



## Maryland Department of Health Student Research Projects

### Developmental Disabilities Administration: Four Distinct Projects to Create Tools & Data Dashboards

SUMMER 2026  
May 26 – July 31

*Please read through this document for more information  
on each of the four projects.*

*You must apply to each project separately.*

These projects are being offered through the **University of Maryland Strategic Partnership: MPowering the State** (<http://mpower.maryland.edu>) – a formal collaboration between the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) and the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP). The University of Maryland Strategic Partnership – “MPower”— provides funding for the program.

#### **MDH MISSION**

The mission of the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) is to provide a high-quality and sustainable healthcare system that is equitable and accessible to all. The DDA connects Marylanders with intellectual and developmental disabilities to services that help empower them so they can live the lives they want to live in communities they choose.

The DDA helps people with intellectual and developmental disabilities [get the right services](#) to help them be part of their community. These services can be accessed through [Home and Community Based Medicaid Waiver programs](#) or state funds from the DDA. People who get help from the DDA also get support from their families, community groups, and other programs. To learn more about the DDA, you can click on any of the topics listed below, or [download our printable flyer](#).

#### **OVERVIEW OF FOUR PROJECTS:**

The selected students will collaborate with MDH on four distinct projects with a focus in critical areas. *Click the links below for more details on individual projects.*



- **DDA Project A: National Core Indicators (NCI) Project:**  
Develop dashboards and summaries to analyze and publicly report results of the National Core Indicators (NCI) surveys, benchmarking Maryland’s performance against national standards.
- **DDA Project B: Provider Deficiencies and Plan of Correction Project:**  
Build dashboards to track provider deficiencies, plans of correction, and compliance trends, supporting regulatory oversight and quality improvement.
- **DDA Project C: Suspected Fraud Allegations Project:**  
Create tools to monitor and visualize suspected fraud, waste, and abuse, enhancing transparency and supporting risk management.
- **DDA Project D. Eligibility Dashboard Project:**  
Design a centralized dashboard to track Medicaid and DDA eligibility activities, improving timeliness and accuracy of determinations.

## **ABOUT THE PROJECTS**

The UM Scholar will have the opportunity to work with the DDA to produce functional, user-friendly dashboards, visuals, and data summaries that enhance visibility into key DDA operations — such as National Core Indicators, provider deficiencies and plans of correction, Medicaid and DDA eligibility, and suspected fraud—and support data-driven decision-making within the Developmental Disabilities Administration.

### **Scope of work:**

Across all project themes, the selected UM Scholars will:

- Research existing data sources, track methods, and identify gaps or inconsistencies
- Collaborate with DDA staff, subject matter experts, and relevant teams to define key metrics and reporting requirements
- Develop prototype dashboards and data visualizations using tools such as Power BI, Tableau, or Google Data Studio
- Test data integration and ensure visual accuracy
- Create documentation and user guides for staff
- Present findings and recommendations to program leadership at the end of the internship

**Each project theme may include additional, specialized activities. For full details, please click on the descriptions (above) for Projects A, B, C, and D.**



**Daily activities may include:**

- Building dashboards and visuals
- Meeting with DDA teams (Quality Enhancement, Eligibility, or other relevant staff)
- Collaborating with DDA IT or subject matter experts
- Cleaning and formatting datasets; conducting statistical analysis
- Preparing progress summaries and sharing findings

**Skill development includes:**

- Analytical and critical thinking
- Regulatory and compliance knowledge
- Communication and collaboration
- Process management
- Data management and statistical analysis
- Data visualization and storytelling
- Research interpretation and presentation
- Technical/data skills (e.g., Power BI, Tableau)

**IDEAL CANDIDATE**

This project is ideal for a student who is innovative and creative, with skills related to research, data analysis, and creating dashboards, graphics, and reports. The ideal candidate will also have an interest in public health data systems, health policy, or information management.

**Preferred qualifications include:**

- Experience with Excel, Power BI, Tableau, or other data visualization tools
- Strong analytical and problem-solving skills
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Attention to detail and ability to work independently or in a team setting

*Familiarity with Medicaid programs or eligibility workflows is a plus but not required.*

**ELIGIBLE STUDENTS**

Students may come from UMCP's College of Behavioral & Social Sciences, College of Computer, Mathematical, and Natural Sciences, James A. Clark School of Engineering, School of Public Policy, School of Public Health, or Robert H. Smith School of Business, and UMB's School of Social Work or School of Graduate Studies.



## **PROJECT LOCATION**

**The projects will be delivered in hybrid format;** Remote and in-person.

When in person, this is the address that students will report to:

MDH State Center  
201 W. Preston Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Mentor and student should discuss delivery details during the interview, including method (in-person, hybrid, or remote), expectations, location, and meeting frequency. Flexibilities to complete the 10 weeks of research may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## **PROJECT LEADS/PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS**

### **A. National Core Indicators (NCI) Project**

**Project Lead:** La’Kisha Alvarado, QIO Program Manager II

**Office Address:** 201 W. Preston Street 4th floor Baltimore, Maryland 21201

**Email Address:** [Lakisha.alvarado@maryland.gov](mailto:Lakisha.alvarado@maryland.gov)

**Phone Number:** (410) 274-2775

### **B. Provider Deficiencies and Plan of Correction Project**

**Project Lead:** Nicole Kropfelder, Division Chief of Quality Enhancement

**Office Address:** 201 W. Preston Street 4th floor Baltimore, Maryland 21201

**Email Address:** [Nicole.Kropfelder1@maryland.gov](mailto:Nicole.Kropfelder1@maryland.gov)

**Phone Number:** (410) 456-8257

### **C. Suspected Fraud Allegations Project**

**Project Lead:** Nicole Kropfelder, Division Chief of Quality Enhancement

**Office Address:** 201 W. Preston Street 4th floor Baltimore, Maryland 21201

**Email Address:** [Nicole.Kropfelder1@maryland.gov](mailto:Nicole.Kropfelder1@maryland.gov)

**Phone Number:** (410) 456-8257



#### **D. Eligibility Dashboard Project**

**Project Lead:** Ama Owusu-Donkor, DDA Division Chief of Eligibility

**Office Address:** 201 W. Preston Street Baltimore, Maryland 21201

**Email Address:** [ama.owusu-donkor@maryland.gov](mailto:ama.owusu-donkor@maryland.gov)

**Phone Number:** (443) 235-5802

**More than one student will be considered for this project.**

#### **PROJECT REQUIREMENTS:**

- 10 weeks/400-hour student research project conducted with schedule mutually defined and agreed upon by the student and mentor.
- The project is funded by the [University of Maryland Strategic Partnership: MPowering the State \(MPower\)](#) and is a part of the [UM Scholars program](#).
- The selected student will receive a stipend for their work, to be paid in multiple installments over the 10 weeks.
  - **\$5,500** for undergraduate students
  - **\$6,500** for graduate students
- Work is expected to occur during typical business hours; Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm.
- To be eligible, the student must be enrolled in the Fall 2026 semester.
- Travel to and parking at the MDH is the responsibility of the student and costs are included in the stipend.

**Please click the link to the application below. You will be required to apply to each of the four distinct projects.**

**[APPLY HERE](#)**