

News Release

Bridging Communities Conference Connects Over 300 Nonprofits and Government Partners

Conference connected nonprofit organizations with tools and resources for expanding impact across Maryland

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (June 7, 2024) — More than 300 people, representing more than 100 nonprofits and governmental organizations from across Maryland participated in the inaugural Bridging Communities Conference at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County on Thursday. The conference was a collaborative effort between the Office of the Comptroller, Maryland Nonprofits, United Way of Central Maryland, the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives (GOCI), Health LeadHer, and the Maryland Department of General Services.

Comptroller Brooke E. Lierman discussed the Office of the Comptroller's work and how the agency can build strong partnerships with nonprofits to better serve the people of Maryland.

“Our new vision is that we aim to work in partnership to build a state that is more equitable, more resilient, and more prosperous so that every Marylander can reach their full potential,” Comptroller Lierman shared. “Partnership is first in that because it’s so key to doing anything meaningful in this day and age. You and I know progress is not inevitable, but with partners by our side, we can progress.”



Comptroller Brooke Lierman spoke to a gathering of nonprofit leaders Thursday at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

Laura Bacon, founder of The 3rd – a nonprofit focused on showcasing and incubating businesses owned by women of color and providing them with a gathering place – talked about her journey and lessons learned as a nonprofit founder, and shared strategies that can help attendees enhance their operations, improve the sustainability of their organizations, and build community with one another.

The conference hosted several skills-based sessions, including grant writing, financial management, and organizational development. Other presenters included Secretary of Service and Civic Engagement Paul Monteiro; Franklyn Baker, President and CEO, United Way of Central Maryland; and Heather Iliff, President and CEO, Maryland Nonprofits.

"Nonprofits and government are natural partners in providing a social safety net and promoting greater quality of life and equity in our communities," said Heather Iliff, President & CEO of Maryland Nonprofits. "The Bridging Communities conference was a critical step in convening our sectors to collaborate more closely. It was heartening to feel the energy in the room and hear the ideas being shared during this sold-out event."



Heather Liff, president and CEO of Maryland Nonprofits, said nonprofits are natural partners in a social safety net.



Left to right: Heather Iliff, president and CEO of Maryland Nonprofits; Franklyn Baker, president and CEO, United Way of Central Maryland; Maryland Secretary of Service and Civic Innovation Paul Monteiro; and Gregory D. Yancey, chief of staff for the Governor’s Office of Community Initiatives.

The conference was designed to facilitate meaningful connections between nonprofit organizations and give attendees the knowledge, tools, and resources to access resources and tools that would help them address challenges, support the sustainability of their organizations, and position them for long-term success.

“Nonprofit organizations play a vital role in tackling community inequities while paving the road for a more sustainable society,” United Way of Central Maryland President and CEO Franklyn Baker said. “The goal of the Bridging Communities Conference is to better equip nonprofits with the knowledge and resources they need, so they can continue to transform the lives of the people they serve for the better.”

Organizers are developing an impact report to share highlights and outcomes from the conference.



Attendees network during the Bridging Communities Conference on June, 6, 2024

[View Nonprofit Conference Photos](#)

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Media Contacts

Robyne McCullough
rmccullough@marylandtaxes.gov
410-980-0139 (cell)

Barbara Sauers
bsauers@marylandtaxes.gov
410-212-9414 (cell)

Office Location

Goldstein Treasury Building 80 Calvert St. Annapolis, MD 21401



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