

Talbot County Community Reinvestment and Repair Fund

Initial Distribution Plan

Draft – August 2026

1. Purpose and Context

Maryland’s Community Reinvestment and Repair Fund (CRRF) directs a portion of adult-use cannabis tax revenue to community-based initiatives benefiting disproportionately impacted and low-income communities. The Maryland Office of Social Equity has described the “mission of CRRF as reinvesting cannabis tax revenue in areas harmed by the war on drugs while promoting economic growth and development through community-based funding and resources.” The Talbot County Council designated Talbot Family Network (TFN), the County’s Local Management Board, to serve as the Talbot County Reinvestment and Repair Commission and guide local use of these funds ([Bill 1620](#)).

The designation builds on TFN’s existing community-planning role. Maryland’s Local Management Board (LMB) framework requires LMBs to gather community information about current needs, strengths, services, and resources and to use community assessment to inform planning for children, youth, and families. TFN carries out this work in Talbot County through recurring community assessments, stakeholder engagement, data review, and development of a local Community Plan.

CRRF was created in response to the disproportionate impact of cannabis enforcement, including on Black Marylanders and Black communities. “Disproportionately Impacted Area” (DIA), however, is a specific State geographic designation based on historical cannabis-possession charges; Easton ZIP Code 21601 is Talbot County’s designated DIA.

State law also allows CRRF investments to benefit qualifying low-income communities. For purposes of CRRF, a low-income community is a Qualified Census Tract (Easton 9603) or a geographic area in which at least 51% of households have incomes at or below 80% of the area median income. This means CRRF investments are not limited to Talbot County’s single Qualified Census Tract or the area identified by the State as disproportionately impacted; other communities may qualify based on the State’s low-income standard.

Talbot County’s approach recognizes that the consequences of disproportionate impact are not limited to the person arrested. They can extend to families, children, economic opportunity, housing stability, and communities. Reinvestment and repair therefore may include direct responses to justice-system involvement as well as investment in community conditions that can compound or perpetuate disadvantage.

This **Initial Distribution Plan** establishes areas for CRRF investment based on current data, community input, and local and regional assessments while allowing the County’s approach to evolve through community engagement, implementation, and learning.

2. Planning and Evidence

This plan was developed using Talbot-specific evidence gathered over multiple assessment cycles, supplemented by County and regional planning efforts and CRRF-specific data. Talbot-specific evidence was given the greatest weight, with regional sources used to provide additional context and identify areas of convergence. County-specific evidence was given the greatest weight. Regional sources were used to provide additional context and identify areas of convergence, recognizing that these sources may have been developed for different purposes and/or populations.

The analysis considered the persistence of conditions across time and sources, documented racial and economic disparities, community and stakeholder input, and relevance to CRRF's repair and reinvestment purpose. The August 18, 2026, stakeholder process helped interpret data and identify connections among conditions; participants were not asked to rank priorities.

3. What the Evidence Tells Us

Justice-System Involvement and Its Consequences

Available historical data used by the State indicate that Black residents were disproportionately arrested for marijuana possession in Talbot County. Current local data also show substantial racial disparities in broader justice-system involvement. Black residents represent approximately 12% of Talbot County's population but 35% of the Talbot County Detention Center population. Racial disparities are also evident in State incarceration associated with Talbot County and juvenile justice referrals.

Justice-system involvement can create or compound barriers to employment, income, housing, family stability, and opportunity. Recent local work has also identified criminal records, over-enforcement, and expungement barriers as factors affecting economic mobility.

Addressing the consequences of disproportionate enforcement and justice-system involvement should be foundational to Talbot County's use of CRRF, both directly and through its intersection with the priority areas below.

Initial Priority Areas

Based on the evidence reviewed, this plan proposes three initial CRRF priority areas. They are not ranked at this stage; continued engagement with the communities CRRF is intended to benefit will help inform their relative emphasis over time.

