

Howard County Disability Inclusion, Safety and Crisis Response Task Force

July 30th, 2026
9:30a to 12:30p
Meeting Minutes

Opening Remarks

Tiffany Erbeling, facilitator, opened the meeting to welcome the task force and walk through the day's agenda.

Task force co-chairs, Melissa Rosenberg with the Autism Society of Maryland and Acting Howard County Police Department Chief Terrence Benn, provided welcome remarks and thanked attendees for participating. Acting Chief Benn noted that there is excitement to listen and learn, and that police policy and procedure need and require community support.

Carl DeLorenzo, Howard County Government, reviewed the charge of the [County Executive's Order](#) launching the task force, and that the task force recommendations are due by November 2nd.

Member Introductions

Members introduced themselves, with optional reflections on what inspires them to participate in the task force. Reflections included responses like wanting to call police and be safe, and interests in modeling standards that go beyond CIT.

Community Engagement Discussion

Members discussed opportunities to intentionally gather community input while developing recommendations.

Melissa shared about a community meeting held on July 29, focused on ensuring a feeling of safety in the disability community. An additional open meeting is scheduled for August 20th, also focused on safety. The community meetings are being facilitated by the Mediation Conflict and Resolution Center.

Task force members shared additional ideas to capture community input, including:

- A suggestion to conduct surveys to gather information. Regarding surveys, neurodivergent individuals should help create the survey questions.
- How to engage people who are not comfortable with police being present at meetings — for example, capturing written suggestions and finding other ways to include those who “lack voice.”

Howard County Disability Inclusion, Safety and Crisis Response Task Force

- Police input is often under-tapped; the group wants honest input from officers.
- Value in involving additional participants such as dispatch, EMTs, and firefighters.
- Providing virtual options.
- Concerns raised about fear of individuals being “logged” as IDD/DD in databases.
- Emphasis on programming and ways to help the community — resources beyond police, and educating IDD/DD individuals and those who support them.
- Need to acknowledge cultural differences and account for variation across the County.
- Younger residents (18/19) and the next generation bring great ideas and a different lived experience.
- Suggestion to include the Department of Housing.
- The Police Accountability Board (PAB) discussed CIT training and the need for training in more segments of government and society, including schools.
- Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) is working on a training with School Resource Officers (SROs) and security teams. HCPSS's next step is helping students self-disclose when they feel comfortable doing so.

Presentation: Howard County Police Department Training Practices

Lieutenant Lloyd walked through a presentation on the department’s training practices in working with individuals with Autism and IDD.

Following LT Lloyd's presentation, members raised the following questions and comments:

- How many officers are trained in CIT, and is advanced training available?
- How realistic is the training — are real IDD/DD crisis actors used?
- Training only goes so far; what components are missing, given that adult learning is difficult?
- What accountability exists in the field when officers do not follow their training?
- Is there a CIT refresher course, and if so, how often is it provided?
- Why are the highest-risk IDD situations kept away from social workers?

Howard County Disability Inclusion, Safety and Crisis Response Task Force

- Do officers receive implicit bias training? (answered - yes)
- Is there a 911 script for when someone self-discloses?
- Do officers self-identify when they are out of their depth on an incident, and what action is taken when a situation is beyond them?
- Is there a lessons-learned component? This appears to be lacking during after action reviews.
- Do officers self-report issues and go on administrative duty or leave after a crisis situation?
- Are the trainings offered online?
- Why is CIT training completion at 80% and not higher? (answered – goal is 100%; history has shown that training is more successful after 2 years of service; a roll out process)
- What is the protocol for determining whether a weapon situation calls for the Mobile Crisis Team (MCT) or police — based on access, desire, and intent?
- What are the criteria for a caller to go to 911 versus being routed to Grassroots?
- Comment shared that developmental disability behavior is often criminalized.

Mariana Izraelson, Grassroots Crisis Center, briefly shared about the mobile crisis response flow to de-escalate, create a safety plan, and assess whether the situation is safe for MCT to respond; if not, different strategies are used.

Presentation: Health Department / Behavioral Health

The Local Behavioral Health Authority shared a presentation about a 911/988 collaboration, coordinating “warm” transfers between 911 and 988. The presentation noted that:

- An updated MOU is underway to move toward a 3-step CIRC transfer protocol.
- There is a goal to collect data and establish baselines with the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP).
- Clarity that 911 flagging is associated with both an individual’s name and address.
- A goal of the updated protocol is to minimize burden on the PSAP and police.
- Question raised about whether protocol questions could be interpreted differently by Autistic individuals, and how literally answers are given?

Howard County Disability Inclusion, Safety and Crisis Response Task Force

- Opportunity shared about incorporating trauma-informed thinking into the training – e.g., is there training on fight, flight, freeze responses?
- Question raised about if 988 call takers transfer calls back to 911 if the 3-questions are answered positively (answered – yes; but that is not the priority)
- Is a co-responder model used even for high-risk incidents, and is there a full-time Behavioral Health Unit (BHU) that responds?
- What Autism/IDD training do MCT call takers receive? (An answer was provided that trainings are set by Vibrant, the national 988 provider)
- Question asked about who is dispatched first — Grassroots or a beat officer.

Additional Comments

Several task force members called to the importance of talking about breakdowns in the case of Alex LaMorie's death to inform the task force's recommendations. Jill Harrington charged the group with making this a safe space and the need to approach the conversation from a trauma-informed lens.

Tiffany shared that the task force's focus will continue to be on the four areas of the Executive Order, and on developing recommendations in response.

Next Meeting

Tiffany shared that the next task force meeting will be on Monday, August 24th from 12:30p to 4:30p. This will be a hybrid meeting, held in person at the NonProfit Collaborative. Tiffany concluding the meeting.