

# Governor Hogan Announces Over \$45 Million in Education Funding to Help Students Affected By COVID-19 Pandemic

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**ANNAPOLIS, Md.** - Governor Larry Hogan today announced the commitment of more than \$45.6 million in additional education funding for K-12 technology improvements, community college workforce development programs, rural broadband initiatives, and other priorities in every jurisdiction in Maryland, particularly those most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act gives governors the flexibility to provide direct funding to education priorities.

"I believe very strongly that every single child in Maryland deserves access to a world-class education, regardless of what neighborhood they happen to grow up in," said Governor Hogan. "That is true now, more than ever, and especially for those students significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. While many states have already seen significant cuts and layoffs, in Maryland, we are committed to doing everything possible to level-fund education. We will continue to maximize federal resources in order to provide critical funding for the students and communities that need help the most."

## **K-12 Technology Funding: \$10 million**

The Maryland State Department of Education surveyed all twenty-four local school systems to identify any barriers to implementing remote learning. The feedback from these surveys along with consultation with local school systems led to Maryland's determination that K-12 technology funding is critical to the continued success of education processes during the state's recovery from COVID-19.

## **Community College Workforce Development Programs: \$10 million**

The Maryland Higher Education Commission is in regular ongoing communication with the state's Institutions of Higher Education to discuss specific COVID-19 related issues with respect to assuring their students can continue their programs. Based on these deliberations, the state's community colleges are the most effective delivery method for constituents to improve their employment opportunities and for the state to improve workforce development. Funds to community colleges will be utilized to immediately expand existing training and educational programs in locally relevant sectors and to develop new in-demand training programs for post COVID-19. Funds will also be utilized to market these programs to employers and prospective students, including recently unemployed Marylanders.

## **Competitive Innovation Grants: \$10 million**

The Competitive Innovation Grants will be awarded to educational institutions that present a unique or innovative approach to engage students, teachers, and school communities while working to address academic accessibility as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Projects can focus on implementing unique ideas at an individual school, feeder system of schools, or school system. Priority will be given to programs that address at-risk students.

## **Rural Broadband: \$10 Million**

The Governor's Office of Rural Broadband will construct a wireless education network for students' use in Western Maryland, Southern Maryland, and on the Eastern Shore. This network will initially be constructed in the areas that currently lack broadband service, but could be expanded to cover other areas of the state where access may be limited for other reasons. The state is proposing a wireless, Long-Term Evolution (LTE) network using frequency provided by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for educational purposes, or available unlicensed frequencies.

## **Urban Broadband: \$5 Million**

Maryland's wireless education network for students will also be available in urban centers, where access to the internet can be scarce for underprivileged populations. The state plans to use a phased, targeted approach to ensure the populations who lack access will be connected first.

## **School for the Deaf, School for the Blind: \$657,990**

The Maryland State Department of Education will provide grants to the Maryland School for the Blind and the Maryland School for the Deaf to assist in the implementation of remote learning for staff and students. The funds will be used to purchase devices, including assistive technology and adaptive equipment for staff and students, implementing appropriate security tools, and providing professional development. MSDE anticipates distributing funds on a per-pupil basis.

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