



# Retirement News Highlights

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## 'Historically high': State agencies have huge job vacancies, but \$2 billion surplus

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***The Herald-Mail***

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The Spending Affordability Committee of the Maryland General Assembly looked ahead at the state's budget over the next several years during a virtual meeting Tuesday, and while a surplus is projected, many state agencies have hundreds of positions unfilled.

Tonya Zimmerman, a senior policy analyst at the state's Department of Legislative Services, called the vacancy rates "historically high" when asked by the committee's Presiding Chair Del. Marc Korman, D-Montgomery, to compare the rates over time. She added that the vacancy rates have increased even more since a January fiscal briefing.

"While high vacancy rates used to be an isolated problem among certain agencies and areas, it's a fairly widespread issue," Zimmerman said. She noted there's only a couple parts of the executive branch with vacancy rates under 10% — the Department of Commerce and the Department of Housing and Community Development.

The state's Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, slated to have 9,200 personnel, had 1,496 vacancies as of October 2022, equating to a 16% vacancy rate. Democratic Gov.-Elect Wes Moore has pledged to fill the 100-plus vacancies at that department's division of parole and probation in an effort to reduce violent crime.

Maryland's Department of Human Services, an organization of nearly 6,000, had 945 vacancies as of October, equating to a vacancy rate above 15% as Republican Gov. Larry Hogan nears the conclusion of his terms in office in January.

**Analysis of Vacancies and Turnover Rate**  
**Executive Branch, Excluding Higher Education**  
**Fiscal 2023 Legislative Appropriation Compared to October 2022 Vacancies**

<u>Department/Service Area</u>	<u>Positions</u>	<u>Budgeted Turnover Rate</u>	<u>Vacancies to Meet Turnover</u>	<u>October Vacancies</u>	<u>Vacancies Above (or Below) Turnover</u>	<u>October Vacancy Rate</u>
<b>Largest Six State Agencies</b>						
Public Safety and Correctional Services	9,217	10.0%	922	1,496	575	16.2%
Human Services	5,971	6.9%	411	945	534	15.8%
Health	6,337	8.2%	517	887	370	14.0%
Police and Fire Marshal	2,506	7.0%	175	290	115	11.6%
Juvenile Services	2,164	5.0%	109	356	247	16.5%
Transportation	9,058	5.1%	465	961	496	10.6%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>35,252</b>	<b>7.2%</b>	<b>2,598</b>	<b>4,934</b>	<b>2,336</b>	<b>14.0%</b>
<b>Other Executive</b>						
Legal (Excluding Judiciary)	1,500	6.2%	94	153	60	10.2%
Executive and Administrative Control	1,663	4.3%	71	189	118	11.3%
Financial and Revenue Administration	2,125	4.9%	105	231	126	10.8%
Budget and Management and DoIT	507	4.9%	25	56	31	11.0%
Retirement	187	4.6%	9	25	16	13.4%
General Services	689	6.0%	41	88	46	12.7%
Natural Resources	1,380	4.3%	59	144	85	10.4%
Agriculture	409	6.8%	28	61	33	14.8%
Labor	1,350	7.9%	106	161	55	11.9%
MSDE and Other Education	1,849	4.5%	82	322	240	17.4%
Housing and Community Development	333	5.0%	17	32	15	9.6%
Commerce	188	5.0%	9	13	4	6.9%
Environment	880	6.1%	53	90	36	10.2%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>13,060</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>699</b>	<b>1,563</b>	<b>864</b>	<b>12.0%</b>
<b>Executive Branch Subtotal</b>	<b>48,313</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>3,297</b>	<b>6,498</b>	<b>3,200</b>	<b>13.4%</b>

DoIT: Department of Information Technology  
MSDE: Maryland State Department of Education

