

## MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL SERVICES BOARDS 2019 REVERE BANK AWARD FOR INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

### Modern Office Innovation

Baltimore County Health and Human Services (HHS) was created by the Baltimore County Executive in 2013 and brought together several agencies within the county. The Departments of Health, Social Services, Housing, Local Management Board and Human Relations are all now part of Health and Human Services, which touches every citizen in Baltimore County through its array of services and programs, a population of over 800,000. With the integration of these “people centered” departments “under one roof,” the opportunity to modernize and improve services to constituents has become a reality. The ability to serve constituents in a “No Wrong Door” environment has been realized with the implementation in 2019 of our new Modern Office for Health and Human Services.

The Modern Office is comprised of numerous elements that address the physical space, co-location of services, business processes and use of technology. Baltimore County has fully developed its Modern Office environment at the Drumcastle Government Center, which is the headquarters for HHS, and implemented elements of it at our four district offices.

### *Physical Space:*

The Drumcastle Government Center is located at 6401 York Road in Towson Maryland. The building is on the National Historic Registry as it was one of the first suburban department stores, but was purchased by Baltimore County and is now used as a government office building. Over 900 employees work in this building and over 300 clients per day walk through its doors.

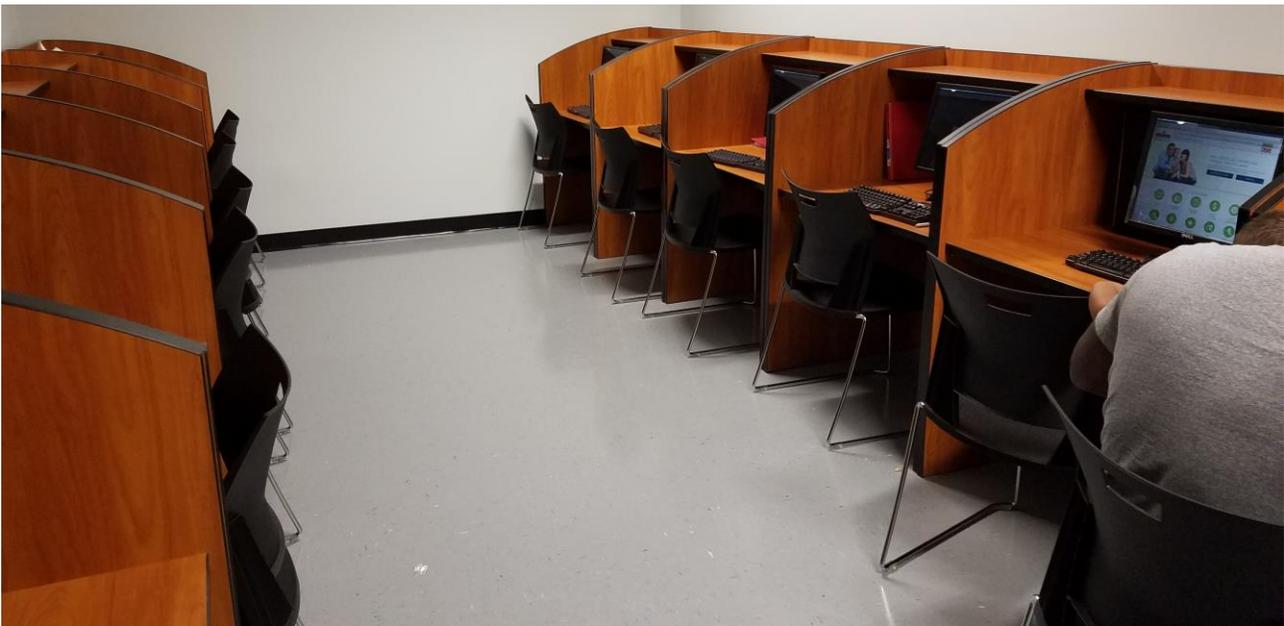


Security was enhanced while also adding open and inviting entrance and waiting areas.





A general reception desk with 9 stations serves customers for a variety of programs.



