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# Scaling Workforce Development Programming In Baltimore

By Linda Dworak

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F O U N D A T I O N  
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## *Foreword and Executive Summary*

Throughout Baltimore, men and women, from young adults to older workers, are seeking meaningful employment opportunities that offer family-sustaining wages and support personal well-being. Labor markets are tight, meaning that skilled workers are in great demand, and a unique prospect exists to open doors to quality jobs<sup>1</sup>, particularly for those who have faced intractable barriers to such opportunity. For this reason, it is now imperative to consider rapid expansion of high-quality workforce development programs to assist job seekers obtain the skills they need.

This paper explores opportunities to scale up approaches to effective workforce development programming in Baltimore. In discussing scale, the report is focused on expanding the quantity of services offered to reach more individual job seekers. Specifically, it considers the expansion of comprehensive models that address opportunity gaps through the provision of in-demand occupational skills training, industry-recognized certification, intensive employer engagement, and supportive services to mitigate personal and systemic barriers to employment.

To assess the potential for greater scale, staff from 31 workforce development

organizations on the front lines of workforce development in Baltimore were interviewed about their perspectives on increasing the numbers of individuals served. Currently, the nonprofit organizations and community colleges in this report collectively provide industry sector-based workforce development services to approximately 2,700 job seekers per year. The skills training available is focused on 13+ industry sectors and more than 74 occupational titles. Most of these programs are relatively small, enrolling fewer than 100 individuals per year. However, many programs identified labor market forces pointing to current and projected job openings that could be filled by Baltimore residents through an expansion of programming. As detailed in Executive Summary Table 1, an increased investment of \$5 million over current funding levels to 16 organizations could rapidly increase the number of residents receiving occupational skills training, supportive services, and job placement by about 1,000 people annually.

This report highlights the opportunities and challenges for rapid scaling up of effective workforce development programs. It begins with a brief review of local and national evidence demonstrating that the industry-sector workforce development model is effective at assisting job seekers to prepare for and enter the workforce. This model, which involves meaningful engagement with employers in a targeted industry sector to design integrated approaches involving skills training, supportive services, and employment placement and retention, has taken root in Baltimore with a significant number of well-regarded programs. Studies have shown that this approach shows success in aiding unemployed and underemployed individuals to obtain and sustain employment.

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<sup>1</sup> There are many ways to define a “quality job” that vary according to the perspectives of individual workers as well as factors related to industries, business size, local conditions, etc. Research by Pacific Community Ventures concludes that elements of a quality job include: a living wage, basic benefits, career-building opportunities, wealth-building opportunities, and a fair and engaging workplace. For more on this topic, see <https://www.pacificcommunityventures.org/quality-jobs/>.

Executive Summary Table 1.  
Programs with the Potential For Expansion Within One Year if Funding is Made Available

Organization	Cost per Participant	Potential New Slots	Cost PP * Slots
BACH (Medical Assistant)	\$9,000	15	\$135,000
BioTechnical Institute of Maryland	\$11,400	40	\$456,000
CCBC-Workplace Literacy*	\$5,500	150	\$825,000
Civic Works (Stormwater Remediation)	\$8,000	50	\$400,000
Featherstone Foundation	\$3,750	46	\$172,500
Goodwill (building trades)	\$3,200	10	\$32,000
Humanim (Admin Assistant)	\$5,000	10	\$50,000
Lazarus Rite	\$3,500	60	\$210,000
Living Classrooms	N/A	100	Through expansion of public work contracts
Maryland New Directions, Commercial Transportation Careers Fast Track	\$1,000	75	\$75,000
NPower	\$7,500	75	\$562,500
Per Scholas	\$8,000	30	\$240,000
St. Vincent de Paul	\$5,000	40	\$200,000
Urban Alliance (hospitality)	\$6,250	15	\$93,750
Urban Alliance (construction and surveyor)	\$7,500	40	\$300,000
Vehicles for Change	\$12,000	60	\$720,000
Year Up (supplement to employer sponsorships)	\$7,500	40	\$300,000
Year Up - Byte Back	\$1,000	120	\$120,000
Year Up (adding space)	\$1,500	80	\$120,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1052</b>	<b>\$5,071,750</b>

\*CCBC believes that it could expand its Workplace Literacy programs to serve as additional 500 students per year. Some subset of these would be Baltimore City Residents. The estimate of 150 used here may be an undercount.

Next, the report reviews the case for scale by looking at Baltimore’s labor market from both the perspective of the program staff and a review of labor market data. Concurrent with national trends, the Baltimore region is experiencing strong employment figures. Moreover, a number of factors, such as forthcoming building development projects, plans for large-scale renewable energy expansion, and projected growth in the information technology (IT) and cybersecurity fields, are among the indicators of job opportunity. These favorable conditions exist alongside historic and present systems of isolation and exclusion for many African American residents of high-poverty neighborhoods where high unemployment rates persist. The opportunity gap created by this disconnect between demand for skilled workers and the thousands of men and women seeking meaningful work demands expansion of workforce development interventions embedded with an equity lens.

Having identified real opportunity in industry-sector demand, interviews with practitioners provided extensive feedback on the question of how to achieve greater scale of services, emphasizing that without careful consideration, an increase in quantity of services could lead to a related decrease in quality of services. These practitioner experts offer insights on their strategies for growth that falls into three main categories: 1) building operational capacity; 2) enhancing collaboration, coordination, and career pathways; and 3) addressing systemic barriers to employment.

The paper draws upon these insights to offer recommendations for scale that relate to: increasing investment, creating and enhancing tools and systems to maximize opportunities and efficiencies, and addressing system barriers. In summary, these recommendations are outlined below.

<p><b>1. Increase public and private investment to grow what works</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Align philanthropic grantmaking.</li> <li>• Expand use of SNAP E&amp;T funding.</li> <li>• Create new Baltimore City funding pool to support sector-based workforce development.</li> <li>• Direct more public procurement dollars to vendors that include a job training and placement mission in their work.</li> <li>• Encourage and incentivize employers to co-invest.</li> <li>• Fully fund case management and supportive services.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Create and enhance tools and systems for greater effectiveness</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase coordination and alignment of efforts.</li> <li>• Build data systems to measure participation and impact in workforce programs.</li> <li>• Create accessible real-time labor market information tools.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Address major systems barriers to scale</b></p>	<p>Advocate for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation policies and solutions;</li> <li>• Adult basic education bridge programs;</li> <li>• Criminal justice and reentry reform;</li> <li>• Equitable job quality policies and practices; and</li> <li>• Reduction of benefits cliff effect.</li> </ul>
<p><b>APPLY AN EQUITY FRAMEWORK TO ALL WORK</b></p>	

These recommendations are undergirded by a call to recognize and address the structural racism that is at the root of persistent poverty and labor market disconnect in the Baltimore region. A number of reports cited herein document local disparities in employment and earnings when race and gender are taken into consideration. Consequently, an equity lens must be applied to each recommendation for allocating resources, developing structures and systems to enable growth, and reconfiguring public policies.

This moment of opportunity, propelled by strong demand for skilled workers and low regional unemployment levels, may eventually wane. Therefore, this topic is of utmost importance at this point in time and demands action now. It requires that policymakers, philanthropy, and private businesses come together with haste to commit resources, enabling individuals, communities, and high-quality workforce development entities to seize upon a uniquely advantageous chance to succeed at greater scale. The time for collective action is now.

## Introduction

Baltimore is recognized nationally as a leader in industry-sector workforce approaches that provide unemployed and underemployed Baltimore residents with access to certificate-based occupational skills training, wraparound supports, and job placement services. The most effective of these programs garner deep engagement with employers to meet industry demand for skilled workers in high-demand occupations. Yet, while Baltimore's industry-sector workforce programs are helping to make an impact, their combined capacity is not at the scale needed to serve the large number of residents seeking career-oriented employment and the many employers looking for a ready workforce.

In light of this situation, the director of the Baltimore Workforce Funders Collaborative (BWFC) conducted interviews with 31 Baltimore-based workforce entities in late 2018 to better

understand the obstacles and opportunities for scaling up existing industry-sector workforce initiatives to serve more Baltimore residents. Additionally, the Baltimore Metropolitan Council provided labor market data for Baltimore City and Baltimore County. The goal of this research is to determine whether or not the local labor market could absorb more skilled workers, and if so, what could be done to prepare and place a larger number of Baltimore residents into target occupations. Research questions focused on two core supply/demand questions:

1. Is there sufficient labor market demand in industry sectors with occupations that pay family-sustaining wages to support the expansion of occupational training for entry-level job seekers?
2. What is the willingness and readiness of local workforce development initiatives to scale up their programs to serve more job seekers? What are the programs' short-term and long-term plans to expand? What are their concerns regarding obstacles to expansion? What organizational and programmatic needs must be addressed to enable expansion?

Combined, the occupational skills training programs interviewed serve approximately 2,700 job seekers per year. Most of these programs are implemented by nonprofit organizations and enroll fewer than 100 individuals per year. These organizations are providing training focused on over 13 industry sectors for more than 74 occupational titles. The industry sectors targeted by the organizations interviewed include: automotive maintenance and repair, biotechnology, business, child care, construction, FIRE (finance, insurance, real estate), food service/culinary, health care, information technology, landscaping, manufacturing, retail, and TDL (transportation, distribution, and logistics). *See Appendix A for a list of all occupations for which interviewed organizations provide training and placement, and Appendix B for a chart of program enrollment and outcomes data.*

Workforce development organizations interviewed include:

Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Healthcare	Living Classrooms
Baltimore City Community College	Maryland Center for Adult Training*
Baltimore Mayor's Office of Employment Development	Maryland New Directions
BioTechnical Institute of Maryland, Inc.	Moveable Feast*
Bon Secours Community Works	National Center on Institutions and Alternatives
Caroline Center	NPower
CASA de Maryland	Per Scholas
CCBC Connections to Employment Program	Second Chance
CCBC Health and Human Services	St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore
Center for Urban Families	The Foundry*
Civic Works/Baltimore Center for Sustainable Careers	Turn Around Tuesdays/BUILD
Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake	Urban Alliance
Humanim	Vehicles for Change
Jane Addams Resource Corporation - Baltimore	William & Lanaea C. Featherstone Foundation, Inc.
Job Opportunities Task Force	Year Up
Lazarus Rite, Inc.	

\*Since these interviews took place, the Maryland Center for Adult Training has ceased operations, Moveable Feast has ceased to offer occupational training, and The Foundry has suspended operations pending identification of a new site.

It is important to note that two community colleges, Baltimore City Community College (BCCC) and the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC), provide noncredit certificate-based occupational training to a significant number of area residents. Among the approximately 15,000 students enrolled in BCCC's Continuing Education programs, the college provides workforce development classes to approximately 2,200 students per year through a combination of direct enrollment and co-enrollment with workforce training partners.<sup>2</sup> The Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) on average enrolls 32,000 students in continuing education courses each year and serves between 300 and 400 Baltimore County and Baltimore City residents annually through its Workplace

<sup>2</sup> A portion of the approximately 2,700 individuals trained by the nonprofit programs are duplicate counts for BCCC and CCBC. This is because some service providers contract the colleges to provide occupational training as part of their more comprehensive workforce development programming.

Literacy courses. CCBC's Workplace Literacy courses (described more fully on pages 6-7) integrate occupational skills training with math and numeracy remediation as well as student supports.

