


HHS COMMITTEE #2
April 27, 2012
Worksession

MEMORANDUM

April 26, 2012

TO: Health and Human Services Committee

FROM: Vivian Yao, Legislative Analyst 

SUBJECT: **Worksession: FY13 Operating Budget, Conservation Corps**

Those expected for this worksession:

Department of Health and Human Services

Uma Ahluwalia, Director
Brian Wilbon, Chief Operating Officer
Patricia Stromberg, HHS Budget Team Leader
Raymond Crowell, Chief, Behavioral Health and Crisis Services

Office of Management and Budget

Beryl Feinberg

The Health and Human Services (HHS) and Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committees met on April 20 to discuss the County Executive's FY13 operating budget recommendation to eliminate \$200,000 funding for the Conservation Corps program in the Department of Health and Human Services and replacing the program with the Student/Teen Employment program (STEP) in the Department of Recreation for a cost of \$315,296.

The Joint Committee recommended (3-2, HHS Chair Leventhal and Councilmember Navarro opposed) the following: (1) disapprove funding of \$315,296 for the summer Student/Teen Employment Program in the Department of Recreation; (2) establish a mechanism for carrying unexpended FY12 funding of \$190,000 in DHHS to FY13 to support the Conservation Corps program through a contract with the Montgomery County Collaboration Council; (3) adding \$315,296 in the Department of Health and Human Services to support Conservation Corps operations in FY13; (4) adding \$315,296 to the Reconciliation List for the Student/Teen Employment Program in the Department of Recreation.

HHS Committee Chair Leventhal clarified his position that he did not support adding the Student/Teen Employment Program to the Reconciliation List because he supported the County Executive's proposal for funding the program in the Recreation Department.

In following up from the joint meeting, the HHS Committee Chair and Councilmember Navarro circulated a memorandum (©1) on April 23 notifying Councilmembers that the HHS Committee would be taking the issue of funding for the Conservation Corps at the Committee's meeting on April 27. The memorandum explained that the Joint Committee meeting resulted in two irregular outcomes: (1) the Executive's funding recommendation for the Student/Teen Employment Program was placed on the Reconciliation List rather than getting an up or down vote, and (2) funding for the Conservation Corps program, which falls exclusively within the purview of the HHS Committee, was placed on the Reconciliation List even though the majority of the HHS Committee did not support the action.

The original packet for the Joint Committee with minor edits is attached at ©2-43 as background for the discussion.



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

GEORGE LEVENTHAL
COUNCILMEMBER
AT-LARGE

MEMORANDUM

April 23, 2012

TO: Councilmembers

FROM: George L. Leventhal *George Leventhal*
Nancy Navarro *Nancy Navarro*

SUBJECT: Conservation Corps and Student/Teen Employment Program

Dear Colleagues,

Last Friday PHED/HHS took up funding for both the Conservation Corps and the County Executive's proposed Student/Teen Employment Program (STEP).

The joint committee meeting resulted in two very irregular outcomes. First, the \$315,296 recommended for the STEP was placed on the Reconciliation List. The Council has traditionally voted, either up or down, any item proposed in the County Executive's operating budget. It is very unusual for it to be put on the Reconciliation List.

Second, funding for the Conservation Corps, which falls exclusively within the purview of the HHS Committee, was also placed on the Reconciliation List in spite of the fact that a majority of the HHS Committee did not support that action.

The two programs were considered together as an either/or proposition and should not have been. Therefore, the HHS Committee will be taking up the issue of funding for the Conservation Corps at our meeting this Friday, April 27 at 10:00 a.m.

We leave it to the PHED committee to determine whether it also wishes to review the decision to place the STEP on the Reconciliation List. If PHED chooses not to do so, we will raise the issue at full Council.

cc: Uma Ahluwalia
Vivian Yao

MEMORANDUM

April 19, 2012

TO: Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee
Health and Human Services Committee

FROM: Vivian Yao, Legislative Analyst

SUBJECT: **Worksession: FY13 Operating Budget, Conservation Corps and
Student/Teen Employment Program**

Those expected for this worksession:

Department of Health and Human Services

Uma Ahluwalia, Director
Brian Wilbon, Chief Operating Officer
Patricia Stromberg, HHS Budget Team Leader
Raymond Crowell, Chief, Behavioral Health and Crisis Services

Department of Recreation

Gabriel Albornoz, Director

Office of Management and Budget

Beryl Feinberg
Jennifer Bryant
Salem Pofem

Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families

Carol Walsh, Executive Director

Members of the Friends of the Montgomery County Conservation Corps are expected to attend the worksession.

I. FY12 BUDGET ACTION AND UPDATE

For FY12, the Council approved \$200,000 in the DHHS operating budget to support the start up of the Conservation Corps program with the understanding that the program would require \$500,000 to continue operations in FY13. The Council did not agree with the County Executive's recommendation to eliminate the program and shift the funding to the Department of Economic Development for youth workforce services through the County's Workforce Investment provider for youth.

The Council directed DHHS to review its previous efforts to procure a vendor to deliver Conservation Corps services, gather information about possibilities for improving program design and the Request for Proposal (RFP) process, and contract with the Collaboration Council to implement the RFP and contract with a selected vendor. The HHS Committee received a mid-year update from the Collaboration Council on its research and findings related to re-starting the Conservation Corps program (see ©4-9). The Collaboration Council concluded that the program was viable using the \$500,000 funding originally recommended by DHHS and the County Executive for FY11. The Collaboration Council also made the following observations:

- Problems with the County's procurement process in FY11 discouraged potential responders.
- There are local and regional providers with both the interest and skill to run a County Conservation Corps.
- The proposed target population should remain the same as the County-run program -- 17-24 year olds who have dropped out of high school and are otherwise disconnected and unskilled, e.g., not engaged in the workforce, low income, limited work history, poor basic skills, some having contacts with the juvenile/criminal justice system.
- The program should provide the following components: employment training and career guidance; academic education; workplace and life skills training; support with basic needs and social services; and stipends and incentives.

Executive staff, however, did not direct the Collaboration Council to solicit the RFP in FY12 because of lack of certainty whether full funding would be available to support the program in FY13. For FY13, however, the Executive has again recommended eliminating funding for the Conservation Corps program (©1). This time, however, the Executive has proposed replacing the program with a summer "Student/Teen Employment program (STEP)" in the Department of the Recreation and recommended total funding of \$315,296 (©2-3) -- an increase of \$115,296 over the Council-approved FY12 funding level for the Conservation Corps.

II. COMPARISON OF PROGRAM FEATURES

The following chart shows a comparison of key features of the Conservation Corps and proposed STEP program based on what is known about the programs to date. Details regarding the programs are more fully explored in the packet.

	Conservation Corps	Student/Youth Employment Program
Target population	High school drop outs, ages 17-24 years old, who are otherwise disconnected and unskilled, e.g., not engaged in the workforce, low income, limited work history, poor basic skills, some having contacts with the juvenile/criminal justice system.	Youth ages 16-19. Recruited from existing positive youth development programs -- Sports Academies, Youth Advisory Council, and partnerships with Hispanic Business Foundation, YMCA, MCPS, and other community organizations.
Other Available Programs	None as comprehensive. Few dropout recovery programs: Montgomery College's Gateway and GED programs, Youth Opportunity Centers and Maryland Multicultural Youth Center. The latter two offer job support services.	Many youth development programs. Some youth job training programs include: DTS Youth Media program (recommended in FY13), Maryland Multicultural Youth Center, Hispanic Business Foundation, Arts on the Block, Liberty's Promise, Future Link.
Model Effectiveness	Research-based outcomes. Met OLO criteria for best practice. County program had good outcomes.	Proposed program has some characteristics of quality based on available research. Program performance unknown.
Outcomes to be measured	Recidivism, GED completion or academic grade level advancement, job retention, post GED training/education.	Attendance, work readiness, work performance, training and skill development.
Annual County Cost	\$500,000 ¹ \$20,000/participant in start up year	\$315,296 \$5,255/participant in start up year
Potential Savings to Taxpayer	Direct taxpayer burden per opportunity youth ² : \$13,900/year and \$235,680/lifetime. Social burden: 37,450/year and \$704,020/lifetime	Unknown
Potential Revenue Sources	\$60,000-\$260,000 fee revenue from work performed. Other potential sources include AmeriCorps program funding through the State	Unknown
Participants	20-25 (start up year)	60 (start up year)

III. MONTGOMERY COUNTY CONSERVATION CORPS

The Montgomery County Conservation Corps was founded in 1984 and provided job, GED and life skills training for out-of-school and unemployed youth ages 17-24. Participants received on-the-job

¹ There may be some additional costs related to start up and storage of equipment. Some of these costs may be supported by in-kind support from the program provider or through other revenue generated by the program. The status of equipment purchased for the Conservation Corps is provided at ©10-11. If the Conservation Corps program is funded, the disposition of the equipment for program use should be made clear.

² Economic Value of Opportunity Youth by Clive Belfield of City University of New York and Henry M. Levin and Rachel Rosen of Teachers College, Columbia University, published in January 2012. The report is available for download on the website of the White House Council for Community Solutions: http://www.serve.gov/council_resources.asp#maincontent. See also summary at ©12-14.

training in conservation, carpentry, wood-working, and landscaping while earning an hourly stipend/wage. Corps members also had the opportunity to earn AmeriCorps educational grants through their participation in the program.

A. Conservation Corps Model Effectiveness

Abt Associates/Brandeis University Findings

Conservation Corps programs nationally have reported successful outcomes. A 1997 Abt Associates/Brandeis University random assignment study concluded that Youth Service and Conservation Corps generate a positive return on investment and the youth involved were positively affected by joining a Corps:

- Significant employment and earnings gains accrue to youth participants;
- Positive outcomes are particularly striking for African-American men;
- Arrest rates drop by one third among all Corpsmembers; and
- Out-of-wedlock pregnancy rates drop among female Corpsmembers.

Abt Associates attributed the effectiveness of Corps programs to several factors including the comprehensiveness of services provided, supportive and dedicated program staff, the quality of service projects, the intensity of the service experience, and access to Corps members of an expanded social network.

Office of Legislative Oversight Report on Alternative Education in Montgomery County

The Office of Legislative Oversight in its report on Alternative Education in Montgomery County (excerpts attached at ©15-20) reported that most alternative education programs serving at-risk youth in the County "focus on dropout prevention rather than recovery." The programs served less than 900 youth in FY12, which number is "notably lower than the 1,200 MCPS students who drop out of high school each year."

In evaluating whether the County-funded alternative education programs align with best practices, OLO found that the Conservation Corps program was one of the programs that "most closely align with the best practices for supporting student engagement" (©20).

B. Cost and Cost Effectiveness

The comprehensive nature of the Conservation Corps program results in higher costs per participant (i.e., \$20,000 at start up) than less comprehensive programs. However, when a young person fails to become a productive adult, the costs are far higher.

City College of New York and Columbia University Study

A recent analysis released in connection with the White House Council for Community Solutions explored the economic burden of "opportunity youth." Opportunity youth are (1) youth who have never been in school or work after age 16 (chronic) or (2) youth who, despite some schooling and some work experience beyond 16, have not progressed through college or

secured a stable attachment to the labor market (under-attached). Opportunity youth are "disproportionately male and from minority groups, but substantial rates are found for all youth groups" (©12).

