

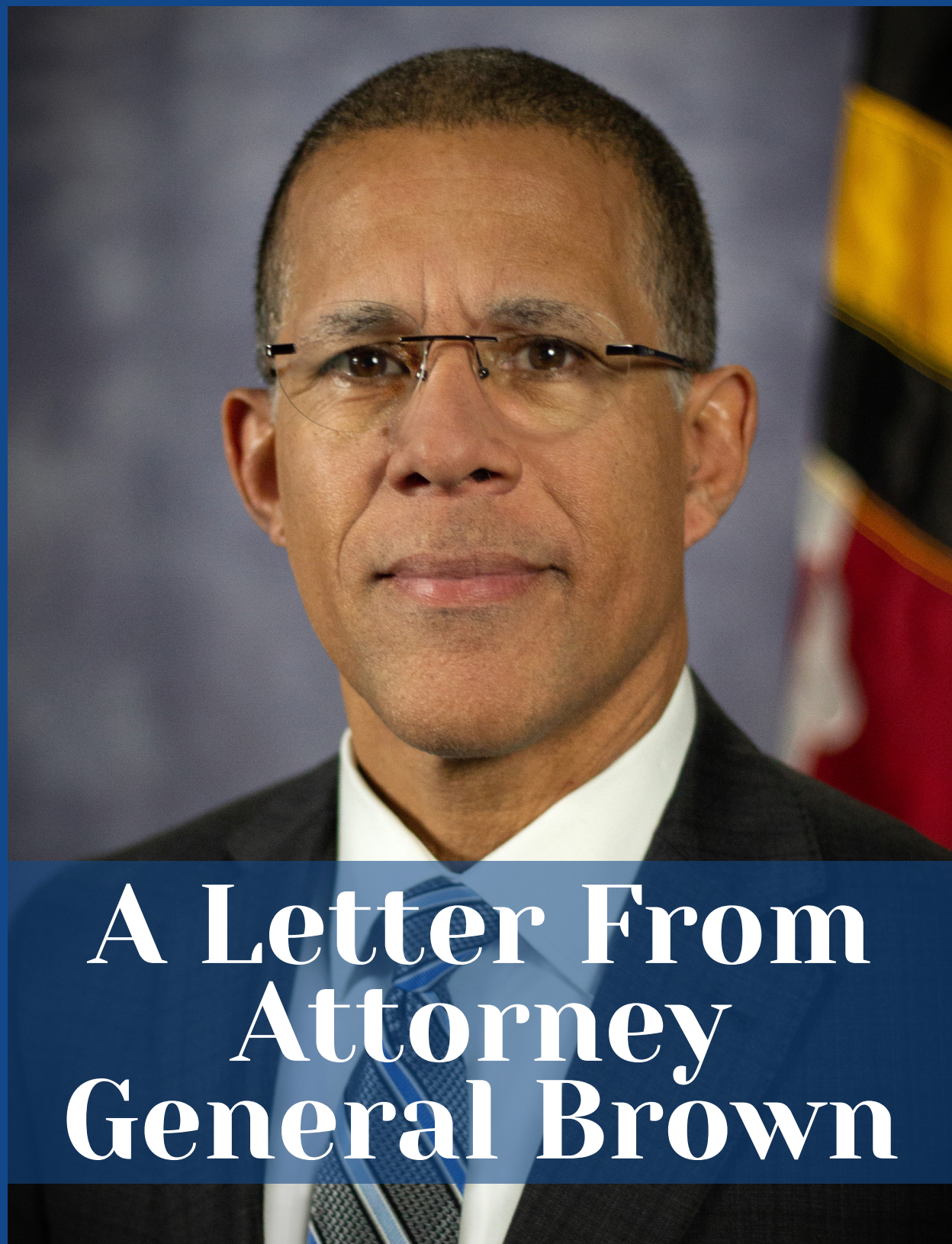


OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL **Strategic Plan**



JANUARY 2025





JANUARY 2025 MARKS THE HALFWAY POINT OF MY FIRST TERM AS YOUR ATTORNEY GENERAL. Since taking office two years ago, we've made many positive changes at the Office of the Attorney General. We expanded our authority to protect and defend the rights of all Marylanders. We improved our organizational efficiency. And we expanded our ability to deliver data-driven results in advising and representing our State government and its agencies.