In addition to the training programs interviewed, several for-profit trade schools offer entry-level occupational training to Baltimore residents. Given the BWFC's limited understanding of the quality and outcomes of those trade schools, this study does not include a review of their scale and capacity to expand.

This report is organized as follows: I) evidence of the effectiveness of an industry-sector workforce development model; II) labor market opportunities for increased scale; III) opportunities to reach underserved populations; IV) building organizational capacity for scale; V) external systems as challenges to scale; VI) scale through collaboration, coordination, and career pathways; and VII) recommendations for action.

Unattributed quotes from interviewees are interspersed throughout this report along with fuller program highlights that describe strategies and innovations developed by Baltimore's workforce development community.

## I. Effectiveness of Industry-Sector Workforce Development Models

Industry-sector workforce development models are widely hailed as effective strategies for preparing and placing individuals into careers while addressing real employer need for skilled workers. Typically, the most effective models involve seven essential elements:

1. Deep engagement with employers and stakeholders in key industry sectors to identify and effectively address labor force needs;
2. A focus on serving job seekers experiencing multiple barriers in low-income communities and entry-level incumbent workers;
3. High-quality programming that includes relevant skill development and industry-recognized certifications that are in line with industry need and requirements;
4. Robust efforts to help job seekers and incumbent workers address personal challenges and mitigate structural barriers to employment that are beyond one individual's control and disproportionately impact people of color and women;
5. Rigorous job placement and post-program follow-up services;
6. A focus on systems change efforts that work to address policies and practices that impede access to family-supporting jobs, particularly for people of color and women; and
7. Commitment to analysis of performance data and directing resources to practices and programs that demonstrate effectiveness.

Various studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of this industry-sector workforce development approach, including the Aspen Institute's Sectoral Employment Development Learning Project (Maureen Conway 2007), Public/Private Ventures' Sectoral Employment Impact Study (Sheila Maguire 2009), and MDRC's 2016 two-year impact study of the WorkAdvance model (Tessler 2013). The evidence-based success of this approach has led to widespread uptake by nonprofit workforce providers across the country, by state and local workforce systems (Maryland's EARN program and Baltimore City's One Baltimore for Jobs demonstration project are great examples) and by the U.S. Department of Labor. Indeed, the 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the primary legislation guiding federal workforce development funding, integrates this sectoral approach.

Local data provide evidence of the impact of sector strategies in Baltimore. Outcomes data were collected by the BWFC for 1,187 individuals enrolled between 2011 and 2015 in six industry-sector workforce programs. Data showed that, among these programs, 70% to 90% of participants successfully completed training and received at least one industry credential; 72% to 93% of program completers obtained employment after training; and 68% to 95% were still employed after six months. Most graduates obtained a job with a starting wage of \$12 to \$18/hour. More than 80% of the individuals tracked through this study were unemployed at the time of enrollment; 68% of the participants had a high school diploma/GED or less as their highest level of education; and more than half of participants had a criminal background that could limit access to quality employment opportunities (Baltimore Workforce Funders Collaborative 2017).

In 2012-2013, the Jacob France Institute (JFI) at the University of Baltimore documented wage gains associated with two local sectoral programs. JFI used Maryland Unemployment Insurance (UI) data on wages, employment, and industry to look at wage outcomes for graduates of Project JumpStart (pre-apprenticeship

construction) and the BioTechnical Institute of Maryland (laboratory associates). This study provided evidence of strong and substantial wage gains of 90% to 160% above pre-program wages and a strengthened attachment to the labor market over time. For both JumpStart and BTI, estimated wage gains in the first-year post completion exceeded program costs, making the case that these programs are a good investment (Baltimore Workforce Funders Collaborative 2017). In 2018, BWFC began to work with the Jacob France Institute and 19 local organizations in a similar wage record study with initial findings expected by early 2020.

## II. Market Opportunities and Challenges

*“Training has to be driven by the market, not by the capacity of a provider. Some organizations approach scale by simply ratcheting up the number of people they put through the training that they know how to do or for which they have equipment, like training incarcerated individuals for printing jobs. We should not be teaching something that is obsolete.” – Workforce development practitioner*

The mid-Atlantic region is one of the most robust economic hubs in the country, with strong labor markets, wages, and business growth. Baltimore benefits from robust employment opportunities in a number of sectors such as health care, information technology, construction, and transportation and distribution.

With some of the nation’s most renowned hospitals, medical schools, and universities, Baltimore’s labor market is dominated by employment in the health care and higher education sectors. The so-called “eds and meds,” which are anchored in Baltimore, have committed to expanding local hiring through efforts such as the Baltimore Integration Partnership and Hopkins Local. In particular, the health care sector projects continued employment growth in future years.

Mid-Maryland also is home to a high concentration of defense contractors, making the region a hub for cybersecurity. As a result, local job openings in the IT sector are growing. In 2018, Baltimore-area advertisements for IT-related jobs increased by 39% over 2017, up to 49,508 postings (Babcock n.d.). These numbers are expected to grow larger as new development at Port Covington includes plans to build “Cyber Town, USA,” a hub for dozens of cyber and tech companies.

Moreover, Baltimore’s location in the center of the East Coast positions the city for expanding e-commerce and transportation, distribution, and logistics employment. The deep-water Port of Baltimore has been growing, and Baltimore is home to highways and railroads connecting the city to all parts of the United States. As a major logistical hub for domestic and international trade, the region has a growing number of warehousing and logistics jobs at locations such as the emerging Tradepoint Atlantic distribution hub.

### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

The **Jane Addams Resource Corporation (JARC)** is anticipating a rapid increase in demand for welders associated with off-shore wind operations. The organization predicts that the \$2.5 billion offshore wind project (including \$900 million for welding work) will involve 4,000 new jobs over a 15-year period. Maryland has set a goal of 48% of work to be done by state contractors. According to program staff, “JARC graduates will be eligible for \$20/hour starting wages, others with some experience will earn around \$30/hour. This will suck up all of the welders in the region, creating demand in other construction projects.” Through a contract with the Maryland Energy Administration, JARC is beginning to train unemployed and underemployed job seekers to prepare for these upcoming opportunities.

Because of growth in these sectors, a number of large and small construction/development projects are underway or on the horizon, including development at Port Covington, Tradepoint Atlantic, Bayview Hospital, and more. These projects will increase the demand for skilled building trades workers. Additionally, the development of offshore wind is projected to create a large number of new jobs: “In total, the [offshore wind] projects have the potential to create over 7,000 new, largely blue-collar jobs, in fields such as welding, engineering, electrical work, and others (Milligan 2019).”

**Figure 1:**  
Projected Demand Compared to Typical Annual Enrollment for Some Baltimore Training Programs

Organization	2018 Jobs	2028 Jobs	2018 - 2028 % Change	2018-2028 Replacement Jobs	2018 - 2028 Openings	Current typical annual enrollment
Automotive Body and Related Repairers	733	814	11%	731	812	
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	3,058	2,989	(2%)	2,773	2,845	
Vehicles for Change Auto Tech Training						43
Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians	3,174	3,425	8%	2,016	2,267	
Life, Physical, and Social Science Technicians, All Other	423	474	12%	517	568	
BTI Lab Associates Program						44
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical	20,412	19,463	(5%)	21,142	21,277	
First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support	11,493	11,441	(0%)	11,125	11,223	
Humanim Admin Assistant Training						30
Construction Laborers	5,557	6,073	9%	5,884	6,406	
Painters, Construction and Maintenance	1,388	1,363	(2%)	1,155	1,190	
JumpStart and Goodwill Pre-Apprenticeship Construction						131
Surveyors	223	227	2%	157	167	
UA Land Surveyor Training						12
Welding, Soldering, and Brazing Machine Setters, Operators	70	67	(4%)	72	73	
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	575	620	8%	630	677	
JARC Welding Program						33
Food Preparation Workers	4,446	4,553	2%	7,533	7,643	
Cooks	17,777	18,180	5%	31,648	32,104	
Moveable Feast, St. Vincent de Paul Culinary training						179
Nursing Assistants	9,707	10,407	7%	11,151	11,851	
Caroline Center, Goodwill Pharm Tech Training						271
Pharmacy Technicians	2,339	2,382	2%	1,812	1,868	
Caroline Center, Goodwill Pharm Tech Training						96
Computer User Support Specialists	2,934	3,281	12%	2,242	2,589	
Goodwill, Per Scholas, NPower Entry Level IT						259
Light Truck of Delivery Services Drivers	5,421	5,682	5%	5,859	6,120	
Bus Drivers	4,208	4,279	2%	5,052	5,191	
Lazarus Rite, MND CDL Training						128

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*The following are examples of programs reporting that if additional resources were available, they could expand now to meet the needs of identified employers and job seekers.*

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The **BioTechnical Institute (BTI)** reports that the bio-technical industry is expanding in the Baltimore region and looking for entry-level laboratory talent in bio-manufacturing, bio-research, and clinical settings. BTI states that it could double the size of its Laboratory Associates program, adding 40 new slots per year by offering new evening classes at a cost of approximately \$456,000. And it could further expand by building new pathways to medical technician and pathology careers. To make this possible, BTI needs additional funding for training. Further expansion beyond these 40 new slots would require BTI to acquire more classroom space and to gain help in developing transportation solutions to enable residents of predominantly black Baltimore City communities to commute to the growing number of bio-tech jobs located outside of Baltimore City in surrounding counties.

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The advanced automotive training program at **Vehicles for Change's Full Circle Auto Repair & Training Center** currently trains 30 to 40 returning citizens per year. Vehicles for Change reports that completion and job placement rates are close to 100%. Due to the "astronomical" industry demand for auto mechanics and technicians, the program believes it could place many more graduates into jobs that pay a sustainable wage. The impact of the program is significant in that it helps individuals reenter society after incarceration. Recently, the organization launched an entry-level training program that bridges into the advanced skills training. Demand from job seekers for this program also exceeds available training slots. If it were able to secure approximately \$720,000 in additional funds, Vehicles for Change could add a second training shift to open 60 new slots in the advanced program and would grow the entry-level program.

The **Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC)** sees opportunities for exponential expansion of Workforce Literacy programs with demonstrated completion and job attachment rates that significantly exceed traditional noncredit community college models. CCBC's Workforce Literacy program provides holistic training and education, based on Baltimore County's Accelerated Connections to Employment (ACE) program model. Students receive integrated occupational skills training with math and numeracy remediation. The approach utilizes an intake methodology that includes three hours of adult literacy assessments, while providing 10 to 12 hours of pre-enrollment workshops, including anger management, time management, College 101, work readiness, and team development. Once enrolled, students receive customized supportive services, case management, basic computers, technical training, financial literacy, and employment-readiness training. With an additional annual infusion of approximately \$2.7 million, CCBC states that it has the potential to add up to 500 new slots for Baltimore County and Baltimore City residents for a range of high-demand occupations.

**NPower** is an IT training program focused on Opportunity Youth, or youth ages 18 to 24 years old who are out of school and out of work. NPower has an aggressive plan to expand the number of young adults it serves in the Delaware-Maryland-Virginia region. This includes expanding its Baltimore Tech Fundamentals course and adding a cybersecurity class, potentially increasing the numbers of students served in Baltimore by 75 per year at a cost of approximately \$563,000. Additionally, NPower is working with the Maryland State Department of Labor to develop an IT Apprenticeship.