The study found that between the ages of 16-24, the annual direct taxpayer burden, resulting from lost taxes, and government-funded expenses related to welfare, health care, and the criminal justice system, for each youth was \$13,900. The larger social burden, which includes all resource implications including lost earnings and productivity and additional costs related to crime and social supports, was \$37,450 each year. In addition, each opportunity youth over a lifetime imposes a taxpayer burden (in present value 2011 dollars) of \$235,680 and a social burden of \$704,020.³

Leveraging Other Sources of Funding and Revenue Will Reduce County Costs Per Participant

The decision to transition the program in FY11 from a County Government-run program to a public-private partnership was supported by the Friends of the Montgomery County Conservation Corps and recommended by the Corps Network, the national advocate and representative of the nation's service and conservation corps.⁴ The change in program structure would provide the opportunity to diversify and expand the program's funding sources and thus serve more of its target population, consistent with other Conservation Corps programs in the region and nationally.

The proposed structure would allow a private provider to seek outside sources of funding, including AmeriCorps program grants and private philanthropy to supplement County funding and thus lower the County cost per participant. In addition, Conservation Corps programs also use revenue generated by the work of Corps members to support operations. Indeed, the County program has been successful in generating fee revenue for work completed by the Corps.

The following table provides the annual fee revenue generated by the County program since FY97. In robust years, the County's program generated approximately \$200,000 annually in fees (and as high as \$260,657 in FY1999). Although the fees generated were returned to the General Fund as a part of the County program, the revenue generated from work projects under a private model could be reinvested in the program to serve more young people.

³ See pages 2,10-11, and 24 of the Economic Value of Opportunity Youth.

⁴ Correspondence expressing support for Montgomery County Conservation Corps program from the Vice President of External Affairs of the Corps Network is attached at ©27-30.

Fiscal Year	Program Budget	Budgeted Fee Revenue	Actual Fees Collected
FY10	856,730	50,000	60,151
FY09	843,450	80,000	90,654
FY08	797,220	160,000	86,996
FY07	796,720	160,000	69,974
FY06	756,910	171,740	111,772
FY05	725,790	197,400	198,169
FY04	698,220	197,400	145,461
FY03	872,720	220,000	124,946
FY02	858,110	220,000	211,134
FY01	839,170	200,000	210,650
FY00	812,740	200,000	215,432
FY99	817,480	200,000	260,657
FY98	757,920	200,000	240,761
FY97	702,820	410,000	141,598

The Friends Board of the Montgomery County Conservation Corps would also be a resource to a reconstituted program. **The Friends have continued to be strong advocates for retaining the program, and could play an important role in helping to generate private funding and CWEPS. See the testimony of Walter Wolfe, Vice President of the Friends Board at ©21-26.**

In addition, Council staff notes that the program also leverages AmeriCorps Educational awards for successful Corps participants through the Corps Network. These additional resources are important tools in connecting these young people to post-GED training and educational opportunities.

County Program Outcomes and Demand

Consistent with the reported successes of Corps programs nationally, the local Montgomery County Conservation Corps program has served a significantly diverse and at-risk population, provided a significant level of services to the community, and reported strong outcomes. Data provided to the Corps Network for 2009 reported that out of 52 members, 45 members belonged to minority groups, 26 were working toward a High School Diploma or GED, 18 received TANF/public assistance, 5 members were involved in the foster care system, 36 were formerly court-involved, and 18 were formerly incarcerated.

During 2009, MCCC completed the following achievements:

- 4,000 hours of education/tutoring;
- 18,000 hours of invasive species removal;
- 2,000 hours of environmental restoration;
- 16,000 hours of non-home construction; and
- 23,000 hours of misc. public land work, resulting in 1700 trees planted; 55 rainbarrels constructed; 13.1 tons of debris collected from streams; one screen porch for a senior center; one school renovation; and one 15-foot handicapped ramp.

Last spring, the program reported that 53 members had been served through March 2010 of the fiscal year. Out of the 34 members that were enrolled without a high school degree, 94%

either completed their GED or increased their grade levels by a minimum of two grades. Only one corps member that had formerly been involved in the justice system relapsed during participation in the program.⁵ There also continued to be a significant demand for the program; 68 young persons remained on the waiting list when the last cohort began in April of 2010.

IV. RECOMMENDED STUDENT/YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

The Executive is recommending the elimination of \$200,000 for the Conservation Corps program in DHHS and replacing it with \$315,296 in the Department of Recreation for a Summer Student/Youth Employment Program. Information responding to Council staff's questions about the program is attached at ©31-32. Executive staff explains that the program is an extension of commitment to support Positive Youth Development and is intended to serve a different population -- high school youth. The Executive "felt that increasing funding to the Conservation Corps in the face of continuing cuts to safety net programs was not a responsible use of County resources." (©31)

Program Components

Some of the program details provided by Executive staff include the following:

- The program will support 60 at-risk youth ages 16-19 at the High School level. They will not necessarily be adjudicated. Youth will be recruited from the Recreation Department's existing programs and partnerships.
- Program expenses will include \$99,296 in personnel costs and \$216,000 in operating expenses.
- Funding for youth stipends is approximately 350 hours (presumably per youth) of training and employment efforts for a total of \$168,000.
- Staffing for the program includes a full-time Recreation Specialist Supervisor and 1.4 FTE for seasonal staff. All staff will be required to go through Positive Youth Development and Advancing Youth Development core training and departmental training of policies and procedures.
- All teens will be paid minimum wage for all hours of work and training.
- Program implementation will begin in August 2012. The teens will work at Recreation Department facilities doing moderate landscaping, litter pick up and logistical support for special events. During the school year, the Department will work with other County agencies to identify future jobs.
- Training opportunities will continue every other Saturday during the school year. Youth training will include Environmental Education, Leave No Trace, Safety Education, First Aid, CPR, Financial Literacy, Job Readiness, Teamwork, Leadership Development and Customer Service and Time Management skill training.
- The program will track outcomes data related to attendance, work readiness, work performance, training and skill development.

⁵ The Civic Justice Corps nationally has reported a 10.2% recidivism rate, which is much lower than the prevailing rate for the general population of 50 - 70%.

Best Practices in Summer Youth Employment

Although Council staff was not able to locate definitive studies that establish the long-term effectiveness of summer youth employment programs, there is research that highlights standards, principals and practices for establishing quality youth employment programs. Council staff references the following materials for the Committees consideration: Building Effective Summer Youth Employment Programs developed by ICF International at <http://www.greenworkskc.org/Pages/photos/Building%20Effective%20Summer%20Youth%20Employment%20Programs.pdf> and PEPNet Quality Standards for Youth Programs published by the National Youth Employment Coalition at <http://www.nyec.org/page.cfm?pageID=116>.

Council staff highlights some key considerations for developing quality youth employment programs provided in these materials:

- Appropriately matching youth with limited skills and available jobs including having the right number of jobs for the number of youth to be placed.
- Providing opportunities for youth to develop competencies to secure and maintain employment; reinforce the connection between academic learning and work; and contribute to the program and community.
- Incorporating strong mentoring relationships important to helping students who may lack experience with key components of work success.
- Appropriate training of staff in working with youth from different backgrounds.
- Creating connections with community-based organizations to assist in the recruitment, screening, and placement of at-risk youth and referrals to supportive services.
- Opting for long-term, full-year engagement instead of short-term, narrowly focused programming, which does not meet the needs of disadvantaged youth or promote lasting results.
- Providing accountability in planning, implementing, and evaluating programs which accurately assess program benefits, including employment placement and retention, academic learning outcomes, and other youth development progress measures.

Additional Questions about the Proposed STEP Program

It appears that some of the characteristics of the recommended STEP program are consistent with those of quality youth employment programs. For example, the program appears to be a year-round program beginning in August and continuing through the year providing long-term instead of short-term engagement. The Department will be using connections with community-based organization (and other County departments) that may assist in various aspects of the program.

However, the proposed program appears to be in the early planning phase and complete information that would help to determine the presence of quality benchmarks is not yet available. Thus, Council staff raises the following questions about the program to better understand what is being proposed and better ascertain the likelihood that the program would generate positive outcomes for program participants:

- How many hours would students be working on a bi-weekly basis? How many hours in the summer?
- Will all 60 youth be performing service projects at the same time? What is level of supervision during each project (number of youth per supervisor) and in the program? How many adults will be working with the participants on an ongoing basis?
- What types of moderate landscaping will youth be performing? What equipment and machinery will youth be using?
- What are the criteria for accepting youth in the program? What attributes of being "at-risk" will the Department consider (to some extent all youth can be considered at-risk)? What attributes would qualify or disqualify youth from participating?
- Will the program be accepting adjudicated youth in the program? If so, what supports will be provided for them? Would there be any additional requirements or restrictions placed on their participation?
- What marketable skills development will the service projects support? How will the program and its service projects reinforce the connection between academic learning and work?
- Will the program track outcomes including employment placement and retention (outside of the program) and academic learning or performance outcomes?

COUNCIL STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Although the STEP program as proposed by the County Executive appears to have value, Council staff does not recommend using scarce resources to support the program at this time. Other programs across County Government, including the Conservation Corps, demonstrate a greater need and higher priority for funding. There are a number of options for positive youth development programming in the County. Moreover, Council staff believes that additional information about program implementation is needed to determine whether it is likely to produce strong outcomes and should thus be funded.

Council staff recommends funding the Conservation Corps program in FY13 for the following reasons:

- The program has a proven track record of helping out-of-school, out-of-work youth gain the skills and credentials they need to achieve economic self-sufficiency and become productive, taxpaying adults, thus avoiding potential costs related to reliance on public support and avoiding involvement in the justice system.
- The program serves one of the most vulnerable groups of youth in the County, who face many challenges in their transition to adulthood. Many have disabilities, have been involved in the justice system, and/or have been in foster care.
- There are few, if any, other programs in the County that address the comprehensive needs of this population and available programs do not meet the demand for services.
- The County can collect additional fee revenue and non-County dollars to sustain program services; support post-program training and education for program graduates; and defray County costs per participant.

- The program has the potential to perform valuable conservation services in the County and develop workers for green jobs of the future.

Consequently, Council staff recommends that the Committee: (1) not approve the \$315,296 identified for the STEP program in the Recreation Department budget; (2) request that the Executive enter into a six-month contract with the Collaboration Council before the end of this fiscal year to deliver the Conservation Corps program using the remaining FY12 funding allocated for the program and; (3) approve \$315,296 in the Department of Health and Human Services to support Conservation Corps operations in FY13 which would be administered through a contract with the Collaboration Council.

The remaining FY12 funding coupled with the amount originally allocated for the Recreation Department program would approach the full-year funding recommended by the Collaboration Council in its mid-year report on the Conservation Corps. Council staff notes that for FY14, however, additional funding of \$184,704 would need to be added to the program to maintain level services.

Behavioral Health and Crisis Services

FUNCTION

The mission of Behavioral Health and Crisis Services (BHCS) is to promote the behavioral health and well-being of Montgomery County residents. BHCS works to foster the development of, and to ensure access to a comprehensive system of effective services and supports for children, youth and families, adults, and seniors in crisis or with behavioral health needs. BHCS is committed to ensuring culturally and linguistically competent care and the use of evidence based or best practices along a continuum of care. BHCS works with the State's public mental health and substance abuse system, other HHS service areas, county agencies and the community to provide strength-based and integrated services to persons in need.

