

Community Assessment for the Development of a Youth Center in Frederick, MD



AUSHERMAN
FAMILY FOUNDATION

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Executive Summary

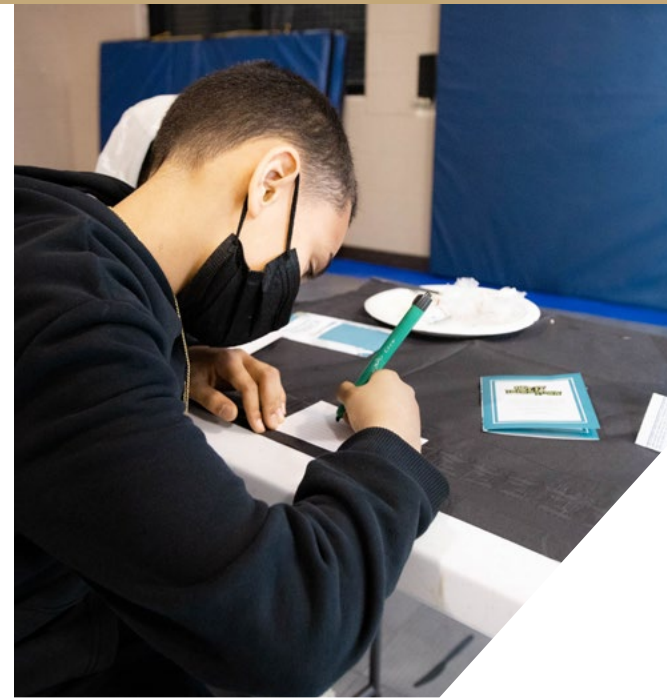
While the prospect of a new space that provides many amenities and is easily accessible to all youth, even the most disenfranchised, is an exciting one, we believe it is important to recognize that a youth center is a means to an end, not an end in itself. It is to be built for the purpose of improving outcomes for youth, especially those who are most vulnerable to becoming disconnected, not graduating from high school, and/or not going on to pursue any post-secondary education or employment.

As such, we recommend that the opportunity for creating a youth center be the catalyst for the Frederick community to rally around our youth and work together toward improved outcomes. Preparing youth for college, careers, and adult life should be the main focus of the youth center's programs.

For collaboration to flourish, clear goals, progress indicators, and decision-making structures must be in place. Our assessment indicates that the Frederick community is ready to take these next steps, pulling together to create even more effective and robust supports for youth.

The work summarized in this report grew out of the 2018 Downtown Safety & Services Initiative. Within that initiative, the Services and Coordination Committee was charged with examining the landscape of human services in the Frederick community, identifying the current needs and gaps, and investigating options for services in response to those needs. One of the final recommendations of the committee was to establish a youth center in Frederick, "where young people feel safe dropping in anytime, is designed to be culturally competent, fosters love and belonging, and ensures visitors have what they need to thrive."¹

As a response to this recommendation, Ausherman Family Foundation, in partnership with Frederick County and The Community Foundation of Frederick County, engaged Strategic Consulting & Coaching (SCC) to conduct a comprehensive community assessment on the youth center concept and to develop a preliminary vision for a youth center based on the assessment. Through the community assessment process, significant support for the youth center concept was expressed.



Utilizing interviews and surveys, SCC gathered feedback from a diverse group of youth providers: national affiliates such as YMCA and Boys and Girls Club as well as many smaller community-based organizations, such as I Believe in Me and SHIP.²

It was a priority for us to capture the voices of smaller organizations as well as reach culturally specific organizations. We worked to gather a grassroots perspective about how larger institutions interact with smaller organizations and with the community, especially communities of color. In addition, multiple sources of local data about youth and families were reviewed and integrated into these findings, as well as research findings on the efficacy of out-of-school time programs, youth development, programming quality, and numerous other relevant topic areas.

Key Findings

1. There is strong support for expanded, formalized collaboration around improving outcomes for young people in Frederick County, including the development of a youth center.
2. Young people are excited about a youth center that they can be part of designing and leading.
3. Most providers are excited about the prospect of a youth center, especially one that provides support for their operations.
4. Multiple sources of local data show significant groups of youth who are at high risk of poor educational and employment outcomes.
5. Youth of color, homeless youth, and youth who have experienced multiple ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) stand to benefit the most from a more coordinated approach. Having an impact on these youth will generate social return on investment and net gains in community prosperity, sustaining the community into the future.
6. An emphasis on facilitating developmental relationships between youth and caring adults is critical to achieving outcomes. Being able to recruit and retain quality staff who can provide these relationships will depend on being able to pay them competitive wages with benefits.