**Lazarus Rite** is a program designed to extend employment opportunities to adults who were formerly incarcerated as licensed commercial drivers, specifically in the waste management industry where barriers to employment for individuals with past felonies are minimal. The program is very small in scale, offering CDL-B training to approximately 30 individuals per year, and is staffed primarily by volunteers. The founders of Lazarus Rite believe that many more individuals could benefit from the program, helping to address a shortage of drivers as waste management workers retire and as Baltimore grows as a hub for the transportation of goods. To maximize this opportunity, Lazarus Rite would need to be able to provide CDL-A training, which would require acquisition of a truck for training and a qualified instructor. It would also need to raise funds to bring volunteer program leaders on as paid staff and further develop as an organization.

These regional employment prospects offer the potential to prepare more Baltimore City residents for jobs by growing skills-training programs and/or expanding other workforce development efforts.

Ten of the occupational training programs interviewed reported that they recruit more qualified candidates than they have training slots. This offers an immediate opportunity for increased scale which could be met by expanding the number of individuals that these organizations can serve or by building improved avenues to refer qualified clients to training provided by other local organizations.

Despite apparent industry opportunities, a few challenges related to understanding and acting upon labor-market needs surfaced through interviews with workforce development organizations.

Some sectoral workforce programs seem to lack good labor market information about occupational demand and career pathways. Programs operating in the same sector, particularly construction and IT, had conflicting impressions of the level of demand at the entry level, suggesting that decision-making is not always well-informed by quality labor market information that includes both regional employment data and feedback from employers involved in the workforce program.

Even with good labor market data, however, it is difficult to project future demand with accuracy. There is strong hope that new jobs will be created at Tradeport Atlantic and Port Covington including Cyber Town, USA, and with the development of offshore wind. Additional demand will be driven by the aging out of skilled workers as they approach retirement. Although programs foresee the need to scale up training to prepare for future labor market

Figure 2:  
Programs with Waitlists, by Occupation

Programs reporting that they currently turn away or wait list qualified candidates due to a lack of training slots	Occupation
BioTechnical Institute of Maryland	Laboratory associates
Caroline Center	CNA/GNA and pharmacy technicians
Civic Works	Weatherization
Featherstone Foundation	Bilingual retail banking
Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake	Pharmacy technicians
Humanim	Administrative assistants
Jane Addams Resource Corporation	Welders and machinists
Lazarus Rite	Commercial drivers
Urban Alliance	Construction and hospitality
Vehicles for Change	Automotive repair technicians

demand, there is no guarantee that these jobs will come on line soon or that individuals from communities of color will be hired to fill vacant positions. Getting the timing right to balance training for future jobs is complicated. It is also important to note that at the time of this research, unemployment rates in the United States are at a 50-year low, presenting a sense of opportunity and optimism as employers compete to attract and retain workers. However, current unemployment rates are still much higher for people of color. Furthermore, many economists predict a recession on the near horizon. Should this come to pass, workforce development organizations will need to respond with agility. Better information about projected trends may provide some degree of help in navigating changing market situations.

In several industries, there is strong current and projected future demand for talent at the mid-skill level where jobs can reach family-sustaining wages. This is particularly true for construction where there is a shortage of supervisors, managers, and licensed tradesmen, as well as IT, where there is local demand for skilled workers for the cybersecurity sector affiliated with Maryland's cluster of defense-related employers. These opportunities also pose challenges for a local workforce system that is geared more toward providing job seekers experiencing multiple barriers with short-term

training for entry-level jobs. The unintended consequence of focusing on immediate employment solutions is that residents—and disproportionately, people of color—languish in entry-level jobs. Helping low-wage workers move up to in-demand mid-skill occupations requires a longer-term view with strategies that involve transitions from entry-level training to further post-secondary education including associate degrees, apprenticeships, and other forms of incumbent worker training.

In its Family Supporting Jobs Report 2018, the Baltimore Metropolitan Council highlights this issue: “Family-supporting jobs represent 13.8% of our region’s labor market demand over the next decade. This figure puts our region in the top half of our peers nationally. Our research indicates that family-supporting jobs will shift away from manufacturing and utilities towards sectors like information technology, bioscience and healthcare. Wholesale industries see the largest increase in their share of the labor market. Construction will remain the sector with the most opportunity to earn a family-supporting wage. While roughly three quarters of our family-supporting jobs have a typical entry-level of education of only a high school diploma, it is important to note that wages typically rise with educational attainment. Within the universe of family-supporting jobs,

#### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

**Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake** is working with the North America’s Building Trades Unions’ C.H.O.I.C.E program and the United Way of Central Maryland to pilot an initiative to prepare Baltimore City residents to apply for, enter, and successfully complete a building trades apprenticeship program. This pre-apprenticeship program uses a Multi-Craft Core Curriculum developed by in coordination with 28 local unions in the greater Baltimore/Washington, DC/ Northern Virginia region. All students who complete the course and pass an apprenticeship exam are guaranteed entry into a union apprenticeship in one of many building trades. Given the demand for skilled tradespersons, Goodwill sees great opportunities to bring the pilot program to greater scale. In the immediate future, Goodwill could add 10 slots to the small pilot at a cost of approximately \$32,000.

the attainment of an Associate's degree is the greatest predictor of increased earnings (Baltimore Metropolitan Council 2018)."

Beyond questions of supply and demand, it is important to pay attention to factors related to earnings potential, job quality, and racial and gender equity. As presented in a report published by Associated Black Charities, "Patterns of Employment by Race in Baltimore City and the Baltimore Region," African American employment in Baltimore is concentrated in lower-wage industries and occupations with high turnover rates (Li 2017). In considering opportunities to grow existing programs, the question as to whether current workforce development efforts sustain or interrupt this dynamic must be asked. Another necessary consideration is whether constant high industry demand for workers in an occupation is a sign that this occupation is undesirable due to low wages and benefits or other working conditions. Just because programs can train and place more individuals for an occupation does not mean it is the best use of scarce resources if such jobs do not lead to family-sustaining careers and/or perpetuate

inequitable employment patterns. Efforts that encourage employers to adopt equitable and high-road employment practices; organize and empower workers; and engage in policy advocacy around wages, benefits, and the structure of work are an important part of the larger effort to create a more robust and equitable employment landscape in Baltimore.

### III. Populations Underserved By Current Programs

Currently there is no unified system that can accurately report on how many Baltimore residents are being served by occupational skills training programs in Baltimore, what their demographics are, or how they fare with regard to employment outcomes. Without such data, it is difficult to fully assess the opportunities to scale up job-training efforts. For this report, interviewees were asked to submit information about the number of individuals served in a typical year. Collectively, they train approximately 2,700 job seekers annually. But this number is inexact and misses participants of programs not interviewed.

#### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

The **Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Healthcare (BACH)** holds annual meetings with all its employer partners specifically to identify industry need for occupational training. At the recent meeting, several employers prioritized the need for licensed medical assistants. Together, BACH and the CCBC see potential for establishing an apprenticeship model to move individuals already trained for entry-level CNA/GNA positions to this higher paying occupation. CCBC has offered to run courses to meet the employer needs, but medical assistants require a full year of training while much of BACH's current funding is designated for shorter-term programs. BACH is also working in partnership with one local long-term care facility to develop a registered apprenticeship that would move CNA/GNAs up to Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN). The Caroline Center, which serves as a training provider for BACH-funded CNA/GNA occupations, notes that a number of individuals enrolled in nursing assistant training demonstrate the potential to complete LPN or Registered Nurse (RN) nursing programs if given the right level of financial and wraparound support.

Figure 3:  
Examples of Baltimore-Based Efforts to Address The Quality of Employment in Baltimore

Strategy	Initiative/ Organization	Description
Encourage employers to adopt high-road employment practices	<b>Good Business Works (GBW)</b>	A collaboration of Baltimore-area business leaders, workforce experts, and community-based organizations committed to improving equitable access to family-sustaining careers, strengthening the local business and economic landscape, and helping communities thrive. GBW recognizes and supports businesses throughout the Baltimore region that are leaders in job quality and committed to working toward continual improvement.
Organize and empower workers	<b>B.U.I.L.D.</b>	A broad-based, nonpartisan, interfaith, multiracial community power organization rooted in Baltimore's neighborhoods and congregations. BUILD works to identify and develop community leaders who work together to improve housing, increase job opportunities, and rebuild schools and neighborhoods.
	<b>Baltimore Black Worker Center</b>	An effort to build the grassroots power of Black workers to increase access to quality and living wage jobs; end discrimination in the workplace; redefine the meaning and possibilities of work; and advance a solidarity economy in Baltimore City led by black workers (whether through unionization, policy reform, survival programs, worker-cooperatives, and/or grassroots issue-based campaigns).
Policy advocacy addressing wages, benefits, and the structure of work	<b>Job Opportunities Task Force</b>	An advocacy organization established to develop and advocate for policies and programs to increase the skills, job opportunities, and incomes of low-wage workers and job seekers in Maryland.
	<b>Public Justice Center</b>	A civil legal aid office that provides advice and representation to low-income clients, advocates before legislatures and government agencies, and collaborates with community and advocacy organizations. PJC's Workplace Justice Project works primarily with low-wage workers to enforce and expand their right to an honest day's pay for an honest day's work, utilizing a variety of strategies including: legislative; regulatory; and other policy advocacy, litigation, and coalition development.

The BWFC is working in partnership with the Baltimore Workforce Development Board to build a data warehouse that will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the scope and impact of services. This work is likely to surface organizational level need for capacity building in data collection, management, and analysis.

*“We would like to do more analysis. We don’t have the staffing to do real analysis of our clients on a yearly basis to see what is working for our clients. We do it ad hoc. It’s tough to find grants for that.” – Workforce development practitioner*

For this report, interviewees were asked to consider whether there were any groups of job seekers to which they would like to extend expanded enrollment opportunities. Most commonly, they spoke of a desire to reach out to more young adults and veterans. Those who hoped to target services to veterans stated that they were not sure how to recruit from that demographic group or what types of programmatic adaptations might be needed to serve them well. Other groups that are a potential focus of growth for some organizations include: immigrants, asylees and English language learners (ELL), returning citizens/ex-offenders, males or females in nontraditional careers, individuals with disabilities, and low-income adults residing outside Baltimore City limits.

Several interviewees noted a compelling need to serve graduating high school youth and opportunity youth (ages 18-24), but programs had varied views on their ability to serve this group. Several traditionally adult-serving programs have experimented with serving youth through the One Baltimore for Jobs (1B4J) demonstration project (2015-2017) or through Baltimore Promise’s Grads2Careers initiative (ongoing). Both pilots have resulted in completion rates for youth that are consistent with those of adults. However, several of these same programs pointed to a unique set of challenges faced by young adults

who have little to no experience in the world of work, indicating a need for alternative, well-financed youth-specific strategies. Moving forward, some indicated a preference to focus more on adults while others will continue to hone a youth-oriented approach. Other programs that have not yet served youth are anxious to give it a try, partly because they see funding opportunities to support that work.

