

Meet the Maryland State Innovation Team

The Innovation Team develops and implements new solutions, collaborating across agencies and sectors, to address complex challenges –starting with economic mobility.



Francesca Ioffreda
Chief Innovation Officer



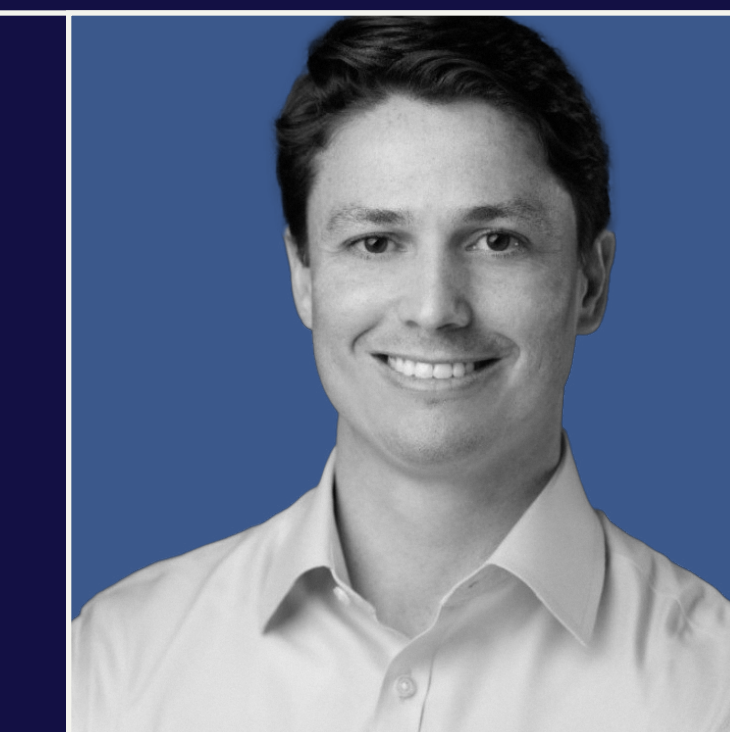
Aria Miles
Project Manager



Alex Miller
Data Scientist



Kayla Edwards
Community & Strategic
Communications Lead



Charlie Rixey
Deputy Director



Martha Marrazza
Project Manager



Lindsey Dobbins
Senior Analyst



Sabrina Martin
Civic Designer

We use a layered approach to research and design to understand community needs and create impactful solutions.

RESEARCH

Data Analysis: We turn complex Maryland-specific data into meaningful community indicators to better understand the dynamics and conditions shaping the lives of residents.

Contextual Fieldwork: We attend community gatherings and learning workshops to conduct immersion, observations, and engagements, gaining insights on resident challenges across the state and supporting resident-led solutions.

In-Depth Interviews: We conduct deep-dives with residents and conversations with stakeholders across the public and private sector to explore experiences in detail and create journey maps.

Focus Groups and Roundtables: We guide conversations with small groups to learn from the dialogue that unfolds between participants.

DESIGN

Co-design: We facilitate sessions to shape ideas with residents, as well as our public and private sector partners, tailoring solutions to the insights and experiences of Marylanders.

User Testing: We show our work, testing our progress and beta versions of solutions with others to sharpen ideas, improve functionality, and deliver impact.

