these studies and contribute data towards their findings. In addition, any action to reduce your personal carbon footprint or advocate for pro-climate legislation will help to improve the current conditions of seasonal allergies.

**CONTACTS:** Do seasonal allergies seem to be getting worse? Blame climate change, aamc.org/news/do-seasonal-allergies-seem-



PHOTO CREDIT: PEXELS.COM.

Allergy season seems to be worse than ever lately, and scientists are blaming—you guessed it—global warming.

be-getting-worse-blame-climate-change; You're Not Imagining It: Seasonal Allergies Are Getting Worse, bu.edu/articles/2023/seasonal-allergies-are-worse-this-year-what-you-can-do.

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