*“Historically, younger students graduate at the same rate but leave employment often before six months. Our training staff pushes back [on enrolling youth], they are concerned about ruining employer relationships. We are trying additional supports [for youth].” – Workforce development practitioner*

#### **IV. Organizational Capacity to Increase Program Scale**

Through interviews, organizations were asked about their organizational readiness and willingness to increase the scale of their programs. Their responses included references to the breadth of programmatic elements that result in their ability to serve job seekers. Three programmatic components surfaced as being most critical to the prospect of increased scale: 1) high-quality skills training; 2) strong employer/industry sector engagement; and 3) intensive case management and barrier remediation. Expansion would require organizations to have the capacity to grow these components, requiring adequate planning and funding.

Given the importance of maintaining the intensity and quality of these elements, many organizations with a track record of success are very cautious about growth. Throughout the interviews that inform this report, program leaders often noted that when workforce initiatives try to grow too quickly without deliberate planning, necessary resources, or increased organizational capacity, there is a risk of weakened quality of service that could result

in less robust participant outcomes. For programs that rely on grant funding, this poses real cause for thoughtful and sometimes constrained growth.

*“The actual work of expansion is a grind...It’s important not to grow too fast. In order to maintain the quality of the work, you need to focus effort and funding on operations—not just training. This includes operational capacity for things like documenting and learning from what is working and what does not go so well. You also need LOTS of staff development training, especially for the front-line staff.” – Workforce development practitioner*

Similarly, many workforce development organizations understand the need to be nimble and adaptive to change. When labor markets are tight, as they are at the time of the writing of this report, opportunities for expansion seem abundant. However, market conditions are always in flux and the possibility of recessionary conditions could eventually limit the ability of programs to place graduates at current rates. When demand for labor is weaker, workforce development programs often scale back or

redirect their efforts toward incumbent worker training and advancement.

Undeniably, the quality of occupational and work-readiness skills training is at the heart of an effective program. Programs that place their graduates into jobs where they succeed are designed to offer the skills, industry-recognized certifications, and exposure to work that employers need and require. This depends upon the development of a high-quality curriculum as well as the ability to hire skilled instructors with deep industry knowledge and a commitment to the social and equity mission of the organization. One interviewee referred to these instructors as a “magic group of people.” For many programs, the difficulty in identifying, retaining, and paying adequately for skilled instructors is a key limitation to increased scale. Similarly, programs that seek to simulate a workplace environment for their programs need the right space and equipment, and those that include work experiences such as paid internships would need to identify additional sites to maintain this critical aspect of their training approach.

#### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

**Civic Works’ Center for Sustainable Careers** has a strong track record of preparing job seekers for jobs in green construction trades. Its successes are due to an approach that goes far beyond just being a provider of training. The individual job seekers assisted by Civic Works often face significant personal and systemic barriers to employment related to criminal histories, racial and gender bias, transportation challenges, and much more. Beyond providing access to certificate-bearing training, Civic Works helps clients to mitigate these barriers through high-touch case management, policy advocacy, and deep employer engagement. The Center works closely with employer partners, using its role as a procurement intermediary to influence business practices and advance job-quality standards in the green construction, retail, and restaurant industries. Civic Works believes that it is positioned to expand the scale of its services to reach more job seekers. To ensure the quality of its work, it has set a modest but steady goal of expanding enrollment at the Center for Sustainable Careers by 10% every year. In the past five years, Civic Works has doubled its number of trainees at the Center, from 60 in 2014-2015 to 120 in 2019, holding to the tenant that it is wise to grow at a slow pace.

*“There are not enough instructors—we don’t have a bench...it’s hard to find folks that match.”*  
 – Workforce development practitioner

To expand at scale, it is likely that programs will need to broaden and deepen their employer relationships. Strong employer relationships in an industry sector are the cornerstone of effective industry-sector workforce development. Deep and meaningful engagement ensures that programming meets real industry need, and allows for placement into paid work experiences (such as internships) and jobs. The work of building and sustaining employer partnerships is time- and staff-intensive. Organizations with strong employer relationships may provide these partners with multiple services such as opportunities to network with employers in their sector, assessment of industry hiring needs, providing or brokering incumbent worker or new entrant training services, development of career advancement maps, screening and referral of job candidates, and more. In turn, deeply engaged employer partners participate in the work of workforce development by contributing regularly to strategic decision-making; providing resources such as funding, classroom space, equipment, or guest instructors; hiring individuals and offering other forms of work experience such as paid internships; working to improve their own internal employment policies and practices to address racial and gender equity or improve job quality; and/or engaging with programs in efforts to change external policies to help eliminate barriers to employment (such as advocating for transportation solutions or expungement policies).

*“During a cohort, trainees get to work with employers. Employer panels give them exposure. Employers are invited to speak to the class. This helps initiate job placement relationships. [Our organization] has a great reputation with employers. They want our interns because they know this will give them first dibs on good candidates. Employers call us to tell us what their needs are.”* – Workforce development practitioner

*“We have great employer partners... we know what they need. They tell us upfront. Students who complete are really excited to work and employers always want more graduates.”*  
 – Workforce development practitioner

Similarly, increased scale will require expansion of client supports that accompany skills training. Organizations interviewed consider that the success of their workforce efforts lies heavily on their ability to provide intensive case management, trauma-informed care, and high-touch barrier remediation services. These services contribute significantly to building what employers perceive as basic job readiness or soft skills. For example, behavior related to unaddressed trauma may be interpreted by an employer as poor work ethic. Tardiness related to lack of reliable transportation may be viewed by an employer as irresponsibility. At a minimum, case managers support job seekers by conducting assessments, developing individualized service plans, assisting with career planning, and motivating and supporting program participants as they progress through training and job placement. But many of the organizations interviewed also take significant steps to help job seekers become ready for employment by addressing deeper, underlying factors that could inhibit success. This can mean providing counseling to a grieving job seeker who has been touched by violence or spending a day in court helping an individual get a suspended driver’s license reinstated. One interviewee cautioned that “you don’t commonly find that level of high-touch service in programs that are taken to scale.” These essential services are critical to this work, but often suffer from lack of funding. Several interviewees expressed a priority need to expand case management capacity before taking on more participants, indicating that case management caseloads are already too large. The ideal ratio of case managers to clients and cost of service varies by program structure and client need.

## The three systemic barriers to scale that were most often cited by workforce practitioners interviewed were related to transportation, adult basic educational needs, and job quality.

*“It’s really good to look at market drivers and the employment market but the success of good sectoral training models depends not only on employer/ industry strategy but also and equally on the ability to provide high touch case management.”*  
– Workforce development practitioner

*“Funders will fund enrollment and completion but don’t always fund the other activities that are needed. Organizations struggle with the staff they need to get the work done... [Organizations are] always overworking their team.”* – Workforce development practitioner

*“In order to expand we would need one more case manager who could specialize in particular barriers such as housing. Case management is very draining. The problem with grants is that we have to decide whether to keep a case manager or add a job developer. The dollars don’t add up to meet the real costs...we are always leveraging staff between different programs to make it work.”* – Workforce development practitioner

### V. Issues External to Programs Pose Greatest Barriers to Scale

Some of the greatest perceived impediments to increasing the number of job seekers served through occupational training programs are external and systemic. Tackling these barriers requires intervention that reaches out beyond the provision of direct client services. The three systemic barriers to scale that were most often cited by workforce practitioners interviewed were related to transportation, adult basic educational needs, and job quality.

*“There is a whole population of residents that can’t access opportunities for one reason or another.”* – Workforce development practitioner

The lack of reliable and affordable transportation to jobs is one of the greatest obstacles to scaling up training programs. Programs know that they can train and place a greater number of program graduates, but they limit expansion knowing that graduates will be unable to get to their new jobs. A number of programs reported that job growth in their target industry sector is concentrated in surrounding counties and/or is not accessible by public transportation, a problem that particularly impacts the most economically distressed neighborhoods of Baltimore. The Central Maryland Transportation Alliance’s transportation report gives the Central Maryland region a failing grade for job access by transit, stating that a typical Baltimorean can only get to 9% of the region’s jobs in under an hour using public transportation (Central Maryland Transportation Alliance 2017). Where public transit does exist, it may operate on schedules that do not match with shift work or require multiple transfers, making trips inordinately long. Furthermore, many workers lack access to functional vehicles, affordable auto insurance, and driver’s licenses. Some interviewees noted that these systemic transportation barriers are racialized, most severely impacting residents of majority black neighborhoods. Therefore, efforts to increase the number of Baltimore residents who have access to family-sustaining employment require solutions based in policy and employer practice. Employers who want to attract and retain

employees should work on solutions with training providers through approaches such as subsidized vans/ride shares, shuttles, etc. They should also join forces with advocacy efforts to influence transportation policies and allocation of public resources in order to interrupt long-standing practices that geographically marginalize communities of color.

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*“Employers often complain that workers don’t come in on time, but it’s because they are dealing with the transportation issue. And buses don’t work for the night shift. Folks find themselves waiting outside at night for buses.” – Workforce development practitioner*  
 .....

Many interviewees stated that low literacy and numeracy levels pose the greatest obstacle to increasing enrollment. Eligibility for participation in many occupational training programs mandates a minimum score on a basic educational skills test. In sync with employer requirements, many programs also require a High School Diploma or GED. Yet, almost one in five African American Baltimore residents over the age of 25 lack a High School Diploma (American Community Survey 2017). When assessed, far too many training applicants do not meet minimum math and numeracy requirements regardless of whether they have completed a high school diploma or equivalency.

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**The following are examples of transportation barriers to scale cited by interviewees.**

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**St. Vincent De Paul’s Next Course** culinary program sees many opportunities in food packaging, but the jobs are in Jessup, Maryland, and transportation is an issue.

**Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake** sees expanding demand for IT workers in surrounding counties, but its graduates cannot get to the jobs.

**Civic Works’ Center for Sustainable Careers** sees regional job openings in stormwater remediation, but they are not in Baltimore City and are not transit accessible.

**CASA de Maryland** reports that transportation is the largest issue limiting growth. Most work opportunities are outside of the city. Where possible, staff try to coordinate with employers to meet workers at a train station. For new immigrants and refugees served by the organization, navigating the public bus system is particularly challenging.

The **BioTechnical Institute of Maryland** reports a growing number of entry-level laboratory jobs, but they are not transit accessible. Most participants have child care responsibilities and must work in a location where they can return to their child’s school in case of emergency.

**Project Jumpstart** could place more people into construction jobs, where project-based work roves from location to location, if everyone had a car.

Figure 4:  
Programs Reporting Unmet Entry Requirements, by Occupation

Programs reporting high demand for training from individuals who do not meet entrance requirements	Occupation
Bon Secours Community Works	CNA/GNA and patient care technicians
Caroline Center	CNA/GNA and pharmacy technicians
Civic Works	Specialized construction occupations
Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake	Building trades apprentices
Humanim	Administrative assistants
Maryland New Directions	TDL and hospitality occupations
NPower	Entry-level IT careers

*“One of the largest barriers outside of transportation is related to TABE [Test of Adult Basic Education<sup>3</sup>] scores. It is hard to find individuals for high skill-level opportunities. Many are not at a point where they can go on a worksite where they can be successful. We get lots of people with a high school diploma and low-level skills in the 4th grade range... People are disappointed to hear how low they score. [Our organization] puts two remedial state-certified teachers on staff to help people raise the TABE scores. They TABE test 250 people to find 20... [it’s] heartbreaking.” – Workforce development practitioner*

This situation points to the critical need for expansion of contextualized Adult Basic Education bridge programs that can remediate educational needs and connect directly to industry-sector workforce programs. Some organizations have built pre-training academic bridges into their programs. Other small pilots that extend these bridges to individuals with even more acute

<sup>3</sup> The Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) is used by many Baltimore-based occupational skills training programs to assess literacy and numeracy skills of prospective students. This assessment is used to diagnose learning needs and, for some programs, is used to determine eligibility to participate in training.

adult educational needs are being piloted but remain vastly insufficient in scale. In 2018, the South Baltimore Learning Center worked with seven Baltimore workforce development organizations to design and pilot customized pre-training Adult Basic Education (ABE) bridge programs, which included: the BioTechnical Institute of Maryland, Bon Secours Community Works, Civic Works, the Jane Addams Resource Corporation, Job Opportunities Taskforce-JumpStart, Maryland Center for Adult Training (MCAT), and NPower. Each new bridge program included instruction that was contextualized to the industry for which occupational skills training is provided. During the pilot phase, 56 job seekers were served. On average, students gained 2.6 levels in reading and four levels in math over an average of 30.5 hours of instruction. The pilot provided lessons that can lay the groundwork for the development and funding of future efforts.