Reach and Engagement

1,000+
residents engaged



12

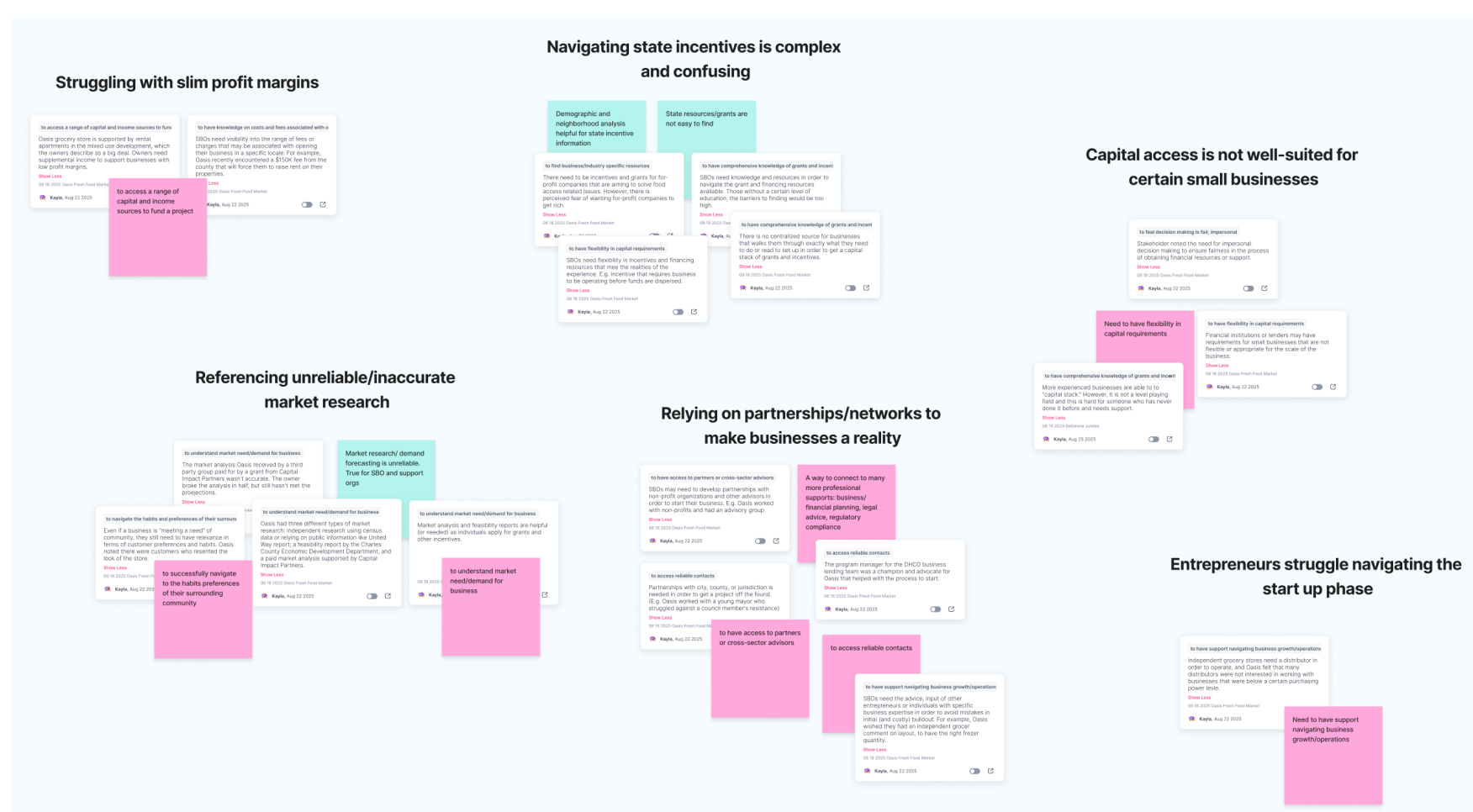
agencies partnered with to co-design and deliver initiatives against the State's strategic priorities

The Compass Journey

The **Maryland Community Compass** represents a platform expansion to the broader community development ecosystem, less than a year after the initial Compass launch.

June 2025

The Innovation Team begins to conduct **discovery research** on the challenges of starting and expanding essential service businesses, like child care and fresh food.



December 17, 2025

The Maryland Community Business Compass, **built in under five months for just \$5,000**, is launched alongside Governor Wes Moore at OpenWorks in Baltimore City.



February 2026

Discovery research kicks off with stakeholders from across Maryland's community development ecosystem, including: nonprofits, community development corporations (CDCs), state/local agencies, capital providers, philanthropies, and think tanks/academia.

Stakeholders highlighted challenges during the pre-development phase, such as funding, technical capacity, bureaucratic slowdowns, and a lack of quality data.



April 2026

Co-design begins with developers and CDCs.

We hosted 30+ co-design sessions with 70+ stakeholders to ideate and refine features that would provide value to their workflows.



June 2026

In partnership with Anthropic, we **increased our funding database** 10x to 2,600+ programs from both public and private sources.

September 2025

Co-design starts with 100+ fresh food providers, child care business owners, and economic development organizations, kicking off product development around three core features: Locate the Opportunity, Find Funding, and Connect to Experts.

January 2026

The Innovation Team launches our partnership with Anthropic and starts evaluating Compass impact.