There is strong alignment between strategic goals set by Frederick County, Frederick County Public Schools, and the City of Frederick and the outcomes that can be achieved through expanded collaboration and high-quality out-of-school time programming for youth, both at a youth center and in the community, providing a strong foundation for more formalized collaboration with ambitious goals.

Local Youth and Family Data

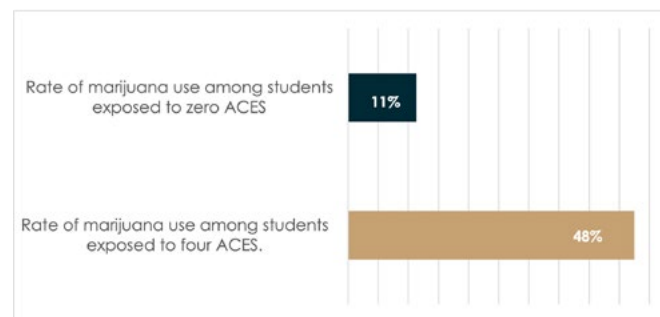


Community data provides facts and insights about the challenges youth face, the behaviors they are engaging in, the resilience of youth, and the factors that support or detract from their resilience. Data also points out disparities between groups where they exist. **Addressing these disparities is critical to continuing community vitality.**

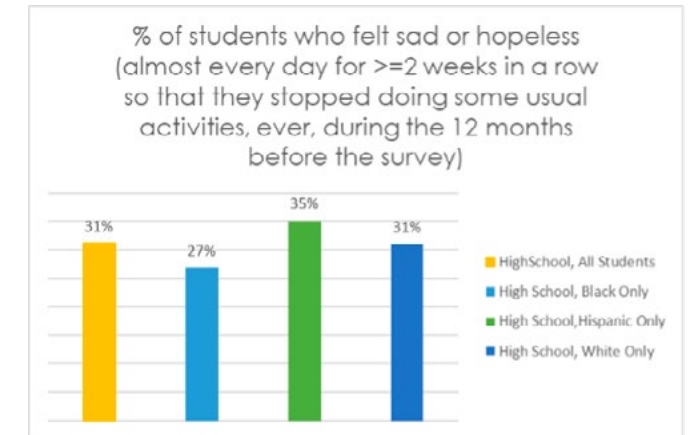
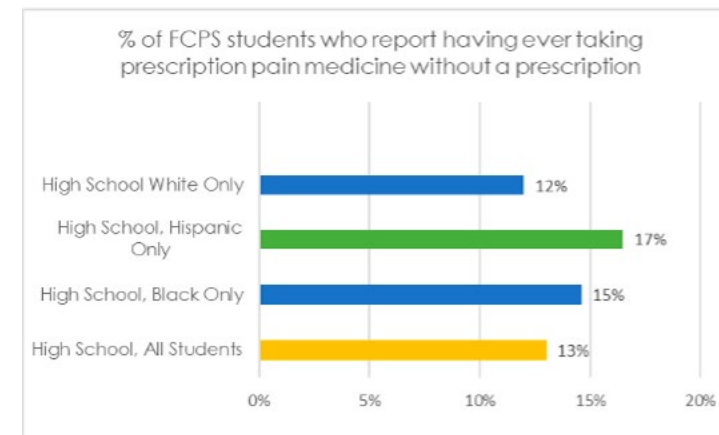
It's also critical to acknowledge the playing field isn't equal, and many youth suffer negative impacts resulting from historical injustice. Racial segregation and systemic racism have resulted in disparities in resources for communities of color - in schools, housing, employment, and wealth. These historical impacts are one reason why it is especially important to ensure that all youth have access to and participate in high-quality youth programs, and to intentionally create outreach strategies to reach youth of color and low-income youth.

Youth Substance Use

Youth substance use is correlated with other risk factors in youth, including childhood trauma and mental health issues. County level data on youth substance use from the Maryland Youth Risk Behavior Survey (MYRBS³) is a rich source of information and insights about youth behavior. The graph (right) shows the strong correlation between use of marijuana and childhood trauma as an example of the degree to which these risk factors are correlated. For each additional ACE exposure, the prevalence of use increases.



Another concern in the community is increased use of opioids and the increase in opioid overdoses among younger and younger students. The percentage of middle school students reporting ever having taken a prescription pain medication is at 7% doubled among middle-school



students overall. While any and all youth substance use is reason for concern, this stands out in the rate of the increase, the risks associated with the behavior, and the young age of the users.

Need for Mental Health Services

The need for expanded access to mental health support and services was called for repeatedly from both youth and providers. MYRBS data for Frederick County shows large numbers of youth struggling with mental health issues, with nearly one in three Hispanic high-school students indicating significant struggles with depression symptoms.

