
CITY OF BALTIMORE

Brandon M. Scott – Mayor
Zeke Cohen – Council President



Office of Council Services

Nancy Mead – Director
100 Holliday Street, Room 415
Baltimore, MD 21202

EDUCATION, YOUTH, & OLDER ADULTS COMMITTEE

The Honorable John Bullock
CHAIR

HEARING NOTES

Bill: 25-0100

Title: Children and Youth Fund - Updates

Hearing Date: 2/12/2026

Hearing Start Time: 12:35 PM

Hearing End Time: 2:32 PM

Location: Du Burns Council Chamber / Webex

Total Estimated Attendance: around 12 people

Committee Members in Attendance:

- **Chair** John Bullock
 - Sharon Green Middleton
 - Zac Blanchard
 - Odette Ramos
 - **Vice Chair** Mark Parker
 - James Torrence
 - Jermaine Jones
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MAJOR SPEAKERS

(This is NOT an attendance record.)

- **Alysia Lee, President and CEO of the Baltimore Children and Youth Fund**
 - **Jeffrey Hochstein, Law Department**
 - **Ty'lor Schnella, Mayor's Office of Government Relations**
 - **Representative from the Comptrollers Office**
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NOTES

- Chair Bullock introduced the hearing and bill 25-0100; Children and Youth Fund – Updates
- Chair Bullock gave the floor to Vice Chair Parker. Where he gave remarks on the amendments and the collaboration on it
 - The Vice Chair then broke down each amendment [break down amendment]
 - The Vice Chair walked through what the bill will look like as amended
 - Started with fiscal sponsorship
 - Moved on to the grant process and procedure – the law department brought up the charter framework which states that the city council by ordinance is responsible for identifying the methods and criteria for allocating available funds

- Reports from grantees that are required – two aspects (cadence report which is quarterly) this gives broad flexibility and BCYF have authority to request fiscal when they see fit
 - Audits (3 year audits) – takes the general power and from the request of the comptroller it will happen every 3 years
 - Board of Directors – full board shall not be less than 20 and 31(larger board helps it to be more completely engaged and that there are enough space for youth leaders)
 - Currently there are 13 board members
 - Other changes is that there is a seat reserved for the youth commission (voted on by the commission)
 - Adjustment to language to reflect the diversity of the city – the board shall reflect the racial demographic of the city
 - Youth waiver is strengthened so that it is harder to have a waiver is harder to achieve for a youth on the board – if there are ever fewer than 2 youth members, they must notify the BOE immediately and address it within 90 days
 - Ethics procedures
 - Annual financial plan – two aspects
 - Breaks up the public engagement – sets aside 2% for the community grant review process
 - The board may not award grants to anyone that has not followed the procedures established under the bill
- Councilman Torrence asked the Vice Chair how the public process will go, some applications/business finances are not allowed to be shared publicly
 - The Vice Chair stated that the Process that itself is publicly understood not that every part of the process is public
 - The Vice Chair continued with the amendments and mentioned that BCYF had an invitation only process and the Law department stated that with public funds there cannot be an invitation process
 - Jeffrey Hotchstein from the Law Department mentioned about the public process portion
 - Councilman Torrence responded stating that there are a couple problems within this bill that there should be more time taken, an example was the “money grab that the comptroller office states they need to complete audits, when they have the staff currently to complete the audits”
 - The Vice Chair continued with the amendment with the final piece of annual reports in a public hearing
 - Right now March 31 is the deadline for BCYF to present in front of the council where the previous fiscal year will be sent and included in apart of their report
 - No later than () shall be sent to the council president and council members
 - The role of the department of finance must also report back to the mayor and city council for the past year, how they were disrupted, etc.