I am incredibly proud of what our team of 1,000 attorneys and professional staff has accomplished in just two short years. You will see some of those achievements in this document, but there is still much work ahead to make sure Maryland is a more equitable, just, and fair place where everyone—residents, families, and businesses—can prosper.

That is why I am excited to share this Strategic Plan with you. In this document, you will find an overview of our mission, vision, and values, as well as five strategic priorities that my Office is committed to for the remainder of my first term:

- 1. STRENGTHENING PUBLIC SAFETY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT;**
- 2. PROTECTING CONSUMERS, WORKERS, AND PROMOTING FAIR BUSINESS PRACTICES;**
- 3. UPHOLDING CIVIL RIGHTS AND PROMOTING EQUAL JUSTICE;**
- 4. SAFEGUARDING GOOD STEWARDSHIP OF OUR PUBLIC AND NATURAL RESOURCES; AND**
- 5. MODERNIZING THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND IMPROVING ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY.**

This Plan forms the roadmap for the Office of the Attorney General to continue building on the successes of the last two years. In the months and years ahead, we look forward to sharing more details on how we will achieve these goals and deliver on these priorities.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the uncertainty many Marylanders are feeling right now. Please know that my Office stands ready to vigorously protect and defend the rights of every Marylander. As always, we remain steadfastly committed to the just and equitable enforcement of the law and will work to safeguard our State against any challenges that may arise.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "AG Brown".

Anthony G. Brown



Activities and Initiatives To-Date

SINCE TAKING OFFICE ON JANUARY 3, 2023, FOR HIS HISTORY-MAKING FIRST TERM AS MARYLAND'S 47TH ATTORNEY GENERAL, ATTORNEY GENERAL ANTHONY BROWN HAS LED THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (OAG) THROUGH SIGNIFICANT INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES IN SECURING THE RIGHTS OF MARYLANDERS, PROTECTING THE STATE'S INTERESTS, AND MODERNIZING THE OAG. KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PAST TWO YEARS INCLUDE:

CIVIL RIGHTS

- Securing the authority to enforce State and federal anti-discrimination laws and establishing the Civil Rights Division within the OAG.
- Combating discrimination in housing, employment, public accommodations, voting, education, and economic opportunities by launching investigations, filing amicus briefs, and advocating for stronger federal rules – resulting in greater protections for marginalized communities.

PUBLIC SAFETY

- Strengthening partnerships with local, State, and federal law enforcement agencies to enhance public safety and tackle organized crime.
- Removing illegal guns, drugs, and criminal offenders from Maryland's streets while dismantling criminal organizations.

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

- Advocating for, and securing the passage of, critical gun safety laws – including the Gun Industry Accountability Act, which enhances accountability for manufacturers and sellers of firearms.
- Successfully litigating cases in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit to uphold Maryland's gun safety laws, such as the Firearm Safety Act and laws regulating concealed carry permits, and filing actions against gun industry participants to hold them accountable for their role in gun violence.



POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

- Establishing exclusive authority to investigate and prosecute police officers for unlawful conduct in police-involved deaths.
- Conducting multiple cases involving in-custody deaths, excessive use of force, and police pursuits.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

- Establishing the Maryland Equitable Justice Collaborative to address the disproportionate incarceration of Black Marylanders and marginalized groups.
- Advancing reforms through legislative, administrative, budgetary, Court Rule, and policy changes to promote equity and reduce systemic injustice.

ORGANIZATIONAL MODERNIZATION

- Investing in the OAG's 1,000+ professional staff and infrastructure to enhance effectiveness and modernize operations, including creating the Office of Solicitor General and a tort litigation unit with existing resources.
- Establishing a federal accountability unit to protect the interests of Marylanders in response to harmful federal actions.

SUPPORTING SURVIVORS

- Launching Maryland's first Sexual Assault Evidence Kit tracking program to provide survivors of sexual violence with transparency and support.
- Releasing a groundbreaking report detailing decades of clergy abuse in the Baltimore Archdiocese, bringing accountability and justice to survivors.

PROTECTING STATE RESOURCES

- Holding accountable those responsible for the Francis Scott Key Bridge disaster and ensuring the State receives compensation for the damages caused.
- Filing Maryland's first PFAS-related cases, taking legal action to protect public health and the environment from these harmful chemicals.

This work reflects the dedication and diligence of the OAG's attorneys and professional staff. The Office remains committed to serving Marylanders and addressing the challenges facing communities across the State.



