

Youth and Work in Montgomery County

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Executive Summary of Office of Legislative Oversight Report Number 2014-3

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This OLO report describes youth career development programs administered by Montgomery County Government and Montgomery College that touch and serve **disconnected youth** between the ages of 16 to 24 who are neither working nor enrolled in school, or only tangentially connected to school or work. About 7,800 County youth are disconnected and thus not on a pathway that leads to economic self-sufficiency.

OLO finds that while a variety of local programs aimed at reconnecting youth to education and employment exist, most focus on GED preparation and job readiness skills. Few programs emphasize occupational skills training that could prepare youth for middle-skill careers. OLO finds that greater coordination among County programs and more public investment to expand occupational training for disconnected youth are warranted.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT TRENDS: Youth employment has declined over several decades and the Great Recession flattened demand even further. In 2008, about a third of teens (age 16-19) and two-thirds of young adults (age 20-24) were employed. By 2011, these rates fell to only a quarter of teens and about 60% of young adults. During the summer, when youth employment peaks, only half of all young people age 16 to 24 held a job.

Both nationally and locally, *employment rates* by subgroup show black and Latino male teens are especially affected:

- Between 2008 and 2011, County black and Latino male teens saw employment rate declines of 19.8 points and 13.1 points respectively.
- Employment rates for black male teens rank last among all subgroups. In 2011, County employment rates for white female, Latino, and Latina teens were nearly 1 in 3, rates for white male and black female teens were 1 in 4, and rates for black male teens were only 1 in 6.

County *unemployment rates* for black and Latino male teens and young adults tell a similar story. More specifically,

- Between 2008 and 2011, black male teens and Latino young adult males saw unemployment rate increases of 20.2 points and 17.8 points respectively and the unemployment rate for Latino young adult men increased four-fold, from 5.8% to 23.6%.
- In 2011, nearly half of black male teens (47%) were unemployed as were nearly a quarter of Latino teens (30%) and more than a quarter of Latina teens (27.9%).

YOUTH DISCONNECTION AND COSTS: A direct relationship exists between the declining demand for youth labor and the number of youth who are either *chronically disconnected* – neither enrolled in school nor working – or *weakly disconnected* – working, but not on a path to earn wages sufficient to support themselves or their families. Nationally, an estimated 7 million youth are either chronically or weakly disconnected.

Locally, about 3,900 youth in Montgomery County are chronically disconnected, including 2.4% of teens and 5.1% of young adults. Black teens are nearly three times as likely as their peers to be chronically disconnected. If national trends hold locally, there may be 3,900 more County youth who are only weakly attached to school and/or work, bringing the County's total count of disconnected youth to 7,800 or 7% of all youth.

Youth disconnection incurs both individual and societal costs because it increases the chances of joblessness and economic dependency into adulthood. For example, lifetime earnings for adults without a high school diploma are \$400,000 less than those who have a diploma. Public costs include lost taxes, higher public expenditures for support and incarceration services, and crime victims' costs. A fiscal analysis of annual and lifetime costs attributable to youth disconnection estimates per disconnected youth:

- A **taxpayer** loss of \$13,890 per year that yields a lifetime fiscal loss to taxpayers of \$235,680.
- A **social** loss of \$37,450 per year that yields a lifetime lump sum social loss of \$704,200 per youth.

Of note for the County, this analysis estimates two-thirds of these costs fall on state and local governments.

WORKFORCE PROJECTIONS AND WAGES

Demand for County workers is polarized by educational attainment, concentrated among low-skilled/low-paying positions at one end and high-skilled/high-paying positions at the other. Among the County's most in-demand occupations, the concentration of low-skilled/low-paying positions is even greater.

Of 168,200 job openings projected for Montgomery County through 2018, Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation's (DLLR's) data show 90% will require either a high school diploma or less (51%) or a bachelor's degree or more (39%); only 10 percent will require a post-secondary award/associate's degree.

Among the 15 occupations projected to have the most openings (so called "hot jobs"), the concentration of low-skill, low-wage positions is 61%. These in-demand occupations account for 45,550 of the 168,220 projected openings. The forecasts for these jobs show:

- Most openings (27,745) will occur among eight occupations that require a high school diploma and offer entry-level wages between \$8.00 and \$11.00 per hour – cashiers, waiters/waitresses, retail salespersons, food service workers, janitors/cleaners, customer service representatives, office clerks, and receptionists.
- Fewer openings (12,770) will occur among five positions that require a bachelor's degree and offer entry-level wages between \$27.25 and \$31.25 per hour – general & operations managers, management analysts, accountants/auditors, network and computer systems operators, and computer systems analysts.
- The fewest openings (5,035) will occur among two allied health positions that require an associate's degree or vocational certificate: registered nurses whose 2011 entry level wages averaged \$28.50 per hour; and nursing aides and orderlies whose 2011 entry level wages averaged \$11.00 per hour.

Workforce projections do anticipate growth among some middle-skill positions that require post-secondary training. Of these, four sectors offer family-sustaining wages: **health care, construction, installation/repair, and computer occupations**. Currently, career pathways to prepare disconnected County youth for these middle-skill occupations are limited, especially for youth who have not completed high school.

BEST PRACTICES FOR YOUTH CAREER DEVELOPMENT

To effectively transition youth into career pathways that will eventually pay self sufficient wages, best practices research for youth career development recommends providing both educational and occupational components:

- *Educational/life skills components* enable youth to improve their soft skills and job readiness, earn high school diplomas, and transition into post secondary opportunities that can offer credentials/degrees.
- *Occupational/hard skills components* enable youth to gain work experience and develop occupational skills that are valued in the labor market.

To recognize and serve the heterogeneous needs of youth participants, the best practices literature for youth career development endorses approaches that vary types of available support services and base programming on different levels of need. Ideally, resources are aligned to address and support three groups of youth participants:

- At-Risk Youth that have direct or indirect exposure to risk-factors for disconnection that can include deficiency in basic academic skills, disengagement from school, low-incomes, gang involvement, pregnancy and parenting. These youth, who are typically of high school age, often require targeted interventions that are limited in scale and cost (e.g. summer employment program).
- High-Risk Youth that in addition to experiencing risk-factors for disconnection (e.g. low academic skills, low-incomes) have minimal work experience, and/or have dropped out. These youth are also often court-involved, in foster care or are homeless. These **weakly disconnected** youth are aged 16-20 and often require longer term interventions and social supports.
- Proven-Risk Youth that have dropped out of school, are not working, and often have been adjudicated. These youth are older (age 18 to 24), **chronically disconnected**, and require longer term investments of social services, educational opportunities, and transitional employment to achieve long-term employment.

LOCAL YOUTH CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS: Montgomery College offers more than 150 programs that lead to certificates or degrees, but barriers preclude most at-risk youth from accessing them. The chart below lists the local programs included in OLO's review. Together, Montgomery County and the College offer more than a dozen programs that provide educational/life skills or occupational training opportunities to youth with some risk for disconnection. In FY13, these programs combined served 2,850 youth at a cost of \$3.8 million. Very few of these programs, however, offered occupational training or targeted chronically disconnected youth.

In FY14, with the implementation of the Achieving College Excellence Success program for at-risk high school students, the County's and College's combined programs will serve nearly 4,000 youth at a cost of \$4.7 million and the County's share of total costs will increase from 41% to 48%.

Montgomery County and Montgomery College Youth Career Development Programs

| Programs by Agency | Enrollment | | Program Budget | County Share | Contracted Providers |
|--|------------|-------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| | Youth | Total | | | |
| Programs for At-Risk Youth/Adults | | | | | |
| Montgomery County Government | | | | | |
| Youth, In-school (DED) | 74 | 74 | \$260,000 | 8% | Latin American Youth Center |
| Youth with disabilities (DED) | 58 | 58 | \$250,000 | 0% | TransCen |
| Summer Teen Employment Program/Teen Works (Recreation) | 60 | 60 | \$190,000 | 100% | None |
| Montgomery College | | | | | |
| Achieving Collegiate Excellence & Success** | 1,200 | 1,200 | \$1,500,000 | 63% | None |
| Literacy and Training for Refugees, FY12 | n/a | 852 | \$810,000 | 0% | None |
| English for Speakers of Other Languages, FY12 | 678 | 4,280 | \$1,800,000 | 15% | None |
| Educational Opportunity Center | 472 | 1,154 | \$329,000 | 13% | None |
| Programs for High-Risk (Weakly Disconnected) Youth/Adults | | | | | |
| Montgomery County Government | | | | | |
| Youth, Out-of-school (DED) | 111 | 111 | \$390,000 | 8% | Latin American Youth Center |
| Youth Opportunity Centers – Education and Employment Programming (DHHS) | 633 | 633 | \$100,300 | 100% | Identity |
| TANF Workforce Services (DHHS) | n/a | 2,997 | \$2,200,000 | 0% | Arbor E&T |
| Montgomery College | | | | | |
| Gateway to College, FY12 | 130 | 130 | \$1,300,000 | 44% | None |
| MI-BEST Programs - Certified/Geriatric Nursing and Apartment Maintenance** | n/a | 80 | \$309,000 | 0% | None |
| Pathways to Success Program | n/a | 180 | \$120,000 | 0% | None |
| Life Skills and GED Preparation, FY12 | 474 | 892 | \$370,000 | 15% | None |
| Programs for Proven-Risk (Chronically Disconnected) Youth | | | | | |
| Montgomery County Government* | | | | | |
| Conservation Corps (DHHS) via the Collaboration Council** | 40 | 40 | \$525,000 | 95% | Latin American Youth Center |
| Transition Services for Foster Care (DHHS) | 28 | 28 | \$120,000 | 0% | Arbor E&T |
| Street Outreach Network - Youth Employment Program (DHHS) | 97 | 97 | \$77,500 | 100% | None |
| Youth Enrollment & Budget Subtotal, FY13 | 2,855 | | \$3,828,800 | 41% | |
| Youth Enrollment & Budget Subtotal, FY14 | 3,990 | | \$4,678,800 | 48% | |
| *Excludes Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation re-entry program included in DED contract. | | | | | |
| ** Enrollment and budget when program(s) operate in FY14. For Gateway, assumes half the FY13 budget and enrollment for FY14 because program sunsets in FY15. | | | | | |

PERSPECTIVES ON PROGRAM PERFORMANCE: OLO conducted more than two dozen interviews with agency and organization administrators and staff to better understand the County's vision for youth career development and its portfolio of programs. The following observations convey the common themes from these interviews:

- Youth career development in Montgomery County consists of an assortment of programs delivered primarily by engaged contractors. The County's efforts operate in an ad hoc fashion that is disconnected from a broader strategy of improving the economic self-sufficiency for at-risk youth.
- The County may adequately serve youth connected to social service or criminal justice systems; however, because programs are not well resourced, few, if any, services exist for others. Moreover, local funds that previously supplemented limited federal and state aid have yet to be restored.
- Connecting disconnected youth to education and employment are difficult tasks that require a comprehensive set of services and long term funding commitments. The County's current commitments via its Positive Youth Development and Economic Development programs have been insufficient.
- If the Council chooses to pursue an initiative to develop a jobs infrastructure designed to re-connect at-risk youth to employment and education, the Youth Council of the County's Workforce Investment Board and Montgomery College are two entities that are well positioned to champion such an effort.

THE POTENTIAL OF CAREER PATHWAYS: Career pathways offers a promising approach to delivering youth career development programs that could bring more coherence to the County's current youth career development efforts. Career pathways refer to a series of connected education and training programs that focus on easing and facilitating the transition from high school to postsecondary programs to employment to enable participants to secure a job or advance in an industry or occupation.

Five steps characterize the career pathways framework: pre-GED, GED, short term certificate, longer term certificate and associate degree, and bachelor degree programs. As students progress through each program level, their occupational, academic, and life skills improve along with their prospects for good-paying, stable positions.

OLO's review of the County's current configuration of services for disconnected youth finds most programs are aligned with the first two levels of the career pathways model (pre-GED and GED levels). Although Montgomery College hosts programs aligned with levels three and four (i.e. short-term credential and long-term credential and associate's degrees), these programs are generally not accessible to disconnected youth.

OLO RECOMMENDATION: Given the gap between the number of disconnected youth in the County and the availability of local services, OLO recommends that the County Council commit to building an infrastructure of comprehensive services and sustained funding to reconnect out-of-school youth to education and employment.

Towards this end, OLO recommends that the Council convene a **Task Force to Create a Career Pathways System for Disconnected Youth** and charge it with preparing a report and strategic plan for implementation and evaluation. More specifically, OLO suggests the Council seek the Task Force's guidance and recommendations on the following five issues:

1. The extent and characteristics of the County's disconnected youth population,
2. The components of an effective County career pathways framework,
3. Research on alternative financing mechanisms,
4. An estimate of the resources required to fill existing service gaps and barriers; and
5. A viable long term financing and implementation plan.

The Task Force should also consider what role, if any, Montgomery County Public Schools' Thomas Edison High School for Technology should play in the County's efforts to enhance occupational training opportunities for out-of-school youth. OLO recommends that the Council plan to establish the Task Force by March 1, 2014 and request a Task Force report by September 1, 2014.

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| For a complete copy of OLO-Report 2014-3, go to: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/olo |
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Youth and Work in Montgomery County

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Chapter 1: Authority, Scope, and Organization

A. Authority

Council Resolution 17-830, *FY 2013 Work Program for the Office of Legislative Oversight*, adopted July 30, 2013.

B. Scope, Purpose, and Methodology

Low educational attainment and under employment among youth is a national challenge. Researchers estimate that nearly 6.5 million teens and young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 in the U.S. were disconnected from the worlds of schooling and work in 2011. For the preceding year, these youth either had: (1) no employment or postsecondary educational experiences; or (2) only weak attachments to schooling and work that were inadequate paths to economic self-sufficiency.¹

Career pathways from early employment experience to economically self-sufficient wages have all but evaporated in the labor market. Some reasons for this are:

- Integrating employment and occupational skills in to the high school is often disparaged, with vocational educational education viewed as a dumping ground for students not deemed “college ready.”²
- Vocational and career and technical education opportunities in high schools to prepare youth for entry-level occupations that offer self-sustaining wages have largely disappeared as a result of the “college for all” approach in education policy.³
- Since the economic collapse of 2008, disconnected youth face intense competition from older workers for entry-level jobs while the costs of post secondary education continue to rise.⁴

Like all youth, disconnected youth are certain to age out of adolescence. However, the paths that exist to transition to an economically self-sufficient adulthood are more precarious than ever. For out-of-school youth who have not completed high school or entered post secondary education after graduating from high school, these pathways to reconnecting and achieving economic self-sufficiency are even more difficult to find. As the Annie E. Casey Foundation states, disconnected youth are “veering toward chronic underemployment as adults and failing to gain the skills employers need in the 21st century.”⁵

Two prior Office of Legislative Oversight reports found that most youth enrolled in Montgomery County Public Schools who are behind in academic credits are unable to access career and technical education pathways in high school that prepare for mid-skill entry-level careers.⁶

¹ Belfield and Levin, *The Economics of Investing in Opportunity Youth*, 2012

<http://www.civicenterprises.net/MediaLibrary/Docs/Belfield-Levin%20Economics%20Investment%20OppYouth%20Sept%202012.pdf>

² Ibid

³ Ross, *Strengthening Educational and Career Pathways for D.C. Youth*, Metropolitan Policy Programs at Brookings 2011

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2011/10/05%20dc%20youth%20work%20ross/1005_dc_youth_work_ross

⁴ Sum et.al, *Deteriorating Employment Rates and Incomes Threaten the Futures of Young Workers and Young Families*; Black Young People and Young Families Fare the Worst, prepared for Children’s Defense Fund, 2010

⁵ Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2013

⁶ OLO Report 2009-10, *Montgomery County Public Schools’ Career and Life Readiness Programs* and OLO Report 2012-4, *Alternative Education in Montgomery County*

OLO also found that limiting access to CTE programs among youth at-risk for dropping out-of-school contradicts best practices that recommend integrated education and skills training as a proven strategy for keeping high school-aged youth engaged and preventing dropouts.

The Council requested this OLO project is to better understand the economic conditions facing the County's out-of-school and disconnected youth populations and the programs administered by the County Government and the College that aim to increase economic self-sufficiency among youth between the ages of 16 and 24 and out-of-school youth in particular. This report describes the labor conditions impacting young workers, the prevalence and consequences of youth disconnection, best practices for reducing disconnection, local programs linking disconnected youth to education and employment, and opportunities for improving youth workforce development in Montgomery County.

Methodology: OLO staffers Sue Richards and Elaine Bonner-Tompkins prepared this report with editorial and production assistance from Kelli Robinson. OLO conducted this study using a variety of information and data collection methods. These included reviewing and analyzing labor market data, compiling information on workforce projections, conducting a series of interviews to understand the administration and delivery of local youth career development programs, and a review of the research literature on risk factors for youth disconnection and best practices for re-connecting youth to education and employment opportunities.

C. Organization of Report

Chapter 2, Youth Employment and Disconnection, describes labor market trends among 16-24 year olds, the structural changes that have impacted youth employment, the risk factors for youth disconnection, and the costs of youth disconnection for individuals and society.

Chapter 3, County Labor Market, Employment Projections, and Middle-Skill Jobs, describes local and regional employment projections, particularly among middle-skill positions that offer self-sufficiency wages and often require some college/post secondary training, but not a bachelor's degree.

Chapter 4, Overview of Local Programs Reviewed, describes the process undertaken by OLO to identify and describe youth career development programs that "touch and serve" local youth at highest risk for disconnection from education and employment.

Chapter 5, Montgomery County Government Programs, describes County Government administered programs that disconnected youth can access to link to education and employment pathways.

Chapter 6, Montgomery College Programs, describes the College's programs that are accessible to high-school age youth and young adults at risk for disconnection.

Chapter 7, Perspectives on Local Program Strengths and Challenges, describes the perspectives of local administrators and staff, and Workforce Investment Board Youth Council members on local program strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement.

Chapter 8, Career Pathways as a Promising Practice, describes a best practices approach for integrating youth career development programs to enable disconnected youth to enter educational and employment pathways that lead to self-sufficiency.

Chapter 9, Summary of Key Findings, synthesizes key findings from the report relative to the local labor market, local youth workforce development programs, best practices, and perceptions regarding program strengths and opportunities for improvement.

Chapter 10, Recommendation, describes OLO's recommendation for the County Council to establish a Task Force to Create a Career Pathways System for Disconnected Youth.

Chapter 11, Agency Comments, provides written comments from Montgomery County Government and Montgomery College on the final report.

D. Acknowledgements

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- Barbara Kaufmann, Director, Division of Workforce Services – Department of Economic Development, Montgomery County Government; and
- Susan Madden, Chief Government Relations Officer – Montgomery College

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- Arbor Education and Training (Arbor E & T)
- Identity, Inc.
- Latin American Youth Center/Maryland Multicultural Youth Center
- Liberty's Promise
- Montgomery College Office of the President
- Montgomery College Division of Academic Affairs
- Montgomery College Division for Workforce Development and Continuing Education
- Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth, and Families
- Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
- Montgomery County Department of Economic Development
- Montgomery County Department of Recreation
- Montgomery County Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
- Montgomery County Workforce Investment Board and Youth Council
- Montgomery Moving Forward
- TransCen, Inc.
- Workforce Solutions Group

Chapter 2: Youth Employment and Disconnection

Historically, completion of a high school diploma enabled youth to enter sectors of the economy that offered pathways to earning wages that could support individuals and families. This was especially the case among youth who completed vocational education programs and entered the trades post high-school. Even youth who dropped out of high school could also enter such pathways that lead to self-sufficiency wages, particularly in manufacturing.

Youth employment opportunities have changed dramatically over the past decade. Fewer high school youth are employed, including those who have graduated from high school. Among those employed, only a small fraction of youth work full-time, even among those not enrolled in college. As a result, an increasing number of youth are either chronically disconnected – neither enrolled in-schooling nor working – or weakly disconnected – working, but neither on a short or long-term path toward earning wages sufficient for supporting individuals or families.

This chapter describes trends in youth employment and youth disconnection in two parts:

- **Part A, Youth Labor Market**, describes four measures of youth employment and its effects (population to work ratios/employment rates, labor force participation, poverty, and unemployment rates) and drivers that have impacted the youth labor market.
- **Part B, Disconnected Youth - Risk Factors, Estimates, and Fiscal Costs**, offers a working definition of disconnected youth and also describes the risk factors for youth disconnection, the prevalence of disconnection, and the fiscal costs of youth disconnection.

A review of the data and background information offers a number of key findings:

- The Great Recession has had a negative impact on youth employment, even among non-college enrolled high school graduates. Youth employment has especially diminished among teens and black and Latino teens in particular.
- The declining demand for unskilled labor and increasing competition with older workers suggests that future employment opportunities for youth will continue to be unfavorable, at least among youth without post-secondary credentials.
- Youth disconnection – youth not in-school or working – it is both a result and contributor to the stagnating economy.
 - Risk factors for youth disconnection include low basic skills, poverty, court-involvement, disabilities, and barriers to employment including discrimination.
 - The individual and societal costs of youth disconnection are high.
- Levels of youth disconnection in Montgomery County are lower than national and state levels, but higher locally among some subgroups (e.g. black male teens).
 - Based on available data, OLO estimates 3,900 youth in the County are neither in-school nor working or chronically disconnected, accounting for 2.5% of all teens and 5% of young adults. If national patterns hold locally, another 3,900 more County youth are also weakly attached to schooling and work.

- Additional data and analysis are necessary to understand the magnitude of youth disconnection locally and the need for workforce development programs (e.g. career pathways) to improve youth connections to schooling and work.

A. Youth Labor Market

It is increasingly difficult for youth workers to compete in the current labor market, particularly if they lack a high school diploma and post secondary credentials. Reflecting this stark reality, youth employment is at its lowest rates since World War II; about half of all young people between the ages of 16 and 24 held jobs in 2011.⁷ The *Youth and Work* report cogently describes the changes in the labor market that impacted youth workers:

“Forty years ago, a teenager leaving high school – with or without a diploma – could find a job in a local factory. Twenty years ago, even as manufacturing jobs moved offshore, youth people could still gain a foothold in the workforce through neighborhood stores and restaurants. Amid the housing boom of the past decade, youth with some training could find a career track in the construction field. But today – with millions of jobs lost and experienced workers scrambling for every available position – America’s young people stand last in line for jobs.”⁸

To describe the youth labor market in Montgomery County, this section describes trends in employment and unemployment among teens and young adults by age, gender, and ethnicity using data from the American Community Survey (ACS) compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau. More specifically, OLO compared employment and unemployment trends by subgroup between the start of the Great Recession (2008) and its end (2011). This section also describes the drivers that have impacted the youth labor market.

Of note, OLO recognizes that the American Community Survey (ACS) offers the most useful public dataset available to describe annual population estimates of key educational and employment measures in Montgomery County. The ACS, however, is not designed to estimate population subsets of less than 65,000. Thus, the margins of error generated for ACS’ estimates for Montgomery County youth subgroups are too large to offer statistically significant values. To improve the confidence of the data presented, OLO relies on three-year estimates (2006-2008 and 2009-2011).

1. Youth Employment Rates

Youth employment rates describe the proportion of the youth population that is employed. The denominator includes all youth, not just those actively looking for work and in the labor market.

Table 2-1 on the next page compares employment rates among teens aged 16-19 by gender in the U.S., Maryland, and Montgomery County among all youth from 2006-08 and 2009-11 and also offers estimates of teen employment by gender in Montgomery County among three subgroups by ethnicity: white, black, and Latino teens. A review of the data shows low levels of employment among teens and dramatic declines in teen employment between 2008 and 2011. More specifically:

- In 2011, 22.7% of teen males and 27.3% of teen females worked in Montgomery County compared to 31.6% of teen males and 33.3% of teen females in 2008.

⁷ Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012

⁸ Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2013

- Among teen subgroups, black males experienced the greatest decline in their employment rate (19.8 percentage points) from 36.4% to 16.6% between 2008 and 2011 compared to white males experiencing the smallest decline (2.9 percentage points) from 30.1% to 25.9%.
- Among female teens, black teens experienced the greatest decline (10.6 percentage points) from 36.7% to 26.1% between 2008 and 2011 compared to white teens experiencing the smallest decline (5.0 percentage points) from 33.9% to 28.9%.

Table 2-1: Teen Employment Rate by Gender, Location, and Subgroup, 2008 & 2011

| | Males | | | Females | | |
|---|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|--------|
| | 2006-08 | 2009-11 | Change | 2006-08 | 2009-11 | Change |
| All Youth Age 16-19 | | | | | | |
| U.S. | 33.1% | 25.0% | -8.1% | 35.8% | 29.0% | -6.8% |
| Maryland | 35.5% | 26.6% | -8.9% | 37.0% | 31.6% | -5.4% |
| Montgomery | 31.6% | 22.7% | -8.9% | 33.3% | 27.3% | -6.0% |
| Montgomery County Subgroups Age 16-19 | | | | | | |
| White | 30.1% | 25.9% | -4.2% | 33.9% | 28.9% | -5.0% |
| Black | 36.4% | 16.6% | -19.8% | 36.7% | 26.1% | -10.6% |
| Latino | 42.0% | 28.9% | -13.1% | 37.8% | 29.9% | -7.9% |
| Source: American Community Survey, 3-Year Estimates | | | | | | |

Of note, Economist Andrew Sum finds that among youth who work, the vast majority hold part-time positions, even those not also enrolled in-school.⁹ Sum also finds that teen jobs by major industry and occupation grew more concentrated over the past decade. Specifically, while the construction, manufacturing, transportation, utilities, professional services, and government sectors saw large declines in teen employment, the retail trade, eating and drinking establishments, and selected service sectors (e.g. recreation, entertainment, and health) saw greater concentrations of teen jobs.

Table 2-2 on the next page compares the employment rate among young adults aged 20-24 by gender in the U.S., Maryland, and Montgomery County among all youth and among subgroups locally from 2006-08 and 2009-11. The data show higher employment rates among young adults than teens. This comports with reflections that OLO heard from local service providers about employers' preferences for hiring older rather than younger youth. The data also show declines in young adult employment rates, particularly among black males and females. More specifically:

- In 2011, 64.8% of young men and 68.1% of young women worked in Montgomery County compared to 71.6% of young men and 70.9% of young women in 2008.
- Among young adult subgroups, black men evidenced the lowest employment rates at 58.5% in 2011 followed by black women at 61.1% compared to 68.7% to 73.2% of other subgroups.
- Both young black men and women also experienced the largest declines in their employment rates of 9-10 percentage points between 2008 and 2011 compared to declines of 1-7 percentage points for other subgroups.

⁹ Sum et. al, 2010. The New York Times (Tyler Cowen, A Dearth of Investment in Young Workers, September 7, 2013) also notes that only 36% of young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 who are not enrolled in school are working full-time, down 10 percentage points from 2007.

Table 2-2: Young Adult Employment Rate by Gender, Location, and Subgroup, 2008 & 2011

| | Males | | | Females | | |
|---|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|--------|
| | 2006-08 | 2009-11 | Change | 2006-08 | 2009-11 | Change |
| All Youth Age 20-24 | | | | | | |
| U.S. | 66.2% | 59.4% | -6.8% | 65.1% | 61.2% | -3.9% |
| Maryland | 68.2% | 60.3% | -7.9% | 69.5% | 65.3% | -4.2% |
| Montgomery | 71.6% | 64.8% | -6.8% | 70.9% | 68.1% | -2.8% |
| Montgomery County Subgroups Age 20-24 | | | | | | |
| White | 71.6% | 68.7% | -2.9% | 71.1% | 69.9% | -1.2% |
| Black | 68.7% | 58.5% | -10.2% | 70.1% | 61.1% | -9.0% |
| Latino | 78.0% | 73.2% | -4.8% | 65.7% | 72.5% | 6.8% |
| Source: American Community Survey, 3-Year Estimates | | | | | | |

2. Youth Unemployment Rates

Unemployment rates describe the proportion of the youth population actively looking for work that have yet to find it. The denominator excludes youth who are not in the labor market because they are discouraged from looking for work.

Table 2-3 compares unemployment rates among teens aged 16-19 by gender in the U.S., Maryland, and Montgomery County among all youth from 2006-08 and 2009-11 and also offers estimates of teen unemployment by gender locally by ethnicity. A review of data shows high rates of unemployment among teens that increased among most subgroups between 2008 and 2011. More specifically, the data show that in Montgomery County:

- Among all teens, unemployment rates increased by 11.2 percentage points from 18.8 – 30.0% for males and by 6.8 percentage points for females from 14.8 – 21.6% from 2008 to 2011.
- Among males, black teens had a 20.2 percentage point increase in their unemployment rate from 26.8 – 47.0% compared to a 3.9 percentage point increase among white teens from 19.3 – 23.2% and 12.8 percentage point increase among Latino from 17.2 – 30.0%.
- Among females, Latina teens experienced the greatest increase in their unemployment rates from 9.6 – 27.9%, followed by white teens whose unemployment increased from 6.4% – 15.4% and black teens whose unemployed decreased from 29.7 – 24.6%.

Table 2-3: Teen Unemployment Rate by Gender, Location, and Subgroup, 2008 & 2011

| | Males | | | Females | | |
|---|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|--------|
| | 2006-08 | 2009-11 | Change | 2006-08 | 2009-11 | Change |
| All Youth Age 16-19 | | | | | | |
| U.S. | 22.6% | 31.1% | 8.5% | 19.3% | 25.8% | 6.5% |
| Maryland | 21.1% | 29.8% | 8.7% | 18.6% | 24.4% | 5.8% |
| Montgomery | 18.8% | 30.0% | 11.2% | 14.8% | 21.6% | 6.8% |
| Montgomery County Subgroups Age 16-19 | | | | | | |
| White | 19.3% | 23.2% | 3.9% | 6.4% | 15.4% | 9.0% |
| Black | 26.8% | 47.0% | 20.2% | 29.7% | 24.6% | -5.1% |
| Latino | 17.2% | 30.0% | 12.8% | 9.6% | 27.9% | 18.3% |
| Source: American Community Survey, 3-Year Estimates | | | | | | |

The County's *young adults* (ages 20-24) also saw unemployment rates increase since the Great Recession. As Table 2-4 below shows, Latino males saw the most dramatic increase, likely as a result of the collapsing construction market. Specifically,

- Young Latino men saw a fourfold increase in unemployment, from 5.8%, the second lowest unemployment rate before the recession, to 23.6%;
- Young black men saw an increase in their unemployment rate from 16.2% to 23.7%.

Among other subgroups, unemployment rate increases ranged from:

- 4.8% to 9.4% among young white men;
- 6.9% to 9.4% among young white women;
- 9.8% to 13.4%; among young black women; and
- 7.5% to 14.7% among young Latina women.

Table 2-4: Young Adult Unemployment Rate by Gender, Location, and Subgroup, 2008 & 2011

| | Males | | | Females | | |
|---|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|--------|
| | 2006-08 | 2009-11 | Change | 2006-08 | 2009-11 | Change |
| All Youth Age 20-24 | | | | | | |
| U.S. | 11.5% | 17.7% | 6.2% | 10.4% | 14.5% | 4.1% |
| Maryland | 11.5% | 17.6% | 6.1% | 9.7% | 14.1% | 4.4% |
| Montgomery | 7.2% | 13.9% | 6.7% | 7.5% | 13.6% | 6.1% |
| Montgomery County Subgroups Age 20-24 | | | | | | |
| White | 4.8% | 9.4% | 4.7% | 6.9% | 9.4% | 2.5% |
| Black | 16.2% | 23.7% | 7.5% | 9.8% | 13.4% | 3.6% |
| Latino | 5.8% | 23.6% | 17.8% | 7.5% | 14.7% | 7.2% |
| Source: American Community Survey, 3-Year Estimates | | | | | | |

3. Youth Labor Market Drivers

Several drivers, predominantly related to current economic conditions, contribute to the declining position of young workers in the labor market.¹⁰ The first driver is the *stagnating economy* that has increased competition between younger and older workers for entry-level jobs. As noted in *Youth and Work*:

“Entry-level jobs at fast food restaurants and clothing stores that high school dropouts once could depend on to start their careers now go to older workers with better experience and credentials. It often takes a GED to get a job flipping burgers. Even some with college degrees have trouble finding work. At this rate, a generation will grow up with little early work experience, missing the chance to build knowledge and the job-readiness skills that come from holding part-time and starter jobs.”¹¹

¹⁰ Belfield and Levin (2012) note that the deterioration of opportunities for youth is not the result of more delinquent behavior by youth as most measures of delinquency have declined over the past decade.

¹¹ Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2013

Trend data examined by the Congressional Research Service show that youth disconnection follows economic cycles.¹² During recessions, when jobs in the economy become scarce, rates of youth disconnection increase; during periods of economic expansion, rates of disconnection decrease. As Belfield and Levin note, the Great Recession has dramatically worsened disconnection levels among today's youth. They find that the decade is not only a "lost decade" but a "depleted decade" as the outlook for youth has worsened rather than remained stable.¹³

The second driver of diminishing youth labor market opportunities is the ***reduced demand for unskilled labor***. Belfield and Levin find that greater automation will continue to reduce the demand for routine, unskilled jobs. Nationally, forecasters predict zero growth in the number of basic production jobs between 2010 and 2020, after these jobs fell by 20% over the past five years.¹⁴ More offshore outsourcing will further reduce the need for U.S. workers with low-skill levels.

Early employment experiences are essential for youth to successfully transition to adulthood.¹⁵ Early work experiences such as internships, summer and part-time jobs allow youth to explore their interests, expose them to the expectations of the workplace, connect them with mentors, and provide opportunities to learn hard and soft skills. If a teen works one year, he or she is likely to work the next year. Thus, those with limited work experience in their late teens and early twenties face limited earnings later in life.¹⁶

Economists anticipate that future employment opportunities for young adults will continue to be unfavorable. Belfield and Levin note that both demographic and structural factors will play a role in shaping the youth labor market of the future. Demographically, the aging of the workforce will slow the rate of labor force growth by opening up more replacement jobs; however, older workers with skills closest to those of the new retirees are likely to fill these jobs.

