**The Maryland Longitudinal Data System (MLDS) Center Research Branch**

**Leveraging Statewide Linked Administrative Data for Decision-Making in Maryland**

**Introduction**

Housed at the University of Maryland School of Social Work, the [MLDS Center](https://mldscenter.maryland.gov/welcome-index.html) research branch provides research and statistical expertise in the linkage, use, and dissemination of research products stemming from the MLDS, a statewide administrative database housing student-level data linked across public sectors. Leveraging data from the MLDS, researchers conduct advanced statistical analyses, produce actionable information, and inform policies and practices to improve student and workforce outcomes in Maryland. Research partners include the University of Maryland College of Education, the University of Maryland Baltimore County School of Public Policy, and Morgan State University’s School of Education and Urban Studies.

**People**

[Angela K. Henneberger](https://directory.ssw.umaryland.edu/employee-detail/henneberger-angela/r/reczX0O2t4Af3p5Hf) is the MLDS Center Principal Investigator and Director of Research

[Terry V Shaw](https://directory.ssw.umaryland.edu/employee-detail/shaw-terry/r/recUa4n8Fb8YxqR4m) is the MLDS Center Associate Director of Research

[Bess A Rose](https://directory.ssw.umaryland.edu/employee-detail/rose-bess/r/rec9FIpR4BEJrWGBL) is the MLDS Center Statistician

**What is the MLDS?**

The Maryland Longitudinal Data System (MLDS) Center is a state agency responsible for collecting and organizing individual student and workforce data from other state agencies for the purpose of generating timely and accurate information about student performance that can be used to improve the State’s education system and guide decision makers at all levels. The [MLDS](https://mldscenter.maryland.gov/Collect.html) is a statewide administrative data system storing and linking longitudinal data records at the individual level across state agencies:

* PreK-12 student and school data are obtained from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE);
* Juvenile justice data are obtained from the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS);
* Child welfare data are obtained from the Department of Human Services (DHS);
* Maryland public and private college student data are obtained from the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC);
* Data for out-of-state college enrollments and degrees are obtained by MSDE through the National Student Clearinghouse;
* Workforce data are obtained from the Maryland Department of Labor for Maryland employees who work for employers who are subject to Maryland's Unemployment Insurance (UI) law.

**Research Agenda**

The [research agenda](https://mldscenter.maryland.gov/ResearchAgenda.html)at the MLDS Center is guided by four broad categories of inquiry:

* Pathways & Pipelines: Research and reports on the entry, transition, and exit points students take into specific education, service and labor sectors. The focus of pathway and pipeline studies are typically descriptive to identify patterns rather than focus on causal relationships.
* Educational, Service & Workforce Outcomes: Research and reports on student-level and/or institutional-level characteristics and the importance of these characteristics in predicting outcomes.
* Program & Policy Evaluations: Research and reports intended to determine whether a given program or policy has been successful.
* Methodological Inquiries: Research and reports intended to improve the selection and application of research and statistical methods when using MLDS data.

All proposed research must fall within one or more of these broad categories.

See the list of [**Current Research Projects**](https://app.powerbigov.us/view?r=eyJrIjoiNWU1YWQ4Y2EtNzEzZi00MjlkLWIwZjUtNjU2MmY3MzVlZDUxIiwidCI6IjYwYWZlOWUyLTQ5Y2QtNDliMS04ODUxLTY0ZGYwMjc2YTJlOCJ9)to learn more about current research.

**How to Use the MLDS for Research**

Researchers who are interested in using the MLDS are invited to submit a proposal via the [MLDS Project Approval Process](https://mldscenter.maryland.gov/ProjectApprovalandManagementProcedures.html). The MLDS Center manages the project approval process, which is required for all projects that seek to use the MLDS data, including projects proposed by staff of the MLDS Center, members of the MLDS Center Research Branch, and researchers or analysts who are not affiliated with the University of Maryland System.