PROGRAM CONTACTS

Contact Raymond L. Crowel of the HHS - Behavioral Health and Crisis Services at 240.777.1488 or Pofen Salem of the Office of Management and Budget at 240.777.2773 for more information regarding this service area's operating budget.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Behavioral Health Planning and Management

As the State mandated local mental health authority, this program is responsible for the planning, management, and monitoring of Public Behavioral Health Services for children with serious, social, emotional and behavioral health challenges, and adults with a serious and persistent mental illness (SPMI). The functions include developing and managing a full range of treatment and rehabilitation services including services for persons with co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse disorders, homeless persons, and persons who have been incarcerated and/or are on conditional release. Services include the ongoing development of a resiliency and recovery oriented continuum of services that provide for consumer choice and empowerment. This program now manages all service area contracts as a result of the Service Area realignment. Juvenile Justice Services has shifted to Outpatient Behavioral Health Services-Child.

Program Performance Measures	Actual FY10	Actual FY11	Estimated FY12	Target FY13	Target FY14
Percentage of adult clients receiving services who demonstrate a higher degree of Social Connectedness and Emotional Wellness ¹	NA	76.5	76.5	76.5	76.5
Percentage of child and adolescent clients receiving services who demonstrate a higher degree of Social Connectedness and Emotional Wellness ²	NA	93.7	93.7	93.7	93.7
Percentage of offenders under age 18 who are diverted to substance abuse education or mental health treatment programs who do not re-enter the correction system within 12 months of being assessed compliant with requirements ³	92	88	89.8	89.8	89.8

¹ Results are calculated using Outcome Measurement System (OMS) data released by DHMH.

² Results are calculated using Outcome Measurement System (OMS) data released by DHMH.

³ The correction system refers to the juvenile justice or adult correction systems. Assessment is done to determine compliance with requirements. This measure is by definition a 12 month follow-up of clients, so actual FY11 data reports recidivism rate of clients served in FY10.

FY13 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY12 Approved	9,138,840	22.30
Technical Adj: Federal Funding Portion from ADAA Treatment Block Grant to New ADAA Federal Grant	0	1.00
Decrease Cost: Eliminate Administrative Fee for Outpatient Mental Health Services Contracts	-59,140	0.00
Eliminate: Conservation Corps and replace with the Student/Teen Employment Program (STEP) in Recreation	-200,000	0.00
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs. Other large variances are related to the transition from the previous mainframe budgeting system to Hyperion.	-393,577	-7.80
FY13 CE Recommended	8,486,123	15.50

Access to Behavioral Health Services

This program area includes Access to Behavioral Health Services, as well as Community Support Services and the Urine Monitoring Program and Laboratory Services, which shifted from Treatment Services Administration. The Access to Behavioral Health Services program provides assessments for clinical necessity and financial eligibility for consumers needing outpatient mental health services including those with a co-occurring disorder, linkages to those eligible for the Public Mental Health System, or community resources.

	Actual FY10	Actual FY11	Estimated FY12	Target FY13	Target FY14
Percentage of County residents registered through the Department of Recreation by age group (55+ years)	4.5	3.3	3.5	3.5	3.5

¹ using 2010 census data

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND INITIATIVES

- ❖ Provide additional funding for an Excel Beyond the Bell program at Forest Oak and Neelsville Middle Schools in the Clarksburg/Germantown area. Excel Beyond the Bell programs will be provided at a total of five schools.
- ❖ Add funding for implementation of the summer Student/Teen Employment Program (STEP) to provide training in general landscaping, maintenance skills, and support for community based events. The program will be designed to reach those at-risk youth in school aged 16 to 19 years old.
- ❖ Provide funding for senior programs at the White Oak Community Recreation Center which is scheduled to open Spring of 2012.
- ❖ Provide funding for weekend and evening teen programs for Middle and High School students.
- ❖ Implemented three new pilot after school initiatives in partnership with the Collaboration Council. The program includes expanded programming, hot meals and a delayed activity bus transportation.
- ❖ Partnered with local non profit Commonweal Foundation to provide a broadened scope of programming for a summer camp at Long Branch Recreation Center which included arts, science, theater and swim lessons for all participants.
- ❖ Successfully partnered with Washington Nationals, Maryland National Park and Planning Commission - Montgomery Parks, Bethesda Kiwanis, and the Miracle League of Montgomery County to commission a fully accessible baseball field. Have begun to organize and program the field to provide a baseball league in the fall and spring for individuals with disabilities.
- ❖ Implemented a new quarterly program for Director Alborno to meet with residents in a town hall format in Montgomery County Community Recreation Centers in various strategic locations throughout the County.

PROGRAM CONTACTS

Contact Robin Riley of the Department of Recreation at 240.777.6824 or Jennifer R. Bryant of the Office of Management and Budget at 240.777.2761 for more information regarding this department's operating budget.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Aquatics

The Aquatics programs provide recreational, fitness, instructional, competitive, therapeutic, and rehabilitative water activities that serve all residents. The broad ranges of programming include lessons, instructional wellness classes, such competitive programming as dive and swim team. Facilities also host a wide variety of local regional and national events and competitions each year. The Department operates seven regional outdoor pools, as well as four indoor aquatics facilities, and a neighborhood spray park. The indoor pools serve the public 17 hours each day, 7 days a week, approximately 340 days a year. The outdoor pools and the spray park operate from Memorial Day through Labor Day weekend.

FY13 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY12 Approved	5,089,660	133.30
Eliminate: Maintenance Funding for the Piney Branch Indoor Pool	-20,000	0.00
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs. Other large variances are related to the transition from the previous mainframe budgeting system to Hyperion.	356,868	-11.69
FY13 CE Recommended	5,426,528	121.61

Countywide Programs

Summer Camps: The Department provides over 50 camps in Montgomery County for children ages 4-13 that are fun, safe, convenient, and affordable. Extended hours provide parents with opportunities to have children cared for both before and after camp. Holiday camps are offered during the winter and spring school breaks.

Summer Fun Centers is a seven-week program in the summer for youth ages 5 to 12 years. This program serves as a neighborhood drop-in program where children may come for the entire seven weeks or they may choose the days they would like to participate in activities like arts and crafts, sports, nature activities, and games.

Youth Winter Basketball remains to be one of the Recreation Department's premier youth activities. Approximately 10,000 youth take part in healthy activities twice a week.

Teens: Sports Academies and Rec Extra are Teen activities provided in cooperation with the County's schools and the Collaboration Council. These programs take place during after school hours in selected High School and Middle Schools; providing safe environments for youth to engage in a sport or other leisure activity such as arts, fitness, dance, special interest, and leadership skills development. Other teen programming includes a Teen Café, sports tournaments, and the Youth Advisory Committee. These programs are part of the County Executive's Positive Youth Development Initiative.

The Sports program administers and delivers extensive programs in adult sports and select youth leagues throughout the County. For adults, competitive leagues and tournaments are offered seasonally in soccer, basketball, and softball.

The Classes program offers recreational and skill development classes for all ages. Leisure classes are scheduled and advertised four times each year in arts, crafts, exercise, music, performing and social dance, and special interest areas. Sports instruction is offered in basketball, fencing, soccer, and martial arts. Special intensive schools and clinics are also offered during school vacation times. The Classes program also provides "Tiny Tot" classes: recreational, social, and early childhood development activities for children ages one to five years, incorporating child-parent interaction, creativity, independence, fitness, and wholesome fun.

Trips and Tours offers a variety of trips, activities, and excursions to cultural arts centers, athletic venues, and destinations of interest for Seniors, Adults, Families, and Teens.

FY13 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY12 Approved	2,410,670	38.60
Add: Student/Teen Employment Program (STEP) in Summer	315,296	2.40
Enhance: Program in Clarksburg/Germantown - Excel Beyond the Bell at Forest Oak and Neelsville Middle Schools	213,680	4.20
Enhance: Weekend/Evening Teen Programs for Middle and High School Students Countywide	128,000	3.00
Decrease Cost: Elimination of One-Time Items Approved in FY12	-101,200	0.00
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs. Other large variances are related to the transition from the previous mainframe budgeting system to Hyperion.	4,337,121	29.25
FY13 CE Recommended	7,303,567	77.45

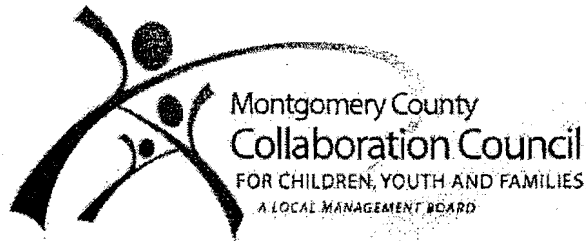
Notes: As the result of several reorganizations over the past three years the multi-program adjustments include alignment of the FY13 budget to the current organizational structure.

Recreation Outreach Services

Events: The Department of Recreation coordinates special events and other activities which offer a variety of benefits including enhancing a sense of community, encouraging family participation, and providing a positive image of the County. These special events offer opportunities for interaction among the various segments of our multi-cultural community and provide a chance to celebrate our rich cultural diversity. Several of our Department's larger events are the Fourth of July Celebrations; Pikes Peak Road Race, Silver Spring Jazz Festival and the annual Thanksgiving Parade.

Partnerships: The Department partners with many County and outside agencies and organizations to provide various leisure opportunities for the residents of the County. More formal partnerships/contracts include the Arts and Humanities Council, Public Arts Trust, BlackRock Center for the Arts, YMCA and others.

Services to Special Populations: The Therapeutic Recreation Team provides accessible leisure, educational and personal development activities for individuals with disabilities through mainstreaming and adaptive programs. The Department has staff trained who develop and implement accessible leisure, educational, and personal skill development activities for individuals with disabilities through mainstreaming/community integration and adaptive programs. The department offers programs including classes, camps, and activities which enhance the lives of individuals with disabilities and provide support for the families of participants, ages pre-school through adult. The activities available to residents with disabilities through the Department are often the only opportunities these individuals have for leisure activities since community options are limited.



January 11, 2012

TO: Uma Ahluwalia, Director, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
Raymond Crowel, Chief, Behavioral Health and Victims Services, DHHS

FROM: Carol Walsh, Executive Director, Montgomery County Collaboration Council

SUBJECT: Montgomery County Conservation Corps (MCCC)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 1984, Montgomery County government operated the Conservation Corps (MCCC). For FY2011, the County Council approved a budget that included the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) contracting with a nonprofit organization to operate the Corps. However, the County was unable to secure a contractor. Services to youth ended in June 2010.

During FY2012 budget deliberations, the County Council again included funding to contract with a private provider for the second part of the fiscal year, conditioned upon further analysis regarding the presence of viable bidders; clarification regarding target population and program design; and the cost of the program relevant to its impact. The Collaboration Council was selected to first do this research and then conduct the procurement process, based on the approval to proceed given this new information.

To respond to the County Council's directive, the Collaboration Council took a broad and comprehensive approach to gathering information including focus groups of potential providers and historic partners to the Corps; consultations with The Corps Network on standards, model programs, and AmeriCorps requirements; site visits to nearby Corps programs, and reviews of literature on effective practices and policies and costs. Raymond Crowel, Chief, Behavioral Health and Victims Services and Teresa Bennett, Child and Adolescent Services from DHHS and Vivian Yao, Montgomery County Council Legislative Analyst participated in several of these activities.

