

# Long-Term Workforce Development Strategies for the Purple Line Corridor

Ensuring A More Inclusive And Equitable Workforce Recovery In The Post-Pandemic Era



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## Introduction

The Purple Line Corridor Coalition has always viewed the building of the Purple Line as a once-in-a-lifetime chance to leverage Maryland's most significant transit investment to increase access to good jobs, housing choices, and vibrant communities. To the coalition, leveraging this opportunity has meant doing everything it can to ensure its actions advance equitable development and an inclusive economy. Leveraging has also meant taking timely, strategic action to bring about systems-level change to uplift all communities along the line.

The pandemic has created new urgency for accelerating systems-level change and community uplift across a full range of issues in the corridor.

In late 2017, the coalition announced the signing of its Community Development Agreement signed by dozens of leaders and stakeholders from across the corridor, most notably by the county executives from Prince George's and Montgomery Counties and the University of Maryland College Park president. The agreement addressed four goals: providing housing opportunities for people across all income levels, helping local businesses not just survive the construction but thrive during and after, and ensuring vibrant and sustainable communities attuned to local culture and place. The fourth and final goal - and the focus of this strategy framework - committed the coalition to create a corridor where "workers are well-trained, grow in number, and are well-matched with employers in skills and location." That statement remains our ultimate *north star* for workforce development.

Yet, as we delved into the data about residents and workers in the corridor and engaged in conversations with dozens of stakeholders in the workforce and economic development space, we realized the very sizable gap between the current reality around the labor market, the workforce, and training, and our aspirations. Although current data amid the fifteenth month of the pandemic is still challenging to assemble fully for the corridor, the gap between reality and aspirations has undoubtedly widened to a chasm during this period.

This moment requires that the coalition move with requisite urgency to support organizations working diligently in the corridor to bridge gaps and collaborate with corridor stakeholders to strategize and invest in longer-term, systemic changes that the corridor's workforce and the economy will need.

***This workforce framing document represents an initial attempt to articulate the larger national and regional context for the workforce development***

### Bridging Gaps Short Term/Systemic Changes Long Term

This moment requires that the coalition move with requisite urgency to support organizations working diligently in the corridor to bridge gaps and collaborate with corridor stakeholders to strategize and invest in longer-term, systemic changes that the corridor's workforce and economy will need.

*challenges the corridor currently confronts (exacerbated by the pandemic) and review how the pandemic has impacted state-, county-, and corridor level workforce and labor conditions.*

*It concludes with our initial thinking about workforce development strategies that will be essential for success in the corridor in the months and years to come and what activities the coalition is in the best position to either support, activate, or collaborate on.*

The coalition applauds the critical work Employ Prince George's, Worksource Montgomery, Montgomery College, Prince George's Community College, and dozens of non-profit workforce development service providers have and continue to perform during the public health emergency across both counties. All have worked tirelessly to address the crisis-driven needs of residents while shifting into new ways to deliver workforce training and accompanying services and determining how to handle a range of newly emerging workforce needs.

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*NOTE: if you feel you already have a solid understanding of the national and regional context for workforce and workforce systems, feel free to just read the Executive Summary on pages 6-14 and then skip to the Strategies Section on pages 50-65.*

## Executive Summary

The Purple Line Corridor Coalition has long held the goal of creating a corridor where workers are well-trained, grow in number, and are well-matched with employers in skills and location. Yet, there is a sizable gap between the realities and prospects of the corridor's current labor force and the long-term aspirations for the workforce. This policy white paper seeks to lay out how the coalition can work with other key stakeholders to ensure a corridor-wide, inclusive, and equitable workforce recovery as the metropolitan region emerges from the depths of the public health pandemic.

### National Economic Challenges: Low Wages, Racial Inequities, Inequitable Job Access

To chart a path forward, we must understand recent economic trends and history. Even as key segments of the U.S. economy have attained new heights in recent decades, the primary beneficiaries of that economic rise have been those with college degrees and beyond. Forty-four percent of U.S. workers are low-wage workers whose median annual wages don't quite reach \$18,000. Occupations in the service economy have grown tremendously in number during that time – think retail, restaurant, and low-level transportation- and information-related jobs – but pay in those occupations has remained persistently low with little likelihood for advancement or promotion. Meanwhile, middle-skill jobs have grown more slowly and often don't pay what would be considered middle-wages. Worse, currently, the U.S. confronts a middle-skills gap, in which there are more jobs requiring middle-skills than workers available.

Significant segments of the Black and Latino population have borne the brunt of these economic dynamics. Both Blacks and Latinos are a little more than half as likely as Whites to hold a B.A. or B.S. degree, but even when they do, they earn lower wages than their White counterparts. Even in career and technical education programs (CTE) in secondary schools, Black and Latinx students are, even today, often guided into lower-paying fields and occupations. Plus, job discrimination, particularly against Blacks, continues to play a role in preventing access to good jobs. Finally, people of color and immigrants are overrepresented in industries that are not covered by standard labor laws, meaning far less access to basic benefits and protections. These dynamics held true a half-century ago and similar realities still hold true today.

The challenges don't end there. the Rework America Alliance is one of many national groups that has identified tens of millions of workers with the talents and skills to fill middle-skill jobs but who are blocked from accessing them because they do not have a four-year degree. Several cross-sector coalitions have advocated for private and public-sector employers to revisit and revise their hiring requirements for those jobs to enable far more workers, many of them Black and Latino, to achieve higher-paying work and more viable career pathways.

### Prospects, Potentials, and Perils for Workforce Recovery

The pandemic wreaked havoc on the national economy, which rippled throughout every region and corridor. The hardest-hit sectors were service-sector industries – think leisure and hospitality – but government, education, professional services, and manufacturing were hit hard

too. As of April 2021, the national unemployment rate had dropped from a high of more than 10% to about 6%, but the rates for Blacks (9.7%) and Latinos (7.9%) were far higher. Even those statistics shield how unemployment has been segmented. In March 2021, the Washington Post reports that “Workers who had been in the bottom 25 percent of earners faced an unemployment rate of around 22 percent.”<sup>i</sup>

For about a decade, the specter of “The Future of Work” loomed over the U.S. labor market, with projections that, none too soon, tens of millions of jobs would be replaced through automation, robotics, and artificial intelligence. The pandemic has accelerated those trends, beginning to reach into the service sector as has never been seen before. These new realities will likely widen existing skill and pay gaps in the labor marketplace. Many jobs that will get created as a result will require very specific skillsets and greater education and training than many workers impacted by displacement and dislocation will possess. In the short term, this could create significant worker shortages without concerted investments nationally and locally in retraining, reskilling, and upskilling.

The pandemic also revealed the vulnerabilities millions of workers face in the U.S., whether poor health care access, safety concerns in the workplace, lack of viable childcare solutions, or the absence of sick leave. What many in higher- and middle-skill jobs would consider standard benefits, many workers in vulnerable industries and occupations find lacking. This means too many jobs still lack the basics of what workforce experts’ term “job quality.” At the national and regional levels, public and private sector leaders must address these disparities in job quality that cut across race and gender to sustain strong and lasting economic growth.

### The Metropolitan Region: Workforce Context

The Washington D.C. region is an economic engine, one of the most dynamic regional economies globally. Yet, the Brookings Institution reported this year that of the 53 very large metro areas with populations over 1 million, the Greater DC region ranks 37th out of 53 in geographic inclusion and 51st out of 53 in racial inclusion. Not a track record our region can be proud of.

The Greater Washington Partnership (GWP), a nonprofit civic alliance of the D.C. region’s largest employers from Baltimore to Richmond, is the most prominent regional group pursuing strategies for inclusive growth, shared prosperity, and economic opportunity for all regardless of race, gender, or zip code. In a 2021 report on inclusive growth in the region, GWP details at length the racial disparities our region grapples with from gaps in wealth, median household income, attainment of bachelor’s degrees, and in those living below the poverty line or experiencing limited economic mobility.<sup>ii</sup>

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Government’s (MWCOG) Regional Economic Monitoring System report (January 2021) showed how the global pandemic’s devastating economic impact had exacerbated these challenges. As of December 2020, “over-the-year employment decreased by 177,800 jobs or 5.2% in the region. The hardest-hit sectors for job



losses in the region include Leisure and Hospitality, which decreased by 25% (24.5% of those jobs in Food Services), and Education and Health Services, which decreased by nearly 7%.<sup>iii</sup>

A recent Brookings report shows that low-wage workers in the D.C. region are far more often found on the east side of the region, particularly eastern Wards of the District of Columbia, the inner ring suburbs of Prince George's County, and parts of southwestern Montgomery County.<sup>iv</sup>

The Maryland Department of Labor (MDOL) funds and incentivizes a range of critical workforce development programs across the state, all highly relevant to the two counties in the corridor and corridor itself. These include MDOL's:

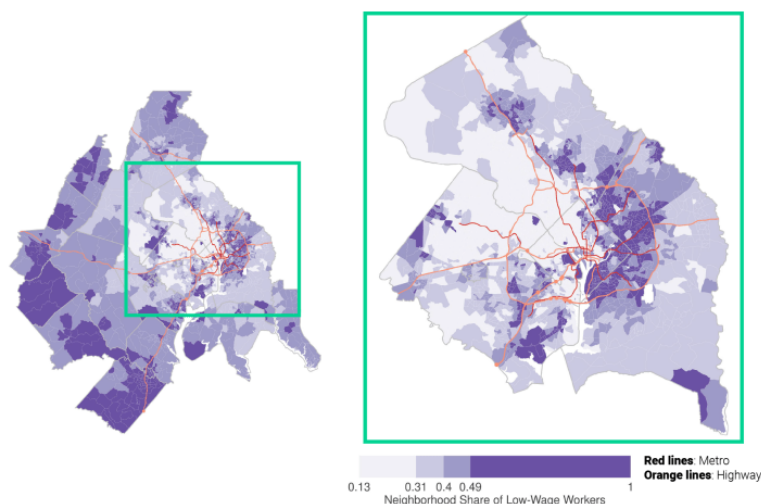
- Nationally recognized program in industry-led job training partnerships, known as **EARN** (Employment Advancement Right Now) **Maryland**, including partnerships in health care, construction, biotech, cybersecurity, and logistics, to support job seekers with training that furthers their careers in these sectors and employers obtain the talent they need to grow.
- **Registered Apprenticeships** (R.A.) program that has helped to support approximately 11,000 Ras across 110 occupations statewide involving 3,800 employers.
- **Career pathways** programs that integrate high-quality education, specific job training, and support services to help foster career pathways to adult learners with higher employment aspirations but also barriers to employment.<sup>v</sup>

The Maryland, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County economies have steadily grown since they hit bottom in the spring of 2020. Economists project that growth to continue to grow over the next several years.

Statewide, the Healthcare and Social Assistance and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services industries continue to grow the fastest.<sup>vi</sup> More specifically, positions requiring Information Technology skills (e.g., computer system engineers, network and computer system administrators, and computer programmers) and Healthcare experience (e.g., registered nurses and nursing assistants) show the most consistent, high levels of growth.<sup>vii</sup>

### Purple Line Corridor: Workforce Context

**Figure 5. Low-wage workers comprise a large share of workers in neighborhoods east of the District and the exurbs**  
Neighborhoods, shaded in proportion to their share of low-wage workers



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020

**B** Metropolitan Policy Program  
at BROOKINGS



The Purple Line corridor serves as a significant economic engine for Maryland. The line stitches together four of Maryland's most significant employment clusters: Bethesda, Silver Spring, Route One corridor (with College Park at the center), and Landover (including New Carrollton).

The corridor encompasses only 2% of the land area of the two counties but features 15% of its employment, 13% of the total number of businesses, and 10% of its property value.<sup>viii</sup> However, despite the corridor's prowess, substantial workforce disparities exist.

The Purple Line corridor is one of the more racially and ethnically diverse areas anywhere in Maryland. However, there are significant disparities in median household income across the corridor's five sub-areas. The median household income for Bethesda-Chevy Chase is more than twice that of three of the other four sub-areas. Only the University of Maryland sub-area at \$82,900 comes close

to reaching the statewide median (\$84,805). The Silver Spring sub-area is well below Montgomery

Table 3-3. Median household income by subarea

Subarea	Median Household Income
Bethesda-Chevy Chase	\$141,331.35
Silver Spring	\$62,219.77
International Corridor	\$63,095.94
University of Maryland	\$82,899.56
New Carrollton	\$62,977.38

County's median household income of \$108,820. New Carrollton sub-area's median household income is well below Prince George's (\$84,920).

Although nearly "half of residents in the corridor hold a bachelor's or advanced degree compared to about 30% of the population nationally and 40% statewide"<sup>ix</sup>, only 17% and 23%, respectively, do in the Riverdale-New Carrollton and International Corridor sub-areas. Further, 55% of residents in the Riverdale-New Carrollton residents' sub-area have a high school diploma or less, as do 57% in the International Corridor sub-area.<sup>x</sup> This percentage is far higher than the national percentage, which is about 39%<sup>xi</sup> and results in too many residents restricted to low-wage and low-skill jobs.

In recent years, the top five industries in the corridor have been:

- Educational Services
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- Public Administration
- Administrative Support and Waste Management
- Health Care and Social Assistance

The industries each county has targeted for growth and viewed as key to their economic development are:

Targeted Industry Clusters (by County)	
Montgomery County	Prince George's County
Biohealth / Biosciences	Federal Government
Information Technology and Cybersecurity	Hospitals & Health Services
Financial Services	Information Technology & Services

Advanced Manufacturing  
Corporate/Regional H.Q.  
Hospitality  
Entrepreneurs/Innovators

Research Intensive Industries (3 sub-clusters):

- Biosciences; Instruments & Electronics; Research, Development, and Engineering

Contributing Clusters

Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics  
Destination Retail (and Placemaking)

As the state and region emerged from pandemic lockdowns, the three industries based in Prince George's that advertised the most job openings in June 2021 were Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; Health Care and Social Assistance; and Retail Trade. In Montgomery County, the top two industries hiring were the same; Manufacturing was the third.<sup>xii</sup>

As of April 2021, Montgomery's employment levels were still well below their March 2020 peak of 550,000, standing at 5.5%. Prince George's followed a similar, though higher, trajectory, and by April 2021, unemployment had settled at 8%.<sup>xiii</sup> Because, on average, Black and Latino residents regionally and locally hold lower-wage jobs, the unemployment rate in the corridor likely exceeds 10%, especially in neighborhoods in Greater Riverdale, Langley Park, and Northern Gateway, Long Branch, and in parts of Takoma Park and Silver Spring.

### The Need for More Aligned and More Equitable Workforce Development Systems

The pandemic has exposed inefficiencies, flaws, and gaps in workforce development systems across the country, as it has so many other systems.

The Urban Institute graphic on the next page depicts the critical components of a local workforce development system. What matters most is whether the components are working sufficiently in concert with one another to serve employers, workers, and the labor needs of the local jurisdiction.

The goals of Maryland's workforce system are to increase the earning capacity of Marylanders by:

1. Maximizing access to employment.
2. Maximizing access to and use of skills and credentialing.
3. Maximizing access to and use of life management skills.
4. Eliminating barriers to employment through the use of supportive services.
5. Strengthening and enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the workforce system.<sup>xiv</sup>



*"Local Workforce Systems Infographic," Urban Institute website.*

The challenge, though, is many workforce systems do not work in the most optimal ways for several reasons:

- Many students from low-wealth households attend weaker postsecondary institutions because of poor academic preparation and a lack of information about accessing stronger institutions.
- Students have access to too little public assistance for workforce program enrollment.
- Workforce providers receive too little funding and inadequate incentives to invest in such programs when funding is so limited.
- Employers invest too little in work-based learning or worker retraining when jobs are displaced.
- Postsecondary institutions and workforce organizations often work in fragmented and uncoordinated ways that hinder sufficient and versatile responses to regional labor demands.<sup>xv</sup>

Yet, one of the biggest challenges for workforce development is the **lack of sufficient public funding**. Funding for WIOA, relative to the size of the labor force and the economy, *is lower today than in 1980*. This funding level translates to only one-tenth of one percent of GDP, a minuscule amount compared to European nations.

Organizations like the National Fund for Workforce Solutions (NWFS) argue that we must change our workforce development systems in ways that connect with the critical education, housing, childcare, and transportation needs residents and potential workers have to succeed in training and education. Ultimately, systems change must focus “on changing policy, practice, perceptions, funding, and institutions.”<sup>xvi</sup> And, we would argue, **with racial equity at the center** of and the guiding force for all these systems.

The coalition has drafted ten guiding principles for racial equity in the corridor’s workforce development. All ten can be found in the longer document, but a few key ones are:

1. **Ensuring far more residents of color** and residents making lower incomes are prepared **to enter and succeed in the labor market**.
2. **Expanding access to certifications for residents of color** to put them on pathways for higher-paying jobs and careers.
3. **Targeting and including overlooked populations in**

## Workforce Equity for a Competitive Purple Line Corridor



**workforce development**, such as returning citizens and English-language learners.

4. **Providing comprehensive support services** that reverse systemic disinvestment for workers of color.
5. **Engaging employers to commit to racially equitable systems change** in employment practices and culture.

### Key Players in the Purple Line Corridor Workforce System

Many workforce development stakeholders play important roles in the design, development, delivery, and evaluation of workforce training and education in both counties and across the corridor, too many to recount here. Six played particularly crucial roles during the pandemic year, above and beyond the essential functions they traditionally play in each county. They are: Employ Prince George's, Worksource Montgomery, Montgomery College, Prince George's Community College, Prince George's County Public Schools' CTE programs, and Montgomery County Public Schools' CTE programs. All have programs in the corridor that already intersect with many of the corridor workforce strategies we outline below.

### Workforce Strategies for the Purple Line Corridor

We believe the need for robust workforce development systems and solutions in the corridor has never been greater. *Each strategy listed below is* drafted knowing that important work in the counties or the larger region is underway but may *not yet impact enough* (or any) corridor residents. *Each* is also drafted as *an aspiration for what we hope we will come to be* in the corridor but with insufficient *resources or intensive, localized coordination* to make it happen currently.