ABOUT THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

As the Chief Legal Officer for the State of Maryland, the Attorney General is elected by the citizens of Maryland to supervise and direct the legal business of the State. Under the Attorney General’s leadership, the Assistant Attorneys General and professional staff who comprise the Office of the Attorney General work together to advise and represent the State, its institutions, agencies, boards, commissions, and officials. The Attorney General also enforces and upholds the rule of law, using the authority of the Office to protect Marylanders and promote the public good.

Mission

The Office of the Attorney General advises and represents State government, vigorously enforces the law to safeguard the rights of the people, and promotes justice and equity for all Marylanders.

Vision

We envision a Maryland where our work as a part of State government ensures that:

- Every Marylander lives in a safe, healthy community with equal opportunity and protections under the law;
- Innovation and creativity thrive;
- The justice system is equitable and grounded in fairness and respect so that all individuals, families, and businesses can prosper; and
- Every Marylander, regardless of where they call home, can achieve their fullest potential.

Values

- **COLLABORATION:** We are committed to breaking down siloes by encouraging team work and the free expression of diverse and constructive ideas to achieve the best possible outcomes for the people and agencies we serve.
- **EQUITY:** We strive to foster diversity, equity, and inclusion through our internal practices and by addressing systemic inequities to ensure all Maryland residents have access to justice, security, and prosperity.
- **EXCELLENCE:** We pursue excellence in all that we do and are dedicated to continuously improving our knowledge, skills, and processes to ensure quality and precision in our work.
- **INNOVATION:** We seek creative, cutting-edge, and data-driven solutions to problems by incorporating a diversity of ideas, perspectives, experiences, and expertise in all we do.
- **INTEGRITY:** As public servants, we hold ourselves to the highest standards of ethics and professionalism and work every day to earn the trust and confidence of the people and agencies we serve.
- **LEADERSHIP:** We nurture public servants on their journey to becoming leaders who are ready to tackle the challenges of governing and service to the State and its people.
- **SERVICE:** We work in service to the State of Maryland and its people by safeguarding rights, ensuring fair application of the law, and prioritizing the best interest of the State and its people.

Innovation at the OAG

Attorney General Brown’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion forms the foundation of his approach to innovation. At the Office of the Attorney General, we understand that bringing together diverse stakeholders with unique expertise, experiences, and viewpoints fosters an environment that produces the most effective, cutting-edge, and innovative solutions to the legal and policy challenges our State faces. To further support innovation across the OAG, Attorney General Brown has committed resources to ensuring that all staff have access to leading-edge tools, enabling us to provide the critical legal services that safeguard the rights of Marylanders and support our State government.



Key Investments

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL HAS MADE SEVERAL KEY INVESTMENTS TO ADVANCE THE OAG'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES WHILE SUPPORTING THE DEDICATED PUBLIC SERVANTS WITHIN THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL WORKING ON BEHALF OF ALL MARYLANDERS.

These investments include:

- **INVESTING IN THE RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, DEVELOPMENT, AND WELL-BEING OF THE OAG WORKFORCE:** Attorney General Brown recognizes the importance of a committed, diverse, and talented workforce. To support this aim, he has dedicated time and resources to recruiting and retaining skilled legal professionals and providing opportunities for their ongoing education and growth. This includes advocating for salary increases to keep OAG attorneys and staff competitive with other State employees and the public service legal market; fostering a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion; and offering opportunities to enhance legal expertise and leadership skills. The OAG also invests in future public service attorneys through programs like the Thurgood Marshall Clerkship Program.
- **CAPACITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS TO MODERNIZE THE OAG:** Attorney General Brown recognizes that to effectively support our State government in the 21st century, the OAG must be agile and responsive to rapidly changing challenges. To achieve this, he has invested in data-driven solutions that optimize the use of time and resources. These investments are designed to help the OAG re-imagine how it performs legal work and bring the Office into the modern era, working alongside State agencies to produce the best results for all Marylanders.
- **POLICY INNOVATION:** Attorney General Brown understands that much of the OAG's legal work can be strengthened through more effective, evidence-based policy solutions. To this end, he has made key investments to enhance the OAG's ability to support and advance State policy, as well as develop policy recommendations in partnership with stakeholders and State agencies. By engaging in policy work across the OAG, the Office will be able to promote more expansive and sustainable long-term solutions for all Marylanders.
- **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** Attorney General Brown believes that the best ideas and solutions often come from the communities and experts most directly impacted by the issues at hand. With this in mind, the OAG has made significant investments to strengthen relationships between the communities we serve, key stakeholders, and our Office. This ensures that we are always informed about the challenges facing Marylanders and can work together to find the best solutions.