B. Risk Factors, Prevalence, and Fiscal Costs of Youth Disconnection

Changes in the youth labor market have contributed to increasing rates of youth disconnected from the worlds of schooling and work. Since disconnected youth are at risk for becoming economically dependent adults, the individual and societal costs of youth disconnection are high. This section is presented in three parts to describe a working definition for disconnected youth, the risk factors for disconnection, the prevalence of disconnection, and the fiscal costs of disconnection.

1. Definitions and Risk Factors for Youth Disconnection

Youth between the ages of 16 and 24 who are not enrolled in-school or working are referred to as "disconnected" in the social science literature to reflect their disconnection from these two core experiences that facilitate the successful transition into adulthood.¹⁷ Disconnected youth typically lack strong social networks that provide assistance in the form of employment connections and other supports such as housing and financial assistance.¹⁸

¹² Fernandes and Gabe, *Disconnected Youth: A Look at 16- to 24-Year Olds Who Are Not Working or In School*, Congressional Research Service, 2009 (<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R40535.pdf>)

¹³ Belfield and Levin, 2012

¹⁴ There will be replacement openings due to retirements – just no net new jobs.

¹⁵ Ross, 2011

¹⁶ Sum, et.al, 2010

¹⁷ "Opportunity youth" and "disengaged youth" also refer to disconnected youth.

¹⁸ Fernandes and Gabe, 2009

Studies of disconnected youth identify several factors that can contribute to youth disengagement. Root Cause's summary of the research identifies the following factors:¹⁹

- Deficiency in basic literacy and numeracy
- Disconnectedness or at-risk disconnectedness from school
- Disability
- Low-income family
- Past, present, or chronic homelessness
- Foster care or transitioning out of foster care
- Pregnancy or parenting
- Criminal record
- Court involvement
- Gang involvement
- Substance abuse

These factors overlap with the barriers to employment that often characterize disconnected youth:²⁰\

- Lack of credentials and work experience
- Lack of childcare and/or transportation
- Lack of English proficiency
- Past criminal record
- Multi-generational poverty
- Individual and family health problems
- Mental health issues
- Homelessness and housing instability
- Substance abuse
- Discrimination

A survey of disconnected youth for a 2007 Congressional Research Service report offers some insight to explain why youth were not in-school or working at that time:²¹

- 37% of respondents reported taking care of family or home with about half having a child;
- 34% of respondents reported an illness or disability with most designated as having a severe disability and more than half receiving Supplemental Security Income or Medicare; and
- 26% of respondents reported an inability to find work and were neither disabled nor taking care of family.

The Congressional Research Service also found that compared to connected youth, disconnected youth were: older, more likely to be black or Latino, evidenced lower rates of educational achievement, were more likely to live apart from parents, were considered poor, and had lower rates of health insurance coverage.

¹⁹ Root Cause, Social Issue Report – Youth Career Development – April 2012
(<http://rootcause.org/documents/YCD%20-%20Issue%202013.pdf>)

²⁰ Root Cause, Social Issue Report – Workforce Development – March 2011
(<http://rootcause.org/documents/WFD-Issue.pdf>)

²¹ Fernandes and Gabe, 2009

2. National Estimates of Disconnected Youth

The actual number of disconnected or disengaged youth is hard to quantify. In part this is because it is difficult to distinguish a downward spiral of disconnection from other disconnections that may be part of a normal transition to adulthood, particularly in a difficult economy. As noted by Root Cause,

“(d)isengagement is cyclical in nature, ranging from intermittent attendance at school to disengaging for months or a year at a time to completely disengaging for multiple years with no intent of returning to school and no consistent employment.”²²

Estimates of disconnected youth also vary widely depending, in part, on the criteria used to capture the expected policy outcome. For example, some estimates restrict their counts to youth who are neither in-school nor in the labor market or “idle” youth. Other estimates count youth who *have* worked or attended school within the past year; however, they are counted as disconnected because they are not on a trajectory to earn self-sufficiency wages.

Using the most restrictive definition to refer to idleness where youth were neither in-school nor actively looking for work if not working, the Center for Law and Social Policy estimated that between 3.8 and 5 million youth between the ages of 16 to 24 were disconnected in 2008.²³ Four years later, in a 2012 report for the Corporation for National and Community Service and the White House Council for Community Solutions, Belfield and Levin (2012) estimate the number of disconnected youth at 6.7 million.²⁴

More specifically, Belfield and Levin define two categories of disconnected youth that include youth who are neither working nor in-school and youth who are disconnected because they are at-risk of not earning wages that lead to economic self-sufficiency:²⁵

- **Chronic disconnected youth** are youth who have no employment or postsecondary educational experiences (and may not have completed high school); and
- **Weakly attached disconnected youth** are youth who have some intermittent work history or post-secondary schooling but those experiences are inadequate for achieving short and long-term economic independence.

According to Belfield and Levin, about half of all disconnected youth belong to each group; together, both groups comprise one-sixth of the nation’s youth population. Table 2-5 on the next page describes the prevalence and numbers of disconnected youth in the U.S. in 2012 and related risk factors evident among disengaged youth.²⁶

²² Root Cause, 2012

²³ Harris, Creating Postsecondary Pathways to Good Jobs for Young High School Dropouts, 2008 (<http://www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications/files/0438.pdf>)

²⁴ Belfield and Levin, 2012

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Ibid

Table 2-5: National Estimates of Youth Disconnection and Related Factors, 2012

| Count and Measure | Percent of All 16-24 Year Olds | Disconnected Youth (millions) |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| All Disconnected Youth | 17.3% | 6.74 |
| Chronic Disconnected Youth | 8.9% | 3.46 |
| Weakly Attached Disconnected Youth | 8.4% | 3.28 |
| Poverty (ages 18-24) | 26% | 7.88 |
| Criminal status (ever arrested 16-24) | 18% | 7.03 |
| Criminal status (arrested per year) | 6.3% | 2.45 |
| Disability | 5.8% | 2.26 |
| Substance abuse | 2.9% | 1.13 |
| Poverty level (as household head) | 2.4% | 0.93 |
| Family care-giver responsibilities | 2.0% | 0.77 |
| Institutional residence | 2.0% | 0.76 |
| Incarcerated | 0.8% | 0.31 |
| Total youth population ages 16-24 | 100% | 38.94 |
| Source: Belfield and Levin, 2012 | | |

2. Local Estimates of Disconnected Youth

The United Way's recent *Community Snapshot* prepared by the George Mason University Center for Regional Analysis finds that, on average between 2008 and 2010, there were 28,000 16-24 year olds in the Washington D.C. region that were neither in-school nor in the labor force (also referred to as "idleness").²⁷ In Montgomery County, approximately 1,141 (or 2.4% of) 16-19 year olds were neither in-school nor in the labor market; and another 2,737 (or 5.1% of) 20-24 year olds were not in-school and nor in the labor market as well.²⁸

Overall, GMU's estimates suggest that about 3,800 Montgomery youth between the ages of 16 and 24 are disconnected from education and employment. This set of youth would closely align with the group of youth that Belfield and Levin define as chronically disconnected – youth with no employment or postsecondary educational experiences over the last year.

Belfield and Levin also note that there are some youth with intermittent work histories and post-secondary school experiences that are insufficient for achieving either short-term or long-term economic independence. These youth are referred to as weakly-attached youth and their numbers are similar in size the number of nationally youth recognized as chronically disconnected youth. So, if national patterns hold locally, perhaps another 3,800 youth in Montgomery County are only weakly attached to the worlds of work and schooling.

Another way to describe disconnected youth is to include youth who are neither in school nor working, but remain in the labor market because they are actively looking for employment (i.e. they are unemployed). Broadening the definition of work disconnection to include unemployed youth generate higher rates of disconnection than estimates that exclude the unemployed.

²⁷ Community Snapshot – A Report on the Economic and Social Well-Being of the National, May 2013
http://b.3cdn.net/uwnca/90c411ddd702a2c292_8km6yiv2d.pdf

²⁸ Ibid

As noted on Table 2-6, 4.3% of male teens and 4.8% of female teens in Montgomery County (approximately 1,000 teen males and 1,100 teen females) were neither in-school nor working in 2011 based on three-year estimates from the American Community Survey. These rates were also far lower than state and national averages. Table 4-6 also shows that 4.1% of out-of-school teen males and 3.1% of teen females in Montgomery County did not have a high school diploma in 2011.

Table 2-6: Measures of Teen Disconnection by Gender and Location, 2008 & 2011

| | Males | | | Females | | |
|--|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|--------|
| | 2006-08 | 2009-11 | Change | 2006-08 | 2009-11 | Change |
| Teens Age 16-19 Neither in-school nor Working | | | | | | |
| U.S. | 8.2% | 9.4% | 1.2% | 7.6% | 7.9% | 0.3% |
| Maryland | 8.7% | 8.5% | -0.3% | 7.2% | 7.1% | -0.1% |
| Montgomery | 3.8% | 4.3% | 0.5% | 6.0% | 4.8% | -1.2% |
| Teens Age 16-19 Not in-school and Without a Diploma | | | | | | |
| U.S. | 7.4% | 6.4% | -1.0% | 5.5% | 4.6% | -0.9% |
| Maryland | 7.4% | 5.5% | -2.0% | 5.0% | 4.3% | -0.7% |
| Montgomery | 3.9% | 4.1% | 0.2% | 4.3% | 3.1% | -1.2% |
| Source: American Community Survey, 3-Year Estimates (Table B14005) | | | | | | |

Finally, ACS data on idleness, based on five-year estimates, offers data on disparities in teen disconnection by ethnicity in Montgomery County. Table 2-7 shows disparities in idleness rates among teens by race and ethnicity in Montgomery County. Compared to about 2% of white and Latino teens being idle between 2007 and 2011, nearly 6% of black teens were idle. Thus, of the approximately 1,200 teens that were idle in the County, black teens comprised 45.6% of all idle youth compared to 20.9% of all teens in the County.

Table 2-7: Montgomery County Teen Idleness by Race and Ethnicity, 2007-2011

| Measure | All | White | Black | Latino |
|---|--------|--------|-------|--------|
| Number of All Youth | 47,331 | 20,417 | 9,848 | 9,561 |
| Rate of Idleness (not enrolled in-school or in the labor force) | 2.6% | 2.1% | 5.7% | 1.9% |
| Number of Idle Youth | 1,231 | 429 | 561 | 182 |
| Distribution of All Youth | 100% | 46.1% | 20.9% | 19.9% |
| Distribution of Idle Youth | 100% | 34.8% | 45.6% | 14.8% |
| Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimates – 2007-2011 | | | | |

These data points offer some sense of the magnitude of teen disconnection locally, but neither a comprehensive assessment of teen disconnection overall or disconnection among young adults between the ages of 20 and 24. Additional data points, for example, would provide:

- A broader definition of disconnection to include the proportion of **young adults between the ages of 20 and 24 who were neither in school nor working**, but still attached to the labor market because they were actively looking for work;
- A broader definition of educational disconnection to include the proportion of **high school graduates between the ages of 16 and 24** who are not working and not enrolled in post secondary programs that enable them to earn self-sufficiency wages; and

- A broader definition of employment disconnection to include the proportion of **youth between the ages of 16 and 24 working less than full-time who are not also enrolled in post secondary training.**

The Youth Council of the Montgomery County Workforce Investment Board (WIB) is poised to compile more comprehensive data about youth disconnection in the County in 2014. More specifically, the Youth Council plans to reissue a solicitation that requests a comprehensive review of youth opportunity demographic and program data this fall.²⁹ Phase I of the proposed scope will collect and report data that describes the demographic, social, and economic condition of local youth. This report will provide the WIB and the County Council with a better sense of the dimensions of youth disconnection in Montgomery County.

3. The Fiscal Costs of Youth Disconnection

Being out of work and out-of-school in the late teens and early twenties substantially increases the chances of a young adult being jobless, poor, unmarried, and economically dependent in their mid-twenties.³⁰ Further, a lack of work experiences among teens and young adults also decreases:

- The likelihood of teens securing future work, particularly among men, women, blacks, Latinos, whites, low income and middle income youth;
- The ability of young graduates to transition into the work force and achieve higher hourly wages, especially for those not immediately enrolling in college full-time after graduation;
- The favorable impact of cumulative work experiences of young adults on annual and hourly earnings as they move into their twenties;
- Opportunities to receive formal training and apprenticeship training from their employers.
- The opportunity for young women to transition into full-time rather than part-time work.

Root Cause defines the **individual cost** of youth disconnection as the average gap of \$400,000 in lifetime earnings between those with and those without a high school diploma.³¹ Belfield and Levin also find that the aggregate costs to tax payers and society associated with disconnected youth are also quite large.³² More specifically, they calculate that:

- On average, **the taxpayer loss** per disconnected youth is \$13,890 per year for each youth over the nine year period from ages 16 to 24 (the federal government burden is \$4,840 and the state/local government burden is \$9,600).³³ For a youth who is disconnected for five years and then experiences as an adult (after age 25) a profile typical of a disconnected youth, the total lifetime fiscal loss is much higher, at \$235,680.
- On average, the **social loss** per disconnected youth is \$37,450 annually.³⁴ Belfield and Levin's estimate of these social losses accounts for a broader set of public supports that

²⁹ See Informal Solicitation #1024290, issued originally October 17, 2012 that will be reissued in 2013.

³⁰ CDF Policy Brief #2 ,September 2011

³¹ Root Cause, 2012

³² Belfield and Levin, 2012

³³ Components of taxpayer costs include lost taxes, additional health care expenditures, expenditures for criminal justice system and corrections, welfare and social service payments, and savings in lower education spending.

³⁴ Components of social costs include lost earnings, additional health expenditures, criminal justice system expenditures and victim costs, welfare and social service payment – non transfers, and the cost of education.

would be provided. As a result, these social losses are much greater than the taxpayer losses. The corresponding lifetime lump sum social loss is \$704,200 per youth.

These patterns suggest that significant public investments in youth workforce development are warranted. Belfield and Levin argue that successfully assisting each disconnected youth to transition into adulthood along a similar path to other youth would reduce taxpayer losses by \$13,890 annually. Yet, they find that an accounting of the combined federal, state, and local investments in disconnected youth yields, at most, \$1,350 per youth per year on programs to alleviate the challenges these youth face.³⁵ In other words, the current level of investment, which totals \$9 billion annually, is equivalent to roughly one-tenth of the fiscal losses that taxpayers are absorbing each year.³⁶

³⁵ Components of federal investments include Departments of Labor (e.g, Job Corps), Education (non-K-12 funding), Health and Human Services (e.g. independent living), and Justice (e.g. OJJDP).

³⁶ Multiplying 6.7 million opportunity youth * 13,890 per year totals \$93 billion.

Chapter 3: The County Labor Market, Employment Projections and Middle-Skill Jobs

National, regional or local area employment projections offer a general outlook for how much industries and occupations are growing or contracting. They provide job seekers, policymakers, and training providers an idea of changes in specific industries or occupations over time, including where future demands for labor will be.

On an annual basis, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) at the U.S. Department of Labor develops national ten-year projections by industry. BLS uses assumptions about industry staffing patterns to convert these industry projections into occupational employment projections. State departments of labor, including the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation, use these BLS industry and employment forecasts to develop state and local occupational projections.

Based on their analyses of national and state level employment projection data, the Georgetown University's Center on Education and Workforce³⁷ and the Governor's Workforce Investment Board³⁸ argue that a gap exists between the employment demand for middle-skilled jobs and the supply of middle-skilled workers. Middle-skills refers to occupations that require post secondary training and/or significant job training; many of these positions, particularly in allied health, offer in-demand career pathways with earning and advancement opportunities.

If a middle-skills gap exists for living wage occupations, then training disconnected youth for middle-skills occupations creates a "win-win" opportunity for disconnected youth, employers, and the public as a whole with the strengthening of the local economy. This chapter compares the current and future supply of middle-skill workers to the current and future demand for middle-skill jobs in Montgomery County to discern whether additional public investments in youth career development aimed at middle-skill positions is warranted. It has three parts:

- **Part A, Middle-Skills**, describes the types of jobs that embody "middle-skills" and arguments for and against increasing middle-skills training.
- **Part B, The Current Labor Market**, describes current labor market data to identify employment opportunities currently available regionally and in Montgomery County.
- **Part C, Workforce Projections**, describes workforce projection by industry and occupation to identify potential areas for employment growth regionally and in Montgomery County.

A review of the data and background information offers a number of key findings.

- Evidence demonstrating a compelling gap in the middle-skills labor market gap is weak at best. The conceptualization of middle-skill occupations and unmet demand is often muddled because the criteria used to define middle-skill occupations are often unclear, inconsistent, and overlap with definitions of high-skill and low-skill occupations.³⁹

³⁷ See Carnevale, Smith, and Stohl - *Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements*, 2018 (2010)

³⁸ See State of Maryland Integrated Workforce Plan, Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation, April 12, 2013

³⁹ For example, health technicians are included in the professional and related services occupations characterized as high skill and public safety officers are included among the service occupations characterized as low skill.

- To provide sustainable paths to economic self-sufficiency, public investments that prepare workers for low/middle-skill positions should be targeted to in-demand, jobs with self-sustaining wages. However, the lack of a robust economic recovery has undercut the value of some middle-skills occupations previously expected to provide these pathways. Instead, in today's economy, some middle-skill occupations, (e.g. nursing aide positions, offer earnings and opportunities equivalent to low-skill positions). Other higher paying low and middle-skill positions (e.g. construction) have experienced significant declines in demand.
- In Montgomery County, most job openings are projected to be in low-skill positions that offer few earning and advancement opportunities rather than among middle or high-skill positions that afford high wages. The County's high cost of living and lack of affordable housing exacerbates this wage gap.
- Both current and future County employment forecasts project persistent middle-skill gaps in two sectors - allied health (including nursing) and computer user support. Positions in these sectors are in demand, anticipated to grow, and generally offer competitive wages. Thus, public investments aimed at training disconnected youth for careers that generate self-sufficiency wages should target these occupational sectors.

A. Middle-Skills

It is often reported that despite high rates of unemployment, employers struggle to fill certain types of vacancies in so-called "middle-skill" jobs. Computer technology, nursing, and high-skill manufacturing are offered as examples of areas with workforce shortages that pay wages comparable to or even above wages earned by adults with bachelor's degrees.

Some economists and analysts argue that now and in the future, greater workforce shortages exist in middle-skill occupations, (i.e., jobs that require some post secondary training but less than a bachelor's degree⁴⁰) compared to shortages in low-skill occupations, (i.e., positions that require a high school degree or less), or shortages in high-skill occupations, jobs that require a bachelor's degree or higher. The analysts, however, tend not to recognize that vocational and career and technical education delivered by secondary institutions (e.g. high schools) can also be effective at preparing young workers for middle-skill positions.

In 2007, Holzer and Lerman published a study on behalf of a campaign by the National Skills Coalition. The study defines middle-skill jobs as those that generally require "some significant education and training beyond high school but less than a bachelor's degree."⁴¹ This training can include associate's degrees, vocational certificates, moderate- to long-term on the job training, previous work experiences, and some college. Examples of middle-skill jobs include:

- Construction trade occupations (e.g. carpenters, electricians, painters, and plumbers)
- Allied health care occupations (e.g. dental hygienist, lab technicians, phlebotomists)
- Installation, maintenance and repair occupations (e.g. mechanics, heating and AC installers)
- Transportation occupations (e.g. bus and heavy truck drivers)
- Office and administrative support occupations (e.g. claims adjusters, legal secretaries)

⁴⁰ See Kochan, Finegold, and Osterman "Who Can Fix the Middle-skills Gap?" Harvard Business Review, 2012

⁴¹ America's Forgotten Middle-Skill Jobs, Skills to Compete Campaign, November 2007

Based on their analysis of employment and educational attainment data for the state of Maryland, the National Skills Coalition reported mismatches between jobs and skills across the continuum. More specifically, they reported Maryland has:

- A **six percentage point surplus** of high-skill workers (with a BA or above) compared to high-skill jobs (42% of workers vs. 34% of jobs);
- A **ten percentage point deficit** of middle-skill workers compared to middle-skill jobs (37% of workers vs. 47% of jobs); and
- A **two percentage point surplus** of low-skill workers (with a high school diploma or less) compared to low-skill jobs (21% of workers vs. 19% of jobs).

These comparisons serve as the basis for arguing the existence of a middle-skills gap and for advocating for increasing public investments in education to fill this gap. If the middle-skills gap hypothesis is correct, using youth career development approaches to increase the number of disconnected youth prepared for middle-skilled positions could be a wise public investment. However, it remains unclear whether public investments to uniformly increase the number of middle-skill workers is desirable for several reasons noted below.

- Many occupations classified as middle-skill jobs are, in fact, low-skill jobs based on their educational requirements. These misclassified positions (e.g. many sales and related occupations), require a high school degree or less for entry instead of an associate's degree or post secondary credential.
- Not all positions with post-secondary training requirements offer entry-level wages above those of low-skilled jobs. The characterizations that accompany discussions of middle-skill jobs frequently suggest that the majority of middle-skill positions offer earning and advancement opportunities that will support economic self-sufficiency. In fact, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, some positions that require post-secondary training, (e.g., cosmetologists and nursing aides), actually offer entry-level wages that are commensurate with low-skill positions.
- The demand for the often cited middle-skill construction and technology positions has declined as a result of the collapse of the housing bubble and the construction market, including the effects of the recession and the slow recovery. When the economy contracted, the number of these positions declined and they have yet to recover. This suggests the need and importance of a strategy to periodically re-assess in-demand occupations.
- Policies and investments that address a perceived middle-skills gap often place the onus for narrowing the gap solely on individuals. For example, in response to the question of "who provides middle-skill training?" the National Skills Coalition states several entities that typically charge students tuition - "community colleges, private school career schools, apprenticeships programs, and community-based training organizations".⁴² This approach overlooks the training previously provided by employers who directly benefit from having a highly skilled workforce. A more balanced approach to workforce training would recognize the capacity of companies to train workers to fill their middle-skill gap and encourage this as part of the larger conversation of addressing middle-skills gaps.⁴³

⁴² Maryland's Forgotten Middle-Skill Jobs, National Skills Coalition, page 5

⁴³ See Kochan, Finegold, and Osterman, 2012

- Policies that rely on higher education and post secondary institutions to address the middle-skills can also ignore the potential role of secondary education to deliver vocational and occupational training opportunities that enhance the marketability of young workers. A more balanced approach to middle-skills training would also recognize the role of high schools in providing middle-skills training to in-school and out-of-school youth.
- Finally, a better understanding of what relationship exists, if any, between the middle-skills gap and the Great Squeeze is needed. The Great Squeeze refers to shifts in the structural labor market where jobs previously filled by non-college graduates are now filled by college graduates.⁴⁴ This is particularly true in areas with a highly educated workforce like Montgomery County. If workers with bachelor degrees are crowding out those with some college and middle-skills, then highly skilled workers are filling jobs previously used to justify the existence of a middle-skilled worker shortage. In other words, a market solution to the gap may have eliminated the need for a policy response.

If a middle-skills gap exists that the public could leverage to reduce both the number of disconnected youth and the fiscal costs that youth disconnection creates, then public investment should focus on the gap in technical middle-skills that prepare youth for positions that are in-demand and yield high earnings and advancement opportunities. These public investments could be delivered by secondary and post-secondary institutions and community based providers. To develop a better understanding of the educational levels that the County's labor market requires, the next two sections examine current and projected labor market data in Montgomery County to identify those occupations that merit public investment.

B. The Current Labor Market

OLO reviewed Maryland Workforce Exchange (MWE) labor market data for June and July 2013 to discern if gaps in the low and middle-skill labor markets currently exist in the County. The data show a current middle-skills gap in allied health and computer user support positions exists. The rest of this section describes OLO's data sources, the limits of the analysis with observations about current middle-skills position shortages in the County.

Labor Market Data: To understand the current demand and supply of labor in the Washington, DC metropolitan market, OLO analyzed data from the Maryland Workforce Exchange (MWE), an internet-based system that serves as the State of Maryland's jobs database. To help match job seekers with businesses that are hiring, MWE provides an online forum where job seekers can post their resumes, and search and apply for jobs. The MWE helps match businesses with job seekers by allowing employers to search the pool of job seekers and to post job openings directly on the website. MWE also aggregates information about job postings from other websites onto its site.

The MWE data can provide a point-in-time snapshot of the regional labor market because it groups job openings by occupation and location and reports the number of job candidates by specific occupation. The sources of the labor market demand data are job openings posted by employers on MWE plus postings from websites such as Monster and Career Builder. The source of labor market supply data are applications for unemployment insurance plus job applications submitted by job seekers who register with One Stop Centers in Maryland.

⁴⁴ <http://www.progressivepolicy.org/2012/04/the-great-squeeze-its-not-just-college-grads/>

In theory, compiling and comparing these MWE demand (posted openings) and supply (MWE registered candidates) data in the region⁴⁵ provides an indication of where potential gaps in the current labor market exist. In practice, this analysis has limitations. For example, labor supply estimates based on MWE data are likely to be lower than the actual labor supply by occupation.

Although MWE does capture data for job seekers applying for unemployment insurance and those utilizing One Stop Center services, it does not capture data for those job seekers who find positions outside of its system. Nevertheless, together with the analysis of workforce projection data in the next section, this MWE data analysis is useful for understanding how and where middle-skill gaps may occur locally.

Analysis and Observations: OLO compiled MWE data on job and candidates' postings on May 29 and June 3, 2013 for 11 middle-skill and 10 low-skill occupational groups projected to generate the most job openings between 2010 and 2020. OLO also identified entry-level wage data compiled by the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation. Table 3-1, on the next page presents these data by skill level.

Middle-Skill Demand. An analysis of the data suggests an *excess supply* of current candidates for the following six middle-skill positions:

- Medical assistants (363 candidates v. 216 openings)
- Secretaries and medical assistants (634 candidates v. 45 openings)
- Construction carpenters (203 candidates v. 34 openings)
- Construction laborers (674 candidates v. 57 openings)
- Automotive service technicians and mechanics (98 candidates v. 31 openings)
- Light truck or delivery service drivers (385 candidates v. 80 openings)

An analysis of the MWE data also suggests *unmet demand* for five middle-skill positions:

- Registered nurses (109 candidates v. 3,194 openings)
- Computer user support specialists (38 candidates v. 807 openings)
- Pharmacy technicians (36 candidates v. 807 openings)
- Maintenance and repair workers, general (51 candidates v. 125 openings)
- Nursing aides (90 candidates v. 402 openings)

The relatively high wages associated with the first four occupations suggest that public investments to support youth career development in these areas may be warranted.

Low-Skill Demand. Among the low-skill positions reviewed, *unmet demand* exists for all ten. More specifically:

- Six of these positions evidence high levels of unmet demand in the region: fast food workers, waiters and waitresses, hair dressers and cosmetologists, personal and home care aides, retail sales workers, and cashiers.

⁴⁵ The Washington, D.C. Metropolitan region includes the Census Bureau's metropolitan statistical area for the District of Columbia, Virginia, Maryland, and West Virginia.

- The low pay associated with most in-demand low-skilled positions suggests that employers' needs are being met since salaries would increase if a shortage existed.
- Three low-skill positions, with a lower level of demand -- security guards, customer service positions, and janitors and cleaners -- offer slightly higher wage levels comparable to wages of the lowest middle-skill positions.

Table 3-1: Current Openings, Candidates, & Entry-level Wages by Select Occupations*

| <u>In-Demand Occupations</u> | Current Openings | Current Candidates | Entry Wages* |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Middle-Skill Positions | | | |
| Registered Nurses** | 3,194 | 109 | \$59,100 |
| Computer User Support Specialists | 807 | 38 | \$39,100 |
| Pharmacy Technicians | 215 | 36 | \$26,200 |
| Nursing Aides, Orderlies** | 402 | 90 | \$21,800 |
| Maintenance and Repair Workers, General** | 125 | 51 | \$30,700 |
| Medical Assistants** | 216 | 363 | \$28,200 |
| Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics** | 31 | 98 | \$27,600 |
| Light Truck or Delivery Drivers** | 80 | 385 | \$22,400 |
| Construction Carpenters* | 34 | 203 | \$30,600 |
| Construction Laborers* | 57 | 674 | \$21,200 |
| Secretaries and Administrative Assistants** | 45 | 634 | \$27,200 |
| Subtotals for Middle-Skill Positions | 5,206 | 2,681 | |
| Low-Skill Positions | | | |
| Combined Food Prep, including Fast Food | 1,378 | 53 | \$17,100 |
| Retail Sales Workers | 2,936 | 188 | \$17,100 |
| Waiters and Waitresses | 359 | 45 | \$17,100 |
| Hair Dressers and Cosmetologists** | 303 | 40 | \$17,700 |
| Personal and Home Care Aides | 241 | 88 | \$19,700 |
| Cashiers | 630 | 261 | \$17,200 |
| Laborers and Freight, Stock and Material Movers, | 396 | 234 | \$17,000 |
| Security Guards** | 898 | 611 | \$23,800 |
| Customer Service | 1,324 | 921 | \$23,800 |
| Janitors and Cleaners | 200 | 147 | \$21,300 |
| Subtotal for Low-Skill Positions | 8,665 | 2,588 | |
| * Entry-level wage data based on 2011 earnings compiled by Maryland DLLR; unless otherwise noted, openings and candidates data retrieved from MWE for DC-VA-MD-WVA MSA on May 29, 2013 | | | |
| **Data retrieved from MWE on June 3, 2013 | | | |

C. Workforce Projections

Economic and workforce projection data are used by analysts to provide a general outlook for industries and occupations within an area to anticipate economic change and growth. This section describes various economic and employment forecasts to better understand the forecasted demand for jobs generally and the shares of jobs by skill level.

Together, the data suggest that more future job openings will either be in low-skill positions that require a high school diploma or less or high-skill positions that require a bachelor's degree. Although fewer openings in middle-skill positions requiring some college and/or a post secondary credential are projected, middle-skills gaps in nursing and allied health will persist locally.

Five Year Regional Economic and Workforce Forecast: In May 2013, the United Way of the National Capital Area published a review of labor and economic data for the Washington D.C. metropolitan area prepared by the George Mason University Center for Regional Analysis that highlighted the following key economic trends in the regional economy:⁴⁶

- The Washington, DC area economy is in a period of transition as a result of declining Federal spending in the region.
- The region generally has low unemployment and high wages; however, unemployment rates remain high for some subgroups (e.g. black youth, DC residents, young adults).
- Overall regional labor force participation has not changed much since before the recession. In 2011, 72.4% of the population age 16 and above was in the labor market compared to a national labor participation rate of 64.0%.
- Young males in the region, who are dropping out of the labor force in high numbers, are the exception to unchanged labor participation rates. Between 2007 and 2011, their labor force participation rate declined from 39.2% to 30.6%.

Montgomery County's economic indicators generally mirror the indicators reported for the National Capital area. For example, 71.8% of Montgomery County residents age 16 and above were in the labor market in 2011; and teen labor force participation rates in Montgomery County declined from 39.2% in 2007 to 29.4% in 2011.

Another key finding from the GMU Center's regional report is that there will be nearly 700,000 job openings in the region between 2013 and 2018. This includes 400,000 replacement jobs and another 300,000 net new jobs without 56,500 of these occurring in the Maryland suburbs. The largest number of job openings in the region (reflecting a combination of replacement and new job openings) will be in sales occupations, followed by business and financial openings and administrative support. Other in-demand occupations include food preparation and service; management; computer, math and science; health care; education and training; and personal care.

Based on their analysis, the GMU Center predicts that 34% of regional job openings between 2013 and 2018 will require a bachelor's degrees or more, 4% will require an associate's degree, and 62% will require a high school diploma, vocational education, or on the job training.

Table 3-2 on the next page describes the GMU Center's regional *industry sector forecast* from 2013-2018. Their projected employment change by industry describes changes in the net number of jobs to describe growth among new jobs rather than among replacement jobs. As shown in Table 3-2, the GMU Center projects the strongest net demand for workers regionally in the professional and business services sectors, followed by construction and health and education occupations.

⁴⁶ Community Snapshot – A Report on the Economic and Social Well-Being of the National, May 2013
http://b3cdn.net/uwnca/90c411ddd702a2c292_8km6yiv2d.pdf

Table 3-2: Metropolitan Washington DC Industry Sector Forecast, 2013-2018

| Sector | Projected Employment Change by Industry |
|---|---|
| Professional and Business Services: | 144,000 |
| Construction | 55,000 |
| Education and Health Services | 39,000 |
| Other Sectors | 18,000 |
| Retail Trade | 13,000 |
| State and Local Government | 12,000 |
| Leisure and Hospitality | 8,000 |
| Information | 7,000 |
| Financial Activities | 5,000 |
| Subtotal of Estimated Job Openings | 301,000 |
| Federal Government | -22,000 |
| Net Openings | 279,000 |
| Source: GMU Center for Regional Analysis | |

Five Year Occupational Forecast: In April 2013, on behalf of the Montgomery County Workforce Investment Board, Steven Fuller of the GMU Center on Regional Analysis presented an occupational forecast.⁴⁷ According to this forecast, *Workforce Trends in Montgomery County, Maryland 2012-2017*, demand for workers will be strongest in sales and related occupations, business and financial occupations, healthcare, and office and administrative support. More specifically, Fuller forecasts that from 2012 to 2017 local employment by occupational group will change as follows:

- Sales and Related Occupations: 15,200
- Business and Financial Operations: 12,600
- Healthcare Occupations (all): 12,000
- Office and Administrative Support Occupations: 11,400
- Management Occupations: 8,400
- Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations: 7,800
- Personal Care and Service Occupations: 7,200
- Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations: 5,700
- Education, Training, and Library Occupations: 5,700
- Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations: 4,800
- Construction and Extraction Occupations: 4,022

Based on his analysis, Fuller predicts 32.3% of Montgomery County job openings between 2012 and 2017 will require a bachelor's degrees or more, 4.2% will require an associate's degrees, 8.2% will require a post secondary credential (i.e. vocational training) and the remaining 55.3% of openings will require a high school diploma or on the job training.