Access to mental health treatment is an equity issue. According to the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health administration, 19% of white people reported a mental health issue in the past year and about half (48%) received services. In contrast, while 17% of Black people experienced a mental health issue over the same period, only 31% received services.

Specific comments and suggestions from youth to address mental health issues in the youth center context included the following elements:

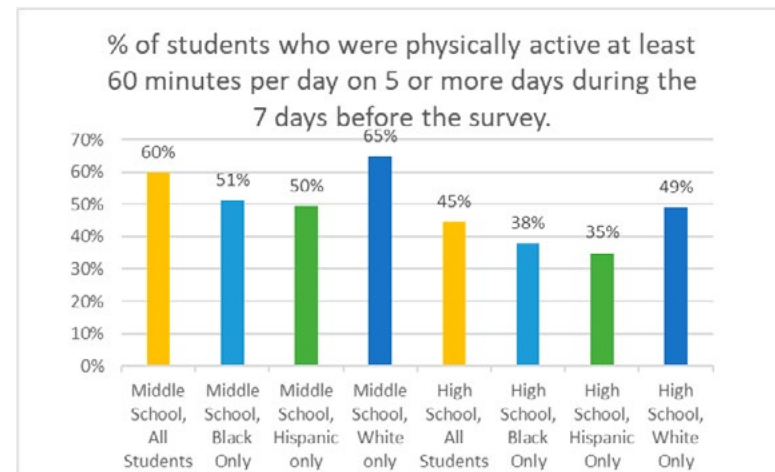
- A place to go when you are angry, stressed out, or happy
- Therapy services
- Therapeutic/wellness activities:
 - Art
 - Music
 - Exercise
- Mental health groups
- Mental health embedded throughout programming in youth center (i.e., trauma-informed center)
- Decompression/relaxation/breathing areas



Both youth and providers were clear, that it is not the availability of services that will get youth connected but rather, the enrichment and social opportunities that are made available. Trusting relationships with staff that develop over time can create improvement in mental health. Once trust is established, those relationships are the gateway to more intensive professional services that can be made available on-site.

Need for Physical Activity

MYRBS data indicates that while many youth are physically active, there is room to provide additional opportunities for physical activity that are both fun and appealing. High-school students are quite a bit less active overall than middle-school students (Figure 3), and high-school students of color are active at even lower rates.



Youth focus group participants identified the opportunity at a youth center to be physically active that attract young people (themselves or youth they know):

- The opportunity to be physically active at the center was central to its appeal.
- Youth repeatedly stated the need for facilities, including a gym (for basketball and other sports), boxing, a weight room, an indoor track, and a pool.
- There was also interest in sports teams (e.g., basketball, football), ways to learn a new sport, access to sports equipment and facilities at no cost, coaching, personal training, and mentoring (with peers or adults).

A Mental Health Emergency

This fall, a coalition of the nation’s leading experts in pediatric health declared a national emergency in child and adolescent mental health. According to the US Surgeon General, “Mental health challenges in children, adolescents, and young adults are real and widespread. Even before the pandemic, an alarming number of young people struggled with feelings of helplessness, depression, and thoughts of suicide – and rates have increased over the past decade... The COVID-19 pandemic further altered their experiences at home, school, and in the community. The effect on their mental health has been devastating. The future wellbeing of our country depends on how we support and invest in the next generation.” The report goes on to add: “The pandemic added to the pre-existing challenges that America’s youth faced. It disrupted the lives of children and adolescents, such as in-person schooling, in-person social opportunities with peers and mentors, access to health care and social services, food, housing, and the health of their caregivers. The pandemic’s negative impacts most heavily affected those who were vulnerable to begin with, such as youth with disabilities, racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ youth, low-income youth, youth in rural areas, youth in immigrant households, youth involved with the child welfare or juvenile justice systems, and homeless youth.”

Household Economic Factors Affecting Youth

Frederick County is affluent overall—the median household income in 2021 was \$97,730. However, significant disparities exist between racial and ethnic groups and across geographic areas of the county. The median income in the City of Frederick is significantly less at \$76,118, with some Census tracts having a median income of \$45,000.

Many people are struggling with not enough resources to thrive: The overall percentage of people in poverty in the city is 11.1%. Like most cities and counties in the US, this poverty is geographically concentrated. The 2019 ALICE Report (ALICE is an acronym for **A**sset **L**imited, **I**ncome **C**onstrained, **E**mployed – an indicator that uses a combination of income data and reasonable living expenses in a given locale to determine the amount needed to meet those expenses) illustrates this point.