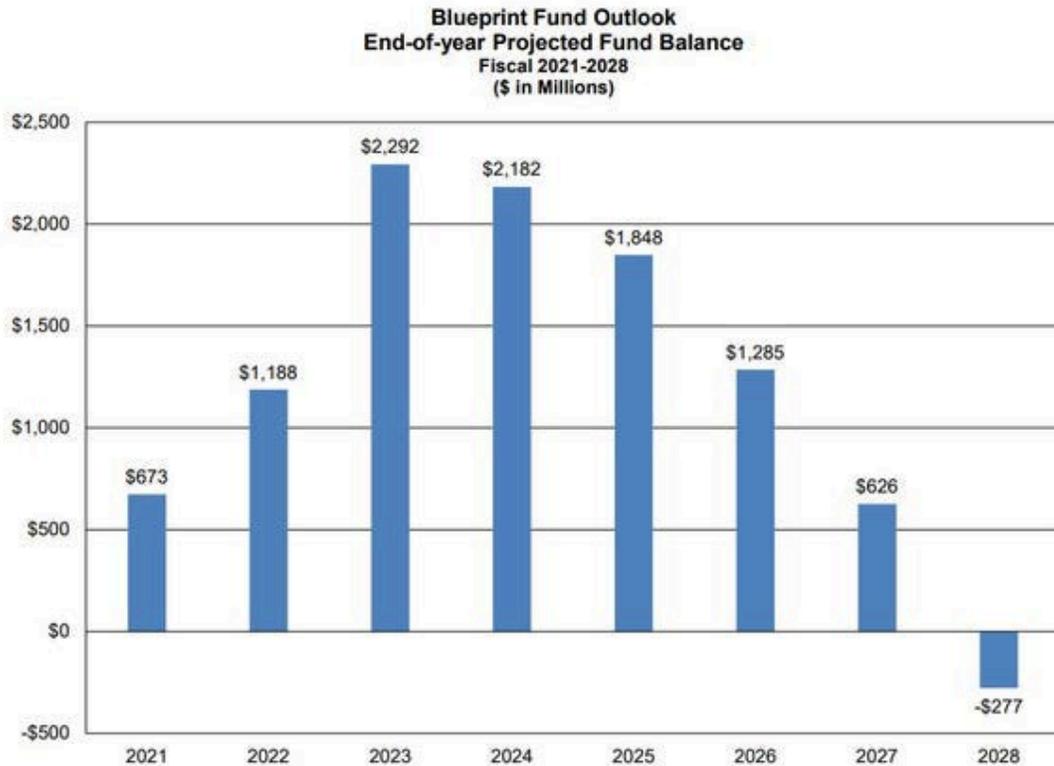
Source: Department of Budget and Management; Department of Legislative Services

A chart from the Department of Legislative Services briefing to the Spending Affordability Committee on Nov. 15, 2022 shows the vacancies in the state's executive branch agencies. The red rectangle (added by the article's author) highlights the October 2022 vacancy rate.

The total of 6,500 executive branch vacancies comes as the state has a nearly \$2 billion surplus, due in large part to federal pandemic aid.

## School funding discussed

Funding for the state’s multi-year education plan, the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future, was also discussed during the Spending Affordability meeting Tuesday. The state is projected to have a positive balance in the associated Blueprint fund until fiscal year 2028.



A graph from the Department of Legislative Services briefing to the Spending Affordability Committee on Nov. 15, 2022 shows the projected funding for the state's "Blueprint" education plan . Positive balances are projected until 2028.

One potential source of funding for the Blueprint is the digital advertisement tax, which an Anne Arundel Circuit Court judge blocked last month.

The comptroller collected about \$54 million for the Blueprint fund from the tax during just one quarter of fiscal year 2022, said Theresa Tuszynski, a policy analyst at the Department of Legislative Services, during the meeting.

A case regarding the law, previously deemed a tax on “big tech” companies by Senate President Bill Ferguson, D-Baltimore City, is scheduled to be heard in federal court on Nov. 29.

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