Comparing these projections to the County's current workforce suggests that county residents possess a higher degree of educational attainment than demanded by the labor market. According to 2009-11 data from the American Community Survey, 57% of residents age 25 or above possess a bachelor's degree or above, residents with some college or an associate's degree account for 20% of residents, and those with a high school degree or less account for 34% of adult residents.

⁴⁷ See <http://www.montgomeryworks.com/> for presentation and report

Local Ten-Year Forecast: OLO also compiled and analyzed data from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation 2008-2018 employment forecast to describe the educational requirements and entry-level wages associated with the occupations projected to have the most openings.⁴⁸ Table 3-3 below presents this data.

Overall, an analysis of the data presented suggests that most openings in Montgomery County will occur among low and high-skill positions in terms of educational attainment, rather than among middle-skill positions. The only middle-skills gap appear evident among the occupations with the most projected total openings is in allied health.

Table 3-3: Montgomery County Occupations with the Most Total Openings, 2008-2018

| Occupations by Educational Requirements | 2008-2018 Projected Openings | 2011 Entry- level Wages |
|--|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| High School Diploma or Less | | |
| Cashiers | 5,520 | \$8.25 per hour |
| Waiters and Waitresses | 4,655 | \$8.00 per hour |
| Retail Salespersons | 4,085 | \$8.25 per hour |
| Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, including Fast Food | 3,335 | \$8.00 per hour |
| Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners | 2,940 | \$8.75 per hour |
| Customer Service Representatives | 2,795 | \$11.00 per hour |
| Office Clerks, General | 2,620 | \$9.50 per hour |
| Receptionists and Information Clerks | 1,795 | \$8.75 per hour |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>27,745</i> | |
| Vocational or Technical Training | | |
| Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants | 1,665 | \$11.00 per hour |
| Associate's Degree | | |
| Registered Nurses | 3,370 | \$28.50 per hour |
| Bachelor's Degree or More | | |
| General and Operations Managers | 3,170 | \$31.25 per hour |
| Management Analysts | 2,895 | \$28.50 per hour |
| Accountants and Auditors | 2,370 | \$23.75 per hour |
| Network & Computer System Administrators | 2,230 | \$30.25 per hour |
| Computer Systems Analysts | 2,105 | \$27.25 per hour |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>12,770</i> | |
| The Top 15 In Demand Occupations | 45,550 | |
| Source: OLO analysis of Maryland DLLR data | | |

OLO's review of education, wage, and demand data for these projected in-demand occupations offers several findings. Of the 15 occupations projected to have the most total openings through 2018:

- Eight of the occupations (cashiers, waiters, retail salespersons, food service workers, janitors, customer service representatives, office clerks, and receptionists) require a high school diploma and offer low entry-level wages ranging between \$8.00 and \$11.00 per hour;
- Five occupations, offering relatively high entry-level wages ranging between \$27.25 and \$31.25 per hour, require bachelor's or graduate degrees.

⁴⁸ Most openings based on both replacement and new jobs

- Two allied health occupations represent the potential “promise” and “peril” of in-demand middle-skill positions. Projected openings for registered nurses represent the “promise” since these middle-skill positions yield wages commensurate with in demand high-skill positions at \$28.50 per hour. Projected openings for nursing aides and orderlies, however, represent the potential peril since these middle-skill positions only yield wages that are commensurate with low-skill, low-wage positions requiring a high school diploma or less.

Overall, the data in Table X suggest that most openings in the Montgomery County will occur among low and high-skill positions, in terms of educational attainment, rather than among middle-skill positions. The only area where a middle-skills gap may persist is in allied health. OLO’s review of more detailed DLLR data confirms this perception that occupational growth will occur at the ends of the workforce continuum rather than in the middle: of the 168,000 job openings projected, 51% will require a high school diploma or less, 10% will require a post secondary award or associates degree; and 39% will require a bachelor’s degree or higher credential.⁴⁹

Middle-Skill Job Openings without the Great Squeeze. OLO also analyzed DLLR growth and wage data to understand the entry-level wages for those in-demand occupational groups with low and middle-skill positions requiring an associate’s degree or less. Table 3-4 on the next page shows that three-quarters of low and middle-skill job openings will occur in seven groups:

- Office and administrative support (20%),
- Food preparation (17%),
- Sales (15%),
- Healthcare practitioners (7%)
- Construction and extraction (7%),
- Maintenance (6%) and
- Personal care (6%).

Most of these occupations offer entry-level wages of less than \$20,000 a year.

⁴⁹ OLO analyzed DLLR data on Montgomery County Workforce Investment Area Occupational Projections from 2008-2018 which is coded by educational attainment – bachelor’s degree or higher, post secondary award or associate’s degree, and high school diploma or less. Of the 168,000 total occupational openings projected for Montgomery County during this time frame, 51% (85,000 positions) require a high school diploma or less; 10% (17,000) will require a post secondary award or the remaining 39% require a bachelor’s degree or above.

Table 3-4: Distribution of Low- and Middle-Skill Job Openings by Occupational Group

| Occupational Groups | % of Openings for Low- and Middle-skill Positions | Annual Entry Level Wages* |
|---|--|----------------------------------|
| Office and Administrative Support Occupations | 20% | \$23,000 |
| Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations | 17% | \$17,000 |
| Sales and Related Occupations | 15% | \$18,000 |
| Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations | 7% | \$46,000 |
| Construction and Extraction Occupations | 7% | \$27,000 |
| Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations | 6% | \$18,000 |
| Personal Care and Service Occupations | 6% | \$18,000 |
| Transportation and Material Moving Occupations | 4% | \$18,000 |
| Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations | 4% | \$31,000 |
| Healthcare Support Occupations | 3% | \$22,000 |
| Computer and Mathematical Occupations | 2% | \$39,000 |
| Business and Financial Operations Occupations | 2% | \$48,000 |
| Education, Training, and Library Occupations | 2% | \$33,000 |
| Protective Service Occupations | 2% | \$27,000 |
| Production Occupations | 2% | \$21,000 |
| Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations | 1% | \$28,000 |
| Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations | 1% | \$53,000 |
| Architecture and Engineering Occupations | 1% | \$55,000 |
| Source: OLO analysis of Maryland DLLR data * 2011 wages rounded; ** Community and social service, legal, management, and farming/fishing/forestry occupations each account for less than <1% of anticipated growth in low- and middle-skill jobs | | |

Middle-Skill Job Openings with a Great Squeeze Scenario. If office and administrative support occupations that offer higher entry-level wages (\$24,000 per year) “upskill” and hire high-skill workers with bachelor’s degrees or more,⁵⁰ then average entry-level wages for the low- to middle-skills workforce may be substantially lower.

Table 3-5 on the next page lists the positions and entry-level wages for in-demand middle- and low-skill occupations under a Great Squeeze scenario, ranked by their entry-level wage. In contrast to the projected occupational profile in Table L, it shows the ten occupational groups that would account for the bulk (86%) of low- and middle-skill projected openings through 2018. Table 3-5 assumes County labor market conditions would allow employers to require a bachelor’s degree or more for office and administrative support occupations.

⁵⁰ The “upskilling” of office and administrative support occupations is likely to occur in Montgomery County because a majority of the workforce holds a bachelor’s degree or more compared to only a third of jobs requiring a bachelor’s degree or more.

Table 3-5: Distribution of Low- and Middle-Skill 2008-2018 Job Openings by Occupational Group, Excluding Office and Administrative Support Occupations

| Occupational Groups | % of Openings for Low- and Middle-Skill Positions | Annual Entry Level Wages* |
|--|--|----------------------------------|
| Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations | 21% | \$17,000 |
| Sales and Related Occupations | 19% | \$18,000 |
| Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations | 8% | \$46,000 |
| Construction and Extraction Occupations | 8% | \$27,000 |
| Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations | 7% | \$18,000 |
| Personal Care and Service Occupations | 7% | \$18,000 |
| Transportation and Material Moving Occupations | 5% | \$18,000 |
| Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations | 4% | \$31,000 |
| Healthcare Support Occupations | 4% | \$22,000 |
| Computer and Mathematical Occupations | 3% | \$39,000 |
| Source: OLO analysis of Maryland DLLR data * 2011 wages rounded | | |

Of these ten groups in Table 3-5, four offered entry-level wages in 2011 that were substantially higher than other in-demand low- and middle-skill positions:

- Health care practitioners - \$46,000
- Computer and mathematical occupations - \$39,000
- Installation and maintenance occupations - \$31,000
- Construction and extraction occupations - \$27,000

If the County labor market were to experience a middle-skills gap and a great squeeze, public investments aimed at reducing this gap and improving opportunities for disconnected youth should be tied to these four higher wage sectors and occupations.

Chapter 4: Overview of Local Programs Reviewed

Comprehensive youth development programs provide skill development, work experiences, and youth development activities. Ideally, they also focus on preparing youth for careers that yield self-sufficiency wages. According to social research, youth workforce and career development programs are an effective strategy to help disconnected youth “return to school, enroll in post-secondary education or career training programs, or start a career.”⁵¹

A plethora of local programs operate in Montgomery County aimed at connecting youth and young adults to education and the workforce. The purpose of this OLO review, however, is to identify and describe the key attributes of local programs that aim to engage and reconnect *disconnected youth* to educational and employment pathways that lead to self-sufficiency. The focus is of particular interest to the County Council given the inability of many at-risk youth to access Montgomery County Public School’s career and technology education pathways that can lead to self-sufficiency.

This chapter describes the approach OLO used to identify the subset of youth and workforce development programs administered by County agencies that “touch and serve” youth at highest risk for disconnection. Toward this end, OLO conducted a four-part process to identify the youth career development programs and services that Montgomery County Government and Montgomery College administer that are described in the next two chapters.

First, OLO reviewed the literature on youth disconnection and career development programs to identify the attributes of youth at highest risk for disconnection and how services vary based on the ages and prior experiences of disconnected youth. OLO found that youth workforce development services and resources are typically aligned to address three groups of participants:⁵²

- At-Risk Youth who have direct or indirect exposure to risk-factors for disconnection. These risk factors can include deficiencies in basic academic skills, disengagement from school, low-incomes, gang involvement, pregnancy and parenting. These youth, who are typically of high school age, often require targeted interventions that are limited in scale and cost (e.g. summer employment program).
- High-Risk Youth who in addition to experiencing risk-factors for disconnection (e.g. low academic skills, low incomes, have minimal work experience, and/or have dropped out. These youth are often court-involved, in foster care, or homeless. These high-risk youth, who can be characterized as *weakly disconnected*, are aged 16-20 and often require longer term interventions and social supports (e.g. summer employment with continuing employment; GED preparation).
- Proven-Risk Youth who have dropped out of school, are not working, and often have been adjudicated. These *chronically disconnected* youth are often older (aged 18 to 24) and require longer term investments of social services, educational opportunities, and transitional employment to achieve long-term employment.

⁵¹ Root Cause, 2012

⁵² Adapted from the typology developed by the Youth Violence Prevention funder Learning Collaborative’s Youth Workforce Development and Education Working Group, 2012. See <http://www.cim-network.org/CIMcontent/UWMBMV/2013%20Investment%20Guide%20v32%20w%20Appendix%20v11.pdf>

Based on this understanding, OLO limited its review of local youth workforce development programs to those serving at-risk, high-risk, or proven-risk youth. Programs serving engaged, low-risk high school-age students and young adults were excluded from OLO's review.

Next, among those programs identified as serving youth at highest risk for disconnection, OLO discerned whether each program's strategies for re-engaging youth at-risk included an educational component, an occupational component, or both. This analysis reflects the Council's interest in understanding what types of programs are available to disconnected youth as well as best practices for re-engaging disconnected youth.⁵³ More specifically, OLO used the following definitions to categorize the key features of each youth workforce development across two program components:

- Educational/life skills are those program components that are intended to promote instruction in academic areas that benefit students in preparing for further education and/or instruction in life skills, such as communication, that enhance job readiness for any position; and
- Occupational/hard skills are those program components that are intended to prepare students with job training to enter the workforce in specific occupational fields and pathways.⁵⁴

Of note, OLO classified program components aimed at enhancing soft skills (e.g. interviewing, resume writing) and providing counseling as *educational* instead of *occupational skills* because the skills and awareness that these programs often cultivate align more closely with efforts to enhance participants' educational readiness than with opportunities for participants to develop specific occupational skills and enter employment pathways with advancement and earnings potential.

Third, due to time constraints, OLO's review excludes programs and contracts with insufficient enrollment and/or budget information, including many Council grant-funded contracts with community based organizations that support youth career development. Since OLO recognizes that these organizations contribute significantly to the County's portfolio of youth services, the appendix provides a list of these grant contracts.

Fourth, a review of each program's outcome and performance data was beyond the scope of this project. Chapter 7, however, provides a synthesis of perspectives on program strengths and opportunities for improvement gleaned during project interviews with program staff, administrators, and contractors.

Finally, OLO's review excludes programs that OLO has reviewed previously or is scheduled to review as part of OLO's ongoing review of programs serving at-risk youth. More specifically, a review of vocational rehabilitation programs and other services for youth with disabilities is excluded because an earlier OLO report reviewed these issues in part;⁵⁵ and a review of developmental education at Montgomery College is excluded because OLO will review these courses as part of another project on the FY14 work program.

The table on the next page lists key information about the local youth workforce development programs reviewed by OLO. Overall, OLO's yields the following findings:

⁵³ See Chapter V of OLO Report 2012-4

<http://www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/council/olo/reports/pdf/FullReport2012-4AlternativeEducation.pdf>

⁵⁴ These definitions adapted from Montgomery College brochure on Continuing Education Placement Options <http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/wdce/brochures/ceplacementoptions.pdf>

⁵⁵ See OLO Report 2009-10 <http://www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/council/olo/reports/pdf/2009-10.pdf>

- **Montgomery County Government's** youth workforce development programs served approximately 1,100 youth in FY13 at a combined cost of \$1.9 million with County funding representing 48% of costs. Only 166 (15%) of these slots provided occupational training and/or jobs in addition to educational services.⁵⁶
- **Montgomery College's** youth workforce development programs served about 1,750 youth in FY12/13 at a cost of \$1.9 million with County funding representing 49% of total costs. In FY14, about 2,900 youth will be served for \$2.8 million with County funding accounting for 58% of costs. None of the College's current youth serving programs include occupational training because various barriers to entry preclude disconnected youth from directly accessing most of the College's occupational programs. Youth enrollment in the College's Refugee and MI-BEST programs that offer occupational skills training is not available.

Table 4-1: Local Youth Workforce Development Programs and Costs by Agency, FY13

| Programs by Agency, FY13 | Enrollment | | Program Budget | Program Components | |
|--|------------|-------|----------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Youth | Total | | Educational | Occupational |
| Montgomery County Government Programs^ | | | | | |
| Youth Opportunity Centers (DHHS) | 633 | 633 | \$100,300 | Yes, GED & Soft skills | No |
| Street Outreach Network - Youth Employment Program (DHHS) | 97 | 97 | \$77,500 | Yes, Soft Skills | No |
| Conservation Corps (DHHS)* | 40 | 40 | \$525,000 | Yes | Training and jobs |
| Transition Services for Foster Care (DHHS) | 28 | 28 | \$120,000 | | |
| TANF Workforce Services (DHHS) | n/a | 2,997 | \$2,200,000 | Varies | Varies |
| Youth, In school (DED) | 185 | 185 | \$650,000 | Yes | Summer jobs & MS Office training |
| Youth, Out-of-school (DED) | | | | Yes, GED & Soft Skills | |
| Youth with disabilities (DED) | 58 | 58 | \$250,000 | Yes | Summer jobs |
| Teen Works (Recreation) | 60 | 60 | \$190,000 | Yes | Summer jobs |
| MCG Youth Subtotal for FY13 | 1,101 | | \$1,912,500 | | |
| Montgomery College Programs | | | | | |
| Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success* | 960 | 960 | \$1,500,000 | Yes | No |
| Literacy and Training for Refugees, FY12 | n/a | 852 | \$810,000 | Yes | Job training |
| English for Speakers of Other Languages, FY12 | 678 | 4,280 | \$1,800,000 | Yes | No, except for Career Connections |
| Educational Opportunity Center, FY13 | 472 | 1,154 | \$329,000 | Yes | No |
| Pathways to Success Program, FY13 | n/a | 180 | \$120,000 | Yes | No |
| Gateway to College, FY13 | 130 | 130 | \$1,300,000 | Yes | No |
| MI-BEST Programs (Certified/Geriatric Nursing and Apartment Maintenance)* | n/a | 80 | \$309,000 | Yes | Job training |
| Life Skills and GED Preparation, FY12 | 474 | 892 | \$370,000 | Yes | No |
| MC Youth Subtotal for FY12/13 | 1,754 | | \$1,916,000 | | |
| MC Youth Subtotal for FY14 | 2,889 | | \$2,766,000 | | |
| ^ Excludes DOCR programs because budget information for re-entry program and DED contract are not available. * Enrollment and budget when program(s) operate in FY14. For Gateway to College, assumes half the FY13 budget and enrollment for FY14 because program sunsets in FY15. | | | | | |

[^] Excludes DOCR programs because budget information for re-entry program and DED contract are not available.

* Enrollment and budget when program(s) operate in FY14. For Gateway to College, assumes half the FY13 budget and enrollment for FY14 because program sunsets in FY15.

⁵⁶ Calculated as the sum of youth participating in the following programs: Youth with Disabilities (58), Summer Youth (40), Conservation Corps (40), & Transition from Foster Care (28)

The next two chapters separately describe the youth workforce development programs administered by Montgomery County Government and Montgomery College, including additional details about the methodology OLO used to select the programs it reviewed. Each chapter provides a program inventory with additional information about program enrollments or seat capacity, participant fees and funding sources, and whether the program serves at-risk, proven-risk or high-risk youth. The information is based on a compilation of data from document reviews, interviews, and surveys.

Chapter 5: Montgomery County Government Programs

Montgomery County Government strives to pursue the common good by working for and with the County's diverse community of 1 million residents. The mission of the County includes operating a responsible and accountable County government, supporting health and sustainable communities and fostering a strong and vibrant economy.⁵⁷ Towards this end, the County offers some specific programs aimed at reconnecting at-risk and disconnected youth to education and employment opportunities that help to achieve its sustainable community and vibrant economy goals. This chapter describes County Government programs that provide youth career development services in education and/or employment across four agencies. It is presented in the following parts:

- **Part A, Background**, describes the policies that shape the County Government's youth career development programs, enrollment and budget across County programs.
- **Part B, Health and Human Services**, describes the key features of five DHHS administered programs that connect youth and adults to education and/or employment.
- **Part C, Economic Development**, describes the key features of three DED programs aimed at connecting youth to education and the workforce, and adults to the workforce.
- **Part D, Recreation**, describes key features of the Summer Teen Employment Program also known as Teen Works.
- **Part E, Corrections and Rehabilitation**, describes youth workforce development programs operating in local detention centers in partnership with other agencies.

As noted in the previous chapter, the County provides grants to non-profit providers that offer career development services to local teens and young adults. A review of these programs is beyond the scope of this project, but a listing of these programs is described in the appendix.

A detailed review of the County's adult workforce development system (i.e. One Stop Career Centers) is also beyond the scope of this study. As already noted, a comprehensive review of this system will be included in OLO's Adult Workforce Development Project planned for later this fiscal year. And although disability is a risk factor for disconnection among youth and adults, this review also excludes the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services to youth and adults in the County.⁵⁸

The tables on the next page lists the youth workforce development programs administered by County Government agencies, their enrollment, budgeted costs for FY13, costs per participant, the County's share of cost, as well as key program components and the contractor vendors for each program.

Excluding Corrections and young adults receiving services under TANF, the County's youth career development programs served approximately 1,110 youth in FY13 at a total cost of \$1.9 million or approximately \$1,700 per participant. At \$918,000 in FY13, County funding accounted for nearly half (48%) of total program costs with more than half of this amount (\$500,000) devoted to the Conservation Corps. Other programs received limited local funding for education and employment services (i.e. Street Outreach Network and Youth Opportunity Centers) or relied on federal formula funding to connect youth to career pathways (e.g. Transition Services for Foster Care).

⁵⁷ See <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/government/missionstatement.html>

⁵⁸ See OLO Report 2009-10 for a partial description of the County's efforts to support the transition of youth with disabilities into the workforce

Table 5-1: Montgomery County Government (MCG) Youth Workforce Development Programs and Costs by Agency, FY13

| Programs by Agency, FY13 | Enrollment | | Program Budget | Program Cost per Participant | County Share |
|---|------------|-------|----------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| | Youth | Adult | | | |
| Health and Human Services (Youth and Adults) | | | | | |
| Youth Opportunity Centers-Education and Employment Services | 633 | -- | \$100,300 | \$158 | 100% |
| Street Outreach Network - Youth Employment Program | 97 | -- | \$77,500 | \$800 | 100% |
| Conservation Corps* | 40 | -- | \$525,000 | \$13,125 | 95% |
| Transition Services for Foster Care | 28 | -- | \$120,000 | \$4,286 | 0% |
| TANF Workforce Services | n/a | 2,997 | \$2,200,000 | \$734 | 0% |
| Economic Development (Youth Programs) | | | | | |
| Youth, In school | 185 | -- | \$650,000 | \$3,513 | 8% |
| Youth, Out-of-school | | | | | |
| Youth with disabilities | 58 | -- | \$250,000 | \$4,310 | 0% |
| Recreation (High School Aged Youth) | | | | | |
| Teen Works | 60 | -- | \$190,000 | \$3,167 | 100% |
| Corrections (Youth and Adults) | | | | | |
| GED/ABE/ESOL Services – Model Learning Center @ MCCF | 318 | 282 | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Re-Entry Services – One Stop Center under contract with DED | 53 | 152 | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| * This will be the number of youth served annually when Conservation Corps operates at full capacity in FY14. In FY13, only 20 youth were served. | | | | | |

Table 5-2: MCG Youth Workforce Programs, Components, and Vendors by Risk Level

| Programs by Youth Risk Level, FY13 | Program Components | | Contracted Provider |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| | Educational | Occupational | |
| Programs for At-Risk Youth | | | |
| Youth, In school (DED) | Yes | Summer jobs, MS Office | Latin American Youth Center (LAYC) |
| Youth with disabilities (DED) | Yes | Summer jobs | TransCen |
| Teen Works (Recreation) | Yes | Summer jobs | none |
| Programs for High-Risk Youth (i.e. Weakly Disconnected Youth) | | | |
| Youth Services, Out-of-school (DED) | Yes, GED & Soft Skills | Summer jobs MS Office | MMYC |
| Youth Opportunity Centers (DHHS) | Yes, GED & Soft skills | No | Identity |
| TANF Workforce Services (DHHS) | Varies | Varies | Arbor E & T |
| Programs for Proven-Risk Youth (i.e. Chronically Disconnected Youth) | | | |
| Conservation Corps (DHHS) via Collaboration Council contract | Yes | Yes, jobs | LAYC |
| Transition Services for Foster Care (DHHS) | Yes | Yes, jobs | Arbor E & T |
| Street Outreach Network – Youth Employment Program (DHHS) | Yes, Soft Skills | No | None |
| GED/ABE/ESOL Services (@DOCR) | Yes | No | None |
| Re-Entry Services – One Stop Center (@DOCR) | Yes, Soft skills | Varies | Workforce Solutions Group |

A. Background

Youth career and workforce development initiatives exist in four different county government departments; Economic Development, Recreation, Health and Human Services and Corrections and Rehabilitation. Two entities, the Youth Council of the Montgomery County Workforce Investment Board and the Positive Youth Development Steering Committee, are responsible for setting policy guidance, coordinating services and monitoring performance outcomes.

- **Youth Council:** The Youth Council is a subsidiary of the County's Workforce Investment Board (WIB). Both the Youth Council and the WIB are mandated by the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and charged with providing policy guidance and oversight of federal WIA funds. Under WIA, the Youth Council's mandate is to serve as the convening agency for the County's youth workforce system. To date the Youth Council's role has been limited to influencing the WIA funded programs administered by the Department of Economic Development rather than the County's total portfolio of youth career development programs.

Currently, the Youth Council is working to promote an expanded approach to youth workforce development that not only provides at-risk out-of-school youth with programs that offer linkages to career pathways but also offers at-risk in school youth programs that emphasize career exploration. It has aligned its work with the County Workforce Investment Board's strategic planning efforts; and it is seeking to secure a vendor to conduct a resource mapping that provides baseline information on County youth at-risk, including where they are located and what services are available to them.

- **Positive Youth Development Initiative (PYDI):** This initiative represents the County's coordinated service response to the problems of gangs and youth violence identified about ten years ago. To the extent that the Positive Youth Development Initiative includes components that support youth workforce development, these are secondary services aimed at preventing and supporting alternatives to gang involvement.

PYDI uses a three-tiered approach of prevention, intervention, and suppression to target services to youth that are broad based and holistic. The table on the next page describes the youth targeted through each level of services and the agencies that provide the services.

Of note, the PYDI three-tiered approach closely aligns with the youth career development goal of delivering differentiated services based on the risk of youth disconnection among at-risk, high-risk, and proven-risk youth. More specifically, PYDI:

- Prevention activities align with youth career development activities that meet the needs of at-risk youth (e.g. teen-age youth with direct or indirect exposure to risk-factors for disconnection such as deficiency in basic literacy and low incomes).
- Intervention activities align with youth career development activities that meet the needs of high and/or proven risk youth (e.g. court-involved or foster care youth, dropouts); and
- Suppression activities align with YWD activities that meet the needs of proven-risk youth (e.g. incarcerated youth) because these services are often provided in detention centers.

Table 5-3: Summary of Positive Youth Development Initiative Framework

| Approach | Targeted Youth | Service Providers | Examples of Services/Activities |
|--------------|---|---|--|
| Prevention | Youth who would benefit from safe, well-staffed, and instructive after school programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Recreation Montgomery County Public Libraries MCPS DHHS Non-profit partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rec Extra Sports Academies Wellness Center Excel Beyond the Bell Summer Youth Employment Family Intervention Specialist |
| Intervention | Youth who engage in risky behavior, including committing gang crime or community violence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DHHS MCPD Non-profit partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Opportunity Center Street Outreach Network Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator Family Intervention Specialist |
| Suppression | Youth who continue to engage in illegal and violent behavior | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Corrections MCPD State's Attorney's Office | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrests Investigations Prosecution Rehabilitations |

Source: Adapted by OLO from September 5, 2008 CountyStat PowerPoint presentation on the PYDI; DHHS

Administration and Governance. County staffs in four departments administer youth career and workforce development programs. Except for the County's Street Outreach Network and Teen Works programs, County Government relies on vendor contracts to provide its youth workforce development programs as follows:

- The Department of Economic Development. DED's Division of Workforce Services administers the County's federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) grant. DWS supports the County's WIB and Youth Council and administers contracts with three vendors (Workforce Solutions Group, Latin American Youth Center, and TransCen) that deliver workforce services at three one-stop centers.⁵⁹ The one-stop centers operate under the banner of Montgomery Works while the youth services operate under the Maryland Multicultural Youth Center banner.
- The Department of Health and Human Services. DHHS' Division of Children, Youth and Families uses in-house staff to deliver PYDI services and manages two vendor contracts that provide youth workforce services (Identity and Arbor E&T).⁶⁰ DHHS' Division of Behavioral Health and Crisis Services manages the Conservation Corps contract with the Montgomery County Collaboration Council.
- The Department of Recreation. Recreation uses in-house staff to administer the Summer Teen Employment program for at-risk high school students, also known as Teen Works.

⁵⁹ Services are also provided in the community by LAYC. DWS is partnering with Howard and Prince George's counties to open a one-stop in Laurel to improve accessibility to services for residents in the Eastern County.

⁶⁰ The Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator oversees the County's youth gang prevention and intervention efforts, including the Street Outreach Network (SON) and the Youth Opportunity Centers; the SON Coordinator works with youth, businesses, and nonprofits to develop career goals and create workforce opportunities for out-of-school youth.

- The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. DOCR coordinate services delivered by in-house staff, other agencies, and non-profits to provide educational, vocational and life skill development services for youth offenders under the age of 22.

Program Funding Sources. Youth workforce programs administered by the County Government are supported by federal, state and local county funds. Local funding, accounting for 48% of total program costs, tends to support programs outright (e.g. Conservation Corps and Teen Works) or supplement programs that are primarily funded with federal dollars. For example, the County added \$50,000 to the Department of Economic Development budget in FY14 to offset the cost of stipends for the 40 youth budgeted to participate in DED's Summer Jobs program.

Enrollment and Per Participant Costs. Excluding Corrections and young adults who received workforce services as part of TANF, 1,100 youth between the ages of 16 and 24 participated in the youth career development programs administered by County Government agencies. Reflecting the differentiated needs of local disconnected and at-risk youth (based on FY13 data):

- Less than a fifth of slots (17.5%)⁶¹ served at-risk teens under WIA funded DED programs for in school and disabled youth and the County funded Teen Works program. These at-risk programs accounted for 37% of total program costs⁶² and averaged \$3,627 per participant.⁶³
- Over two-thirds of slots (67.6%)⁶⁴ served high-risk youth via WIA funded DED programs for out-of-school youth and County funded DHHS gang prevention and intervention programs. These high risk programs accounted for a quarter (25.6%)⁶⁵ of total costs. Average costs between both programs varied with the DED program for out-of-school youth costing \$3,545 per person while the YOC's education and employment services averaged \$158 per youth.⁶⁶
- Less than a fifth of slots (15%)⁶⁷ served proven-risk youth via County funded DHHS programs for gang involved or disconnected youth, and via a State funded DHHS program to support the transition of youth in foster care. These proven-risk programs accounted for 37.8% of total costs⁶⁸ with an average cost per youth ranging for \$800 per youth for the SON-YEP to more than \$13,000 per youth participating in the Conservation Corps.

Key Program Components. Best practices recommend that youth career development programs include both educational and employment components to prepare youth to transition into career pathways that can lead to self sufficiency. Educational components enable youth to earn high school diplomas and transition into post secondary opportunities that can offer industry recognized credentials/degrees; employment components enable youth to enhance their soft skills, gain work experience, and develop occupational skills that are valued in the labor market.

⁶¹ Calculated as 193/1,101

⁶² Calculated as \$700,000/\$1,912,500

⁶³ Calculated as 193/\$700,000

⁶⁴ Calculated as 743/1,101

⁶⁵ Calculated as \$490,000/\$1,912,500

⁶⁶ DHHS staff notes that the principal focus on the YOC is on gang prevention and intervention rather than education or employment. Thus education and employment services only account for ten percent of the YOC's overall budget of one million dollars annually.

⁶⁷ Calculated as 165/1,101

⁶⁸ Calculated as \$722,500/\$1,912,500

Nearly all of the County's youth career development programs include an education component focused on ensuring that youth complete their high school equivalent so that they can enroll in higher education. Few of the County's programs, however, include a specific employment or occupational development focus beyond improving the soft skills of program participants and providing training on Microsoft Office applications (e.g., Microsoft Word). More specifically:

- Among the three programs for at-risk teens, two focus on employment (Youth with Disabilities and Teen Works), while one (In-School Youth program) focuses on college awareness and career readiness.
- Among the three programs for high risk youth, two focus on GED completion (Services for Out-of-School Youth and Youth Opportunity Center) and all three focus on enhancing soft skills to enable youth to typically obtain low-skill, low-wage jobs rather than enhancing opportunities for skills that place youth on career pathways.
- Among the three programs for proven-risk youth, all three focus on GED completion for youth who have not earned a high school diploma (Conservation Corps, Transition Services, and Street Outreach Network), and two provide best practices recommended opportunities for youth to earn and learn occupational skills that may pave the way for them to develop marketable skills that place them on a career pathway.

The remainder of this chapter describes the youth workforce development programs administered by County Government agencies in greater detail. Reflections elicited during project interviews on the performance of each of these programs, and more broadly program strengths and challenges, are described in Chapter 7, beginning on page 69.

B. Health and Human Services

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is responsible for administering public health and human services that help address the needs of the County's most vulnerable children, adults, and seniors. Toward this end, DHHS staff in the Divisions of Children, Youth and Families and Behavioral Health and Crisis Services directly administers the County's violence prevention and intervention efforts and manages vendor contracts that deliver youth workforce services to disconnected at-risk youth as summarized below.

Of note, DHHS leadership indicates that it provides many programs for youth that are primarily focused on prevention and intervention. These strategies are aimed at reducing barriers for education and employment that result from gang involvement, poor educational achievement, and weak social connectedness. Thus, DHHS' employment programs are components of larger prevention and intervention programs (e.g. Positive Youth Development Initiative) rather than the sole focus of their contracts or program activities.

| DHHS Programs, FY13 | Enrollment | | Program Budget | Contractors |
|---|------------|-------|----------------|--|
| | Youth | Adult | | |
| Youth Opportunity Centers – <i>Education & Employment Services.</i> | 633 | -- | \$100,300 | Identity |
| Street Outreach Network – <i>Youth Employment Program</i> | 97 | -- | \$77,500 | None |
| Conservation Corps <i>via Collaboration Council as convener</i> | 40 | -- | \$390,000 | Maryland Multicultural Youth Center (LAYC) |
| Transition Services for Foster Care | 28 | -- | \$120,000 | Arbor E&T |
| TANF Workforce Services | n/a | 2,997 | \$2,200,000 | Arbor E&T |

Youth Opportunity Centers (Education and Employment Services)

- Primary Goal: Gang Prevention and Intervention
- Secondary Goal: GED attainment and job readiness

DHHS contracts with Identity to operate two Youth Opportunity Centers located in Takoma Park and Gaithersburg. The primary focus of both centers is gang intervention – enabling high-risk youth to leave gangs and lead productive lives. To the extent that Youth Opportunity Centers (YOC) deliver education and employment services to the youth it serves, this is a secondary goal. The primary purposes of YOC's are to decrease violence and recidivism among gang-involved youth.