Our Strategic Priorities

- 1. Strengthening Public Safety And Law Enforcement**
- 2. Protecting Consumers And Workers, And Promoting Fair Business Practices**
- 3. Upholding Civil Rights And Promoting Equal Justice**
- 4. Safeguarding Good Stewardship Of Our Public And Natural Resources**
- 5. Modernizing The Office Of The Attorney General And Improving Organizational Efficiency**





STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: Strengthening Public Safety And Law Enforcement

ENSURING THAT ALL MARYLANDERS LIVE IN SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES IS A TOP PRIORITY FOR THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND THE OAG.

This requires that we advance policies designed to reduce violence in our State and strengthen our communities while supporting our law enforcement partners. This involves both ensuring law enforcement agencies have the resources they need to protect our communities and preventing the misconduct that can harm Marylanders – all with the aim of fostering trust and confidence in our justice system.

TO ACHIEVE THIS STRATEGIC PRIORITY, THE OAG WILL:

- Continue to support gun violence prevention policies and defend the State's gun safety laws that reduce the burden of violence in our communities.
- Strengthen relationships with local, State, and federal law enforcement agencies and provide our support for fair and just law enforcement.
- Continue to provide impartial, comprehensive, and timely investigations into all officer-involved fatalities in Maryland through our Independent Investigations Division.
- Advocate for policies and programs that promote a more equitable justice system for all Marylanders.
- Provide legal counsel and representation to State agencies involved in public safety matters.



THE OAG IS COMMITTED TO CONTINUING ITS LEGACY OF PROTECTING MARYLANDERS IN THE MARKETPLACE, THE WORKPLACE, AND BEYOND.

This commitment includes addressing discrimination and inequities in housing, employment, lending, and other financial services. The OAG also works to foster the conditions that both promote fair business and worker protections *and* allow our economy to thrive so that every resident can achieve their fullest potential.

TO ACHIEVE THIS STRATEGIC PRIORITY, THE OAG WILL:

- Enforce consumer protection laws, including combatting predatory lending.
- Support student loan borrowers in Maryland, including enforcement actions against education scams that target vulnerable Marylanders, and support for federal policies like loan forgiveness.
- Advocate for policies that enhance fair business practices in Maryland and strengthen our economy.
- Hold accountable businesses that engage in unfair practices or anti-competitive tactics that undermine a fair and open marketplace.
- Establish a Worker Protection Unit within the OAG to enforce worker protection laws in collaboration with the Department of Labor.
- Advise State agencies on legal matters to ensure that all State laws and policies designed to protect workers and consumers are achieving their goals on behalf of all Marylanders.

A photograph of construction workers wearing hard hats and safety vests, standing in front of a white vehicle with the number 22029. The image is used as a background for the strategic priority title.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: Protecting Consumers and Workers, and Promoting Fair Business Practices

