



MARYLAND ASSOCIATION of COUNTIES

Winter Conference

DEC 10-12, 2025

HYATT, CAMBRIDGE, MD

**LOCAL
LEADERSHIP,
LASTING IMPACT:**

Shaping

**WHAT'S
NEXT**



Registration Brochure



MACo Winter Conference

*Local Leadership, Lasting Impact:
Shaping What's Next*

December 10-12, 2025 | Hyatt, Cambridge, MD

What's next for MARYLAND COUNTIES?

MACo's Winter Conference leads into Maryland's General Assembly Session—the intensive 90 days of law-making that affect all residents of our state. Approximately 900 government leaders and legislators will gather at MACo's Winter Conference to discuss how to prepare for the fiscal and policy realities of 2026 and beyond.

County governments are on the front lines of delivering essential services during a time of rapid change and rising expectations. As Maryland officials confront complex fiscal pressures, workforce shortages, shifting mandates, and emerging technologies, the role of strong local leadership has never been more critical. This conference will explore how counties can take proactive steps to shape what's next — leveraging innovation, collaboration, and strategic investment to build lasting impact for their communities. Through thoughtful planning and decisive local action, counties can lead the way toward a more resilient, equitable, and responsive future for all Marylanders.

If you're involved in local government in any way, you should attend— don't miss your chance to shape the next four years in Maryland!

Register today!



www.mdcounties.org/MACoCon



MACo's Winter Conference will empower you to:

LEARN

Gain knowledge and understanding of the issues facing local governments today.

ENGAGE

Find solutions to important challenges through face-to-face exchanges with county officials, county professionals, and legislators.

COLLABORATE

Save money and increase efficiency through partnerships with stakeholders and vendors.



About MACo:

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) is a non-profit and non-partisan organization that serves Maryland's counties by articulating the needs of local government to the Maryland General Assembly.

The Association's membership consists of county elected officials and representatives from Maryland's 23 counties and Baltimore City.

MACo is the only organization serving the needs of county governments and elected officials across Maryland.



OVERVIEW



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2025

8:00 AM - 4:30 PM	Registration Open
8:00 AM - 10:00 AM	Continental Breakfast
8:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Exhibits Set Up
8:45 AM - 10:15 AM	Academy Core Course
9:00 AM - 9:15 AM	Networking and Coffee Break
10:15 AM - 10:30 AM	Networking Coffee Break
10:30 AM - 12:00 PM	Academy Core Course
10:15 AM - 11:45 AM	Opening Roundtable
11:00 AM - 6:30 PM	Exhibits Open
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	Affiliate Member Meetings & Lunches*
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	Lunch Buffet*
1:15 PM - 1:45 PM	Networking Coffee Break
1:30 PM - 2:30 PM	Educational Session Block
2:30 PM - 3:00 PM	Popcorn Break
2:30 PM - 3:00 PM	Networking Coffee Break
3:00 PM - 4:00 PM	Educational Session Block
4:15 PM - 5:15 PM	MACo's Good Government Book Club Discussion
5:00 PM - 6:00 PM	Women of MACo Reception
5:30 PM - 6:30 PM	Welcoming Reception
6:30 PM - 8:30 PM	Welcoming Banquet & Awards Ceremony*
8:30 PM - 9:00 PM	Corporate Partner Dessert Reception
9:00 PM - 11:00 PM	MD Trivia Night Reception
11:00 PM - Midnight	ePlus Late Night Reception

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2025

7:30 AM - 3:30 PM	Registration Open
7:30 AM - 3:00 PM	Exhibits Open
7:30 AM - 9:00 AM	Continental Breakfast
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	County Elected Officials Forum, Breakfast, & Business Meeting*
9:15 AM - 10:15 AM	General Session
10:15 AM - 10:30 AM	Networking Coffee Break
10:30 AM - 11:30 AM	General Session
11:45 AM - 12:45 PM	Lunch Buffet*
11:45 AM - 12:45 PM	Affiliate Group Meetings & Lunches*
11:45 AM - 12:45 PM	Rural County Coalition Lunch*
11:45 AM - 12:45 PM	Large County Coalition Lunch*
1:00 PM - 1:30 PM	Networking Coffee Break
1:30 PM - 2:30 PM	Educational Session Block
2:30 PM - 3:00 PM	Chocolate Break
2:30 PM - 3:00 PM	Networking Coffee Break
3:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Exhibits Break Down
3:00 PM - 4:00 PM	Educational Session Block
5:30 pm - 6:30 pm	Diversity Caucus Reception
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM	Inaugural Banquet Reception
7:00 PM - 8:30 PM	Inaugural Banquet*
8:30 PM - 9:30 PM	President's Reception
9:30 PM - 11:30 PM	Karaoke Reception

Please note: schedule is tentative and subject to change. More details are listed on the following pages. Check www.mdcounties.org for updates.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2025

7:30 AM - 10:30 AM	Registration Open
7:30 AM - 9:30 AM	Continental Breakfast
8:00 AM - 9:30 AM	Academy Core Course
8:30 AM - 9:30 AM	Special Session
9:30 AM - 9:45 AM	Networking Coffee Break
9:45 AM - 11:00 AM	2026 General Assembly Forecast
11:00 AM - 11:15 AM	Networking Coffee Break
11:15 AM - 12:15 PM	Closing Session
12:15 PM - 12:45 PM	Wrap-Up Boxed Lunches*

