



*Briefing Paper: State Employee Vacancies and the Maryland Budget*

## Support Workers and Agencies in the State Budget

Maryland works because of its state employees. Whether keeping our waterways and roads safe, assuring our drinking water is clean, educating our students with special needs, or working in state hospitals to help our citizens - state employees provide the vital services needed by Maryland residents.

Unfortunately, after eight years of an administration determined to starve our state agencies of resources needed to fulfill our obligations to Maryland residents, nearly every state agency is facing historic employee vacancy rates. Make no mistake: whether it is at the Maryland State Department of Labor, where Marylanders waited months to get the unemployment checks due them, or at the Maryland Department of the Environment, where staffing levels are so low that the Federal EPA has questioned our state's ability to regulate our own water systems, these budget decisions to under-fund and under-staff key Maryland agencies has failed our residents.

With a new administration that recognizes this problem, coupled with a state legislature that has more budgetary authority than it ever has, we can begin to reverse these troubling trends.

The Maryland General Assembly must pass a budget that:

- fully funds and dramatically increases state employee compensation. State employees need to be treated as the professionals they are;
- does NOT cut staff! Too many agencies inexcusably have too many vacant positions and cannot provide high-level services; and
- reverses the trend of chipping away at state employee benefits, so as to show current employees and prospective job candidates that the work of a state employee is valued and appreciated by this state.



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