

State of Maryland Interagency Commission on School Construction

Capital Improvement Program Instructions for Submission



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Photo: Lake Clifton Park Building, Baltimore City Schools, MCN Build, Judy Davis

Please note that these instructions are regularly updated for accuracy, process changes, and streamlining. Users of this document are strongly encouraged to access the most recent version on the IAC's website to ensure that the most updated guidance is used.

Record of Changes

Version	Description	IAC Approval Date
1.0	Initial Adoption for the FY 2025 CIP	7/13/2023
1.1	Updates Submission Method from SharePoint to LEA Upload Form	N/A
1.2	Administrative updates to reflect BMS submission method and to make the instructions FY-agnostic.	7/11/2024
1.3	Clarify submission format requirements in Section 16.	N/A
2.0	Removes guidance recorded in the new IAC APG, clarifies submission requirements in the BMS, and condenses duplicate information.	7/17/2025
2.1	Updates to reflect statutory changes that remove the 75% CIP approval and add reports in November, December, and January; revisions to the BMS Project Creation and CIP Application Development processes; and formatting and structure changes.	7/16/2026

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The IAC's [Administrative Procedures Guide \(APG\)](#) provides a detailed summary of the regulations, policies, and procedures used by the IAC to determine project eligibility for most of the IAC's programs, including the Capital Improvement Program. Please see the APG for general requirements — including a glossary of terms, portfolio level policies and tools, design submissions, updates to the IAC's Facility Inventory Database, and other important information.

1. Purpose

The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is governed by Title 5, Subtitle 3 of the Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland and COMAR 14.39.02. CIP funding can be used for new, renewal, and replacement projects as well as for renovation projects or capital maintenance projects (systemic renovations). Please see the [Administrative Procedures Guide \(APG\)](#) and applicable COMAR sections at the [Division of State Documents website](#) for specific information on project execution.

These instructions have been modified to serve as the guide for submitting CIP applications and include the preliminary LEA CIP funding targets and the Enrollment Growth and Relocatable Classroom (EGRC) funding summary for eligible Local Education Agencies (LEAs). The annual CIP Notice which contains pertinent information specific for this CIP cycle is available along with past annual memos and instructions on the [IAC's website](#).

2. Timeline

Refer to the relevant [fiscal year notice](#), which follows this general schedule:

March/April

- Department of Planning validates projected enrollments for each LEA

July

- LEAs submit Educational Facilities Master Plans to IAC
- IAC publishes CIP Instructions
- CIP Application Development Process Open for the applicable fiscal year

September

- Schematic Design submissions due to IAC

October

- LEAs submit CIP requests
- LEAs submit Comprehensive Maintenance Plans

November

- Design Development submissions due
- IAC staff forwards first round of preliminary draft recommendations to IAC
- Last date for receipt of LEA CIP amendments and local government assurances for support
- IAC staff issues CIP project-request status reports to LEAs and counties by November 30

December

- IAC hears staff recommendations
- IAC staff issues CIP project-request status reports to LEAs and counties by December 31

January

- IAC staff issues CIP project-request status reports to LEAs and counties by January 31

February

- IAC meeting to adopt preliminary awards for 90% of funding available in the submitted capital budget

May

- IAC meeting to approve awards of 100% of funding available in the enacted capital budget

June-July

- IAC releases final CIP publication

3. BMS Project Creation

Projects that do not yet exist in the BMS must have a [Project Creation BMS process](#) submitted with sufficient time for IAC staff processing (up to two business days), subsequent LEA submission of the CIP Application Development BMS process, and LEA submission of the resulting CIP application process. We strongly encourage submission of the Project Creation BMS process ASAP to avoid delays.

4. CIP Application Development BMS Process

Starting with the FY 2028 cycle, the CIP Application Development process (CADP) serves as the electronic equivalent of the majority of the legacy 102 series forms. This automated workflow allows LEAs to calculate estimated Maximum State Awards, prepare preliminary CIP applications, produce reports, and collaborate with IAC staff, including receiving feedback on draft data. This BMS process can be initiated throughout the year and is designed to support the iterative nature of the CIP development. Within the process is an LEA Hold Step which allows for reporting and local review, including the generation of project specific reports in order to share process information with local stakeholders and decision-makers who do not actively work in the BMS. Upon finalization of local requests the LEA should execute the CADP submission of all projects the LEA intends to move forward into their final CIP request by the October due date set each year in the relevant fiscal year notice to the LEA. This will automatically initiate a CIP application request and transfer all application data to generate the final Capital Improvement Program application for the relevant fiscal year. For detailed information regarding the CADP and CIP application process, see the applicable [BMS user guide](#) or contact IAC staff at iac.pscp@maryland.gov or the LEA's assigned Capital Project Manager for assistance.