*=ticket required



Schedule



Wednesday, December 10, 2025

8:00 AM - 4:30 PM | **REGISTRATION CENTER**

8:00 AM - 11:00 AM | **CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST**

8:45 AM - 10:15 AM | **ACADEMY FOR EXCELLENCE**

County Financial Management

A challenge faced by new and veteran county officials is understanding and using the government budget process, the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, and other financial documents effectively as tools for setting priorities and managing the government while maintaining the fiscal integrity of the jurisdiction. Fiscal management can be infused with economic assumptions, technical jargon, and a process that seems foreign to the uninitiated. In this class, veteran public administrators discuss the budget process and financial reporting, as well as giving practical tips for county officials.

10:00 AM - 4:30 PM | **SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC "LIFE IS ON"
ATTENDEE LOUNGE OPEN**

This is your space to take a break, respond to email, or have a quick meeting!

10:15 AM - 10:30 AM | **NETWORKING COFFEE BREAK**
Sponsored by Check Point, Davenport & Company LLC, OpenGov

10:15 AM - 11:45 AM | **OPENING SESSION**

Housing at the Crossroads: Local Challenges in a Changing Landscape

Hosted by MACo's Planners Affiliate

Counties face the daunting task of balancing community needs, state mandates, and limited infrastructure amid rising development pressures. While local governments work to promote affordability and smart growth, many key factors—state regulations, federal funding constraints, and private market dynamics—lie beyond their control. This session brings together local leaders and housing experts to discuss how counties are adapting to these external forces while preserving community character and ensuring growth aligns with available infrastructure. Join this session for a candid discussion on how counties navigate overlapping mandates and market realities in shaping Maryland's housing future.



10:30 AM - 11:00 AM | **SOLUTIONS SHOWCASE SESSION**

Prioritizing Your Emotional Well-Being – Building Resilience

Hosted by Cigna Healthcare

Building resilience helps you leverage healthy coping skills when experiencing difficulties with anxiety, stress or grief, which can foster strength and growth. Cigna will provide a framework for supporting well-being by focusing on the 5 Cs of Mental Health: Connection, Compassion, Coping, Community, and Care. These elements help build resilience, manage stress, and improve relationships and personal growth. Join this session to learn how counties can help employee thrive and grow in the workplace.

10:30 AM - 12:00 PM | **ACADEMY FOR EXCELLENCE**

Open Meetings Act

This class provides an overview of Maryland's Open Meetings Act law, which guides public officials in the requirements for providing public notice of the meetings that public bodies hold to conduct public business and for closing meetings when appropriate. The presenters focus on steps that local governments can take to comply with the law's application to Maryland local government, discuss some of the cases and complaints that have come before the Open Meetings Compliance Board, and, if time permits, address questions from the audience.

11:00 AM - 6:30 PM | **EXHIBITS OPEN**

Visit the exhibits in the main foyer and Choptank Ballroom to meet potential partners and learn more about their cost-saving products and services.

11:15 AM - 11:45 AM | **SOLUTIONS SHOWCASE SESSION**

When Leave Gets Complicated: Staying Compliant in the Paid Leave Era

Hosted by American Fidelity

Leave management has never been simple—and with Maryland FAMILI right around the corner, it's about to be more complex. Employers now juggle multiple sets of rules, exclusions, forms, and timelines while trying to keep communication clear and compliance intact. This session examines how overlapping programs like FMLA and Maryland FAMILI can cause confusion, what employers must know to stay compliant, and how to track and coordinate leave effectively. Presenters will also highlight actionable solutions and tools to streamline processes, reduce administrative strain, and support both compliance and the employee experience.

Schedule



Wednesday, December 10, 2025

11:00 AM - 2:45 AM | **MACHO MEETING**
(private - Wed lunch ticket required)

Private - only County Health Officers may attend.

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM | **LUNCH BUFFET**
(Wed lunch ticket required)

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM | **AFFILIATE & INTEREST GROUP MEETINGS**
(private - Wed lunch ticket required)

Private - only County professionals working in these service areas may attend.

- **MACo Emergency Management Affiliate**
- **MACo Information Technology Affiliate**
Sponsored by BCR Cyber
- **MACo Human Services Affiliate**
- **Regional Councils' Lunch (invitation only)**

12:00 PM - 4:30 PM | **ACADEMY INFORMATION CENTER**
Interested in learning more about the Academy for Excellence in Local Governance certificate program? Already an Academy Fellow or Torchbearer and want to check your transcript status? Stop by!

12:45 PM - 1:15 PM | **SOLUTIONS SHOWCASE SESSION**
Power in Partnership: How Collective Impact Transforms Communities From the Inside Out

Hosted by Park Heights Renaissance

Grab your lunch and join this session to discover how Park Heights Renaissance and its partners are leveraging a collective impact model to drive lasting neighborhood transformation. Learn how aligning government, nonprofits, businesses, and residents under a shared vision creates measurable progress in housing, safety, education, and economic growth. Hear practical lessons on structuring partnerships, sustaining momentum, and tracking community outcomes. Attendees will leave with actionable insights on how collaboration—not competition—can amplify local impact and deliver results that endure.

