

2024 Legislative Package

Public Requests for Legislation and Position Statements

As of October 16, 2024

The Frederick County Executive's Office held a town hall on October 7th to collect public input on legislative recommendations for the 2025 Maryland Legislative Session. The following recommendations were sent to the County Executive after the deadline and were not included in the packet of recommendations available at the town hall.

Organization: Frederick County Public Schools Early Childhood Education and the Judy Centers

Submitted by: Kathleen Allen, Coordinator



October 4, 2024
County Executive Jessica Fitzwater
Frederick County Government
12 E Church St
Frederick, MD 21701

Dear County Executive Fitzwater,

I hope this message finds you well. As a member of the Family Connects Frederick County Community Partner Council and a board member of the Coalition for a Healthier Frederick, I am reaching out to urge your support for sustainable funding for the Family Connects model. This evidence-based initiative has shown great promise in reducing maternal health disparities and improving overall maternal and infant health across our state.

In Frederick County, Family Connects has made a significant impact, with nurses visiting 1,630 families—65% of the 2,500 eligible families—in just the first 15 months. This program has successfully engaged families from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds and various insurance types, ensuring that all Maryland families with newborns can access essential support.

The Judy Center Early Learning Hubs serve six communities within Frederick County, providing free services to families with children from prenatal through age five. These hubs aim to prepare all children for kindergarten, further emphasizing the importance of early connections and resources.

Our partnership with Family Connects allows us to stay informed about community needs and data. We actively refer families from the Judy Center to Family Connects, facilitating a seamless connection to vital services such as home visiting and playgroups. One notable story highlights a family with twins who, after receiving support from a nurse, engaged with our services, ultimately building confidence and connections through ongoing outreach.

Having Family Connects in Frederick means that families needing additional support are met with resources and relationships that help them navigate the early years of parenthood. The opportunity to connect with our newest community members is invaluable.

We believe that all Maryland families with newborns can benefit from the Family Connects model. We kindly ask for your advocacy in the General Assembly and your support with Governor Wes Moore to secure sustainable funding for this critical service.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Together, we can ensure that all families in Maryland have access to the support they need.

Thank you,

Kathleen Allen

Kathleen Allen

Coordinator Early Childhood Education and the Judy Centers

Frederick County Public Schools

Organization: Mental Health Association

Submitted by: Suzanne Borg, Chief Program Officer



October 4, 2024

County Executive Jessica Fitzwater
Frederick County Government
12 E. Church St
Frederick, MD 21701

Dear County Executive Fitzwater,

Thank you for your support of the Family Connects model in Frederick County. As a member of the Family Connects Frederick County Community Partner Council, we urge you to support efforts to develop sustainable funding for the Family Connects model so that all Maryland families with newborns can access this [evidence-based model](#) which [reduces maternal health disparities](#) and improves maternal and [infant health](#).

Family Connects Frederick County is a big success with strong engagement from Frederick County families with newborns. In the first 15 months, nurses visited 1,630 or 65% of the 2,500 eligible families, and families across all race, ethnicity, and insurance types accepted the visit.

The Mental Health Association of Frederick County participates in the Family Connects Community Partner Council because we believe the work aligns with our mission to build a strong foundation of emotional wellness by securing vulnerable families and building resilient children. We know through our experience with our Healthy Families Frederick program that supporting families with newborns helps to reduce parental stress, improve child health, and create strong familial bonds.

We are proud of the success in Frederick County and think that that all Maryland families with newborns can benefit from the Family Connects model. We ask for your support and advocacy in the General Assembly and with Governor Wes Moore on behalf of the Family Connects model to make the case for sustainable funding so that all Maryland families with newborns can access this critical service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Suzanne Borg'.

Suzanne Borg
Chief Program Officer

Organization: Family Connects Frederick County Leadership Advisory Council

Submitted by: Advisory Council

Family Connect Frederick County Leadership Advisory Council

October 7, 2024

County Executive Jessica Fitzwater
Frederick County Government
12 E. Church St
Frederick, MD 21701

Dear County Executive Fitzwater,

Thank you for your support of the Family Connects model in Frederick County. As members of the Family Connects Frederick County Leadership Advisory Council, we urge you to support efforts to develop sustainable funding for the Family Connects model so that all Maryland families with newborns can access this [evidence-based model](#) which [reduces maternal health disparities](#) and improves maternal and [infant health](#).

Family Connects Frederick County has been a big success with strong engagement from Frederick County families with newborns. In the first 15 months, nurses visited 1,630 or 65% of the 2,500 eligible families, and families across all race, ethnicity, and insurance types accepted the visit.

The clinical team has prioritized creating a culture of inclusivity and support for families. With our input, the team developed an Inclusion Script with Iris Inclusion consultant Michael Baran. The nurses start each visit stating their intention to offer respectful, supportive care, ask for feedback at the end of the visit, and the follow-up call from staff asks about how respected and supported the family experience was. In addition, the clinical team can offer culturally aligned care from two bilingual Spanish nurses and an African American nurse.