It is also worth noting the ongoing debate about basic educational skills strategies. There are arguments for intensely focusing efforts on equipping more Baltimore residents with

high school diplomas required for career advancement rather than expanding shorter-term bridges to entry-level employment. On the other hand, some argue for efforts to move employers away from the practice of requiring high school diplomas and college degrees when such a credential does not necessarily translate to needed skills and serves to perpetuate racial disparities.

The scaling up of existing workforce programs is further constrained by concerns about the quality of available jobs, particularly with regard to wages. Within the same occupational categories, there can be significant variation in factors such as pay rates, access to employer-sponsored benefits, workplace culture, and opportunities for advancement. Workforce organizations may reject placement opportunities that do not appear to lead their graduates to family self-sufficiency. In particular, the problem of job quality arises for some programs that target industries where employers hire new staff through temporary agencies that pay below the standard rate for an occupation. Programs that train for entry-level occupations in health care and warehousing reported a particular struggle with job quality concerns and may turn away some lower-wage employers seeking to hire home health workers, nursing assistants, or warehouse workers from among their clients.

*"[We] will turn away employers that lowball. We teach what is a fair wage." – Workforce development practitioner*

*"People are working and it's hard. \$11/hour, the EARN threshold, is not enough to live on. How do we get employers to pay more or have advancement pathways?" – Workforce development practitioner*

Not only do the low wages paid to many entry-level workers fail to meet employees' family needs, but they can also trigger the sudden loss of income supports and public

benefits, as workers earn just enough income to exceed the maximum income allowed to still receive public benefits, thereby impeding the ability to exit poverty. Due to this "benefits cliff," low-wage employment that results in the precipitous loss of subsidies for housing, child care, or health benefits may have a neutral or even negative impact on total family stability and income.

*"Benefits cliff issues are big. Housing costs go up as soon as they get a job and lose benefits. Pending garnishments also happen right away out of first paychecks. Child care issues and expenses arise once they are employed. [Our agency] tries to prepare folks for this reality, but it's exhausting for anyone to handle all of this." – Workforce development practitioner*

Organizations such as the nonprofit Public Justice Center (PJC) are working to respond to this issue. The PJC assists health care training programs with presentations to current and former participants on workers' and tenants' rights. These presentations have led to numerous referrals to the PJC, as well as other organizations and firms, for various wage theft and housing issues, particularly related to home health aides. Through individual and group cases, the PJC provides front-line workers in a range of industries such as construction, health care, and hospitality with free legal representation, resulting in recovered unpaid wages and the establishment of legal precedent and procedure on behalf of workers. Workforce partner organizations sometimes contact the PJC when they suspect that an employer is violating the law. Further, workers continue to report that they have used the PJC's know-your-rights materials when deciding which agencies to work for, and in asking their employers about their pay practices. Additionally, the PJC advocates for state-level policy changes that impact front-line workers in health care and across low-wage industry sectors.

Noting that there are a multitude of public and nonprofit stakeholders in Baltimore’s workforce development landscape, many interviewees believe that increased scale can best be achieved through greater collaboration. This would involve co-creation of career pathways that link programs in a continuum of skills development and stacked credentials.

## VI. Scale Through Collaboration, Coordination, and Career Pathways

Noting that there are a multitude of public and nonprofit stakeholders in Baltimore’s workforce development landscape, many interviewees believe that increased scale can best be achieved through greater collaboration. This would involve co-creation of career pathways that link programs in a continuum of skills development and stacked credentials. In particular, there is a belief that more could be done to bridge nonprofit-based entry-level training to middle-skilled courses of study offered by community colleges. This hope for collaboration is bolstered by the emerging work of the Baltimore Workforce Development Board (BWDB) to spearhead a systems-building vision that supports greater coordination of services (more about BWDB’s Vision 2020 plan can be found at: <https://baltoworkforce.com/>).

.....

*“There are enough jobs and people to go around but we don’t communicate enough... We should be able to see how many IT jobs there are, what certifications are being offered, which organizations should do what so that we are not all doing the same thing but all fit together. We could each serve different candidates, and maybe provide different stackable certifications in the same field... An individual could complete a certification at one organization and then do the next stackable credential at another. There is so much more that we can do to coordinate the ecosystem.” – Workforce development practitioner*

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The Workforce Development and Continuing Education Division of the Baltimore City Community College (BCCC) is working to map educational pathways in eight career clusters that begin with short-term workforce development programs and can connect to credit-bearing certification and degree programs. Through this effort, industry certifications earned through workforce development programs offered by the college or other nonprofit organizations may be recognized or awarded credit to grant students advanced standing as they enter occupational skills programs on the credit side of the college. This strategy supports degree and certificate attainment by recognizing prior learning experiences. Additional efforts are underway to align related programs and experiences so students may bypass the Accuplacer skills assessment, which is used by the college to determine eligibility for placement into credit-bearing programs. Similarly, the college is exploring practices that would lead students directly into career-oriented classes without first requiring completion of developmental education (remedial literacy and numeracy) courses. For example, an individual who has completed a short-term EMT/paramedic program and has obtained the nationally recognized Emergency Medical Technician – Basic (EMT-B) certification may enter BCCC’s credit-bearing program in emergency medicine with nine credits applied to the paramedic program. The alignment

There are both immediate and longer-term opportunities to provide many more unemployed and underemployed job seekers and front-line workers with the services they need to enter into the labor market in jobs with career pathways.

of career pathway programs will reinforce specific academic and technical standards at each level so that upon graduation, EMT students will leave with college credits that can be applied toward an Associate's degree in Para-Medicine. As BCCC further develops these pathways, there will be greater opportunities for workforce programs that award industry-recognized credentials to partner with BCCC to help guide their clients toward additional post-secondary education and career advancement opportunities.

Across the larger workforce development landscape in Baltimore, the Systems Building Committee of the Baltimore Workforce Development Board is focused on "developing and implementing strategies to build a citywide coordinated workforce system." As a first step, the committee is working with the Baltimore Mayor's Office of Employment Development to build new access points into the workforce development system that are clear and accessible to job seekers. These will include in-person, internet, and telephone-based access to services that begin with standardized assessment and employment planning. The Board envisions a collaborative network of stakeholders within the citywide workforce development system, supported by newly established feedback loops, data sharing mechanisms, and convenings. The Practice Advisory, a practitioner-led learning forum for front-line and mid-level workforce professionals, has been launched with the intention of building organizational capacity and enhancing opportunities for collaboration.

.....  
*"MOED is working on Vision 2020. We need more intentional connections to that work. If you aren't a hub, it's been difficult to connect to the public system... It would be good not to create a new system, but to make connections."* – Workforce development practitioner  
 .....

## VII. Recommendations

There are both immediate and longer-term opportunities to provide many more unemployed and underemployed job seekers and front-line workers with the services they need to enter into the labor market in jobs with career pathways. Increased investment in robust sectoral workforce development programs that incorporate occupational skills training with strong supportive services would have an almost immediate impact on a significant number of individuals. Additional sustained attention to systemic issues through policy changes, support for related educational and supportive services, barrier mitigation strategies, and systems building are needed to fully seize upon opportunities to reach scale and increase equity.

The following recommendations emerged out of the interviews with the nonprofit organizations and community colleges providing workforce development services in Baltimore in response to questions about scale. They are organized into three categories: increasing investment, creating and enhancing tools and systems to maximize opportunities and efficiencies, and addressing system barriers.

Figure 5:  
Summary of Recommendations

<p><b>1. Increase public and private investment to grow what works</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Align philanthropic grantmaking.</li> <li>• Expand use of SNAP E&amp;T funding.</li> <li>• Create new Baltimore City funding pool to support sector-based workforce development.</li> <li>• Direct more public procurement dollars to vendors that include a job training and placement mission to their work.</li> <li>• Encourage and incentivize employers to co-invest.</li> <li>• Fully fund case management and supportive services.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Create and enhance tools and systems for greater effectiveness</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase coordination and alignment of efforts.</li> <li>• Build data systems to measure participation and impact in workforce programs.</li> <li>• Create accessible real-time labor market information tools.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Address major systems barriers to scale</b></p>	<p>Advocate for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation policies and solutions;</li> <li>• Adult basic education bridge programs;</li> <li>• Criminal justice and reentry reform;</li> <li>• Equitable job quality policies and practices; and</li> <li>• Reduction of benefits cliff effect.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>APPLY AN EQUITY FRAMEWORK TO ALL WORK</b></p>	

All of the recommendations must be fundamentally connected to a commitment to and strategy for addressing the structural racism that is at the root of persistent poverty and labor market disconnect in Baltimore. Approaches undertaken should be designed to advance the Baltimore region toward greater racial equity, defined by the state as when one's life outcomes cannot be predicted by race or ethnicity. This will include intentional work to consider the allocation of resources, development of structures and systems, and reconfiguration of public policies with a racial equity lens.

### **1. Increase Public and Private Investment To Grow What Works**

Increased investment of \$5 million over current funding levels could rapidly increase the number of residents receiving occupational skills training, supportive services, and job placement by about 1,000 people annually. Sustained investments could enlarge this number over a longer timeline. Interviews with workforce practitioners highlighted the short-range opportunities described in the chart on page 26.

It is important to note that most public- and private-sector grants provide one- or two-year investments. Workforce organizations are constantly in the process of fundraising to replace grants as they expire. To respond to the opportunity to extend training and employment opportunities to more Baltimore residents, current funders are encouraged to sustain and grow allocation of resources to these activities while helping to advocate for more local training dollars.

Increased public and private investment could be derived from the following set of recommended strategies.

#### **A. Align philanthropic grantmaking to enable innovation and sustainability of effective programming.**

#### **B. Increase public sector investment:**

- Work with the state to expand use of uncapped federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Education and Training (SNAP E&T) funding for provision of employment, training, and support services to SNAP participants in Baltimore City.
- Create a new Baltimore City funding pool to support sector-based workforce development approaches in alignment with sustained philanthropic support.
- Increase city and state investments in workforce solutions by directing a larger number of procurement dollars to vendors that include a job training and placement mission to their work.