Equity at the OAG

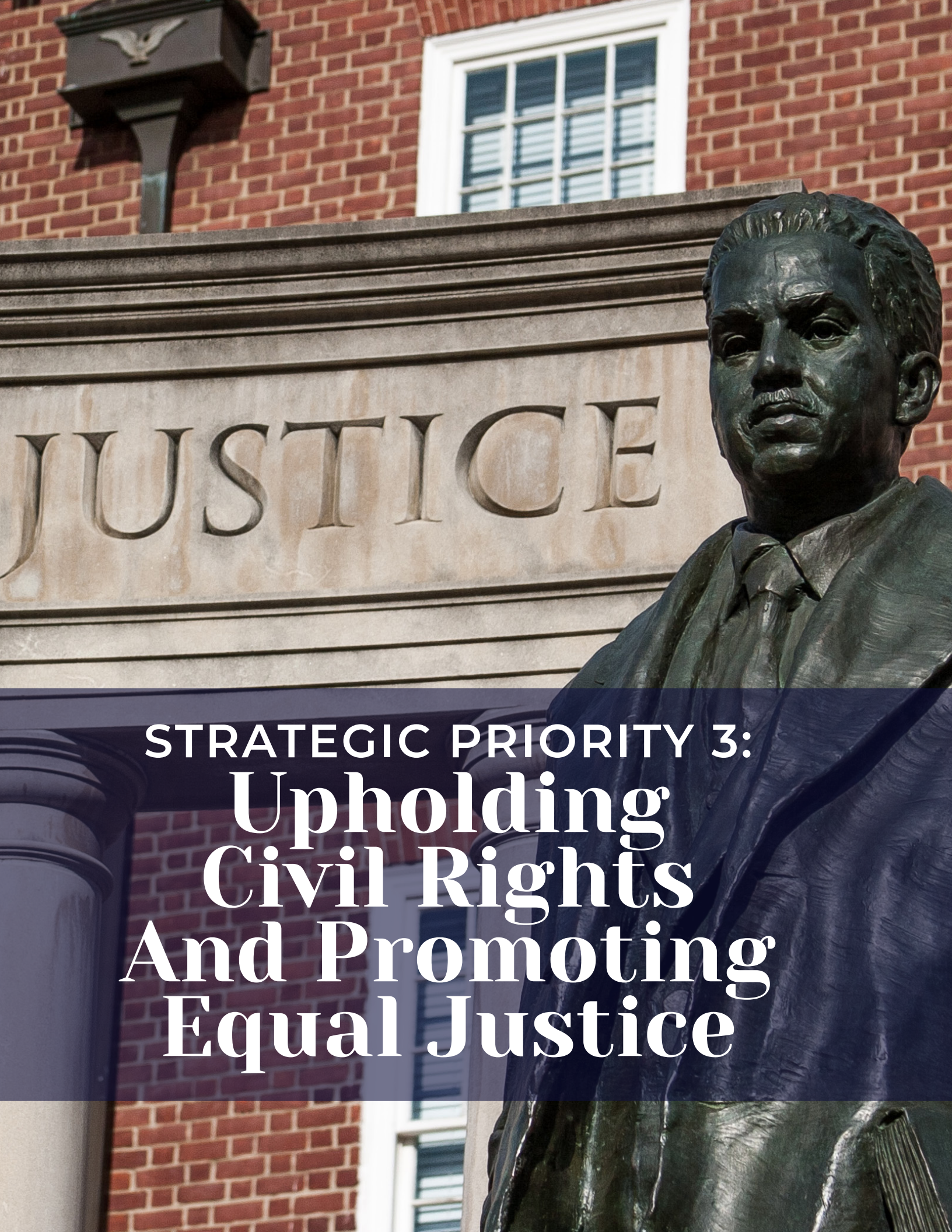
SINCE TAKING OFFICE IN JANUARY 2023, ATTORNEY GENERAL BROWN HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT EQUITY AND JUSTICE ARE TOP PRIORITIES FOR THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL. HE UNDERSTANDS THAT DIVERSE TEAMS, ROOTED IN EQUITY, LEAD TO MORE INNOVATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS FOR THE STATE.

Maryland is the fourth most diverse state in the nation, and Attorney General Brown is committed to creating a justice system that serves every Marylander – no matter who they are, how they identify, where they live now, or where they came from. One that recognizes that people start from different places and have different needs and works to ensure fair and just outcomes for all.

In his historic first term as Maryland’s first Black Attorney General, Attorney General Brown has made significant progress in advancing equity. He established the Office of Equity, Policy, and Engagement within the Executive Division and secured the authority to enforce both State and federal civil rights laws across Maryland. He also launched the Maryland Equitable Justice Collaborative, a transformative initiative focused on meaningful reforms in the criminal justice system. Under his leadership, the OAG is planning an Equity Assessment to ensure that equity is a core consideration in the decision-making processes of every unit and division within the Office.

Attorney General Brown’s commitment to equity is also reflected in his management of the OAG. From day one, he has created a more equitable environment for the over 1,000 attorneys and professional staff who work here. This includes a strong focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Office’s hiring and management practices, and ensuring equitable access to resources and support for all members of the team. Additionally, the Attorney General’s commitment to equity can be found in the advice, counsel, and representation that the OAG provides to its clients as well as in the enforcement actions it takes to protect the rights and interests of all Marylanders.