To reduce gang involvement, the YOC's establish rapport with high-risk youth to identify their areas of need and to begin to work with them to make better choices. If the youth are not involved in gangs or with DJS, typically they are not served. YOC reports that they must turn away potential clients who self-refer due to substance abuse and other issues.

For referred youth, the results of a YOC intake are shared with a team who determines what action steps, if any, are warranted. This information is shared with DHHS and also recorded via ETO software for use by the Centers' external evaluator. Youth who are invited to join the YOC are monitored regularly and also participate in an update process every six months to track progress.

Program Features: Services at both Centers include tattoo removal, mental health screening, GED services, substance abuse counseling and healing circles. Both YOC programs offer GED classes with partner agencies. However, students seeking the GED are often so far behind that they may begin with Adult Basic Education classes and pass the TABE test in addition to the pre-GED assessment. YOC reports that this pattern even exists among youth who have completed 10th/11th grade. The YOCs network with local businesses to create employment opportunities for youth.

Program Costs and Enrollment: In FY13, Identity's contract to operate two YOC's totaled \$1 million. Overall, 633 youth were served at both centers. Funding for education and employment services delivered via the two YOC's totaled approximately \$100,300 or one-tenth of the total YOC budget. Thus the average cost of YOC's education and employment services was \$158 per participant. County funding accounted for 100% of total costs.

The Street Outreach Network (Youth Employment Program)

- Primary Goal: Gang Prevention and Intervention
- Secondary Goal: GED attainment and job readiness

DHHS staffs the Street Outreach Network (SON) whose focus is gang prevention and intervention. As part of the SON, DHHS recently hired a full-time coordinator who assists the Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator in delivering youth career development services to high-risk out-of-school youth served by the Street Outreach Network. The focus of the SON Youth Employment Program is to work with youth, businesses, and community nonprofits to develop career goals for out-of-school youth and create workforce opportunities for them.

Program Features: SON-YEP activities and services include:

- Assistance with self-identity and personal goal setting
- Resume and cover letter

- Appropriate work attire and etiquette
- Help in filling out applications
- In-store walk ins
- Mock interviews
- Participation in job fairs and workshops that align with social work/counseling needs
- Transportation vouchers

The SON-YEP Coordinator also helps youth to set attainable goals such as GED completion and enrollment in Montgomery College. The SON-YEP Manager also mentors and offers case management for other challenges facing youth, such as health and behavioral issues.

Program Costs and Enrollment: In FY13, the Street Outreach Network overall served 382 youth at a combined cost of \$659,000. SON-YEP served 97 youth at a staff cost of \$77,500 or at an average cost of \$800 per SON-YEP participant.

Conservation Corps

- Primary Goal: Connect high-risk out-of-school youth to education and employment pathways

The Conservation Corps serves disconnected youth between the ages of 17 and 24 who are unemployed and have not earned a high school diploma or credential. The program focuses on improving basic skills, occupational skills related to conservation, and GED readiness. The program's primary focus is dropout recovery rather than job training. Completion of the Conservation Corps' five month program offers a launch or alternative pathway to entering post secondary education and/or training.

In 2012, DHHS contracted with the Collaboration Council to serve as the Conservation Corps program convener and contract monitor. The Latin American Youth Center (LAYC) was awarded the contract to manage the Conservation Corps.

Program Features: Key components of the Conservation Corps include GED preparation, workforce development in conservation with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Montgomery Parks, project planning, tutoring, and life skills workshops. Specific activities include team building experiences, career exploration, and opportunities for members to serve as crew leaders to gain leadership skills. The Conservation Corps also offers a \$150 a week stipend for participants funded by a \$25,000 award from the Mead Family Foundation.

The Conservation Corps provides classes for 20 students and it is set up to serve two cohorts of youth per year. The program schedule provides two weeks of training; two weeks of mental toughness (focus on life skills). The first cohort of students began in March 2013; another cohort began in the fall. Since some youth may need more than five months to study and complete their GED, LAYC envisions about half of the first cohort to return and repeat the program. Returning students will be available to mentor new corps members, and earn their GED before graduation.

Participants also develop individualized development plans and meet regularly with a mentor. Each week, participants split their time between GED readiness and outdoor occupational skills training in conservation. The group of 20 is divided into two crews of 10 who alternate between these activities. There is a 1:10 staff to participant ratio. The goal of the combining GED and workforce experience in completing conservation projects is to ensure that participants become employable.

LAYC is planning to develop an entrepreneurship component and to also partner with the National Park Service on projects. LAYC and the Collaboration Council are also seeking private sector partners in the conservation/landscaping sector who can hire Conservation Corps teams to help offset the costs of the program. LAYC is also seeking funding to implement a mentorship program to assist some youth who are interested in career pathways other than conservation.

Program Costs and Enrollment: On an annual basis, the Conservation Corps is designed to serve two cohorts of 20 youth for an annual cost of \$525,000. Across 40 participants, the average cost of this program is \$13,125 per participant. Funding for the Conservation Corps relies on a \$500,000 County contract and \$25,000 grant from the Mead Family Foundation. In-kind support is also provided by MMYC and DNR to store and maintain equipment.

Transition Services for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care

- Primary Goal: Connect out-of-school foster care youth to education and employment

DHHS' Transition Youth Services Unit (i.e. Independent Living Program) serves teens in foster care between the ages of 14 and 20. Education and employment are two of the six service areas the state emphasizes in its delivery of services to foster care youth. The other four areas are housing, health and mental health, financial literacy, and family and friend support. DHHS provides employment support services for foster youth through its vendor contract with Arbor E & T for general employment services. The Arbor E & T contract generally serves older teens in foster care between the ages of 17 and 20.

DHHS' Child Welfare Services refers youth to this program according to their own pre-screening service criteria. About a quarter of the youth in foster care are referred to the Foster Care Youth Employment Program. In addition to the workforce support services described below, benefits of remaining in care include financial support, housing options, tuition waiver, and education training vouchers. About 90% of foster youth remain in care until age 21.

Program Features. The vendor's Youth Advocate provides comprehensive employment services designed to empower foster care youth through a coordinated progressive series of activities. The services include a self-assessment to discern the youth's career interest conducted by the vendor, development of individualized service plans, job training, job search, and job placement. The Youth Advocate works with employers to locate an internship that reflects the youth's career interests.

Components of the program include intensive case management, home visiting, vocational and career exploration, job coaching, life skills training, paid work experience, job placement, job retention and referrals to support services. The Youth Advocate checks in with the client at least weekly and communicates regularly with the employer to ensure that the client is showing up. The County pays the wages earned by the foster youth in their internship, giving employers an incentive to participate.

Program Costs: Program funding is provided by a state grant, the Maryland Rise Block Grant. Originally funded as a summer youth employment program, DHHS' contracting out of this program to Arbor E & T enabled the County to run a year-long program that served 28 youth in FY13. With \$120,000 in total funding, cost per participant averaged \$4,285.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

- Primary Goal: Quickly move adults receiving TANF from welfare to work

Parents who receive federally funded Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) are required to participate in activities that enable them to transition from welfare to work. This includes parents between the ages of 16 and 24. Employment services are provided to all recipients as part of the TANF program. DHHS contracts with Arbor E & T to deliver employment services to local clients.

Generally, TANF requires full-time participation between primary and secondary activities (40 hours). Examples of primary work activities include: four consecutive weeks of full time job search; work experience (not paid, mainly in the public sector); actual work; and 12 months of full-time enrollment in school (at least 20 hours per week); and short term job training (employer provided training). GED classes are considered a secondary work activity.

Program Features. Arbor E & T services for TANF clients include job search, soft skills indicative of job readiness, English literacy, basic skills, and occupational training. Differentiated services are provided to clients as needed. Since the focus is on getting TANF clients employed as soon as possible, most of the employment that is secured is in the low-skill service sector. DHHS leadership reports, however, that hourly wages among TANF clients typically exceed \$10 per hour and can reach as high as \$20 per hour.

Other benefits available to TANF clients that are funded directly by DHHS include transportation support (e.g. Smartrip cards and/or gas money) and child care vouchers.

Program Costs: All TANF Workforce Services delivered by Arbor E & T are funded by the state via formula funding or grants. In FY13, 2,997 TANF clients were served at a cost of \$2.2 million (or at an average cost of \$734 per participant). DHHS does not track TANF clients by age, so the number of youth between the ages of 16 and 24 receiving TANF workforce services locally is unknown.

C. Economic Development

The Department of Economic Development's mission is to make Montgomery County a "globally competitive and highly diversified knowledge-based economy." Towards this end, DED's Division of Workforce Services seeks to foster connections between job seekers and employers in the County through a number of services that include:

- Job readiness workshops and training,
- Employer recruitment services
- Job fairs
- Customized training programs
- Programs for veterans, youth, and others
- Access to the Maryland Workforce Exchange

DED relies on contracted vendors to deliver these services to adults and youth in the County. A description of the services, costs, and participants served with each youth service contract follows. DED's contract with Workforce Solutions Group to operate a One Stop Centers at the Montgomery County Correctional Facility which is described on page 49; and the Workforce Investment Board's Accelerating Connections to Employment Program is described on pages 65-66.

| DED Programs, FY13 | Enrollment | | Program Budget | Contractors |
|--|------------|-------|----------------|--|
| | Youth | Adult | | |
| Youth Services, In- and out-of-school | 185 | -- | \$650,000 | Maryland Multicultural Youth Center (LAYC) |
| Youth Employment Services, youth with disabilities | 58 | -- | \$250,000 | Transcen, Inc. |

Workforce Services for In- and Out-of-school Youth

- In-School Program Goal: College awareness, career/job readiness, and soft skills
- Out-of-School Program Goal: GED attainment, career/job readiness, and soft skills

Youth workforce programs supported by federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds are designed to provide education, skills training, and support services to low-income youth between the ages of 16 and 21 with documented barriers⁶⁹ to post-secondary education and training. Specific services can include:

- Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to high school completion
- Alternative secondary school offering
- Summer employment
- Paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing
- Occupational training
- Leadership development opportunities
- Supportive services
- Adult mentoring
- Guidance and counseling
- Follow up services

The WIA establishes specific performance measures for programs, such as achieving gains in literacy and numeracy among participants. Thus, if a youth tests so low at initial entry that it seems unlikely they will make significant gains on WIA basic skill measures, they are unlikely to be admitted to a WIA funded program.⁷⁰ The WIA also requires that youth participants be served year round and not only through summer employment programs.

DED contracts with the Latin American Youth Center (LAYC) and TransCen to deliver its WIA funded youth programs in the County. The LAYC contract includes services for in school youth (teens enrolled in high school), services for out-of-school youth, a summer internship program that supports both sets of youth, and an annual job fair for all youth in the County. The youth services provided by LAYC operate under the banner of the Maryland Multicultural Youth Center (MMYC). A description of these services follows; DED's contract with TransCen is described in the next section.

⁶⁹ Examples of these barriers include having a disability, a pregnancy or child, homelessness, and adjudication.

⁷⁰ If youth cannot meet the WIA eligibility guidelines for any reason (e.g. age or literacy), MMYC tries to fill in the gaps with grants to meet their needs. For example, MMYC has partnered with Holy Cross to place interns there and also has a grant to refer youth to the 7-week MI-BEST program at Montgomery College to train apartment maintenance technicians in a pilot program with the National Apartment Association.

In-School Youth (ISY) Program. MMYC's ISY program focuses on preparing youth for post secondary education goals. More specifically, MMYC assists students in completing their college applications and federal financial assistance (FAFSA) forms. MMYC staff note that of the 32 students participating in the ISY program last year, 25 enrolled in higher education. MMYC staff also note that they often rely on referrals from MCPS transition counselors and school based staff to identify eligible students for its ISY program. For example, since MMYC used to provide job readiness trainings at Seneca Valley and Montgomery Blair high schools, both campuses are familiar with their services and make referrals to MMYC.

Out-of-School Youth (OSY) Program. MMYC provides its OSY services at two sites, a center in Silver Spring and a one-stop career center in Germantown. MMYC receives referrals for its OSY services from other agencies, including probation services, social services, foster care, and independent living. At intake, the case manager at MMYC solicits information from youth about their career pathway interests so they can find training opportunities that match.

Based on their needs, participating youth partake in MMYC's services that include opportunities to improve their educational attainment (GED classes), soft skills, on the job training, Microsoft Office training, and job/career readiness. The career pathways that MMYC typically offer target retail, hospitality, and allied health jobs. MMYC fosters effective communication with job placement sites so it can respond to attendance and other personnel issues that emerge with placed youth.

MMYC's program offerings, however, vary between its two locations. For example, although the WIA OSY program focuses on GED completion, the Germantown location does not offer a GED class. Instead, youth in Germantown are encouraged to pursue their Microsoft Office certification. Alternatively, MMYC's Silver Spring site hosts four cohorts of GED classes annually. The Silver Spring site also provides Microsoft Office trainings.

Annual Youth Job Fair. MMYC sponsors an annual youth job fair that targets 16 to 21 year olds to increase their exposure to employers and job opportunities. To prepare for this year's youth fair, MMYC contacted more than 1,000 potential employers to discern who would have summer openings. MMYC notes that more employers are seeking employees age 18 and older rather than younger youth. In FY13, over 500 youth and 40 employers participated in the youth job fair. On average, each job fair participant interacted with 26 employers, resulting in 45 hires that could be documented. County funds are used for the youth job fair.

Summer Internship Program. MMYC's summer internship program is open to both ISY and OSY youth. This year, MMYC staff received 200 applications and conducted 104 interviews culminating in 90 placements compared to 50 last year. The five week program includes one week of team building exercises and initial training followed by a four-week internships. Each participant receives a \$600 stipend for the program. County funds help defray the cost of this program as well.

Program Costs and Enrollment. LAYC's budget for its DED funded programs in FY13 was \$650,000 with 60% of these resources devoted to OSY programs. WIA funding accounted for 92% of program revenue; County funding accounted for the remaining 8% of program revenue. Overall, 185 youth were served in the ISY and OSY programs, including 90 youth placed in summer jobs.⁷¹

⁷¹ Of the 90 youth summer job placements in FY13, 40 were funded with \$50,000 from the County to offset the costs of stipends to support placements for disadvantaged youth.

Of note, LAYC augments the WIA and County resources it receives with private resources. Other revenue sources includes a Community Grant from the Executive's Office for the partnership with Holy Cross and Microsoft training, and grants from philanthropy that include the Mead Family Foundation, Phillip Graham Fund, City Foundation, and the United Way.

Youth Employment Services (YES) for Youth with Disabilities

- Program Goal: Summer employment for youth with disabilities

DED contracts with TransCen, Inc. to deliver its WIA funded programs for youth with disabilities. DED's Youth Employment Services contract focuses on recruiting employers to host summer internships for youth with disabilities. TransCen, Inc. works with MCPS to identify students for the program that are at-risk of dropping out, not eligible for other programs because their disabilities are not "significant" enough, but in need of support to get and keep a job.⁷²

Program Features. Most referred youth need job readiness support on how to interview and some job coaching. Most of the referred students are diploma bound students and are typically not eligible for vocational rehabilitation, but can be referred to vocational rehabilitation if they demonstrate a need for long term job coaching or assistive technology.

YES' program focus, however, is not to improve job readiness before job placement although Transcen offers two workshops toward this end prior to job placement. Instead Youth Employment Services directly links youth with disabilities to jobs without the prerequisite of improving their job readiness. TransCen recognizes that youth will often learn most of the soft skills demanded of work on the job. So, they place youth in jobs and simultaneously provide soft skill training as youth fulfill their summer positions. TransCen also recognizes that youth do not necessarily know what they want to do as a career, so youth exposure to various employment options is valuable.

Youth Employment Services targets in school youth with disabilities, ages 16-21 years old, in their exit year of school. TransCen reaches out to over 250 youth to share information about the project. They assess at least 80 youth using the *Positive Personal Profile* to determine interests, skills and abilities to assist you to attain employment. Among the youth selected for the program, TransCen offers case management and placement of 58 youth in paid employment using "customized employment methodology."

⁷² TransCen, Inc. also operates two additional federally supported employment programs for youth with disabilities.

- The Maryland State Department of Education Division of Rehabilitative Services (DORS) Youth with Disabilities Summer Internship Program provides a 6 week program for 30 high school youth. Students in this program are referred by Vocational Rehabilitation and are typically enrolled in the junior or senior year but can include older youth who graduate with a certificate of completion at age 21. Participating students are paid by DORS; the budget for the grant is \$52,000.
- The Add Us In Program is a Department of Labor funded demonstration grant and program for low-income, Spanish speaking youth with disabilities to link them to jobs. Their goal is to provide job readiness workshops for at least 200 youth per year and to host paid internships for 50 youth with disabilities. Add Us In is a partnership between TransCen, the Workforce Investment Board, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and the Hispanic Business Foundation. The amount of this grant is \$516,000.

To solicit employer participation, TransCen hosts an employer “lunch and learn” event annually with participation of about 30-40 companies. Most TransCen contact with employers is individualized based on a match with prospective employees. TransCen targets about 100 employers to reach the 30-40 slots needed annually. Networking is ongoing. Overall, TransCen tries to assess what the workforce needs are of potential employers to see if their youth with disabilities may fit the bill.

Like LAYC, TransCen reports that paperwork requirements under WIA can be cumbersome. Most referrals to the WIA program come from MCPS rather than based on self-referrals. TransCen also houses its three staff members for the Youth Employment Project at the Wheaton One Stop Center.

Program Costs and Enrollment. TransCen budget for its DED funded programs in FY13 was \$250,000. Both WIA and Maryland State Department of Education Division of Rehabilitative Services (DORS) provided funding for YES. With this contract, TransCen “touched” 250 youth with workshops about its services, and provided more intensive services to 80 youth that yielded paid internship placements for 45 youth.

D. Recreation

The mission of the Department of Recreation is to “provide high quality, diverse, and accessible programs, services, and facilities that enhance the quality of life for all ages, cultures, and abilities.” Towards this end, Recreation administers a variety of programs that promote youth engagement and serve as the County’s largest seasonal employer of teens and young adults. Given its dual focus of serving youth and employing youth, the Department of Recreation coordinates the County’s Summer Teen Employment Program also known as Teen Works.

Summer Teen Employment Program/Teen Works

- Primary Goal: Career awareness and summer employment for high school students

The primary goal of Teen Works is to provide high school students an opportunity to gain work experience that relates to their academic and future career interests. Teen Works delivers work opportunities, training, career exploration/job readiness training, leadership development, financial literacy and communication skills to in school youth between the ages of 16 and 19.

Teen Works serves a variety of teens, including those who have dropped out or been adjudicated. However, teens in need of wrap around services cannot participate in the program. Referrals to Teen Works come from nonprofit providers such as MMYC and Identity, and from County programs supporting at-risk teens.

Teen Works was added to the Positive Youth Development Initiative portfolio in FY13; Recreation staff manage this program directly. For FY14, a new FTE position has been added to the Recreation budget to help expand the program.

Program Features. Teen Works consists of a school year program that operates for 10-12 hours a week for 30 weeks and a summer internship that operates for 40 hours per week for eight weeks. Participants receive stipends for both their school year and summer internship experiences. During the school year, students attend an initial week of job readiness training, followed by participation in events to help with clean up at parks, libraries and community centers and with sports academies. Participants also receive leadership, job readiness training, and transportation to their work sites from the Department of Recreation’s County headquarters.

Teen Works participants were organized across four teams this past summer:

- Students assigned to the Camp Team at Broad Acres Elementary assisted in running their summer camp.
- Students assigned to the Community Team assisted with landscaping and clean up at different agency buildings.
- Students assigned to the Careers Team with MMYC were placed in County Agencies (e.g., HOC, Silver Spring Civic Building, Libraries).
- Students assigned to the Conservation Team completed conservation projects like stream clean up and learn about career pathways in conservation.

Once a week Teen Works participants also engaged in a team building activity such as kayaking or a ropes course during the summer.

Costs and Funding. In FY13, 60 youth participated in Teen Works from seven different high schools at a program cost of \$190,000. This equates to a per participant cost of about \$3,000. In FY14, funding was added for an additional FTE to expand the program to serve an additional 13 students.

E. Corrections and Rehabilitation

- Primary Goals: Enhance job readiness of clients to enhance employment success post release

A key objective of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCR) is to reduce the rate of recidivism by providing offenders with opportunities for self improvement while under their care. These opportunities include education and workforce services aimed at supporting the employment of offenders post release. DOCR coordinates the delivery of education and employment services as part of its *ReEntry for All* Program located at the Montgomery County Correctional Facility (MCCF)⁷³ and via pre-release and reentry services delivered at its Pre-Release Center (PRC).⁷⁴

The *ReEntry for All* program at MCCF provides a holistic approach to providing wrap-around services and discharge planning for offenders to reenter the community. This program coordinates a multitude of social services⁷⁵ that meet the needs of reentry clients as well as jobs and educational programs. Specific education and workforce services available at MCCF include:

- Work opportunities in food service, laundry, maintenance, and medical;
- Book repair and binding training;
- GED/ABE/ESOL classes; and
- High school credit classes delivered by Montgomery County Public Schools.⁷⁶

Previously MCCF also offered a bakery training program that was eliminated due to budget cuts.

⁷³ The MCCF is a 1,028 person capacity facility that houses inmates in pre-trial status of serving sentences up to 18 months. Inmates serving minimum sentences of 90 days can access re-entry services.

⁷⁴ The PRC is a 171 bed residential work release program.

⁷⁵ These services include access to ongoing medications, mental health counseling, domestic violence programs, shelter referrals, food stamps and food bank, and to community clinics.

⁷⁶ Includes high school credit classes in general and special education and psychological services

Additionally, DOCR partners with Montgomery College to provide a noncredit digital literacy and reading blueprints course at the MCCF and to access to college counselors after taking the Accuplacer Assessment for potential credit bearing course. DOCR also partners with the College to offer a GED program at the PRC and recently administered a federal grant funded demonstration program that improved the computer literacy of 460 clients and enable 15 clients to earn industry recognized credentials from the College. This grant ended in 2011.⁷⁷

One Stop at MCCF Program Features. To support the successful transition of clients into the community, the MCCF houses a One Stop Career Center in partnership with DED that is staffed by the Workforce Solutions Group (under contract with DED). The MCCF One Stop provides a variety of resources and services that include: a library; computer lab; practice interviewing room; access to the internet; and re-entry cards that serve as legal identification, transit passes, and library cards.

Overall, MCCF One Stop services focus on enhancing job readiness and improving client's life skills through a progressive and interactive approach. Individuals are recruited to the program through quarterly recruitment events, collaborative case management referrals and word of mouth. Clients can participate anywhere from six to 14 weeks, and approximately 90% complete the program.

Workforce Solutions Group staff at the MCCF also work several days at the other Montgomery Works One Stops located in Germantown and Wheaton linking ex-offenders to employers in the community and helping to forge the link between the County's correctional facilities and its workforce system.⁷⁸ Montgomery Works is able to leverage its established relationships with employers who are aware of the ex-offender population.

Workforce Solutions Group staff report regular contact in connecting clients with support services based on their needs; they also recently held an on-site job fair at the MCCF. The top three industries where participants find employment are food services, automotive services, and retail/warehouse services.

Program Costs and Enrollment. In 2012, the One Stop Center at MCCF served 152 individuals, including 53 youth. The Department of Economic Development's contract awarded to the Workforce Solutions Group funds this center; its budget is included in DED's contract.

⁷⁷ The Digital Literacy project received \$351,000 in grant funding from the U.S. Department of Justice's Second Chance Act grant.

⁷⁸ The County has three One Stop Centers located in Wheaton, Germantown, and the Correctional Facility. DED is considering partnering with the State and neighboring counties to add a fourth location in Laurel to provide more accessible services for clients in the eastern County (off Route 29). OLO's forthcoming Workforce Development Project will describe Montgomery County's One Stop Centers in detail.

Chapter 6: Montgomery College Programs

The mission of Montgomery College as the County's community college - is broad, reflecting the array of the students it enrolls and the need of the community. Montgomery College strives to enhance the occupational skills, literacy, and general knowledge of adults in the community and to also offer a variety of credit and noncredit educational programs that enable students to earn certificates, two-year degrees, and to transfer to four-year institutions. The College strives to provide these services at a modest cost to residents, businesses, and other organizations it serves.

With regard to youth career development, Montgomery College offers a number of opportunities that connect youth ages 16 to 24 to education and/or employment. Some programs target high school aged youth. Other programs more broadly serve adults seeking to gain basic knowledge and English language skills that will enable them to complete their high school credential and pursue post-secondary education. Notwithstanding the multiplicity of programs the College offers, not all are accessible to the population that is the focus of this study, namely youth and young adults ages 16-24 without a high school diploma who are not in school and not working.

This chapter provides a general overview of the College's programs that serve youth between the ages of 16 and 24, followed by in-depth reviews of a select list of programs. This list reflects OLO's assessment of those College programs that are accessible to either in-school youth at-risk of disconnecting or out-of school youth who are already disconnected that will allow them to acquire both the educational credential and the occupational skills they need to reconnect. It has three parts:

- **Part A, Background**, describes differences between credit and noncredit courses and funding and program requirements that likely contribute to the underutilization of the College's career programs among youth overall and disconnected youth in particular.
- **Part B, Programs for High School Aged Youth**, describes two programs that exclusively serve teens including some youth at-risk for disconnection: the Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success (ACES) program and the Gateway to College program that will sunset in 2015.
- **Part C, Programs for Youth and Adults**, describes the College's Adult English for Speakers of Other Languages, Literacy, and GED (AELG) programs, Educational Opportunity Center (EOC), and Pathways to Success programs that primarily serve adults with low levels of educational attainment that can include disconnected youth.

To determine which of the College's programs are accessible to reconnect high-risk or proven-risk youth who are at different stages of developing their educational and occupational skills, OLO conducted a three-part assessment to filter the College's array of programs.

First, as noted in Chapter 5, OLO categorizes the key components of youth workforce programs reviewed as aligning with one or both program components emphasized in the best practices literature as effective strategies for re-engaging youth at-risk:

- Educational/life skills components are intended to promote instruction in academic areas that benefit students in preparing for further education and/or instruction in life skills - such as communication and professionalism - that enhance job readiness for any position.

- Occupational/hard skills components are intended to prepare students with job training to enter the workforce in specific occupational fields and pathways.⁷⁹

OLO categorizes whether each program reviewed includes each set of these criteria based on our review of program documentation and interviews. Of note, we classify program components aimed at enhancing soft skills (e.g. interviewing, resume writing) and providing counseling on future opportunities as educational rather than as occupational skill program components because the skills and awareness often cultivated align more with efforts to enhance the educational readiness of participants (e.g. literacy, ESOL, and GED preparation programs) rather than provide opportunities for participants to develop occupation specific skills to enter employment pathways with advancement and earnings potential (e.g. middle skills positions).

The programs described in this chapter that serve in-school high school aged youth generally provide educational and life skills instruction. Those that serve out-of-school youth or young adults provide either contextualized education or pre-developmental education. OLO's list of programs excludes Montgomery College's dual enrollment program for high achieving high school students and its credit courses that enable youth to complete transferable two-year degrees in academic majors because these in-school youth are not typically considered at-risk for disconnecting.

The second part of OLO's assessment examines the ability of out-of-school youth who are not working to access the College's broad array of career certificate program offerings that could prepare them for entry-level positions in career pathways that generate self-sufficiency wages. Here, OLO's review identifies two significant barriers to entry for disconnected youth that exist:

- The academic requirements for credit courses, including career and technology education programs; and
- The tuition requirements for noncredit workforce development courses.

Since these barriers to entry prevent disconnected youth – youth between the ages of 16 and 24 who are neither in school nor employed - from accessing most of the College's credit and noncredit programs that prepare adults for entry-level positions, (e.g., career pathways via certificates, two-year degrees, and/or transfers to four-year institutions), these programs are excluded from OLO's list of the College's youth career development programs.

Finally, the third part of OLO's assessment excludes programs that OLO has reviewed previously or is scheduled to review since this study is one part of a multi-part ongoing OLO review of programs that offer education and occupational skill development for at-risk high school aged youth and young adults. Specifically,

- While OLO recognizes that developmental education courses can open pathways for disconnected youth to earn credits at Montgomery College, this chapter does not provide a review of these courses beyond the College's related Pathways to Success program because OLO will review these courses as part of another project on the FY14 work program.

⁷⁹ These definitions adapted from Montgomery College brochure on Continuing Education Placement Options <http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/wdce/brochures/ceplacementoptions.pdf>

- Similarly, although disability is a risk factor for youth disconnection, this review also excludes the College's programs targeting services to improve the career readiness of youth with disabilities.⁸⁰

This program review also excludes the College's contracts with Corrections, Arbor E & T, and the Housing Opportunities Commission aimed at connecting high and/or proven risk youth and adults to educational and occupational opportunities. Specifics regarding these community collaborations are excluded because insufficient program data was available for OLO's review.⁸¹ The College's delivery of GED preparation classes at Corrections' Pre-Release Center, however, is described on page 48.

The table on the next page lists the key components for each program and the risk groups served by each program. Among the Montgomery College programs reviewed, OLO finds that four focus on enhancing the educational skills of disconnected youth and adults:

- **Gateway to College**, a dropout recovery program whose funding will sunset in 2015;
- **Adult ESOL and Literacy-GED (AELG)** programs that enable disconnected youth to complete their GED;
- **The Educational Opportunity Center** that focuses on enhancing the college readiness of low-income/first generation college attending adults; and
- **The Pathways to Success Program** that offers pre-development education courses for students who need additional preparation in reading in order to qualify for credit courses.

Further, OLO finds that three of the College's programs emphasize both educational and occupational skills development that can enable disconnected youth to transition into self-sufficiency:

- **The Maryland Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (MI-BEST) programs in Certified & Geriatric Nursing and Apartment Maintenance**, that each provide an opportunity for adults with low basic skills or English language learners to earn industry-recognized credentials;
- The **Career Connections program** that offers contextualized ESOL classes to prepare adults for occupations in three industry sectors: customer service, health care, and construction; and
- The College's **Refugee Programs** that also combine basics skill development (English language proficiency) with occupational training in allied health and computer technology.

The number of youth participating in these three programs, however, remains unknown.

⁸⁰ Some of the College's partnerships with MCPS to support the transition of youth with disabilities are described in an earlier OLO report on career and life readiness programs (OLO Report 2009-10).

⁸¹ The College's grant funded partnership with Corrections to deliver technical training at the Pre-Release Center ended in June. The College, however, still works with Arbor E & T to provide course work leading to an early childhood education credential among TANF clients and also partners with local Housing Opportunities Commission sites to offer residents classes for ACT/SAT prep, writing for adults and, study skills.

Table 6-1: Montgomery College Workforce Development Programs and Components by Risk Level

| Programs by Participant Risk Level | Youth Enrollment | Program Award Amount per Participant | Program Components | |
|---|------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | | | Educational or Life Skills | Occupational or Hard Skills |
| <u>At-Risk Youth or Adults</u> | | | | |
| Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success (FY14) | 1,200 | \$1,250 | Yes | No |
| Literacy and Training for Refugees (FY12) | n/a | \$951 | Yes | Job training |
| English for Speakers of Other Languages (FY12) | 678 | \$421 | Yes | No, except for Career Connections |
| Pathways to Success Program (FY13) | n/a | \$139* | Yes | No |
| <u>High-Risk Youth or Adults (i.e. Weakly Disconnected)</u> | | | | |
| Gateway to College (FY12) | 130 | \$10,000 | Yes | No |
| Educational Opportunity Center (FY13) | 472 | \$285 | Yes | No |
| MI-BEST Programs (Certified/Geriatric Nursing and Apartment Maintenance) (FY14) | n/a | \$3,863 | Yes | Job training |
| Life Skills and GED Preparation (FY12) | 474 | \$415 | Yes | No |
| *Figure based on WDCE scholarships of up to \$25,000 divided among all participating students | | | | |

The table on the next page also lists the portfolio of Montgomery College programs serving high school aged youth and youth and adults with their program enrollments and budgets for years with the most recently available data. Overall, among the programs OLO included in its review that had youth participation data, the College served about 1,750 youth in FY12 in its youth workforce development programs at a combined cost of \$1.9 million with County funding accounting for nearly half of total program costs.

OLO also finds that as a result of both the FY14 start of the Accessing Collegiate Excellence and Success (ACES) program and the continuing phase out of the Gateway to College program, the emphasis of the College's programs will shift so that more at-risk youth and fewer high-risk and weakly disconnected youth are served. Specifically,

- In FY14, approximately 2,900 youth will be served by all of the College's programs at a combined cost of \$2.8 million;
- The slots for at-risk youth will increase from 678 in FY12 to 1,878 in FY14 or from two-fifths to two-thirds of all slots;⁸² and
- The slots for high-risk, weakly disconnected youth will drop from 1,076 in FY12 to 1,009 in FY14 or from three-fifths to less than one-third of all slots.⁸³

⁸² Calculated in FY12 as 678/1,754 (39%); in FY14 as 1,878/2,889 (65%)

⁸³ Calculated in FY12 as 1,076/1,754 (61%) and in FY14 as 1,009/2,889 (35%); calculations assumes the number of youth in Gateway to College in FY14 will total 65 students or less since this program is scheduled to sunset in 2015

- County funding will account for 58% of total costs compared to 49% in FY13.