5. Application Submission

Projects requested in the CIP shall be consistent with the priority and needs described in the Educational Facilities Master Plan, which is submitted annually in July.

LEAs should consult with their assigned Capital Projects Manager to determine if a site visit for a project is necessary. Outside of the CIP cycle, IAC staff will generally request site visits for major capital projects when in the Feasibility Study phase.

A full CIP application from an LEA consists of CADP submissions for each project, subsequent CIP Funding Application process submissions for each project, and submission of general CIP documentation via the CIP Front End Upload process on the LEA's Global Project. A complete CIP submission includes BMS submissions for front end documentation as well as application initiation for individual projects in accordance with the submission checklist below.

CIP Submission Checklist

Front End Documentation

- ☐ When all individual project requests are submitted, the LEA should upload general CIP documentation to the CIP Front End Upload process in the BMS, including the LEA-wide Forms 102.4-102.6 in Excel format and one PDF that includes:
 - ☐ Summary of FY requests (which can be generated via various BMS reports)
 - ☐ Record of Board of Education action approving the CIP request
 - ☐ Signed Letter(s) from local government (County or Baltimore City) stating local financial support for the projects included in the CIP request

Individual Project Requests

- ☐ For each individual project request:
 - ☐ Upload a draw schedule including all project expenditures shown separately for each funding source.
 - ☐ If more than one project is submitted for the same facility, cross reference the projects by priority number and project type (e.g. "See Priority #X - Roof Replacement"), clearly indicate why they are submitted as separate projects rather than as a single project, and explain whether or not there is a preference for the projects to be funded together and whether they will be awarded under a single or multiple contracts.
- ☐ For all projects that would impact floor plans, include a proposed floor plan of the school if available.
- ☐ For projects including CTE spaces, upload a letter of support from the MSDE Senior Executive Director of MSDE's Division of College and Career Pathways.
- ☐ For projects including regional special education program space(s), upload a letter of support from the MSDE Assistant State Superintendent of the Division of Special Education.
- ☐ For any project subject to the Safe Walk to Schools Act (Educ. Art., § 5-329, Annotated Code of Maryland), upload a Pedestrian Safety Plan in accordance with the Safe Walk to Schools Act of 2022.
- ☐ For capital maintenance (systemic renovation) and renovation projects:
 - ☐ Verify that the project information corresponds to information provided in the Comprehensive Maintenance Plan submitted in October of the application year
 - ☐ Identify proposed work ineligible for state funding
 - ☐ Provide the age of building system(s) or the age and number of units
 - ☐ Identify specific areas of the building where work will not be done or will be locally funded
 - ☐ For projects that include roof replacement:
 - ☐ Submit the three most recent annual roof inspection reports;
 - ☐ Address how the ¼ inch per square foot slope requirement will be met; and
 - ☐ Provide roof plans of the entire school that indicate the existing type and slope of each section.
- ☐ An LEA requesting the Net-Zero School State-Share Add-On, which results in a 5% increase to the State cost share for eligible projects, must submit the NZE Add-On Request Form at each design submission, including Ed Specs, SDs, DDs, and CDs and upload the latest form as part of the CIP application.

6. Communication Requirements

All application submission-related documents must be submitted via the BMS. Emails or other methods of communication will not be accepted in lieu of official BMS process submissions.

Some documents are required to be submitted in PDF format. PDF documents should provide a table of contents, bookmarks, and consecutive page numbers.

In order to facilitate timely review, it is imperative that LEAs respond to requests for information from the IAC in a timely manner. Requests for information will be sent via the IAC's BMS. Requests for Comments or requests for information sent via the LEA's "**Initiator Revise**" step must be responded to within 3 business days. Responses required in the LEA's "**LEA Issues Response**" step must be responded to within 5 business days. Failure to respond within the above timeframes may result in a project being determined to be ineligible for funding.

7. Amendments to CIP Requests

Amendments to an LEA's pending request for the current CIP application year must be submitted by the date identified on the CIP schedule. Submit amendments only for those projects for which information has changed; do not resubmit supporting documentation unless it has changed.