Each is drafted in response to *how the corridor* (as well as the region and nation) *is emerging from a pandemic-induced recession* that has been, as Falecia D. Williams, president of Prince George's Community College, "the most inequitable in modern U.S. history. ... and the eventual recovery threatens to be equally uneven without swift and sweeping action."<sup>xvii</sup>



The strategies fall into three broad categories:

- **Advancing a Robust Workforce Advocacy Agenda**
  - Federal advocacy – e.g., funding for Pell grants that include shorter, for-credit certificate programs; greater funding apprenticeships and work-based learning programs in growing industries.
  - State advocacy – e.g., expand and make permanent investments made in workforce recovery/revitalization; expand funding for apprenticeships, digital skills programs, career pathways programs for disadvantaged populations, adult literacy & ESL, and wraparound supports to increase completion rates.
  - Local advocacy – e.g., make permanent funding of Career Pathways for All; provide employer incentives to initiate apprenticeships; provide business literacy and entrepreneur support.
- **Promoting Workforce Programs Aligned with Growing Industries & Occupations**
  - Invest in building corridor residents' digital skills aligned with future jobs
  - Link residents to sustainable career pathways in high-growth industries & occupations
  - Promote the wider use of employer-based apprenticeships
  - Call for skills-based hiring: more pathways to more "good" jobs

- Support the expansion of entrepreneurial programs and entrepreneurs of color
- **Bolstering Workforce Development Support Systems & Infrastructure in the Corridor**
  - Provide robust wraparound supports
  - Address adult literacy and ESL challenges with immigrant communities
  - Extend high-speed broadband to corridor neighborhoods currently without it
  - Encourage placement of a Mobile Jobs Center in the corridor

## Conclusion

Now that the Purple Line Corridor Coalition has established a blueprint of its *aspirations*, it has a new, equally complex challenge. It must (1) finalize the concrete commitments it will make, (2) build upon the excellent work already happening in the corridor, (3) solicit additional commitments from other workforce stakeholders, and (4) collaborate to help fund and launch new initiatives that can make significant progress on workforce outcomes over the next several years. At a broad level, the coalition should:

- Become a strong advocate for more resources in the corridor for workforce development, training, and middle-skill jobs and pursue funding that produces results at greater scales for corridor residents.
- Support initiatives that grow the digital skills of the thousands of corridor residents without sufficient capability currently.
- Promote the robust set of public-sector, private-sector, and NGO-sector programs and initiatives that already provide effective workforce training in both counties or the region.
- Become a champion for holistic approaches to workforce development in the corridor that include robust support services to enhance the chances of success for those embarked on training and skill-building.



## The National Context, Pre-Pandemic

Workforce systems have long provided a range of employment services, education and training programs, and supportive services focused primarily on adults with low basic skills, unemployed/underemployed workers, youth in career-and-technical programs, people with challenges and hardships to work, and those seeking career change and advancement. These populations commonly face significant hurdles toward gainful employment and viable career pathways.

Before we look at the substantial consequences the pandemic has wrought on critical segments of the workforce, we must first understand what brought us to this point, nationally and regionally. We first look at the predominance and the increase of low-wage work in the economy in recent decades and the persistent racial inequities we see across just about every workforce measure, including accessibility to good, quality jobs.

### Low-Wage Work

From the recession of the early 1980s until now, the national economy has not been kind to workers lacking postsecondary education. During those four decades, we have seen “lopsided growth in low-wage occupation, the advent of the gig economy, and flexible employment arrangements that leave workers unprotected by fair labor standards, have contributed to the shrinking of the economic middle over the past couple of decades.”<sup>xviii</sup>

In the last three decades, middle-wage jobs have grown 1.5 times more slowly than low-wage jobs, while high-wage workers saw their earnings increase more than three times the rate of all other workers. *Forty-four percent of U.S. workers are low-wage workers. That’s approximately 53 million people. Median annual earnings? \$17,950.*<sup>xix</sup>

Twenty-five million workers can be found in just ten occupational groups, primarily retail, restaurant, and low-level information and

transportation-related jobs. A high share of these jobs is what Brookings Institution refers to as *low-wage, low-mobility occupations*.

Meaning, workers are paid low wages, and the jobs there have very few prospects for advancement or promotion.

Black and Latino workers have a far higher likelihood of earning low wages than white workers, particularly but certainly not exclusively in the above industries and jobs.<sup>xx</sup>

### The Increasing Predominance of Low-Wage Jobs

In the last three decades, middle-wage jobs have grown 1.5 times more slowly than low-wage jobs while high-wage workers saw their earnings increase more than three times the rate of all other workers. Forty-four percent of U.S. workers are low-wage workers. That’s approximately 53 million people. Median annual earnings? \$17,950.



Yet, the majority of jobs in the U.S. are *middle-skill jobs*, requiring more than a high school diploma but less than a terminal degree. But not all middle-skill jobs are *middle-wage jobs*. To complicate matters “there are more middle-skill jobs than workers trained to that level,”<sup>xxi</sup> [43% versus 53%] according to the National Skills Coalition. This is referred to as the *middle-skill gap*.

### Racial and Ethnic Inequities

In recent decades, the national economy has been especially challenging for important segments of the African American population and, more recently, the rapidly growing Latinx population.

Why?

“Racial and ethnic inequities in educational attainment, employment, and wages are the result of intentional historical and current policies and practices that have systemically limited educational and economic opportunities.”<sup>xxii</sup> This inequity includes Blacks and Latinos living in segregated neighborhoods fundamentally disconnected from jobs centers and quality K-12 schools. Residents facing inadequate transportation options, unstable housing situations, or inaccessible, quality childcare, to name a few.<sup>xxiii</sup>

Adult low-literacy and English-language fluency are also compounding issues. Workers who do not speak English face a significant *automation* risk, and those who speak some English face a risk almost as high. Finally, workers without a four-year degree face a risk considerably higher than those with one.<sup>xxiv</sup>

Nationally, African Americans and U.S.-born Latinos are a little more than half as likely as Whites to hold a bachelor’s degree; for first-generation Latino immigrants, they are less than one-third as likely to have a B.A. Yet, even when Blacks and Latinos attain the same level as their white counterparts (from less than high school to graduate degree), they earn *lower* wages.<sup>xxv</sup>

Even in postsecondary Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs “research shows white students and some groups of Asian students have better employment and earnings outcomes from community and technical college programs than Black and Latinx students. One reason is the way white students are sorted into fields of study that offer pathways to jobs with higher wages, while Black and Latinx students are often funneled into lower-yield fields.”<sup>xxvi</sup>

### **Racial Inequities in Pathways to Higher Wages**

“Research shows White students and some groups of Asian students have better employment and earnings outcomes from community and technical college programs than Black and Latinx students. One reason is the way White students are sorted into fields of study that offer pathways to jobs with higher wages, while Black and Latinx students are often funneled into lower-yield fields.”

To one degree or another, all these factors pose risks and challenges to essential segments of the Purple Line corridor workforce.

### Inequitable Access to Good Jobs

Then there's the matter of "good" or "quality" jobs. Workforce researchers define good jobs in a range of ways, but common elements of a good job include:

- Adequate level and predictability of pay
- Provision of benefits (health insurance, retirement plan, leave, etc.)
- Working conditions (predictable hours and control over those hours; job security and safety; nondiscrimination)
- Business culture and job design (culture of DEI and belonging; diversity of tasks, clear career paths, etc.)
- On-the-job skills development (training and education, including for advancement) <sup>xxvii</sup>

There is a glaring racial component regarding access to quality jobs. Adults with less than a college degree are also less likely to hold quality jobs or have a pathway to them. The percentage of Black and Latino adults with a degree is considerably lower than for Whites. Job discrimination against Blacks in particular also still plays a crucial role in access. Thus, Whites are far more likely to hold quality jobs than Blacks and Latinos.<sup>xxviii</sup>

Further, "[w]orkers in temporary or contingent employment are not covered by standard labor laws, meaning they have less

access to benefits and protections, including prompt payment (if at all), paid sick time, and other paid time off. People of color, along with women, immigrants, and people with disabilities, are overrepresented in industries that rely heavily on low-wage, independently contracted labor, including home health care, nail salons, cleaning, and landscaping, highlighting how the structure of workers' employment is another important dimension of racial inequity in the labor market."<sup>xxix</sup>

### **The Pandemic's Big Impact: Low Wage Workers**

Workers making \$14/hour and under (down to the federal minimum wage) all suffered disproportionate loss of jobs, whereas workers at every wage level \$25/hour and above showed job gains, with workers \$56/hour and above (making \$110k and above) saw significant job gains.

A lack of a credential, the 4-year college degree, impedes too many workers from pursuing a pathway to higher quality, *good jobs*. The Rework America Alliance sponsored by the Markle Foundation, reports that the:

*United States is home to 106 million workers who have built capabilities through experience but whose talents are often unrecognized because they do not have a four-year college degree. These Americans will be crucial contributors to future US economic competitiveness, and a more equitable economy requires their success. Current systems that emphasize traditional degrees and prior experience in the same field have largely failed them, keeping many from securing good jobs that unlock economic mobility. In fact, about 5.8 million of these workers were unemployed as of February 2021.<sup>2</sup> In turn, a large share of these workers—about 36 percent or 2 million people—are Black and Latinx.<sup>xxx</sup>*

In every region, the U.S. must find sustainable ways for far more workers to have more comprehensive access, based on their experience and skills, to good jobs to ensure their economic advancement. Such a commitment would have a disproportionately positive impact on Black and Latinx workers.

**Next** we look briefly at how the pandemic has altered the landscape for the U.S. workforce and what to expect on the path out of the pandemic. Specifically, we **look at higher levels of unemployment, the acceleration of “the future of work,” and the greater urgency for creating “quality jobs.”**

## Post-Pandemic: Prospects, Potentials, and Perils for Workforce Recovery Nationally

### Grappling with High Unemployment

In the second quarter of 2020, the U.S. GDP suffered its steepest drop in nearly a century, causing unemployment to swell from 6.2 million to more than 20 million within the pandemic's first 90 days.<sup>xxxix</sup> The leisure and hospitality industries comprised nearly 40% of the increase. Since May 2020, job gains nationally have been significant. Yet, as of April 2021, the number of unemployed in the U.S. remained 4 million higher than in February 2020.<sup>xxxix</sup>

Those same industries – leisure and hospitality – where staffs are primarily women and people of color, are still down 3.45 million jobs through February 2021. While no other industry came close to leisure and hospitality's job losses, losses in other sectors were significant. Government at all levels lost nearly 1.4 million jobs, education and health services, nearly 1.3 million, professional and business services, 771,000, and manufacturing, 561,000.<sup>xxxix</sup>

Although by April 2021, the U.S. unemployment rate had dropped to 6.1%, the rate for Blacks (9.7%) and Latinos (7.9%) were both considerably higher than whites (5.3%).<sup>xxxix</sup> The gap between Blacks and Whites closely mirrors the historical Black-to-white unemployment rate of 2:1. The Washington Post reports that "Workers who had been in the bottom 25 percent of earners faced an unemployment rate of around 22 percent in February [2021], compared with the [overall rate](#) of 6.2 percent."<sup>xxxix</sup>

The economy during Covid-19 has hit low-wage workers especially hard, with relief still very uncertain for the industries and jobs they work in.

Less than 75% of low-wage workers were still working in 2020 compared with more than 90% of high-wage workers (workers in the top 25% of the wage distribution). Workers making \$14/hour and under (down to the federal minimum wage) all suffered a disproportionate loss of jobs, whereas workers at every wage level \$25/hour and above showed *job gains*, with workers \$56/hour and above (making \$110K and above) seeing *significant* job gains.<sup>xxxix</sup>

xxxix

Worse, wages grew fast from 2019 to 2020, nearly 7%. This significant growth came almost *entirely due to the nearly 8 million jobs lost by low-wage earners*, boosting the overall average and median wage.<sup>xxxix</sup>

xxxix

### Who is Vulnerable to Automation?

"[P]eople of color, workers without a 4-year college degree, and those with limited English proficiency are at increased risk of automation-driven job disruption that may push them into more precarious, marginalized work or displace them from the labor market altogether."

Beyond those distressing statistics, experts say the unemployment rate leaves millions of former workers out of its calculations, indicating a more accurate gauge is the employment-to-population ratio. Thus, the actual unemployment rate for African Americans and Latinos could be double-digit rates.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

### Acceleration of ‘The Future of Work’

Many experts are pessimistic about what a short-term economic rebound will yield, namely that it won’t sufficiently benefit workers who have taken the biggest hits. Specifically, the pandemic appears to have accelerated the elimination of a significant range of service jobs that experts assumed would remain resilient for a while longer because they required direct, personal contact with customers. Yet again, the impact will be on workers with little or no education beyond high school, who labor in the low-wage service economy.<sup>xxxix</sup>

Peter Beard, a workforce development executive for the Greater Houston Partnership, says, “Covid will intensify underlying dynamics that were already transforming the workplace. Automation, for one, will most likely accelerate as employers seek to protect their businesses from future pandemics.”<sup>xl</sup>

Even for service-related jobs that remain for now, “[p]eople of color, workers without a 4-year college degree, and those with limited English proficiency are at increased risk of automation-driven job disruption that may push them into more precarious, marginalized work or displace them from the labor market altogether.”<sup>xli</sup>

In March 2021, the Washington Post cited an end-of-2020 survey of primarily large company CFOs in which half of the firms were *already* using or intended to use new technologies to reduce their dependence on staffing since the pandemic began. The Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas president indicates that although many companies had plans underway before Covid to automate jobs, the pandemic accelerated those plans.<sup>xlii</sup>

Such plans are likely to widen existing skill and pay gaps in the labor marketplace.

Although it is far too early to discern how the recovery for various industries will shake out, experts see some evident trends.

“Industries likely to expand in response to the pandemic—health care, medical device and supply manufacturing, and telecommunications equipment and software to support remote work and learning—require particular skill sets and greater education and training than many laid-off, lower-skilled workers currently possess. Additionally, evidence suggests that recessions cause many employers to permanently raise skill requirements as they retool their operations,

### **Where Jobs Will Likely Expand**

“Industries likely to expand in response to the pandemic—health care, medical device and supply manufacturing, and telecommunications equipment and software to support remote work and learning—require particular skill sets and greater education and training than many laid-off, lower-skilled workers currently possess.”

making remaining jobs further out of reach for job seekers.”<sup>xliii</sup> Employers will be harder pressed to sustain raised skill requirements given worker shortages unless accompanied by significant investment in retraining, reskilling, and upskilling initiatives.

An early indication of employer need and worker demand comes from Michigan.

*The state used some of its stimulus money last year to create a “Futures for Frontliners” program to give free tuition to grocery store clerks, health aides and other front-line workers so they can earn a certificate or an associate degree. More than **100,000 people** applied. The program also comes with career advice.*<sup>xliv</sup> (emphasis added)

### Job Displacement, Job Quality

The pace of increased automation and digitalization has been in ascendance during the 2010s. Experts now estimate that automation, robotics, and artificial intelligence will eliminate upwards of 85 million jobs by 2025. A 2020 World Economic Forum report projects that those same technologies will yield at least that many new jobs, but the skill requirements will exceed those jobs it replaces.<sup>xlv</sup> Eighty-five million jobs, by the way, are approximately half of all U.S. jobs currently.<sup>xlvi</sup>

The pandemic and its accompanying deep recession have forced elected officials, government agencies, employers, and workers to rethink what we mean by “job quality.” The dual crisis has revealed the breadth and depth of vulnerability too many workers face. “Lack of access to health care, worker safety concerns, the need for flexible work arrangements and paid sick leave, and disproportionate job losses in certain low-wage job sectors have underscored the ways in which job quality varies for different workers and can connect to health, wealth, and stability. ... [Plus, the threat of] automation and increases in ‘gig jobs’ and other nonstandard work arrangements – that highlight the importance of considering the impact of job quality on economic mobility.”<sup>xlvii</sup>

Yet, the scale of change required to address the needs that underlie “job quality” is not only massive but incredibly complex and resource-intensive. Experts in the workforce field say it will require a commitment resembling a “New Deal” for skills and retraining.<sup>xlviii</sup> However, a transformation focused on job quality gets tackled during a full economic recovery, it must address disparities across wage levels, gender, and race and eliminate persistent gaps to generate strong and lasting economic growth, according to Raphael Bostic, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta.<sup>xlix</sup>

### Scale of Change Required for More “Quality Jobs”

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### **The Struggles of Black and Latino Small Business Owners and Entrepreneurs**

In the decade leading up to the pandemic, the number of businesses owned by African Americans, Latino-Americans, and Asian Americans increased significantly. However, many of those businesses start with the distinct disadvantages of starting with less capital than their white counterparts and having higher failure rates because they launch in industries with high failure rates (for example, the personal services industry) or profit margins are far slimmer. The pandemic has wreaked havoc on small business owners nationwide, with higher-than-normal closure rates and for small business owners of color with more challenging access (often due to factors connected to systemic racism) loans and grants that could have saved or sustained many a business.

Yet, we know that small businesses employ half of all private-sector workers and create two out of every three jobs nationally. We also know that business owners of color hire more people of color, providing more people within those same companies with increased opportunities for employment and economic success. Yet, new policies and practices will need to be implemented locally and nationally or we will continue to see the same biased realities playing out, like loan denial rates for business owners of color remaining about three times higher than those for white business owners. In particular, counties and regions will need to learn effective practices from groups like the City Accelerator Initiative (a collaboration of Living Cities, Citi Foundation and Governing) about how to more productively coordinate services for entrepreneurs of color, reduce local barriers to local businesses launching and thriving, and build more robust, inclusive, and responsive local business ecosystems.



## Washington D.C. Region: Workforce Context

The Washington DC region is known as an economic powerhouse. The regional economy is not only the third largest in the U.S. but one of the largest globally. It features a distinctive integration of industries from healthcare and IT to defense and professional services to the robust presence of the federal government and “offers ample opportunities for workers with in-demand skillsets to both specialize and apply their knowledge across different fields.”<sup>i</sup>

Yet too many residents in the region cannot afford the cost or time to pursue the opportunities that allow them to enhance their skills and thus enjoy career mobility. The Brookings Institution reported this year that of the 53 very large metro areas with populations over 1 million, the Greater DC region ranks 37th out of 53 in *geographic* inclusion and 51st out of 53 in *racial* inclusion.<sup>ii</sup> Not the track record our region needs.