Table 6-2: Montgomery College Workforce Development Programs, Enrollments, and Budgets

| Programs | Unduplicated Enrollment | | Program Budget | Participant Costs | County Share |
|--|-------------------------|-------|------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| | Total | Youth | | | |
| High School Aged Youth | | | | | |
| Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success (ACES) (FY14) | 1,200 | 1,200 | \$1,500,000 | None | 63% |
| Gateway to College (FY13) | 130 | 130 | \$1,300,000 | None | 44% |
| Youth and Adults (FY12 data) | | | | | |
| English for Speakers of Other Languages <ul style="list-style-type: none">Adult ESOL,English language and civics,Career Connections | 4,280 | 678 | \$1,800,000 | \$90-115 plus cost of materials* | 15% |
| Life skills and GED preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none">Literacy – GED | 892 | 474 | \$370,000 | \$45-90 plus cost of materials** | 15% |
| Literacy and Training for Refugees <ul style="list-style-type: none">Refugee ESLRefugee Targeted Assistance | 852 | n/a | \$810,000 | Cost of materials | 0% |
| Vocational training for adults with low basic skills or English language learners <ul style="list-style-type: none">MI-BEST – Certified/Geriatric Nursing (CAN/GNA),MI-BEST – Apartment Maintenance Technician | 80 (FY14) 50 30 | n/a | \$309,000 (FY14) | Cost of materials | 0% |
| Educational Opportunity Center (FY13) | 1,154 | 472 | \$329,000 | None | 13% |
| Pathways to Success Program (FY13) | 180 | n/a | \$120,000 | \$668 | 0% |
| *For ESOL and GED Programs, Montgomery County contributes \$400,000 towards a required match. The College contributes \$155,752 of state FTE to meet the full required amount. **Only classes at the highest levels (Advanced ESOL and GED) charge tuition and fees. Lower levels of both ESOL and Literacy-GED pay only the cost of books. Tuition and fees are based on the number of hours of instruction. | | | | | |

A. Background

Montgomery College offers an array of credit and noncredit courses and programs to meet its broad mission of providing adult education, workforce development and continuing education, and college level courses. Understanding the distinction between credit and noncredit courses is essential to understanding how and when Montgomery College's programs enable disconnected youth to connect to educational and employment pathways.

Credit vs. Noncredit Courses: Credit courses refer to college-level courses that count toward an associate's degree. General degree requirements for a two-year degree (e.g. language arts, mathematics, social sciences) are often transferable to four-year colleges, but some credits earned in career program majors that lead to an associate of applied science degree (A.A.S) only transfer to a limited number of baccalaureate institutions.⁸⁴

The inability to transfer college major credits to most four-year universities creates a bias against a student's pursuit of an A.A.S. degree. It also limits the use of an A.A.S degree as a stackable credential. All things being equal, a student intending to transfer to a four-year college will seek to complete a two-year degree in a fully transferable major instead of an A.A.S. degree in a career program major unless the student is following an articulated pathway from Montgomery College to a four-year institution that can guarantee a smooth transfer of courses.⁸⁵

Noncredit courses refer to courses that do not count toward two-year degrees. These courses can include workforce development and continuing education courses that improve the skills of individuals and in some cases can lead to industry recognized credentials. Noncredit courses also include adult basic education and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses, and other classes that prepare students for college-level work (i.e. developmental education).

Although Montgomery College is an open access college, any student desiring to enroll in college-level courses must take the ACCUPLACER or its ESL equivalent and meet the College's minimal assessment criteria.⁸⁶ In 2011, approximately half of all Montgomery College students had developmental education needs.

Enrollment and Funding: In 2012, the College enrolled about 61,000 students. Approximately 60% of the College's students were enrolled in credit courses (38,197) and 40% were enrolled in noncredit courses (25,060). Credit students on average enrolled in more courses, so credit coursework accounted for 81% of total credit hours (539,543 billing hours) and noncredit coursework accounted for the remainder (128,712 equated course hours). A majority of noncredit students (61% or 15,317 students) enrolled in just one course.

Direct services funding for credit courses exceeds funding for noncredit courses by a factor of ten to one. Specifically, the FY12 direct services budget for credit courses to support instruction, academic support, and student services was \$138.6 million compared to \$13.4 million for workforce development and continuing education that delivers noncredit courses.

Although credit students on average take more courses than noncredit students, this difference in course taking patterns between credit and noncredit students does not entirely explain the 10:1 difference in funding. Rather, one factor that accounts for much of the resource differential is that more sources and higher levels of state and County funding and tuition supported by federal financial aid exists to offset the cost of credit courses vs. noncredit courses.

⁸⁴ There are certain A.A.S. programs that have articulation agreements with four-year institutions that fully transfer credits earned in their career majors. These include articulated pathways for biotechnology with Stevenson University, hospitality and construction management at the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore, and a majority of the pathways with University of Maryland, University College.

⁸⁵ This observation is not intended to suggest that A.A.S. degrees are not valuable and that students do not recognize their value. As noted on the next page, completion of these degrees significantly increases the earning potential of graduates; the College notes that about 20% of its students are enrolled in its A.A.S. programs.

⁸⁶ This does not apply for those who score 550 or higher on each section of the SAT or 24 or higher on the ACT.

Of note, students enrolled in credit courses are eligible for federal financial assistance; however, eligibility for this aid is limited to students who have completed their high school diploma or GED.⁸⁷ In 2012, the students enrolled at Montgomery College received nearly \$30 million from Pell grants and \$18 million from federal student loans. Additionally the College received \$30 million in state aid and \$94 million from the County to underwrite the costs of credit courses. Overall, County funding accounts for 44 percent of the College's operating budget for its academic (non-WDCE) programs.

In contrast, federal financial aid is not available for most noncredit courses, the County's funding of noncredit courses meets federal matching requirements, and the state provided \$5 million in aid for the College's noncredit programs in FY12.⁸⁸ In short, credit courses receive substantially more financial support from government sources either directly or indirectly⁸⁹ at all levels than noncredit courses. Yet, noncredit courses are often the only pathway available for disconnected youth to access educational opportunities that lead to employment and career advancement.

Career and Technology Education (CTE): Montgomery College offers a variety of both credit and noncredit programs that ideally disconnected youth with some level of preparation and readiness could utilize to improve their occupational skills and earnings potential. As noted in the College's 2012 Accountability Report, the median income of graduates who earned a two-year career program degree increased on average from \$17,000 one year prior to graduation to \$39,000 three years after graduation.⁹⁰

Yet differences in both how CTE programs are funded and how CTE majors who may decide to transfer to four-year colleges are treated have likely contributed to the underutilization of these programs overall and among disconnected youth in particular. Until these underlying issues are addressed, the College's robust offerings of CTE programs are not able to benefit disconnected youth in ways that could increase their occupational training and earnings potential.

The College advertises that it has "more than 150 credit and noncredit programs that will directly support the Maryland Skills2Compete initiatives."⁹¹ Examples of programs lasting from two months to two-years that can lead to industry certifications, certificates, and college degrees are noted on the next page in Table 6-3.

⁸⁷ The College notes that this results from a recent change to federal law, previously, students with the "ability to benefit" from credit work were eligible to apply for federal financial assistance.

⁸⁸ In FY12, the County contributed \$400,000 in matching funds to support the College's adult basic education, ESOL, and GED programs. The College contributed another \$155,752 of State FTE funds to meet the federal matching requirement for its AELG programs.

⁸⁹ The College notes that federal financial aid (e.g. Pell grants) and student loans can not be considered direct revenue for the College because students use financial aid for a variety of purposes, not just college tuition or fees.

⁹⁰ See pamphlet at <http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/Departments/inplrh/OIRA%20Other%20Files/Effectiveness/PAR/Montgomery%20College%20PAR%20Indicators%20to%20MHEC.pdf>

⁹¹ See <http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/wdce/skills2compete.html>

Table 6-3: Montgomery College's Career Programs

| <u>Credit Career Programs</u> | <u>Noncredit Career Programs</u> |
|---|--|
| • Accounting | • Apprenticeship Programs |
| • Advertising Art/Illustration | • Automotive Technician Training |
| • Applied Geography/GIS | • Biotechnology Certification |
| • Architecture Technology | • Business and Entrepreneurship |
| • Automotive Technology | • Building Trades |
| • Biotechnology | • Carpentry |
| • Building Trades Technology | • Certified Nursing Assistant |
| • Computer Applications | • Early Childhood Education/Child Care |
| • Computer Graphics | • Commercial Drivers License |
| • Computer Publishing and Printing Management | • Computer Repair |
| • Computer Science | • Computer Networking |
| • Construction Management | • Computer Programming |
| • Criminal Justice | • Dental Assistant |
| • Diagnostic Medical Sonography | • Electrician |
| • Early Childhood Education | • Food Safety Certification |
| • Emergency Medical Technician | • Green Energy and Sustainability Management |
| • Engineering Technologies | • HVAC and Refrigeration |
| • Fire and Emergency Services Management | • Hispanic Business and Training Institute |
| • Hospitality Management | • Hospitality |
| • Information Systems | • Human Resources |
| • Graphic Design | • Home Care Companion |
| • Health Information Technology | • Home Inspection |
| • Interior Design | • Insurance |
| • Landscape Technology | • Interior Design |
| • Management | • LEED AP |
| • Mental Health Associate | • Management and Supervision |
| • Microcomputer Technician | • Medicine Aide |
| • Network Engineer | • Networking Engineering Certification |
| • Nursing | • Pharmacy Technician |
| • Paralegal Studies | • Phlebotomy Technician |
| • Photography | • Physician's Office Assistant |
| • Physical Therapist Assistant | • Printing and Computer Publishing |
| • Printing Management | • Project Management |
| • Radiologic Technology | • Real Estate Licensure Preparation |
| • Radio/Television | • Small Business and Entrepreneurship |
| • Surgical Technology | • Transportation Safety |
| • Technical Writing | • Webpage Design |
| • Web Careers | • Welding |

Montgomery College also has articulation agreements with MCPS so that the CTE courses taken in high school can count towards the attainment of an A.A.S. degree or credential at the College. More specifically, MCPS and Montgomery College jointly offer 37 programs of study across 11 CTE clusters. Depending on the program, students who maintain a grade of B or higher in MCPS can receive advanced standing credits when they are admitted to the College.

Despite these articulation efforts and the existing demand for middle-skill labor in the County (see Chapter 3), there has been a steady decline in former MCPS students taking advantage of the CTE articulation agreement with the College. College data from 2010 till 2012 show a steep decline in the number of CTE credits earned, and several CTE programs with no credits earned. OLO's 2009 report on career and life readiness programs revealed a similar trend within MCPS and the under utilization of programs offered at the Thomas Edison High School of Technology.

As revealed in OLO's 2009 report on career and life readiness,⁹² the increasing rigor of CTE classes and programs within MCPS has resulted in fewer opportunities for academically challenged students to access CTE courses. Students repeating core coursework requirements for graduation do not have time in their schedules to pursue CTE pathways. As such, CTE has increasingly become a program used by high-achieving students who meet the University System of Maryland requirements for college readiness in addition to completing their CTE pathway requirements upon graduation.

Among the MCPS CTE completers who enter Montgomery College, college credit for some CTE courses completed in high school can be transferred to the College and applied to specific career program A.A.S. degrees. However, if a CTE completer is interested in transferring to a four-year institution, investing time and money to complete the A.A.S. may not align with their long term goals since credits earned beyond their general requirements in their career program major often will not transfer.⁹³ As long as many Montgomery College students continue to choose to complete a fully transferable degree instead of the A.A.S., the College's credit career programs will continue to be underutilized.⁹⁴

Even if the pipeline of college-ready students seeking an A.A.S. continues to shrink, CTE program capacity at the College that could be used to serve disconnected youth will not automatically become available. Instead, given their risk factors, disconnected youth are likely to need extensive developmental education opportunities and social supports to access the College's existing programs.

Of note, the College's Educational Opportunity Center and Pathways programs described on pages 66-67 provide counseling and pre-developmental educational opportunities aimed at preparing disconnected young adults for post-secondary education and/or workforce development opportunities at the College. Yet, these programs generally serve youth and adults *at-risk for disconnection* rather than *high- or proven-risk youth* and young adults who are neither enrolled in school, working, or on a pathway to self-sufficiency and thus in need of such services.

Participant Costs: Since 2009, the cost of tuition for credit courses at the College has increased from \$99 per credit hour plus fees to the current rate of \$112 plus fees. For noncredit courses, tuition and fees are based on course length and subject matter. For example, a 12 hour course may run \$96 - \$120 depending on equipment requirements of the classroom. Tuition costs can be considerably higher for several noncredit courses that lead to entry-level career pathway positions currently in demand. For example, fall 2013 tuition and fees are:

⁹² And also noted in OLO Report 2012-4 on Alternative Education

⁹³ This especially includes high school credits. But there are exceptions to transfer of career program credits earned at the College that are fully transferable to UMUC and, depending on the pathway, transferable to other four-year institutions in Maryland (e.g. construction management and hospitality at UMES, biotechnology at Stevenson).

⁹⁴ Some A.A.S. programs are also underutilized because completion of one to two courses affords access to an occupational pathway rather than completing all courses required for the A.A.S. (e.g. automotive technology).

- \$265 for a 15 hour Computer Technology course on Wordpress;
- \$445 for a 37.5 hour Construction Management course;
- \$742 for a 87.5 hour Automotive Suspensions course;
- \$970 for a 88 hour Certified Nursing Assistant course; and
- \$2,500 for a 96 hour Health Information Technology course.

While the College seeks to offer higher education opportunities at an affordable cost to the community, participants' tuition accounts for a greater share of noncredit than credit program costs. In FY12, for example, tuition and fees accounted for 37% of the total costs of credit programs compared to 51% of the total costs of noncredit programs.⁹⁵

As previously stated, most noncredit programs are ineligible for federal financial aid.⁹⁶ The costs of noncredit CTE programs combined with the lack of available federal financial aid suggests that these programs do not provide meaningful career pathway options for disconnected youth in poverty. Moreover, differences in access to funding between for credit and noncredit programs creates an incentive for disconnected youth to pursue credit programs even if they are interested in shorter term noncredit programs that more quickly prepare them for entry into career pathways.

To address the lack of the financial aid available for noncredit programs, the College offers a one-time scholarship of up to \$1,000 for select financially eligible students to use to pursue a career pathway. However, for many of the noncredit programs that offer occupational training in high demand fields, this scholarship is insufficient to cover total costs. For example, the cost of the class to train as a phlebotomist is \$1,775 plus \$200 for clinical hours.

Admittance to High Demand Programs: In interviews with OLO, college staff shared that many youth – not just disconnected ones - are often unable to compete academically for admission into some of the most high demand noncredit training opportunities. For example, the College's Bioscience Program was developed to attract and train recent high school graduates for entry level careers in bioscience. Instead, the program has attracted candidates with bachelor's degrees in need of technical training to work in this emerging field.⁹⁷ Overall, both connected and disconnected youth face similar challenges in entering many of the College's high demand allied health programs.

The ability of disconnected youth to access apprenticeship programs in the construction trades is likely difficult as well. The College works with five local trades unions to provide classroom training for participants enrolled in their apprenticeship programs.⁹⁸ Apprentices are often paid \$40,000 - \$50,000 while in training for these two to four-year programs. The College reports that unions receive more than 1,000 plus applicants for the 200-250 apprentices admitted per cohort.

⁹⁵ For credit programs, total tuition and fees was \$80.5 million out of total budget of \$217.3 million in FY12 inclusive of direct services, operation of plant, institutional support and scholarships. For noncredit programs, total tuition and fees accounted for \$8.3 million out of a total budget of \$16.1 million in FY12. The College notes that these programs are expected as a matter of public policy to operate on a cost recovery basis and thus lack any significant County support. Further, the College recognizes this cost structure coupled with the lack of federal financial aid and limited access to scholarships for students' share of the cost is a challenge.

⁹⁶ Some noncredit developmental education courses, however, are eligible for federal financial assistance.

⁹⁷ The College is actively seeking to develop a partnership with Wheaton High School so that more recent high school graduates can successfully enter the College's Bioscience Program.

⁹⁸ [Air Conditioning Contractors of America National Capital Chapter; Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc., Metropolitan Washington Chapter; Independent Electrical Contractors, Inc., Chesapeake; Steamfitters, Local 602; and Sprinkler Fitters Local 669](http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/Departments/giterv/about/apprenticeship.htm) (<http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/Departments/giterv/about/apprenticeship.htm>)

In sum, this review suggests that few if any disconnected youth benefit from the occupational training opportunities available in most credit and noncredit programs at the College because of barriers that limit access. Specifically,

- Academic barriers and the costs of higher education reduce opportunities for disconnected youth (i.e. not employed or enrolled in school) to access credit CTE programs, even if they are eligible for financial aid; and
- Cost barriers exacerbated by the limited availability of financial assistance for noncredit programs reduce opportunities for disconnected youth to access many of these programs.

These barriers are further exacerbating by a lack of local and focused counseling services available to youth overall and disconnected youth in particular regarding how to navigate careers and access career pathways with advancement and earnings potential and the value of post-secondary education toward this end.⁹⁹

The remainder of this section focuses on two sets of programs that at-risk youth and disconnected youth can access at the College to improve their academic and occupational credentialing.

B. Programs for High School Aged Youth

Montgomery College partners with Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) through a variety of programs, activities, projects, and initiatives to enhance the college readiness of high school aged youth. This section describes two of these partnerships that serve youth at-risk of disconnection:

- *Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success (ACES)* is a new program that seeks to enhance college awareness, readiness, and completion among students and families with first generation college students at select MCPS high schools; and
- *The Gateway to College* program has served as a dropout recovery program by enabling MCPS dropouts to enroll at the College and simultaneously earn credits toward their high school diploma and an associate's degree. This program will sunset in 2015.

A description of each of these programs follows.

| Programs for High School-Aged Youth | Youth Enrollment | Program Budget | Participant Cost | County Share |
|--|------------------|----------------|------------------|--------------|
| Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success (ACES), FY14 | 1,200 | \$1,500,000 | None | 63% |
| Gateway to College, FY13 | 130 | \$1,300,000 | None | 44% |

Accessing Collegiate Excellence and Success (ACES)

- Primary Goal: Increase college awareness, readiness, and completion among at-risk students

⁹⁹ OLO interviews with staff at the College indicate that a lack of local and focused counseling services exists to advise and improve youth and adults' understanding of career systems and pathways available to them. While the College's Career Coach online tool is helpful, it's insufficient for persons who are not computer savvy. The exception noted by the College was counseling services offered to participants in the Educational Opportunities Center.

In 2012, Montgomery College, MCPS and the Universities of Shady Grove signed a Memorandum of Understanding to offer the Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success (ACES) program. The program is aimed at students who are under-represented in higher education as well as those who will be the first in their family to attend college. Given the program's focus of serving low-income students in relatively high need high schools, ACES participants will include youth who are at-risk for disconnection.

Program Features: ACES seeks to more intensively counsel students identified across five risk factors for not entering college:

- Minority group membership,
- Low-income or single parent household,
- First generation college student,
- Student with disability or in special education,
- Homelessness or unstable living conditions.

The program began this fall by identifying program participants; completing intake needs assessments and the start of individual interventions such as basic skills preparations and college-readiness activities. This year, the College's goal is to recruit 11th and 12th graders at ten MCPS high schools: Montgomery Blair, Clarksburg, Einstein, Gaithersburg, Kennedy, Northwood, Rockville, Seneca Valley, Watkins Mill, and Wheaton.¹⁰⁰

Montgomery College academic coaches, on-site at each high school, will provide one-on-one case management services, including advising, career exploration and assistance with college applications. Case management services will shift as a student's education progresses. For example, students will receive academic planning and transfer advising services at Montgomery College and financial aid counseling, advising, internship placement, and leadership development at four-year institutions. The ACES program also intends to provide continued coaching and supports for students enrolled at Montgomery College and the Universities at Shady Grove.

Program Costs and Enrollment: The ACES program is funded for the current year at \$1,500,000 and will serve 1,200 students across ten MCPS campuses. Montgomery County Government provided the initial \$500,000 to start this program and also provides 44% of the \$1,000,000 in additional operating funds budgeted for this program. So for FY14, the County's share of program costs is 63%.

The Gateway to College Program

- Primary Goal: High school completion and higher education pathway for MCPS dropouts

Gateway to College began in 2004 at Montgomery College with grant funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. As of December 2013, the program was operational in 33 colleges across 20 states. According to the Gazette, among the more than 1,000 students that had enrolled at Montgomery College's Gateway Program since its inception, only 120 students had received a high school diploma for the 130 to 160 students served annually.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Of note, the ten high schools, with the highest percentages of Class of 2012 graduates enrolled at Montgomery College were Kennedy (40.6%), Seneca Valley (36.7%), Watkins Mill (35.5%), Magruder (34.7%), Clarksburg (32.5%), Damascus (32.3%), Einstein (32.1%), Wheaton (31.7%), Northwest (31.8%), and Gaithersburg (31.7%).

¹⁰¹ <http://www.gazette.net/article/20121214/NEWS/712149539/1124/montgomery-college-cancels-county-high-school-dropout-program&template=gazette>

Program Features: The Gateway to College program has served as a dropout recovery program to former MCPS students with grade level performance.¹⁰² The Gateway to College program re-engaged dropouts between the ages 16-20 by letting them take course work at the College to simultaneously accumulate high school and college credits so they could graduate from high school and progress towards an associate degree or a certificate. This program served high risk youth since it delivered educational opportunities to actual dropouts. Gateway students took reading, writing, math and career development courses before they transitioned to college courses with the general student population.

Program Costs and Enrollment: In FY13, 130 students were served at a cost of \$1,300,000. This program is funded out of the College's operating budget, so the County's share of total costs is 44%. With the FY14 budget, funding for new participants has been eliminated. The College will continue to serve students currently in the program but will no longer admit new students. In 2015, the program is scheduled to come to a complete end to align with the state's mandated increase in the age of compulsory secondary school attendance to 18.

C. Programs for Youth and Adults

Montgomery College offers a variety of educational programs that enable adults to improve their life, literacy, and occupational skills. Adult Education classes at Montgomery College are delivered as noncredit courses within the College's Workforce Development and Continuing Education division (WDCE). The College's adult education classes include adult ESOL, GED classes, and occupational training classes for adults with low English skills. The College also offers counseling and basic skill instruction to adult learners seeking to improve their educational credentials via its Educational Opportunity Center and Pathways to Success Program.

This section describes the following four sets of adult serving programs:

- *Adult English for Speakers of Other Languages, Literacy, and GED Preparation (AELG),*
- *Literacy and Training for Refugees,*
- *Vocational Training for Adults with Low Basic Skills or English Language Learners; and*
- *College Preparation Programs for Adults*

By definition, these adult programs often serve disconnected youth and young adults because they focus on improving the basic academic and occupational skills of adults with basic skills and/or low levels of educational attainment. Moreover, unlike many noncredit programs offered at the College, these programs are mostly underwritten with federal and state grants. As such, participant costs are often not a barrier to participation. A description of each program follows.

Of note, Montgomery College staff state that its AELG program (Adult ESOL, Literacy-GED) programs act as vocational and academic bridges that are intended to transition students into noncredit vocational programs. The instruction in many AELG courses occurs at intermediate and advanced levels of English. Moreover, a Transition Coordinator is available to help students enroll in their first noncredit vocational class after they complete the program. Scholarship funds are also available through Workforce Development and Continuing Education.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Entry to Gateway to College required 10th grade or above proficiency in reading and mathematics.

¹⁰³ The Career Path WDCE Scholarship is designed to support financially needy students seeking entry level positions with one-time scholarships of up to \$1,000. They are available to offset the cost of coursework in a variety

AELG Programs

The College's AELG Programs includes its English for Speakers of Other Languages courses and its literacy and GED preparation courses also referenced as Life Skills and GED preparation courses. The College offers AELG classes in 18 locations across the County (e.g. schools, community centers) that include the County's correctional facilities. Youth as young as 16 can enroll in these courses if they are not enrolled in MCPS (e.g., they have dropped out). A description of how these programs are funded follows the description of these two sets of programs.

| AELG Programs, FY12 | Unduplicated Enrollment | | Program Budget | Participant Costs | County Share |
|---|-------------------------|-------|----------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| | Total | Youth | | | |
| English for Speakers of Other Languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult ESOL, • English language and civics, • Career Connections | 4,280 | 678 | \$1,800,000 | \$90-115 plus cost of materials* | 15% |
| Life skills and GED preparation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy – GED | 892 | 474 | \$370,000 | \$45-90 plus cost of materials** | 15% |
| <p>*For ESOL and GED Programs, Montgomery County contributes \$400,000 towards a required match. The College contributes \$155,752 of state FTE to meet the full required amount.</p> <p>**Only classes at the highest levels (Advanced ESOL and GED) charge tuition and fees. Lower levels of both ESOL and Literacy-GED pay on the cost of books. Tuition and fees based on the number of course hours.</p> | | | | | |

ESOL Program Features: The College offers three noncredit programs aimed at enhancing the life skills and English proficiency of adults whose native language is not English:

- The **Adult ESOL** Program provides English language and life skills instruction to County residents whose native language is not English. The College offers these courses to help speakers of other languages learn English for life, work, and community.
- The College's **English Language and Civics** courses are designed for adult English language learners to increase their understanding of and ability to navigate governmental, educational, banking, healthcare, and workplace systems.
- **Career Connections** offers contextualized ESOL classes to prepare students for occupations in three industry sectors: customer service, health care, and construction. In FY12, enrollment for all three sectors totaled 103 students with 26 in ESOL for Customer Service Jobs, 18 in ESOL for Building Trade Jobs, and 59 in ESOL for Health Care Jobs.

Life Skills and GED Preparation Program Features: The College's GED Preparation programs prepare adults to take and complete the GED test so they can earn their high school diploma (i.e. a Maryland High School Diploma). The College offers three specific programs:

- **Adult Basic Education** courses that offer small classes for adults in reading, math, and writing that align with grades 0-4 and bolster adults' basic skills;
- **Pre-GED Preparation** courses for adults that offer computer aided instruction in reading, math, and writing aligned with grades 5-8; and

of fields that include apartment leasing, computer technology, cosmetology, early childhood development, health sciences, project management, real estate, technology, veterinary assistance, and information technology.

- **GED Preparation** courses that prepare adults for the five academic areas covered by the GED test: Social Studies, Science, Reading, Mathematics, and Writing.

Of note, College staff shared with OLO that the current paper GED exam will be replaced by a more rigorous and expensive online exam at the start of 2014. The College will administer the new GED in the County and is looking for opportunities to increase the digital literacy of test takers. The State has agreed to offset increases in the costs of the new GED exam for at least a year. Nevertheless, local service providers both at the College and within the community anticipate that the numbers of new test takers and passage rates on the GED in the County may decline as a result of these changes.

Program Enrollment and Costs: The combined enrollment across all four of the AELG programs was 5,172 students (unduplicated count) and 10,330 seats (duplicated count) in FY12. Enrollment in courses for English language learners accounts for more than 80% of overall AELG enrollment. Youth between the ages of 16 and 24 accounted for 16% of Adult ESOL enrollment and 53% of Adult Basic Education/GED enrollment. Overall, the Adult ESOL classes evidence the longest waiting lists. The College reports that for spring 2013, 810 persons were waitlisted at some point for an ESL class while 215 persons were waitlisted for some sections of Adult Basic Education- GED.¹⁰⁴

Federal and state support of AELG programs means that only the most advanced ESOL and GED courses charge student tuition. In FY12, the combined federal, state, and County revenue for the College's AELG programs totaled \$2.7 million. State and federal support comprised 80% of this amount at \$2.7 million and the College's allocation of State FTE funding to meet local match requirements comprised another 6% of revenue at \$156,000. The County Council's contribution of \$400,000 to the College's AELG programs has remained the same since 2006 and accounts for less than 15% of AELG government revenue.

Literacy and Training for Refugees

The College houses a Refugee Center that serves refugees who are residents of Montgomery County and Prince George's County in one of two programs aimed at facilitating their transition and participation in the community. A description of each program and their combined costs follows.

| Refugee Programs, FY12 | Unduplicated Enrollment | | Program Budget | Participant Costs | County Share |
|---|-------------------------|-------|----------------|-------------------|--------------|
| | Total | Youth | | | |
| Literacy and Training for Refugees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refugee ESL • Refugee Targeted Assistance | 852 | n/a | \$810,000 | Cost of materials | 0% |

Program Features: Both programs provide short-term Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) services that lead to employment within a year. VESL classes emphasize the listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills necessary for entry into the workforce or other vocational programs. Students learn career-specific terminology and develop the intercultural competence needed for successful interaction in American society. The College also works closely with refugee resettlement agencies and providers to train and place participants in the labor market. Additionally:

¹⁰⁴ Unpublished data provided by Donna Kinerney, Instructional Dean, AELG – Montgomery College

- **The Refugee ESL: English for the American Workplace** teaches life skills and prevocational English skills and also offers on the job training in a student managed business.
- **The Refugee Targeted Assistance Program (TAP)** includes a vocational skills component for either certified nursing assistant training or computer skills training.

Program Enrollment and Costs: These programs are eligible to persons with legal documentation of their refugee and asylee status. The Refugee ESL program served 683 students in FY12. About 74% had some high school education. The TAP program served 169 students and of those who went to school outside of the U.S. about 68% had completed grades 12-18. With funding from the federal U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that is administered by the Maryland Office for Refugees and Asylees, this program operates tuition free. Moreover, the TAP program offered tuition reimbursement for several noncredit programs that prepare adults to become pharmacy technicians, phlebotomy technicians, child care providers, and technicians in computer applications, databases, and networking. In FY12, the budget for the College's Refugee Programs was \$810,000.

Vocational Training for Adults with Low Basic English Skills or English Language Learners

The College offers two Maryland Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (MI-BEST) programs that replicates Washington State's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) model of combining instruction in basic skills and occupational skills to prepare adults for entry-level positions in career pathways. The College offers a MI-BEST program (Accelerating Advancement Initiative) that trains adults with low basic skills to become Apartment Maintenance Technicians, and another MI-BEST program (Accelerating Connections to Employment) that enables English language learners to earn certifications in Geriatric nursing.¹⁰⁵ A description of each program follows.

| MI-BEST Programs, FY14 | Unduplicated Enrollment | | Program Budget | Participant Costs | County Share |
|--|-------------------------|-------|----------------|-------------------|--------------|
| | Total | Youth | | | |
| Vocational training for adults with low basic skills & English language learners | Estimated 80 | n/a | \$309,000 | Cost of materials | 0% |
| • Accelerating Advancement Initiative – MI-BEST, Apartment Maintenance | (30) | | | | |
| • Accelerating Connections to Employment - MI-BEST, Certified/Geriatric Nursing | (50) | | | | |

Program Features:

- **The Accelerating Advancement Initiative** utilizes the MI-BEST approach to train adults to become apartment maintenance technicians. In 2010, the College partnered with the National Apartment Association Education Institute to offer a three-week course to address a national shortage of skilled apartment maintenance technicians. The course led to a certificate for apartment maintenance technician, a recognized credential that qualifies completers for entry level jobs into career pathways with benefits and advancement opportunities. This program is open to anyone with low basic skills, including adults who have a high school diploma.

¹⁰⁵ Of note, the Accelerating Connections to Employment (ACE) initiative is lead by the Montgomery County Workforce Investment Board who partners with the College to provide the CNA and GNA training. ACE is a four-state, nine-site random trial demonstration project funded by the U.S. Department of Labor.

- **The Accelerating Connections to Employment (ACE) MI-BEST Program** seeks to blend ESOL instruction with occupational training. This program at Montgomery College is one of six Maryland community colleges that will offer this program in collaboration with their Workforce Investment Board through a federal grant. This program is expected to serve 100 adult English language learners over a three year period. The program will rely on Workforce Investment Board resources, including a Career Navigator, to move students into employment. The first cohort of students will be trained as geriatric nursing assistants.

Program Costs and Enrollment: In 2013, the Community Foundation for the National Capital Region awarded Montgomery College a \$105,000 Greater Washington Workforce Development Collaborative grant to support the MI-BEST Apartment Maintenance Program. For FY14, \$50,000 from this grant has been budgeted to train approximately 30 adults as apartment maintenance technicians. Federal revenue from the U.S. Department of Labor to support the ACE program in certified/geriatric nursing totals \$256,000 for FY14 and is anticipated to support 50 adults.

College Preparation Programs for Adults

The College offers two programs that focus on access to higher education among adults:

- **The Educational Opportunity Center's** mission is to increase the number of adult participants who enroll in postsecondary education institutions; and
- **The Pathways to Success Program's** mission is to increase ACCUPLACER reading scores among students so that they can enroll in developmental education and credit courses.

A description of the key program features, including enrollment and budget information, follows.

| College Preparation Programs for Adults, FY13 | Unduplicated Enrollment | | Program Budget | Participant Costs | County Share |
|---|-------------------------|-------|----------------|-------------------|--------------|
| | Total | Youth | | | |
| Educational Opportunity Center | 1,154 | 472 | \$329,000 | None | 13% |
| Pathways to Success Program | 180 | n/a | \$120,000 | \$668 | 0% |

Education Opportunity Center (EOC) Program Features: The mission of this federally funded TRIO program is to assist low-income and/or first generation college-attending adults age 19 and older in earning their GED and applying to college. Target groups served by the EOC included homeless and foster care youth. Youth and young adults are also referred from the juvenile and adult criminal justice systems. College access services delivered by the EOC include:

- GED preparation (practice exams and counseling),
- Admissions counseling (exploration of post secondary education options, including apprenticeships),
- Financial aid assistance (FAFSA),
- Academic advising (program requirements),
- Career advising (career assessments), and
- Financial literacy.

All services are available in English and Spanish and available at no cost to participants. The EOC works with 30 plus social service organizations in the County to identify prospective students including Liberty's Promise and the Housing Opportunities Commission. Of note, the EOC program requires that two-thirds of participants must be first generation college-attending students or low income, and reside in Montgomery County. Approximately 81% of EOC students fit this bill.

Pathways to Success Program Features: This program serves as a learning community for students who have a reading score of 35 to 52 on the ACCUPLACER Reading Test. Students scoring at this level are not yet ready to enter developmental education or credit courses. The College offers the Pathways program as an opportunity for students to prepare for developmental education by completing a one-semester, noncredit program comprised of three courses: reading, writing, and life and career planning. The tuition for this program is \$668. However, Pathway students who have graduated from MCPS and are also county residents are eligible to apply for needs based Pathway Grants. Students who complete the Pathways Program are re-tested to determine their eligibility to continue on to credit courses.