1:15 PM - 1:45 PM | **NETWORKING COFFEE BREAK**
Sponsored by Check Point, Davenport & Company LLC, OpenGov

1:30 PM - 2:30 PM | **AFFILIATE SESSIONS**

Problematic Policy: Passing the Buck on Wrongful Convictions

Hosted by MACo's Attorneys Affiliate

In a novel move by the Maryland General Assembly, counties have been obligated to cover 50% of the costs for wrongful conviction compensation despite having no role in these cases' prosecution, conviction, or exoneration. This move imposes an unpredictable financial burden on county governments, with no oversight or ability to plan for these expenses. As this policy change is implemented, counties must figure out adapting to such an unprecedented shift. This session will bring together key voices from across Maryland's counties and justice system to shed light on the process and its impacts, including the complex legal and financial realities that arise from wrongful conviction cases. Together, the panel will explore the balance of justice, accountability, and fiscal responsibility, offering attendees a fuller understanding of this sensitive and significant matter.

County Solutions to Safeguard Local Communities

Hosted by MACo's Human Services Affiliate

Whether through housing support, family services, public safety, or other critical programs, counties support residents in a wide range of ways to address vulnerability and strengthen communities. This session highlights innovative local approaches that safeguard populations facing housing insecurity, family instability, and exploitation through strong partnerships and strategic use of county authority. Panelists will explore models that provide holistic legal and social supports for families at risk of separation, efforts to prevent exploitation through targeted permitting and licensing reforms, and comprehensive plans to reduce homelessness through coordinated housing and social services. Attendees will learn how interagency collaboration, community partnerships, and policy innovation can build safer, more resilient communities where all residents have access to stability, support, and opportunity.

Streamlining Engagement: Maximizing Communication Tools for Government

Hosted by MACo's PIOs/Communications Affiliate

In today's fast-paced digital world, effective communication is essential for government agencies. This session, led by a design and branding expert, will explore how government officials and professionals can leverage online tools to enhance visual storytelling, streamline public communication, and improve engagement with residents. Attendees will learn how to create professional, on-brand graphics for social



Schedule



Wednesday, December 10, 2025

media, presentations, reports, and more – without the need for advanced design skills. Through real-world examples and practical demonstrations, this session will showcase best practices for consistency, accessibility, and efficiency in government communications. Whether you're an elected official, public information officer, department director or staff member responsible for outreach, this session will equip you with the tools to communicate well and efficiently online.

Powering the Future: What Battery Storage Means for Maryland Counties

Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) are becoming an important part of Maryland's energy future—helping store electricity for use when demand is high or when the grid goes down. For counties, this technology could mean lower energy costs, reliable backup power for critical facilities, and lower energy bills for government facilities and residents. Following major 2025 legislation that expanded Maryland's energy storage framework, counties should expect to see more applications for BESS projects and face new questions about where and how these systems fit into local communities. This session will explain what BESS are, how they work, and what they could mean for counties—from infrastructure planning and land use to emergency response and long-term energy savings. Hear from state experts, county leaders, and industry professionals as they break down this evolving technology and its potential impact on county operations and residents.

If You Build It, They Will Come: Infrastructure As a Tourism Strategy

Infrastructure is the foundation of a thriving tourism economy. From well-connected roads and scenic trails to modern marinas, parks, event spaces, and broadband access, intentional investments can boost local tourism while serving residents year-round. This session will explore how counties can plan and build infrastructure that supports sustainable tourism growth, revitalizes communities, and enhances quality of life. Speakers will also touch on how climate change is shaping tourism infrastructure needs—highlighting ways to design for long-term resilience in the face of rising seas, shifts in weather patterns, and evolving visitor travel trends.

2:30 PM - 3:00 PM | **NETWORKING COFFEE BREAK**

Sponsored by Check Point, Davenport & Company LLC, OpenGov

2:30 PM - 3:00 PM | **POPCORN BREAK**

Join the exhibitors for a fun and delicious break!

3:00 PM - 3:30 PM | **SOLUTIONS SHOWCASE SESSION**

Stretching County Dollars: Smarter Purchasing Through NACo's Public Promise Procurement

Hosted by NACo Public Promise Procurement

County budgets are tight, revenues are shrinking, costs are increasing, and every dollar counts. The National Association of Counties (NACo) has a solution! Public Promise Procurement provides competitively bid single-award contracts that are transparent, compliant, nationally solicited, and designed to save the public sector time and money. By leveraging the collective purchasing power of 3,069 counties nationwide, Maryland counties can eliminate solicitation churn, reduce costs, and purchase from peer-vetted world class suppliers. Join this session and explore how NACo's cooperative contracting program can support your local leadership priorities and simplify procurement in your county while making a lasting financial impact.

3:00 PM - 4:00 PM | **AFFILIATE SESSIONS**

Navigating Trust and Collaboration: Counties Protecting Public Health Together

Hosted by MACo's Health Officers Affiliate

The current health landscape in Maryland involves shifting public health funding priorities, challenges to healthcare access, and complex health issues affecting households and local economies. Positioning the state on a strong path forward will help ensure a lasting positive impact and minimize harm on the communities counties serve. This panel will explore how counties can maintain community health and equity in an uncertain landscape and with federal support that may be unpredictable. Panelists will discuss strategies for intergovernmental coordination, building multi-sector partnerships, and leveraging coalitions to sustain essential services, protect residents, and strengthen trust in local public health systems.