Across the state, Maryland reached a labor force participation rate of 69% just before the pandemic, the highest in more than a decade. By summer 2020, the rate had declined to 63%, then bounced back to just above 65% in February 2021. Statewide, the rate remains the lowest in years, and the number of people employed sits at 2012 levels – approximately 2.9 million. The number of unemployed workers and the unemployment level statewide sit at 2013 levels, around 200,000 and 6.2% as of February.<sup>iii</sup> The unemployment rate is up from 3.5% in February 2020 but down from 9.0 in April 2020.<sup>iiii</sup>

### Inclusive Growth – an Economic Imperative

The Greater Washington Partnership (GWP), a nonprofit civic alliance of the D.C. region’s largest employers from Baltimore to Richmond, is the most prominent regional group pursuing strategies for inclusive growth, shared prosperity, and economic opportunity for all regardless of race, gender, or zip code. The Partnership asserts that “inclusive growth is not only a moral imperative, but an economic one”<sup>iv</sup> for the Capital region.

During the pandemic, GWP realized that the region, unlike the regions it competes with globally, lacked a coordinated forum for collaborating on economic development strategy. It subsequently commissioned a cross-sector (government, industry, academia, philanthropy, community) steering committee to generate “an enduring collaboration to achieve equitable regional economic development by design.”<sup>v</sup>

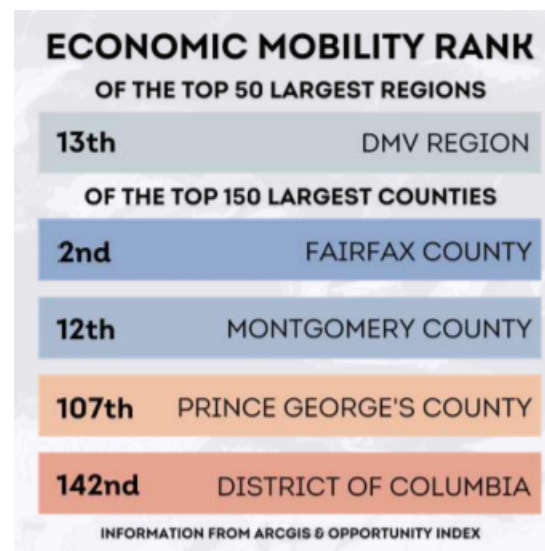
The Partnership’s committee recently presented a comprehensive report on inclusive growth and racial disparities in the region, documenting how wide the region’s racial and economic gaps are and how deep the change required is to bridge those gaps. Some of the data they presented includes:

- Black and Latinx households are more than twice as likely to have *zero net wealth* in the DC region than White households. This outcome closely mirrors national averages.
- Black and Latinx residents are closer to three times as likely to live below the poverty line than White residents in the Richmond-DC-Baltimore region.

- At \$61,000/year, the median household income for Blacks in the larger region is \$42,000 lower than Whites. Latinx median income is \$33,000 lower.
- Although Whites and Blacks' high school graduation rates in the DC region are comparable (97% to 92%), the gap between Whites and Latinx is enormous (28% gap).
- The percent of Whites in the DC region with a Bachelor's degree or higher is 78 percent higher than Blacks and more than double the rate of Latinx residents.
- Sizable percentages of Black and Latinx residents within DC, Montgomery County, Prince George's County, Fairfax County, and Prince William County experience limited economic mobility.<sup>lvi</sup>

An Urban Institute study “found that white families in the Washington region have 81 times the wealth of Black families and 22 times the wealth of Latino families. In dollar terms, that translates to \$284,000 in wealth for white families at the median compared with \$13,000 in wealth for Latino families and just \$3,500 for Black families.” Most people generate their wealth through the equity they build in the houses they own. We know Black homeownership is nearly 30% lower than that of whites nationally, a rate exacerbated by homes owned by Black being “valued substantially less, especially when they reside in predominantly Black and brown neighborhoods.”<sup>lvii</sup>

GWP has also looked at The Opportunity Atlas developed by the Census Bureau and Harvard and Brown universities. The Atlas analyzes economic mobility, defined as the ability of children from a specific neighborhood to rise out of poverty. Although the larger region's economic mobility score is higher than the median, there are enormous variations. “Fairfax County and Montgomery County rank 2nd and 12th, respectively, out of the 150 largest counties in mobility. ... In contrast, Prince George's County and DC rank 107th and 142nd in terms of economic mobility, respectively.”<sup>lviii</sup>



The gaps go beyond the above list but suffice in painting a picture of the region's challenges in bridging wealth, income, and the jobs gaps. As GWP asserts, Covid-19 is likely to have “amplif(ied) the structural and socioeconomic challenges for communities of color disproportionately than for whites.”<sup>lix</sup>

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Government's (MWCOG) Regional Economic Monitoring System report (January 2021) showed the global pandemic's devastating economic impact, exacerbating these challenges. As of December 2020, “over-the-year employment decreased by 177,800 jobs or 5.2% in the region. The hardest-hit sectors for job losses in the

region include Leisure and Hospitality, which decreased by 25% (24.5% of those jobs in Food Services), and Education and Health Services, which decreased by nearly 7%.”<sup>lx</sup>

### Key Workforce Barriers to Inclusive Regional Growth

In the Greater Washington Workforce Development Collaborative’s 2015 analysis of the state of the regional workforce a half-decade after the Great Recession, it found that: “[d]espite widespread prosperity and rates of unemployment and poverty that fall below national averages, the burden of unemployment is unevenly distributed across racial/ ethnic groups and geographic territories in the Washington metro area. Disparate economic growth and access to opportunity leaves a large share of residents unable to fully participate in the regional economy.”<sup>lxi</sup>

The collaborative found that Black and Hispanic residents in the region were three times more likely than White residents to earn poverty wages and that “wage and employment inequalities persist for women, people of color, and younger workers.”<sup>lxii</sup>

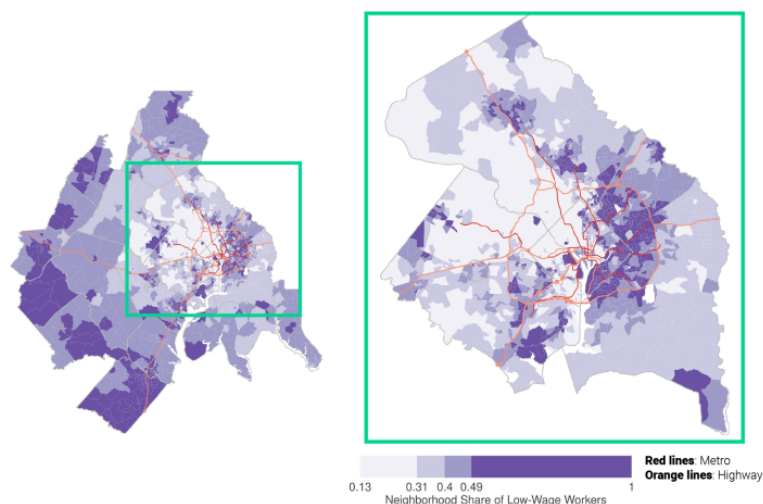
The Collaborative’s analysis also found that 43% of hiring in suburban Maryland

(Montgomery and Prince George’s counties) was for middle-skill jobs and that the median hourly wage for those jobs in the overall region stood at \$35.27/hour, 14% higher than the region’s estimated living wage at the time. <sup>lxiii</sup> This is a positive feature of the region’s economy.

Yet too many workers in the DC region encounter multiple barriers to pathways to middle-skill jobs, including “educational attainment, limited English proficiency, family caregiving responsibilities, excessive commutes and limited access to transit, and criminal records, among others.” <sup>lxiv</sup>

A recent Brookings report shows that low-wage workers in the DC region are far more often found on the east side of the region, particularly eastern Wards of the District of Columbia and the inner ring suburbs of Prince George’s County. (Note this also extends in a limited way into inner-ring suburbs in southwestern Montgomery County as well.)

**Figure 5. Low-wage workers comprise a large share of workers in neighborhoods east of the District and the exurbs**  
Neighborhoods, shaded in proportion to their share of low-wage workers



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020

**B** Metropolitan Policy Program  
at BROOKINGS

Because job centers are located outside of those demographic concentrations, too many low-wage workers in eastern parts of the region must spend significant time and money commuting to those centers. These commutes *could* be made worse by proposed cuts being considered to public transportation in and around DC because many of these workers “cannot afford to own cars and those who work irregular or off-peak hours when transit service is less frequent.”<sup>lxv</sup>

### The Need for Far More Tech Talent

The region that runs from Baltimore to the north to Richmond in the south is considered the nation’s second-largest technology hub. The emergence of this hub has spawned an enormous demand for family-sustaining jobs requiring a range of IT skills that regional employers have had a very difficult time coming close to filling, even before the pandemic.

“By 2025, the forecasted supply gap is about 50% for tech talent and about 67% for tech adjacent talent. Tech talent demand is concentrated among a few occupations. Workers need to improve their digital literacy to execute the same tasks as before, and automation will enhance this need. Though the Capital Region’s tech and tech adjacent workforce is more diverse than that of our peers, Black and African American and Hispanic and Latino tech workers are underrepresented compared with the region’s workforce overall.”<sup>lxvi</sup>

### Following the Blueprint of Maryland’s 2020-2024 WIOA State Plan

As was true prior to the pandemic, the occupations that are most in demand continue to be in healthcare and information technology across the state. The same holds true for advertised openings looking for specific certifications as part of the requirements for applying for jobs (e.g., Certified Nursing Assistant in health care; Cisco Associate certification in IT).

Maryland’s 2020-2024 Workforce and Innovation Act (WIOA) plan describes the populations in the state (in 2018) with the greatest barriers to employment including those with/in:

- Disabilities (11.4% of the population, labor force participation rate, 50.6%)
- Low incomes (14.8% of the population, participation rate unknown)
- Poverty (9% of the population, 50.9% participation rate, 24.8% unemployment rate)
- Youth (6.3% of population, 37.5 participation rate, 17.3% unemployment)
- English language barriers (7% of population, participation and unemployment rate unknown)

Those populations, along with others with barriers or needing support, are who the Maryland Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL) asks each county workforce board to target in its program and service offerings.<sup>lxvii</sup>

Seven years ago, the Maryland Department of Labor (MDOL) launched what has become a nationally recognized program in industry-led job training partnerships, known as **EARN (Employment Advancement Right Now) Maryland**. EARN programs across the state have included partnerships in health care, construction, biotech, cybersecurity, and logistics, among others, to support jobseekers with training that furthers – or starts – their careers in occupations in these sectors. It is designed to ensure that industry employers have the talent they need to

grow. These programs include support for those with specific barriers to employment along with career readiness and advancement support. As of late 2019, EARN programs across the state had served nearly 7,500 Maryland residents. In recent years, the Hogan administration has provided additional funds for training in cyber and information technology as well as green jobs training. <sup>lxviii</sup>

In 2016, MDOL began to significantly expand the state's commitment to **registered apprenticeships (RA)**. The state received \$1.1 million in funding from USDOL for 2017 and 2018 and an additional nearly \$3 million in 2019 to expand apprenticeship programs (including for youth and returning citizens) and staffing resources. In 2019, the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program served nearly 11,000 RAs across 110 occupations through participation of more than 150 apprenticeship sponsors and nearly 3,800 employers. <sup>lxix</sup>

MDOL also continues to invest in **career pathways programs** which integrate high-quality education, specific job training, and support services to help foster job and career pathways to adult learners with higher employment aspirations but also with current, employment barriers. The funding supports programs tied to industry needs for specific types of skills, access to secondary and postsecondary educational options, career and education counseling, and other services that can help a Marylander advance his or her career path. Adult education in these programs can also serve English language learners (ELL), helping effectively these learners to obtain literacy and high school equivalencies as well as training and employment services. <sup>lxx</sup>

### The Recovery Begins

Maryland's economy has continued to grow back slowly. Jobs grew for the 12<sup>th</sup> consecutive month in April 2021. Economists expect job recovery to continue at a steady pace for the foreseeable future.

Specific industries in the state continue to recruit at a large scale. In the first week of June 2021, healthcare employers held the top five spots for job openings statewide (Johns Hopkins Health System, University of Maryland Medical System, LifeBridge, HH Medstar Health, Adventist Health). The *Healthcare and Social Assistance* industry featured the highest number of openings (25,370), followed closely by *Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services* (22,431).

<sup>lxxi</sup>

That same week in Maryland, *Information Technology* positions featured three of the top seven job types advertised – computer system engineers, network and computer system administrators, and computer programmers (#2, #5, and #7). *Healthcare* had the #1 and #6 positions advertised in the state (registered nurses and nursing assistants). Numbers 3 and 4, respectively, were retail salespersons and customer service representatives. <sup>lxxii</sup>

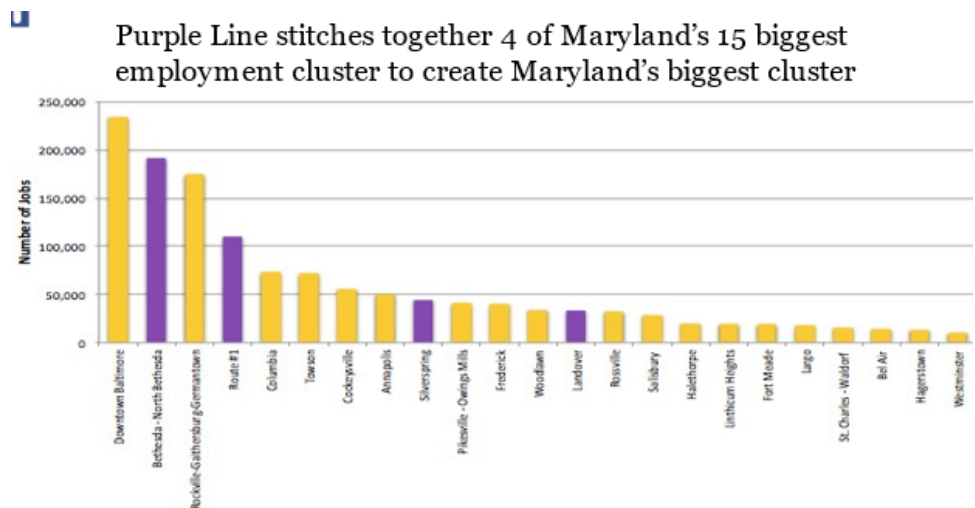


## Purple Line Corridor: Workforce Context

The Purple Line corridor serves as a significant economic engine for Maryland. The line stitches together four of Maryland's biggest employment clusters: Bethesda, Silver Spring, Route One (with College Park at the heart of the route), and Landover (which includes New Carrollton).

It encompasses only 2% of the land area of the two counties but features 15% of its employment, 13% of the total number of businesses, and 10% of its property value.<sup>lxxiii</sup> However, despite the corridor's prowess, substantial workforce disparities exist.

The Coalition breaks the corridor down into five sub-areas, each with a very different employment profile.



- **Bethesda-Chevy Chase** has a high concentration of employment with large sectors in professional office jobs located in the central business districts of these communities.
- **Silver Spring** also has a high concentration of employment with large sectors in professional office jobs located in its central business district.
- **Riverdale-New Carrollton** has the third-largest employment share and is the only one with a substantial share of industrial land, supporting a concentration of transportation and warehousing jobs.
- **The University of Maryland (UMD)** subarea has a high share of employment in educational services, the largest industry segment in the Corridor.
- **The International Corridor** is largely zoned for residential use with limited employment opportunities and services that primarily serve local residents.<sup>lxxiv</sup>

The corridor is one of the more racially and ethnically diverse areas anywhere in Maryland. However, each section has unique demographics. The Bethesda-Chevy Chase is the least racially diverse. More than 80% of residents in this sub-area are White. The Riverdale-New Carrollton and the International Corridor sub-areas are racially diverse, with well more than half being residents of color.

There are significant variations, if not disparities, in median household income across the sub-areas. The median household income for Bethesda-Chevy Chase is more than twice that of three of the other four sub-areas. Only the University of Maryland sub-area at \$82,900 comes close to reaching the statewide median (\$84,805). The Silver Spring sub-area is well below Montgomery County's median household income of \$108,820. New Carrollton sub-area's median household income is well below Prince George's (\$84,920).

Although nearly "half of residents in the corridor hold a bachelor's or advanced degree compared to about 30% of the population nationally and 40% statewide"<sup>lxxv</sup>, only 17% and 23%, respectively, do in the Riverdale-New Carrollton and International Corridor sub-areas. Further, 55% of residents in the Riverdale-New Carrollton residents sub-area have a high school diploma or less, as do 57% in the International Corridor sub-area.<sup>lxxvi</sup>

This percentage is far higher than the national percentage, which is about 39%<sup>lxxvii</sup>, and results in too many residents restricted to low-wage and low-skill jobs.