Purpose of the Report

This report is to update the Council on the DHHS and Collaboration Council's work to analyze the reestablishment of a Conservation Corps in Montgomery County. The report includes this executive summary that provides top level findings, conclusions and recommendations for next steps followed by a full report with more detailed discussion.

The report addresses three questions posed by the County Council:

1. Are there private providers who have both the interest and the capacity to successfully operate a County Conservation Corps?
2. How should the Corps be structured to ensure its success in positive youth outcomes?
3. What are the best estimates of cost to establish and maintain a viable Conservation Corps relative to its impact?

1. Are there private providers who have both the interest and the capacity to successfully operate a County Conservation Corps?

Findings:

While there are potential providers who would be interested in bidding, there are process and scope issues that need to be addressed. For example, the FY2011 RFP was found to be overly prescriptive and complex. Requirements and deliverables seemed too extensive and broad especially at the outset of a new initiative. At the same time there was not good clarity around a number of key issues such as the AmeriCorps requirements, the availability of equipment and vehicles, and work projects with county departments. These and other issues such as clarifying the role of the Friends of the Conservation Corps will need to be addressed in the RFP process.

Conclusions:

There are local and regional providers with both the interest and skill to run a County Conservation Corps.

2. How should the Corps be structured to ensure its success in positive youth outcomes?

Findings:

In considering the structure of a Conservation Corps we examined a range of Corps programs across the country and conducted in-depth site visits to nearby Corps programs. We examined their target populations, program goals, program structure, and partnerships. We also looked at what the Corps offers participants in relation to their readiness to enter the workforce and complete high school (diploma or GED) and then move on to post-secondary certificates or degrees.

Target Population. We found that the educational level of Corps members varied greatly from pre-GED to college enrolled. The majority of young people being served were those who have dropped out of high school and are otherwise “disconnected”—not currently engaged in the workforce, low income with some having contacts with the juvenile/criminal justice system and illegal use of drugs. Family and other support systems also varied. A second consistent theme is the range of work readiness skills of participants. Many have limited or no work history and poor basic skills such as timeliness and organization. We also found that aside from an opportunity to gain skills and educational advantage, most Corps members come because they need an opportunity to earn money through weekly stipends. These characteristics of the target population mirror those of the former MCCC.

Program Goals. Formally referred to as Youth Service and Conservation Corps, the Corps goals have evolved from the initial focus on work experience and earning a GED to get a job to the current emphasis on increasing work readiness and career goal-setting to move into post-secondary settings such as trade schools and colleges. This evolution is necessitated by today's economy requiring workers to have occupation-specific training within and beyond high school in order to have an advantage at entering and staying in the workforce in either middle or high skill-level jobs. Thus Corps programs help disconnected youth to have a second chance to be re-engaged and remain long-term in the workforce. The prior MCCC did not clearly state the relationship of its required work projects to long-term career development and employment in job valued in the labor market.

Program Structure and Approach. Corps programs use research-based effective practices for serving older and disconnected youth where a set of integrated services are delivered within a positive youth development, strengths-based philosophy over many months. These services are job readiness training and work-setting experience, academic instruction for high school completion, life skills training, career

guidance, and linking with basic needs and social services supports. These services are delivered within a crew structure where typically no more than 10 youth work with an adult supervisor and role model. Individual Development Plans establish individual Corps member's goals and identify and track the needed activities and supports to achieve those goals.

Conservation Corps programs are typically structured so that Corps members can fulfill the requirements for earning AmeriCorps Education Awards. The prior MCCC participated in the Education Awards program. Corps members must have a GED or high school diploma and complete 900 hours of Corps activities to be able to use \$2,350 for trade school or college. This time requirement typically means that Corps members must participate in 35 hours/week of programming for six months. The Corps program itself must deliver 80% of its hours in work experience and 20% in education and training for an aggregate of those considered Corps members.

Partnerships. Corps programs have several partners, including other child serving agencies that refer youth; contribute to the Corps member's Individual Development Plan; deliver education and life skills training; and serve as work-sites. The prior MCCC had these partnerships; several agencies have indicated their interest in re-building their relationship with the new MCCC.

With work-based experiences as the fundamental activity, the primary challenge for Corps providers is to ensure that adequate work experiences are in place throughout the Corps member's enrollment. Since Federal AmeriCorps regulations stipulate that for-profit businesses cannot benefit from Corps work, the only sources of work must be government agencies and nonprofit organizations. When MCCC was within DHHS, it had strong partnerships with several County departments to perform an array of work services, either free or for a fee. These same relationships are essential to the private contractor.

Conclusions:

Target Population. The proposed target population will remain the same as previously served by the MCCC and stated in the DHHS RFP. The age range is 17-24 years. We also recommend that the Corps continue to serve persons who are pre-GED through those entering college or other training programs. See page 11 for detailed eligibility requirements.

Program Goals. The overarching goal is *Young people prepared and participating in the workplace.* Measures that will track this outcome for each young person will include:

- Increased academic credentials (high school diploma or GED, pre-GED progress, or post-secondary education and training)
- Increased workplace knowledge and skills readiness
- Develop career pathway plan especially in natural resources and environmental occupations
- Utilization of Education Award to continue on a career pathway post-Corps program

Program Structure and Approach.

Work Crews. During the first year, at least two work crews will operate, each with 10 young people assigned to an adult staff person. This small staff to participant ratio is needed, given the minimal work readiness, academic and life skills that Corps members will present. The adult staff person will have a mix of experience in working with disconnected youth along with knowledge of the specific work skills and content needed in the job sites. The number of crews can expand with the number of fee for service work projects.

Service Schedule. We also believe that a three-phase program that meets participants at their level of readiness and focuses on achievable and progressive goals will benefit participants. Consistent with this we strongly believe that the length of time of the program should be nine months, in order to give participants time to solidify their work skills and complete their academic goals. An example of a three phase program is: 1) all enrollees would participate in an orientation period, 2) followed by period that focuses on work readiness skills, improving academic performance and gradual introduction to the workplace; 3) with a final phase being increased work responsibilities and transition to post-Corps activities.

Program Components. An effective Montgomery County Conservation Corps should have four components:

1. Employment Training and Career Guidance – Corps members will participate in Corps Work Experience Projects (CWEP) that have been identified as needed by the county departments and other public agencies and nonprofit groups. The extensive list from the prior RFP will be honed down to a targeted group of CWEPs for which Corps members can be trained to perform well and safely and are aligned with current labor market needs within the Maryland State Department of Education's Environmental, Agricultural and Natural Resource Career Cluster. Examples of career options requiring an Associate's degree or less include Landscaper, Environmental Technician and Horticulturalist. Rather than having the Contractor build its own onsite career guidance capacity as required in the past RFP, the contractor will be expected to utilize the Workforce Investment Board's MontgomeryWorks One Stop Career Centers.
2. Academic Education, Workplace and Life Skills Training - Educational elements of the Corps must take into consideration the varied needs of participants. Each Corps member will be assessed to determine their academic level and goals. Education providers will hold appropriate degrees and certificates. While the Corps needs to address the educational needs, there is no hard and fast rule that requires that educational elements be provided directly by the Corps. For example a partnership with academic institutions could be established that would address the component either at the Corps facility or off-site. Complementing the training in technical work content is the training of Corps members in those workplace behaviors such as dependability and working as part of a team. The life skills training content will be responsive to the current set of Corps members' needs; activities will utilize appropriate curriculum and be delivered by Corps program staff, outside agencies and consultants or volunteers.
3. Basic Needs and Social Services - Each Corps member must have an Individual Development Plan which establishes goals within each of the program's components, including the array of housing, food, clothing, income supports, child care and other unique needs of each Corps member. The Corps should form partnerships with those public agencies (or government-funded private agencies) that have benefits for which the Corps Members are eligible.
4. Stipends and Incentives -The weekly participation stipends typically offered through Corps programs are essential to attracting and retaining Corps participants. Participants in AmeriCorps programs are not considered employees and therefore are paid stipends not hourly wages. A system of incentives, including increase in stipend amounts, can provide recognition and reward for positive Corps member development and performance.

Partnerships. As referenced frequently above, there are many opportunities for partnerships in each of the program components. It is our intent to identify those public partners that would be available to any contractor in the RFP. Prospective bidders will be encouraged in the RFP to form partnerships within a proposal.

3. What are the best estimates of cost to establish and maintain a viable Conservation Corps relative to its impact?

Findings.

Expenses. Start-up and annual operating funds are needed. In developing cost recommendations we examined the past costs of operating the Corps in Montgomery County as well as the costs and operating budgets of other Corps programs. Given the target population and the breadth and depth of services that must be provided for impacts, this intervention program has higher expenses. The Corps operating model calls for participants to work in small crews for an extended period of time to be most effective. This results in a higher per participant cost, estimated at \$22,000 (for two crews with 20 members total for nine months), including the Corps member's stipend.

In addition to the stipends, the operating costs are driven by a variety of factors including staffing, transportation, work-related equipment storage and maintenance. Some costs are relatively fixed and with the expansion of fee-based work and other grants, the per participant rate can decrease somewhat (for example 3 crews and 28 members) decreases the per participant to closer to \$20,000 including stipend. It is important to note that a separate start-up budget would pay for recruiting staff and purchasing new vans and other needed work equipment and program supplies.

Revenues. Corps nationally use a mix of funding sources including state and county government; Federal AmeriCorps program grant (different from educational awards); fees for work contracts; and private philanthropy and fund-raised dollars. Baltimore CivicWorks has been especially successful in creating a mix of funding sources and work projects that give flexibility to job training and financially support the overall organization.

Conclusions.

Expenses. The County funding budgeted for this year should be used for start-up expenses, especially purchase of vans and work equipment. Our estimate is that operating a viable Conservation Corps in the County will cost an average of \$500,000 year. Inherent in the procurement process is the objective of purchasing the most services for the least cost within the funding available. Also, Offerors that can bring additional resources will be favorably rated. And, further in-kind resources, such as storage space for the equipment and vans, from the County and others will help control costs.

Revenues. While we are confident that a strong provider can over time develop alternative funding streams, County funding for the Corps would need to be maintained at \$500,000 for at least the first two years of operation. It is realistic that a program of this complexity will require a least two service cycles to become stable and credible for expansion, especially in gaining more fee-based contracts for work projects. The Contractor will be required to apply for AmeriCorps program funds, during the first two years. As with other "friends" organizations, the Friends of the Conservation Corps would assist in generating private funding.

Specific Recommendations for Action

The RFP Process and Time Line:

Assuming the County Council and County Executive agree on funding for the Conservation Corps, we recommend that:

- An RFP be issued by the Collaboration Council with a target date for startup activities in late FY2012.
- The startup period is focused on putting in place essential elements of the Corps; staffing and training, procurement of materials, and working on establishing the partnerships and agreements, etc.
- The program would begin serving its first cohort of at least 20 youth in early FY2013.

RFP Program Design and Deliverables

The Requirements of the provider will be limited to the essential elements as detailed in this report but the processes and approach to accomplishing them will be less prescriptive. We will also ensure that prospective bidders are given support in understanding the AmeriCorps requirements and public partnership resources.