We found that Compass democratized opportunity for small businesses, saving users an estimated \$5,000–\$15,000 on market analyses and up to 85% of time on funding and site research. However, to foster truly thriving neighborhoods, we realized we needed to move upstream.

September 3, 2026

The expanded Maryland Community Compass is publicly launched with Governor Wes Moore and Anthropic, less than nine months after the initial Business Compass launch, bringing the same easy-to-access data to the broader community development ecosystem.

The Challenge

Sourcing Neighborhood Data

\$2k–4k

Annual subscription fees paid by community developers for demographic and economic data on other platforms

2+ weeks

Time it takes nonprofits and CDCs to pull together neighborhood data

25+ webpages

Number of different webpages hosting relevant data for a given neighborhood

The Problem

Fragmented data blocks the initial case for a project

Reliable neighborhood-level data exists across dozens of state and local government sources, but nowhere in one place, making it hard to build a complete, trustworthy case for a project.

“You know, some [data] are up to date, up to 2024, where others... 2017 was the last time they had data [...] I’m always wondering where else should I be looking?”
– Baltimore community development organization

No easy way to show development momentum

State investment and permit/construction activity are signs that neighborhood development is already in motion, but that data is difficult to identify, making it hard for developers to recognize the momentum that’s already there.

“It would be nice if you could collate all the state investments in here... that would be impressive.”
– Baltimore community development organization

Hard to find who actually knows the neighborhood and its critical needs

Zoning codes show what is legally possible, but not who to talk to. Without connections to community organizations and existing plans, developers miss the chance to shape a project around what the neighborhood actually needs.

“You can look at the zoning code, but ultimately you’re going to want to talk to Mary, who’s been on the Main Street board for 28 years.”
– Maryland small real estate developer

Who Feels This



Jaya
Director of Community Revitalization

Manages an established development organization that oversees multiple developments across several neighborhoods



Emily
Department of Housing and Community Development Project Manager

Scores capital funding applications and stewards development projects for her region

The above are fictional personas based on real users we spoke to

Next up: Neighborhood Insights. Head to the next board for an annotated walkthrough.