Figure 3-1. Population demographics as percentage of the population by subarea

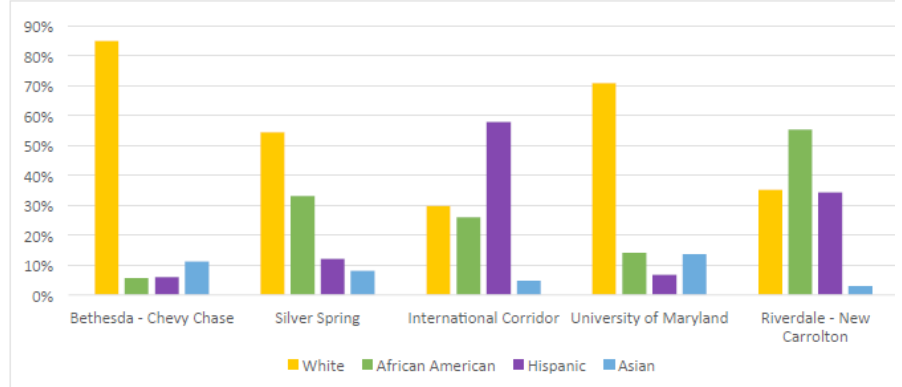
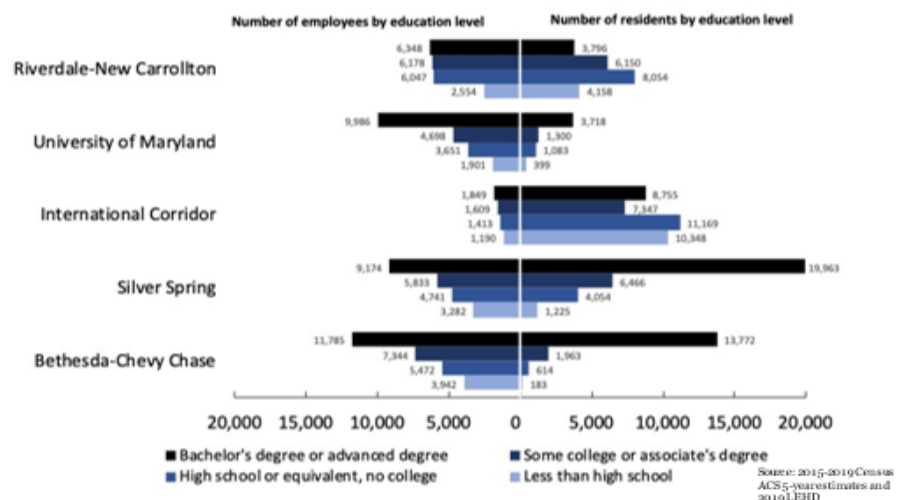


Table 3-3. Median household income by subarea

Subarea	Median Household Income
Bethesda-Chevy Chase	\$141,331.35
Silver Spring	\$62,219.77
International Corridor	\$63,095.94
University of Maryland	\$82,899.56
New Carrollton	\$62,977.38

## Jobs-Worker Balance by Subarea





Pre-pandemic, private companies in six industries in the corridor comprised nearly two-thirds of the top 100 in the corridor. See the table below for the details.

<b>Top Private Employers in the Corridor</b>	
Administrative Support, Waste Mgt. & Remediation	14 employers in the top 100, 8 in the top 50
Building and Construction	13 in the top 100, 7 in the top 50
Profession, Scientific, and Technical Services	10 in the top 100, 3 in the top 50
Health Care and Social Assistance	10 in the top 100, 4 in the top 50
Retail Trade	9 in the top 100, 1 in the top 50
Accommodation and Food Services	8 in the top 100, 3 in the top 50

Top private employers include the presence of nationally known companies and brands like IBM, Discovery, UPS, CVS, and Boston Consulting Group, well-known regional firms like Clark Construction and Eagle Bank, emerging tech companies like 2U, and industry leaders like Hargrove and Freeman Decorating Services.

**Top public employers** in the corridor include the University of Maryland-College Park, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, WMATA, University of Maryland Global Campus, and the U.S. Departments of Treasury, Defense, and Commerce.

Public and private employers employ nearly 124,000 workers in the corridor, with 57.2% employed in the Montgomery segment of the corridor and 42.8% in the Prince George's segment. Forty-seven-and-a-half percent are considered middle-skill jobs, high-skill is 39.5%, and low-skill, 13%. A little more than 60% of low-skill, about 54% of the middle-skill, and approximately 57% of the high-skill jobs are in Montgomery.<sup>lxxviii</sup>

It's important to keep in mind the industry clusters each county has targeted for growth and as key to their economic development:

<b>Targeted Industry Clusters (by County)</b>	
<b><u>Montgomery County</u></b>	<b><u>Prince George's County</u></b>
Biohealth / Biosciences	Federal Government
Information Technology and Cybersecurity	Hospitals & Health Services
Financial Services	Information Technology & Services
Advanced Manufacturing	Research Intensive Industries (3 sub-clusters):
Corporate/Regional HQ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Biosciences; Instruments &amp; Electronics; Research, Development, and Engineering</li> </ul>
Hospitality	<b><u>Contributing Clusters</u></b>
Entrepreneurs/Innovators	Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics
	Destination Retail (and Placemaking)

In their programs, the lead workforce agencies for each county – Employ Prince George’s (EPG) and Worksource Montgomery (WSM) – feature target industries that overlap in important ways with the county’s set of target industries.

EPG features four “industry bridge” programs in Construction, Information Technology, Hospitality and Accommodation, and Healthcare. WSM targets the following industries in its programming: IT/cybersecurity, healthcare, hospitality, construction, bioscience, and entrepreneurship. You can read more about these in the chart on page 48.

At the end of 2020, the number of jobs had declined from approximately 214,500 to about 204,000. The number of jobs sits below pre-2015 employment levels across the zip codes the corridor touches in both counties.<sup>lxxix</sup> For Prince George’s County as a whole, employment sits at 2011 levels.

In recent years, the top five industries in the corridor have been:

- Educational Services
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- Public Administration
- Administrative Support and Waste Management
- Health Care and Social Assistance

During 2020, Transportation and Warehousing moved into the top five, as did Construction, although these moves may be temporary due to the pandemic. Accommodation and Food Services dropped out of the top ten.

The occupations that showed the most significant leaps in growth across the corridor’s thirteen zip codes were:

- Business and financial operations – rose from #5 to #1
- Educational instruction and library – rose from #4 to #2
- Healthcare support – rose from #11 to #4
- Community and social service – rose from #10 to #5
- Transportation and material moving – rose from #9 to #6
- Farming, Fishing, and forestry – rose from #15 to #7

The occupations showing the largest declines were in (1) food preparation and serving related and (2) personal care and service.<sup>lxxx</sup> These declines are likely to be temporary.

In early June 2021, the three industries based in Prince George’s advertising the most job openings were in Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; Health Care and Social

Assistance; and Retail Trade. In Montgomery County, the top two industries hiring were the same; the third was Manufacturing.<sup>lxxxix</sup>

### Purple Line Construction and Operation: Workforce Opportunities

In the first two-plus years of the construction of the Purple Line across both counties (late 2017-early 2020), the concessionaire and sub-contractors have employed nearly 3,500 individuals. Approximately 40% of those were residents of both counties (Prince George's, 999; Montgomery, 366). About 40% of workers came from outside of Maryland, with the remaining 20 or so percent coming from other parts of Maryland. The coalition will continue to work with MTA and the new concessionaire (when hired in late 2021) to find ways to increase the percentage of local hires.<sup>lxxxii</sup>

Within the next couple of years, the coalition will seek to work with another part of the concessionaire team, the Purple Line Transit Operators (PLTO) who are yet to be constituted formally, to ensure that residents of both counties fill the pipeline of more than 200 permanent jobs in operating and maintaining the line when it opens. Jobs will include train operators as well as those who will support line operations and maintain the vehicles, tracks, overhead power lines, power sub-stations, passenger stations and other infrastructure associated with the Purple Line. The opening of the line is not expected for at least another 3-5 years.

### Unemployment – Maryland, the Counties, and the Corridor

Finally, it is essential to understand where the state, the counties, and the corridor stand concerning unemployment levels.

Maryland. On March 31, 2021, the number of residents employed had dropped by more than 160,000 from December 31, 2019. At the end of April 2021, the state's unemployment rate was 5.8%, despite 12 consecutive months of job growth. The number of unemployed residents stood at 181,434, *down* more than 100,000 since May 2021, but *up* almost 55,000 since just before the pandemic.<sup>lxxxiii</sup>

Montgomery County. The number of unemployed in the county rose from 17,600 in March 2020 to a peak of 46,700 in spring 2020 (an increase of more than 2.5 times). By March 2021, it had declined to 30,375, but almost 13,000 higher than a year before. In April 2021, Montgomery's employment levels were still well below its March 2020 peak of 550,000. As of April 2021, unemployment stood at 5.5.

Prince George's County. The number of unemployed rose from 21,300, pre-pandemic, to 43,900 by the end of May 2020. By March 2021, it had fallen to 39,133, up by more than 16,000 from a year before. In April 2021, Prince George's had approximately 452,400 residents employed, comparable to levels back nearly a decade ago. The unemployment rate had bumped back up to 8% in April 2021 from a low of 7.6% two months earlier.<sup>lxxxiv</sup>

Nationally as of this writing (early June '21), the unemployment rate declined to 5.8% overall. The jobless rate for Blacks stood at 9.1%, for Hispanics, it was 7.3%, and for Whites, it was 5.1%.<sup>lxxxv</sup> Historically, the Black unemployment rate is about two times higher than the rate for

Whites. We don't know the racial and ethnic breakdown for Maryland or the two counties, but we can assume it follows similar trends.

As we saw before, during the pandemic, joblessness has skewed toward lower-wage/lower-skill workers. Therefore, in places where many Black and Latino residents hold lower-wage jobs in the corridor, the unemployment rate quite likely exceeds 10%, especially in neighborhoods in Greater Riverdale, Langley Park, and Northern Gateway, Long Branch, and in parts of Takoma Park and Silver Spring.

## The Need for MORE ALIGNED Workforce Systems Locally (& Nationally)

Workforce development systems in the U.S. are not famous for being well-aligned or, for that matter, well-resourced. Like it has with so many “systems” across the nation, the pandemic has exposed inefficiencies, flaws, and gaps in workforce development systems. To tackle the nation's workforce and labor market issues in 2021, we have no choice but to create more aligned and cohesive workforce systems. This section will explore the dynamics behind why workforce development is not nearly aligned as well as it should be to meet the critical needs of this moment. Although the focus of this analysis is primarily national, the insights and findings have high relevance to both counties and the Purple Line corridor.

Urban Institute defines a local workforce system as “a set of organizations and activities that prepares people for employment, helps workers advance in their careers, and seeks to build a skilled workforce to support employers and the local economy.”<sup>lxxxvi</sup>

As a general rule, local workforce systems:

- Provide employment services (e.g., career readiness training, job placement strategies, etc.),
- Provide education and training (through workforce system organizations like community colleges and community-based organizations),
- Provide supportive services (including childcare, transportation, case management, etc.),
- Support employers human resource needs, and
- Improve job quality and access (especially for people in low-wage, low-skill jobs)

*Workforce systems serve a wide range of individuals*, including:

- “Unemployed or underemployed workers
- Youth (those in CTE programs, those who didn't complete H.S., those seeking post-secondary credentials, and ‘disconnected’ youth)
- Adults with low basic skills (includes those who haven't earned an h.s. diploma, those lacking basic competencies to enter postsecondary education and training, and immigrants who haven't mastered English)

- People with personal challenges to work (including those who have difficulty accessing or affording quality and safe childcare; those facing economic hardship; those who are housing insecure; those with mental health or substance abuse challenges; returning citizens, those with physical disabilities; those with cultural or language barriers)
- Workers seeking career change or advancement.<sup>lxxxvii</sup>

Workforce development, then, should *focus primarily on those workers and students without bachelor's degrees.*<sup>lxxxviii</sup>

Urban Institute's graphic below depicts the critical components of a local workforce system. The key to the system's success is to get all the elements working together coherently and cohesively.<sup>lxxxix</sup>

**Five strategic goals** that partners *in Maryland's workforce system* established during Governor Hogan's second term set an excellent benchmark for goals we should have in the corridor's workforce system. The five are to increase the earning capacity of Marylanders by:

1. Maximizing access to employment.
2. Maximizing access to and use of skills and credentialing.
3. Maximizing access to and use of life management skills.
4. Eliminating barriers to employment through the use of supportive services. And,
5. Strengthening and enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the workforce system.<sup>xc</sup>



*"Local Workforce Systems Infographic," Urban Institute website.*

Holzer identifies two overarching reasons why the labor markets in a nation or a region generate insufficient education or training to prepare workers sufficiently for the jobs marketplace: "(1) market failures that generate less than the socially optimal investments, and (2) inequities that generate too little education or training among the disadvantaged or displaced."<sup>xc</sup>

Regarding #1, employers (especially small- and medium-size organizations) often face financial constraints to conduct training. They only infrequently coordinate with others in their industry to address those constraints. Employers may hesitate to invest in training out of fear, misplaced or not, about the ineffectiveness of training programs or the trainees' capacities. Employers may also have ill-informed or prejudiced views about the target population for trainees for lower-skill jobs.

Regarding #2, workers often may have insufficient information or too few resources to gain access to the training they may need. Or, they may lack confidence or baseline skills (including soft skills) to complete the training successfully, which can then lead to better jobs and career pathways. Displaced workers encounter additional negative forces, including loss of seniority from their previous jobs, the need to switch industries or occupation types for which they're not currently equipped, and a real risk of permanent earnings loss. Many may withdraw from the labor market entirely, especially during the current Covid-19 economy. <sup>xcii</sup>

***Workers who do receive training typically access it through one of three routes:***

- For-credit or noncredit certificate programs and occupational associate's degrees from 2-year colleges
- Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) through American Jobs Centers to receive vouchers for training and other workforce services from approved local providers
- Employer-provided, on-the-job training or work-based learning opportunities (e.g., apprenticeships) <sup>xciii</sup>

Numerous studies help to clarify which ***investments in training and workforce services yield the most effective return***. Among the findings are:

- Associate's degrees typically have a higher payoff than certificates, although it depends on the area of study.
- For working adults, shorter, non-degree programs tend to be more attractive because the positive results can come more quickly.
- Pell grants, in general, are a cost-effective investment for helping low-income students attain credentials.
- Federal and state spending on reduced tuition or funding support services to underrepresented students is a worthy government investment. In particular, programs like Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) and Stay the Course improve credential completion rates at 2-year colleges for disadvantaged students, especially when evaluated rigorously.
- Using ITAs for WIOA-based training can be cost-effective for disadvantaged adults but less so for displaced workers (not all studies agree).



- Sector-based training for high-demand jobs has also been shown to be cost-effective if rigorously evaluated. Successful examples include Project QUEST (San Antonio), Per Scholas (IT training across more than a dozen U.S. cities), and a Milwaukee-based partnership program focused on manufacturing and construction trades.<sup>xciv</sup>

Nationally, only 60% of students complete certificates within six years, and only 39% complete associate's degrees within that same time. According to multiple studies, too many students receive the academic and career guidance they need to navigate their academic programs effectively and efficiently. Holzer and others identify **significant challenges nationally for workforce systems:**

- Many students from low-wealth households attend weaker postsecondary institutions because of poor academic preparation and lack of information about how to access stronger institutions.
- Students have access to too little public assistance for workforce program enrollment.
- Workforce providers receive too little funding and inadequate incentives to invest in such programs when funding is so limited.
- Employers invest too little in work-based learning or worker retraining when jobs are displaced.
- Postsecondary institutions and workforce organizations often work in fragmented and uncoordinated ways that hinder sufficient and versatile responses to regional labor demands.<sup>xcv</sup>

**Public funding of workforce development is a critical problem.** The government funds workforce development locally through Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) boards. Funding for WIOA, relative to the size of the labor force and the economy, *is lower today than in 1980*. This funding level translates to only one-tenth of one percent of GDP, a minuscule amount compared to European nations. The typical ITA for a worker looking to upgrade his or her skills is a paltry \$2,000.

Although funding for two-year colleges is more robust, public funding per full-time student (FTEs) in these colleges is well below funding for FTEs in four-year colleges, even though two-year colleges serve a far higher percentage of disadvantaged students who have a greater need for supports.



Students in certificate programs typically don't have access to federal funding (e.g., Pell grants or Title IV assistance), which too often means they must pursue the education on their own dime. Lack of federal funding for community colleges to offer certificate programs also means the institutions are challenged to invest in programs that yield the best labor market returns.

Failure for many large companies and employers to provide work-based learning (WBL) also compromises the overall workforce development system. Smaller employers find it hard to fund and scale such programs.

Historically, trade unions championed and organized apprenticeships, especially in the manufacturing and construction industries. However, such apprenticeships have declined precipitously with the dramatic decline of private-sector unions in recent decades. <sup>xvii</sup>

Holzer and others argue that despite countless quality (but isolated) workforce development efforts, *our fragmented approaches nationally and regionally significantly impede overall effectiveness in outcomes*. "Major reforms are needed to improve worker outcomes and to ensure that all Americans in need of workforce services in the coming years will be able to obtain them." <sup>xviii</sup>

### Framework for Changing Workforce Systems

Urban Institute's Bernstein and Martin-Caughey outline a framework for changing workforce systems. *Systems change* is not focused on delivering training services to workers or trainees. It *is focused on transforming how organizations support employers and the workforce with far greater effectiveness*.

A highly effective workforce system has five goals (see diagram):

### Overcoming Fragmentation in Workforce Development

Despite countless quality but isolated workforce development efforts everywhere, our fragmented approaches nationally and regionally significantly impede overall effectiveness in outcomes. "Major reforms are needed to improve worker outcomes and to ensure that all Americans in need of workforce services in the coming years will be able to obtain them."

### Insufficient Public Funding for Workforce Development

Public funding of workforce development is a critical problem. A primary way the government funds workforce development locally is through workforce innovation and opportunity act (WIOA) boards. Funding for WIOA, relative to the size of the labor force and the economy, is lower today than it was in 1980. This funding level translates to only one-tenth of one percent of GDP, a miniscule amount compared to European nations.

- Collaboration is built around a shared vision for serving both workers and employers.
- Programs and services are easily accessed and well known, especially to those with genuine barriers to employment.
- Employers are active partners in sharing their critical business needs and invested in the success of programs.
- Key workforce players use quality data to track systems change progress and continuously improve and redesign programs and services as needed.
- The system builds to a scale that is sustainable and reliably meets the needs of individuals (for good jobs and opportunities for advancement) and employers (for hiring and retaining workers with needed skills).<sup>xcviii</sup>

The National Fund for Workforce Solutions (NWFS) is a champion for systems change in workforce systems. It emphasizes that the change must include systems workforce development connects to – like education, housing, child care, and transportation.<sup>xcix</sup> Ultimately, “systems change focuses on changing policy, practice, perceptions, funding, and institutions.”<sup>c</sup>

And, we would argue, **with racial equity at the center** of and the guiding force for all these dimensions.