Program Enrollment and Costs:

- Educational Opportunity Center is supported by a five year federal grant in the amount of \$233,000 per year and an annual contribution from Montgomery College's operating budget of approximately \$96,000 in FY13 of which the County provided \$41,000 or 13% of total costs. Annually, the EOC serves approximately 1,100 students: 85% of participants are brand new to the program, and about 15% are repeaters. In FY13, about 41% of all EOC participants were youth between the ages of 16 and 24.
- The Pathways to Success Program enrolled 180 students with a total program budget of \$120,000 in FY13. The College made available \$25,000 in reserves from its Workforce Development and Continuing Education Fund for Pathway grants for County residents. As a WDCE funded program, no County funds supported this program. The percentage of youth between the ages of 16 and 24 enrolled in Pathways was not tracked by the College.

Chapter 7: Perspectives on Local Program Strengths and Challenges

Through interviews to improve our understanding of the County's portfolio of youth career development programs, OLO elicited the perspectives of agency and organization administrators and staff on program strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. OLO interviewed more than two dozen administrators and staff members employed by Montgomery County Government agencies, Montgomery College, and contractors who deliver direct services. OLO also interviewed members of the Montgomery County Workforce Investment Board and its Youth Council.

This chapter summarizes the common themes that emerged during project interviews in two parts:

- **Part A, Perspectives on Program Strengths**, describes five themes cited as strengths of existing services: availability of services to highest risk youth, non-profit partners deliver high-quality services, performance benchmarks met for federally funded programs, and there are two likely champions for enhancing local efforts to connect youth to education and employment.
- **Part B, Perspectives on Program Challenges**, describes five challenges identified during project interviews: a weak County commitment to youth workforce development, limited services for at-risk out-of-school youth, most programs link youth to the low-wage labor market, and insufficient data to support strategic planning.

Of note, OLO did not interview program participants or youth who could benefit from the County's youth career development programs for this project. And the responses elicited during project interviews with agency and organizational staffs are not necessarily representative of the organizations that employ the staff members interviewed. Future reviews of the County's youth and work programs should include surveys of program participants and staffs to elicit representative perspectives on what services work well and opportunities for improving local services.

Overall, a review of the observations shared during OLO's project interviews offers several findings:

- Connecting disconnected youth to education and employment are difficult tasks. Doing it well requires a comprehensive set of resources and time frames lasting a year or longer.
- Locally, youth career development is contingent on funding – there is very little federal or state funding for youth workforce development and the County funding that used to help offset these amounts diminished during the economic downturn and has not been replaced.
- Youth career development services are available to highest risk youth connected to social service systems (e.g. foster care, incarcerated, TANF). Youth who are weakly or chronically disconnected from school and work, but not connected to a social service system, are receiving minimal services, if any.
- The County does not promote youth workforce development as a strategic goal. Instead it is an off shoot of two related but different commitments – positive youth development to prevent youth violence and economic development to promote the attractiveness of the County to new and existing businesses.
- The County delegates its youth workforce programming to the community-based sector. Non-profits and for-profits organizations are effective at delivering services, but cannot coordinate services across County programs or lead a strategic plan for youth workforce development for the County.

- Local youth career development often focuses on GED preparation and job readiness for low-skill, low-wage service sector rather than enhancing youth occupational skills that prepare them for career pathways that generate self-sufficiency wages.
- Two potential champions within the County are poised to encourage the County to adopt a more progressive stance to youth career development – the Youth Council of the Workforce Investment Board and Montgomery College.

A. Perspectives on Program Strengths

Montgomery County Government, Montgomery College, and Workforce Investment Board respondents and vendors offered a variety of answers in response to the question of “What things work well regarding the current delivery of local youth workforce development programs?” Descriptions of the five common themes that emerged follow:

1. Comprehensive youth workforce development services are available to youth connected to the County’s social service systems and participating in the Conservation Corps.

Interviews with program administrators and staff suggest that youth involved in the County’s child welfare, criminal justice, and income support systems (i.e. TANF) and youth enrolled in the Conservation Corps have access to a comprehensive set of youth career development services beyond a focus on job readiness (e.g. interviewing, resume writing). Best practices suggests that higher risk youth that are court/system-involved often require a comprehensive set of services with educational, social services, and occupational components to connect to education and employment pathways that lead to self-sufficiency. Strengths noted among these four programs follow.

- **DHHS’ Transition Services Unit** offers services in six areas to support teen’s transition out of foster care – education, employment, housing, health, financial literacy, and family and friend support. DHHS contracts with Arbor E&T to deliver its Foster Care Youth Employment Program that places youth in paid internships tied to their career interests. Key features of this program include case management, home visits, vocational and career exploration, job coaching, life skills training, job placement, job retention, referrals to support services, and regular communication between the Youth Advocate and employer to ensure successful internship placement.
- **DOCR’s ReEntry for All Program** provides wrap-around services and discharge planning for offenders to reenter the community, including youth. This program coordinates social services¹⁰⁶, educational and employment programs designed to meet the needs of reentry clients. Specific services available include adult basic education/ESOL and GED preparation classes, high school general and special education classes, work opportunities (e.g. food service, laundry) and access to an on-site One Stop Center at the MCCF staffed by Montgomery Works. The One Stop provides resources and services to support reentry including a resource library, computer lab, practice interviewing room, limited access to the internet, letters of explanation, life skills training, and re-entry cards that serve as legal identification, transit passes, and library cards. Reentry services are available at both the Montgomery County Correctional Facility and the Pre-Release Center.

¹⁰⁶ Services include access to ongoing medications, mental health counseling, domestic violence programs, shelter referrals, food stamps/banks, and community clinics.

- **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)** provides employment services and social services for young parents between the ages of 16 and 24 to support their transition into the workforce. DHHS contracts with Arbor E & T to provide differentiated employment and job search services to clients. These can include life skills, job readiness, and English training to TANF clients, and on a limited basis occupational training. Other benefits available to TANF clients that are funded directly by DHHS include transportation support (e.g. SmarTrip cards and/or gas money) and child care vouchers.
- **The Conservation Corps** serves youth between the ages of 17 and 24 who are unemployed and have not earned a high school diploma. The five-month program focuses on improving basic skills, occupational skills related to conservation, and GED readiness. DHHS contracts with the Collaboration Council and the Latin American Youth Center to manage the Corps. Specific activities include team building experiences, career exploration, and opportunities for members to serve as crew leaders to gain leadership skills. The Corps also offers a \$150 a week stipend for participants. The goal of the combining GED and workforce experience in completing conservation projects is to ensure that participants become employable. Strengths of the program include participants' enthusiasm for the program and the positioning of MMYC to offer a variety of services as needed. The participants in particular enjoy the hands on experiences provided through the Conservation Corps.

2. County collaborates with high-quality non-profit and for-profit partners to deliver youth workforce development services.

Interviewees recognized the high caliber of the non-profits and for-profits that provide direct services to youth in the County as a strength of the County's youth workforce development system.

Interviewees recognized that the County is fortunate to have several nonprofits that offer excellent youth workforce services. These include programming that focuses on fostering connections between staff and clients to enhance youth engagement and success, and making related services available across programs. For example, the Maryland Multicultural Youth Center offers DHHS funded mental health services to the youth it serves under two other County contracts: the Conservation Corps, also funded by DHHA; and WIA services for in- and out-of-school youth funded by DED.

Interviewees also noted that the County sets a high bar based on the number of youth that are served rather than on process outcomes. This has allowed the spread of the positive youth development approach and opportunities to integrate this approach with employment opportunities. For example, Identity operates the Wellness Center at Northwood which includes an employment component. There is also proposal under discussion to train Northwood Students in the basics of positive youth development. The Collaboration Council is helping to conceptualize this. One idea is that youth could be trained to serve as co-facilitators.

Of note, the community-based organizations that carry out the County's youth workforce development work often have other County contracts that support their youth workforce development efforts and thus their ability to coordinate services for youth among its contracts. More specifically, MMYC holds two of the County's youth workforce contracts – WIA-funded Youth Services and the Conservations Corps, Identify has two County contracts to operate the Youth Opportunity Centers and Wellness Centers, Arbor E&T has two County contracts to provide employment service to TANF clients and youth transitioning out of foster care, and the Workforce Solutions Group has the contract to operate One Stop Centers located in the community and at the Montgomery County Correctional Facility.

3. Federally funded youth workforce development programs in the County reach their performance benchmarks.

Interviewees noted that although the County has not had robust youth workforce development offerings to date, it has done well with its limited resources by achieving the performance benchmarks of its federally funded programs. This includes non-profits and local agencies/offices achieving federal program benchmarks despite often arduous participation, data, and reporting requirements and limited funding. More specifically,

- DED and MMYC met their WIA performance goals for youth programs while meeting strenuous participation, data, and reporting requirements for WIA funded programs and diversifying the businesses participating in the Summer Internship Program;
- DHHS and Arbor E&T continue to meet TANF's workforce placement performance goals despite increasing caseloads and constant funding, and
- Montgomery College has met their Educational Opportunity Center performance goals for TRIO funded programs despite having an extremely large caseload of program clients.

4. The Youth Council is poised to develop a County-wide vision for enhancing the County's youth workforce development programs.

The Youth Council of the County's Workforce Investment Board is designated under WIA to serve as the local convener of youth workforce development programs. Interviewees report that the Youth Council is in the process of developing a strategic vision for youth workforce development that encompasses more than the WIA-funded initiatives to include programming for at-risk in-school and out-of-school youth that offer linkages to career pathways and emphasize career exploration.¹⁰⁷

Interviewees report that the Youth Council has aligned its work with the County Workforce Investment Board's strategic planning efforts and it is seeking to secure a vendor to conduct a resource mapping that provides baseline information on County youth at-risk, including where they are located and what services are available to them.

Interviewees further report that the rigor of the County's WIB and its Youth Council has improved as a result of the WIB's recent strategic planning process but that more work remains and more funding is needed to carry out this work. Towards this end, the WIB and its Youth Council are seeking to establish their non-profit status so they can attract revenue to support its expanded mission.

Overall, interviewees recognize that the Youth Council is poised to develop a comprehensive strategic plan for youth workforce development in the County, including data and resource mapping to identify youth and local business workforce needs. Interviewees recognize, however, that the Youth Council's ability to advance such a plan may be hampered by its current affiliation with DED and MCG and they are willing to support other conveners to support such as plan.

¹⁰⁷ DED reports that the Youth Council completed its strategic plan in April 2012 that is aligned with the current WIB plan and that the Youth Council will be participating with the WIB in updating its strategic plan in 2014. DED also reports that this new WIB plan will include youth activities eliminating the need for two separate plans.

5. Montgomery College is well suited to serve as the local convener and champion for the County's youth workforce development programs disconnected youth.

A majority of interviewees recognized Montgomery College as a likely convener and potential champion for enhancing the County's youth workforce development system. Several agency administrators and staffers noted the high regard for College among community stakeholders and the County Council. They also characterized the College's partnerships with MCPS, DHHS, DOCR, and others as potential building blocks for enhancing and expanding future programming aimed at connecting more disconnected youth to work.

Although some interviewees observed that the College's tuition structure presents a challenge to expanding programming to disconnected youth who often have low incomes, others noted the ability of the College to secure federal and philanthropic grants to support and expand the MI-BEST model that provides basic and occupational skill development opportunities at little/no cost to participants.

Of note, in response to the question of what agency or department could effectively champion for improved youth workforce development in the County, the College's leadership also agreed that they are well positioned and suited to champion youth workforce investment as a County priority in partnership with other relevant stakeholders in the County.

B. Perspectives on Program Challenges

Interviewees offered a variety of answers in response to the question of "What are the current challenges to connecting youth to work in Montgomery County and where are the opportunities for program improvement?" Descriptions of the five common themes that emerged follow:

6. Weak commitment to youth workforce development in Montgomery County that undermines potential impact.

Interviewees noted that the weak emphasis on workforce development issues in the County can create challenges for youth workforce development programs that undermine their potential impact. Interviewees characterized this criticism in a variety of ways with specific examples of how the weak emphasis leads to missed opportunities to improve services that meet the needs of disconnected youth. Some examples of challenges that interviewees highlighted include the following:

- ***County leadership does not prioritize the issue of youth employment or workforce development or undertake the task of engaging the business community to provide youth employment opportunities in a sustained manner.*** Interviewees observed that the County is focused more on economic development than it is on workforce development and that the local Chambers of Commerce and the WIB lack a strong relationship. There was a perception that businesses are willing to participate or they can be coaxed if public dollars are leveraged. For example, if DED provided a matching grant, the private sector would match the grant to support a program. Others commented that businesses need to be invited and celebrated for doing so.
- ***Montgomery County's investment in workforce services appears to be minimal compared to nearby counties, (e.g. Howard and Frederick).*** As a result, County staff are often one step removed from the operations of its youth and adult workforce systems (e.g. One Stop Centers) and businesses' workforce needs. Counties that have a closer working relationship with their WIBS seem to be better able to leverage their relationships with the business community.

- ***Lack of funding and limits on the use of federal WIA funds is a challenge.*** Interviewees noted that DED is trying to work backward (to target investments) but it is constrained in its use of federal WIA funding. There used to be County money to support retail development, but these funds were eliminated. While money is not always the answer, DED's limited budget makes it impossible to reach everyone in need. Given this lack of resources, it is a challenge to figure out how to maximize impact with minimal resources or decide where the best leverage is.
- ***Lack of coordination across youth serving programs.*** Interviewees indicated that youth serving systems in the County often do not take to each other or collaborate well. They noted that child welfare, criminal justice, and other agencies tend to work in silos versus systems. Interviewees noted that although lots of separate, discrete pieces are in place, without a coordinated system, the County is unable to move forward in a strategic manner. Specific challenges noted included programs coordinating with probation officers regarding the additional responsibilities and commitments for adjudicated youth and securing state identification for program participants, particularly for candidates from immigrant families.
- ***County needs for youth to focus on workforce and career development earlier with MCPS.*** Interviewees stated that there is a need to reframe the college and career readiness discussion and to consider providing CTE earlier so that youth are prepared for entry level employment when they graduate from high school. Interviewees also noted that MCPS has a key role to play in this regard, particularly for youth at high risk for disconnection, but that perhaps the high regard for the school system creates the misperception that greater investments in youth workforce development are not necessary. Other interviewees remarked that both MCPS and the County Government need to focus more resources to actual needs rather than perceptions.

7. **Few workforce development opportunities available for non-systems involved disconnected youth and young adults.**

Interviewees indicate that now, Montgomery County's system of workforce development services is designed for higher functioning adults and youth. Thus, while career based education would be great for enhancing the self-sufficiency of disconnected youth, the occupational opportunities currently offered in the County (e.g. Montgomery College) do not meet the needs of such youth with low basic skills and low-incomes. At the same time, interviewees note that MCPS' Thomas Edison High School of Technology is underutilized.

Other interviewees noted that not only do very few second chance opportunities for disconnected youth exist within the County; but more importantly, no institution exists for out-of-school youth once they dropout to become skilled, particularly in the trades. Interviewees noted that greater investments in infrastructure to serve youth without high school diplomas are warranted, whether youth are working or not, to link more of them to living wage career pathways. Pathways are especially needed for those who have not earned a high school diploma and for young men of color (African American and Latino men).

8. Connecting disconnected youth to education and employment remains a challenge.

Despite programs often meeting federal benchmarks for performance, interviewees routinely commented that connecting disconnected youth to education and employment pathways remains a difficult task. Specific challenges cited during interviews include:

- ***Lack of soft skills among program participants.*** Interviewees noted employers have complained that disconnected youth often struggle with attendance, tardiness, and insubordination. Other challenges include communication and taking the initiative. These soft skills are essential for youth to keep their jobs and hopefully to advance.
- ***Unwillingness of some program participants to make a sustained commitment to change.*** Some interviewees noted that some participants are unwilling to make a sustained commitment to a longer-term workforce development program, particularly if they are not earning a stipend. Program provider interviewees recognized that some youth who sign up are not ready to fully commit to program participation.
- ***Differentiating programs and employment opportunities by youth age.*** A challenge of an effective system of youth career development services is the heterogeneous needs of youth. As one interviewee noted the needs of 16 to 24 year olds cover a wide range, from earning extra spending money to the wages needed to support a family. Typically, in school teens should focus on career exploration while out-of-school older teen agers and young adults should focus on career pathways that lead to sustainable wages. Interviewees noted that the latter is a particularly difficult challenge given the local economy.
- ***Securing and maintaining high quality work placements for all youth.*** Several interviewees noted that many employers are only interested in hiring youth age 18 and above. Program provider interviewees also noted that securing and maintaining work placements remains a challenge, particularly when predecessor staff who have worked with youth placements depart. Interviewees noted that extensive time is invested in creating and re-establishing relationships with employers who place youth. Interviewees also noted that the County's WIB has not been a significant source of summer internship placements.
- ***Youth development and GED completion are often insufficient to connect youth to careers.*** Interviewees noted that the County's Positive Youth Development Initiative investments are often effective at reducing gang involvement and youth violence, but insufficient for improving the economic outcomes of youth and connecting them to careers. Interviewees noted that changes in the GED exam presents a challenge since many youth have a hard time passing the current exam. Moreover, interviewees noted that even if a young person earns a GED, this does not create access to quality jobs and employers. This makes it very difficult to break the cycle of poverty. Interviewees reported that youth need assistance discerning between a job versus a career that leads to advancement and self-sufficiency.

9. Focus of youth career development on low-skilled, low wage occupations.

Interviewees acknowledged that most of the youth workforce development efforts focus on placing youth in low-skilled and low-wage positions, often in retail, rather than in career pathways with earnings and advancement potential. Some interviewees bemoaned the use of work placements on conservation teams (e.g. Conservation Corps, Teen Works) that may not yield transferable skills that are recognized in the local labor market.

Several interviewees expressed concern that employment placements in retail, particularly in temporary or seasonal positions, were often more appropriate for teens rather than young adults in need of a career pathway. However, some interviewees also expressed concern that eliminating unpaid internships as a placement option may reduce opportunities for disadvantaged, disabled, and/or disconnected youth to increase their employability by gaining transferable skills. Interviewees also advocated for increasing opportunities for English language learners to improve their English proficiency, particularly in writing, so they can transition into higher-paying positions.

10. Insufficient data on youth workforce demand and impact of current programs to support strategic planning.

Interviewees conceded that a vacuum exists regarding the demand for youth workforce development services and the impact of current programs beyond the data tracked for federal program compliance. Currently, there is a lack of data regarding the occupational demand for youth in Montgomery County, youth workforce needs by age group, local businesses workforce demands, and what happens to youth after they leave local youth career development programs.

Interviewees note that to the extent that the County has identified a sector in need of youth labor and taken a sector approach to support workforce development, it has occurred in allied health. Interviewees agree that the County could probably create a workforce center within this sector that targets GED and high school graduates into a career path and ensures there are pipelines within the County to meet the increased demand for workers in allied health as certified nursing assistants, registered nurses, physician's assistants, and the like.¹⁰⁸

The Youth Council has not had the resources to compile the data to describe the need and supply of youth workforce development programs in the County overall or within specific areas of the County. The Youth Council is in the process of seeking a vendor to provide this information. And the County's Workforce Investment Board is in the process of becoming a non-profit organization so that it can attract more resources for research and resource mapping to address these issues and further its strategic planning efforts.

¹⁰⁸ Interviewees mentioned that DED is currently soliciting federal grant funding to develop a local certified nursing assistance program.

Chapter 8: Career Pathways as a Promising Practice

As noted thus far in this report, youth career development programming in Montgomery County includes a number of efforts aimed at connecting youth and young adults to educational and occupational opportunities that prepare them for the local labor market. A common perspective shared during OLO project interviews, however, is that the County lacks a coordinated strategy for preparing youth who are at any level of risk for disconnecting for middle-skill occupations with advancement and earnings potential.

OLO's review of the research suggests that career pathways can provide an effective approach to integrating the County's youth career development programs into a coordinated approach for preparing disconnected youth for employment. Career pathways refers to education and training opportunities that are organized as a series of steps that lead to higher credential and employment opportunities in growing occupations. A report by Abt Associates [‘the Abt Report’] that describes best practices for implementing career pathways is the principal source for this chapter's review of career pathways as a promising practice for enhancing youth career development.¹⁰⁹

Although research regarding the efficacy of the career pathways approach is limited,¹¹⁰ the author of the Abt Report anticipates this approach to structuring workforce development can be used by institutions and local communities to align and coordinate their programs. Toward this end, this chapter's descriptions of both the career pathway approach and the best practices for implementing it, may serve as a resource to local administrators seeking to improve Montgomery County's youth career development programs.

This chapter is presented in four parts:

- **Part A, Defining Career Pathways**, describes the career pathways framework and theory of change and its alignment with the multiple pathways approach, a strategy recommended in OLO's 2012 alternative education report to meet the needs of at-risk teens and dropouts;
- **Part B, Key Program Characteristics**, describes the essential features of career pathway programs and best practices for implementing this approach;
- **Part C, Career Pathways in Practice**, offers four illustrative examples from the Abt Report to describe what effective career pathway programs look like in operation; and
- **Part D, Career Pathways as an Integrative Strategy**, describes the emerging consensus among policymakers to structure workforce development programming along a career pathway framework and assesses the potential for Montgomery County to do the same.

Several findings emerge from the information reviewed in this chapter:

- The career pathways framework aligns with the multiple pathways approach for re-engaging high risk teens and out-of-school youth to education and employment opportunities.
- The career pathways model is organized around five program levels that lead to successively higher credentialing and employment opportunities:

¹⁰⁹ Fein, David – *Career Pathways as a Framework for Program Design and Evaluation*, 2012; see <http://www.abtassociates.com/AbtAssociates/files/a9/a9eabb2-6695-478a-aa3c-0151acf82052.pdf>

¹¹⁰ Fein finds that since most career pathway programs are either in design or in their early stages of implementation, a body of research to support a set of best practices or a list of evidenced based programs is still being developed.

- Pre-GED programs that prepare students for GED programs and lower-skilled jobs;
 - GED level programs that are designed to prepare participants for college-level training and semi-skilled jobs with a career focus;
 - Short-term certificate programs for entry-level skilled jobs;
 - 1-2 year certificates or associate's degree programs for middle-skilled jobs, and
 - Bachelor's degrees or above programs that lead to upper-skilled jobs.
- Although career pathway programs can utilize a variety of strategies, there are ten program features that characterize most effective programs:
 - Collaboration across community-based programs,
 - Focus on low-skill adults or others at-risk,
 - Specification of knowledge and skills required for specific career pathways,
 - Comprehensive approaches to assessment,
 - Promising approaches to basic skills instruction and occupational training,
 - Academic and non-academic supports,
 - Strategies for connecting participants with employers,
 - Program packaging to promote bounded choice,
 - Data-driven decision making with a continuous improvement ethos; and
 - Movement toward scalability and sustainability.
- An important assumption of career pathways programs for low-skilled adults is that graduates will find enough middle-skilled jobs supporting a middle-class standard of living, and that such jobs will provide stepping stones to advanced training and higher-skilled employment.
- A policy consensus about the value of career pathway programs as a way to connect the otherwise fragmented array of workforce development programs and support services is emerging at the federal level, as well as many states and local communities.
- An opportunity exists in Montgomery County to connect local youth workforce development efforts into a coherent career pathways approach that offers stackable credentialing options for low-income youth and adults that could potentially better meet the needs of disconnected teens and young adults.

A. Defining Career Pathways

Career pathways refers to education and training opportunities that are organized as a series of steps that lead to higher credentialing and employment opportunities. Fein of Abt Associates describes the basic career pathways model as follows:

“The essential career pathways thesis is that post-secondary education and training should be organized as a series of manageable steps leading to successively higher credentials and employment opportunities in growing occupations. Each step is designed to prepare students for the next level of employment and education and also to provide a credential with labor market value.”¹¹¹

¹¹¹ Abt Associates, *Career Pathways as a Framework for Program Design and Evaluation*, May 2012, p. 2

Table 8-1 describes the five program levels that comprise the basic career pathways model as described by Fein. Of note, it includes pre-GED and GED level programming to bridge students from basic skills instruction to post-secondary, college-level instruction. Under this model, as a student progresses across each program level, their occupational, academic, and life skills improve along with their prospects for good-paying, stable employment.

Table 8-1: Basic Career Pathways Model by Program Levels

| Program Levels | Instructional Level | Program Focus |
|---|--|--|
| 1. Basic Bridge Programs | 6 th -8 th grade (pre-GED) | “On-ramp” and “bridge” programs designed to prepare low-skilled participants for college-level training and lower-skilled jobs with a career focus |
| 2. Sectoral Bridge Programs – Semi-Skilled Positions | 9 th -11 th grade (GED) | |
| 3. Short-term Certificate Programs – Entry-level Skilled Jobs | College-level training | College-level training for “middle skills” employment – jobs requiring some college but less than a bachelor’s degree |
| 4. 1-2 Year Certificate to AA Programs – Mid-level Skilled Jobs | College-level training | |
| 5. BA+ Programs – Upper-Skilled Jobs | College-level and advanced training | Includes interventions promoting completion of bachelor’s degrees and more advanced credentials |
| Source: Adapted from Figure 1, Abt Associates, Career Pathways as a Framework for Program Design and Evaluation, May 2012 | | |

The dual focus on career pathway programs to enhance participants’ educational attainment and occupational skills squarely aligns with the multiple pathways to graduation approach that encourages programs include both educational and occupational components to re-engage dropouts and teens at highest risk for dropping out.¹¹² More specifically, the educational components of both career and multiple pathways approaches include “on ramp” and bridge programs designed to re-connect out-of-school youth to pathways to higher education; and the occupational components of both approaches seek to improve at-risk youth’s access to career training and employment.

Abt Associates has also articulated a theory of change for career pathways, described in Table 8-2 on the next page. This theory hypothesizes that the core components of career pathway programs enhance the skills of participants; these improved skills increase participants’ educational credentialing, employment and earnings potential and also contribute to improved community outcomes, including more local economic growth. Reflecting the stackable credential hypothesis, this theory of change suggests that favorable outcomes of career pathway programs accrue to participants across the continuum of programming. So, each program level adds educational and employment value to participating students.

¹¹² See Chapter VI of OLO Report 2012-4, Alternative Education in Montgomery County <http://www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/council/olo/reports/pdf/FullReport2012-4AlternativeEducation.pdf>

Table 8-2: Theory of Change for Career Pathways

| Program Inputs→ | Intermediate Outcomes→ | Primary Outcomes |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|
| Initial targeting and placement decisions | Foundational academic skills | Increased performance and persistence in training <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certificate/diploma• 2-year, 4-year degree |
| Take first or next step in career pathway/lattice | Occupational skills | |
| Comprehensive assessment | Psycho-social factors | Improve performance and advancement in jobs <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase earnings• Increase benefits• Increase job security |
| Core curriculum | Career orientation and knowledge | |
| Supports | Resource constraints | Improve other outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Income and assets• Child and adult well-being• Local economic growth |
| Employment connections | Other personal and family changes | |
| Source: Adapted from Figure 1, Abt Associates, Career Pathways as a Framework for Program Design and Evaluation, May 2012 | | |

With its descriptions of the career pathways model and theory of change, Abt Associates identifies two limitations or caveats of the career pathways approach:

- Its potential impact is limited if the economy does not offer enough middle-skilled positions that support middle-class lifestyles and thus merit investment in the career pathways framework. Fein notes that the evidence seems generally encouraging although middle-skilled jobs are likely to shrink somewhat as a fraction of all net new job openings.
- Demand for middle-skills employment in highly technical fields raises the bar for programs aiming to train youth and adults with weak basic skills.

These caveats suggest that the success of career pathway programs depends on ensuring that the needs of the local labor market are met. To achieve this, the design and development of career pathway programs must pay attention to understanding both the occupational needs of current and projected employers and the current and potential supply of workers.

B. Key Program Characteristics

In their review of career pathway programs and related approaches, Fein finds that, “There is general agreement on the core components of career pathway programs but little uniformity in approaches to defining and organizing them.”¹¹³ Toward this end, the Abt Report describes ten sets of best practices for career pathway programs across three sets of themes. This section describes these in turn:

1. Basic program characteristics that influence the overall design of programs;
2. Service strategies for implementing career pathway programs; and
3. Meta-strategies for successful program implementation and sustainability.

Basic Program Characteristic Best Practices: Abt identified the following three basic program characteristics as best practices for designing and implementing career pathway programs.

¹¹³ Abt Associates, *Career Pathways as a Framework for Program Design and Evaluation*, May 2012, p. 5

1. **Involve key organizations and their roles.** Community-based organizations and community colleges often provide overall leadership and core services, in association with economic development, workforce, human service agencies, and other state and local agencies, business groups, and private funding agencies. The identity, roles, and collaborative arrangement of partners involved determine a program's capacity to effectively design and deliver services.
2. **Target populations.** The orientation of a program is determined by the level of basic skills and the kinds of non-academic challenges its participants face. Some programs target lower-skilled adults and focus on academic preparation, others target better-skilled students and focus on non-academic issues, and some work with a range of skill levels and training goals.
3. **Specify occupations, credentials, and basic career pathways levels to address.** The required knowledge and skills, appropriate instructional methods, and possibilities for modularizing training and credentials vary by occupation, as do opportunities for employment following training.

Service Strategy Best Practices: According to Abt Associates, each career pathways program draws from four sets of promising service strategies to fill in its design.

4. **Comprehensive and well designed approaches to assessment** that include *assessments for academic skills and interests* (e.g., basic academic skills, learning styles/disabilities, and career aptitude/interest) and *non academic areas* (e.g., psycho-social factors, college knowledge, job readiness skills, coping skills, and other personal and family challenges).
5. **Promising approaches to basic skills instruction and occupational training** that include well-articulated and *shorter curriculum models*, *contextualization* that often infuses basic skills instruction into vocational courses, *acceleration* strategies to allow course completion in a shorter time period, *flexible delivery* to accommodate schedules for working adults; and *active learning* that utilizes project-based learning.
6. **Academic and non-academic supports** to enhance success and foster persistence in successive training and employment steps. These specific supports can include *personal guidance and supports* to enhance social connections between students and their program, *instructional supports* to address both academic and non-academic needs, *social supports* to foster connections between students and staff (e.g. mentors), *supportive services* to address non-program barriers to program completion (e.g. transportation), and financial assistance.
7. **Strategies for connecting participants with employers** that ensure that career pathways target training in fields and jobs within occupations based on labor market studies of future supply and demand and involve employers and business groups as partners in designing programs and as instructors and evaluators-advisors. Specific strategies can include *employment experience during training* and *employment after training*.

Meta Strategies Best Practices: Abt Associates suggests that the implementation of successful career pathway programs embodies the three meta-strategies listed below.

8. **Program packaging to promote bounded choice.** A program that bundles academic services, occupational training and service supports shifts the responsibility for these decisions from the student to the program. This frees students to concentrate on their studies.

9. **A continuous improvement ethos.** The success of a career pathway program rests on a strong monitoring system that combines student assessment data, identifies eligibility for services, and tracks student progress. At another level, programs can also monitor the local economy and adjust training programs based on shifts in local industry demand.
10. **Movement towards scalability and sustainability.** Advocates of career pathways envision an approach that can bring systemic change to workforce development programs. To date, however, most programs have been small, intensive and relatively expensive. Some research has begun to address strategies to replicate these programs and to bring them to scale.

Taken together these strategies produce career pathway programs that are student centered and customized to further a student's career aspirations while also providing the supports they need to address and resolve issues and other factors that place them at risk of not re-connecting to education and employment. These strategies also align key program features recommended for implementing the multiple pathways approach to re-engaging youth at highest risk for not completing high school (e.g. use of on-ramp programs, customized services, programming across instructional levels, partnerships with local businesses, and collaboration across institutions).

C. Career Pathways in Practice

Abt Associates profiles four career pathways programs in its report to illustrate how varying workforce development programs can fit into the career pathways framework. Each of the programs focus on adults with two focused directly on young adults age 18-24; each program offers services across several or every program level articulated under the career pathways model (i.e. pre-GED, GED, short-term certificate, 1-2 year certificate/associate's degree, and bachelor's degree). These illustrative examples may be useful to Montgomery County leaders if they seek to weave together existing programs in the County to provide a seamless set of career pathway services to disconnected youth. A narrative description of the key features of the four programs described by Abt follows.

I-BEST- Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (Washington State)

Program Focus: Credentialing across select occupations.

Target group: Low-skilled adults (6th to 11th grade instructional level)

Provider: Washington State's 35 Community and Technical Colleges

Program Features:

- Customized and accelerated occupational training
- Dual-instructor approach pairing basic skills and content instructors together in class
- Opportunity for low-skilled students who otherwise would enter developmental education to access occupational classes
- Bundling of curriculum supports into short modules represents a fairly high level of "packaging" helping students focus on learning and big picture decisions
- Range of other supports, including pro-active advising, and supplementary skills instruction
- Assistance accessing financial aid, including state grants covering tuition, fees, books, and supplies up to \$1,000 per year

Year Up (Eight Cities)

Program Focus: Training and job experiences for entry-level jobs in high-growth sectors (e.g., information technology and financial services)

Target group: Low-income youth ages 18-24 who have a high school diploma or GED

Provider: Local Year Up Programs

Partners: Community colleges, major employers, and a network of service providers

Program Features:

- Intensive up-front screening process to identify youth possessing motivation and other personal assets but facing other challenges that the program can help address
- Full time participation
- Customized six-month training program at local program office followed by a six-month internship with a local employer
- Contextualized classes in writing and critical thinking and professional and technical skills
- Under agreements with local community colleges, opportunity to earn up to 18 college credits for training provided by Year Up and to also use campus facilities
- Cohorts are organized into “learning communities” of about 40 students who attend classes together and participate in weekly feedback sessions
- During the internship stage, Year Up staff members carefully match participants to local employers where they work in entry level career track positions such as help desk and desktop support (in information technology positions), and fund administration, portfolio accountant, and trade reconciliation (in financial operations positions)
- Weekly half-day classes at Year Up and close monitoring and supervision by program advisors keep students connected to the program during their internship
- Access to clinically trained social workers and wide range of external services
- Financial support and students stipends of up to \$260 per week throughout the year
- Active recruitment and relationship building with major employers who advise and help design training and provide internships and post-program employment
- Employers contribute about half of total program costs for Year Up

Carreras En Salud (Chicago, IL)

Program Focus: Preparation for health care industry pathways

Target group: Low-income adult ESOL students

Provider: Instituto del Progreso Latino

Partners: Humboldt Park Vocational Educational Center of Wilbur Wright College, Association House of Chicago, and the National Council of La Raza

Program Features:

- Customized instruction modules, or bridges, organized in clusters preparing students for certification in progressively higher-paying health care jobs
- A pre-Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) bridge (starting at the 6th grade language level) includes two 16-week models and an eight-week CNA course to prepare for the state CNA certification exam.