In 2018, 31% of Frederick County households were ALICE, another 6% were living in poverty, totaling 37% with income below the ALICE threshold. These households cannot afford the basic expenses that are essential to being able to live and work in the community, manifesting in food and housing insecurity with significant impact on youth in those households.⁴

For households of color, the percentage is even higher, with 55% living below the ALICE threshold. The highest percentage of households living below the ALICE threshold is in the areas in and immediately surrounding Frederick City.

The costs of financial instability are cumulative and intensify over time. Skimping on essentials, from food to health care, leads to greater long-term problems. These problems have a significant impact on children and youth, making adults more stressed and resulting in fewer resources (both time and money) available to dedicate toward education and enrichment activities

“It would be somewhere to go that provides free services. Nobody in this community can afford to pay \$200 for ballet classes.”

-Frederick youth focus group participant

While a coordinated out-of-school time program that includes a youth center cannot mitigate all of the socio-economic factors that contribute to the high need in the community, it can improve the odds for the next generation: High quality out-of-school programming has been proven effective at closing the income achievement gap.⁷ Quality out-of-school programming made accessible to low-income youth has also been shown to demonstrably impact rates of substance abuse, high-school graduation, criminal involvement, and future employment, with the greatest benefits for the youth whose circumstances are the most challenging.⁹

(Network for Youth Success, Return on Investment accessed from www.networkforyouthsuccess.org)

How Local Youth and Provider Feedback Spoke to Financial Need

Youth in the focus groups reflected this reality in their comments, saying that activities need to be free and low barrier.

Transportation is a significant barrier for families and youth without a reliable car – many providers and youth commented on the need for the facility to be on a transit route.

The Importance of Youth Relationships with Caring Adults in the Community

Not all youth have caring adults in their lives: According to the YRBS, one in ten middle-school students indicate that they do not have an adult outside of school that they can talk to about things that are important to them. With approximately 10,000 middle-school students in the school district, this represents ~ 1,000 students.

“Youth will come to a center for the relationships and for the recreational and enrichment opportunities. It is on this foundation of trust and relationships that services and supports can then be offered.”

-Frederick youth provider

Trusting relationships need

to be built over time: High-school students were asked if they would feel comfortable seeking help from one or more adults besides their parents if they had an important question affecting their life. Twenty-five percent said they would not be comfortable. For Hispanic students, the number was even higher, with 30% indicating they wouldn't be comfortable asking for help outside their immediate family. It would take additional time to develop trust to accept help when it is needed.

Relationships impact mental health, especially for traumatized youth:

- Youth with one or more ACEs who had support from three or more non-parent adults were much less likely to report feeling sad or hopeless for more than two weeks in a row (26.7% prevalence for those with support versus 41.9% for those without adult support)
- Youth with one or more ACEs who had support from three or more non-parent adults were also much less likely to have made a suicide plan (12.7% versus 19.3%). These data give additional weight to the already significant evidence that relationships matter.⁵

“I think [a youth center] can be effective, but we've seen the greatest impact on youth is through relationships. Buildings help create environments for relationships to blossom, but you need trained, caring adults to step into those voids.”

-Frederick youth provider

Many youth development programs focus on the importance of relationships in their work with young people. The Center for Promise (the research center for America's Promise Alliance) suggest that “Relationships with adults, peers, and out-of-school time (OST) staff have the potential to affirm and support a young person's sense of their own identity; increase a sense of belonging and of being valued; and provide a context for young people to express agency, power, and voice.”⁶

However, not all young people have access to needed developmental relationships or to mentor figures as they grow up.

- In a Search Institute study of 25,000 young people, 22% said they didn't experience any of the five aspects of a developmental relationship, and 18% said they only experienced one.⁷
- Similarly, a study by MENTOR, the National Mentoring Partnership, revealed that one in three young people grow up without a mentor of any kind (formal or informal). The survey also showed that “with each additional risk factor a young person experiences, the less likely he or she is to connect with an informal mentor.”⁸

The youth center can be a place where young people can experience the power of these relationships and build critical webs of support.

Talking about relationships and the characteristics of adults at the youth center that they were looking for, Frederick youth called out the need for these relationships. According to the youth, adults at the center should be:

- Friendly, warm, welcoming, upbeat, helpful; always happy to see you
- Bring a sense of community; show they want to be there
- Make youth feel special, recognized
- Mentor-like and not intimidating
- Trained on ACEs, mental health, DEI
- Allow youth to try things without pushing
- Mix of ages, genders, religion
- Racial diversity
- Speak multiple languages
- Experienced and knowledgeable
- Enforce but don't nag

The Power of Developmental Relationships

Search Institute research finds that “high-quality relationships are essential to young people's growth, learning, and thriving—including for those young people who face serious challenges in their lives.” Sometimes overlooked, however, are the very features of a relationship that make it powerful and contribute to a young person's growth, resilience, and thriving. Search Institute has studied this topic extensively and created the Developmental Relationships Framework, which identifies five elements, expressed in 20 different actions that make relationships impactful for young people. The five elements are: express care, challenge growth, provide support, share power, and expand possibilities.