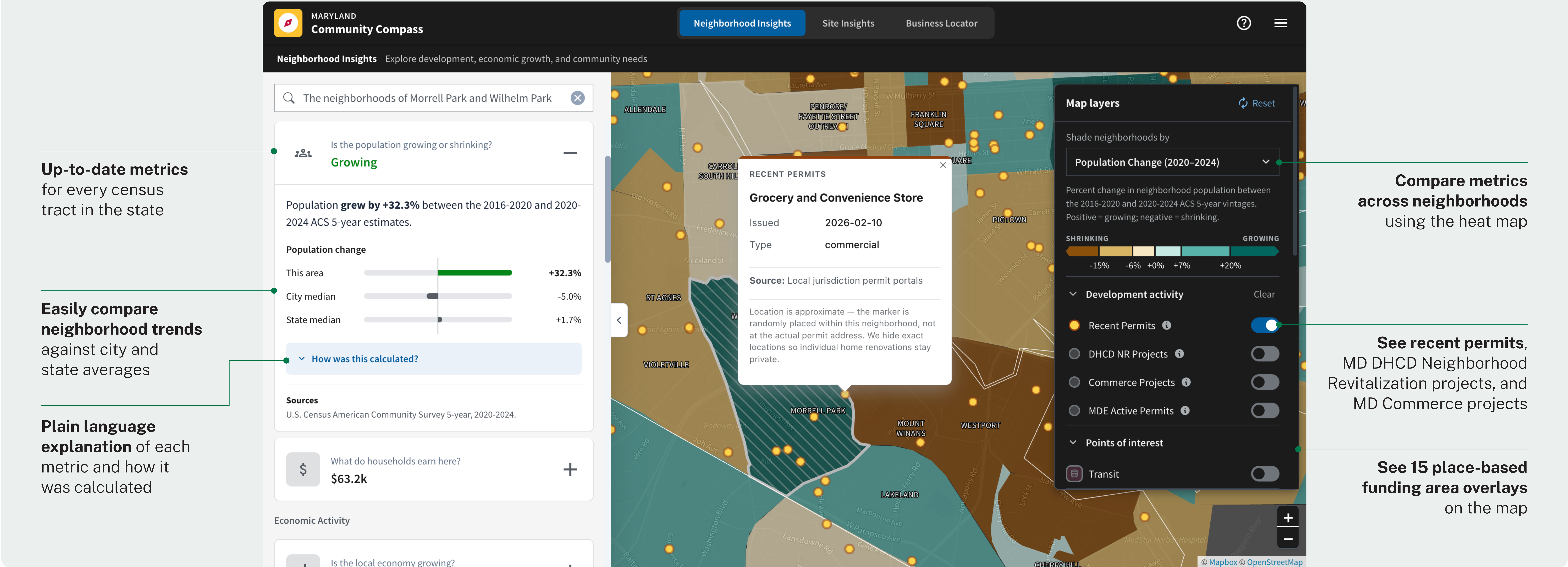


The Compass Neighborhood Insights

Build the case for a project with up-to-date neighborhood-level metrics for development activity, demand, and growth.

“Good community development starts with understanding a place—its assets, its challenges, and where investment can make the greatest difference. Compass brings together information that organizations like ours often spend significant time tracking down and turns it into something much more accessible and actionable.”

— Ashley Wallace, Executive Director at Central Baltimore Partnership



~60

Metrics to understand a neighborhood

1,400+

Individual census tracts mapped statewide

~200

Community plans with 18,000+ pages



The Challenge Conducting Site Research

15+ hours

Monthly time one established CDC spends fielding site due diligence questions from smaller organizations

100 pages

The average number of pages in a community plan

>1/2 day

Time it often takes a community development organization to complete initial site due diligence research

The Problem

Scattered zoning makes buildability a guessing game

Confirming zoning, permitted uses, and site-specific regulations requires manual lookups, GIS expertise, legal knowledge, and often an external consultant, turning a simple feasibility question into a costly, error-prone process.

“We were just trying to figure out recently what Sustainable Communities overlap with state parks. That is not a simple question to answer unless you have somebody with GIS experience on staff.”

– Maryland non-profit

It is unclear what funding opportunities exist

Funding eligibility criteria live across multiple agency documents and websites, so developers and CDCs cannot easily tell every program a site actually qualifies for before investing time in an application.

“Expecting the developer, particularly our more nascent developers, to understand all the nuances of all these programs and the requirements... it’s a really heavy lift.”

– Baltimore-based CDFI

Buried community plans make it difficult to confirm a project’s community alignment

Community plans can run 100+ pages, and there’s no quick way to check whether a project lines up with local priorities, so alignment may get judged informally, through relationships or subsidy history, rather than the plan itself.

“Is this something the community wants? Because I’m not in a position to tell you what your community wants. Do you have a letter from the local CDC?”

– Baltimore-based CDFI

Who Feels This



Rick
Moonlighter developer

A self-taught developer working part-time with his brother to rehab a mixed-use building, learning by doing while balancing a full-time career



Marcus
Grassroots vacant-rehab CDC director

Focuses on vacant home remediation across a cluster of historically disinvested Baltimore neighborhoods

The above are fictional personas based on real users we spoke to

Next up: Site Insights. Head to the next board for an annotated walkthrough.



Instantly evaluate what is buildable before spending money. View site-specific regulations, zoning, permitted uses, funding eligibility, community plan linkages and more.

— Brad Shapiro, President at CREative Solutions Today

Export a report of your site research once you are done



The Challenge Capital Stacking

20 hours/month

Time one fresh food retailer spends searching for funding opportunities

30 sources

Number of private and public sources in one small developer's project capital stack

\$2,000+ /year

Annual subscription fees of another grant search platform used by one child care center owner

The Problem

Funding sources are too scattered to find

Assembling a capital stack means chasing down dozens of funding sources one by one, each with its own rules, timeline, and application.

"I spend so much, a lot of time every week just fielding calls from very well-meaning people across the state..., asking, 'what kind of money is available for this thing?' And just so often I feel like I'm some type of weird oracle or something."

– Maryland nonprofit

Language itself is a barrier

Funding programs are written in dense policy jargon that assumes prior expertise. Understanding a single program description often means stopping to look up multiple terms, turning basic research into a constant start-and-stop search.

"People shouldn't have to google [vague terminology] every 2 sentences [when reading a funding application]."

– Baltimore community organizer

Who Feels This



Rick
Moonlighter developer

Self-financed a project with his brother as they were unaware of state financing routes early on



Jaya
Director of Community Revitalization

Manages an established development organization and spends 30% of each day tracking down funding sources

The above are fictional personas based on real users we spoke to

Next up: Find Funding. Head to the next board for an annotated walkthrough.