The Reentry Bridge: Where Access Meets Opportunity

Hosted by MACo's Corrections Affiliate

Local detention centers across Maryland do more than house incarcerated individuals—they play a critical role in preparing people for successful reentry into their communities. This session will highlight the innovative programs and services available in local facilities, from educational and vocational training to behavioral health treatment, workforce readiness, and community-based partnerships. Panelists will discuss how these initiatives reduce recidivism, strengthen families, and improve public safety, while also sharing best practices and success stories from counties across the state. Join this conversation to learn how local governments are supporting rehabilitation and reentry in meaningful ways.



Scoring the Future: Understanding MDOT's "Project Scorecard"

Hosted by MACo's Administrators Affiliate

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) is proposing updates to the project scoring process—an effort to bring greater transparency and consistency to how transportation projects are evaluated for state funding. The new framework aims to clarify how local priorities align with statewide goals, but it has also raised concerns among some counties about potential regional disparities in funding outcomes. In this session, MDOT leaders will outline the proposed changes, discuss the reasoning behind them, and invite feedback from county officials on how to ensure the system remains equitable and effective across all communities.

Elections at Work: Local Leadership, Modern Challenges

Counties play a central role in Maryland's elections – from recruiting poll workers to managing ballots and early voting sites. As 2026 approaches, local election officials face growing challenges in retaining trained staff, meeting new procedural demands, and sustaining public confidence amid shifting expectations. Modern voting trends, new technologies, ongoing recruitment hurdles, evolving cyber threats, and the spread of disinformation all add complexity to an already demanding process. In this session, an expert panel will provide timely updates on election operations and the cooperative efforts required to help counties prepare for the upcoming cycle.

4:15 PM - 4:45 PM | SOLUTIONS SHOWCASE SESSION

Empowering Maryland Counties With AI-Driven Observability and Security

Hosted by Dynatrace

Discover how Maryland counties can modernize IT operations, enhance services, and strengthen cybersecurity with Dynatrace's AI-powered observability platform. This session will explore how full-stack monitoring, real-time vulnerability detection, and automated root cause analysis can help local governments overcome staffing challenges, legacy systems, and rising digital demands. Learn how Dynatrace supports cloud migration, improves service reliability, and aligns with Maryland's strategic IT priorities. Real-world examples and a live demo will showcase how counties can deliver smarter, faster, and safer digital experiences. Attendees will leave with actionable insights and opportunities for tailored engagement.

4:15 PM - 5:15 PM | MACo GOOD GOVERNMENT BOOK CLUB

Sponsored by JP Morgan

MACo's conference brings another renewal of the "Good Government Book Club" for county leaders and others interested in reading a relevant book in advance and bringing thoughts and discussion to the conference for an in-person exchange. All registered conference participants are welcome to attend and participate in the discussion. Book choice to be announced soon!

4:15 PM - 5:15 PM | CLEAN CHESAPEAKE COALITION MEETING

The mission of the Clean Chesapeake Coalition is to raise awareness and pursue improvement to the water quality of Chesapeake Bay in the most prudent and fiscally responsible manner possible - through research, coordination, and advocacy. Join the conversation about the challenges to water quality and ideas for measurable improvement.

5:00 PM - 6:00 PM | WOMEN OF MACo RECEPTION

Sponsored by Cigna Healthcare

The Women of MACo welcome all conference attendees to join them for a networking reception focused on developing female leadership.

5:30 PM - 6:30 PM | WELCOMING RECEPTION

Co-Sponsored by Constellation, Maryland Environmental Service, Pepco & Delmarva Power, Verizon, Zelenkofske Axelrod, LLC

6:30 PM - 8:30 PM | WELCOMING & AWARDS BANQUET (ticket required)

Hosted by the Local Government Insurance Trust

Centerpieces Sponsored by Royal Plus

This event is a highlight of MACo's Winter Conference. Join us to celebrate MACo's public service, best practices, and legislative award winners.

8:30 PM - 9:00 PM | CORPORATE PARTNER DESSERT RECEPTION

Don't miss our dessert reception, hosted by MACo's Partners.

9:00 PM - 11:00 PM | MARYLAND TRIVIA NIGHT

Test your knowledge of all things Maryland with this fun trivia night! Build your team and compete for prizes!

11:00 PM - 12:00 AM | ePLUS LATE NIGHT RECEPTION

Sponsored by ePlus Technology, Inc.

The night's not over yet! Don't miss out on late-night snacks and networking.

Schedule



Thursday, December 11, 2025

7:30 AM - 3:30 PM | **REGISTRATION CENTER**

7:30 AM - 9:00 AM | **CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST**
Sponsored by Aetna

7:30 AM - 3:00 PM | **EXHIBITS OPEN**
Visit the exhibits in the main foyer and Choptank Ballroom to meet potential partners and learn more about their cost-saving products and services.

7:30 AM - 5:30 PM | **SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC "LIFE IS ON" ATTENDEE LOUNGE OPEN**
This is your space to take a break, respond to email, or have a quick meeting!