Economic Stability and Mobility. Talbot County's overall economic indicators mask significant disparities. In 2024, median household income was approximately \$94,643 for White households compared with \$53,347 for Black households. Across assessment cycles, residents and partners have identified wages relative to the cost of living, childcare, benefit cliffs, racial income and wealth disparities, and justice-system barriers as factors affecting economic mobility. Neighborhood Service Center's (NSC) 2026 stakeholder forum similarly identified employment, income, cost of living, and low or insufficient wages as significant challenges to family stability.

Housing Stability. Affordable and stable housing has persisted as a concern across Talbot County's community assessment cycles. Local evidence shows substantial housing cost burdens, particularly among renters, and concerns about housing availability and instability. Housing affordability and availability are also significant issues in Talbot County's current Comprehensive Plan update; affordable housing was the second-most frequently identified area for improvement in the County's public survey. NSC's 2026 stakeholder forum likewise ranked housing as the leading community need and the most frequently identified challenge to family stability.

Child Development and Educational Opportunity. Children's opportunities to thrive are shaped well before they enter school and continue across childhood and adolescence. Recent Talbot Kindergarten Readiness data show substantial differences by race, ethnicity, and economic status, pointing to disparities in early childhood development and opportunity. Those differences remain evident in later academic outcomes, as reflected in racial and ethnic disparities in third- and eighth-grade Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program results. Together, these indicators point to the importance of the broader conditions and opportunities that support children's development—from early childhood experiences and access to quality childcare to family stability, learning opportunities, and pathways to future success.

Contributing Conditions

The evidence also identifies behavioral health, transportation, food security and access to services as important and interconnected conditions. These are not excluded from CRRF consideration. They may be relevant when they contribute to a priority area or address consequences of justice-system involvement. NSC's recent stakeholder forum similarly found that these needs often interact and that challenges in one area can increase instability in others.

4. Guiding CRRF Investment

This Initial Distribution Plan will guide CRRF investment toward addressing consequences of disproportionate cannabis enforcement and justice-system involvement and advancing economic stability and mobility, housing stability, and child development and educational opportunity in disproportionately impacted and/or low-income communities.

These priorities identify conditions Talbot County seeks to improve, not a prescribed list of programs to fund. Future investments should demonstrate a meaningful connection among the proposed work, the people and communities CRRF is intended to benefit, and the needs identified in this plan.

Specific funding criteria and approaches will be developed consistent with State requirements and this plan.

5. Community Partnership, Learning and Refinement

Repair and reinvestment should be shaped with the people and communities the Fund is intended to benefit. Continued engagement will create meaningful opportunities for

residents—particularly people with lived experience of justice-system involvement and residents of disproportionately impacted and low-income communities—to help inform priorities, investments, and learning.

The Commission will build on the stakeholder and public engagement that informed this Initial Plan while recognizing the importance of deeper, sustained engagement with the communities CRRF is intended to benefit. As implementation moves forward, community participation and experience will help inform what is working, who investments are reaching, and where adjustments may be needed. This Initial Distribution Plan may be refined as engagement deepens and additional evidence and experience become available.

Sources Considered

Development of this plan drew primarily from Talbot-specific evidence and input, supplemented by County and regional planning and assessment sources.

Talbot and County sources included TFN’s FY2019–20 and FY2023–24 Community Assessments and associated surveys and focus groups; the current TFN Community Plan; TFN’s annual data review; recent Collective Impact work; Neighborhood Service Center’s Community Needs Assessment and 2026 Community Needs Assessment stakeholder forum; Talbot County’s 2026 Comprehensive Plan update and public survey; local education, housing, economic and justice-system data; the August 18 CRRF stakeholder process; and public comment.

Regional sources included the Mid-Shore Behavioral Health 2025 Needs Assessment and UM Shore Regional Health’s 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment and related health-planning work.

State sources included Maryland CRRF statute and regulations, the CRRF survey reports of 2024 and 2023, the 2025 legislative changes, and Maryland Office of Social Equity guidance and data.