ITEM	QUANTITY
Large Sea Containers measuring 20'X10'	5
Wheel Barrows	5
Tree Hand Carts	2
Grass Spreader	1
Tree Watering bags	100
Band Saws	3
Miter Saws	3
Radial Arm Saw	1
Table Saw	1
Portable Table Saw	1
Drill Press	1
Woodworking Planer	1
Bench Grinder	1
Air Compressor	1
Portable Air Compressor	1
Portable Generator	1
Snow Blowers	1
1 Blower	
Assorted ladders	
Assorted Traffic Safety Cones, Flags, and Signs	
Assorted Fire and Garden Hose	
Circular Saws	3
Jig Saws	2
2 Belt Sanders	
Hand-held Orbital Sanders	2
Pneumatic orbital sander	1
1 Grinder	1
2 Pneumatic Impact Wrenches	2
Drills	7
Hammer Drill	1
Nail Guns (Pneumatic)	5
Screw Gun	1
Impact Gun/Fastener	1

Hand Tools	QUANTITY
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Mattocks	28
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Rakes	27
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Spades and Shovels	62
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Digging Bars	5
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Post-Hole Diggers	6
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Pitch Forks	26
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Claw Forks	3
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Hoes	11
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Tiller	1
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Scrapers	7
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Edgers	11
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Sickles	8
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Weed Wackers	2
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Sledge Hammers	10
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Pole Drivers	5
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Axes	5
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Assorted Saws

Assorted Hammers

Assorted Screwdrivers

Assorted Wrenches

Assorted Levels and Squares

Assorted Crow Bars and Cat Paws

Assorted Clamps

Assorted Rasps

SUMMARY

In their early adult years, it is important for youth to gain additional skills through further educational, training, and work experience. Yet, many of America's youth are neither enrolled in school nor participating in the labor market – they are not investing in their human capital or earning income. Their disconnection represents a significant loss of economic opportunity for the nation. This report examines the status of these 'opportunity youth'.

For the 16-24 age group, we estimate that at least 6.7 million (17%) are currently 'opportunity youth'. These youth are disproportionately male and from minority groups, but substantial rates are found for all youth groups. Opportunity youth may have dropped out of high school or college and been unable to find work; may have been involved in the criminal justice system; may have mental or health conditions that have inhibited their activities; or may have care-giving responsibilities in their families.

Some opportunity youth are 'chronic': they have never been in school or work after the age of 16. Others are 'under-attached': despite some schooling and some work experience beyond 16, these youth have not progressed through college or secured a stable attachment to the labor market. We estimate a chronic opportunity youth population of 3.4 million and an under-attached opportunity youth population of 3.3 million. Both groups are failing to build an economic foundation for adult independence.

The economic burden of opportunity youth is not just felt by the youth themselves. Both taxpayers and society lose out when the potential of these youth is not realized. Opportunity youth are less likely to be employed and more likely to rely on government supports. In addition, they report worse health status and are more likely to be involved in criminal activity. This has costly implications for taxpayers and for society both now and in the future.

Decisions made by youth have consequences for adult livelihoods: individuals with limited labor market experience in youth have lower earnings in adulthood; incarcerated youth who commit crimes find it much harder to get work after release; and youth in poor health may be unable to find work that offers health insurance. One key mediator is education. We estimate that the high school graduation rate of opportunity youth is 18 percentage points lower than the rest of the youth population. By age 28, only 1% of opportunity youth will have completed at least an Associate's degree; the rate for the rest of the population is 36%. Low levels of education in youth diminish economic well-being in adulthood.

We calculate the economic burden of opportunity youth from the perspective of both the taxpayer and society. We also calculate the immediate burden – that incurred when a person is aged 16-24 – and the future burden – that incurred over the rest of his or her adult lifetime. These calculations are derived from national surveys such as the American Community Survey and the Current Population Survey and from longitudinal surveys such as the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997, the Educational Longitudinal Survey of 2002, and Add Health. Longitudinal surveys allow us to follow actual opportunity youth as they age into adulthood and so we attribute differences in adulthood to youth behaviors. We calculate the lost earnings, lower economic growth, lower tax revenues and higher government spending associated with opportunity youth.

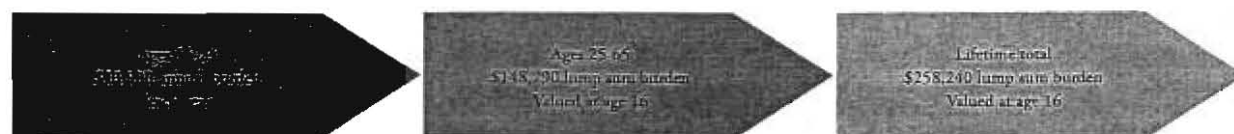
We estimate that each opportunity youth imposes – on average and compared to other youth – an immediate taxpayer burden of \$13,900 per year and an **immediate social burden of \$37,450 per year** (2011 dollars). These are annual amounts for each year that a youth is identified as having opportunity youth status.

After each opportunity youth reaches 25, he or she will subsequently impose a **future lifetime taxpayer burden of \$170,740 and a social burden of \$529,030**. Thus, the immediate burden is only a fraction of the future loss in potential: on average, only one quarter of the burden is incurred in youth (up to age 24); three-quarters is incurred afterward (ages 25-65).

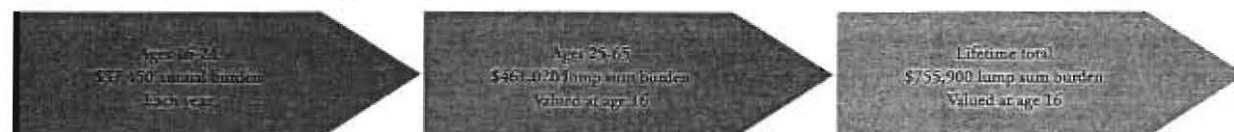
In total, a 20-year old opportunity youth will impose a full taxpayer burden of \$235,680 and a full social burden of \$704,020. These are lump sum amounts expressed in 2011 present value dollars.

The economic burden depends on the age of the youth. The charts below show how the economic burden is calculated for a 16 year old opportunity youth. There is a burden each year of youth (ages 16-24) and then there is burden as a result of lost potential in adulthood (ages 25-65). The lifetime total burden is the sum of these youth and adult burdens. The lifetime total burden is expressed as a lump sum, i.e. how the burden is valued when the youth is 16 years old.

Taxpayer Burden of Each 16 Year Old Opportunity Youth



Social Burden of Each 16 Year Old Opportunity Youth



For a 16 year old opportunity youth, therefore, the total taxpayer burden is \$258,240 and the total social burden is \$755,900.

The economic potential of an opportunity youth cohort is very large. Considered over the full lifetime of a cohort of 6.7 million opportunity youth who are aged 16-24, **the aggregate taxpayer burden amounts to \$1.56 trillion in present value terms. The aggregate social burden is \$4.75 trillion.** These costs 'roll over' each year because each year brings a new cohort of opportunity youth.

In order to draw on the potential of opportunity youth, it will be necessary to make cost-effective, targeted investments. Where such investments are effective, their economic value is likely to be substantial. But these investments will need to be targeted toward youth who are on the margin of education and work. Approximately half of all opportunity youth are chronic, i.e. they have almost no formal education or work experience between the ages of 16 and 24. These youth will require a substantial array of social and economic supports. The other half are 'under-attached' opportunity youth: these individuals are likely to have completed high school and may have participated in (but not completed) higher education; and they are likely to have accumulated some work experience. These under-attached youth are far from full participants in the economy but they may – given the appropriate reforms and supports – play a much more productive role.

We estimate that the total taxpayer burden for each under-attached opportunity youth is \$215,580. The total social burden is \$596,640 per youth. These figures represent threshold values for deciding on the optimal investment in such youth. That is, investments up to this amount to ensure that opportunity youth are fully productive would pay for themselves. Across the 3.3 million such youth, the total fiscal loss is \$707 billion and the total social loss is \$1.96 trillion (expressed as lump sum amounts at age 20).

Sensitivity analysis indicates that the immediate taxpayer burden per under-attached opportunity youth is probably higher than the estimates reported here.

Overall, the economic burden from failing to invest in all of America's youth is substantial. More education, better training, as well as social supports will be needed to alleviate this burden.

OLO's review of the research literature indicates that best practices in alternative education, dropout prevention, and career and technical education align with the rigor, relevance, and relationships framework for engaging high school students. The table below summarizes these practices.

Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships Framework to Engage Students

Best Practices to Engage Students	Practice Features	Examples of Practices
Enhance rigor of curriculum and instruction	High standards and expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality instruction • High expectations for students
	Extensive supports that enable students to meet high expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective classroom management • Social skills instruction • Summer school and tutoring
Enhance relevance of curriculum and instruction	Reflects students' interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice for students • Active, hands on learning • Flexibility
	Reflects students' long-term goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on career and college readiness • Career and technical education • Service learning/internships • AP/IB/early college experiences
Foster relationships	Connections to schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personalized instruction • Small schools and class sizes • Mentors
	Connections to community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental involvement • Collaboration with other agencies

Source: OLO analysis of best practices identified by National Research Council, 2003

LESSONS FROM OTHER COMMUNITIES – MULTIPLE PATHWAYS TO GRADUATION

In some communities, alternative education programs are part of a comprehensive service delivery framework known as “multiple pathways to graduation” aimed at reducing dropout rates, improving graduation rates, and structuring services for at-risk youth. This approach consists of a continuum of programs for re-connecting youth to education and employment. Towards these ends this approach typically includes two key components:

- An **education component** that expands educational program offerings to reach at-risk youth through: (1) the use of adequate “on ramps” or re-entry points for youth who detour from the traditional path; (2) customized services to address the challenges that can detour students; and (3) a mix of schools and programs that responds to the educational needs of disconnected youth.
- An **occupational component** to ensure gainful employment or access to career training for at-risk youth. Examples of this component include career academies, intensive career exploration programs, and high school reform models that emphasize career and technical education.

LOCAL ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

In FY11, three County agencies provided fourteen alternative education dropout prevention and recovery programs. Together, they served more than 14,000 youth at a cost of about \$28 million. (See page iii.)

The County current allocates more than 90% of its alternative education resources for dropout prevention. In FY11:

- Eight **dropout prevention programs**, administered by MCPS, served 13,000 youth at a cost of nearly \$26 million.
- Six **dropout recovery programs**, administered by Montgomery College and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), served 861 youth at a cost of about \$2.5 million. Enrollment in dropout recovery programs equaled about 70% of the number of youths that drop out from MCPS annually.