7:30 AM - 4:00 PM | **ACADEMY INFORMATION CENTER**
Interested in learning more about the Academy for Excellence in Local Governance certificate program? Already an Academy Fellow or Torchbearer and want to check your transcript status? Stop by!

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM | **COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIALS FORUM, BREAKFAST & BUSINESS MEETING (private - ticket required)**
Sponsored by Marathon Health
County Elected Officials (County Executives, Council Members, and Commissioners) are invited to attend this breakfast and business meeting to conduct the Association's official business and share best practices with their peers.

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM | **AFFILIATE MEETINGS (private)**
Private: Only county professionals working in these service areas are invited to attend.

- **MACo Budget & Finance Affiliate**
- **MACo's Planning/Zoning Affiliate**

9:15 AM - 10:15 AM | **GENERAL SESSION**
Troubling Trends: The State of Maryland's Economy
Join Economist Daraius Irani for an in-depth update on Maryland's economy and the implications for county governments. This dynamic presentation will explore national and regional economic trends, labor market shifts, and emerging challenges and opportunities within Maryland's economy. Dr. Irani will also examine how these forces affect county operations, service delivery, and long-term planning, providing actionable insights to help local leaders anticipate and respond to economic changes. Attendees will gain a clearer understanding of the financial landscape and its direct impact on workforce development and revenue streams.

10:15 AM - 10:30 AM | **NETWORKING COFFEE BREAK**
Sponsored by Check Point, Davenport & Company LLC, OpenGov

10:30 AM - 11:30 AM | **GENERAL SESSION**
From Policy to Progress: A Conversation with Legislative Leadership
This interview-style session with a leader in the Maryland General Assembly offers a candid and forward-looking discussion on the issues shaping Maryland's policy landscape. From economic growth and education to housing, public safety, and the evolving role of local governments, this conversation will explore the leadership's vision for the state – and what it means for Maryland's counties. Attendees will gain insight into legislative priorities, political dynamics, and key opportunities for county-state collaboration.

11:45 AM - 12:45 PM | **LUNCH BUFFET**
(Thu lunch ticket required)
Sponsored by FirstNet by AT&T

11:45 AM - 12:45 PM | **CHAPTER ORGANIZATION MEETINGS (private - Thu lunch ticket required)**
Private: Only county elected officials (County Executives, Commissioners, and Council Members) and professionals from Maryland's 24 county jurisdictions (including Baltimore City) are invited to attend.

- **Large County Coalition**
Sponsored by American Fidelity
- **Rural County Coalition**
Sponsored by MacLeod Law Group LLC

11:45 AM - 12:45 PM | **AFFILIATE MEETINGS (private - Thu lunch ticket required)**
Private: Only county professionals working in these service areas are able to attend.

- **MACo Attorneys Affiliate**
Sponsored by DiCello Levitt
- **MACo Parks & Recreation Affiliate**
- **MACo's County PIOs and Communications Professionals Affiliate**
- **MACo Human Resources Affiliate**
Sponsored by American Fidelity

1:00 PM - 1:30 PM | **NETWORKING COFFEE BREAK**
Sponsored by Check Point, Davenport & Company LLC, OpenGov



1:30 PM - 2:30 PM | AFFILIATE SESSIONS

Keeping Pace With Growth: The Role of Adequate Public Facilities Ordinances

Hosted by MACo's Engineers Affiliate

As Maryland communities grow, ensuring that development aligns with the capacity of local infrastructure remains a cornerstone of responsible planning. Adequate Public Facilities Ordinances (APFOs) have long served as a key local tool to balance growth with the availability of roads, schools, water, sewer, and public safety services—all of which carry significant costs to build, maintain, and expand. This session will explore the history and continued relevance of APFOs, examining how they help counties manage the fiscal and logistical challenges of growth while promoting safe, sustainable, and well-timed development. Panelists will also explore the policy choices involved in shaping these ordinances – how thoughtful local standards can help protect community character and livability while balancing housing affordability, economic growth, and practical implementation.

PFAS in Local Spaces: Hidden Chemicals, Real Challenges

Hosted by MACo's Environmental Health Affiliate

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), often referred to as "forever chemicals," are emerging as one of the most complex environmental and public health challenges facing Maryland counties. These chemicals are turning up in more places than ever, including the very spaces where residents play, gather, and connect. From artificial turf and playground surfacing to waterproof coatings, sealants, and everyday cleaning products, these persistent compounds are incorporated into materials used daily in park operations. As awareness and regulation of PFAS continue to grow, county Parks and Recreation departments face new challenges in identifying risks, managing potential contamination, and maintaining public trust; all while keeping facilities safe and accessible. This session will unpack what PFAS are, how they enter park environments, and what counties can do to mitigate exposure and plan future projects using PFAS-safe materials. Hear from environmental experts, state partners, and local leaders as they share practical steps and collaborative strategies to help parks stay resilient, sustainable, and safe for every community.

The Cost of Classrooms: Maryland's School Construction Funding Gap

Hosted by MACo's Budget & Finance Affiliate

Maryland's framework for funding school construction has grown more complex as needs outpace available resources. With the end of temporary initiatives like Built to Learn, counties now face rising fiscal pressure as multiple

overlapping programs, new funding formulas, and inflation-driven construction costs collide. This session breaks down the cost pressures, competing priorities, and policy complexities that shape school facility funding. Speakers will examine the fiscal and procedural hurdles facing county governments and discuss practical solutions to keep essential projects moving while ensuring every student learns in a safe, modern classroom.