- A pre-Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) bridge (starting at the 8th grade level that aims to move participants to 12th grade) consisting of two more 16-week modules incorporating preparation in EKG (electrocardiogram) and Phlebotomy for patient care technician jobs
- LPN preparatory program consisting of two-three semesters focused on completing regular college pre-requisites in English, math, biology, and psychology
- LPN program at Humboldt Park Vocational Education Center for a full year, followed by a hospital clinical experience and LPN review course to prepare for the state LPN exam
- Pre-Registered Nurse (RN) program, to complete college chemistry and biology to apply to the RN program
- RN program at Wilber Wright College for a full year to prepare for state RN certification
- Strong organizational relationships with area employers who advise on program content and provide internship and employment opportunities
- Evening classes and free on-site child care to help participants balance work and child care responsibilities
- Intensive, comprehensive guidance and case management services
- Assistance in securing public benefits, financial aid, and private support to ensure that students' financial needs are met

VIDA -The Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement (Texas)

Program Focus: Completion of associate's degrees and to lesser extent, certificate programs

Target group: Low-income new or ongoing college students (10th grade or above proficiency)

Provider: Community colleges in the lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas

Partners: Business partners and local economic developmental authorities

Program Features:

- Training in projected high-growth fields (e.g. allied health, technology, business, education, social services, manufacturing, and specialized trades such as automotive technology)
- Accelerated package of remedial instruction via intensive 16-week College Preparatory Academy for students that test below skill levels required for college admission
- Strong, proactive counseling and guidance program where counselors hold mandatory monthly meetings with each participant at his/her college to review progress and address academic and non-academic issues
- On-campus group sessions each month with a cohort of participants that build social support among students, as well as provide training in areas such as study skills, time management, communication, and work culture and readiness
- Strong relationships with local businesses that support job placements
- Full-time student participation for two to three years
- Assistance in determining financial need and identifying sources of financial support

D. Career Pathways as an Integrative Strategy

Career pathways are gaining steady acceptance as an integrative framework for promising approaches to post secondary education and training for low-income and low-skill adults. The Abt Report finds that, in addition to designing discrete programs, the career pathways framework can be used to foster systemic change across workforce development systems serving low-income and low-skilled adults. More specifically Fein notes that:

“Systemic change initiatives entail wider-scale institutional re-alignments and coordination, seeking to weave together larger webs of programs and resources into seamless pathways whose diverse contributing sources are transparent from the student’s perspective. At this level, the image of a single career ladder or pathway gives way to a series of ladders, or vertical lattice, identifying opportunities and supporting lateral and upward movement across related jobs in an occupational sector – and sometimes across sectors and career clusters.”¹¹⁴

As such, the career pathways approach is one that administrators in Montgomery County may want to consider as an approach for coordinating existing youth workforce development programs and assessing and addressing gaps in local service delivery.

An initial comparison between the basic career pathways model by program level described in Table 8-1 and the programs reviewed in this report suggests the following:

- A majority of the local youth career development programs reviewed in this report that “touch and serve” disconnected youth align with basic bridge programs focused on GED readiness and completion.
- The number of youth participating in the few local sectoral bridge programs that combine basic skills and occupational training (e.g., MI-BEST and Refugee Programs) is unknown.
- Montgomery College hosts a number of college-level training programs not reviewed in this report that likely align with the last three stages of the career pathways model. These programs were excluded from this review because they are mostly inaccessible to disconnected youth.
- An analysis of whether sufficient local supports exist to help at-risk, high-risk, and proven-risk youth access career pathways and transition across pathway program levels is warranted.

In sum, while some key components of the career pathways model currently exist locally, both the lack of coordination and connection among these programs and the inaccessibility of some to serve high-risk youth and young adults are outstanding issues. Further, the programs that are accessible can provide an overwhelming set of choices, particularly for youth with limited financial resources or with family responsibilities who are trying to re-connect or get back on track. The research suggests that the organizing framework that career pathways provide can support youth as they navigate various academic and occupational training options. Building career pathways can also bring structure and shared outcomes to the training and services that disparate organizations and institutions in Montgomery County offer to teens and young adults.

¹¹⁴ Fein, 2012 – pages 3-4

Chapter 9: Summary of Key Findings

Changes in the economy have made it increasingly difficult for young persons without post-secondary credentialing to enter career pathways that lead to economic self-sufficiency. Whereas young persons used to enter the job market after high school into full-time employment, learn skills on the job, and benefit from advancement opportunities, current opportunities for young persons after high school to enter occupations that generate family-supporting incomes have all but vanished.

Local demand for young workers is increasingly occurring at two ends of the economy: among low-skilled and low-paying service sector positions and among high-skilled and high-paying positions that often require a bachelor's degree or more for entry. Workforce projections also anticipate growth among some middle-skill positions requiring occupational/post-secondary training in pathways that offer family-sustaining wages (e.g., allied health). However, the ability of low-income youth between the ages of 16 and 24 to enter these middle-skill pathways is limited, especially among out-of-school youth who are not working and/or have not completed high school.

The purpose of this OLO project is to describe youth career development programs outside of the school system that provide training for middle-skill occupations. This report describes youth career development programs administered by Montgomery County Government and Montgomery College that touch and serve *disconnected youth* - youth between the ages 16 and 24 who are neither working nor enrolled in school, or are only tangentially connected to schooling or work, but not on a pathway that leads to economic self-sufficiency in either the short-term or long-term.

Overall, this project finds that there are a variety of local programs aimed at reconnecting youth to education and employment. However, most programming that is accessible to disconnected youth focuses almost exclusively on GED preparation and job readiness skills without a commensurate focus on occupational/hard skills training or links to additional programs that could prepare them for middle-skill careers. OLO finds that greater coordination among existing County programs and more public investment to expand occupational training for disconnected youth are warranted.

This chapter summarizes OLO's key project findings in four parts.

- **Findings 1-4** describe local youth employment and disconnection trends and the implications of youth disconnection on individuals and society;
- **Findings 5 and 6** describe the projected demand and earnings for middle-skill occupations;
- **Findings 7-10** describe best practices for youth career development programs and local programs administered by Montgomery County Government and Montgomery College;
- **Findings 11 and 12** describe perspectives on performance for local programs and potential opportunities for program improvement utilizing a career pathways framework.

Youth Employment and Disconnection Findings

Finding #1: The Great Recession has flattened demand for youth employment nationally, across the state, and in Montgomery County. Locally, demand has most dramatically declined for black and Latino male teens.

Youth employment rates¹¹⁵ measure the share of youth who are working compared to all youth. Youth employment has been on the decline over the past several decades. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, during the nation's peak summer employment months for youth, only half of all young people age 16 to 24 held a job.¹¹⁶

Table 9-1 compares youth employment rates by gender and location, and among race and ethnicity subgroups locally. Nationally, about a third of teens (age 16-19) and two-thirds of young adults (age 20-24) were employed in 2008 compared to a quarter of teens and about 60% of young adults in 2011. Thus the decline in employment was especially high for teens.

Maryland and Montgomery County mirrored this trend with teen employment falling more than young adult employment during this time frame. The data also show the disparate impact of the Great Recession on employment rates for black male and Latino teens and young adults locally with:

- Black male teens in Montgomery County having the lowest 2011 employment rate with only 1 in 6 having a job compared to nearly 1 in 3 white female, Latino, and Latina teens, and 1 in 4 white male and black female teens.
- The greatest declines in local employment rates occurring among black male teens (19.8 points) and Latino male teens (13.1 points). Comparatively, white male teens experienced one of the smallest declines across subgroups in their employment rate (4.2 points).

Table 9-1: Teen and Young Adult Employment Rates by Gender and Subgroup, 2008 & 2011

| | Males | | | Females | | |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Teens | 2006-08 | 2009-11 | Change | 2006-08 | 2009-11 | Change |
| U.S. | 33.1% | 25.0% | -8.1% | 35.8% | 29.0% | -6.8% |
| Maryland | 35.5% | 26.6% | -8.9% | 37.0% | 31.6% | -5.4% |
| Montgomery | 31.6% | 22.7% | -8.9% | 33.3% | 27.3% | -6.0% |
| -White | 30.1% | 25.9% | -4.2% | 33.9% | 28.9% | -5.0% |
| -Black | 36.4% | 16.6% | -19.8% | 36.7% | 26.1% | -10.6% |
| -Latino | 42.0% | 28.9% | -13.1% | 37.8% | 29.9% | -7.9% |
| | | | | | | |
| Young Adults | 2006-08 | 2009-11 | Change | 2006-08 | 2009-11 | Change |
| U.S. | 66.2% | 59.4% | -6.8% | 65.1% | 61.2% | -3.9% |
| Maryland | 68.2% | 60.3% | -7.9% | 69.5% | 65.3% | -4.2% |
| Montgomery | 71.6% | 64.8% | -6.8% | 70.9% | 68.1% | -2.8% |
| -White | 71.6% | 68.7% | -2.9% | 71.1% | 69.9% | -1.2% |
| -Black | 68.7% | 58.5% | -10.2% | 70.1% | 61.1% | -9.0% |
| -Latino | 78.0% | 73.2% | -4.8% | 65.7% | 72.5% | 6.8% |
| Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 3-Year Estimates | | | | | | |

¹¹⁵ Also referred to as the employment to population ratio

¹¹⁶ Bureau of Labor Statistics, <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/youth.pdf>

Trend data on unemployment rates also demonstrates the diminished demand for youth labor across jurisdictions and particularly among black and Latino male teens and young adults. Unemployment rates, shown in Table 9-2, describe trends in the share of young persons actively looking for work who have yet to find a job between 2008 and 2011. The data show that nationally, the recession had a disparate impact among males where:

- Among teens (age 16-19), about a fifth of males and females were unemployed in 2008 compared to 30% of males and a quarter of females in 2011.
- Among young adults (age 20-24), 10-11% of young men and women were unemployed in 2008 compared to 18% of young men and 14% of young women in 2011.

Maryland unemployment data follows these trends, as does Montgomery County data when focusing on subgroups by race and ethnicity. More specifically, the data show that:

- From 2008 to 2011, black male teens and Latino young adult males experienced the largest increases in their unemployment rates of 20.2 points and 17.8 points respectively. In fact, the unemployment rate for Latino young adult men increased four-fold, from 5.8% to 23.6%.
- Among teens and young adults, black male teens (47%), Latino male teens (30%) and Latino female teens (27.9%) were the three subgroups with the highest unemployment rates in 2011.

Table 9-2: Teen and Young Adult Unemployment Rates by Gender and Subgroup, 2008 & 2011

| | Males | | | Females | | |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Teens | 2006-08 | 2009-11 | Change | 2006-08 | 2009-11 | Change |
| U.S. | 22.6% | 31.1% | 8.5% | 19.3% | 25.8% | 6.5% |
| Maryland | 21.1% | 29.8% | 8.7% | 18.6% | 24.4% | 5.8% |
| Montgomery | 18.8% | 30.0% | 11.2% | 14.8% | 21.6% | 6.8% |
| -White | 19.3% | 23.2% | 3.9% | 6.4% | 15.4% | 9.0% |
| -Black | 26.8% | 47.0% | 20.2% | 29.7% | 24.6% | -5.1% |
| -Latino | 17.2% | 30.0% | 12.8% | 9.6% | 27.9% | 18.3% |
| | | | | | | |
| Young Adults | 2006-08 | 2009-11 | Change | 2006-08 | 2009-11 | Change |
| U.S. | 11.5% | 17.7% | 6.2% | 10.4% | 14.5% | 4.1% |
| Maryland | 11.5% | 17.6% | 6.1% | 9.7% | 14.1% | 4.4% |
| Montgomery | 7.2% | 13.9% | 6.7% | 7.5% | 13.6% | 6.1% |
| -White | 4.8% | 9.4% | 4.7% | 6.9% | 9.4% | 2.5% |
| -Black | 16.2% | 23.7% | 7.5% | 9.8% | 13.4% | 3.6% |
| -Latino | 5.8% | 23.6% | 17.8% | 7.5% | 14.7% | 7.2% |
| Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 3-Year Estimates | | | | | | |

Finding #2: Changes in the youth labor market have increased rates of youth who are disconnected from the worlds of schooling and work.

Historically, the high school to work transition provided a well tread path to adulthood. Early work experiences played an essential part since internships and summer and part-time jobs gave youth exposure to the workplace while they explored diverse career interests. Youth with a high school diploma could find jobs that would eventually lead to wages that could support a family.

Today's stark reality is that youth employment opportunities have changed dramatically and the prospects for recovery are bleak. Fewer than half of all high school-aged youth, *including those with diplomas*, are employed and most only part-time. Teen jobs are increasingly concentrated in retail trade, eating and drinking establishments, and select service sectors.

A 2009 examination of economic trend data by the Congressional Research Service found that youth disconnection (youth neither in school or working) follows economic cycles, and thus increases during recessions and decreases as the economy recovers and expands. However, when economists consider the economic, structural and demographic factors behind the current youth labor market, they anticipate young adults' future employment opportunities will continue to be unfavorable due to the declining demand for unskilled labor and increasing job competition with older workers.

Finding #3: The individual and societal costs of youth who are disconnected from schooling and work (i.e. disconnected youth) are very high.

Being out of work and out-of-school in the late teens and early twenties substantially increases the chances of a young adult being jobless, poor, unmarried, and economically dependent in their mid-twenties.¹¹⁷ These effects accumulate over time and result in a \$400,000 gap in lifetime earnings between adults with and without a high school diploma - the individual cost of youth disconnection.

Society also incurs costs of youth disconnection in terms of taxpayer losses that reflect the lost taxes and higher public expenditures for disengaged adults resulting from youth disconnection and social losses that reflect the broader costs in terms of loss earnings, victims' costs, and ongoing supports. Belfield and Levin estimate that taxpayer losses for youth disconnection average \$13,890 per year for each youth and could generate a lifetime fiscal loss to taxpayers of \$235,680 with state and local governments bearing two-third of these costs.¹¹⁸ They further find that the **social** loss per youth is \$37,450 annually and the lifetime lump sum social loss is \$704,200 per youth.¹¹⁹

Belfield and Levin's work also shows that public investments such as youth career development programs that successfully transition youth to an economically self-sufficient adulthood avoid fiscal losses of \$13,890 per youth per year whereas current spending levels on disconnected youth programs average \$1,350 per youth per year.¹²⁰ In other words, current program spending is equivalent to roughly one-tenth of the fiscal losses that taxpayers are absorbing each year.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ CDF Policy Brief #2 ,September 2011

¹¹⁸ Belfield and Levin, 2012

¹¹⁹ Components of social costs include lost earnings, additional health expenditures, criminal justice system expenditures and victim costs, welfare and social service payment – non transfers, and the cost of education

¹²⁰ Components of federal investments include Departments of Labor (e.g. Job Corps), Education (non-K-12 funding), Health and Human Services (e.g. independent living), and Justice (e.g. OJJDP)

¹²¹ Multiplying 6.7 million opportunity youth * 13,890 per year totals \$93 billion

Finding #4: Data suggests that between 3,900 and 7,800 youth are disconnected in Montgomery County and that black teens are nearly three times as likely as their peers to be disconnected.

George Mason University's Center for Regional Analysis estimates that 3.5% (3,878) of County youth ages 16-24 are neither in school nor in the labor market, including 2.4% of teens (1,141) and 5.1% (2,737) of young adults. This measure of youth disconnection excludes youth who were actively looking for work but not employed (i.e. unemployed). Overall, the County's youth disconnection rates are far lower than state or national rates.

Nationally, roughly seven million youth ages 16-24 are disconnected. Research estimates identify two groups of youth that are roughly the same size: *chronically disconnected youth* who are neither in school nor working; and *weakly attached youth* who have some intermittent work history or post secondary schooling but not enough to achieve short or long term economic independence. If national trends were to hold locally, there may be 3,900 more County youth who are only weakly attached to school and/or work, bringing the County's total count of all disconnected youth to 7,800.

Available data further suggests that black teens are nearly three times as likely as their peers to be disconnected. Table 9-3 displays American Community Survey estimates by race and ethnicity for Montgomery County teens aged 16 to 19 who were neither in school nor in the labor market between 2007 and 2011.¹²² The data show that the 5.7% of black teens were disconnected compared to 2.1% of white teens and 1.9% of Latino teens. The data also show that black teens comprised 45.6% of all disconnected teen from 2007-2011, but only 20.9% of all teens in the County.

Table 9-3: Montgomery County Idle Teens by Race and Ethnicity, 2007-2011

| Measure | All | White | Black | Latino |
|--|--------|--------|-------|--------|
| Number of Idle Teens (not enrolled in-school or in the labor force) | 1,231 | 429 | 561 | 182 |
| Number of All Teens | 47,331 | 20,417 | 9,848 | 9,561 |
| | | | | |
| Rates of Idleness (excludes unemployed teens) | 2.6% | 2.1% | 5.7% | 1.9% |
| | | | | |
| Distribution of Idle Teens | 100% | 34.8% | 45.6% | 14.8% |
| Distribution of All Teens | 100% | 46.1% | 20.9% | 19.9% |
| Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates – 2007-2011 | | | | |

Additional data, however, is required to understand the magnitude of youth disconnection in Montgomery County. Local data on high school graduates who are not working and not enrolled in school and youth working less than full-time who are not enrolled in post-secondary training are essential to understanding the scope of disconnection in the County to plan services.

The Youth Council of the County's Workforce Investment Board is poised to compile more comprehensive data on youth disconnection in 2014.¹²³ It is anticipated that Phase I of the Youth Council's proposed scope will describe the demographic, social, and economic condition of local youth. This report is poised to provide the WIB and the County Council with a better sense of the dimensions of youth disconnection in Montgomery County.

¹²² These estimates are five year averages since ACS data are unreliable for populations of less than 65,000.

¹²³ See Informal Solicitation #1024290, issued originally in FY13 (October 17, 2012) that will be reissued in FY14.

Workforce Demand Findings

Finding #5: Forecasts show future County job openings will be largely in low-skill and high-skill positions; 12% will require a post-secondary credential.

A five-year forecast by George Mason University's Center for Regional Analysis predicts 55% of County openings will be in low-skill positions; 32% in high-skill jobs; and 12% in jobs requiring a post-secondary credential. A ten-year state forecast shows similar results.¹²⁴ Table 9-4 displays the top 15 County occupations with the most openings from this 2008 to 2018 forecast. The data shows:

- Eight occupations, accounting for 27,745 openings, will require a high school diploma with entry-level wages ranging between \$8.00 and \$11.00 per hour;
- Five occupations, accounting for 12,770 openings, will require a bachelor's degree (or higher) and offer entry-level wages between \$27.25 and \$31.25 per hour, and
- Two occupations, accounting for 5,035 openings, will require an associate's degree or vocational certificate. Entry-level wages for registered nurses are \$28.50 per hour; entry-level wages for nursing aides and orderlies are \$11.00 per hour.

Table 9-4: Montgomery County Occupations with the Most Total Openings, 2008-2018

| Occupations by Educational Requirements | Projected Openings* | 2011 Entry-level Wages |
|---|---------------------|------------------------|
| High School Diploma or Less | | |
| Cashiers | 5,520 | \$8.25 per hour |
| Waiters and Waitresses | 4,655 | \$8.00 per hour |
| Retail Salespersons | 4,085 | \$8.25 per hour |
| Combined Food Preparation & Serving Workers, incl. Fast Food | 3,335 | \$8.00 per hour |
| Janitors & Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners | 2,940 | \$8.75 per hour |
| Customer Service Representatives | 2,795 | \$11.00 per hour |
| Office Clerks, General | 2,620 | \$9.50 per hour |
| Receptionists and Information Clerks | 1,795 | \$8.75 per hour |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>27,745</i> | |
| Vocational or Technical Training | | |
| Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants | 1,665 | \$11.00 per hour |
| Associate's Degree | | |
| Registered Nurses | 3,370 | \$28.50 per hour |
| Bachelor's Degree or More | | |
| General and Operations Managers | 3,170 | \$31.25 per hour |
| Management Analysts | 2,895 | \$28.50 per hour |
| Accountants and Auditors | 2,370 | \$23.75 per hour |
| Network & Computer System Administrators | 2,230 | \$30.25 per hour |
| Computer Systems Analysts | 2,105 | \$27.25 per hour |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>12,770</i> | |
| The Top 15 In Demand Occupations | 45,550 | |
| *Data reflects cumulative openings by occupation for Top 15 occupations. Overall, DLLR projects 167,620 job openings (new and replacement openings) in Montgomery County from 2008 to 2018. | | |

¹²⁴ OLO's review of Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation data confirms this perception: of the 167,200 job openings projected (new and replacement openings), 51% will require a high school diploma or less, 10% will require a post secondary award/associates degree; and 39% will require a bachelor's degree or more.

Finding #6: Public workforce investments for disconnected youth should target positions in four groups with comparatively higher entry-level wages: health care, construction, installation/repair, and computer occupations.

Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation data, described below, show that three-quarters of all projected job openings in low- and middle-skill positions in Montgomery County (requiring an associate's degree or less) will occur across seven occupational groups from 2008 to 2018: (1) office and administrative support, (2) food preparation and service, (3) sales and related, (4) health care practitioners, (5) construction, (6) building maintenance, and (7) personal care.

Table 9-5: Distribution of Low- and Middle-Skill Job Openings by Occupational Group

| Occupational Groups | % of Openings for Low- and Middle-Skill Positions | Annual Entry Level Wages* |
|---|--|----------------------------------|
| Office and Administrative Support Occupations | 20% | \$23,000 |
| Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations | 17% | \$17,000 |
| Sales and Related Occupations | 15% | \$18,000 |
| Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations | 7% | \$46,000 |
| Construction and Extraction Occupations | 7% | \$27,000 |
| Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations | 6% | \$18,000 |
| Personal Care and Service Occupations | 6% | \$18,000 |
| Transportation and Material Moving Occupations | 4% | \$18,000 |
| Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations | 4% | \$31,000 |
| Healthcare Support Occupations | 3% | \$22,000 |
| Computer and Mathematical Occupations | 2% | \$39,000 |
| Business and Financial Operations Occupations | 2% | \$48,000 |
| Education, Training, and Library Occupations | 2% | \$33,000 |
| Protective Service Occupations | 2% | \$27,000 |
| Production Occupations | 2% | \$21,000 |
| Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations | 1% | \$28,000 |
| Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations | 1% | \$53,000 |
| Architecture and Engineering Occupations | 1% | \$55,000 |
| Source: OLO analysis of Maryland DLLR data * 2011 wages rounded; ** Community and social service, legal, management, and farming/fishing/forestry occupations each account for less than <1% of anticipated growth in low- and middle-skill jobs | | |

If employers “upskill” and hire high-skill workers with bachelor’s degrees or more,¹²⁵ then the next six occupational groups described above plus the following four would account for 80% of the projected growth in low- to middle-skilled jobs: transportation, installation/repair, healthcare support, and computer and mathematical occupations.

Except for the four occupational groups displayed in **bold** – health care practitioners, construction, installation/repair, and computers - entry level wages for the top ten occupations for low- and middle-skill workers are generally low (< \$20,000 a year). To help ensure youth can successfully transition into careers that offer family-sustaining wages, public workforce development investments for disconnected youth should be tied to the higher wage sectors and occupations in bold.

¹²⁵ This “upskilling” is likely to occur in Montgomery County because a majority of the workforce holds a bachelor’s degree or more compared to only a third of jobs requiring a bachelor’s degree or more.

Best Practice and Local Program Findings

Finding #7: Best practices recommend that youth career development programs include education and occupational components and support services depending on the needs of youth participants.

Best practices recommend that youth career development programs include both educational and occupational components to prepare youth to transition into career pathways that can lead to self sufficiency.¹²⁶ *Educational/life skills components* enable youth to improve their soft skills and job readiness, earn high school diplomas and transition into post secondary opportunities that can offer industry recognized credentials/degrees. *Occupational/hard skills components* enable youth to gain work experience and develop occupational skills that are valued in the labor market.¹²⁷

Best practices also recommend that youth career development programs vary their programming and services based on the ages and experiences of the youth they serve. Youth workforce development services and resources are typically aligned to address three groups of participants:¹²⁸

- At-Risk Youth who reside in high impact neighborhoods where they have direct or indirect exposure to risk-factors for disconnection. These risk factors can include deficiency in basic literacy and numeracy, disengagement from school, low-incomes, gang involvement, pregnancy and parenting. These youth, who are typically of high school age, often require targeted interventions that are limited in scale and cost (e.g. summer employment program).
- High-Risk Youth that in addition to experiencing risk factors for disconnection have minimal work experience, and/or have dropped out. These youth are often court-involved, in foster care or are homeless, and have experienced direct exposure to violence. These *weakly disconnected* youth are aged 16-20 and often require longer term interventions (e.g. summer employment with continuing employment; GED preparation) and social supports.
- Proven-Risk Youth who have dropped out of school, are not working, and often have engaged in violence and been adjudicated. These youth are older (age 18 to 24), *chronically disconnected*, and often require longer term investments of social services, educational opportunities, and transitional employment to achieve long-term employment.

Finding #8: Montgomery County Government's youth workforce development programs served about 1,100 youth in FY13 at a combined cost of \$1.9 million. County funding accounted for nearly half of total costs and most programming was delivered by contracted providers.

Table 9-6 on the next page describes the enrollment and budgets for each of the youth workforce development programs administered by Montgomery County Government. Excluding Corrections and young adults receiving services under Temporary Assistance for Need Families (TANF), the County's programs served approximately 1,100 youth in FY13 at a total cost of \$1.9 million.

¹²⁶ See Chapter V of OLO Alternative Education in Montgomery County report (OLO Report 2012-4) <http://www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/council/olo/reports/pdf/FullReport2012-4AlternativeEducation.pdf>

¹²⁷ These definitions adapted from Montgomery College brochure on Continuing Education Placement Options <http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/wdce/brochures/ceplacementoptions.pdf>

¹²⁸ Adapted from the typology developed by the Youth Violence Prevention funder Learning Collaborative's Youth Workforce Development and Education Working Group

At \$918,000 in FY13, County funding accounted for nearly half (48%) of total costs for youth workforce development programs with more than half of this amount (\$500,000) devoted to the Conservation Corps. Other programs received limited local funding (i.e. Street Outreach Network and Youth Opportunity Centers) or relied on federal formula funding to connect youth to career pathways (e.g. Transition Services for Foster Care).

Table 9-6: Montgomery County Government Youth Workforce Development Programs, FY13

| Programs by Agency,* FY13 | Enrollment | | Program Budget | County Share | Contracted Providers |
|--|--------------|-------|--------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| | Youth | Total | | | |
| Programs for At-Risk Youth | | | | | |
| Youth, In-school (DED) | 74 | 74 | \$260,000 | 8% | Latin American Youth Center |
| Youth with disabilities (DED) | 58 | 58 | \$250,000 | 0% | TransCen |
| Teen Works (Recreation) | 60 | 60 | \$190,000 | 100% | None |
| Programs for High-Risk Youth (Weakly Disconnected) | | | | | |
| Youth, Out-of-school (DED) | 111 | 111 | \$390,000 | 8% | Latin American Youth Center |
| Youth Opportunity Centers – <i>Education and Employment Programming</i> (DHHS) | 633 | 633 | \$100,300 | 100% | Identity |
| TANF Workforce Services (DHHS) | n/a | 2,997 | \$2,200,000 | 0% | Arbor E&T |
| Programs for Proven-Risk Youth (Chronically Disconnected) | | | | | |
| Conservation Corps (DHHS) <i>via the Collaboration Council**</i> | 40 | 40 | \$525,000 | 95% | Latin American Youth Center |
| Transition Services for Foster Care (DHHS) | 28 | 28 | \$120,000 | 0% | Arbor E&T |
| Street Outreach Network - <i>Youth Employment Program</i> (DHHS) | 97 | 97 | \$77,500 | 100% | None |
| Youth Enrollment & Budget Subtotal | 1,101 | | \$1,912,800 | 48% | |
| *Excludes DOCCR because budget information for re-entry program and DED contract not available | | | | | |
| ** Enrollment and budget when program(s) operate in FY14 | | | | | |

Table 9-6 also describes the County's administration of youth workforce development programs. It shows that most programs are delivered by contracted providers. More specifically:

- Five of the County's programs are managed by the Department of Health and Human Services who contracts with three providers to deliver direct services across four programs – Identity (Youth Opportunity Centers), the Latin American Youth Center (Conservation Corps) and Arbor E&T (TANF Workforce Services and Transition Services for Foster Care).
- Three of the County's programs are managed by the Department of Economic Development who contracts with two providers to deliver direct services – Latin American Youth Center (In- and Out-of-School Youth), and TransCen (Youth with Disabilities).

Finding #9: The County Government offers youth workforce development programs across youth risk levels, but not every program includes an occupational component.

Best practices recommend that youth career development programs include both educational and occupational components to prepare youth to transition into career pathways that can lead to self sufficiency. Nearly all of the County's Government's programs include an education component focused on ensuring that youth complete their high school equivalent so that they can enroll in higher education. But only 166 (15%) of all available slots include a specific employment or occupational development focus beyond improving the soft skills and/or Microsoft Office proficiency of program participants. More specifically:

- Among the three programs for at-risk teens, two focus on employment (Youth with Disabilities and Teen Works), while one (In-School Youth program) focuses on college awareness and career readiness.
- Among the three programs for high-risk, weakly disconnected youth, two focus on GED completion (Services for Out-of-School Youth and Youth Opportunity Center) and all three focus on enhancing soft skills to enable youth to obtain low-skill, low-wage jobs rather than enhancing opportunities for skills that place youth on career pathways.
- Among the three programs for proven-risk, chronically disconnected youth, all three focus on GED completion for youth who have not earned a high school diploma (Conservation Corps, Transition Services, and Street Outreach Network), while two (Conservation Corps and Transition Services) meet the recommended best practice of providing opportunities for youth to earn and learn occupational skills that may pave the way for them to develop marketable skills that place them on a career pathway.

A review of budget and enrollment data of County Government programs by youth risk category suggests that the greater occupational opportunities available to at-risk and proven-risk youth is likely a function of how resources are allocated across risk groups. Overall, in FY13:

- Less than a fifth of slots (17.5%) served **at-risk teens** under Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funded DED programs for in-school and disabled youth and County funded Teen Works. These programs accounted for 37% of total program costs, averaging \$3,627 per participant.
- Over two-thirds of slots (67.6%) served **high-risk youth** via WIA funded DED programs for out-of-school youth and County funded DHHS gang prevention and intervention programs. These programs accounted for 25.6% of total costs with average costs ranging from \$158 per youth for education and employment services via the Youth Opportunity Centers to \$3,545 per person for the DED program for out-of-school youth.
- Less than a fifth of slots (15%) served **proven-risk youth** via County funded DHHS programs for gang involved or disconnected youth, and via a State funded DHHS program to support the transition of youth in foster care. These programs accounted for 37.8% of total costs with an average cost ranging for \$800 per youth for the SON-YEP to more than \$13,000 per youth participating in the Conservation Corps.

A review of each program's outcomes was beyond the scope of this project. Administrators of federally funded programs managed by the Departments of Economic Development and Health and Human Services, however, indicated that each of their respective programs (e.g. In-school and out-of-school youth; TANF) met or exceeded mandated requirements for program performance.

Finding #10: Montgomery College’s workforce development programs served 1,750 youth at a combined cost of \$1.9 million in FY12/13 with County funding comprising half of total costs. In FY14, 2,900 youth are budgeted to be served for \$2.8 million.

Montgomery College offers more than 150 credit and noncredit programs that can lead to industry certifications, certificates, and college degrees. These post-secondary opportunities are often ideal for preparing youth and adults for admittance to career pathways with advancement and earnings potential. Several barriers to entry face youth at-risk for disconnection, including the cost of the College’s programs and academic requirements for admittance into technical career pathways. These barriers preclude most youth at-risk for disconnection from accessing these programs at the College.

Table 9-7 describes the youth workforce development programs operated by the College that were accessible to youth at-risk for disconnection. In FY12/FY13, these programs served about 1,750 youth at a cost of \$1.9 million. County funding accounted for 49% of total costs in FY13. In FY14, 2,900 youth will be served for \$2.8 million with County dollars comprising 58% of the budget.

To date, the College’s programs have mainly served youth at high risk for disconnection and to a lesser extent, at-risk youth. With both the scaling up of the Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success program to increase the college-readiness of current MCPS students and the phasing out of dropout recovery Gateway to College program, the focus of the College’s youth career development programs will shift to serve more at-risk youth and fewer high-risk youth.

Table 9-7: Montgomery College Youth Workforce Development Programs and Costs, FY13

| Programs by Agency, FY13 | Enrollment | | Program Budget | County Share |
|---|--------------|-------|--------------------|--------------|
| | Youth | Total | | |
| Programs for At-Risk Youth and Adults | | | | |
| Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success* | 1,200 | 1,200 | \$1,500,000 | 63% |
| Literacy and Training for Refugees, FY12 | n/a | 852 | \$810,000 | 0% |
| English for Speakers of Other Languages, FY12 | 678 | 4,280 | \$1,800,000 | 15% |
| Educational Opportunity Center | 472 | 1,154 | \$329,000 | 13% |
| Programs for High-Risk Youth and Adults (Weakly Disconnected) | | | | |
| Gateway to College, FY12 | 130 | 130 | \$1,300,000 | 44% |
| MI-BEST, Certified/Geriatric Nursing and Apartment Maintenance* | n/a | 80 | \$309,000 | 0% |
| Pathways to Success Program | n/a | 180 | \$120,000 | 0% |
| Life Skills and GED Preparation, FY12 | 474 | 892 | \$370,000 | 15% |
| Youth Enrolment and Budget Subtotal for FY12/13 | 1,754 | | \$1,916,000 | |
| Youth Enrollment and Budget Subtotal for FY14 | 2,889 | | \$2,766,000 | |
| * Enrollment and budget when program(s) operate in FY14. For Gateway, assumes half the FY13 budget and enrollment for FY14 because program sunsets in FY15. | | | | |

A review of performance outcomes of the College’s programs that serve at-risk and high-risk youth was beyond the scope of this project. Yet, each of these programs includes an educational component aimed at improving basic skills, college and/or career readiness, and life skills. Two of the programs – the Maryland Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (MI-BEST) and Literacy and Training for Refugees – deliver combined basic and occupational skills instruction to prepare low-skilled adults for entry-level positions in career pathways with earnings and advancement potential. Youth enrollment for these programs is not available.