Systems Change Goals (Fig. 2) in "Changing Workforce Systems" by Bernstein & Martin-Caughey, Urban Inst., Feb 2017.

## The Need for **MORE EQUITABLE** Workforce Systems Locally

“Every decision we make as regional economic development and planning leaders should be addressing the socioeconomic divide through an equitable growth lens.”<sup>ci</sup> This quote from a recent GWP report, “One. A Blueprint for Enduring Collaboration to Advance Economic Opportunity and Equity in Greater Washington,” provides critical guidance for how the coalition should operate regarding workforce issues, strategies, and outcomes in the Purple Line corridor.

For too long in the D.C. region and the corridor, racial equity has taken a backseat when it has come to economic progress. Or, to keep the analogy going, equity has long stood at the bus stop for transportation that runs infrequently, unpredictably, and breaks down habitually. This section highlights how to center racial equity and sustain a commitment to it in the future.

A recent PolicyLink report defines workforce equity this way:

*“Workforce equity means racial income gaps have been eliminated, all jobs are good jobs, and everyone who wants to work has access to family-supporting employment.”*

This definition obviously sets an extraordinarily high bar to be accomplished decades into the future. Yet, it establishes an urgency for action because we know how vast the racial income gaps are, how many thousands of corridor residents that work in low-skill, low-wage jobs, and the vast number struggling to attain stable, livable wage, “good” jobs.

We saw earlier how lack of postsecondary degrees hampers large numbers of workers where racial disparities persist. We’ve seen, as well, how the industries hardest hit by temporary or even more permanent unemployment have been lower-wage industries where Blacks and Latinos predominate. And, we’ve now read how automation and the rising, digitalized economy stand ready to eliminate millions more jobs in the next half-decade, especially those performed by workers in lower-skill (often, service-sector) jobs.<sup>cii</sup>

Educational inequities, nationally and locally, have reinforced these gaps. So has residential segregation and all the historical and contemporary factors that accompany that segregation: housing and food insecurity, to name just two. Recent studies have shown how racial bias and discrimination have remained persistent in labor markets. Financial insecurity also persists in the corridor, often because too many residents remain unbanked or underbanked. Having a criminal record, which is often tied to deep racial injustices, also prevents too many workers from fully participating in the economy.

Finally, “[m]eaningful access to employment entails more than education, training, and equitable hiring practices. It also depends on an individual’s ability to take advantage of a given job opportunity: living close enough to the worksite, having reliable and affordable transportation, being able to arrange dependable family care, and enjoying affordable health care and benefits like paid leave that support employment stability and worker well-being.”<sup>ciii</sup>

All these factors argue clearly for implementing a workforce development system - and set of strategies - that have racial equity at their core. The literature for workforce development and racial equity has increased manifold over the past decade. We have been influenced heavily by reports from PolicyLink, Race Forward, The National Skills Coalition, and others to shape our thinking on workforce issues. As a result of their good works, we have developed **ten guiding principles<sup>civ</sup>** that should guide our thinking and action to ensure a racial equity focus:

1. ***Ensuring far more residents of color*** and residents making lower incomes are prepared ***to enter and succeed in the labor market***. (PolicyLink)
2. ***Expanding access to certifications for residents of color*** to put them on pathways for higher-paying jobs and careers (RACE Forward)

3. **Targeting and including overlooked populations in workforce development**, such as returning citizens and English-language learners (CLASP and GWCF)
4. **Providing comprehensive support services** that reverse systemic disinvestment for workers of color. (RACE Forward)
5. **Engaging employers to commit to racially equitable systems change** in employment practices and culture (PolicyLink)
6. **Investing in innovative training and credentialing models** (PolicyLink)
7. **Increasing the use of skills-based hiring, retention, and advancement strategies** (Pathways to Work Equity Advisory Group – Metropolitan Dallas)
8. **Boosting sector partnerships to drive industry-specific training and hiring strategies** that emphasize participation by residents of color (National Skills Coalition)
9. **Providing digital access and learning for all working people at home and on the job** (National Skills Coalition)
10. **Collecting and tracking outcome-focused data by race.** For example, it is challenging to obtain disaggregated unemployment data to see how unemployment varies by race at the state, county, and corridor level. (PolicyLink)

## Workforce Equity for a Competitive Purple Line Corridor



The region and the corridor's workforce have grown far more racially and ethnically diverse in recent decades and will grow even more diverse in the next decade. The region's racial disparities have increased as well. Both in the corridor and around greater Washington, it is time to re-create workforce development systems that effectively bridge these huge gaps and prepare a diverse workforce aligned with the rapidly evolving needs of local and regional employers, large and small.

## Key Players in the Purple Line Corridor Workforce System

Without question, the workforce development agencies and the community colleges in both Prince George's and Montgomery counties not only carry out essential functions for employers, workers, and residents, but have gone *above and beyond* during the extraordinarily challenging, dual economic and public health crisis. From a distance, we have marveled at the full range of adjustments, modifications, and sometimes, yes, transformations they have had to make to serve residents during this challenging, lengthy, and highly uncertain period.

Below, we briefly highlight the key roles these four organizations play, linked to workforce development in the corridor. All descriptions are derived directly from the organizational website.

We also briefly describe the robust career and technical education (CTE) programs both county school systems deliver, emphasizing high schools located in or near the corridor.

**Employ Prince George's (EPG)** is the principal workforce development entity for Prince George's County. EPG provides workforce intelligence and solutions for job seekers and businesses. EPG's mission is to contribute to the economic vitality of Prince George's County by providing a demand-driven system that delivers qualified workers to business and provides job seekers with opportunities for careers in high-demand/high-growth industries. (from the EPG website)

During the pandemic, EPG launched an online medical assistant training program in collaboration with MedCerts and Goodwill. It also partnered with 2U and George Washington University to launch the Access 2 Education Scholarship Fund enabling county residents. In June, EPG launched its Encore Program for experienced workers over the age of 50

EPG also recently brought its acclaimed customized program design to immigrants, refugees, asylees, and English language learners in Prince George's County via its new Career Pathways for All (CPFA) Program. Residents and community groups will especially welcome this in the International Corridor in the Langley Park/Northern Gateway/Hyattsville neighborhoods, where the Latinx and African populations are large.

EPG runs the American Job Center (AJC)-Largo and has plans for the AJC-National Harbor and the AJC-Temple Hills. It also operates the countywide AJC Community Network (AJCCN). You can read more about the programs EPG offers in the box on page 48.

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**Worksource Montgomery (WSM)** is the principal workforce development entity for Montgomery County. It sees its mission as threefold: meeting the talent attraction, development, and retention needs of strategic industries, meeting the needs of the underemployed and unemployed, and developing career pathways that lead to sustainable wage jobs and support a thriving mission.

WSM recently launched a partnership with the Washington Area New Auto Dealers Associations (WANADA) to establish an auto technician training program for county residents. WANADA's institute will provide hands-on training and mentorship for the program. In April 2021, it launched an RFP to secure a partner that will offer comprehensive employment and training programs – including support services - for Out-of-School Youth, ages 16-24.



WSM runs the American Job Centers in Wheaton and Germantown and also offers H.I.R.E (Helping Individuals Reach Employment) pop-up services in a range of county libraries and community centers throughout the year. H.I.R.E comes to the Takoma Park Community Center (in the corridor) the first Tuesday of every month from 9:30-11:30am. You can read more about the programs WSM offers in the box on page 48.

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**Montgomery College (MC)** is the community college serving all of Montgomery County and was ranked by Academic Influence as one of the best community colleges of 2021 and among the top community colleges in the country for return on investment.

MC features campuses in Germantown, Rockville, and Takoma Park/Silver Spring (in the Purple Line Corridor) and has training and community engagement centers throughout the county (Silver Spring, Wheaton, and Gaithersburg). The downtown Silver Spring campus will be walkable to the Purple Line. MC offers a wide range of workforce development-oriented courses and programs, including high-growth industries like health sciences, information technology, and business.

MC also features the Gudelsky Institute for Technical Education that offers programs (credit & noncredit) in four areas: automotive technology, building and construction technology, digital fabrication, and workforce technologies.

The college publishes a comprehensive Career Preparation and Training Resource Guide ([LINK](#)) to detail its full range of training, licensure, and certification programs. MC also offers a wide range of online noncredit courses in workforce development and continuing education.

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**Prince George's Community College (PGCC)** is the community college serving Prince George's County. It features a main campus in Largo and has sites on Joint Base Andrews, Laurel College Center (a joint effort with Howard Community College), a Skilled Trades Center in Camp Springs, University Town Center in Hyattsville, and the Westphalia Training Center in Upper Marlboro.

PGCC offers more than 200 academic and career training programs, serving more than 40,000 students each year. The college operates six institutes: Construction, Energy, and Transportation; IT and Business Services; Hospitality and Culinary; Education, Health, and Human Services; and Public Safety and Security. It also recently launched the Computer and Information Technology Institute to prepare adult learners for entry into the workforce in the technology job market.

The college opened a state-of-the-art Culinary Arts Center in 2018 to much acclaim, with three specialized kitchen labs offering licensing, certification, or an



associate degree. The college provides 138 workforce training certificate programs and 66 government or industry licensure or certifications. The full range of its workforce development and continuing education offerings can be found here ([LINK](#)).

PGCC also opened the first, middle college high school in Maryland to give high school students a chance to earn an associate degree along with their diploma. The Academy of Health Sciences dual enrollment program is offered in partnership with Prince George's County Public Schools.

The University Town Center site is a five-minute walk from Prince George's Plaza station on the Green Line and is located just a couple of miles south of the future Adelphi Road/UMGC Purple Line stop. This site also houses three ESL programs (Academic ESL, Transition ESL, and Adult Education ESL) in addition to numerous certification programs.

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## County School Systems: Career and Technical Education (CTE)

Prince George's County Public Schools	Montgomery County Public Schools
<p>PGCPS offers CTE programs at every high school in the county. Each school features a unique set of CTE programs. Overall, the school system has CTE programs in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Architecture and Design</li> <li>• Business and Finance</li> <li>• Consumer Services, Hospitality, and Tourism</li> <li>• Engineering and Science</li> <li>• Environmental Studies</li> <li>• Graphic Arts, Media, and Communications</li> <li>• Health and Biosciences</li> <li>• Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness</li> <li>• Information Technology</li> <li>• Junior ROTC</li> <li>• Transportation</li> </ul> <p><u><b>High School CTE Programs Most Relevant to the Corridor</b></u></p> <p>PGCPS has three high schools within 1-2 miles of the PL corridor – Parkdale, Northwestern, and Bladensburg.</p> <p><b>Northwestern</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Management, Pre-Engineering, Early Childhood Education</li> </ul> <p><b>Parkdale</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Administrative Services &amp; Business Mgt., ProStart (restaurant &amp; food service), Early Childhood Education, Homeland Security</li> </ul> <p><b>Bladensburg</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electrical, Carpentry, Cosmetology, Culinary Arts &amp; ProStart (restaurant &amp; food svc), Certified Nursing Assistant, Pharmacy Technician, Biomedical Science</li> </ul>	<p>MCPS has three separate non-profit education foundations that support students in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Automotive</li> <li>• Construction</li> <li>• Information Technology</li> </ul> <p>It also offers the following Maryland CTE career clusters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academy of Health Professions</li> <li>• Arts, Media, and Communication</li> <li>• Business Management and Finance</li> <li>• Consumer Services</li> <li>• Education, Training, and Child Studies</li> <li>• Environmental, Agricultural, and Natural Resources</li> <li>• JROTC</li> </ul> <p><u><b>High School CTE Programs Most Relevant to the Corridor</b></u></p> <p>Although the system provides CTE programs in every county high school, it also features two CTE centers, including one at <b>Thomas Edison High School of Technology</b> (6 miles north of the corridor in Wheaton). Thomas Edison offers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Automotive</li> <li>• Construction</li> <li>• Human and Consumer Services</li> <li>• Career Readiness Education Academy (CREA)</li> </ul> <p><b>Montgomery Blair High School</b> (2 miles north of corridor) offers the following academies: Entrepreneurship and Business Management, Human Service Professions, International Studies, Media Literacy, and Science, Math and Computer Science</p>

A recent study published in the National Bureau for Economic Research found that “career and technical education is an important strategy for improving the economic opportunities of students who might not pursue a traditional four-year college degree.”<sup>cv</sup> It also found substantial positive effects for males: high school-age boys are “10 percentage points more likely to graduate from high school and ... have 32% higher quarterly earnings.”<sup>cvi</sup>

Numerous other important workforce development stakeholders are already working in the Purple Line corridor and/or with a potential interest in being involved in future workforce

initiatives. This is by no means an exhaustive list but comprehensive of what we have found thus far.

Important Workforce Development Stakeholders Already in the Purple Line Corridor	
Montgomery Co. providers	Prince George's Co. providers
<p><b>Worksource Montgomery</b> (WSM) has <b>industry alliances</b> to create robust career pathways in numerous sectors. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Health Care</b> – to accelerate the training and placement of qualified nurses (BSN)</li> <li>• <b>Hospitality</b> – in partnership with the American Hotel and Lodging Association for its hotel management program</li> <li>• <b>IT/Cyber</b> – with a consortium of IT companies, this program provides training and placement in advanced coding technologies</li> <li>• <b>Construction</b> – partnering with the national Green Infrastructure Certification Program to prepare residents for work in this high-demand industry</li> </ul> <p>WSM also has targeted programs for youth and dislocated workers, runs an EARN-funded program to get more minorities into IT fields, and has MOUs to offer training for entrepreneurs and those looking to enter into biotech fields (from the WIOA Regional Plan, 2020-2024, p. 18).</p> <p><b>Identity</b> - Provides rigorous job-readiness skills and training; academic enrichment/tutoring; GED prep; ESL; life skills programming; wraparound services; internships/ work experiences. Identity has a Youth Opportunity Center in Takoma Park and an out-of-school time program at Montgomery Blair High School (about 2 miles from the corridor). Along with Latin American Youth Center, Identity is now WSM's lead workforce development provider for youth/young adults in the county.</p> <p>Identity annually serves more than 3,000 youth and families (450 parents) in the county. 77% Latino, 17% Black/AA, 6% other ethnicities. Parents – 9 of 10 foreign-born, 50% with less than a high school diploma. 61% FARMs students; 30% in the US less than a year; 41% separated from parents due to immigration issues; 31% live in a single-parent home, 15% in a 'restructured family.'</p> <p><b>Latin American Youth Center (LAYC)</b> - offers job readiness training, GED, career exploration services, job placement, and retention support to out-of-school, disconnected youth who are not in school or engaged in employment. Offers training, certifications, and internships in 8-week cohorts. Provide hands-on experiences based on career interests. Training includes workplace safety, entrepreneurship, leadership, construction &amp; maintenance, CPR,</p>	<p><b>Employ Prince George's</b> launched its inaugural <b>Industry Bridge Program</b> in 2017. Industry Bridge Programs are comprehensive workforce programs that align Workforce Services, Adult Education, and Occupational Skills Training to meet the workforce needs of specific In-Demand Industries in the DC Metropolitan Area. EPG's four bridge programs are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Construction Works Program (CWP)</b> – with free industry-certified training</li> <li>• Education Partnerships for <b>IT Careers</b> (EPIC) to prepare residents for industry-recognized CompTIA A+ Certification</li> <li>• <b>Hospitality</b> and Accommodation Institute</li> <li>• Capital Area <b>Healthcare</b> Alliance preparing workers for Pharmacy Tech, CNA, GNA, and other higher-paying, fast-growing occupations</li> </ul> <p>With partners, EPG also operates three out-of-school youth programs, one in-school youth program, programs for older workers, and targeted programs for veterans, returning citizens, and immigrants and refugees (from the WIOA Regional Plan, 2020-2024, p. 18).</p> <p><b>American Job Center @ Largo</b> (USDOL) – provides career counselors for job seekers to identify interests, assess skills, advise on potential training and in-demand jobs). Also, it offers Youth Career Center part of AJC networks; one-stop operator model in Largo <b>operated by Eckerd Connects (EC)</b> also promotes training opportunities in high growth, in-demand industries in PGC: healthcare; professional services, IT, construction; accommodation services; retail/hospitality. EC focuses on disconnected youth.</p> <p><b>CASA</b> – has training centers in the corridor in both counties. Provides vocational training, legal services, job placement, ESOL for low-income immigrants, and also serves disconnected youth.</p> <p><b>Latin American Youth Center (LAYC)</b> – operates the Maryland Multicultural Youth Center in Riverdale, which offers job and life skills training, job-readiness supports, paid internships, job placement services, GED preparation 1-on-1 tutoring, case management, and support services for out-of-school youth ages 16-24. LAYC also performs more limited services for youth in Montgomery.</p>

OSHA, and MS Office. Along with Identity, Inc., LAYC is now WSM's lead workforce development provider for youth/young adults in the county.

**MI-BEST: Maryland Integrated Basic Education and Skills**

**Training** - The MI-BEST Certificate Courses are perfect for students whose English skills are high, intermediate, or more advanced but still need improvement. If passed, this course has a test that will provide students with an industry-specific, nationally recognized certification.

- Certificate for Apartment Maintenance Technician/CAMT, which focuses on maintenance
- National Apartment Leasing Certificate Program/ NALP for ESOL Students, which focuses on skills to work in the leasing office

**Byte Back** – in 2017 launched Education Partnership for IT Careers (EPIC) with PGEDC. Provides adult learners with free beginner-to-expert technical training. Industry-recognized Certifications: Microsoft and CompTIA. Administrative professional track careers (admin and office assistants; office managers & AP specialists; benefits specialists; etc.) and IT professional track careers: computer technicians; PC technicians; Help Desk Tier I and II support; IT support specialists; tech support specialists; desktop support techs.

**Sarvis Empowerment Café (CKAR)** – 14-week certified culinary arts and customer service training program with PGCC. Each year will train 45 chefs.

In Appendix I, we provide a far lengthier list of workforce development providers and stakeholders who may be interested in serving the corridor or expanding what they already do for residents in the corridor.