Nurses connect families with health care and local community resources based on the needs that the family identifies during the visit. Referrals for new needs identified during the visit are very common. While 45% of referrals are health care related, nurses regularly refer families to WIC, Child Care Choices, Healthy Families, Family Partnership, Judy Centers, and the story times at our local libraries and places to access free diapers.

Our community has responded to Family Connects with enthusiasm—

- Ausherman Family Foundation and Rescue Mission partnered with Frederick Health to use the hospital's purchasing powers to increase access to free diapers for families in need at local diaper banks and all Frederick County public schools
- Frederick County Public Libraries designed a toolkit of early literacy resources for nurses to provide to all families they visit
- Judy Centers created more groups for families with very young babies

We are proud of the success in Frederick County and think that that all Maryland families with newborns can benefit from the Family Connects model. We ask for your support and advocacy in the General Assembly and with Governor Wes Moore on behalf of the Family Connects model to make the case for sustainable funding so that all Maryland families with newborns can access this critical service.

Thank you!

Family Connects Frederick County Leadership Advisory Council

Leigh Adams
Erica Blake
Natalie Cioffi
Danielle Doll

Catherine Dorsey
Jackie Douge, MD
Alyssa Frederick
Jan Gardner

Yewande Oladeinde
Derek Shackelford
Laura Soisson

Organization: Interagency Early Childhood Committee

Submitted by: Steve Buckley and Leslie Frei



**Interagency
Early Childhood**
COMMITTEE

A subcommittee of the Frederick County Local Management Board

October 4, 2024
County Executive Jessica Fitzwater
Frederick County Government
12 E Church St
Frederick, MD 21701

Dear County Executive Fitzwater,

Thank you for your support of the Family Connects model in Frederick County. The members of the Frederick County Early Childhood Education Advisory Council, also known as the Interagency Early Childhood Committee, urge you to support efforts to develop sustainable funding for the Family Connects model so that all Maryland families with newborns can access this evidence-based model which reduced maternal health disparities and improves maternal and infant health.

Family Connects Frederick County has been a big success with strong engagement from Frederick County families with newborns. In the first 15 months, nurses visited 1,630 or 65% of the 2,500 eligible families. Families from across all races, ethnicity, and insurance types accepted the visit.

The IECC successfully advocated for adverse childhood experiences to be identified as a priority for local health improvement planning. The Coalition for a Healthier Frederick County hosted the ACEs Workgroup—with support from the Child Advocacy Center, the Office for Children and Families, and then the Office for Family Services — from 2017-2024. The ACEs Workgroup identified the evidence-based Family Connects — a universal newborn home visiting model as a great fit with other early supports for families and Frederick Health launched this service on 1/1/2023 with ARPA grant funds. All Frederick County families with newborns can receive a free 90-min visit with a nurse in their home. The nurse does a wellness check on mom and baby and provides personalized resources — including referrals to health and mental health care providers, WIC, Judy Centers, Healthy Families, Family Partnership, Child Care Choices, FCPL story times, and others.

We are proud of the success in Frederick County and think that that all Maryland families with newborns can benefit from the Family Connects model. We ask for your support and advocacy in the General Assembly and with Governor Wes Moore on behalf of the Family Connects model to make the case for sustainable funding so that all Maryland families with newborns can access this critical service.

Thank you,

Co-Chairs of the IECC

Steve Buckley, MS, OT/L Lic# 04314

Digitally signed by Steve Buckley,
MS, OT/L Lic# 04314
Date: 2024.10.04 16:20:29 -04'00'

Steve Buckley
Director
Frederick County Developmental Center

Leslie Frei

Digitally signed by Leslie Frei
Date: 2024.10.07 11:57:09 -04'00'

Leslie Frei
Supervisor Early Childhood Education and Judy Centers
Frederick County Public Schools

Organization: Frederick Community College

Submitted by: Delaine Welch, Associate Professor



October 3, 2024

County Executive Jessica Fitzwater
Frederick County Government
12 E. Church St
Frederick, MD 21701

Dear County Executive Fitzwater,

Thank you for your support of the Family Connects model in Frederick County. As a member of the Family Connects Frederick County Community Partner Council, we urge you to support efforts to develop sustainable funding for the Family Connects model so that all Maryland families with newborns can access this [evidence-based model](#) which [reduces maternal health disparities](#) and improves maternal and [infant health](#).

Family Connects Frederick County has been a big success with strong engagement from Frederick County families with newborns. In the first 15 months, nurses visited 1,630 or 65% of the 2,500 eligible families, and families across all race, ethnicity, and insurance types accepted the visit.

Frederick Community College participates in the Family Connects Community Partner Council through IECC so that a universal newborn home visiting model as a great fit with other early supports for families and Frederick Health launched this service on 1/1/2023 with ARPA grant funds.

We work closely with Family Connects in the following ways: by supporting the initiatives they do and making students aware of their beneficial services.