Through developmental relationships, young people can discover who they are, cultivate the abilities needed for them to shape their own lives, and learn how to engage with and contribute to the world around them. When young people have access to these relationships in all parts of their lives (families, schools, communities, youth programs, etc.), they are more likely to be resilient in the face of challenges and grow up thriving.”¹

Youth also identified a need for and interest in mentoring with peers or with adults

Youth described how they would want to feel at the center, including:

- That they are welcome
- Part of a community
- Comfortable and relaxed; able to unload and show vulnerability.
- Home away from home
- Stimulating and engaging
- Safe

A youth center would need to “offer things that would make us put down our phones.”

“It needs rules or restrictions to make sure that things aren’t happening in these facilities that are wrong, harmful, or disruptive. Like no kids in the bathroom vaping.”

Support Academic Success and Post-Secondary Readiness

A strong linkage can be made between regular participation in quality out-of-school time programming and improved academic outcomes. Reaching and impacting those students who are most at-risk of failing to graduate in Frederick will require a strong linkage between the proposed youth center, its participating organizations, and the school district.

Youth identified this need for school and educational support in focus groups, including the following components:

- Study space
- Tutoring
- Computer/Wi-Fi access
- School counselors
- GED support

There was also a clear emphasis on the need for resources around college, career, and life readiness.

“Must have people or staff there that can help youth get where they want to go. Help them find the right path and make the proper connections.”

- Job readiness preparation
- Employment and/or internship opportunities at the center
- Intro-level training for certain jobs, skills, or trades (i.e., cosmetology)
- Help with job applications, resumes, setting up direct deposit
- Job and internship connections



- College application and financial-aid application assistance
- Life coaching
- Financial literacy classes
- Guest speakers from specific jobs
- Recruiting events for sports and colleges
- Help with finding housing/apartments
- Help with driver’s license, finding a car, car insurance

Students at Highest Risk of Not Graduating

Overall, FCPS has a high graduation rate: In 2021, Frederick County Public Schools had an overall graduation rate of 94%, higher than the Maryland state average of 87%.

However, this rate is lower for some groups of students:

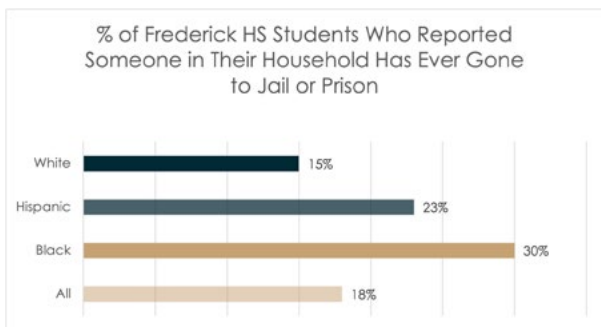
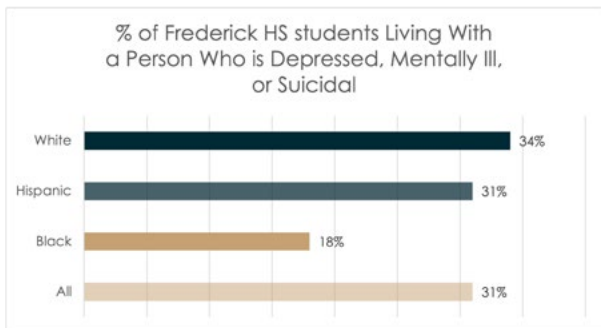
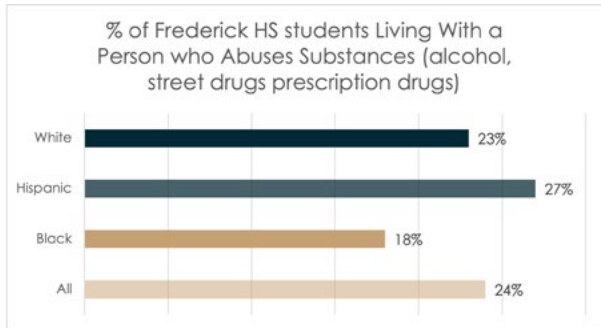
- At Frederick High School, which serves the downtown/central Frederick city area, the graduation rate is 76%.⁸ The population served at Frederick High School is predominantly students of color – 38% Hispanic, 25% Black, 4% two or more races, and 7% Asian.
- The number and percentage of Hispanic students have increased significantly over the past decade, going from 15% in 2010, to 38% in 2021, more than doubling over that time. The percent of students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch is 51%.¹⁰
- At Governor Thomas Johnson High School, which also serves the downtown area, the graduation rate is 84%. The diversity at GTJ High School is similar to Frederick High School’s: most students are of color (68%), and there has been a tripling of the number and percentage of Hispanic students over the past ten years.
- For students who are homeless, the graduation rate is 74%.
- For students who are both Hispanic and English Language Learners (likely to be more recent immigrants), the graduation rate is 61%. For those who are both Hispanic and homeless, the rate is 55%.