Rx for Retention: County Strategies for Prescription Drug Spending

Hosted by MACo's Human Resources Affiliate

Counties, as public employers, bear the growing costs of prescription drugs through the health insurance coverage they provide to employees and their families. While counties subsidize these health plans, employees also share the burden through premiums, co-payments, and deductibles. Rising drug prices threaten counties' ability to offer comprehensive and affordable benefits while straining local budgets. This session will explore the complex drivers behind prescription drug costs and examine how changes in both state and federal policies could affect county health plans and prescription drug costs. The conversation will also touch on the work of Maryland's Prescription Drug Affordability Board and its efforts to curb excessive costs across the public sector. Attendees will gain practical insights into how strategic drug benefit management can support workforce well-being, strengthen recruitment and retention, and uphold responsible use of public funds.

2:30 PM - 3:00 PM | NETWORKING COFFEE BREAK

Sponsored by Check Point, Davenport & Company LLC, OpenGov

2:30 PM - 3:00 PM | CHOCOLATE BREAK

Stop by for a sweet boost before afternoon sessions!

3:00 PM - 4:00 PM | AFFILIATE SESSIONS

AI in Government: From Promise to Practice

Hosted by MACo's Information Technology Affiliate

Artificial intelligence is rapidly reshaping how counties deliver services, protect data, and make decisions. This session moves beyond theory to examine real AI deployments in local government – from streamlining constituent requests to detecting cybersecurity threats. County CIOs and technology experts will share how they're adopting AI responsibly, managing data governance, and addressing workforce and ethical considerations. Attendees will leave with a clear understanding of where AI can deliver impact – and where caution still matters.

Schedule



Thursday, December 11, 2025

Incentives That Work: A Modern Toolkit for County Economic Development

Hosted by MACo's Economic Development Partnership Affiliate

Maryland counties are navigating an increasingly competitive environment for attracting and retaining businesses. This session will unpack the state's latest legislative efforts, explore federal programs such as Community Development Block Grants, and spotlight powerful tools like Enterprise Zones and Opportunity Zones. Panelists will share success stories, address challenges such as funding uncertainty, and offer practical strategies for leveraging state and federal incentives to drive growth. Attendees will leave with actionable insights to help their counties stand out, strengthen local economies, and compete more effectively on a national stage.

Preparedness in Peril: Rethinking Readiness as Federal Stability Falters

Hosted by MACo's Emergency Managers Affiliate

Federal preparedness and disaster recovery programs face a perfect storm of funding freezes, legal challenges, and shifting administrative rules. With FEMA's future direction uncertain, county emergency managers must look beyond traditional sources to sustain critical readiness and recovery capacity. In this session, an expert panel will explore evolving federal conditions, potential state and local funding mechanisms, and how counties can maintain stability in the face of prolonged fiscal uncertainty.

Environmental Justice Screening – Building Equity Into Communities

Maryland continues to take steps to address the disproportionate environmental impacts faced by low-income and underserved communities. A recent Executive Order from Governor Moore emphasizes coordination across state agencies to support these communities in the face of climate change and environmental challenges. As part of this effort, the Maryland Department of the Environment has developed a mapping and screening tool designed to help identify areas of heightened environmental and public health vulnerability. This session will provide an overview of how the tool works, its potential applications for local governments, and how it can assist with meeting state program requirements. Participants will also hear about examples and strategies for incorporating environmental justice considerations into local planning and resource allocation.

3:15 PM - 3:45 PM | SOLUTIONS SHOWCASE SESSION

The Data Gap in Women's Health: Why Benefits Miss the Mark

Hosted by Progyny

Despite growing investment in women's health benefits, programs fall short because they lack the data needed to demonstrate real outcomes. For Maryland counties and private employers alike, this can lead to higher costs, fragmented care, and poor member experience. In this session, Progyny will share how integrating claims, outcomes, and member experience metrics across fertility, maternity, and menopause enables organizations to move from fragmented offerings to a unified, insight-driven strategy. With comprehensive reporting across 100% of members, leaders can finally treat women's health not as an added cost driver, but as a measurable investment in equity, productivity, retention, and long-term savings.

4:30 PM - 5:30 PM | MACo COUNTY ADMINISTRATORS AFFILIATE MEETING (private)

Private - only County and Council Administrative Officers (and their Deputies/Assistants) may attend.

5:30 PM - 6:30 PM | DIVERSITY CAUCUS RECEPTION

MACo's Diversity Caucus welcomes all conference attendees to join them for a networking reception focused on diversity initiatives in local government.

6:00 PM - 7:00 PM | INAUGURAL BANQUET RECEPTION

Co-Sponsored by Ameresco, LGIT Health, Maryland American Water, Sparks@Play

7:00 PM - 8:30 PM | INAUGURAL BANQUET (ticket required)

Hosted by Park Heights Renaissance

Co-Sponsored by Comcast, Kaiser Permanente, and Motorola Solutions, Inc.

Wine Service Sponsored by MidPoint Technology Group, Presidio

Celebrate the installation of MACo's 2026 Board of Directors. Connect with old friends, meet new ones, and hear from a special guest speaker about the legislative outlook for the year ahead!