Finally, the **Maryland Department of Labor** will continue to be both a **critical leader and influencer** in the workforce programs that ultimately get delivered in the corridor **and an essential funder** of many of those programs.

## Workforce Strategies for the Purple Line Corridor

Fashioning a set of strategies for the corridor is not straightforward.

In two of the other goal areas for the coalition – housing affordability and small business support - the coalition concerns itself primarily with a narrow corridor no more than a mile wide across sixteen miles from New Carrollton to Bethesda. Typically, workforce development is organized for a municipality or city or an entire county, but not a *narrow corridor* as we have along the Purple Line.

Although residents in many parts of the corridor face similar workforce-related challenges (e.g., high unemployment or many workers in low-wage jobs or low literacy), those specific areas (e.g., Long Branch or Greater Riverdale) reside in *separate* counties, governed separately. Thus, the need for any kind of collaboration is neither automatic nor even obvious.

Further, the coalition does not currently provide workforce training and is unlikely to in the future.

The pandemic interrupted the coalition's initial efforts at collaborative, cross-county planning for workforce development in early 2020. It forced many key workforce development players in both counties to invest significant energy and resources to respond to rapidly emerging conditions for residents and workers for fifteen months. Thus, the pandemic period was not suited for developing a longer-term, collaborative agenda-building.

Yet, the need for robust workforce development systems and solutions in the corridor has never been greater.

Below, we have drafted strategies that we hope fit the needs of the moment.

**Each strategy** is drafted knowing that important work in the counties or the larger region is underway but may *not yet impact enough* (or any) corridor residents.

**Each** is also drafted as *an aspiration for what we hope we will come to be* in the corridor but where there are *not yet enough resources or intensive, localized coordination* to make it happen.

Each is drafted in response to *how the corridor* (as well as the region and nation) *is emerging from a pandemic-induced recession* that has been, as Falecia D. Williams, president of Prince George's Community College, "the most inequitable in modern U.S. history. ... and the eventual recovery threatens to be equally uneven without swift and sweeping action."<sup>cvi</sup>

Our response in the corridor should tend toward also be *sweeping*.

Why? For many reasons, of course. Williams identifies one that is potentially a canary in the proverbial coal mine. During the most recent spring semester, when the need by residents and workers for workforce solutions has been sky-high, community college enrollments nationally

*declined by ten percent*; the falloff was *higher for students of color*. Across the nation and locally, leaders must attend urgently to these negative trendlines.

We need workforce strategies in the corridor – and in both counties – that better prepare workers effectively not just for the regional, post-pandemic economy, but for the “future of work” wave already showing up on our labor market’s shores and sure to heighten over the next several years. As McKinsey and Company reported in May 2021, “[t]he pandemic has dramatically *increased* the speed at which digital is fundamentally changing business.”<sup>cviii</sup> (emphasis added)

### The Most Inequitable Recession in Modern U.S. History

We are experiencing a recession that has been, as Falecia D. Williams, president of Prince George’s Community College “the most inequitable in modern U.S. history. ... and the eventual recovery threatens to be equally uneven without swift and sweeping action.”

All strategies below have as their *intended target populations that*: (a) have historically been disadvantaged by our economic and labor policies (most often Black and Brown); (b) residents and households who are unemployed, underemployed, or toiling at low-wage jobs; (c) returning citizens; (d) young people particularly those with high potential to disconnect from the local economy; and (e) first-generation immigrants; among others.

Those who we have disadvantaged are predominantly of color. That is why racial equity must stay central in policy, programs, and implementation.

The strategies fall into three categories: (1) Advancing a Robust Workforce Advocacy Agenda; (2) Promoting Workforce Programs Aligned with Growing Industries & Occupations; and (3) Bolstering Workforce Development Support Systems & Infrastructure in the Corridor.

## I.

### Advancing a Robust Workforce Advocacy Agenda

- Federal advocacy
- State advocacy
- Local advocacy

Because as Wilson, the president of Prince George’s Community College, says, the economic “recovery threatens to be equally uneven without swift and sweeping action.” And because, as McKinsey and Company reminds us, “[t]he pandemic has dramatically *increased* the speed at which digital is fundamentally changing business,” it is clear that workforce development efforts in the corridor can ill afford to be under-invested.



**Federal Advocacy.** Ultimately, changing the gameboard on workforce development and employment outcomes will require significant additional funds. ***Coalition stakeholders should advocate for:***

- **Funding the Higher Education Act at a higher level** with a specific emphasis for the additional funds to (1) expand eligibility for Pell grants to include shorter, for-credit certificate programs (while reducing the minimum program hours from 600 to 150; and, (2) enable states to expand access to apprenticeships and work-based learning programs that lead to credentials and to expand internship programs for disadvantaged, recent high school graduates (in programs like Year Up).<sup>cix</sup>
- **Making permanent the Trade Adjustment Assistance and Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grants.** Under the Obama administration, TAACCCT successfully awarded \$2 billion in grants to community colleges over four years. Grants focused on improving the functioning and responsiveness of local workforce systems to local and regional labor markets. Evaluations found that “employers were actively engaged in the design and delivery of training, while community colleges engaged in serious curriculum review to identify areas for expanding teaching capacity. ... [and] Partnerships among community colleges, local workforce boards, and industry expanded, especially in high-demand fields.”<sup>cx</sup>

A Council of Economic Advisors report showed that to reach the average public workforce system investment of OECD countries, it would need to invest \$80 billion more *each year*. The \$19 billion it currently invests is less than .1% of the U.S.’s GDP. “Since 2001, Congress has cut funding for our public workforce system by 40%, for CTE by 30% and for basic adult education by nearly 15%.”<sup>cxi</sup>

**State Advocacy.** Although federal resources will be critical to addressing the counties’ and the corridor’s workforce issues at scale, there are essential roles the state can play to ensure more significant workforce development and employment outcomes as well.

- **Make a Larger, More Permanent Investment in Workforce Recovery and Revitalization.** As was indicated earlier in this report, WIOA boards nationally have been significantly underfunded for years and this is no different in Maryland. The funds agencies are provided pale in comparison to what their predecessors received four decades ago. That is no longer acceptable.

The American Rescue Plan allowed Maryland to prioritize, rightfully, more funds for workforce development across the state. Prince George’s received \$11.8 million for FY22 and FY23 while Montgomery received \$8.2 million. These funds will allow both agencies to make investments in new programs while expanding others.

This is very welcome news but also points to the need, at the state level, to make increased funding in annual budgets for workforce development more robust not just to meet immediate and urgent needs but to serve more effectively and expansively the

populations that continue to lag behind on wages, skills, and opportunity. If and when a national infrastructure bill passes, funds from that legislation will provide yet another opportunity to enhance workforce development systems and agencies across the the state.

The coalition should work with other workforce stakeholders in the two counties and the corridor to advocate for increased workforce investments. These investments can be used to expand:

- **Apprenticeship programs** in the corridor and both counties, with an emphasis on serving disadvantaged populations
- **Digital Skills training** aligned with the IT industry and IT-adjacent industries and occupations with an emphasis on serving residents of color
- **Career Pathway programs** deployed by community colleges and WIOA boards with an emphasis on serving the full range of disadvantaged populations
- **Wraparound supports** employed in all training and workforce development programs that use state funds to increase the completion and placement rates of program graduates
- **Adult Literacy and ELS programming** to better enable far more immigrant residents and other residents of color to become eligible for training that can move them into higher-paying, higher-skill jobs
- **Subsidized High-Speed Broadband** for residents in the corridor that are currently underserved by broadband and Internet access that is unaffordable

**County Advocacy.** Although county governments have far greater budgetary constraints on what they alone can invest in workforce development and are highly dependent on federal and state labor department allocations, they are not without significant influence on workforce issues. County leaders determine local appropriations for the community colleges and workforce agencies that supplement state and federal funds.

- **Enhanced Funding to Address Higher Unemployment and Lower Employment Levels.** Given that the decline in employment levels in both counties and the significantly higher unemployment rates, *counties must also step up with enhanced funding to ensure high-quality, well-aligned, highly effective workforce programs expand to meet the current need.* That current need is even higher in key areas of the corridor where we know unemployment is highest and the daily struggle to meet household needs through low-wage jobs persist.

Advocacy for more significant funding will remain an essential priority for the coalition and the corridor during the next several years.

Yet, it is not by any means all that is needed. Many of the programs and initiatives mentioned above regarding workforce recovery and revitalization will need support in implementation regardless of the level of funding. And each will need to be crafted strategically to ensure it leads to the right outcomes.

## II.

### Promoting Workforce Programs Aligned with Growing Industries & Occupations

- Invest in building corridor residents' digital skills aligned with future jobs
- Link residents to sustainable career pathways in high-growth industries & occupations
- Promote the wider use of employer-based apprenticeships
- Call for skills-based hiring: more pathways to more “good” jobs
- Support the Expansion of Entrepreneurial Programs and Entrepreneurs of Color

A need we heard during several interviews was to *expand the number and type of employer partnerships* for workforce development in the corridor. Partnerships would not only entail establishing pipelines for positions demonstrating nearer- and longer-term growth in and near the corridor, but advice and guidance on the development and delivery of curricula, resulting in residents getting hired for open positions. It is particularly this last factor that has been most absent in partnerships historically in the counties and where the coalition may be able to play a useful role, especially for the first three bullets above.

### Invest in Building Corridor Residents' Digital Skills Aligned with Future Jobs

In July 2020, the Greater Washington Partnership (GWP) published “The Capital Region Faces a Huge Tech Talent Shortage” that showed that by 2025 60,000 *annual* technology positions in the region would go unfilled unless the tech pipeline was greatly expanded (this is considered a 50-67% gaps). They found too many potential workers can ill afford the time or the cost of improving their skills, even if that improvement could lead to higher-demand jobs and higher wages.

Finally, the report found that Black and Latinx tech workers were underrepresented in the region's technology and tech adjacent (tech jobs, but not in the technology sector) workforce. Thus, stakeholders in both counties and throughout the corridor must *place a premium on preparing more residents for positions in technology* that will expand hugely over the next four years.

Numerous organizations and collaborative efforts are working toward bridging this gap.

Regionally and in collaboration with academic and industry partners, GWP's Capital CoLAB has created the CoLAB Digital Tech Credential, a unique credential that indicates students have in-demand digital literacy skills.

Several national providers of technology upskilling offer programs in the D.C. region, including Year Up, Per Scholas, Genesys, and Generation. P-TECH also runs their Grade 9-14 program in a couple of high schools in Prince George's that provides an aligned high school-community college-career training model program aligned with local industries.

Per Scholas has a regional chapter program located in the corridor (Silver Spring). It is a national nonprofit that serves young adults from a wide range of backgrounds, most of whom have no postsecondary credentials. Participants get trained in IT services and advanced IT competencies for jobs that pay middle-wages. The program includes technical training, durable

skill development (i.e., soft skills-plus), and career services. Year Up, Genesys, and Generation offer comparable programs in the DC region.

JPMorgan Chase and Bloomberg Philanthropies have underwritten the TalentReady initiative in the DC region in five communities, including Prince George's and Montgomery. In each jurisdiction, K-12 and higher education leaders partner with employers to design pathways that connect curricula, certifications, degrees, and on-the-job learning for in-demand IT careers.<sup>cxi</sup>

Even combined, however, these programs regionally do not add up to the scale of technology job openings currently available or the greatly expanded openings expected in the near future.

**The Coalition should** work with both community colleges and workforce agencies, and current digital-skills providers to **support**:

- *More Purple Line residents entering and completing these programs*
- *The scaling up of such programs, ideally with more offerings in the corridor itself*

Not every resident, however, will be able to qualify for these digital certification programs. Urban Institute reports that more than 15% of Americans lack basic digital skills, many with lower incomes, many who are people of color.<sup>cxiii</sup> Urban encourages local workforce agencies and workforce boards to require local providers to “*use WIOA Title II funds for new services like digital skill and digital literacy training.*” Such programs should target those with low digital skills, lower educational credentials or limited language proficiency, or limited broadband access. And the programs should be aligned with jobs that local employers and industries have identified as pipelines to fill.

On this front, too, *the Coalition should work to publicize these offerings to Purple Line residents who need them and look to hold some offerings in the corridor.*

Where possible, the Coalition should also help identify and establish relationships with employers who are increasingly in the market for hires requiring enhanced digital skills.

The National Skills Coalition published a toolkit that includes approaches to closing the digital skills gap based on work in California: [TOOLKIT](#). Seattle has a “Digital Skills for All” initiative that could serve as an interesting model for the corridor, <https://digitalskillsforall.org/>.

### *Link Residents to Sustainable Career Pathways in High-growth Industries & Occupations*

**Career pathways** is a holistic approach that “enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and at least 1 recognized postsecondary credential.”<sup>cxiv</sup> It also provides other services that help accelerate career advancement in entering or advancing within an occupation or industry.

Career pathways have proven to be an effective way to “mitigate the many challenges adults of color face in securing college credentials.”<sup>cxv</sup> Arkansas and Oregon both serve as state-wide examples of implementing career pathways initiatives that invest in gap tuition funding and provide wraparound support services to help students complete credentials not just in any field but *for in-demand occupations*.<sup>cxvi</sup> The

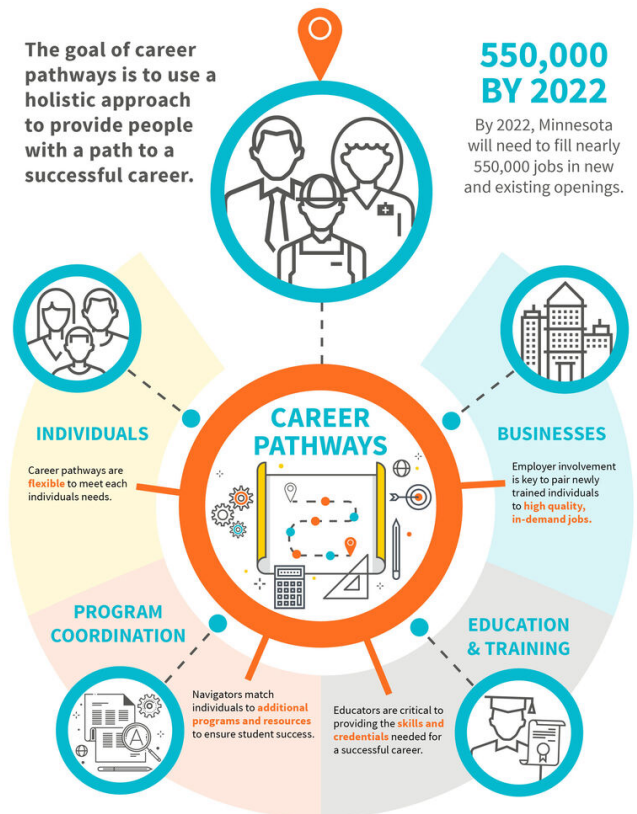
## CAREER PATHWAYS

Helping individuals and businesses succeed by streamlining the complex system of workforce development programs and resources.

The goal of career pathways is to use a holistic approach to provide people with a path to a successful career.

**550,000  
BY 2022**

By 2022, Minnesota will need to fill nearly 550,000 jobs in new and existing openings.



**MSPWin**

St. Paul and Minnesota Foundation, <https://www.spmcf.org/what-we-do/invest-in-community-led-solutions/community-initiatives/msp-regional-workforce-innovation-network>.



adjacent graphic (from the Minneapolis-based group MSPWin) does an excellent job showing the components of career pathways.<sup>cxvii</sup>

Recently, Employ Prince George's (EPG) launched a *Career Pathways for All program for immigrants and refugees* to receive free career advice, skills training, and job search assistance. EPG also provides bi-lingual hiring events, evaluating credentials obtained overseas, and access to English remediation classes. As the immigrant population has multiplied in both counties and specific segments of the corridor, pathway programs like this will become increasingly essential to prepare these residents for the changing labor market.

[<https://www.employpg.org/CPFA/>.]

***The coalition needs to heavily promote this program for immigrants on the Prince George's side of the corridor who could benefit from it.***

Given the post-pandemic need to prepare far more workers, especially those displaced or still unemployed, it will be essential for both counties to increase Career Pathways programs for residents in occupations and industries on higher-growth paths. It will be equally important for the coalition to find ways to connect more Purple Line residents to those pathway programs.

**Stackable credentials** are when shorter-term certificate programs are organized in such a way to stack, one upon the next, to lead ultimately to an associate's degree (if a student 'stacks' them that high). Ideally, each credential is connected to attaining a higher-return occupation in a growing industry.<sup>cxviii</sup>

Stackable credentials only work effectively when aligned with employers indicate they value them. Ideally, certificate programs are co-developed by employers or industry leaders who thus signal they will enact such hiring because they have invested resources into the training itself. Community colleges (like Montgomery College and Prince George's Community College) play the critical role in building systems of stackable credentials tied to middle- and high-wage occupations and industries.

In the corridor, it will be critical to ***inform and encourage residents with only a high school diploma or equivalent (particularly those of color) to focus their education and training toward attaining these credentials*** to build greater and greater value as they stack them up.

**Career and Technical Education (CTE)** programs are often the larger educational framework for career pathways and stackable credentials. Both Prince George's County Public Schools and Montgomery County Public Schools have robust CTE programs described on pages 28-29 above. Many students who attend the high schools, especially in the half of the corridor from downtown Silver Spring to New Carrollton, do not immediately move on to four-year colleges and universities. For those who don't immediately, we need to encourage their participation in CTE programs tied to growing occupations and industries so they can establish an occupational foothold upon attaining their diplomas.

Enrolling in CTE programs offered in both community colleges can also serve a critical role for Purple Line residents holding only high school diplomas for growing their skills and advancing their careers.



*The coalition needs to heavily promote CTE program opportunities for high-school-age students in the corridor in both counties and to older residents eligible for community college CTE offerings in both counties.*

When promoting the programs, the coalition should emphasize the CTE offerings aligned well with the top targeted industries in each county. In both counties, that includes **Biosciences and Information Technology**. It would also include hospitality and financial services for Montgomery, among others; for Prince George's, **Hospitals/Health Services and Transportation/Logistics/Distribution**, among others. Since it will also be an important industry during the building of the Purple Line and then development and redevelopment along the line, **Construction** is yet another industry that should be targeted and aligned for CTE programs in both counties.