Quality Out-of-School Time Supports Community Prosperity

A substantial body of research shows that regular participation in quality out-of-school programming can improve school attendance (a key precursor to improved graduation prospects) and a decreased likelihood of dropping out of school.¹ High-school graduation is a key indicator of educational success as well as a social determinant of health throughout the lifespan. Youth from lower income families tend to be more likely to repeat grades and use special education services and are less likely to graduate from high school.¹

Continuing to improve high-school graduation rates, especially among the most at-risk sub-groups, is an investment in the future prosperity of Frederick County. Those who do not complete a high-school education have much poorer life outcomes than those who graduate, earning on average \$260,000 less in lifetime earnings as well as being far more likely to suffer from chronic diseases. Nationally, adults with less than a high-school education have weekly median earnings that are 32% less than adults with a high-school diploma, and 117% less than those with a bachelor’s degree (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018), ultimately negatively affecting purchasing power and community economic vitality.

Adverse Childhood Experiences



About half of youth in Frederick have experienced or are currently experiencing trauma, also known as Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACEs.

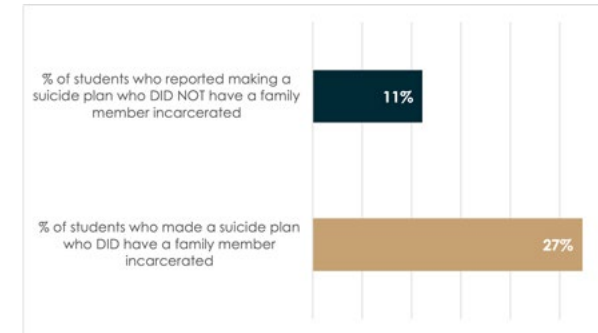
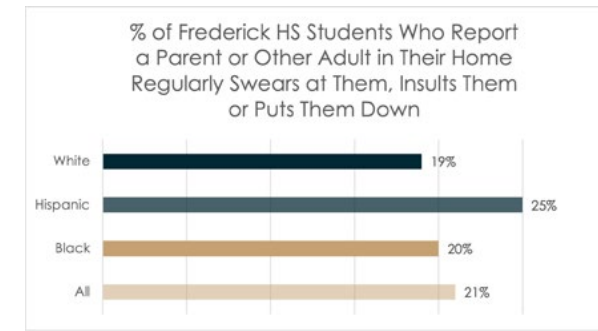
ACEs is a category of traumatic experiences that threaten someone's life, safety, or well-being, inducing a toxic stress response. Toxic stress results from frequent prolonged activation of the body's stress-response systems without the protection of a supportive adult relationship and has negative effects on physical, emotional, social, and behavioral development, including increased prevalence of engaging in risky behaviors, higher incidences of chronic diseases, and higher likelihood of experiencing homelessness.

The 2018 Frederick YRBS results were analyzed in 2020 by the Maryland Department of Health, with a focus on ACEs, and presented to the ACEs workgroup and other stakeholders in November 2020.

Three of these indicators are shown in the graphs to the left.

Emotional Abuse:

Overall, 20.6% of Frederick high-school students reported a parent or other adult in their home regularly swears at them, insults them, or puts them down. The rate was highest among Hispanic students at 25%.



The key point for action is that strengthening protective factors can lower the risk of risky behaviors among those youth - mitigating the impact of trauma. Youth with support from three or more non-parent adults with one or more ACEs, were much less likely to report feeling sad or hopeless for more than two weeks in a row (26.7% versus 41.9% for once ACE), and were much less likely to have made a suicide plan (12.7% versus. 19.3% for one ACE). These data give additional weight to the already significant evidence that relationships matter.

Funding Strategies in Response to These Findings


The Frederick Funders Grantmaking Report, 2020, shows that just 4% of 2020 grant dollars were specifically focused on prevention. Investing in the youth center, and in the infrastructure to create more structured collaboration and collective impact, can have a significant impact as an upstream prevention strategy. While this is a long-term proposition as a community health goal, an immediate impact will be felt by youth who participate in the programming and benefit from the relationships that can be created intentionally as part of this strategy. Allocating more funding toward prevention is one of the action steps that could be explored in response to the findings in this report. Supporting a Frederick Youth Collaborative and the development of a youth center would align with that shift.