#### **C. Scale up effective workforce development through alignment with and buy-in by employers in the region.**

#### **D. Fully fund case management and supportive services.**

**A. Align philanthropic grantmaking for innovation and sustainability:** Beginning in the mid-late 2000s, the philanthropic sector provided the resources to launch new sectoral workforce initiatives in Baltimore and has sustained investments over time. Philanthropy-driven innovation in sector-based training also has involved significant investments in generalized job-readiness interventions and the piloting of academic bridge programs, integrated community college programs, and pathways from secondary education into post-high school skills training. The Baltimore Workforce Funders Collaborative hosted by the Maryland Philanthropy Network facilitates grantmaking alignment.

**Figure 6:**  
**Programs with Potential for Expansion Within One Year if Funding is Made Available**

Organization	Cost per Participant	Potential New Slots	Cost PP * Slots
BACH (Medical Assistant)	\$9,000	15	\$135,000
BioTechnical Institute of Maryland	\$11,400	40	\$456,000
CCBC-Workplace Literacy*	\$5,500	150	\$825,000
Civic Works (Stormwater Remediation)	\$8,000	50	\$400,000
Featherstone Foundation	\$3,750	46	\$172,500
Goodwill (building trades)	\$3,200	10	\$32,000
Humanim (Admin Assistant)	\$5,000	10	\$50,000
Lazarus Rite	\$3,500	60	\$210,000
Living Classrooms		100	Through expansion of public work contracts
Maryland New Directions, Commercial Transportation Careers Fast Track	\$1,000	75	\$75,000
NPower	\$7,500	75	\$562,500
Per Scholas	\$8,000	30	\$240,000
St. Vincent de Paul	\$5,000	40	\$200,000
Urban Alliance (hospitality)	\$6,250	15	\$93,750
Urban Alliance (construction and surveyor)	\$7,500	40	\$300,000
Vehicles for Change	\$12,000	60	\$720,000
Year Up (supplement to employer sponsorships)	\$7,500	40	\$300,000
Year Up - Byte Back	\$1,000	120	\$120,000
Year Up (adding space)	\$1,500	80	\$120,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1052</b>	<b>\$5,071,750</b>

\*CCBC believes that it could expand its Workplace Literacy programs to serve as additional 500 students per year. Some subset of these would be Baltimore City Residents. The estimate of 150 used here may be an undercount.

Of the approximately \$26 million in grants for workforce development in Baltimore awarded by philanthropic members of the Baltimore Workforce Funders Collaborative in 2018, almost \$10 million was designated for industry-sector workforce development programming. Future sustainability and growth, as well as the emergence of new innovations in practice, will depend on larger and ongoing sources of aligned funding.

#### **B. Increase public-sector investment:**

Local, state, and federal dollars have access to public resources that dwarf philanthropy's potential investment. Public funding is playing a critical role in sustainability and growth. State agencies and programs such as Maryland EARN, the State Apprenticeship and Training Fund, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Education and Training (SNAP E&T), and the Health Services Cost Review Commission have helped build scale in recent years. Notably, the Maryland EARN program has awarded approximately \$8 million to Baltimore-based industry workforce partnerships over the three-year period from 2017 to 2019. The

SNAP E&T program has begun to support a small number of Baltimore's workforce programs by channeling federal dollars to support job training and support services for SNAP recipients. Although SNAP E&T match funds are uncapped by the federal government at this time, Maryland has not taken full advantage of millions in reimbursable funding. Specifically, in Baltimore, funds potentially eligible for reimbursement can include state funds (i.e., Maryland EARN projects in the city), local funds (small amount of city dollars spent on workforce services), or nonfederal funds (i.e., millions of philanthropic dollars spent in the city on workforce and related supportive services) put up by workforce organizations. One Baltimore for Jobs (1B4J), designed and led by the Baltimore Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED), was very impactful in spurring further innovation by testing a coordinated, workforce system approach by funding 17 sectoral workforce training programs and building better connections to community on-ramps and legal and child support services, but was supported with a nonrenewable federal demonstration grant.

#### **PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT**

**Living Classrooms' Project Serve** assists adults who are returning from incarceration with rapid attachment to work. The program begins to work with individuals while they are in the pre-release phase of their incarceration and puts them into paid work positions within a week of release. As a licensed general contractor, Living Classrooms obtains work contracts from the City of Baltimore and employs Project Serve clients for about four months on work crews while also providing case management that facilitates transition to longer-term employment. Project Serve currently has a city contract through the Community Development Block Grant to clean 4,000 vacant properties per year. Living Classrooms believes that it could serve an additional 75 to 100 individuals per year if it were contracted to double the number of properties served to 8,000. This would provide a needed city service that impacts high-poverty communities while also helping residents to stabilize and reduce recidivism rates. However, the current procurement process favors the lowest bidder, making it difficult for Project Serve or other similar programs to win contracts. Living Classrooms believes that the procurement process would produce greater results for Baltimore if it were to award points to organizations that include social goals and services for their employees along with the delivery of services.

Baltimore City could grow its support for this work through the establishment of a training fund that would build upon the successes of 1B4J.

Additionally, Baltimore City and the state could increase investments in workforce solutions by directing a larger number of procurement dollars to vendors that include a job-training and placement mission to their work. Social enterprises and workforce programs such as Humanim’s Details Deconstruction, Living Classroom’s Project Serve, Roca, and Civic Works’ Baltimore Center for Sustainable Careers all provide training and work experience to Baltimore residents through public contracts that provide needed services.

**C. Encourage employers to co-invest:** Employers should play a larger part in efforts to prepare more residents for current and future in-demand jobs. They can invest in talent development by participating in advisory boards that shape program strategies, offering instructional support, providing paid work experience through internships and apprenticeships, investing in incumbent worker training so front-line workers can advance, and making financial investments through corporate philanthropy and fees for service. Rather than paying a for-profit staffing company to find new employees, businesses

could offset some nonprofit training costs by paying fees for quality referrals and placements. Employer-led organizations including state and local chambers of commerce, the Greater Baltimore Committee, and numerous other business and industry associations should partner with workforce stakeholders to make the case for increased employer investment and disseminate tools that engage and inform the private sector.

*“In a job-readiness program, we can’t get people to be perfect. We need stronger employer buy-in. Employers need to be willing to make a little investment ... They need to invest in helping them adjust to the workplace.” – Workforce development practitioner*

**D. Fully fund case management:** Barrier mitigation and case management functions need to be adequately resourced as a part of increased scale. Employers commonly tell the workforce system that they prioritize “job readiness” and “soft skills” when hiring for entry-level positions. To succeed in finding and maintaining employment, individuals who have faced multiple personal and systemic barriers to employment are likely to need supportive services and case management to prepare to

#### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

**Year Up** utilizes a corporate engagement model to support and grow its youth-development programs. Employers partner with Year Up by providing paid six-month internships to underrepresented young adults. Nationally, 44% of Year Up interns are converted to hires by internship sponsors who benefit from the low-risk opportunity to screen and assess these new employees.

**Per Scholas** provides free training for in-demand IT occupations to open doors to technology careers for individuals from often overlooked communities. It has proven that it can offer value to businesses by helping them to access high-quality candidates and developing relationships with companies that care about a diverse and inclusive workplace. Recognizing that many employers are willing to pay talent acquisition firms for access to great candidates, the nonprofit organization is piloting a fee-for-placement model in Boston.

meet those employer needs. Simultaneously, industry-sector programs need to continually work with employers to create a better understanding of the structural obstacles that disproportionately impact residents who are people of color. Case management practices that are designed within a racial equity framework are in need of further development, while programs that target youth need additional specialized approaches linked to positive youth development theory. For this reason, barrier mitigation and case management functions need to be adequately resourced. With many programs reporting overstretched case managers, there is a need to boost funding to build capacity and support appropriate staffing levels before expanding programs to take in more clients. Among the practitioners interviewed for this study, there were differing opinions about a strategy that allows for shared resources for addressing barriers. Some noted the effectiveness of an approach undertaken through the 1B4J program where resources for barrier remediation (legal services, financial coaching, mental health services) were centralized and shared among workforce organizations. Others argued that barrier remediation and case management must be conducted within a holistic and integrated structure of the workforce program itself to achieve the best results.

Funders may also consider providing support to workforce organizations to measure and document the value and true costs of intensive case management. Some innovative strategies for measuring impact of this work are currently emerging in Baltimore and may merit more attention. Examples include approaches used by the Center for Urban Families and Roca to track and document psycho-social interventions and outcomes. The Center for Urban Families' self-sufficiency matrix is used as both an assessment and case management tool to measure and track client progress toward stability and to identify any potential crises.

## ***2. Create and Enhance Tools and Systems for Greater Effectiveness***

Greater scale is best reached through a systems approach that is data-informed and allows for programs to connect along career pathways.

- A. Increase coordination and alignment of career pathway efforts.**
- B. Build data systems to measure participation and impact in workforce programs.**
- C. Create accessible real-time labor market information tools.**

### **PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT**

Since early 2019, the **Center for Urban Families (CFUF)** has been assessing the needs of its clients along 10 dimensions of self-sufficiency related to well-known barriers to family stability and economic success such as housing, transportation, and education. For each of these dimensions, the assessment tool helps to categorize an individual's place on a five-point scale ranging from "in crisis" to "thriving." CFUF plans to re-assess these clients at six-month intervals for up to five years, during which time, case managers and clients can work together to set goals and implement strategies to overcome these barriers. CFUF believes that the data collected will drive continuous improvement within the organization and provide multi-dimensional evidence of the impact of CFUF's programs on families over time.

### **A: Coordinate and align career pathway efforts:**

Many of the stakeholders interviewed recommend greater coordination among nonprofit workforce programs and the two local community colleges, particularly to implement career pathways from entry-level training programs into middle-skill occupational tracks. In some sectors, they pointed to opportunities for entry-level programs within a single industry sector to specialize by population groups, program design, or occupational specialization. For example, one construction program might develop special competencies for serving youth while another construction program might focus on the needs of returning citizens. Likewise, one culinary program might train for high-pressure restaurant careers while another could be geared toward hospital-based dietary aid occupations.

Interviewees also called for greater development of career pathways from entry-level training programs delivered by nonprofit community organizations into middle-skill occupational tracks at the community colleges. Industry sector-based workgroups could be established to map out possible connections and lattices among workforce development organizations, the community colleges, employers, and the public workforce system. It was generally felt

that community colleges are uniquely well-positioned to focus on middle-skill occupations, while community-based organizations are able to connect to job seekers at the neighborhood level and are more likely to be able to provide quality case management and job-placement services. In some sectors, it is a huge jump to get from one rung of a career ladder to another, and new systems need to be put in place to enable advancement. Apprenticeships and incumbent worker training approaches can be expanded to meet that need. For example, the Center for Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning at Jobs for the Future (<https://center4apprenticeship.jff.org>) provides guidance on developing new strategies that help workers learn on the job; it has a particular focus on expanding such opportunities to people of color, women, opportunity youth, people with disabilities, and others who have traditionally been underrepresented in career advancement opportunities and well-paying jobs.