8:30 PM - 9:30 AM | PRESIDENT'S RECEPTION

Co-Sponsored by Priceless Industries, Inc., Cigna Healthcare, Keenan Pharmacy Services

Join MACo's newly installed President and Board for a celebratory reception.

9:30 PM - 11:30 PM | KARAOKE RECEPTION

Sponsored by Progyny

Join us for a fun evening as our attendees showcase their musical talents!

Schedule



Friday, December 12, 2025

7:30 AM - 10:30 AM | **REGISTRATION CENTER**

7:30 AM - 9:30 AM | **CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST**
Sponsored by Chesapeake Employers' Insurance Company

7:30 AM - 10:30 AM | **SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC "LIFE IS ON"
ATTENDEE LOUNGE OPEN**

This is your space to take a break, respond to email, or have a quick meeting!

7:30 AM - 12:30 PM | **ACADEMY INFORMATION CENTER**
Interested in learning more about the Academy for Excellence in Local Governance certificate program? Already an Academy Fellow or Torchbearer and want to check your transcript status? Stop by!

8:00 AM - 9:30 AM | **ACADEMY FOR EXCELLENCE**
Employment Issues

This class provides an overview of preferred employment practices and of the legal restrictions involved in hiring, firing, promoting, and disciplining employees. The instructor addresses how positions should be advertised and interviews conducted. Also included are risk management techniques concerning the proper supervision of employees.

8:30 AM - 9:30 AM | **GENERAL SESSION**
The Blueprint Beat Goes On...

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future was designed as a statewide, systems-based education reform, but what happens when a formula meets the real-world complexity of local context? This session examines how the Blueprint model, layered over Maryland's diverse local needs, capacities, and political dynamics, can produce unintended misalignments. Panelists will explore the tension between legislative design and on-the-ground implementation, share examples from the field, and discuss opportunities to better align state goals with local realities.

9:00 AM - 9:30 AM | **SOLUTIONS SHOWCASE SESSION**
From Alerts to Action: Preempt Risk to Critical Services
Hosted by Check Point

Every minute counts when it comes to protecting critical public services and sensitive data. But with endless system alerts and competing priorities, real risks can hide in plain sight. This session explores how government IT teams can move from simply seeing threats to stopping them—quickly, safely, and without disrupting daily operations. Join experts from Check Point Exposure Management to learn how agencies can identify their most serious vulnerabilities,

understand which ones truly matter, and take smart, proactive steps to fix them. Participants will see how modern tools can prioritize risks by potential impact, strengthen defenses automatically, and show measurable improvements in their organizations' security posture—all while keeping essential services running smoothly.

9:30 AM - 9:45 AM | **NETWORKING COFFEE BREAK**
Sponsored by Check Point, Davenport & Company LLC, OpenGov

9:45 AM - 11:00 AM | **2026 GENERAL ASSEMBLY FORECAST**
Sponsored by DMI, Inc.

What's in store for the 2026 legislative session? From fiscal outlooks to pending policy changes, this is your sneak-peek at what's next in Annapolis. Attendees will get key insight into need-to-know issues and more from legislative leadership and the Administration.

11:00 AM - 11:15 AM | **NETWORKING COFFEE BREAK**
Sponsored by Check Point, Davenport & Company LLC, OpenGov

11:15 AM - 12:15 PM | **CLOSING SESSION**
Highway User Revenues: The Lifeline of Local Roads
For decades, Maryland's Highway User Revenues (HUR) had been the backbone of local transportation funding—helping counties maintain roads, repair bridges, and keep communities connected. Faced with the Recession in the early 2000s, the State decreased the share of local funding from HUR – a shift that was supposed to be temporary, but has lasted more than a decade, depriving counties of billions in what should have been revenue to support local infrastructure maintenance. Slight bumps in funding over recent years helped, but didn't make counties whole and with a funding cliff looming in 2027 and evolving transportation habits reshaping revenue streams, the future of HUR is uncertain. This session unpacks the history and importance of HUR, its role in county budgets, and why maintaining local shares is critical to sustaining safe, reliable infrastructure across Maryland.

12:15 PM - 12:45 PM | **WRAP-UP BOXED LUNCHES**
(Fri lunch ticket required)

Sponsored by American Fidelity
Grab a boxed lunch to enjoy on your way home or sit and talk with friends about what you've learned before you hit the road!

Don't Miss MACo's Exhibit Show!



Wednesday, December 10, 2025..... 11:00 am—6:30 pm

Thursday, December 11, 2025..... 7:30 am—3:00 pm

Approximately 70 vendors will be present to showcase their cost-saving products and services.