Perspectives on Program Improvement Findings

Finding #11: Local youth career development efforts fall short of the commitment needed to successfully transition all disconnected youth to self-sufficiency.

OLO conducted more than two dozen interviews with agency and organization administrators and staff to better understand the County's vision for youth career development and its portfolio of programs. The perspectives and observations that OLO elicited about the County's efforts portray an ad hoc set of programs disconnected from a broader strategic commitment to successful transitions to economic self-sufficiency for at-risk County youth.

Youth workforce development in Montgomery County consists of an assortment of programs delivered primarily by engaged nonprofits and for-profit vendors. The County may adequately serve youth connected to social service or criminal justice systems; however, because programs are not well resourced, few, if any, services exist for others. Local funds that previously supplemented limited federal and state aid have yet to be restored.

County government leaders have yet to embrace youth workforce development as a strategic goal, choosing instead to focus on two separate and distinct efforts. One initiative promotes positive youth development as a strategy to prevent youth violence; the second provides economic development incentives as a strategy to increase the County's attractiveness to new and existing business.

Connecting disconnected youth to education and employment are difficult tasks that require a comprehensive set of services and long term funding commitments. If the Council chooses to pursue an initiative to develop a jobs infrastructure designed to re-connect at-risk youth to employment and education, the Youth Council of the County's Workforce Investment Board and Montgomery College are two entities that are well positioned to champion such an effort.

Finding #12: The career pathways framework offers a promising approach to delivering youth career development programs that could bring more coherence to the County's current youth workforce development efforts.

In project interviews, Montgomery College administrators in Workforce Development and Continuing Education described the benefits of the career pathways approach for training youth and adults for occupations with advancement and earnings potential.

Career pathways are modular, integrated education and training programs organized and offered as a series of sequential steps. A career pathway is a series of connected education and training programs, and support services that enable participants to secure a job or advance in an industry or occupation.¹²⁹ They focus on easing and facilitating the transition from high school to community college, from pre-college to credit courses, and from postsecondary programs to employment.

Researchers identify five program levels characteristic of model career pathway programs: pre-GED, GED level, short term certificate, longer term certificate or associate degree, and bachelor's degree programs. As a student progresses through each program level, their occupational, academic, and life skills improve along with their prospects for good-paying, stable employment.

¹²⁹ See <http://www.worksourceoregon.org/index.php/career-pathways/128-what-are-career-pathways>

Career pathway programs envision that participants who complete a career pathway with the requisite occupational skills will access in-demand jobs that provide stable employment and good wages. An engaged business community is key to realizing this vision. Effective programs engage business leaders to specify the knowledge and skills required for specific career pathways, recruit participants, and provide internships and subsequent employment.

Some communities are using career pathways to integrate the efforts of their institutions, nonprofits and business leaders so that workforce program outcomes are better aligned with local businesses' demands. Common features of these programs include: a focus on low-skill adults or others at-risk, comprehensive assessment approaches, promising approaches to basic skills instruction and occupational training, and a robust set of academic and non-academic supports. Research about the efficacy of the career pathways approach is limited.¹³⁰

The career pathways model squarely aligns with the multiple pathways to graduation approach designed to re-connect high school dropouts. Both approaches have educational components that provide on-ramps or bridge programs and occupational components that improve at-risk youth's access to career training and employment. The career pathways model would provide stackable credentialing options for low-income youth and adults that could potentially better meet the needs of disconnected teens and young adults.

OLO's review of the County's current configuration of services for disconnected youth finds most programs are aligned with the first two levels of the career pathways model, (i.e., the pre-GED and GED levels). Although Montgomery College hosts programs aligned with levels three and four (i.e. short-term credential and long-term credential and associate's degrees), these programs are generally not accessible to disconnected youth.

If the County wants to pursue implementation of a system of career pathways programs for disconnected youth that mirrors features common to other successful programs, it must:

- Identify promising career pathways based on industry forecasts,
- Address youth's access to programs beyond the pre-GED and GED level;
- Assess the sufficiency of the existing system of supports; and
- Ensure business engagement.

¹³⁰ Fein finds that since most career pathway programs are either in design or in their early stages of implementation, a body of research to support a set of best practices or a list of evidenced based programs is still being developed.

Chapter 10: Recommendation

Montgomery County has an estimated 3,900 youth ages 16-24 who are neither working nor in school and another 3,900 who may be only weakly attached to the labor market. Various entities, (e.g., Montgomery College, the County Government, nonprofits and businesses), administer services to reconnect youth to employment and education; however, the County lacks a career pathways framework to bring a collective focus and coherence to these efforts.

OLO finds that career pathways approach offers a promising approach to reconnecting disconnected youth to education and employment opportunities. OLO also finds that the utilization of the career pathways approach could bring greater coherence to the County's youth workforce development efforts that currently include few links from the educational services provided to occupational training for middle-skill jobs.

OLO also that finds public investments in youth career development efforts should focus on middle-skill occupations that are anticipate to grow and offer family-sustaining wages. An initial review of workforce projections and wage data suggests youth career development efforts should target four occupational groups offering relatively high entry-level wages for positions that require an associate's degree or less:

- Health care practitioner and technical occupations
- Construction and extraction occupations
- Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations
- Computer and mathematical occupations

Reconnecting disconnected youth to education and employment is a difficult task that requires a collective vision, comprehensive services, and sustained funding resources. Reconnecting disconnected youth is especially difficult when the goal is to prepare at-risk youth for technical middle-skill occupations when they have not yet mastered basic academic skills or earned a high school diploma/equivalent. Yet, instituting a County career pathways framework to re-connect high-risk youth could also yield significant dividends including a skilled workforce, a locally based jobs infrastructure and net fiscal benefits, while also providing at-risk County youth and young adults access to stable employment with good wages.

Given the gap between the needs of and number of disconnected youth and the availability of local services, OLO recommends that the County Council commit to building an infrastructure of comprehensive services and sustained funding to reconnect at-risk, out-of-school youth to education and employment. Towards this end, OLO recommends that the Council convene a **Task Force to Create a Career Pathways System for Disconnected Youth** and charge it with preparing a report and strategic plan for implementation and evaluation. More specifically, OLO suggests the Council seek the Task Force's guidance and recommendations on the following five issues:

1. The extent and characteristics of the County's disconnected youth population,
2. The components of an effective County career pathways framework,
3. Research on alternative financing mechanisms,
4. An estimate of the resources required to fill existing service gaps and barriers; and
5. A viable long term financing and implementation plan.

While this current report touches on a few of these topics, additional data and analysis are required to inform the development of a systemic effort aimed at enhancing the County's overall approach.

To focus its work, the Task Force should base its recommendation on a start-up service capacity of 2,000 slots. This assumes providing services initially for a slight majority of the estimated number of youth who disconnect from schooling and work every year.

The Task Force should also consider what role, if any, Montgomery County Public Schools' Thomas Edison High School for Technology should play in the County's efforts to enhance occupational training opportunities for out-of-school youth. The Council requested this current project as follow-up to a prior OLO report that found that students at greatest risk for dropping out had limited access to MCPS' career and technology education programs. OLO Report 2012-4, *Alternative Education in Montgomery County*, found that there were few school-based programs aimed at re-engaging high-risk youth and that the Thomas Edison was underutilized and inaccessible for most youth who struggled academically. That report also recommended discussions between the County Council and MCPS representatives to identify opportunities to make Edison's programs available to more at-risk youth in the County, including out-of-school youth.

If the Council pursues a career pathways framework for disconnected youth, its success will depend, in part, on the engagement and connections between County businesses, government, and nonprofit sectors that will emerge as a result of the Task Force. Recognizing that forging and strengthening these connections is critical, it would make sense for the Task Force membership to be broad based, encompassing representatives from the regional and local business and nonprofit sectors, including Montgomery Moving Forward, the Youth Council of the Montgomery County Workforce Investment Board, the current vendors of local youth workforce development contracts, Montgomery College, the County Government, MCPS, and the youth who will be served.

OLO recommends that the Council plan to establish the Task Force by March 1, 2014 and request a Task Force report by September 1, 2014.

Chapter 11: Agency Comments

The written comments received from the President of Montgomery College and the Chief Administrative Office of Montgomery County Government are attached.

This final OLO report incorporates technical corrections and comments provided by Montgomery County Government and Montgomery College staff. As always, OLO greatly appreciates the time taken by staff to review our draft report and provide feedback.



Office of the President

December 5, 2013

Chris Cihlar, PhD
Director, Office of Legislative Oversight
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Dr. Cihlar:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Office of Legislative Oversight's report entitled Youth and Work in Montgomery County. The report is well done and lays the foundation for a meaningful dialogue to ensure everyone in our community can access the education and training necessary to succeed in the county's economy and be a full participant in our community.

At Montgomery College, we know that, to succeed in our community, individuals need a postsecondary education. Earning a high school diploma—an important milestone—is no longer enough to earn a living wage. From mechanic to engineer, a postsecondary education is required in today's economy. To build a county workforce with 21st-Century skills, residents must be prepared for postsecondary learning. Unfortunately, as this report points out, many residents are not ready for such training and education—they lack the basic skills required to access and succeed in postsecondary endeavors. Therefore, the community must recommit to supporting the needs of the whole child from preschool all the way through postsecondary education. Fulfilling this commitment includes providing for after-school programs, social services, and libraries as well as local postsecondary opportunities.

Most particularly, a concerted effort is necessary to explore the career pathways model—a model with the potential to serve the many different kinds of learners in our county and meet local employer needs.

To that end, the report's recommendation to create a task force on career pathways is especially important. Nationwide experts in career pathway development say that success requires a tightly knit collaborative effort committed to a singular vision and key outcomes. The participation of employers in this work is very important. And, our nonprofit partners and community-based programs that are already committed to serving this community of youth need to be at the table to develop better pathways to education and work for all our residents. We must build on and leverage already successful work and perhaps scale up the most promising existing efforts.

An example of the power of collaboration is our new effort—Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success (ACES). This program, which was created through a partnership of Montgomery College, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), and the Universities at Shady Grove (USG), will help to empower and engage students in preparing for their future. Simply put, we want to fend off “disconnection.” To begin, coaches from the College are embedded in 10 high schools targeting 1,200 students—the very group of students who may be at risk of “disconnecting.” In the past, some have said these students are “at risk” of failing; we like to say these students are “at promise” of succeeding, and believe this mindset is vital to their achievement. Helping students understand their potential and the opportunities ahead is the cornerstone of the MC-MCPS-USG partnership.

Clearly, coaching—that is, guiding and leading—students is an important asset in any effort to help all students succeed, and particularly for the students described in this report. Many of our nonprofit partners and community-based programs provide such services. The College’s federally funded Educational Opportunities Center helps students—referred to the College from a vast array of partners—to imagine their future and aids them in setting their course to that future. Also, at the College, we are working to keep our students “connected” once they make it to our campuses. Many students come to the College knowing they need to continue their education but are uninformed as to how to “go to college.” Our new Welcome Centers help students to navigate the college-going process and chart a pathway to a degree or certificate.

In addition to Welcome Centers on campuses, we are working to create community engagement centers to take the College directly to the community. If we are to live up to our commitment to meet the dynamic challenges facing our community, we can no longer simply wait for the student to seek us out, to come to our doors. We must instead engage residents and illuminate the pathways to postsecondary education—in their neighborhoods. The development of these centers is in the planning stages. Co-located with government or community partners, the centers could leverage existing resources and maximize the collective impact in the community. Ideally, the centers will help residents move forward, whether to obtain a GED, access career and technical training, or enter a traditional credit program. We are hopeful such centers, once fully operational, will enable the College to help to change the trajectory of the life of a family and provide services in such way as to impact both parent and child.

Ultimately, our community must find a way to value and enhance access to *all* the pathways leading to jobs with a living wage. A first step is to acknowledge that a high school diploma—itsself a vital first step to a bright future—is no longer enough. Together with MCPS, USG, and an array of community and social service partners and employers, we must ensure our youth stay connected to their future, obtain basic skills, achieve high school success, and advance to and then complete postsecondary education.

These pathways are not necessarily linear and a one-size-fits-all model will not work. The immediate pursuit and completion of a college degree after high school is but one pathway to success for our residents. Alternatively, a model that helps students obtain a good job and maintain educational momentum as their careers progress—by availing themselves of continuous

Chris Cihlar, PhD
Director, Office of Legislative Oversight
December 5, 2013
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education and training over a lifetime of working—is another viable route, a very important and valuable pathway that requires more of our attention. Hopefully, together we can enhance this route and provide such a pathway that is smooth, clearly articulated, well-understood and accessible—one that offers timely completion and is affordable. To construct this pathway, we must embrace “stackable” credentials with easy on- and off-ramps to work, to training and education, back to work, and so forth. Not only do the futures of the students described in this report depend on this effort, but indeed the future of our Montgomery County community depends on it as well.

Working together, we can empower our residents to change their lives and ensure Montgomery County remains a community rich with endless possibilities for all. We at Montgomery College look forward to the work ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "DeRionne P. Pollard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "DeRionne" being more prominent and the last name "Pollard" following in a similar style.

DeRionne P. Pollard, PhD
President



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Timothy L. Firestine
Chief Administrative Officer

MEMORANDUM

December 6, 2013

TO: Chris Cihlar, Director, Office of Legislative Oversight

FROM: Timothy Firestine, Chief Administrative Officer *Timothy L. Firestine*

SUBJECT: Draft OLO Report 2014-3, Youth and Work in Montgomery County

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft OLO Report 2014-3: Youth and Work in Montgomery County. The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) has provided a comprehensive review of the status of youth workforce development in Montgomery County. We generally agree with most of the report's findings, but have a specific comment regarding the finding that "Local youth career development efforts fall short of the commitment needed to successfully transition all youth at-risk for disconnection to self-sufficiency." We believe the County government has done a great deal to support Montgomery County youth through existing youth workforce development and positive youth development. While coordination and collaboration are necessary to serve disconnected youth, we believe that the Montgomery County Workforce Investment Board (WIB) and its Youth Council are the correct entities to lead the initiatives described within the report. Given the requirements of the federal Workforce Investment Act and the strategic plan of the WIB, its Youth Council is well positioned to champion and enhance the County's youth workforce development efforts.

OLO Recommendation

OLO recommends that the Council convene a Task Force to Create a Career Pathways System for Disconnected Youth and charge it with preparing a report and strategic plan for implementation and evaluation.

CAO Response to OLO Recommendation

If the Council decides to implement this recommendation, we strongly recommend the WIB and its Youth Council be tasked to lead the Task Force.

Chris Cihlar, Director, Office of Legislative Oversight
December 6, 2013
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Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this draft, and for your thorough study of the issue. If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact Assistant Chief Administrative Officer Fariba Kassiri.

TLF:bk

cc: Joseph Adler, Director, Office of Human Resources
Uma Ahluwalia, Director, Department of Health and Human Services
Gabriel Albornoz, Director, Department of Recreation
Parker Hamilton, Director, Montgomery County Public Libraries
Fariba Kassiri, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer
Steve Lohr, Chief, Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service
Steve Silverman, Director, Department of Economic Development
Arthur Wallenstein, Director, Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
Barbara Kaufmann, Department of Economic Development
Gail Nachman, Office of Human Resources

Appendix A

Other Local Educational and Employment Programs

The focus of this OLO report (OLO Report 2013-4, *Youth and Work in Montgomery County*) was a review of local youth workforce development programs administered by Montgomery County Government and Montgomery College. OLO's review did not encompass other local youth workforce development programs operated by organizations that receive other sources of funding, including County grants and non-competitive contracts listed in the FY14 approved operating budget.

This appendix lists programs that offer education and/or employment services to youth and adults compiled from two sources: the InfoMontgomery database managed by the Collaboration Council, and the County grants database managed by the County Council. OLO prepared this list to identify some of the local organizations that offer educational and/or employment services and the types of services they provide.

The list is organized based on whether identified programs serve youth (Table A-1) or adults (Table A-2). Each program meets the needs of individuals in one or more of the following ten categories:

- Youth/adolescents
- Youth with disabilities
- Young English language learners/immigrants
- Juvenile offenders
- Adults
- Older adults
- Veterans
- Adults with disabilities
- Adult English language learners/immigrants
- Adult offenders

Collectively, this list identifies 44 organizations and providers that deliver educational and/or employment services to youth and adults. There are nearly twice as many programs for adults (35) as for youth (18). Among the ten categories listed above,

- 17 programs serve adults with disabilities (i.e. vocational rehabilitation);
- 9 programs serve youth/adolescents;
- 6 programs serve adults overall;
- 6 programs serve adult immigrants/English language learners
- 5 programs serve youth with disabilities;
- 4 programs serve veterans;
- 2 programs serve youth immigrants/English language learners
- 2 programs serve juvenile offenders;
- 2 programs serve older adults; and
- 2 programs serve adult offenders

Further research is required to understand the enrollment and budgets of these programs and their educational and employment impacts, particularly for disconnected youth between the ages of 16 and 24. A review of similar programs receiving County funding is also warranted.

Table A-1: Local Youth Education and Employment Programs

| Program Name | Organization | Services | Locations |
|--|--|--|--|
| <i>All youth/adolescents (9 programs, 9 providers)</i> | | | |
| Flight2Employment | Take Flight, Inc. | 12-week afternoon program for career development | East County Community Recreation Center & Wheaton High School |
| Future Link | Future Link, Inc. | Career development and life skills | Montgomery College – Takoma Park and Rockville campuses |
| INSPIRE | Trawick Foundation and Latin American Youth Center – Maryland Multicultural Youth Center | One year job readiness and work skill development with academic support, leadership and life skill development for pregnant or parenting youth or those aging out of foster care | Provided in partnership with Holy Cross Hospital |
| JSSA Employment and Career Services (1) | Jewish Social Service Agency | Comprehensive job assistance centers – Young adults | Organizational office, Rockville JSSA Employment and Career Services, Silver Spring |
| Partnership Youth Initiative | Hispanic Business Foundation of MD | Work experience and internships | Community-based, variable |
| Career Development Services/ENVISION | IMAC – International Minority Affairs Cooperative | Work ready skills training for high school students | Organizational office, Silver Spring |
| College Tracks for College Success | College Tracks, Inc. | College application and financial aid assistance for first-generation college bound students | Bethesda-Chevy Chase and Wheaton High Schools |
| Pre-College and College counseling services | Collegiate Directions, Inc. | Comprehensive counseling and tutoring services for first-generation college bound students | Einstein, Kennedy, Paint Branch, Springbrook, Walter Johnson, and Wheaton High Schools |
| Youth Career Development Services | Crittenden Services of Greater Washington | Program to expand career aspirations for low-income high school aged young women | Organizational office, Silver Spring Two local high schools |
| <i>Youth with disabilities (5 programs, 5 providers)</i> | | | |
| Career Transition Program | St. Luke's House | Mental health and career vocational resources | Community-based, variable |
| CLARC Employment Services | Computer Learning and Resource Center, Inc. (CLARC) | Comprehensive job assistance (e.g. coaching, resume preparation, placement assistance) | Organizational office (Silver Spring) |
| Job Clubs | TransCen, Inc. | Job finding assistance via after-school Job Clubs | Organizational office (Rockville) |
| Project SEARCH | Ivymount School | One year internship for high school students with intellectual disabilities in a health, business, or government placement | Community-based, variable |
| Supported Work Environments | Lead4Life, Inc. | Pre-job guidance focused on work readiness | Community-based, variable |

Table A-1: Local Youth Education and Employment Programs, Continued

| Program Name | Organization | Services | Locations |
|--|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| <i>Youth Immigrants/English language learners (2 programs, 2 providers)</i> | | | |
| Opportunities Plus | Liberty's Promise | After-school club, job skills training and summer internships | Community-based, variable |
| Catching Up Program | African Immigrant and Refugee Foundation, Inc. | Mentoring and tutoring for school-aged African immigrant children | Organizational office, Silver Spring |
| <i>Juvenile Offenders (2 programs, 2 providers)</i> | | | |
| Job Readiness | Lead4Life | 7-week pre-job program focused on work readiness | Community-based, variable |
| JumpSTART | Latin American Youth Center - Maryland Multicultural Youth Center | Job readiness training and internships for youth in Department of Juvenile Services system | Community-based, variable |

Table A-2: Local Adult Education and Employment Programs

| Program Name | Organization | Services | Locations |
|--|---|---|--|
| <i>All adults (6 programs, 6 providers)</i> | | | |
| Career Development Services | New Hope Christian Church | Career development | Clopper Mill ES, Germantown |
| Employment Initiative Program | Housing Opportunities Commission | Job finding assistance | Organizational office, Kensington |
| Home Care Aid Training | Home Care Partners | 125 hour training leading to home care aide certification | Organization office, Washington, DC |
| People-4-People Employment Assistance Program | Immanuel's Church and Lutheran Church of St. Andrew | Job finding assistance | Organizational office, Silver Spring |
| Business Development Services | Empowered Women International | Train women to create micro-enterprises | Organizational office, Alexandria, VA |
| Project LEAD | Interfaith Works | Job counseling and placement service to low-income residents served at the Interfaith Clothing Center | Organizational offices, Rockville |
| <i>Older adults (2 programs, 2 providers)</i> | | | |
| JSSA Employment (2) and Career Services | Jewish Social Service Agency | Comprehensive job assistance centers – Older adults | Organizational office, Rockville JSSA Employment and Career Services, Silver Spring |
| The Career Gateway | Jewish Council for the Aging of Greater Washington | Employment transition counseling, training and employment programs for older adults | Organization office, Rockville |

Table A-2: Local Adult Education and Employment Programs, Continued

| Program Name | Organization | Services | Locations |
|--|---|--|--|
| <i>Veterans (4 programs, 4 providers)</i> | | | |
| Bridge to Work (1) | Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind | Training and employment programs for veterans who are visually impaired. | Organizational office, Silver Spring |
| Montgomery Station Supported Employment Program (1) | Family Services, Inc. | Vocational rehabilitation veterans | Community-based, variable |
| Veteran Services Employment | Montgomery Works | Job finding assistance for veterans | Organizational office, Wheaton |
| Veterans Employment Program | Easter Seals Greater Washington-Baltimore Region | Job finding assistance for veterans | Organizational office, Silver Spring |
| <i>Adults with disabilities (17 programs, 15 providers)</i> | | | |
| Back to Work Program | St. Luke's House | Vocational rehabilitation for adults with mental illness | Community-based, variable |
| Bridge to Work (2) | Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind | Training and employment programs for veterans who are visually impaired. | Organizational office, Silver Spring |
| Career Services and Assistive Technology | Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind | Job finding assistance and training and employment programs | Organizational office, Silver Spring |
| CLARC Employment Services | Computer Learning and Resource Center, Inc. (CLARC) | Comprehensive job assistance (e.g. coaching, resume preparation, placement assistance) | Organizational office (Silver Spring) |
| Customized employment and other day services | Compass, Inc. | Prevocational training (job readiness) | Organizational office, Silver Spring |
| Employment Services | SEEC | Vocational rehabilitation | Community-based, variable |
| Grower Program | Red Wiggler Community Farm | Training and employment program on a farm | Red Wiggler Farm, Germantown |
| JSSA Employment and Career Services (3) | Jewish Social Service Agency | Comprehensive job assistance centers – Individuals with special needs and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing | Organizational office, Rockville JSSA Employment and Career Services, Silver Spring |
| Montgomery County Customized Employment Intern Project | TransCen, Inc. | Job finding assistance with County departments for part-time temporary work | Montgomery Works, Wheaton |
| Montgomery County Customized Employment Public Intern Project | Montgomery Works | Work experience and training with County departments for part-time temporary work | Organizational office, Wheaton Community-based, variable |
| Montgomery Station Supported Employment Program (2) | Family Services, Inc. | Vocational rehabilitation for adults with serious mental illness | Community-based, variable |
| SCGW Supported Employment | Saint Colletta of Greater Washington | Vocational rehabilitation for adults with intellectual disabilities | Organizational office, Rockville |

Table A-2: Local Adult Education and Employment Programs, Continued

| Program Name | Organization | Services | Locations |
|--|---|--|---|
| <i>Adults with disabilities (17 programs, 15 providers), Continued</i> | | | |
| Bakery and Related Industries Training | Sunflower Bakery | Year long on-the job training for persons with intellectual disabilities | Organizational office, Gaithersburg |
| Supervised Worksite | Rehabilitation Opportunities, Inc. | Vocational rehabilitation for adults with functional and/or intellectual disabilities | Organizational office, Germantown |
| Supported Employment | Rehabilitation Opportunities, Inc. | Vocational rehabilitation for adults with functional and/or intellectual disabilities | Organizational office, Germantown |
| Supported Employment | Head Injury Rehabilitation and Referral Services | Vocational rehabilitation for adults with brain injuries | Organizational office, Rockville |
| Training and Paid Employment Program | Jobs Unlimited, Inc. | Vocational rehabilitation for adults with severe mental illness | Upscale Retail Thrift Shop, Rockville |
| <i>Adult Immigrants/English language learners (6 programs, 6 providers)</i> | | | |
| Employment Program | Spanish Catholic Center of Catholic Charities | Job finding assistance through training and language development for immigrants | Spanish Catholic Center - Gaithersburg |
| Refugee Employment Services | Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area | Training and employment programs for immigrants and community newcomers | Montgomery/Prince George's Counties Refugee/Immigrant Services, Silver Spring |
| Welcome Back Center of Suburban Maryland | Office of Community Affairs, DHHS | Facilitates the Maryland health professions licensure process for foreign-trained health professionals | Silver Spring Health Center, Silver Spring |
| Adult English Literacy Services | Montgomery County Coalition for Adult English Literacy | Training and capacity building to strengthen language services for English language learners | Organizational office, Rockville |
| Adult Literacy Services | Literacy Council of Montgomery County | Adult ESOL basic literacy tutoring and classes, and pre-GED classes | Organizational office, Rockville |
| Casa Welcome Centers | Casa de Maryland | Employment placement services, ESOL classes, vocational training, and legal services | Silver Spring, Wheaton, and Shady Grove |
| <i>Adult Offenders (2 programs, 2 providers)</i> | | | |
| Welcome Home Program | Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington, Inc. | Mentoring to men and women returning to their communities | Pre-Release Center, Rockville |
| Re-Entry Support | Identity | Spanish language support and re-entry services | Organizational office, Gaithersburg |

Youth and Work in Montgomery County



Office of Legislative Oversight
Report Number 2014-3

March 24, 2014

The Assignment

- In 2012, OLO's alternative education report found that MCPS' career and technology education programs were inaccessible to youth at-risk and struggling learners
- The Council asked OLO to determine what programs in other County agencies prepare youth at-risk for careers, particularly high school dropouts

Presentation Overview

- Disconnected Youth
- The Youth Labor Market
- The County's Middle-Skill Jobs Forecast
- Youth Workforce Development Best Practices
- County Government and College Programs
- Stakeholders' Perspectives
- OLO Recommendations

Disconnected Youth

- Teens (16-19) and young adults (20-24)
- Youth may be:
 - **Chronically disconnected**, i.e., disconnected from school and work, OR
 - **Weakly connected**, i.e., working but not on a path to economic self-sufficiency
- About 7,800 County youth, equivalent to $\frac{3}{4}$ of an MCPS graduating class, are disconnected

Youth Employment Trends

- Employment rate for youth (16-24) was 50% in 2012
- Nationally, from 2008 to 2011:
 - Teen employment fell from 33% to 25%
 - Young adult employment fell from 66% to 60%
- Youth males of color were hardest hit. Locally:
 - In 2011, 47% of black male teens were unemployed
 - In 2011, only 1 in 6 black male teens had a job vs. 1 in 3 or 1 in 4 teens of every other subgroup
 - From 2008 to 2011, Latino young men saw a 4x increase in their unemployment rates (6% to 24%)

Middle-Skill Jobs

- Positions that require post secondary training, but not a bachelor's degree
- “Hot jobs” are in-demand middle-skill jobs that pay a living wage
- Youth work programs ideally target “hot jobs” to provide a pathway to self-sufficiency
- Local demand for middle-skill jobs is weak, accounting for 10% of projected job openings

Four Middle-Skill Occupational Groups That Could Yield “Hot Jobs” for Youth

| Occupational Group | % of total openings | Entry wages |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Office and Administrative Support | 20% | \$23,000 |
| Allied Health | 7% | \$46,000 |
| Construction and Extraction | 7% | \$27,000 |
| Installation, Maintenance, and Repair | 4% | \$31,000 |
| Computer and Mathematical | 2% | \$39,000 |

Costs of Disconnected Youth

- Disconnected youth more likely to rely on government supports, have poor health, and to be involved in criminal activity
- ***Taxpayer loss*** of \$14,000 per year or lifetime fiscal loss to tax payers of \$236,000 per youth in lost taxes and higher public expenditures
- ***Social loss*** of \$37,000 per year in lost earnings and victims costs or a lifetime lump sum social cost of \$700,000 per youth
- ***Two-thirds of taxpayer and social costs fall on state and local governments.***

Best Practices: Programs Should Provide Multi-Faceted Services

- ***Education*** or the academic and soft skills that prepare youth for employment and post secondary training
- ***Occupations*** or paid work experience and technical training that qualify youth for jobs with earnings and advancement potential
- ***Social services*** to provide interim resources that support youth until they complete their transition to self-sufficiency

Best Practices: Program Delivery Should Be Differentiated


- ***At-risk youth***
 - Exposed to risk factors for disconnection such as low achievement, gang involvement or parenting
- ***High-risk/weakly connected youth***
 - Have experienced risk factors for disconnection
 - Have minimal work experience
 - May have dropped out of high school
- ***Proven-risk/chronically disconnected youth***
 - Have dropped out of school
 - Are not working
 - Often have been adjudicated

County Investment in Programs for At-Risk Youth Increased in FY14

- MCG and the College offer 17 programs
- In FY13, 2,850 youth were enrolled at cost of \$3.8 million
- In FY14, nearly 4,000 youth are enrolled at a cost of \$4.7 million
- From FY13 to FY14, the County's share of program funding grew from 41% to 48%

Program Data by Risk Level

| Item | At-Risk Youth | Disconnected Youth | | |
|---------------------|---------------|--------------------|-------------|----------|
| | | High Risk | Proven Risk | Subtotal |
| Total # Programs | 7 | 7 | 3 | 10 |
| Enrollment | 2,542 | 1,283 | 165 | 1,448 |
| Total Budget (000s) | \$2,620 | \$1,337 | \$723 | \$2,060 |
| County \$ (000s) | \$1,216 | \$447 | \$576 | \$1,023 |

| | | | | | |
|---|--|------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
|  | | Disconnected Youth Estimates | 3,900 | 3,900 | 7,800 |
| | | % Need Met | 33% | 4% | 18% |

Services for High Risk (Weakly Connected) Youth and Adults

| Program/Agency or Dept | # Youth Served | Academic/ Soft Skills | Paid Jobs/ Hard Skills |
|---|----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Gateway to College (MC) | 65 | ✓ | |
| Life Skills & GED Preparation (MC) | 474 | ✓ | |
| Pathways to Success Program (MC) | NA | ✓ | |
| MI-BEST (MC) | NA | ✓ | ✓ |
| Youth Opportunity Centers (DHHS) | 633 | ✓ | |
| Youth, Out-of-School (DED) | 111 | ✓ | ✓ |
| TANF (DHHS) | NA | ✓ | ✓ |
| Totals | 1,283 | 7 | 3 |

Services for Proven Risk (Chronically Disconnected) Youth

| Program (County Government Department) | # Youth Served | Academic/ Soft Skills | Paid Jobs/ Hard Skills |
|--|---------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Street Outreach Network (DHHS) | 97 | ✓ | |
| Transition Services for Foster Care (DHHS) | 28 | ✓ | ✓ |
| Conservation Corps (DHHS) | 40 | ✓ | ✓ |
| Totals | 165 | 3 | 2 |

Disconnected Youth Have Limited Access to Career and Technology Education

- Barriers to entry limit the ability of disconnected, out of school youth to access the College's 150 certificate and degree programs
- In FY14, College resources will shift to serve more **at-risk** youth and fewer **high-risk** youth

Stakeholders' Perspectives: Strengths

- County's contracted providers are engaged and deliver high-quality services
- County federally funded programs achieve their performance benchmarks
- Highest risk County youth connected to social service or criminal justice systems receive services
- Montgomery College and the Workforce Investment Board's Youth Council are champions

Stakeholders' Perspectives: Weaknesses and Challenges

- Youth work development is not a County priority
- Few services exist for weakly connected youth who are not in a social service system
- Programs target low-skilled, low-wage jobs
- County programs are not tied to a larger strategy of connecting at-risk youth to work

The Potential of Career Pathways

Career pathways connect education and training programs to enable participants to secure a job or advance in an industry or occupation

Five stages characterize the career pathways framework:

- Pre-GED
- GED
- Short-term certificate
- Longer-term certificate and associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree

OLO Recommendations

OLO recommends that the County Council commit to building an career pathways infrastructure to connect out-of-school youth to education and employment.

- *Create a Task Force to Create a Career Pathways System for Disconnected Youth*
- *Expand the number of slots for chronically disconnected, proven risk youth*
- *Consider what role, if any, MCPS' Edison High School for Technology should play in enhancing job training for out-of-school youth*