The Compass Find Funding

A database with over 2,600 funding opportunities including grants, loans, training programs, rebates, tax credits, technical assistance, and private sector resources.

“I had given up on looking for grant dollars and things. So... just knowing that there is a place to search for just resources in general is nice. A one-stop shop!”
— Child care business owner

MARYLAND
Community Compass

Map InsightsFind FundingGet SupportGuide me

Find Funding For Your Needs

Our database of funding and support programs now incorporates 100+ data sources spanning state, local, and a select number of private sources.

Verify program details before applying

This database is built from publicly available information. Always confirm program details, eligibility, and deadlines with the source agency or organization before applying.

Search

Filter by

Keyword: vacant xPrince George's xClear all

Showing 2 results

Business Category +

Assistance Type +

Grantee Organization Type +

County 1 +

Title ↑	Description	Assistance Type	Deadline ↑
Revitalization Tax Credit (Redevelopment and Revitalization Tax Credit)	Prince George's County offers a real property tax credit program to...	Tax-Credit	Recurring; No later than October 1 of t...

Download list as CSV

Filter programs to scope what you're looking for

Read a plain language description of the program, details on proper use of funds, requirements, and more

ANTHROPIC

Through our partnership, Anthropic supported us in increasing the number of funding opportunities included in the database by tenfold.

Download search results as a spreadsheet

See program deadlines to establish your funding timeline

2,600+

Funding opportunities listed in Compass, 10x more than at December 2025 launch

72,000+

Web pages scraped

25,000+

Funding database page visits since December 2025 launch

To our collaborators: Your input and expertise made this possible.

Thank you.

State Agencies & Government

- Baltimore City DHCD
- Baltimore City i-Team
- Caroline Human Services Council
- City of Annapolis
- City of Baltimore
- Governor's Office for Children
- Maryland Community Investment Corporation (MCIC)
- Maryland Economic Development Corporation (MEDCO)
- MD Department of Commerce (incl. GOBA)
- MD Department of Health
- MD Department of Housing and Community Development
- MD Department of Information Technology
- MD Department of Labor
- MD Department of Natural Resources
- MD Department of Planning
- MD Department of Social and Economic Mobility
- MD Department of the Environment
- MD Department of Transportation
- Office of Senator Alsobrooks
- Prince George's County Planning Department
- Rural Maryland Council
- Washington County Business & Economic Development

Nonprofits & CDCs

- Action Baybrook
- Beloved Community Services Corporation
- Central Baltimore Partnership
- City Life Community Builders
- Community Development Network of Maryland
- Cooperative Community Development
- Druid Heights CDC
- Essex Community Development Corporation
- Fell's Point Main Street
- Garden Mission
- Garrett County Community Action Committee
- Greater Baltimore Committee
- Govans Ecumenical Development Corporation (GEDCO)
- Greater Baybrook Alliance
- Hope Harbor CDC
- Jubilee Baltimore
- Love Regardless
- Neighborhood Design Center
- Park Heights Renaissance Inc.
- Preservation Maryland
- ReBUILD Metro
- Salisbury Neighborhood Housing Services
- Shiloh Baptist Church
- Southeast CDC
- Upton Planning Committee
- Westport CEDC

Developers & Real Estate

- A-Peace LLC
- Arctaris
- Baltimore Renaissance Development Group
- CREative Solutions Today
- Cross Street Partners
- Griffin Capital Company, LLC
- Harrison Development
- Hestia Community Partners
- Lee & Associates
- Parity Homes
- Port 44
- Redbrick LMD
- Terrapin Development Corporation
- Timshel Development
- True Ground Housing Partners
- Other Independent Developers

Philanthropies

- Abell Foundation
- Baltimore Community Foundation
- Bloomberg Philanthropies
- Greater Washington Community Foundation
- Rockefeller Foundation

Capital Providers

- Baltimore Community Lending
- Baltimore Development Corporation
- Enterprise Community Partners
- FSC First
- Innovation Works / Ignite Capital
- Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF)
- Momentum Capital / Capital Impact
- Neighborhood Impact Investment Fund
- Redefine Alliance
- SHIFT Capital

Think Tanks & Academia

- Aspen Institute
- Bloomberg Center for Public Innovation
- Brookings Institution
- Economic Innovation Group
- Johns Hopkins University
- Urban Institute

Other

- Anthropic
- EcoMap