FCC is proud to be part of the College Success for Single Mothers Project. We collected data on our single mothers' and student parents' lived experiences and implemented action plans to expand services that foster student success.

We are proud of the success in Frederick County and think that that all Maryland families with newborns can benefit from the Family Connects model. We ask for your support and advocacy in the General Assembly and with Governor Wes Moore on behalf of the Family Connects model to make the case for sustainable funding so that all Maryland families with newborns can access this critical service.

Thank you!

Delaine Welch, M.A., M.S.

Associate Professor – Early Childhood/Psychology

Organization: Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership

Submitted by: Amy Wilkinson, Executive Director



October 7, 2024
County Executive Jessica Fitzwater
Frederick County Government
12 E. Church St
Frederick, MD 21701

Dear County Executive Fitzwater,

Thank you for your support of the Family Connects model in Frederick County. As a community partner serving Frederick County families in need, we urge you to support efforts to develop sustainable funding for the Family Connects model so that *all* Maryland families with newborns can access this evidence-based model which reduces maternal health disparities and improves maternal and infant health.

Family Connects Frederick County has been a big success with strong engagement from Frederick County families with newborns. In the first 15 months, nurses visited 1,630 or 65% of the 2,500 eligible families, and families across all race, ethnicity, and insurance types accepted the visit.

Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership's mission is to foster the growth of strong, resilient, hopeful children who are impacted by the incarceration of a loved one in the Frederick County region. In 2023, we provided emergency support to 47 families, basic human needs supplies to 630 people, 1700 contact hours of parenting classes, and much more.

Having Family Connects in Frederick County means that all newborns can receive a home visit, connecting those families to resources like COIPP's programs, mental health care, housing, and dozens of other support services available within our community. Expanding Family Connects will bring this valuable resource to newborns and families statewide.

We are proud of the success in Frederick County and think that all Maryland families with newborns can benefit from the Family Connects model. We ask for your support and advocacy in the General Assembly and with Governor Wes Moore on behalf of the Family Connects model to make the case for sustainable funding so that all Maryland families with newborns can access this critical service.

Thank you,
Amy Wilkinson
Executive Director
Children of Incarcerated Parents Partnership

Organization: Frederick County Food Council

Submitted by: Hannah Fuchs, Advocacy Lead

Dear all,

My name is Hannah and I am the advocacy lead for the Frederick County Food Council. I attended your town hall meeting on Monday, October 7, regarding legislative priorities for the upcoming session in the state assembly and would like to share our priorities in writing here.

Making compost mandatory across the county, ideally across the state

- Notably, New York City just passed such legislation this month. Considering that New York and Maryland are both part of the U.S. Climate Alliance, it would strengthen these efforts to expand such mandatory requirements on state levels, both in Maryland and New York, and hopefully across many more states.
- When food waste goes into landfills, it produces the worst kind of greenhouse gases. Composting makes soil healthier, which improves food-growing capabilities and can actually capture more carbon dioxide.

Requiring school systems to purchase a certain percentage of food from local sources in Maryland

- We need to take responsibility for educating our younger generations about where our food comes from and about the local farms in our state.
- With such legislation, we would also support our local small farmers and strengthen a local and resilient food supply chain.

Funding for county food councils as per this year's Maryland Food System Resiliency Council report

- Food councils are an important link between our local communities and farmers, as well as our county governments and legislators. Food councils serve as facilitators that can communicate critical information to the local community while liaising with the local government about the needs of residents.

Thank you very much for providing us with the opportunity to share with you some of our legislative priorities. Please let me know if you have any questions and feel free to get in touch any time.

Kind regards,

Hannah

Organization: Sierra Club Catoclin Group

Submitted by: Kerri Hesley, Group Chair & Zero Waste Lead

October 2024

Below are the Maryland Sierra Club Legislative Priorities for the 2025 session. These priorities align well with Frederick County climate goals. We encourage all elected officials in the county to support these priorities.

Sierra Club State Legislative Priorities	How Frederick County Support Can Support These Goals Locally
Building Electrification Solar technicians	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Push for building codes with enhanced energy efficiency requirements• Institute Building Performance Standards• Energy efficiency programs for County buildings• Encourage Frederick County Public Schools to make their buildings more energy efficient• Encourage workforce development for all the trades needed for building electrification. There is a critical need for electricians, welders, and other trades people. These jobs provide good career options, especially for those not interested in college.
100% Clean Energy Lorig Charkoudian 18 other states have this	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incentivize Solar on as many buildings as possible.• More Solar on Parking Lots• Require Data Centers to deploy Solar on their buildings and in buffer zone areas• Encourage Frederick County Public Schools to deploy Solar• Continue expanding Solar on County facilities• Enhance building codes to require solar-ready homes
Bottle Bill ** Teresa / Brooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• County to publicly support the state bottle bill

Beverage deposit bill - 10¢ in/out
- Bev. Association req. to make nonprofit to implement