Interested in exhibiting? More info here: www.mdcounties.org/WC25ExhibitorBrochure

Exhibitors from MACo's Previous Winter Conference:

- Academy for Excellence in Local Governance
- Accela, Inc.
- Accenture
- Aetna
- Ameresco, Inc.
- American Fidelity
- archSCAN, LLC
- AT&T
- Blue Whale EV
- Bolton
- CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield
- Centurion
- Chesapeake Chapter CAI
- Cigna Healthcare
- Comcast - Beltway Region
- DALY
- Dicello Levitt
- Dynatrace
- EA Engineering, Science, and Technology, Inc., PBC
- ePlus Technology Inc.
- ezVOLTz
- First Tryon Advisors LLC
- Fortinet, Inc.
- Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy
- Hadco Philips Decorative Lighting
- Hitachi Vantara
- HPE Zerto
- Infoblox
- International Software Systems, Inc.
- IPVideo, a Motorola Solutions Company
- Kaiser Permanente
- Keenan Pharmacy Service
- Kohler Equipment
- LeafFilter Gutter Protection
- LGIT Health
- Local Government Insurance Trust (LGIT)
- Maritime Conference Center
- Maryland Environmental Service
- MD Army National Guard—ESRG
- MD Libraries
- MD Office of the Inspector General for Education
- MetLife
- MidPoint Technology Group
- Miller Partnership Consultants LLC
- Motorola Solutions, Inc.
- Nationwide Retirement Solutions (NRS)
- OpenGov
- Pepco & Delmarva Power
- Plumbers and Steamfitters UA Local 486
- Presidio
- PSA Insurance and Financial Services
- Ranked Choice Voting Maryland
- Republic Services
- Royal Plus, Inc.
- SERVPRO of MD & NOVA
- Sister States of Maryland
- Skyline Technology Solutions
- Sparks At Play
- Target Marketing Group
- The Davey Tree Expert Company
- three+one
- U.S. BENCOR/MidAmerica
- United Concordia Dental
- University of MD Extension
- Veriti
- Verizon
- WGL Energy, Inc.
- xop.ai
- Zelenkofske Axelrod, LLC



MACo Winter Conference—REGISTRATION RATES

December 10-12, 2025 | Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay, Cambridge, MD | [More Details](#)

Attendee Registration Rates:

	Before 11/07/2025	Through 11/21/2025	After 11/21/2025
COUNTY MEMBERS (ELECTED, APPOINTED, OR HIRED)			
Full Registration (<i>includes all conference sessions, meals, and breaks for 1 person</i>)	\$410	\$435	\$490
Wednesday Sessions & Lunch only (<i>order Banquet tickets separately</i>)	\$305	\$335	\$390
Thursday Sessions & Lunch only (<i>order Banquet tickets separately</i>)	\$305	\$335	\$390
Friday Sessions & Lunch only (<i>order Banquet tickets separately</i>)	\$305	\$335	\$390
OTHER GOVERNMENT (MUNICIPAL, STATE, FEDERAL EMPLOYEES)			
Full Registration (<i>includes all conference sessions, meals, and breaks for 1 person</i>)	\$530	\$565	\$620
Wednesday Sessions & Lunch only (<i>order Banquet tickets separately</i>)	\$355	\$385	\$440
Thursday Sessions & Lunch only (<i>order Banquet tickets separately</i>)	\$355	\$385	\$440
Friday Sessions & Lunch only (<i>order Banquet tickets separately</i>)	\$355	\$385	\$440
COMMERCIAL (PROFIT & NON-PROFIT)			
Full Registration (<i>includes all conference sessions, meals, and breaks for 1 person</i>)	\$630	\$660	\$715
Wednesday Sessions & Lunch only (<i>order Banquet tickets separately</i>)	\$405	\$435	\$490
Thursday Sessions & Lunch only (<i>order Banquet tickets separately</i>)	\$405	\$435	\$490
Friday Sessions & Lunch only (<i>order Banquet tickets separately</i>)	\$405	\$435	\$490
MEAL TICKETS			
Wednesday Welcoming Banquet	\$95	\$95	\$95
Thursday Inaugural Banquet	\$115	\$115	\$115

[View the Full Registration Policies](#)

BRIEF POLICIES (must read full policies above for all info):

Full Registration for 1 person includes:

- All conference sessions and exhibit halls
- All conference meals, receptions, and breaks

Daily Registration for Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday for 1 person includes:

- All conference sessions and exhibit hall for that day
- Conference Breakfasts and breaks for that day
- Lunch for that day
- Banquet tickets may be purchased separately - **but only with a daily registration for the day of that event;**
- Multiple daily registrations must be purchased consecutively.
Example: Wednesday/Thursday Sessions Only registrations are allowed, but Wednesday/Friday Sessions Only registrations are NOT allowed.

Guests:

- There is no guest registration, but additional banquet tickets may be purchased for personal guests—personal guests CANNOT be people you work with in any capacity (clients, coworkers, etc.). They must be family guests or significant others without a business reason to attend the conference—the business relationship supersedes the personal relationship. See Full Policies for more details.

Children are not allowed in any of the official conference spaces, due to safety and liability concerns.

HOTEL DETAILS:

MACo will host blocks of rooms at three hotels (all prices are per room/per night, plus applicable taxes):

- Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay Hotel, Cambridge, MD (\$152)
- Holiday Inn, Cambridge, MD (\$124)
- Holiday Inn, Easton, MD (\$129)

For more information: www.mdcountries.org/WC25Hotels

[REGISTER ONLINE](#)

(new system: [VIEW REGISTRATION GUIDE](#))

Registration will be completely online.

Check and ACH payment will be accepted, if needed—email sofiapa@mdcounties.org to arrange these payments.

Check and ACH payments must be received within 10 days of registering or additional fees may apply.

Please contact Sofia Pablos-Aguirre with any questions regarding registration at 410.269.0043 or email sofiapa@mdcounties.org.