It was noted by several interviewees that the Baltimore Workforce Development Board is committed to a new workforce systems-building agenda that includes shared data, collaboration among systems actors, coordinated intake and

### **PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT**

The **Baltimore Culinary Enterprise Alliance** is a group of four Baltimore workforce development programs all of which provide skills training for employment in the food services and hospitality sectors. The group meets quarterly and held a kickoff event in February 2019. The Baltimore Culinary Enterprise Alliance was created by its members to facilitate collaboration. Members are working together to cross-refer clients interested in training opportunities and to engage with employers, building a coordinated resource for staffing. The group also plans to host networking events such as chef competitions, cooking demonstrations, and food shows. Catalyst Kitchens, a national technical assistance arm of Seattle-based FareStart, provided support to help develop the group and plan the kickoff event. Current members of the group include: **St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore's Next Course** program, the **Maryland Food Bank - Foodworks** program, **City Seeds**, and **Paul's Place**.

referral systems, and heightened employer outreach. As part of this agenda, a Practice Advisory (<https://baltoworkforce.com/practice-advisory-2/>) convened by the Mayor's Office of Employment Development and guided by nonprofit workforce practitioners provides a forum for peer learning and networking among workforce organizations. This leads to optimism about the possibilities for greater coordination among the many actors in the workforce system.

### **B. Implement data systems to measure participation and impact in workforce programs:**

An accurate assessment of the need to scale up sectoral workforce development program is hampered by the lack of good citywide data about the current number of individuals served and their employment outcomes. Several efforts are underway to address this problem and will need sustained collaboration and financial support to operate at scale. Data collected must be used to inform equity-based approaches that increase the ability of the workforce system to more effectively serve greater numbers of African American Baltimore City residents. The data system efforts underway include:

- The Baltimore Workforce Funders Collaborative launched a wage record study in 2018 with seed funding from The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation. The Jacob France Institute (JFI) at the University of Baltimore, which serves as the research partner for this study, is using state administrative data sources to analyze pre- and post-training earnings for cohorts of participants in 20 workforce development organizations. A wide range of participant demographics data are also being collected to enable an analysis of outcomes based on factors such as race, age, gender, criminal history, etc. This disaggregation of data will inform efforts to address inequities in workforce development outcomes. Current work lays the foundation for a system that will require additional funding for growth and sustainability.
- On September 21, 2018, a *Resolution of the Baltimore Workforce Development Board Requesting the Collection of Certain Grantee Data by Workforce Funders* requested that workforce funders, both public and private, require their grantees to submit an annual workforce participant outcomes report and a program profile to the BWDB. Through collaboration between the Workforce Systems Effectiveness Committee of the Baltimore Workforce Development Board and the Baltimore Workforce Funders Collaborative, a common reporting form for occupational training has been developed to meet this need. The reporting tool, which will begin to be rolled out in 2020, will facilitate unified data collection that builds the capacity of workforce organizations to engage in continuous improvement and equips the Baltimore Workforce Development Board and philanthropic investors with the information they need to make informed decisions. The outcomes report is based on a set of common performance metrics that have been approved by the Baltimore Workforce Development Board.
- Through a grant to the Baltimore Workforce Funders Collaborative from the National Fund for Workforce Solutions and the Ballmer Group, efforts have begun to design an integrated workforce data system that will provide information about interventions and outcomes to increase the employment and income of residents engaged with a continuum of workforce development services in Baltimore. It is envisioned that the Baltimore Mayor's Office of Employment Development will take on responsibility for administration of the data system as part of its systems-building work. Additional allocation of public resources will be necessary to fully develop and implement the data warehouse.

These three elements of data systems-building will function only to the extent that nonprofit workforce development

organizations have adequate technical and personnel capacity to collect quality enrollment and outcomes data. This will require investments and training at the program level.

**C. Build accessible real-time tools and training for workforce practitioners to understand and act on labor market information:** Decisions about the addition of more occupational skills training should take labor market data into account. Workforce systems stakeholders should participate in efforts by the Baltimore Metropolitan Council to build an interactive online tool for the Baltimore region showing career pathways including occupational projections, income data, and educational/work experience requirements. This tool should be designed to support Workforce Development Boards in the region as well as nonprofit workforce development entities, community colleges, and individuals. It can play a critical role in facilitating regional collaboration.

Industry-sector workforce programs must also continue to collect business-level information directly from employers about current and projected needs. Practitioners can look to the Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Healthcare as a model for bringing employers together in an

industry partnership model or to organizations that have built strong industry advisory councils such as Maryland New Directions or the Jane Addams Resource Corporation. Also, there is an important role for established employer groups. For example, the partnership between the Job Opportunities Task Force and Associated Builders and Contractors has steered the design of the JumpStart Pre-Apprenticeship Construction program. The Greater Baltimore Committee plans to augment labor market data analysis in progress by collecting real-time information on employer needs from among its business members.

### **3. Address Major System Barriers To Scale**

Advocate for changes to policies, practices, and budget allocations to address major system barriers to scale, including:

- A. Transportation policies and solutions;**
- B. Adult basic education bridge programs and funding;**
- C. Criminal justice reform and reentry;**
- D. Equitable job quality policies and practices; and**
- E. Reduction of the benefits cliff effect.**

#### **PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT**

Cities such as Louisville, Kentucky, and Minneapolis and St. Paul in Minnesota have developed recognized models for making labor market information available and actionable. In Kentucky, the **Career Calculator** is a free interactive tool that enables users to search current job and education data for the Louisville region by occupation, college major, and income. The Career Calculator ([www.Careercalculator.org](http://www.Careercalculator.org)) earned Louisville a 2016 Purpose Award from the U.S. Conference of Mayors. In the Twin Cities, the **Minneapolis St. Paul Workforce Innovation Network (MSPWIN)** funds the publication of quarterly sector analyses designed to help workforce system actors make informed decisions. For example, an Information Technology Summary Sheet shows demand data for IT jobs organized along career pathways as well as information about the number of individuals enrolled in related education and training programs.

.....  
*“The question of scale is a worthwhile goal, but you really achieve scale through policy change.”*  
 – Workforce development practitioner  
 .....

Many of the primary barriers to scale are imbedded in systemic issues that require action at a policy level. Making changes to reduce or eliminate these barriers will require investments in advocacy and community organizing undergirded with a racial equity lens.

**A. Transportation:** The lack of reliable, affordable, and equitable transportation to jobs surfaces as one of the most impactful obstacles to scale. Predominantly African American Baltimore neighborhoods with a high concentration of poverty have been historically and systematically disconnected from regional job growth centers by transportation barriers. Given that Baltimore’s transit system is run by the Maryland Transportation Administration and routes to work need to cross municipal boundaries, real solutions to the transportation problem require action at the state level. The 2015 cancellation by Governor Hogan of a partially federally funded \$2.9 billion plan to build a light rail (the Red Line) connecting high-poverty Baltimore neighborhoods to urban job centers carries a lasting sting. While true transformation of the existing transportation system cannot happen without large-scale public financing and planning, some more immediate small-scale solutions could have impact for trainees of Baltimore’s workforce programs. Some of these fixes include creation of a regional transportation authority, development of employer-sponsored micro-transit/van lines, car insurance premium regulations, access to free driver’s education and behind-the-wheel training, reforms to driver’s license suspension policies, and requirements that economic development projects include worker transportation assessments and plans. A number of Baltimore-based advocacy groups have outlined policy proposals that could advance these solutions including the Central Maryland

Transportation Alliance, the Job Opportunities Task Force, the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition, the Baltimore Transit Equity Coalition, and the Sierra Club.

**B. Adult Basic Education (ABE) bridges:** Many adult job seekers and learners need intensive literacy and numeracy remediation to qualify for occupational skills training, but there is a scarcity of resources to support academic bridge programming. In recent years, spending on adult education in Maryland has been adversely impacted by significant reductions in federal allocations. Meanwhile, Maryland sets the allowable average per pupil funding for Adult Basic Education at \$800 as compared to the national average annual expenditure per adult learner of \$1,021 (World Education n.d.), far less than what is needed to provide a necessary level of service. These funding levels must be expanded to meet the acute need for effective basic educational services. Additionally, Baltimore could benefit from the development of a citywide strategy for advancing adult basic education strategies. Specifically, there is a strong need to pilot and grow ABE bridges and integrated instructional models that create programmatic linkages between basic education and occupational skills training, incorporating instruction that is contextualized to industry sectors. Likewise, efforts to increase GED attainment among those who did not complete a high school diploma are essential to support career advancement past entry-level employment.

Recognizing the critical need to address adult education barriers, Maryland established an Adult High School Pilot Program in 2017 as an alternative method for adults to earn a high school diploma along with post-secondary credits and/or industry-recognized certifications. Subsequently, the state has approved two adult high school proposals for Baltimore. Unfortunately, no state funding has been allocated to enable their operation. A proposal by Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake to finance an Excel Center

## Making changes to reduce or eliminate these barriers will require investments in advocacy and community organizing undergirded with a racial equity lens.

(Goodwill's acclaimed adult high school model) in Baltimore through sales taxes from its nonprofit retail stores failed to gain traction in the 2019 State Assembly but merits a revisit in 2020.

Adult literacy and numeracy challenges are intertwined with public K-12 system outcomes in Baltimore. Complicated systemic and structural issues, some of which are rooted in racism, have led to the failure of schools to provide many students with basic skills prior to high school graduation. Leadership at Baltimore City Public Schools is seeking to develop and pilot new approaches to address skills attainment. Additional information about this challenge and recommendations for further action are included in a report on High School Diploma Attainment in Baltimore released by the Abell Foundation in 2019 (Holleman 2019).

**C. Criminal Justice Reform and Reentry:** Skills training and placement into jobs on career pathways is out of reach for many

black Baltimore residents whose prospects are limited by past encounters with the criminal justice system. A system of racialized enforcement of laws and judicial proceedings combined with the imposition of fees and fines on people living with poverty have resulted in a disparate impact of the criminal justice system on Baltimore City residents. This situation and a series of policy recommendations are laid out in "The Criminalization of Poverty," a report by the Job Opportunities Task Force (Job Opportunities Task Force 2018). Another report, "Opening Doors to a Second Chance," includes recommendations by the Coalition for a Second Chance for helping returning citizens obtain employment after incarceration (Greater Baltimore Committee 2016). This blueprint for action includes a list of high-priority actions that could be taken by the Baltimore business community and through policy advocacy.

### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

The first **Excel Center** was developed by Goodwill of Central and Southern Indiana as a free public high school for adults. While earning a high school diploma, students gain college credits and a variety of industry-recognized certifications in a specialized high school setting where students have access to on-site child care, counseling, and additional academic and personal supports. The Excel Center model has experienced incredible success with measurable impact in communities and is now operating 16 sites in Indiana. In 2013, the Excel Center expanded nationally with adult high schools in Arkansas, Tennessee, Texas, and Washington D.C. After a lengthy review of programming and curriculum by the Maryland State Departments of Education and Labor, Licensing and Regulation, Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake received approval to launch an Excel Center in Baltimore. Plans to open the school have been delayed while the organization works to raise needed funding.

The top-line conclusion is YES, there are both labor market demand and organizational disposition for the expansion of current efforts, and such expansion could result in more Baltimore City job seekers placed into employment.