THE OAG IS COMMITTED TO DEFENDING AND UPHOLDING THE CIVIL RIGHTS OF ALL MARYLANDERS AND TO PROMOTING EQUAL JUSTICE UNDER THE LAW.

The OAG recognizes that the freedoms gained from our nation’s civil rights laws were hard-fought and hard-won and are a testament to our commitment that all people are created equal. We remain committed to building and supporting a justice system that promotes these aims.

TO ACHIEVE THIS STRATEGIC PRIORITY, THE OAG WILL:

- Continue to defend and enforce all State and federal civil rights laws through our newly established Civil Rights Division.
- Address systemic inequities in housing, education, healthcare, and beyond.
- Advocate for vulnerable populations across Maryland and promote policies designed to protect them.
- Ensure equal, and more equitable, access to justice for every Marylander.
- Lead, in partnership with the Maryland Office of the Public Defender, the Maryland Equitable Justice Collaborative to identify and advance reforms to our criminal justice system and reduce the racial disparities found within it.
- Provide legal counsel to State agencies that advances fairness and equity in public policy, programs, and services.
- Advise clients to prevent future discrimination and advocate to remedy the impact of past discrimination against protected classes.

About the Maryland Equitable Justice Collaborative

Established in 2023, the Maryland Equitable Justice Collaborative is dedicated to reducing the mass incarceration of Black Marylanders and other marginalized groups in Maryland’s prisons. The Collaborative brings together experts from the criminal justice system, academia, government, and our communities to identify the underlying causes of mass incarceration and develop a roadmap for reform.

Driven by consensus, the Collaborative released its roadmap of 18 evidence-based recommendations in December 2024. These recommendations form a comprehensive approach to reform and include solutions to the broad-ranging issues that contribute to mass incarceration in fields such as youth justice, successful re-entry, facilities reform, sentencing reform, health and human services, education, workforce development, and economic opportunity.

The Collaborative is a joint initiative led by the Office of the Attorney General and the Maryland Office of the Public Defender in partnership with the Judge Alexander Williams Center for Education, Justice & Ethics at the University of Maryland, College Park, and the Bowie State University Institute for Restorative Justice. The Collaborative’s first full report is scheduled to be published in early 2025.



Civil Rights Division



CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS PROTECT MARYLANDERS FROM DISCRIMINATION, ABUSE, AND HARASSMENT IN MANY ASPECTS OF DAILY LIFE, INCLUDING: HOUSING, WORKPLACES, SCHOOLS, PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS, THE MARKETPLACE, AND VOTING. THESE LAWS ARE ESSENTIAL TO ENSURING FAIRNESS AND DIGNITY FOR ALL AND PROHIBIT DISCRIMINATION BASED ON CHARACTERISTICS SUCH AS RACE, COLOR, RELIGION OR CREED, ANCESTRY OR NATIONAL ORIGIN, SEX, AGE, MARITAL STATUS, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY, AND MENTAL OR PHYSICAL DISABILITY.

Upon taking office in January 2023, Attorney General Brown worked with the Governor and General Assembly to obtain the authority to protect Marylanders' civil rights under State and federal laws. Shortly thereafter, the Attorney General established the Civil Rights Division, which announced its first major case in the summer of 2024. The case involved an abusive landlord on the Eastern Shore who exploited his power to sexually abuse vulnerable women and single mothers in need of housing.

This landmark case represents the beginning of the Division's critical mission. During its first year, the Civil Rights Division initiated several investigations into civil rights violations across Maryland, filed amicus briefs in important cases both in Maryland and nationwide, and actively engaged with the civil rights community. The Division has worked to establish a strong presence throughout Maryland, with a special focus on vulnerable communities – where the need for civil rights protections is greatest.

Our State can rest assured that the Division advances our goal that every Marylander lives free from discrimination and injustice while striving to create a future that is grounded in equity and fairness.


THE OAG RECOGNIZES THAT AMONG OUR STATE'S MOST VALUABLE ASSETS ARE OUR PUBLIC AND NATURAL RESOURCES. Through our work on behalf of State government and all Marylanders, it is our duty to promote and secure the good stewardship and management of these resources to safeguard their long-term sustainability.