MCPS Alternative Education Programs Focused on Dropout Prevention

MCPS Programs	Program Descriptions	Enrollment	FY11 Budget
Alternative I Programs	Services for students with academic, attendance, or behavioral challenges	1,664	\$3,257,000
Alternative II and III Programs	Schools for students requiring additional alternative services or in lieu of suspension	450	\$5,042,000
Regional Institute for Children & Adolescents*	Special education school primarily serving students with emotional disabilities	152	\$3,326,000
High School Plus**	Credit recovery classes during school day	4,390	\$502,000
Summer School**	New and recovery credit classes in summer	5,911	\$1,829,000
Online Pathway to Graduation**	Opportunity for current and former students to earn up to 3 credits online for graduation	129	\$75,000
Vocational Education in Special Education	Pre-vocational training for certificate-bound students with disabilities	583	\$11,427,000
Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement	Vocational and academic program for ESOL Spanish-speaking high school students	30	\$267,000
Total		13,309	\$25,725,000

* MCPS share of funding; ** FY12 Data

DHHS and Montgomery College Alternative Education Programs Focused on Dropout Recovery

County-Funded Programs	Program Descriptions	Enrollment	FY11 Budget
Gateway to College (Montgomery College)	Dropouts and current students can earn high school and college credit simultaneously toward diploma and associate's degree	141	\$925,000
GED Program at Montgomery College	Placement testing, GED preparation classes, GED testing and post secondary support	127	\$49,000
Conservation Corps (DHHS)	Job training, stipend, and GED preparation	19	\$400,000
Crossroads and Upcounty Opportunity Centers (DHHS)	Variety of services for at-risk youth including dropout prevention and recovery	409	\$952,000
Maryland Multicultural Youth Center (DHHS)	GED preparation and job readiness programming for at-risk Latino youth	165	\$133,000
Total		861	\$2,460,000

Exhibit 21: Alternative Education Programs in Montgomery County, FY11

Program	Key Program Features	Enrollment
MCPS Alternative and Special Education Programs		
Alternative I	Advisory classes, supports, and consultations in comprehensive middle and high schools.	1,664
Alternative II and III	Second-chance schools for students (a) needing more supports than Alternative I or (b) instead of being expelled.	450
Regional Institute for Children and Adolescents	Day and residential school for students with emotional disabilities or placed by courts. MCPS and DHMH operate this school.	152
MCPS Dropout Prevention and Recovery Programs (FY12)		
High School Plus	Free credit recovery courses offered at comprehensive high schools (replaced Evening High School).	4,390
Summer School	Fee based new and recovery credit core/non core courses.	5,911
Online Pathway to Graduation	Online recovery credit and High School Assessments for current & former students who are three credits or less short of graduation.	129
MCPS Career and Technology Education Programs for Special Populations		
Vocational Education	Classroom and community based pre-vocational and vocational education for certificate-bound students with disabilities.	583
Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement	Career and technical education program focused on building entry-level job skills for Spanish speaking English language learners ages 18-21 who have experienced interrupted educations.	30
Montgomery College Programs		
Gateway to College	Two year dual enrollment program in MCPS and Montgomery College for students ages 16-20 who have dropped out.	141
GED Programs	GED placement testing, preparation classes, testing, and transition support for anyone age 16 or older who needs to complete a GED.	127
Montgomery Department of Health and Human Services Programs		
Conservation Corps	Job training, stipend, and weekly GED and computer literacy instruction to out-of-school and unemployed youth ages 17 to 25.	19
Youth Opportunity Centers	Services include case management, GED preparation, and workforce services. Identity, Inc. operates this program.	409
St. Luke's Transition Center	Assistance to 11 th and 12 th grade students with emotional disabilities to support the transition into adulthood.	89
Maryland Multicultural Youth Center/LAYC	GED preparation and job readiness programs for at-risk Latino youth. The Latin American Youth Center operates this program.	165
TOTAL		14,259

Finding 7. MCPS offers a wide variety of career and technology education programs. Students behind in credits typically cannot access these programs.

Career and technical education (CTE) programs are routinely identified in the dropout prevention literature as effective practices to meet the needs of at-risk youth. Empirical evidence has demonstrated that Career Academies and Talent Development High Schools that emphasize CTE are effective in reducing dropout rates and enabling students to progress in high school, particularly at-risk students.

MCPS offers CTE courses in all 25 comprehensive high schools, the Thomas Edison High School of Technology, the Needwood Academy, and RICA. The eligibility requirements for CTE programs, however, generally limit their enrollment to students performing at or above grade level.

As a result, CTE programs generally exclude the enrollment of MCPS students who are at the highest risk of dropping out. There are, however, two exceptions to this practice – vocational education for certificate-bound students with disabilities and the Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement (SEPA) program for Spanish speaking high school students with interrupted educations. Both of these programs provide experiential/job-based learning opportunities for students performing below grade level to support their transition into adulthood.

Finding 8. Enrollment in County-funded dropout recovery programs does not match the demand for services suggested by MCPS' dropout data.

In Montgomery County, most of the alternative education programs serving at-risk youth focus on dropout prevention rather than recovery. The enrollment and budget data for the six County-funded dropout recovery programs in Table 10 show these programs served fewer than 900 youth in FY11. This number is notably lower than the 1,200 MCPS students who drop out of high school each year.

Table 10: County-Funded Dropout Recovery Programs

Program	FY11 Number Served	FY11 Budget	FY12 Approved Budget
Gateway to College	141	\$925,000	\$948,000
GED Program at Montgomery College	127	\$49,000	\$59,000
Conservation Corps	19	\$400,000	\$200,000
Crossroads Youth Opportunity Center	308	\$502,000	\$502,000
Upcounty Youth Opportunity Center	101	\$450,000	\$450,000
Maryland Multicultural Youth Center	165	\$133,000	\$133,000
Total	861	\$2,460,000	\$2,292,000

BEST PRACTICES FOR ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Finding 9. Best practices for alternative education programs engage students by promoting rigor, relevance, and relationships.

The research literature on student engagement (National Research Council, 2003) identifies three best practices for motivating students to succeed in high school:

- Enhance the **rigor** of the curriculum by coupling high standards and expectations for student success with high levels of support to enable all students to succeed;
- Enhance the **relevance** of school by ensuring that curriculum and instruction respond to and reflect students' current interests and long-term goals; and
- Foster **relationships** to motivate students to succeed by connecting students to their schools and communities.

Together, these practices are known as the "rigor, relevance, and relationship framework" for promoting student engagement. The exhibit below describes the key features of this framework based on best practices for promoting student engagement. A review of the research literature indicates that best practices in alternative education, dropout prevention, and career and technical education align with the rigor, relevance, and relationships framework for engaging students.

Best Practices to Engage Students	Practice Features	Examples of Practices
Enhance rigor of curriculum and instruction	High standards and expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality instruction • High expectations for students
	Extensive supports that enable students to meet high expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective classroom management • Social skills instruction • Summer school and tutoring
Enhance relevance of curriculum and instruction	Reflects students' interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice for students • Active, hands on learning • Flexibility
	Reflects students' long-term goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on career and college readiness • Career and technical education • Service learning/internships • AP/IB/early college experiences
Foster relationships	Connections to schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personalized instruction • Small schools and class sizes • Mentors
	Connections to community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental involvement • Collaboration with other agencies
Source: OLO analysis of best practices identified by National Research Council, 2003		

Finding 10. MCPS' alternative education and career and technology education programs mostly align with best practices for promoting rigor, relevance, and relationships. MCPS' other dropout prevention efforts, however, do not fully align with best practices.

MCPS administers its alternative education programs to comply with Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) requirements. MCPS has not evaluated its programs to determine their effectiveness at improving graduation rates; it was beyond the scope of this project to discern whether MSDE requirements align with research-based best practices.

To consider whether MCPS' alternative education programs align with best practices, OLO developed a rubric to compare the "rigor, relevance, and relationship" framework to the key features of each MCPS alternative education program. Applying this rubric, OLO found that:

- MCPS' Alternative I, II, and III programs and Regional Institute for Children and Adolescents generally align with best practices for promoting student engagement. The only gap evident is whether MCPS' Alternative II and III programs reflect students' interests in short- and/or long-term goals beyond earning a high diploma and preparing for college.
- MCPS' career and technology education programs also squarely align with best practices for enhancing student engagement. One exception to this pattern is the absence of extensive supports to assist MCPS students pursuing career pathways to reach high expectations for student performance. Conversely, MCPS' vocational programs in special education and Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement Program each employ extensive supports aimed at ensuring students reach high standards and expectations for performance.
- MCPS' dropout prevention and recovery programs (e.g., High School Plus, Online Pathway to Graduation) focus exclusively on the rigor construct by providing students additional opportunities to master course content and earn their high school diploma. They do not address the relevance and relationship constructs to motivate students to succeed.

Finding 11. Three of six County-funded alternative education programs administered by Montgomery College and DHHS align with best practices.

The County funds six programs that provide dropout prevention or recovery services beyond MCPS:

- Gateway to College and GED Programs administered by Montgomery College; and
- Youth Opportunities Centers (Crossroads and Upcounty), Conservation Corps, Maryland Multicultural Youth Center, and St. Luke's Career Transition Programs funded by DHHS.

All but the St. Luke's program focus on re-engaging MCPS dropouts to earn their GED or to prepare for the workforce as part of their service delivery. To consider whether these County-funded alternative education programs align with best practices, OLO developed a rubric to compare the "rigor, relevance, and relationship" framework to the key features of each these programs. Applying this rubric, OLO found that the Gateway to College, Conservation Corps, and Youth Opportunity Centers most closely align with the best practices for supporting student engagement while the alignment for the other, smaller programs is not as strong. Like MCPS' alternative education programs, none of these County-funded programs have been evaluated to determine their effectiveness at improving graduation rates.

TESTIMONY OF WALTER WOLFE – 4/11/12

17
Conservation
Corps
V4
LHC

Good evening. My name is Walter Wolfe and tonight I am here in my capacity as Vice President of the Friends Board of the Montgomery County Conservation Corps (MCCC). Also, I want you to know that I had the distinct honor of directing MCCC from 1994 to 2001.

Tonight on behalf of the Friends Board I convey our disappointment at the Executive's proposal to discontinue MCCC in his FY13 budget. **I urge the Council to restore the Corps at \$500,000 in the HHS budget – following the plan that the Council established last year to establish MCCC as a public/private partnership.**

As you know, for 25 years MCCC increased the employability of unemployed, out-of-school 17-24 year old County youth by providing the opportunity for personal growth, education and skills training. At the same time, MCCC and its participants completed projects of real and lasting value preserving, protecting and enhancing the natural, cultural, community and historic resources of the County. Today, the County is well positioned to build an even stronger MCCC as a public/private partnership to help the most vulnerable young adults in our community forge a path to success.

As you may recall, The Council voted for partial funding for MCCC (at \$200,000) last year with the understanding that the program would require full funding (\$500,000) to continue in FY13. The Council funded the program because it recognized the value the corps offers the county. For example:

- o MCCC has a proven track record of helping youth prepare for economic self-sufficiency while completing valuable service projects in the County. MCCC completed the national Corps Network Excellence in Corps Operations (ECO) quality standards process twice in the last ten years.
- o The corps model is a nationally proven approach for helping out-of-school, out-of-work youth gain the skills and credentials they will need to become productive, taxpaying adults.
- o MCCC serves the most vulnerable group of youth in the County, who face a multitude of challenges in their transition to adulthood. Not only are all of MCCC's participants out-of-school and out of work, many also have disabilities; have been involved in the justice system; and/or have been in foster care.

As part of the partial funding last year, the Council charged the Collaboration Council with identifying the best strategy for operating MCCC in a public/private partnership through a nonprofit. The Collaboration Council produced a thorough report, drawing on lessons from national youth corps best practices, visits to corps programs, and assessment of an RFP process. Several County agencies expressed interest in continuing to work with the corps as it becomes a public/private partnership, including Corrections, DEP, and WSSC. The Collaboration Council report provides an excellent blueprint, putting the County in a strong position to continue to fund a successful corps. Our understanding is that the Collaboration Council can move ahead with an RFP for a public/private MCCC as soon as it is clear that funds will exist for the program in FY13.