A computer lab with 21 workstations is available for customers to apply for a variety of programs.

### *Co-Location of Services:*

The creation of HHS brought together the Baltimore County Department of Health, Department of Social Services, Office of Housing, Local Management Board and Human Relations Commission. Together, these agencies offer a wide array of programs and services to Baltimore County constituents, including many of the county's most vulnerable populations. The Modern Office allows Baltimore County to meet many of our client's needs in a one-stop-shop environment. Staff from various programs work side by side at the reception desk and in the interview rooms and customers can easily move between programs to have their needs met.

The Drumcastle Government Center houses programs for low income individuals and families in a single, convenient location. These programs include, but are not limited to:

- Family Investment Program
  - Temporary Cash Assistance
  - Food Supplement Program
  - Medical Assistance
  - Temporary Disability Assistance

- Emergency Assistance
- Public Assistance to Adults
- Housing Programs
  - Housing Choice Vouchers
  - Family Unification Program Vouchers
  - Near Elderly Disabled Vouchers
- Office of Home Energy Programs
  - Maryland Energy Assistance Program
  - Electric Universal Services Program
  - Electric and Gas Arrearage Programs
- Health Programs
  - Maryland Children’s Health Insurance Program
  - Navigators for Affordable Care Act Qualified Health Programs
  - Environmental Health Inspections
- Social Services Programs
  - Adult Protective Services
  - Domestic Violence Referral Program
  - Child Protective Services
- Assistance with Child Care Scholarship applications
- Mainstream Vouchers
- Family Self Sufficiency Program
- Housing Counseling
- Communicable Disease Programs
- Health Care Access and Navigation Programs
- Family Preservation Services
- Foster Care Services
- Family Visitation Service

*Business Processes:*

Serving such a large number of customers each day and through such a wide variety of programs required changes to many business processes. The Modern Office concept included implementing some radically different workflows. Staff at the reception desk share equipment and supplies. They monitor the waiting area to ensure customers are served, regardless of program. Document management, a major challenge for local DSS offices, is coordinated through use of an Enterprise Content Management System, Drop Boxes and a Document Management Center where customers are encouraged to mail, fax or email verification documents. Case workers also share 21 interview rooms, one with an interactive video conferencing system for visual translation services for the hearing impaired, where confidential conversations with customers can take place. Applicants are also directed to computer labs where they can get assistance with filling out various applications on-line.

Customer satisfaction has improved significantly, as evidenced by unsolicited comments posted on the internet. These include:

- “They get you in and out pretty quick!”
- “Pretty quick and convenient. The set up with the computer and having different staff assigned to different specific case topics works!”
- “I like the fact that all the departments of social services are in one location.”
- “Wow, they remodeled and it all works great now!”
- “Fast. Professional. Friendly.”

*Technology:*

Baltimore County Government also purchased intake management software to support the Modern Office. The Q-Flow system, also used by Maryland Vehicle Administration, allows customers to check in at through a kiosk and receive an alpha-numeric ticket indicating their place in the “line” for a particular service. Q-Flow facilitates the expeditious reception, intake and interviewing process the Department now has in place and provide minute-by-minute management information to supervisors,

managers and program administrators regarding wait times for each service, total number of customers served and average length of time of those service interactions.

### Replication

The full Modern Office environment included renovations to existing office space, co-location of various programs and accompanying new business processes, and use of technology. Much of this was accomplished through the generosity of Baltimore County Government who paid for the space planning and renovation costs, as well as purchased the Q-Flow intake management system. The County owns the building and is, in essence, the landlord for the DSS. In a similar vein, some other Baltimore County DSS district offices, of which there are four, have been renovated at no cost to the DSS. The landlords provided much of what was needed in the district offices as part of the lease renewal process. As such, the Modern Office is achievable at very minimal costs if planned effectively. The co-location of services requires partnership with other agencies but can also be accomplished at no cost. Lastly, the technology is readily available in various formats and most local departments already use some version of an intake management system in their offices.