Amendments must include verification that the Board of Education supports the revised priorities. If the amendments include projects not included in the original request or include projects whose nature and/or scope have changed significantly, the amendments must include an updated letter of support from the County or City government. The letter of support and other documents must be uploaded separately to ensure that local Board of Education and local government support is properly documented and must be received by the amendment submission date identified on the CIP schedule. For demonstration of Board of Education support, a cover letter signed by the Superintendent certifying that the local board approval has taken place is sufficient along with the date of approval. The letter of support from the local government must address all amended and unchanged project requests.

Amendments to a CIP year that have already been approved by the IAC may be requested at any time (including immediately following the closure of a CIP cycle year). New project requests must be submitted in the BMS. Revisions to projects already submitted should be provided to the IAC via a letter sent to iac.pscp@maryland.gov and copied to the assigned Capital Projects Manager.

After review of amendment requests, the LEA will be informed of IAC staff recommendations and IAC action. Opportunities for the LEA to appeal before the IAC are the same as for the normal CIP approval process.

8. Cost per Square Foot

The cost per square foot for each calendar year is set by the IAC in July of the prior year. The approved costs per square foot for building only and for building plus site development are published [on the IAC website](#). The cost per square foot for a project is set at first-time construction funding as described in [APG section 3.L](#).

9. Planning Requests

Requests for planning approval must be submitted for all projects except capital maintenance projects, open space enclosures, and small additions. Requests for planning and funding may be submitted in the same year.

Planning requests typically will not be evaluated or recommended for approval prior to the 100% IAC approval in May. State funding commitments to, and progress of, the LEA's currently active previously approved projects will be considered when evaluating additional requests for planning approval.

10. Funding Requests

Funds may be requested for **planning development and design** prior to meeting the necessary project progress requirements that are required for local planning or construction funding approval.

For **forward-funded projects**, the factors (enrollment, square feet per student, cost per square foot) that were in effect on the date of the project's bid opening should be used. LEAs should contact IAC staff with any questions about specific factors.

11. Funding Factors

See the [IAC's APG](#) for the funding methodology for new, replacement, and renewal projects and specific phase requirements for each of the following:

- Gross Area Baselines
- Eligible Enrollment
- Cost per Square Foot

12. Eligible and Ineligible Items, Expenditures, and Projects

Projects eligible under the CIP include all facilities owned by local boards that are used primarily for educational purposes, including charter schools, facilities owned by a private entity under an alternative financing arrangement, or a lease that meets the requirements in the IAC's Leased Facilities Policy, which can be found in Appendix C of the APG, and projects in the Baltimore City 21st Century Schools (formerly 10-Year) Plan, as established by 2013 Md. Laws, Ch. 647. For the complete listing of eligible and ineligible project classifications please review the [IAC's APG](#).

13. Project Evaluation

To ensure data used in the evaluation of funding requests is completely finalized, the following data will be used:

- Enrollment: MSDE-audited and approved September enrollment count data from September 30 of the calendar year preceding the calendar year in which applications are due, as published in MSDE's State Aid to Local Education Agencies publication.
- Concentration of Poverty (CPG): The MSDE CPG data finalized most recently prior to July 1 of the calendar year in which applications are due.
- Maintenance Effectiveness Assessment (MEA): Data finalized by the end of the fiscal year preceding the October in which applications are due (i.e., for the FY 2026 CIP, applications were due in October 2024 so MEA data finalized as of June 30, 2024 were used).

- Statewide Facilities Assessment: Same method as MEA data.

Requests for prekindergarten classrooms may take priority over other requests outside of the LEA's requested priority order. Prioritization of prekindergarten classrooms will occur within each LEA's target allocations, and the IAC will prioritize prekindergarten requests for local planning and for early planning and design or construction funding, in accordance with Education Article §7-1A-07, Annotated Code of Maryland.

Funding for the current Fiscal Year CIP cycle that is projected at the 90% stage in February is an estimate which will not be finalized until the 100% approval in May when the Capital Budget has been finalized.

For forward funded projects, the data used will be based upon the bid date of the projects rather than the fiscal year of the request.