MCCC represents a significant investment of County funds, but one that pales in comparison to discontinuing MCCC. The Collaboration Council report estimated that MCCC, like other effective corps programs that provide the comprehensive range of services and supports that the targeted youth need to succeed (such as GED, workforce preparation and life skills development), would cost about \$20,000 per youth. However, when a young person fails to become a productive adult, the costs are far higher. A recent analysis released in connection with the White House Council for Community Solutions found that each youth who is not in education, employment or training imposes over a lifetime, on average and compared to other youth, a direct burden of to taxpayers of \$235,680 and a wider burden to society of \$704,020.

MCCC is one of very few programs that works with County youth most at-risk of an unsuccessful transition to adulthood, and one of even fewer programs that align with best practices for engaging those youth. A report that the Council's Office of Legislative Oversight released last month (*Alternative Education in Montgomery County*, OLO Report #2012-4) found that:

- There is an unmet demand in the County for options for dropouts: the number of youth dropping out each year exceeded the slots in programs supported by the County to work with them;
- Out of just six county-funded dropout recovery programs, MCCC was one of only three that aligned with best practices for supporting student engagement, and
- MCCC was the only program studied that included an occupational component, which the report cited as a critical element for re-engaging dropouts.

As a public/private partnership, MCCC will enable the County to tap into additional revenue sources, bringing more funds to the county for vulnerable youth. The expectation of the partnership, as the Council outlined last year, is that the nonprofit provider would raise funds for MCCC from sources that the County has not tapped into previously. The Collaboration Council report details several of these potential sources, including fee-based service contracts (a common practice in other corps), federal funding, and private philanthropy. Additional funds would enable MCCC to grow to serve more participants and lower the cost per participant covered by the County.

MCCC also provides the County a critical access point for federal AmeriCorps education awards. MCCC was one of just two programs in the County offering these awards, and the only one working with low-income youth who are not normally college bound. Participants earned these awards through the hundreds of hours of community service they completed as part of MCCC, and could use them to pursue post-secondary education or training. The educational grants will instead go to youth in other jurisdictions if MCCC ends.

Investing in MCCC offers the County a dual benefit: helping vulnerable youth transition to productive adulthood while at the same time completing vital service projects, particularly related to environmental sustainability. MCCC's thousands of service hours each year encompassed environmental restoration, invasive species removal, tree planting, public lands conservation, environmental education, and much more. Discontinuing MCCC would deprive the County of a significant partner in its environmental efforts, as well as key source of workers for the growing number of middle level jobs in the County that require less than a two year degree, including many of the "green jobs" of the future.

I attach a document prepared by the Friends Board which outlines our key points in a bit more detail, including citations for the statistics and resources I have noted tonight.

The Executive's budget proposes to discontinue MCCC and shift \$313,000 to the Recreation Department for a new program to engage teenagers in conservation activities during the summer break from school. This new program would serve a younger in-school group of youth with different activities, and should not replace MCCC.

The Friends Board **urges you to restore MCCC in the FY13 HHS budget at \$500,000**, following the plan established by the Council last year. And as a public/private MCCC expands the program's revenue streams beyond the County government, MCCC will be able to help a larger portion of the 1500 youth that drop out of school each year to become tax payers rather than tax users.

Restore the Montgomery County Conservation Corps in the FY13 Budget: Key Points 4/11/12

The Montgomery County Conservation Corps (MCCC) seeks to increase the employability of unemployed, out-of-school 17-24 year old County youth by providing the opportunity for personal growth, education and skills training. MCCC also seeks to complete projects of real and lasting value preserving, protecting and enhancing the natural, cultural, community and historic resources of Montgomery County, MD.

The members of the Friends of the Montgomery County Conservation Corps (MCCC) Board urge the Council to restore the Montgomery County Conservation Corps (MCCC) at \$500,000 in the HHS budget – following the plan that the Council established last year to establish MCCC as a public/private partnership.

- The Executive's budget proposes to discontinue MCCC and shift \$313,000 to the Recreation department for a new program to engage teenagers in conservation activities during the summer break from school. This program would serve a different group of youth with a different mix of activities and we do not believe it should replace MCCC.

Following the plan the Council put in place last year, the County is well positioned to build an even stronger MCCC as a public/private partnership to help the most vulnerable young adults in our community forge a path to success.

- The Council voted for partial funding for MCCC (at \$200,000) in FY12 with the understanding that the program would require full funding (\$500,000) to continue in FY13.
- The Council funded the program because it recognized the value the corps offers the county.
 - MCCC has a record of 25 years of helping youth prepare for self-sufficiency while completing service projects of lasting value to the County.
 - The corps model is a nationally proven approach for helping out-of-school, out-of-work youth gain the skills and credentials they will need to become productive, taxpaying adults.
 - MCCC serves the most vulnerable group of youth in the county, who face a multitude of challenges in their transition to adulthood. Not only are all of MCCC's participants out-of-school and out of work, many also have disabilities; have been involved in the justice system; and/or have been in the foster care system.
- The partial funding included charging the Collaboration Council to identify the best strategy for operating MCCC in a public/private partnership through a nonprofit, and with identifying a vendor through an RFP process.
 - The Collaboration Council produced a very thorough report, drawing on lessons from research on youth corps, national youth corps best practices, visits to several corps programs, and assessment of an RFP process. The Collaboration Council report provides an excellent blueprint, putting the county in a strong position to fund a successful corps.¹
 - Several County agencies have expressed interest in continuing to work with the corps as it becomes a nonprofit, including Corrections, DEP, and WSSC.
- The Collaboration Council presented its findings to Council and the Executive in February. Our understanding is that it can move ahead with the RFP as soon as it is clear that funds exist for the

¹ The Collaboration Council presented its report to the Council at an HHS Committee meeting on February 9, 2012.

program in the next annual budget, since it would be difficult to attract applicants without knowledge of continued funding into next year.

MCCC represents a significant investment of County funds, but one that pales in comparison to discontinuing MCCC. Youth who fail to become productive adults represent a significant economic burden for the County. MCCC is one of very few programs that works with County youth most at-risk of that outcome, and one of even fewer programs that align with best practices for engaging those youth.

- As documented in the Collaboration Council report, running the corps model effectively comes at a significant cost per participant: about \$20,000 per year. That level enables optimum service, allowing for the comprehensive range of services and supports that the targeted youth need to succeed, including GED preparation; work readiness and life skills development; work experience; case management; and assistance transitioning to jobs and further education.
- However, when a young person fails to become a productive adult, the costs are far higher. A report from City University of New York and Columbia University, released in January 2012 in connection with the White House Council for Community Solutions, analyzed the economic burden associated with “opportunity youth” – youth who are not in education, employment or training. The report found that each opportunity youth imposes, on average and compared to other youth, a taxpayer burden of \$235,680 and a social burden of \$704,020, in today’s dollars. The taxpayer burden captured only resources for which the taxpayer was responsible, such as lost taxes and government-funded expenses related to welfare, health care, and the criminal justice system. The social burden included all of the resource implications of opportunity youth despite who “pays” for them, such as lost earnings and productivity and additional costs related to crime and social supports.²
- Very few other options exist in the county for out-of-school young adults, as documented in a report last month from the Council’s Office of Legislative Oversight (*Alternative Education in Montgomery County*, OLO Report #2012-4). The OLO report found an unmet demand for options for dropouts: the number of youth dropping out each year exceeded the slots in programs supported by the County to work with them.³
- The OLO report found that of just six county-funded dropout recovery programs, MCCC was one of only three that aligned with best practices for supporting student engagement.⁴ Further, the report noted that MCCC was the only program in its study that included an occupational component, which the report cited as a critical element for re-engaging dropouts.⁵

² See pages 2, 10-11, and 24 of *The Economic Value of Opportunity Youth* by Clive Belfield of City University of New York and Henry M. Levin and Rachel Rosen of Teachers College, Columbia University, published in January 2012. The report is available for download as a PDF on the website of the White House Council for Community Solutions:

http://www.serve.gov/council_resources.asp#maincontent.

³ OLO Report 2012-4, *Alternative Education in Montgomery County*, p. 69. Available with reports on OLO’s website:

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/csltempl.asp?url=/Content/council/olo/reports/2008.asp>

⁴ OLO Report 2012-4, pp. 52, 71.

⁵ OLO Report 2012-4, p. 75.

As a public-private partnership, the MCCC will enable the County to tap into additional revenue sources, bringing more funds to the county for vulnerable youth.

- The expectation for the public/private partnership, as the Council outlined last year, is that the nonprofit provider would raise funds for MCCC from sources that the County has not tapped into previously. The County would assume the full cost for the first few start-up years, but after that additional funds identified by the provider would enable MCCC to serve more participants and lower the cost per participant covered by the County. The RFP would set out this expectation.
- Numerous sources of funding for corps programs exist that the County has not accessed but that the public/private partnership could. The Collaboration Council report details several, including fee-based service contracts (a common practice in other corps), AmeriCorps programmatic funding, and private philanthropy. A public/private partnership, with the help of the Friends Board, would also be able to pursue corporate and individual donations as well as in-kind support. All of these avenues could play a significant role in increasing the County's funding and capacity for working with out-of-school, out-of-work youth.
- MCCC already tapped into an important federal resource for youth: the federal AmeriCorps Education Award. Participants earned these awards through the hundreds of hours of community service they completed as part of MCCC, and could use them to pursue post-secondary education or training. MCCC was one of just two programs in the County offering the AmeriCorps award, and the only one working with low-income youth who are not normally college bound. As detailed in the Collaboration Council report, the public/private partnership would be structured to continue to enable participants to qualify for these awards. If MCCC is discontinued, the County and its youth will lose the opportunity to tap into these funds, and the money will instead go to youth, and educational institutions, in other jurisdictions.

Investing in MCCC offers the County a dual benefit: helping vulnerable youth transition to productive adulthood while at the same time completing service projects of real and lasting value. Discontinuing MCCC would deprive the County of a significant partner for vital service projects, particularly related to environmental sustainability.

- In its 25 years, MCCC completed hundreds of work projects that preserved, protected and enhanced the natural and community resources of the County.
 - For example, in 2009, its last full year of operation in county government, MCCC completed 4,000 hours of education/tutoring; 18,000 hours of invasive species removal; 2,000 hours of environmental restoration; 16,000 hours of non-home construction; and 23,000 hours of miscellaneous public lands work, resulting in 1700 trees planted, 55 rain barrels constructed, 13.1 tons of debris collected from streams; one screen porch for senior center; one school renovation; one 15 foot handicapped ramp.⁶

⁶ Information provided by MCCC to The Corps Network, a national network of corps programs which MCCC helped found in 1984. The Corps Network regularly collects data from its member corps about services and impacts.

- In some cases the County might complete these types of projects through a private contractor, but then would not receive the dual benefit of the youth programming for its funds invested. In other cases, projects would not be undertaken without a dedicated service partner like MCCC.
- Both DEP and WSSC, who commissioned service projects from MCCC for many years, have indicated interest in continuing to work with MCCC as a public/private partnership.
- As participants serve through MCCC, they become more aware of community needs and environmental issues, positioning them to be members of the County's next generation of "green" citizens. It is not uncommon for participants to become the first members of their family to learn about conservation.

Investing in a public/private MCCC also bolsters the County's efforts to build its workforce for the growing number of middle level jobs that require less than a two year degree, including many of the "green jobs" of the future.