- The Vice Chair also added that there was a clean up portion of separating the BCYF which is strictly the fund compared to the BCYF inc.
- Councilman Torrence asked about the youth commission, that if the commission cannot meet the required number the council can add the youth and have them trained before they are on the board
- Councilman Jones asked where the percentage of the fund of the Baltimore City Youth Works 20%
- Alisha Lee, President of the BCYF began her presentation findings of a legislative impact survey that will offer practical recommendations
 - 89% agree detailed requirements in City law would make it harder for BCYF to improve grant processes over time – Recommendation: Keep operational grant procedures governed through the MOU + BCYF policies, not City Code Legislation should set guardrails and principles, not step-by-step operations
 - 91% agree fixed timelines and communications rules would make it harder to run flexible programs like YEPP – Recommendation: Explicitly preserve flexibility for youth-centered programs. Avoid statutory timelines that restrict program design
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- The chair opened up for questions
- Councilman Torrence proposed as an alternative that the grant making process go through the BOE and then the council votes – may slow down the process but keeps it public
 - They would move it as resolution – which would then become an official policy for BCYF
 - Vice Chair Parker responded stating that by the Charter the Council cannot legally delegate the Fund to share their grant making process
 - Councilman Torrence responded and stated that his concern is not the allocation but with the grant making process
 - If they get audited BCYF can state that they followed the process that was approved by the council and mayor
- The Youth Fund (Lee) has issue with the methods within the bill – i.e. grant application process. Also experience for a leader being a criteria is an issue relating to equity. Should the council create a grants manual? Find a way that shows the council wants a process that's transparent, etc.
 - Vice Chair Parker stated he is opened to an amendment
- Councilman Blanchard asked if the bill sponsor was interested in th
 - Vice Chair Parker responded that the community review process takes time and is not a quick response mechanism.
 - Ms. Lee stated not all of the organizations need community review process like a sports program (charm city youth athletics)
- Councilman Jones asked about the survey, was this post or pre amendments
 - Post, sent a survey at last Thursday
 - Councilman Jones followed up with how many people completed the survey
 - Response was about 50% of their grantees
 - Councilman Jones suggested the general public should be surveyed to give more input

- Response was that a difference survey would have to be sent since the questions asked in this survey related to the process
- Vice President Middleton asked about the grant reviewers, who are they comprised of?
 - Young people are about 30% that are not board members, current grantees like staff – the rest are community members that have people who are knowledgeable
 - Vice President Middleton asked if they ever considered an elected official to be apart of the reviewers
 - They stated they would love it
- Councilwoman Ramos asked the law department, what exactly it means that the ordinance is where the operational piece comes from – talk a little bit more that this operation piece needs to be an ordinance
 - Jeffrey Hochestein from the Law department responded stating that the original draft of the bill requiring fiscal sponsorship is why this was stated. Also stated that now this bill is on the opposite side of the spectrum and there is not much operational aspect from the council. There needs to be a balance
- Councilman Torrence stated that what he wanted to do was have an ordinance for the policy change and have the public comment on it and make it a public process. This is hindering marginalized people who need access to these funds. There needs to be a balance that respects the history. The focus needs to be on the operation and if they do not follow the operation the council can come in and fix it
- Chair Bullock stated that the committee needs to focus on what challenges are they trying to address.
- Councilwoman Ramos asked the comptrollers office about what the actual amount would be needed just for the BCYF, not a whole group of audits needing to be done. Councilman Torrence: Full breakdown of salary, staff assistant, auditor 1 and 2, potential cost would be
 - Formal Committee request
- Councilwoman Ramos asked MOGR if they will be in charge of getting everyone together to work on
 - Ty’lor Schnella response from MOGR was that they will get in contact with the sponsor
- Vice Chair Parker will present the bill to the board by the end of the month, and there will be another working session with that is with grantees and maybe board members with Vice Chair Parker (the Vice Chair has not committed to this working session)
- Councilman Blanchard asked for BCYF to set up a time to walk through the current grant procedures
 - BCYF suggested there also be a rules and regulation conversation that they are working with DOF with
- Councilman Torrence asked if he can see a copy of their contracts to their grantees
 - The councilman suggest for the committee to look into best practices

- Chair Bullock stated there should be additional time and they can come back and vote on certain things, also have smaller meetings so everyone can state where they stand
 - Vice Chair Parker stated that procedurally it would be helpful to differentiate between the amendments that are in a good place but other amendments that need to be re-evaluated
- Chair Bullock asked if that are any amendments that Mayors office and BCYF are on board with
 - As of right now there is no amendment where are everyone is on board with, they would need to go line by line
- The Vice Chair stated there are amendments he is willing to work on with and will update the committee of the conversations and where things are going
- Chair Bullock stated he will like this bill to come back when it is ready to be voted on

FURTHER STUDY REQUESTED

2/12/2026

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Ramos

- Hearing Packet in bill file? ----- YES NO N/A**
- Attendance Sheet in bill file?----- YES NO N/A**
- Agency reports read? ----- YES NO N/A**
- Hearing televised or audio-digitally recorded? ----- YES NO N/A**
- Certification of advertising/posting notices in the bill file? ----- YES NO N/A**
- Evidence of notification to property owners in bill file? ----- YES NO N/A**

Notes by: Juliane Jemmott
Notes Date: 2/12/2026

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