Over time, the coalition should work with both workforce agencies, both community colleges, and both school systems to help foster additional employer partnerships tied to these programs and opportunities.

### **Promote the Wider Use of Employer-based Apprenticeships**

For decades, apprenticeship programs, when done effectively, have provided countless Americans with training on the job to learn a career-sustaining trade or occupation. Yet, apprenticeships have fallen out of favor in recent decades, especially as the national economy became increasingly non-unionized since apprenticeships were often tied to union-based jobs.

Apprenticeships can still serve as a significant pathway for on-the-job training and mentorship for women and people of color who have traditionally been underrepresented in apprenticeship programs. Although Maryland has nowhere near the number of registered apprenticeship programs as states like South Carolina and California, it has boosted its offerings in recent years due to the U.S. Department of Labor's significantly increased investment to create and expand apprenticeship programs.

Why are apprenticeships a critical element of corridor-based workforce development strategies? In 2020, the U.S. Department of Labor reported that "94% of apprentices who complete an apprenticeship program retain employment, with an average income of \$70,000."<sup>cix</sup> Thus, apprenticeships continue to be a critical pathway to middle-skill, middle-wage jobs. However, nearly 2/3 of apprentices in 2020 were men, and African Americans were underrepresented in those programs.

Apprenticeships typically involve high schools, community colleges, local government, local workforce boards, and other community-serving non-profits who organize and recruit employer partners to accelerate the adoption of apprenticeship programs.<sup>cxx</sup>

Scores of apprenticeship programs are available in Prince George's and Montgomery counties (See [LINK](#)), but many residents are unaware they exist. The programs cut across many skilled trades and are also offered in other industries such as hospitality/lodging, pharmacy, graphic design, and social media. Nationally, apprenticeships are growing in the health care and

information technology industries, as we know are significant growth industries in the counties.<sup>cxxi</sup>

*The coalition should encourage the community colleges, the county workforce boards, and corridor-based employers to take advantage of the federal and state resources available to launch or expand apprenticeship programs while supporting the active recruitment of people of color and women into those programs. For the corridor, the most important industries to target for apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships will likely be Health Care and Construction. The PLCC should also cultivate relationships with key employers in both sectors that can lead to longer-term partnerships for both counties that fill key pipeline for both individual employers and the industries more broadly.*

### *Call for Skills-based (not academic-based) hiring:*

#### *More pathways to more “good” jobs*

A very significant workforce movement has emerged nationally over the last several years, focused on helping the nearly 70% of Americans who work without the benefit of a college degree get good jobs based on the *skills* they have or ones they can attain expeditiously.

National organizations advocating for this strategy include three initiatives funded by the Markle Foundation ([Rework America Alliance](#), [The Rework American Business Network](#), and [The Skillful State Network](#)), [Opportunity@Work](#), Urban Institute, The Brookings Institution, The National Fund for Workforce Solutions, and the Aspen Institute, among others. Opportunity@Work has identified 70 million workers they refer to as *Skilled Through Alternative Routes* (STARs), meaning sufficiently skilled but without a 4-year degree.

Accelerator for America, a national nonprofit focused on equitable economic development, argues that employers “have traditionally used college degrees as a proxy of durable skills, critical thinking, and independence ... [which] helps to narrow the field of candidates quickly but does not necessarily result in an applicant pool that is better qualified for a job. Black, Latinx, and Native American workers, who are least likely to hold college degrees, are automatically excluded at higher rates because of this requirement.”<sup>cxxii</sup>

The coalition and county and corridor stakeholders should *collaborate with larger employers to redefine job requirements that allow pathways for workers to be hired for jobs that traditionally have required bachelor’s degrees*. In other words, hiring workers based on the competencies they’ve developed in the workplace and other specific credentials they’ve earned along the way.

The coalition should also work with larger employers in and near the corridor to ensure they are providing other elements of what makes for “**good” jobs**: *adequate pay, a safe and healthy working environment, control over one’s work schedule, access to training, and learning on the job that leads to workplace advancement, and access to benefits* (including paid leave) among others. The coalition could also partner with workforce system leaders in both counties to establish and prioritize minimum standards for “quality” or “good” jobs.

The National Fund for Workforce Solutions has developed a comprehensive job design framework to help employers design "[good" jobs](#)," while the Aspen Institute has developed a [Job Quality Tools Library](#).

### ***Support the Expansion of Entrepreneurial Programs and Resources for Entrepreneurs of Color***

This long-term strategy will tie closely to the work of the PLCC's Small Business Action Plan.

Both counties feature significant entrepreneurship and innovation assets and entrepreneurial ecosystem support services. These include but are not limited to:

- **The Prince George's Community College's Innovation Hub** on its Largo Campus – <https://www.pgcc.edu/innohub/>.
- **The Bowie Business Innovation Center** (Bowie BIC) located on Bowie State University's campus – <https://bowiebic.com/>.
- **The Innovation Station Business Incubator (ISBI)** powered by the Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation is the elite business accelerator agent and entrepreneurial ecosystem hub of the County – <https://www.pgcedc.com/innovation-station>.
- **Montgomery College's Pinkney Innovation Complex for Science and Technology** which features the facility – 19Seven10 – which is the new 120,000 square foot state-of-the-art life sciences office building that includes lab, office, manufacturing and distribution spaces aimed at companies focused on areas such as biotech, life sciences, and cybersecurity – <https://www.montgomerycollege.edu/documents/business-partners-employers/pic-mc/picmc-germantown-site-plan.pdf>
- **The Maryland Women's Business Center** works with female entrepreneurs across Maryland's capital region in three locations including in Rockville and at Bowie State University (in same location as the BIC) , <https://marylandwbc.org/about-us/>.
- **The Silver Spring Innovation Center** is part of Montgomery County's Business Innovation Initiative at 8070 Georgia Avenue with 20,000 square feet of space, with 37 offices and a coworking area accommodating 20-25 advanced technology businesses. It is within walking distance to the Silver Spring Metro and in the Purple Line corridor. The Center is in a qualified historically underutilized business (HUB) zone. It also has a Virtual Incubator (VIP) membership.
- Both Montgomery College (Germantown campus and the University of Maryland (along Route 1) have designated **Regional Institution Strategic Enterprise (RISE) Zones**. These Zone designations allow targeted businesses locating within the zones to receive real property tax credits of 75 percent for five years. The purpose of the RISE Zone program is to access institutional assets that have a strong and demonstrated history of commitment to economic development and revitalization in the communities in which they are located. Qualified institutions and local governments develop a targeted strategy to use the institutional assets and financial incentives to attract businesses and create jobs within the zone.

The PLCC Small Business Action Team has a cadre of small business support organizations and providers that already assist numerous small business owners in key equity areas of the corridor (e.g., Greater Riverdale, Langley Park, Long Branch, downtown Silver Spring, and Lyttonsville among others). These organizations include but are not limited to:

- Latino Economic Development Center
- CASA de Maryland
- Central Kennilworth Avenue Revitalization CDC
- Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at the University of Maryland
- Montgomery Housing Partnership

The objective for this strategy will be to find effective ways to involve more Purple Line residents in programs and services to build and strengthen their entrepreneurial skills and acumen as well as their new or long-existing firms.

### III.

#### **Bolstering Workforce Development Support Systems**

##### **& Infrastructure in the Corridor**

- Provide robust wraparound supports
- Address adult literacy and ESL challenges with immigrant communities
- Extend high-speed broadband to corridor neighborhoods currently without it
- Encourage placement of a Mobile Jobs Center in the corridor

In McKinsey & Company's recent report, "Unequal America: Ten insights on the state of economic opportunity," they report the results of a survey of Americans on the obstacles they face to economic opportunity. Inadequate transportation options, needing to care for dependents, and poor access to healthcare and healthy foods were all commonly cited. The tenth and final barrier in the report was that 40% "are either enrolled in training or interested in pursuing it - but cost is a barrier for many."<sup>cxxiii</sup>

We concur with many of the insights the McKinsey report offers. Thus, we believe it is critical the coalition serve as a strong advocate for corridor residents to have access to the workforce supports they need to access job opportunities, be able to fully participate in workforce training, and receive assistance in finding higher-wage jobs once they've built up appropriate skills.

##### **Provide Robust Wraparound Supports**

To those not steeped in the workforce development world, it may seem straightforward that if you need to enroll in a training or certificate program, you just pay for it and do it. Unfortunately, it's by no means that simple. Those most in need of training, retraining, or upskilling, often Black and Brown workers, come to those opportunities grappling with lower incomes, lower wealth levels, and fewer financial resources not just to the training cost (which sometimes may be free) but to the non-tuition expenses including food, transportation, child care, tools, and equipment (more on each of these below).<sup>cxxiv</sup>

Many workforce programs in the region already provide some supports along with the training they provide. It is important to reiterate here the specific types of supports that can make the most significant difference for workers and residents in need of training. Where federal, means-tested programs are involved, local governments can leverage them for their residents.

- **Food:** The federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) supports training and employment activities to boost the incomes of participants in SNAP. The program's name in Maryland is the Food Supplemental Program Independence card. The program's fees can be used for tuition and fees for training as well as career navigation services, and its grants can be used, in part, for support services. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds can also provide support services for workers in training.
- **Transportation:** stipends to assist trainees in reaching the sites where training is offered. Other transportation supports such as driver's education, financial assistance to obtain a used vehicle.
- **Child Care:** The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funds can be used by states to provide child care subsidies to parents with lower income who attend training programs. However, some of the grant program's federal and state regulations can discourage supporting parents' in favor of investing in child care for parents already employed.<sup>cxxv</sup>

Further, not all potential workers come fully ready to take on gainful employment. Two populations in particular – returning citizens and disconnected youth – need an even more comprehensive range of supports as they prepare for training and employment. This can include life skills training, access to family services, or assistance obtaining a GED. For youth, important strategies to get them on a new path might include summer programming and jobs, internships, and service-learning opportunities.<sup>cxxvi</sup>

In the corridor, organizations *like Identity, Inc. (Montgomery) and Latin American Youth Center* (offices in both counties) provide a significant array of programs for young people. Yet, too many youth still slip through the cracks. After the Great Recession, studies of successful experiences show that relentless outreach using trusted mentors is a critical strategy to recruit and retain youth in these types of programs.<sup>cxxvii</sup>

For returning citizens, this can include short-term transitional paid employment, full-time job placement, post-placement services, as well as family-focused case management, all deployed in a highly structured and supervised manner.<sup>cxxviii</sup> Of note, Prince George's County Council recently passed unanimously a Re-Entry Employment Incentive for EPG to administer. The legislation encourages county employers to hire county residents returning from incarceration with a financial incentive, reimbursing at \$5/hour up to 1,000 hours of employment in a given year for a qualified employee. Although not a workforce training initiative, the new incentive models for corridor stakeholders effective ways to support returning citizens who experience significant hurdles to employment.<sup>cxxix</sup>



***The coalition should advocate wherever necessary to ensure workforce programs provide the appropriate support services for workforce training for disadvantaged populations.***

### **Address Adult Literacy and ESL Challenges with Immigrant Communities**

Many residents in the International Corridor (bridging Langley Park and Long Branch neighborhoods) have a range of literacy challenges. Some do not have literacy in their native languages. Others do but have very limited English-language skills. Still, others have functional English-language skills but never attained a high school diploma. All three populations need programs that can help them advance sufficiently, so they have pathways to higher-skilled and higher-wage jobs.

As we saw above, Employ Prince George's has just launched a career pathways program targeting specific segments of the first-generation immigrant population. Yet more expansive programs will be required in both counties to change the employment prospects of this population in the corridor.

Workforce programs for immigrant communities must include wraparound supports but also "integrated education and training (IET) that concurrently provides industry-specific occupational skills, workforce preparation, and adult basic education ... [including] quality English-language learning that is contextualized and relevant to immigrants' career goals."<sup>cxxx</sup>

***The coalition should support Employ Prince George's in sustaining its new Career Pathways program, especially by promoting it in corridor neighborhoods with large immigrant populations. It should also encourage Montgomery County providers to provide a comparable program.***

### **Make High-Speed Broadband Affordable to**

#### **Corridor Residents Struggling without it**

Greater Washington Partnership reports that hundreds of thousands of households in the D.C. region live without access to the Internet. Although we don't know the total for households in the corridor, it's a safe bet that it's in the thousands. The lack of broadband access or even to computer devices is not racially equitable. Across the D.C. region, for example, Black and Latinx students are twice as likely as white students not to have a computer in the home. For people who have broadband access, it is difficult to imagine life without it. Lack of broadband access to the web impedes many aspects of daily life. "Connectivity is vital for access to jobs, education, health, and human services."<sup>cxxxi</sup>

Lack of access impacts both searching and applying for jobs and, when training is virtual, to participate in educational opportunities.

Connected DMV is organizing a region-wide campaign, Connectivity for All (C4A), which commits to helping provide 100,000 low-income adults affordable access to a computing device



and high-speed, home-based internet over the next four years. C4A would also ensure those adults learn foundational computer skills. <sup>cxxxii</sup>

*The coalition should look to partner with Connected DMV and other interested corridor-based stakeholders* to ensure far more corridor residents have the opportunity to participate in this large-scale program.

*It should also look to support both counties and corridor municipalities to advocate for expanding broadband access*, perhaps creating a “lifeline broadband program, modeled after the federal lifeline program for phone access, that would extend free broadband access to low-income ... households.”<sup>cxxxiii</sup>

The Pew Charitable Trusts has identified nine states that have implemented broadband programs successfully and have promising practices to learn from or model. To explore this further, click [HERE](#).

### *Encourage Placement of a Mobile Jobs Center in the Corridor*

Worksource Montgomery and Employ Prince George’s have made preliminary plans to procure a large recreation vehicle (RV) to retrofit for use as a Mobile Jobs Center in each of their counties. Below, you can see Enoch Pratt Free Library’s mobile job center in Baltimore.

Many residents have challenges accessing transportation to visit facility-based job centers in places like Gaithersburg and Largo.

Over the course of a week or month, a *mobile job center would move from location to location in neighborhoods where unemployment is high, or low-wage workers predominate*. The center offers

computers, books, information, and assistance for job seekers and career changers in Baltimore. A mobile job center could offer other services as well. For example, housing counseling or guidance and connections to other local social

services. Although these mobile centers would not serve in-need neighborhoods along the Purple Line exclusively, *the coalition should ensure that corridor neighborhoods are on the regular circuit when these vehicles come online*.



Enoch Pratt Free Library: Mobile Job Center,  
<https://www.prattlibrary.org/services/mobile-job-center>.

We will look to the **Maryland Department of Labor** as an important partner in supporting the implementation of this agenda and a sponsor and investor of key programs and initiatives.

We also look forward to collaboration with the [Maryland Transit Administration](#) and [Purple Line Transit Partners](#) to find ways (1) to **bolster the pipeline of construction-related workers with residents from the corridor as the construction of the line continues** over the next several years and (2) to have corridor residents contribute significantly to the **pipeline of workers who ultimately operate and maintain the transit system once it is open**.

Finally, in the months to come, the National Center for Smart Growth will conduct a deeper analysis of corridor industry and occupational data and trends to determine with greater specificity additional types of industry partnership and occupational pipelines will make sense for future corridor-based workforce strategies.



## Summary: Potential Corridor Strategies

As Connected DMV argues in its regional economic development strategy, “[a] broad-based effort is needed to improve educational and job opportunities for lower-income residents — most of whom are racial minorities — especially in the region’s eastern half.”<sup>cxxxiv</sup> The eastern half the report refers to covers a significant part of the Purple Line corridor east of downtown Silver Spring.

Now that the Purple Line Corridor Coalition has established a blueprint of its *aspirations*, it has a new, equally complex challenge. It must embark on (1) establishing the concrete commitments it will make, (2) building upon the excellent work already happening in the corridor, (3) soliciting additional commitments from other workforce stakeholders, and (4) collaborating to launch new

initiatives that can make significant progress on workforce outcomes over the next several years.

What has become apparent as a result of establishing this initial strategy framework is that the coalition should:

- Become a strong advocate for more resources in the corridor for workforce development, training, and middle-skill jobs.
- Support initiatives that grow the digital skills of the thousands of corridor residents without sufficient capability currently.
- Promote the robust set of public-sector, private-sector, and NGO-sector programs and initiatives that already provide effective workforce training in both counties or the region.
- Become a champion for holistic approaches to workforce development in the corridor that include robust support services to enhance the chances of success for those embarked on training and skill-building. This should focus, too, on support for entrepreneurs of color in the corridor.
- Collaborate with other corridor, county, and state stakeholders to pursue funding and investments in workforce training that produces results at greater and greater scales for corridor residents.
- Advocate for funding of specific and proven job training programs, like: apprenticeships/pre-apprenticeships, industry-based skills partnerships, career pathway programs, and secondary/postsecondary CTE programs.
- Advocate for workforce development programs attuned to the unique needs of first-generation immigrants.
- Collaborate with public and private sector leaders to ensure effective access to and affordability of high-speed broadband for all corridor residents.

Everything the coalition pursues should align with principles that the National Skills Coalition has articulated so effectively, including:

- Invest in those first who have been hurt the most.
- Eliminate structural racism in skills policies.
- Create better jobs than before the pandemic and emphasize sustainable careers vs. just a job.
- Pursue comprehensive approaches to re-training and re-employment for all displaced workers.
- Invest in sector partnerships to drive industry-specific training and hiring strategies.
- Provide digital access and learning for all working people at home and on the job.<sup>cxxxv</sup>

## Next Steps

In July, the PLCC convened separate meetings for Montgomery and Prince George's workforce development stakeholders to vet this report and provide feedback. In early August, the coalition held several one-on-one meetings with regional and state stakeholders to solicit additional feedback on the report.

In August and September, the coalition convened stakeholder meetings to share a draft of shorter-term, 12-18 month strategies and actions in the corridor. This final draft of the larger strategy document was completed in September and we expect a final draft of shorter-term strategies and actions to be completed by October.