TO ACHIEVE THIS STRATEGIC PRIORITY, THE OAG WILL:

- Support State agencies to be effective stewards of public resources through our legal advice, procurement support, and OAG opinions.
- Protect our natural resources through the enforcement of environmental laws.
- Hold polluters accountable through our Environmental Crimes Unit and other divisions and units where appropriate.
- Bring equity to environmental policy and protections with a focus on environmental justice.
- Promote the sustainability of our State's resources through our legal guidance and representation of State agencies on compliance and policy matters.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: Safeguarding Good Stewardship of our Public and Natural Resources



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5: Modernizing the Office of the Attorney General and Improving Organizational Efficiency

THE OAG'S WORK ON BEHALF OF THE STATE AGENCIES AND PEOPLE WE SERVE DEPENDS ON OUR ABILITY TO PROVIDE CUTTING-EDGE SUPPORT AND LEGAL SERVICES. The challenges government faces are more complex than ever, and to keep pace with these demands, the OAG is committed to modernizing our resources and improving our organizational efficiency to produce data-driven, effective solutions for our clients and the public.

TO ACHIEVE THIS STRATEGIC PRIORITY, THE OAG WILL:

- Leverage technology, streamline internal processes, and enhance operational efficiency to improve service delivery.
- Enhance strategic operations by bringing a data-driven approach to the OAG's work.
- Ensure the effective use of public resources.
- Provide timely, high-quality legal advice and representation to State agencies.





Federal Accountability Unit

ATTORNEY GENERAL BROWN IS DEDICATED TO PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF EVERY MARYLANDER – NO MATTER THE SOURCE OF CHALLENGES TO THOSE RIGHTS. IN RESPONSE TO POTENTIAL FEDERAL POLICIES THAT COULD HARM MARYLANDERS OR CONFLICT WITH THE PRIORITIES OF OUR STATE GOVERNMENT AND AGENCIES, ATTORNEY GENERAL BROWN ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION TO ESTABLISH A FEDERAL ACCOUNTABILITY UNIT SHORTLY AFTER THE 2024 ELECTION.

Using authority granted by the General Assembly in 2017 to hold the federal government accountable, this Unit will be ready to challenge any federal actions that threaten the rights and interests of Maryland residents.

Attorney General Brown affirms that Marylanders' reproductive freedoms – recently enshrined in the State Constitution – are secure, along with protections for individuals who may face discrimination based on immigration status, gender identity, or sexual orientation. Additionally, under his leadership, the Office of the Attorney General remains committed to protecting our environment, safeguarding our workplaces and workforce, expanding access to affordable, quality healthcare, and promoting equitable educational opportunities.





Community Engagement

When it comes to solving the complex problems facing our communities and State government agencies, the Office of the Attorney General understands that including the voices and ideas of a broad range of stakeholders, experts, and those with lived experiences that are often marginalized will help us produce the most effective and innovative legal and policy solutions.

Attorney General Brown established the Office of Equity, Policy and Engagement within the OAG which houses a dedicated Community Outreach team that works to build bridges among community members, stakeholders, and the OAG to ensure that every resident and OAG partner has access to the legal resources, services, and educational materials they need.

How Can the OAG Help You?

WHILE THE PRIMARY ROLE OF THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL IS TO PROVIDE LEGAL ADVICE AND REPRESENTATION TO THE STATE AND ITS VARIOUS AGENCIES – AND WE DO NOT REPRESENT INDIVIDUAL MARYLANDERS IN LEGAL MATTERS – WE STILL OFFER A WEALTH OF RESOURCES TO ASSIST MARYLANDERS IN NEED OF LEGAL HELP.

Though we don't represent individuals directly, we can bring enforcement actions to stop illegal conduct when groups of Marylanders have been harmed by the same wrongdoer, whether that be by another person or a business. But to do this, we need to hear from you to understand where and how Marylanders are being harmed. We can also help connect you to additional legal resources and representation throughout the State.

Through our Consumer Protection Division, we also offer mediation support for individuals with complaints against businesses, planned community associations, or their health insurance companies.

Additionally, we host a hate crimes portal and hotline where Marylanders can report hate crimes and hate bias incidents so that we can make referrals to law enforcement for further investigation when appropriate. Please visit <https://nohomeforhate.md.gov/> to learn more or call 1-866-481-8361 to make a report.

For more information about how to report your concerns or access legal support and resources, please visit www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov.

Finally, the Office of the Attorney General has created several guides to help you understand your rights in consumer matters, landlord-tenant disputes, and other legal issues you might face in your day-to-day life. Please visit our website to learn more.



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