The Frederick County ACEs Workgroup, along with Trauma-Informed Frederick, have done significant work to raise awareness of the importance of recognizing and addressing ACEs, including training for school personnel, policy advocacy, and engagement of healthcare providers.

We recommend that the Frederick Youth Collaborative build on the work of the ACEs workgroup, working with them, along with Trauma-Informed Frederick, to bring further training and awareness to the youth provider community, and to the building design team in creating the spaces within the building. Integrating a trauma-informed approach into programs and services, both at the youth center, and throughout the community, will be key to effectiveness.

Overall, about half of Frederick County high school youth were exposed to one or more of the measured ACEs.

The more ACEs students were exposed to, the more likely it was that they reported engaging in risk-taking behavior at far greater rates than their peers who were not exposed.



Food and Addressing Food Insecurity Among Youth

Food security influences risk behaviors:

- **Twenty-five percent of youth with one or more ACEs who were food insecure misused prescription drugs.**
- **For those who were food secure, the rate was 15.7%.**
- **Food security likewise lowered the prevalence of mental health issues, using tobacco, and getting into fights at school.**

Clearly, there is a need to provide food at the youth center and to continue to address the issue of food insecurity.

“Open the kitchen to anyone so that the youth can learn how to make something at their own pace on their own time, decreasing their dependency.”

- *Frederick Youth in Focus group, February 2022*

Youth Recommendations for Food

- Snacks (include healthy options)
- Food court
- Full meals with wide variety of food available
- Juice bar
- Kitchen space/community kitchen



Vulnerable Populations

Homeless Youth

While only accounting for approximately 5% of homeless students in the state, Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) continues to see a growth in its homeless student population. In SY 20/21, there were 895 students experiencing homelessness, 609 of whom were between the ages of 12-18, and 111 of those were unaccompanied homeless youth at last count. These numbers are widely considered to be an undercount, due to limitations in understanding student situations in a remote learning situation. **Students of color are experiencing homelessness at more than double the rate of their white peers—2.7% versus 1.3%.**

Much work has been done to meet the needs of youth experiencing homelessness in Frederick County, including programs offered through SHIP. We believe even more can be accomplished through coordination of these programs with the proposed youth center. These students represent a population at high risk of adult homelessness, dependence on public services, and chronic illness in adulthood, perpetuating generational poverty.

Opportunity Youth

Opportunity youth are disconnected teenagers and young adults who are between the ages of 16-24 and are neither working nor in school. It is for these reasons that many policymakers refer to disconnected youth as “opportunity youth,” because they have tremendous opportunity for building a more robust community, workforce, and economy as they move toward self-sufficiency. The latest report from Measure of America estimates that 2,100 youth are disconnected in Frederick County.¹¹ The county’s disconnected youth are nearly twice as likely to live in poverty, more than three times as likely to have a disability, more than twice as likely to lack health insurance, and more than 20 times more likely to be institutionalized compared

to connected youth. Disconnected youth 21-24 years old are less than half as likely to have a bachelor's degree as their connected counterparts. Disconnected young women are over four times as likely to be mothers as their connected peers.¹² Reaching this group of young people is a priority for the Frederick community, and previous work has been done analyzing the specific needs of this group and how to serve them.



Youth Homelessness = Trauma

Youth experiencing homelessness are more likely to have experienced significant trauma. Homeless unaccompanied minors experience significant challenges related to school, including poor or failing grades, truancy, transportation issues, and disciplinary issues. These educational issues are a manifestation of conditions associated with homelessness, including hunger, trauma, abuse, and neglect. Youth experiencing homelessness are/have been exposed to ACEs at a much higher rate than average. According to a study of homeless youth in Minnesota, 48% of youth surveyed reported experiencing physical abuse, 31% sexual abuse, 31% neglect, 60% witness abuse, 41% parental incarceration, 61% lived with a substance abuser, 59% had a parent/guardian with mental illness, and 84% reported at least one of the preceding. As explained in the previous section, this has serious implications for these youth, but can be mitigated with protective relationships. Experiencing trauma also puts youth at risk for being perpetrators of child abuse themselves, should they become parents.

The CDC estimates the lifetime cost per victim of child maltreatment to be \$831,000.