14. Project Approvals

Each project submitted in the CIP will be assigned a project review status. Statuses will be revised throughout the CIP process until final approvals are made on or after May 1. Prior to preliminarily approving project funding requests in the 90% round, the IAC will provide to LEAs and counties three CIP project-request status reports:

- On or before November 30 each year, a report containing the following information for each project that a LEA has requested for State funding in the Capital Budget:
 - Status of the request; and
 - If available, the Maximum State Award estimated or approved by the IAC.
- On or before December 31 and January 31 each year, a report containing the following information for each project that a LEA has requested for State funding in the Capital Budget Bill:
 - Status of the request;
 - If available, the Maximum State Award estimated or adopted by the IAC; and
 - The projected 100% CIP award.

The IAC will approve the Capital Improvement Program in stages as shown in the updated CIP Application Schedule. On or before March 1 each year, the IAC shall provide recommendations to the presiding officers and the budget committees of the General Assembly and the Department of Legislative Services for public school construction projects that comprise 90% of the school construction allocation included in the capital budget submitted by the Governor for the following fiscal year. Approval of 100% of the approved appropriation will take place after May 1. Opportunities for the LEA to appeal the CIP are scheduled annually. Additionally, CIP decisions can be appealed at any time consistent with the IAC appeal process pursuant to Section 2.L. of the APG.

Project Review Status Definitions

A - Recommended for approval: All IAC and LEA staff questions, problems, and comments have been resolved and the project is eligible and recommended for IAC approval of the requested type (design/planning funding, planning, or construction funding).

B - Deferred but eligible: All IAC and LEA staff questions, problems, or comments have been resolved and the project is eligible for planning or funding, but it has been deferred due to State fiscal constraints in the current fiscal year or related to funding commitments for future years. **The project is not approved by the IAC.**

C - Deferred and not currently eligible for a planning or funding approval due to unresolved issues: Outstanding issues may be of a technical or other nature and may include but are not necessarily limited to: lack of an acceptable feasibility study, capacity/enrollment, scope, or project schedule; the LEA's ability to carry out a large number of projects; lack of maintenance for the requested component or system; concerns regarding estimated cost or calculation of State or local funds; lack of commitment of local funds; submission or clarification of Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) documentation or process; review of alternative solutions available; lack of site approval; pending waiver regarding location outside of a Priority Funding Area; lack of supporting documentation; master plan inconsistency; and pending approvals by other agencies. These issues may be resolved at any time prior to final approval of the CIP by the IAC.

D - Denied and not eligible for planning or funding approval: Due to the nature of the project, it is ineligible for State participation. Reasons for ineligibility include but are not limited to: the project scope does not fit within an approved category of State-eligible CIP projects; local fiscal support was not provided or was withdrawn after the date established by the IAC; the project does not meet minimum State requirements for cost or scope; the facility is too new or was too recently renovated; the project was funded through another program or the funds are not required; MBE procedures were not followed in the procurement of the project; the LEA proceeded to construction prior to State approval (certain capital maintenance (systemic) projects); enrollment projections do not justify the project; the future of the facility is uncertain; or the facility has not been adequately maintained.

U - Deferred and currently has outstanding IAC staff issues that will need to be resolved by a date determined by the IAC Designees: Funding is shown within the Total Projected Allocation column for projects with this status and is contingent upon resolution of pending issues.

15. CIP Publication and Project Execution

Final details of CIP approvals are available in the May IAC Meeting Agenda and subsequently in the [IAC's CIP](#) publication, which is posted to the website in the summer.

For information regarding project execution, including IAC contract approval, payment and reimbursement requests, and closeout procedures, see the [IAC's APG](#).

16. LEA Appeals of Staff Recommendations

If the IAC staff does not recommend approval of an LEA's specific request for planning or funding of a project, the LEA may submit to the Executive Director a written request for a hearing to take place at the first meeting of the IAC to take place between 30 to 45 days after receipt of the request by the Executive Director. The request shall explain all of the LEA's reasons for disagreeing with the IAC staff's recommendation. The LEA shall provide to IAC staff any supporting documentation that may be requested.

17. Funding Considerations

Detailed information on design submissions, Cooperative Use Space, Career and Technical Education, regional Special Education, and Pedestrian Safety Plans can be found in the [IAC's APG](#).

18. Significant Enrollment Growth and Relocatable Classroom (EGRC) Funding

LEAs are eligible for EGRC funding if their enrollment growth is significant (150% of the statewide average growth over five years) or if they utilize a significant number of relocatable classrooms (averaging 250 or more over five years).

EGRC funding is allocated per a statutory formula. LEAs eligible for EGRC funding will be notified in each year's CIP Notice.