**D. Job quality policies and practices:** In 2016, 26% of Baltimore City households earned incomes above the official federal poverty level but below a basic survival income (United Way of Central Maryland 2018). These “ALICE” households are comprised of individuals who are employed, but their earnings are insufficient to support basic necessities such as housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, technology, and taxes. Too often, front-line work is fraught with job-quality issues that may include poverty wages, lack of benefits and paid leave, health and safety issues, unpredictable scheduling, discriminatory hiring practices, hostile work environments, and more. Considering this reality, the work of poverty alleviation through workforce development must go beyond meeting current labor market needs to include efforts that help reshape the nature of entry-level employment. Oftentimes, policy change is the most direct method of prompting change at a systems level. Local groups and organizations such as the Public Justice Center, Maryland Working Families, and the Job Opportunities Task Force play a critical role in advocating for new laws, regulations, and enforcement mechanisms that address job-quality issues. In recent years, their work has led to worker-centered policies such as increased minimum wage rates and paid sick leave. It is also important to engage the business community and consumers in seeking solutions to job-quality issues. In Baltimore, the Good Business Works<sup>4</sup> initiative is

working to identify, promote, and grow socially responsible businesses by redirecting consumers’ purchasing of products and services, and by channeling public and private subcontracts to businesses that adhere to job-quality standards. More support needs to be given to policy advocacy, implementation, enforcement, and innovative approaches like Good Business Works to make front-line work better for more entry-level employees.

**E. Reduction of the benefits cliff effect:** Maryland should implement policies that reduce the economic shock of lost public benefits that is triggered when a household income rises. A forthcoming Benefits Cliff study commissioned by the United Way of Central Maryland and funded, in part, by the Abell Foundation, will provide a better understanding of this dynamic, demonstrating the core dilemma for scaling up industry-sector training and providing policy recommendations to address the issue by converting benefits cliffs into more rational benefits slopes.

## Conclusion

This report sought the input from a broad group of Baltimore-based workforce practitioners on the question of whether and how to increase the scale of current industry-sector occupational training programs. The top-line conclusion is YES, there are both labor market demand and organizational disposition for the expansion of current efforts, and such expansion could result in more Baltimore City job seekers placed into employment. For some organizations, this expansion could come about in short order if resources to cover costs are available.

<sup>4</sup> Good Business Works is a collaborative effort involving multiple organizations. Civic Works and the Baltimore Workforce Funders Collaborative jointly serve as the organizational home for the initiative.

This finding prompts a call for increased funding for effective industry-sector workforce development approaches including the expansion of local public-sector resources as well as investments by employers in target industry sectors and a true focus on equity as both a process and an outcome.

For others, expansion would require a slower process that involves more planning and ensures fidelity to the special combination of strategies and services that are fundamental to success.

This finding prompts a call for increased funding for effective industry-sector workforce development approaches including the expansion of local public-sector resources as well as investments by employers in target industry sectors and a true focus on equity as both a process and an outcome.

Notwithstanding this immediate opportunity, there are significant organizational and systemic barriers that must be addressed if Baltimore is to reach its full potential to connect residents with family sustaining employment and provide regional employers with the employees they need to grow in Baltimore. Organizations need support to expand their capacity, especially in the areas of instructional staffing, case management,

and employer engagement. At the same time, policy solutions are needed to address structural barriers that perpetuate inequity such as the lack of reliable and affordable transportation to job sites, the immense underfunding of adult education solutions, and the proliferation of low-wage work that does not support the basic needs of families.

If we believe that the future of Baltimore depends upon a thriving economy where good, family-supporting jobs are accessible to all residents—particularly African American workers who have been historically (and in many cases continue to be) excluded from the opportunities to build wealth—then these insights and recommendations, delivered by the expert practitioners at the front lines of this work, can serve as a guidepost for expanding the impact of workforce development efforts in Baltimore.

## About the Author

Linda Dworak serves as the Director of the Baltimore Workforce Funders Collaborative, a group of public and private funders which works to build pathways to family-supporting jobs for unemployed and underemployed Baltimore City residents while meeting the needs of the region's employers for a skilled workforce. With graduate degrees from the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs, Linda has served as Senior Consultant to the Aspen Institute's Workforce Strategies Initiative and currently sits on the board of two workforce development organizations.

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## Appendix B: Typical 1-year enrollment and outcomes by program

Organization	Program	Sector	Time period	Enrollments	Completion	Certifications	Placement	Average Wage	Cost Per Participant
BACH	EARN	Health Care	2017-2018	199	165	CNA/GNA, PCT, Medicine Aid, Phlebotomy	most were incumbent workers who received wage increases	\$11.50 - \$17.30	
BACH	Apprenticeship	Health Care	2017-2018	24	6	Surg Tech, Environmental Services Apprenticeship Certification		\$15-\$26	
BACH	HSCRC	Health Care	2017-2018	216	194	CNA/GNA, Community Health Worker, Peer Recovery Specialist		\$12.75-\$18	
BTI	BioSTART and Lab Associates	Biotechnology	2015-2018	149	115	115	0.77	\$14.21	\$11,400
Caroline Center	CNA/GNA	Health Care	2018	138	104	CNA/GNA	91	\$12.68	\$4,000
Caroline Center	Pharm Tech	Health Care	2018	76	57	Pharm Tech	40	\$14.66	\$4,000
CCBC-Connections to Employment	ACE	Various		237	200		151		\$5,500
CFUF	Strive Core	n/a	2018	400	180		93 initial + 104 graduates of other CFUF programs + 38 former graduates	\$12.20	
CFUF w/Habitat	Habicore	Construction		11				\$12.20	
CFUF w/ Baltimore Tree Trust	Urban Roots	Arborist	Annual Goals	12				\$12.00	
Civic Works	Center for Sustainable Careers	Construction	FY17	105	87	all 105 got at least 1	81	\$15.34	\$8,000 - 10,000
Featherstone Foundation	Reaching New Heights	Banking/Business Services	2018	12	9		7	\$13-\$26	\$3,750
Foundery	partnership with CFUF	Manufacturing	2016 - 2018	40				\$15+	
Goodwill	Pharm Tech	Retail/Health Care	2018	24	7 (13 still active)		4	\$14.00	\$3,184
Goodwill	Microsoft Tech Associate	Information Technology	2018	79	16 (50 still active)		11	\$14.66	\$3,625
Goodwill	Building Trades Pre-Apprenticeship	Construction	2018	9	9	(4-5 year apprenticeship)	9	\$15.43	\$3,200
Humanim	Admin	Business Services	FY 2018	30	23	19 Microsoft Office Specialist, 23 PACE admin cert of excellence	23	\$14.98	\$5,000
JARC	CNC	Manufacturing	FY 2018	36	0.65	NIMS 99% of Completers	80-85%	\$16.00	\$15,000-\$20,000
JARC	Welding	Manufacturing/Construction	FY 2018	33	0.65	1.7 per person + OSHA 10	80-85%	\$16.00	\$15,000-\$20,000
JOTF	JumpStart	Construction	2017	122	91	91. 100% get at least one, some non completers too	74	\$13.00	\$6,500
Lazarus Rite		Commercial Transportation	10/16-3/18	45	35	35 CDL-B	10	\$19.15	\$3,500
MCAT	CNA/GNA	Health Care	7/17 - 6/18	101	86	94 GNA	76	\$12.50 - \$13	\$2,000
MCAT	PCT	Health Care	7/17 - 6/18	8	8	8 CPCT	8	\$14.71	\$3,500
MND	CTC	Commercial Transportation	7/17 - 6/18	83	78	45 people earn 90 credentials	0.67	\$16.02	\$4,500 adults, \$6,000 youth
MND	MTDL	Maritime Transportation, Distribution and Logistics	7/17 - 6/18	78	70	63 people earn 95 credentials	48	\$13.55	\$4,000 adults, \$6,000 youth
Moveable Feast	Culinary	Culinary	2017	59	36	46 ServeSafe and NRF	30	\$13.31 - 14.48	\$3,500
NPower		Information Technology	7/17 - 6/18	106	80	72 CompTia A+	58	\$18.00	\$8,000
Next Course		Culinary	last year	120	67	67 ServSafe	55	\$11.75	\$5,000
Per Scholas	IT	Information Technology	2019 goal	60	51		48	\$17.00	\$8,000
Turn Around Tuesdays		n/a	2018		N/A	N/A	202	\$14.50	\$1800 to get job, \$2400 to retain for 2 years
Urban Alliance	Land Surveyor	Construction	Year 1	12	8	0	2	\$32,000 Salary + Benefits	\$7,500
Urban Alliance	Construction	Construction	Year 1	20	15	3	5	\$15.00 per hour	\$7,500
Vehicles for Change	Advanced Automotive	Automotive	2017	32	32	4-10 certs per person	32	\$16.98	\$20,000
Vehicles for Change	Entry Level Waverly	Automotive		11	11		6 in jobs, 2 in advanced training		
Vehicles for Change	Advanced Automotive	Automotive	2015-2019	120	97	4-10 certs per person	97	\$17.50	\$20,000
Vehicles for Change	Entry Level Waverly	Automotive	2018	25	25	1-2 certs per person	15	\$12.00	

## Appendix C: Occupational Demand as Perceived by Interviewees

Program	High Demand
BACH	Medical Assistant Home Health Aid Central Sterile Processing Medical Front Office CNA/GNA
Bon Secours Community Works	PCT CNA/GNA
BTI	Bio-manufacturing jobs
Caroline Center	CNA/GNA LPNs
CCBC Health/Human Services	Medical Assistant
CCBC C2E	Medical Assistances and Pharmacy Technicians Medical Front Office Diesel Mechanic Apartment Maintenance Technician
Civic Works	Weatherization and Solar (small but growing sectors)
Featherstone	Bilingual Retail Banking
Foundry	Welders Machinists
Goodwill Industries of the Chesapeake	Retail Pharmacy Technicians Building Trades Entry-level IT
Humanim	Medical Admin – Patient Access Specialist and Operations Manager
Jane Addams Resource Corporation	CNC Operators Arc Welders (demand is not high now but is expected to explode soon) Aluminum Welding
Project JumpStart	Construction-Licensed Tradesmen
Lazarus Rite	CDL-A CDL-B Waste Truck Drivers

## Appendix C Continued: Occupational Demand as Perceived by Interviewees

Program	High Demand
Living Classrooms	Patient Transport Hospital Environmental Food Service
Maryland Center for Adult Training	PCT / Nurse Support Techs CNA/GNA
Maryland New Directions	CDL-A CDL-B
Moveable Feast	Hospital Culinary Workers Line Cook Prep Cook
NPower	
St. Vincent de Paul Next Course	Line Cook Food Packaging (Jessup)
BUILD Turnaround Tuesday	Hospital Culinary Hospital Environmental Plumbers Helper Electrician Helper
Urban Alliance	Surveyor Technicians Entry-level Construction Hospitality Front Desk
Vehicles for Change	Auto Mechanic Automotive Tech Service Writer Body Shop Tech Parts Ordering Lot Attendant Diesel Mechanic
Year Up	Construction Supervisor/Management IT Cyber Security

\*Since these interviews took place, the Maryland Center for Adult Training has ceased operations, Moveable Feast has ceased to offer occupational training, and The Foundry has suspended operations pending identification of a new site.



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By Linda Dworak  
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### About the Abell Foundation

The Abell Foundation is dedicated to the enhancement of the quality of life in Maryland, with a particular focus on Baltimore. The Foundation places a strong emphasis on opening the doors of opportunity to the disenfranchised, believing that no community can thrive if those who live on the margins of it are not included.

Inherent in the working philosophy of the Abell Foundation is the strong belief that a community faced with complicated, seemingly intractable challenges is well-served by thought-provoking, research-based information. To that end, the Foundation publishes background studies of selected issues on the public agenda for the benefit of government officials; leaders in business, industry and academia; and the general public.

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