- As the County seeks to build a workforce for the growing "green jobs" sector of the economy – jobs that contribute to the goal of achieving environmental sustainability – MCCC and its participants can serve as an important part of that talent pipeline. A 2011 Corps Network publication outlined how corps can forge green career pathways for out-of-school, out of work youth,⁷ which the Collaboration Council drew from in its report and recommendations on MCCC.
- MCCC can also serve as an important contributor to the County's efforts to prepare workers for "middle skill" jobs – jobs that require more than a high school diploma but less than a four year degree, often an associate's degree or training for an industry credential.
 - In a March 20 Council briefing on Trends in Workforce Development (part of the Council's Shaping our Future: Adapting to Change briefing series), Council members and national experts discussed the significance of the growing number of these middle level jobs. Council members noted the need for the County to increase its focus on preparing workers for these jobs, not just for professions that require four-year college degrees.⁸
 - The Collaboration Council report outlines a programmatic approach for MCCC, based on MCCC's previous efforts and the experiences of other successful corps, designed to put youth on the path toward middle skill jobs by helping youth complete their GED, gain work experience, and connect to vocational training and postsecondary education. In addition, many of the "green jobs" MCCC would be well suited to prepare youth for are middle skill jobs, as the Corps Network's green career pathways publication details.

Prepared by the Friends of the Montgomery County Conservation Corps. For more information contact one of the Friends Vice Presidents: Kate O'Sullivan (kateosullivanUS@yahoo.com, 240/476-1370) or Walter Wolfe (aquolobo@aol.com, 301/482-2471).

⁷ The Corps Network report, *A Green Career Pathways Framework: Postsecondary and Employment Success for Low-Income, Disconnected Youth*, is available on the publications page of the Corps Network's website:

http://corpsnetwork.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=359:publications&catid=88:publications

⁸ A summary of the discussion at the briefing was prepared for Wheaton Patch and can be found at <http://wheaton-md.patch.com/articles/future-montgomery-county-workers-should-emphasize-technical-training-experts-say#>. The Council press release announcing the briefing is at

http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Apps/Council/PressRelease/PR_details.asp?PrID=8340.

Yao, Vivian

From: Carol Huls [CHuls@corpsnetwork.org]
Sent: Monday, April 16, 2012 4:23 PM
To: Leventhal's Office, Councilmember; Floreen's Office, Councilmember
Cc: Montgomery County Council; Andrews's Office, Councilmember; Berliner's Office, Councilmember; Elrich's Office, Councilmember; Ervin's Office, Councilmember; Rice's Office, Councilmember; Riemer's Office, Councilmember; Navarro's Office, Councilmember; Yao, Vivian; jrupert@p2r.net; kateosullivanUS@yahoo.com; aquolobo@aol.com; Carol Huls; Mary Ellen Ardouny
Subject: Restore the Conservation Corps in the FY13 budget

April 16, 2012

Honorable George Leventhal
 Chair, Council Health and Human Services Committee
councilmember.leventhal@montgomerycountymd.gov

Honorable Nancy Floreen
 Chair, Council Planning, Housing & Economic Development Committee
councilmember.floreen@montgomerycountymd.gov

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SUBJECT: Restore the Conservation Corps in the FY13 budget

Dear Councilmember Leventhal and Councilmember Floreen:

On behalf of The Corps Network, I would like to join the Friends of the Montgomery County Conservation Corps (MCCC) in urging the Council to restore MCCC in the FY13 budget.

The Corps Network served as a resource to the Collaboration Council as it developed the recommendations you commissioned on transitioning MCCC to a public-private partnership, an approach which has proven effective in many communities. We hope you will restore MCCC in the FY13 budget so Montgomery County may continue to benefit from one of the best strategies our country has for re-engaging out-of-school, out of work youth.

The Corps Network is a proud advocate and representative of the nation's Service and Conservation Corps. Our

number one goal is to sustain and grow the Corps movement. MCCC helped found our network in 1984 and we were fortunate to have MCCC as a member throughout the years since. MCCC completed our Excellence in Corps Operations (ECO) process twice in the past ten years, placing it among a national group of corps recognized for their commitment to high-quality standards and continuous improvement.

Our member Service and Conservation Corps operate in 50 states and the District of Columbia. Over 30,000 Corpsmembers, ages 16-25, annually mobilize approximately 289,000 community volunteers who in conjunction with Corpsmembers generate 13.5 million hours of service every year. Service and Conservation Corps are a direct descendant of the Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps, in which three million young men dramatically improved the nation's public lands while receiving food, shelter, education, and a precious \$30-a-month stipend. Today's Service and Conservation Corps provide a wealth of conservation, infrastructure improvement, and human service projects – those identified by communities as important. Some Corps improve and preserve our public lands and national parks. Others provide critical energy conservation services, including weatherization, restore natural habitats and create urban parks and gardens. Still others provide disaster preparation and recovery to under-resourced communities. Finally, Corps raise the quality of life in low-income communities by renovating deteriorating housing and providing support to in-school and after school education programs.

A variety of research studies have demonstrated that Corps offer significant benefits to youth participants and for communities. In one example, a 1997 Abt Associates/ Brandeis University random assignment study concluded Corps generated a positive return on investment and the youth involved were positively affected by joining a Corps. The study found significant employment and earnings gains for youth participants in corps, as well as decreased incidence of undesirable outcomes such as lower pregnancy rates and arrest rates. A nationwide evaluation from Texas A&M University released in March 2012 found that young people who participated in Corps exhibited improved leadership skills, community engagement and environmental stewardship. In another example, a review of data from 14 Civic Justice Corps 2006-2008 pilot programs for court-involved youth found that participants exhibited a 10% recidivism rate – dramatically below the prevailing recidivism rates of 50-70% around the country. MCCC served as one of these 14 Civic Justice Corps pilot sites.

As you know, for 25 years MCCC worked to increase the employability of at-risk youth while completing projects of real and lasting value to the County. MCCC helped hundreds of youth to build their skills, obtain their GEDs, and connect to jobs. It also provided thousands of hours annually in service to the County, including invasive species removal, environmental restoration, construction, and public lands work. Through its participation in The Corps Network's AmeriCorps Education Award program, funded by the federal Corporation for National and Community Service, MCCC enabled its youth participants to qualify for thousands of dollars in scholarships to support their future education.

I believe you will find that continued support of MCCC will provide a significant return on the County's investment, an important consideration at all times but even more so in the current challenging economic environment.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or for further information.

Sincerely,

Mary Ellen Ardouny
Vice President of External Affairs
The Corps Network
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(202) 737-6272
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Sent on behalf of Mary Ellen Ardouny, by

Carol Huls
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The Corps Network: Strengthening America through Service and Conservation

Hi All,

I wanted to let you know that the STEP and Conservation Corps program will be discussed at a joint HHS and PHED meeting on April 20 at 9:30 a.m. I sent these questions over to HHS (I've edited them since though), but I think that most of them are for you, as it is related to the STEP program.

Conservation Corps

1. Why is the Conservation Corps being recommended for elimination?

At the direction of the Council HHS worked with the Collaboration council to complete a review of the feasibility of contracting with a provider to run a Montgomery County Conservations Corps. The cost projection from that review made it clear that the County would need to spend at a minimum approximately \$500,000 per year for several years to sustain and promote the growth of a provider run Conservation Corps.

A review of Local and National Corps programs indicted that effective Corps programs need to engage youth for an extended period, reducing the number of persons per year that could be effectively served with the expectation of positive outcomes.

It was felt that increasing funding to the Conservation Corps in the face of continuing cuts to safety net programs was not a responsible use of County resources.

2. What is the status of equipment that was purchased for the use of the program? HHS, DGS and Recreation are currently working towards identifying and checking the inventory of equipment.
3. It appears that \$200,000 is being transferred to the Department of Recreation to support a summer youth employment program. It is correct that the Executive has recommended funding support to the Department for a summer youth employment program. The Department has a commitment thru its mission to support the Positive Youth Development Initiative; this new program is an extension of that commitment.
4. Will this funding support the same population of youth served by the Conservation Corps? The program will support at-risk youth at the High School level, but they will not necessarily be adjudicated.
5. How will the total \$315,296 be broken out in operating and personnel expenses? \$99,296 PC and \$216,000 OE. How much will be provided in stipends? Funding for youth stipends is approx 350 hrs of training, employment efforts for a total of \$168,000. What positions and FTEs will be added to operate the program? 1 Recreation Supervisor plus seasonal staff (2.4 wy - 1 FT and 1.4 seasonal) What qualifications will be required of program staff? All staff will be required to go thru Positive Youth Development and Advancing Youth Development core training, as well as required department training of policies and procedures.
6. How many youth are anticipated to be served? How many hours of work will they be performing? How much will the youth be compensated? Will they be compensated for all hours of participation in the program? Program implementation will begin in August of FY13, continue life skills training and recruitment during the school year. All teens will be paid minimum wage per hr, will be compensated for all hours, work and training. The program will serve approximately 60 students in year one.
7. What employers will be participating in the program and what jobs will be available to youth? Projects will primarily serve County facilities and agencies. In the first year, participants will work at Recreation

Department facilities doing moderate landscaping, litter pick and provide logistical support for special events. This would include set up, take down, parking assistance, litter pick and other functions during special events. During the school year, Recreation Department staff will work with other county agencies to identify future jobs. This could include additional landscape services and or snow removal to senior citizens participating in nutrition programs, community event support, litter pick on county properties and park properties. Training opportunities every other Saturday will continue during the school year. What training will be provided to employers? This will be determined as employers come into the program but would encourage them to participate in Positive youth development training modules, training to include program expectations, record keeping and safety requirements.

8. How will youth be selected to participate in the program? What are the eligibility requirements for the program? How will youth be placed in positions? What training will be provided to youth and what supervision will be provided at work sites? What expectations will be placed on their work and what will happen if they do not meet expectations? Youth ages 16-19, will be recruited from our existing positive youth development programs – sports academies, YAC, partnerships with Hispanic Business Foundation, YMCA, MCPS and other community partners. Youth will be trained in a variety of areas to include Environmental education, Leave No Trace, Safety Education, First Aid, CPR, Financial Literacy, Job Readiness, Teamwork, Leadership development, and customer service time management skill training. There will be clear and concise expectations to include regular attendance, completion of work assignments, progress in the training elements and quality controls. Expectations that are not met will be handled on a case by case basis, mentoring and opportunities for improvement will be included, but removal from the program could be the result of non compliance.
9. What short-term and long-term outcome measures will be tracked? How long will the program run? The program will operate year round – during school year the youth will be scheduled for training, employment projects every other Saturday. Youth will undertake a work readiness survey at implementation; will complete a post test at end of year. Development skill records will be monitored through out the program. Attendance, work performance and training development will also be tracked to determine success.
10. What administrative procedures will need to be implemented to adequately oversee registration, timekeeping and payroll? We currently have these procedures in place in our temporary seasonal hiring and anticipate no modifications.
11. If the youth will be completing work for County agencies, which agencies will be involved and what is the estimated value of the work that they will complete? The current plan is to work closely with a variety of agencies these include but are not limited: Facility Maintenance, Office of Community Partnerships, Libraries, Parks, and Commission on Aging, Volunteer Center and the Office of Economic Development. There is no calculation to determine current value of service.

I understand that you are working out some of the details to the program, but would appreciate as much information as you can provided by April 11. I'm working on the rest of the question for the Rec budget and am planning to get them out this week.

Thanks,
Vivian Yao