

# Investing in Youth Workforce Development in Baltimore City, MD

## American Rescue Plan Community Profile

June 2022 | Youth



### American Rescue Plan Funding

Total State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds in Baltimore City: \$641 million

Amount of State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Featured in This Profile: Approximately \$8.4 million<sup>1</sup>

### Project Summary

The [Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development \(MOED\)](#) has committed to expanding workforce development opportunities for youth via an \$8.4 million investment in the city's [YouthWorks](#) program.<sup>2</sup> YouthWorks provides young people with hands-on professional experience in addition to financial literacy and skills training. Baltimore City has coordinated this program for more than 30 years, making it one of the longest-running summer youth employment opportunities in the country.<sup>3</sup>

MOED Director Jason Cohen-Perkins and his team strongly believe YouthWorks and other workforce investments will greatly enhance the city's commitment to economic justice.<sup>4</sup> This summer alone, roughly 6,700 youth will be able to pursue summer employment and an additional 100 youth will be eligible for year-round work opportunities via the YouthWorks Academy.<sup>5</sup> These programs reach the most underserved residents including those involved with the foster care system and/or recipients of government assistance.

The YouthWorks allocation is part of a much larger \$30 million investment in workforce development and expansion.<sup>6</sup> MOED will oversee three other programs targeting under- and unemployed residents, including those who were formerly incarcerated and/or receiving public assistance. City officials anticipate this will produce positive outcomes for community members, including economic growth and skills building.<sup>7</sup> These

investments also align with Mayor Brandon M. Scott's five core pillars for building a better Baltimore. These pillars include

- building public safety;
- prioritizing youth;
- clean and healthy communities;
- equitable neighborhood development; and
- responsible stewardship of city resources.<sup>8</sup>

### Age Group Served

Youth, ages 14–21 years

### Funding Stream Used

Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

### Key Partners

- Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED)
- Baltimore City YouthWorks

### Local Perspective

#### Unique Challenges

Learning to balance competing priorities is one of the greatest challenges facing American Rescue Plan recipients, according to Perkins-Cohen.<sup>9</sup> He adds that communities across the country are in crisis and while it is critical to address local issues with immediate action, interventions need to be planned carefully to ensure they are meaningful, impactful, and sustainable.<sup>10</sup> Federal rules meant to safeguard funds can make it more challenging to plan and act accordingly. Both of these points make it challenging for local governments to take quick action.

## Ensuring Accountability

Baltimore City established the [Mayor's Office of Recovery Programs](#) for the purpose of managing the city's \$641 million recovery fund.<sup>11</sup> Director Perkins-Cohen notes that his team has worked alongside the Office of Recovery Programs to ensure that MOED remains compliant with expectations and requirements for American Rescue Plan subgrantees.<sup>12</sup>

## Lessons Learned

Director Perkins-Cohen emphasizes the importance of using American Rescue Plan dollars to invest in sustainable programs that align with the city's goals and vision for its residents.<sup>13</sup> He also stresses the importance of equity and social justice. YouthWorks targets those who need workforce opportunities the most, including youth involved with the foster care system and/or those from families receiving government assistance. As such, it serves as a model for how cities can best support residents with a history of generational and systemic disadvantage.

## Geographic Region

Mid-Atlantic United States

## Community Size

Total Population (2020): 585,708<sup>14</sup>

## Racial Demographics<sup>15</sup>

- White 29.7%
- Black or African American 62.3%
- American Indian and Alaska Native 0.3%
- Asian 2.5%
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander 0.0%
- Two or More Races 3.2%
- Hispanic or Latino 5.4%
- White alone, not Hispanic or Latino 27.3%

## Socioeconomic Status

- Median household income (2020): \$52,164<sup>16</sup>
- Children living in poverty (2020): 26.8%<sup>17</sup>

## Acknowledgment

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To view additional resources and find American Rescue Plan allocations for other communities, visit [childrensfundingproject.org/american-rescue-plan](https://childrensfundingproject.org/american-rescue-plan).



## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Jack French, “Mayor Scott Announces \$55 Million Investment to Put Baltimore Back to Work and Ensure Equitable Economic Recovery from COVID-19,” press release, November 16, 2021, <https://mayor.baltimorecity.gov/news/press-releases/2021-11-16-mayor-scott-announces-55-million-investment-put-baltimore-back-work>.
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>4</sup> Jason Perkins-Cohen, director, Baltimore City Mayor’s Office of Employment Development, personal communication, March 28, 2022.
- <sup>5</sup> French, “Mayor Scott Announces \$55 Million Investment.”
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>8</sup> Brandon M. Scott, “Mayor Brandon M. Scott Building a Better Baltimore,” December 8, 2021, [https://baltopi.shinyapps.io/action\\_plan\\_tracker/?\\_ga=2.262626507.671241478.1638811174-1216828783.1624554686](https://baltopi.shinyapps.io/action_plan_tracker/?_ga=2.262626507.671241478.1638811174-1216828783.1624554686).
- <sup>9</sup> Perkins-Cohen, personal communication, March 28, 2022.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>11</sup> Jack French, “Mayor Scott Establishes the Mayor’s Office of Recovery Programs to Manage Historic American Rescue Plan Investment,” press release, July 1, 2021, <https://mayor.baltimorecity.gov/news/press-releases/2021-07-01-mayor-scott-establishes-mayor%E2%80%99s-office-recovery-programs-manage>.
- <sup>12</sup> Perkins-Cohen, personal communication, March 28, 2022.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>14</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, “Quick Facts,” Baltimore City, MD, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/baltimore-citymaryland/POP060210>.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>17</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, “Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates,” Baltimore City, MD, [https://www.census.gov/data-tools/demo/saipe/#/?map\\_geoSelector=u18\\_c&s\\_measures=u18\\_snc&s\\_year=2020&s\\_state=24&s\\_county=24510](https://www.census.gov/data-tools/demo/saipe/#/?map_geoSelector=u18_c&s_measures=u18_snc&s_year=2020&s_state=24&s_county=24510).

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