Throughout September and October, the coalition will also develop draft policy agenda to share with PLCC's Equity Leadership Council to focus on the advancement of potential initiatives and actions at the state- and county-levels.

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## Initial Ideas for a Shorter Term Action Plan (Draft: September 2021)

### Principle: Rapidly Connect Jobseekers to Work & Training

1. Conduct Outreach and Promotion of Corridor Workforce Services & Opportunities:
2. Ensure New Mobile Job Centers Regularly Visit Equity Corridor Locations

### Principle: Expand Access to Workforce Development Services to More Immigrants

3. Activate Immigrants (Adults & Youth) into Workforce Services

### Principle: Build Greater Workforce Capacity for the Future

4. Pursue a Shorter-Term Advocacy Agenda at State- and County-Levels.
5. Reengage the PLTP / MTA partnership for PL Construction Work for 2022 and Beyond

### Consider for Further Study in 2022-2023

- ❖ RESEARCH: How to Best Engage Employers in the Corridor for Better Jobs Pipelines
- ❖ RESEARCH: How to Bridge Digital Inequities (literacy, affordability) in the Corridor
- ❖ RESEARCH: How to Expand Apprenticeships for Adults and High School Students in the Corridor
- ❖ RESEARCH: How to Train and Support New Corridor-based Entrepreneurs
- ❖ RESEARCH: How to Support Increases in Wrap Around Services for Workforce Training Participants

## APPENDIX I:

### Important Local Workforce Providers and Stakeholders with the Potential of Increased Interest and Service to Corridor Residents

#### Other Workforce Development providers who could potentially serve in the Corridor

(List is not exhaustive)

Montgomery Co. providers	Prince George's Co. providers
<p><b>Work Opportunities Unlimited (WOU)</b> – WOU placed 1,000+ residents in work placements in 2020. WOU works with employers to match their hiring needs and open positions with qualified job seekers. Once a candidate is hired, WOU ensures the new employee makes a successful transition into the job through on-the-job training, assistance with accommodations, communication, and learning style. <a href="https://workopportunities.net/about-us/">https://workopportunities.net/about-us/</a>.</p> <p><b>Literacy Council of Montgomery County</b> - offers ESL Classroom Program. Classes held in libraries, community service centers, and churches. The program is 60 hours with classes on a rolling basis. <a href="https://www.lcmcmd.org/mission-and-history">https://www.lcmcmd.org/mission-and-history</a>.</p> <p><b>Future Link, Inc.</b> – Based in Rockville, Future Link provides low-income, first-generation-to-college young adults with the tools, skills and resources to achieve lasting economic self-sufficiency. Our two-phase program begins with career exploration and education planning followed by comprehensive, personalized support including mentoring, paid internships, tutoring, scholarships and ongoing professional development workshops. Future Link empowers participants to achieve their education and career goals. Dedicated mentors, employers and donors sustain our work by investing in local youth. <a href="https://futurelinkmd.org/">https://futurelinkmd.org/</a>.</p> <p><b>Our House</b> – Based in Brookeville, the mission of Our House is to provide the opportunity for at-risk adolescents to become happy, healthy, and productive. The Our House Program is more than just a job skills training program. It includes development of the entire individual, providing the trainees with a full set of skills for success. Our House does this by providing access to industry recognized certifications, career tracks, a 12 month career pathway, educational and support services. <a href="https://our-house.org/index.php/mission/">https://our-house.org/index.php/mission/</a>.</p> <p><b>ASM Educational Center</b> in Rockville offering 15 training programs in information technology, <a href="https://asmed.com/">https://asmed.com/</a>.</p>	<p><b>The Training Source</b> – programs for adults/youth located in Seat Pleasant – support/life skills, professional and technical skills. Focused on most disadvantaged residents, including low-income, physically or intellectually challenged, returning citizens, at risk youth. Currently offers 7-week virtual Office and Professional Services Training Program and Certified Customer Service Professional Certification. Also offers SNAP and Professional Clothing Closet services. <a href="https://www.thetrainingsource.org/">https://www.thetrainingsource.org/</a></p> <p><b>Central Kenilworth Avenue Revitalization CDC (CKAR)</b> – CKAR CDC is a non-profit that forms strategic partnerships to implement projects in the Greater Riverdale community, including community and economic development, workforce training, business retention, and advocacy. CKAR is also creating a new eatery, Sarvis Café to provide healthy and affordable meal options for local residents, community programming for neighbors, and on-the-job training in culinary arts &amp; customer service. <a href="https://ckarcdc.org/">https://ckarcdc.org/</a>.</p> <p><b>Community Youth Advance (CYA)</b> offers programs for students and educators throughout the school year, on the weekends, and during the summer break. CYA fills existing gaps—improving the academic performance of our young boys and girls and building character and self-confidence for our mentees—relies on the support we receive from community partnerships. <a href="https://communityyouthadvance.org/">https://communityyouthadvance.org/</a></p> <p><b>End Time Harvest Ministries</b> (ETHM: HQ in Riverdale; program at Bladensburg H.S.) - ETHM is a faith-based, school-based and community-based youth development nonprofit organization located in Bladensburg High School (BHS). ETHM's Mission is to engage youth in the county for Academic, Career, and Life Success. <a href="https://www.ethm.org/">https://www.ethm.org/</a></p> <p><b>Prince George's County Library System</b> provides courses for residents to help them meet their job development goals including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>DigitalLearn.org</b> that teach residents how to tackle technology at their own pace and gain the confidence they need.</li> <li>• <b>Lynda.com Computer Literacy</b>, providing an intro to computers, files, folders, networks, and peripherals like printers &amp; keyboards, basic skills working for software applications, the Internet, &amp; email.</li> <li>• <b>Northstar Digital Literacy</b>, providing free assessment tests for computer digital literacy in ten main areas: Basic Computer Use, Internet, Windows Operating System, Mac OS, Email, MS Word, Social Media, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint, &amp; Information Literacy.</li> <li>• <b>Microsoft Imagine Academy</b>, providing curricula and resources to train and certify students and educators on Microsoft products and technologies.</li> </ul>



<p><b>Cybersecurity Training Center</b> in Rockville offering a range of cybersecurity training program, <a href="https://cybersectc.com/">https://cybersectc.com/</a>.</p> <p><b>Knowledge First Institute</b> in Silver Spring provides training in allied health (certified nursing assistant), <a href="https://knowledgefirstinstitute.com/about-kfi/">https://knowledgefirstinstitute.com/about-kfi/</a>.</p> <p><b>OST Global Solutions, Inc.</b> in Rockville providing training in business development in federal contracting, <a href="https://ostglobalsolutions.com/">https://ostglobalsolutions.com/</a>.</p> <p><b>Smoothstack, Inc.</b> in Rockville provides an IT career development program, <a href="https://www.smoothstack.com/universities-career-development/">https://www.smoothstack.com/universities-career-development/</a>.</p> <p><b>The Alliance for Media, Arts, and Culture, Inc.</b> in Silver Spring offering a couple of training programs in arts and the media, <a href="https://www.thealliance.media/resources/">https://www.thealliance.media/resources/</a>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Cisco Networking Academy</b>, an IT skills and career building program available to learning institutions and individuals.</li> </ul> <p><b>ASM Educational Center</b> in Rockville but now offering training programs in information technology for PGC residents, <a href="https://asmed.com/">https://asmed.com/</a></p> <p><b>The Bridge Center at Adam's House</b> is an inter-agency collaboration between the counties departments of Health, Corrections, Social Services, Family Services and other community based partners to provide holistic assistance to any County resident reentering the community, especially people that are formerly incarcerated, veterans, and youth (18-24 years old) who are trying to attain stability in the community. <a href="https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/2889/The-Bridge-Center-at-Adams-House">https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/2889/The-Bridge-Center-at-Adams-House</a>.</p> <p><b>Project Opportunity</b> is a free entrepreneurship training program designed solely for veterans (Active Duty, Guard/Reserve Personnel, and Veterans) who want to start their own business or expand their current small business. Program graduates are in various stages of their business ventures, ranging from finalizing their business plan to actual launch and earning income. <a href="https://www.project-opportunity.com/about-us/">https://www.project-opportunity.com/about-us/</a>.</p>
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## Important and/or Potential Workforce Development Stakeholders in the Purple Line Corridor

<p><b>State and Regional organizations</b></p>	<p><b>Greater Washington Partnership –Collaborative of Leaders in Academia and Business (CoLAB)</b> is an action-oriented partnership of business and academic institutions that develops the talent needed for the jobs of today and tomorrow. Mission: Build the capital region's diverse digital tech ecosystem by partnering with employers and educators to build industry-aligned digital tech pathways that ensure inclusive growth. <a href="https://capitalcolab.com/">https://capitalcolab.com/</a>.</p> <p><b>Connected DMV</b> brings together the region's collective assets and brightest minds to deliver initiatives that have the power to fundamentally reshape our physical, digital, economic, and social infrastructure to help the most vulnerable among us. <a href="https://www.connecteddmv.org/">https://www.connecteddmv.org/</a></p> <p><b>TECHNOLOGY UPSKILLING</b></p> <p><b>Year Up</b> - Year Up provides a year-long leadership development program in 16 U.S. cities. The program connects young adults from disadvantaged communities to 6-month internships with corporate sponsors immediately after participating in an initial six-month skill- and knowledge-building component that includes college-level coursework and career training. It graduates more than 2,000 students annually. Like the other programs, Year Up provides wrap-around support services and works extensively with graduates in job search and job placement assistance. A young African American neighbor who was uninterested in a postsecondary pathway completed this program and immediately landed a job, with a career path, at Freddie Mac.</p> <p><b>Per Scholas</b> - a national nonprofit located in 15 cities including in the corridor (Silver Spring) Young adults (most w/o postsecondary credentials) from a wide range of backgrounds get trained in IT services and advanced IT competencies for jobs that pay middle-wages. Program includes technical training, durable skill development, and career services.</p> <p><b>P-TECH</b> - P-Tech runs Grade 9-14 programs in more than 160 schools nationwide, eleven states, and 27 other countries (including Latin America, Asia, and North Africa). The 6-year program model combines high school, community college, and career training and involves close partnerships with core industries (e.g., technology, manufacturing, healthcare, finance, etc.) to prepare thousands of disadvantaged students for jobs. P-Tech The Model: a seamless program for students," <a href="https://www.ptech.org/how-it-works/the-model/">https://www.ptech.org/how-it-works/the-model/</a>.</p>
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	<p><b>Genesys</b> – A 14 month program that includes 8 weeks of comprehensive professional and technical skills training, a year-long paid (\$12,000) internship, college and career coaching, 1,200 hours of training in a professional job and 60 hours of college prep and career counseling sessions. 96% of students are of color, 85% who participate are FARMs students. DC area location in Tysons Corner. <a href="https://genesysworks.org/national-capital-region/">https://genesysworks.org/national-capital-region/</a>.</p> <p><b>Generation</b> - Generation is an international nonprofit training for unemployed people in jobs in four sectors: technology, healthcare, skilled trades (e.g., construction), and customer service. Generation utilizes an employer-partner model linked directly to the hiring and recruitment needs of local and regional employers. Participants engage in a one-to-three-month skill-building program with technical, behavioral, and professional presence components while also providing critical social support services. Generation is directly involved in placing program graduates into jobs immediately after graduation, with a success rate in most countries around 80%. In the U.S., the program has had more than 3,500 graduates over its first five years. <a href="https://www.generation.org/about">https://www.generation.org/about</a>.</p> <p><b>OTHER MORE GENERAL, MULTI-FACETED PROVIDERS</b></p> <p><b>Goodwill</b> - serves suburban MD though training is in DC hdqtrs. @ South Dakota Ave. Digital and computer education; dressing for success; financial literacy; job search strategies; placement assistance. Job job training in energy &amp; construction careers; security &amp; protective services; medical office assistant; hospitality; &amp; career navigation (12-day) program.</p> <p><b>Liberty's Promise</b> supports low-income immigrant youth, ages 15-21, by providing them with means to become actively involved in civic life, pursue higher education, and embark upon meaningful careers. (Based in Alexandria, VA)</p> <p><b>Job Opportunities Task Force</b> - Since 1996, JOTF has worked to help low-wage workers gain access to high-paying jobs. JOTF's mission is to develop and advocate policies and programs to increase the skills, job opportunities, and incomes of low wage workers and job seekers in Maryland.</p> <p><b>Jobs for the Future</b>, Offers 6 programs in Maryland <a href="https://www.jff.org/about/where-we-work/">https://www.jff.org/about/where-we-work/</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best Bet Services; Jobs to Careers; Counseling to Careers; Sector Strategies: Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics; TechHire Technical Assistance; Google IT Support Professional Certificate</li> <li>• SkillRise is an initiative of the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), which helps organizations empower adult learning with educational technology. The purpose of ISTE's framework Upskill With Edtech: Preparing Adult Learners for the Future of Work is to help adult-learning and workforce-development organizations understand how to leverage educational and productivity technology to better prepare adult workers and job seekers in the digital age in education and training programs. and <a href="https://skillrise.org/">https://skillrise.org/</a></li> </ul>
<b>Other Government Agencies &amp; Entities</b>	<p><b>Numerous county social service agencies in Prince George's and Montgomery counties.</b></p> <p><b>Montgomery County public libraries</b></p> <p><b>WSM</b> Job Centers have partners who collocate from DHHS, DLLR, Dept of Rehabilitation Services, Senior Community Service Employment Program, Work Opportunities Unlimited.</p> <p><b>County Council Member offices –</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prince George's County – Districts 2 (Taveras) and 3 (Glaros)</li> <li>• Montgomery County – District 5 (Hucker)</li> <li>• Planning/Housing/Econ Dev Committee Members – PGC (Harrison, Davis, Hawkins, Ivey); MoCo (Jawondo, Riemer, Friedson)</li> </ul> <p><b>Cities of Riverdale Park, Takoma Park, College Park, New Carrollton, and Hyattsville.</b></p>

<p><b>Potential Corporate Partners, Large Employer Partners, &amp; Anchor institutions</b></p>	<p><b>Building Trades/Unions –</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ABC of Metro Wash;</li> <li>• Baltimore DC Building Trades;</li> <li>• IBEW Local #26;</li> <li>• Mid-Atlantic Carpenters’ Union;</li> <li>• Sheet Metal Union Local 100</li> </ul> <p><b>Higher Education industry</b> (University of Maryland &amp; UMGC; MC – Takoma/Silver Spring Campus; Washington Adventist, etc.)</p> <p><b>Hospitality industry</b> (Marriott, Sheraton, Hilton, etc.)</p> <p><b>Retail industry</b> (CVS, Starbucks, Walmart, Home Depot, Whole Foods)</p> <p><b>STEM industries</b> (2U, IBM, Science Applications, Boston Consulting, UMD/Discovery District companies &amp; organizations, etc.)</p> <p><b>Health/Medical</b> (Kaiser Permanente, Suburban Hospital, Holy Cross Hospital, Howard Hughes Medical, Walter Reed Medical, Children’s National Health System, etc.)</p>
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### Large Employers Located in the Corridor

Federal and Regional Government	Healthcare	Education	Private Sector
Internal Revenue Service	Kaiser Permanente	University of Maryland- College Park	2U
Department of Defense – Naval	Suburban Hospital		IBM
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration – Dept. of Commerce	Holy Cross Hospital	University of Maryland- Global Campus	Red Coats (security)
National Institutes of Health	Howard Hughes Medical Center	Montgomery College (Takoma Park/Silver Spring campus)	United Parcel Service
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) – Goddard	Walter Reed National Military Medical Center	Montgomery County Public Schools	Giant Food Stores
U.S. Department of Agriculture – Beltsville	Children’s National Health System	Prince George’s County Public Schools	Whole Foods
Agricultural Research Center	Washington Adventist Hospital	Prince George’s Community College (Prince George’s Plaza, Hyattsville)	Fitness International
U.S. Food and Drug Administration	Acadia Healthcare	Washington Adventist University	Clark Construction
Adelphia Laboratory Center	<i>Among others</i>	Ana G. Mendez University	Universal Protection Services
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority		<i>Among others</i>	Discovery, Inc.
Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission			Boston Consulting Group
<i>Among others</i>			Eagle Bank
			Ikea
			Costco
			Walmart
			HMS Host
			Hargrove
			Freeman Decorating Services
			<i>Among others</i>

## Appendix II:

### List of Interviewees

#### Montgomery County-Based Stakeholders

1. Anthony Featherstone, CEO, Worksource Montgomery
2. Steve Greenfield, Dean of Business, IT, and Safety, Workforce Development Division, Montgomery College
3. Council Member Evan Glass, Montgomery County Council
4. Julio Murillo, Senior Advisor for Council Member Tom Hucker, Montgomery County Council
5. Steve Boden, Supervisor, Foundations Office for Career and Technical Education, Montgomery County Public Schools
6. Reemberto Rodriguez, Montgomery County Region 4 Director
7. Bruce Baker, Executive Director, CHEER

#### Prince George's County-Based Stakeholders

1. Walter Simmons (CEO) and Jeff Swilley (COO), Employ Prince George's
2. Yvette Snowden, Associate Vice President, Workforce Development and Continuing Education and John Deadwyler, Program Coordinator, Prince George's Community College
3. Council Member Deni Taveras, Prince George's County Council
4. Aimee Olivo, Chief of Staff for Council Member Dannielle Glaros, Prince George's County Council
5. Danielle Carter, Instructional Specialist, Prince George's County Public Schools, Department of Career and Technical Education

#### Regional, Statewide, and National Stakeholders and Experts

1. Dawnn Leary, Senior Community Investment Officer, Greater Washington Community Foundation
2. Caryn York, Executive Director, Job Opportunities Task Force
3. Martha Ross, Senior Fellow, Metropolitan Policy Program, Brookings Institute
4. Lindolfo Carballo, Director of Workforce Development, Education, and Employment, CASA de Maryland
5. Shayne Spaulding (Senior Fellow) and Pam Loprest (Senior Fellow), Urban Institute

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