Implementation Recommendations

Community Vision

A provider visioning process generated a preliminary consensus about what a youth center in Frederick could be:

- Holistic shared collaborative space (including addressing ways to meet basic needs)
- A web of coordinated and caring supports
- An inclusive and open door for everyone
- Safe, warm, fun, comfortable, and accepting
- Flexible, inclusive, innovative, and responsive programming
- Youth voice is loud and clear

Youth focus groups named many of the same elements:

- **Food**
- **Access to employment and housing**
- **Mental health support**
- **Relatable, supportive staff**
- **Youth leadership opportunities**
- **Venues that celebrate and showcase youth work**

- **Life-skills programming**
- **Variety of enrichment and advancement opportunities:**
 - ✓ Sports (indoor and outdoor)
 - ✓ Arts
 - ✓ Community service/volunteer opportunities
 - ✓ Video games
 - ✓ Wi-Fi
 - ✓ Study space and tutoring support



Provider Recommendations for Future Campus



Minimum Building Requirements



Providers were also in strong agreement about the kinds of space and equipment that would be needed:

- **Versatile spaces:** In both 1:1 interviews and in the visioning process, providers identified the need for larger spaces than typical classrooms that could be used for a range of offerings from group tutoring to yoga to art projects. These same spaces could be used as meeting rooms for staff and shared training on topics like trauma-informed interviewing, ACEs, mentorship, and required training like first aid and CPR. Multiple providers mentioned the benefit of shared trainings if co-located.
- **Space and equipment for varied programming** from STEM to performing arts, to drop-in space, and recreational activities will be the draw for youth with access to school liaisons, mental health providers, and other prevention and intervention services.
- **A Hub and Spoke Space configuration:** Several providers as well as youth described a hub-and-spoke model with a gym in the middle and spaces for STEM, art, auditorium or theatre space, a youth hang-out room, a kitchen for cooking classes, and community activities.
- **Connectivity with easy access to up-to-date technology:** The groups also stressed the importance of connectivity to Wi-Fi and technology for both programming purposes and for staff to log in to their respective organization’s e-mail, tracking tools, etc.

Based on this feedback, to meet the identified needs articulated by youth and program providers, the building at a minimum should include the following:

Space	Purpose
Welcoming entry area	Set the tone, provide a friendly welcome, monitor entry
Gym 1	Basketball
Gym 2	Additional sports (volleyball, fitness, other games)
6-8 Classrooms	Arts, music studio, multi-purpose instruction
Lounge areas	Socializing, informal instruction; separate by age groups
Program spaces	Case management, behavioral health, mentoring, peer support
Multi-purpose co-working space	Partnering service providers, smaller non-profits
Office space	For youth center and collaborative leadership and staff
Conference/meeting room	For coalition board meetings, other
Kitchen	For cooking instruction
Food vendor space	Provide job opportunities for youth, serve healthy food
Video gaming room	Fun, gaming
Outdoor space	Sports field, outdoor seating areas, skate park

“Kids can help make murals . . . Space that is nice, clean, attractive, new materials. Poor kids deserve the same space as families who can afford it. Space that is respectful for all.”

-Frederick youth provider





Community Relationships and Collaboration

Most youth providers interviewed and surveyed displayed a strong willingness to be involved in such a collaboration. When asked, “How could youth providers work more effectively together in the community?” their answers included:

- “Establish a coalition of partners serving youth in the county and meet once a month to discuss challenges, barriers, duplication of services, funding, and more.”
- “Through a coalition that meets regularly to discuss programs and share resources.”
- “Need a shared vision, a backbone infrastructure, data and accountability, communication including youth, all races, ethnic groups, and SES.”
- “Sharing of resources and skills.”
- “Collaboration! Sometimes we have the titles, but we don’t know the role. We need to be everywhere . . . can’t pick and choose where we are going to help. This is about making an impact.”

There is strong support for expanded formalized collaboration around improving outcomes for young people in Frederick County, including for the development of a youth center. Fifty-four percent of survey/interview respondents said they believed a youth center was a good idea. Frederick has a strong history of collaboration in the Early Childhood space and in developing responses to ACEs through the Trauma-Responsive Frederick initiative. However, a comprehensive collaboration to impact youth has not yet been formed.

Support for creating a holistic or comprehensive model and programming with opportunities for social, emotional, and physical activities for youth of different ages at different times was a consistent theme throughout the assessment process. There was universal alignment between the providers and youth about the importance of an attractive, light-filled, clean, and respectful space. These are contributing elements to a safe space that would be valued by all (youth, parents, providers, and downtown businesses and residents.) A few providers also expressed caution about the need for a new youth center as well as seeking clarity about management of space.

Co-location and the opportunity to work together will ideally yield greater collaboration among providers and create greater impact, shared outcomes, and more opportunities and access for all youth regardless of background. Informal information sharing and learning over a dinner break with other youth workers will positively contribute to collaboration.



FREDERICK YOUTH COLLABORATIVE/YOUTH CENTER: THEORY OF CHANGE

ASSUMPTIONS

Working collaboratively across sectors improves outcomes for youth.

Caring adults in the community value youth.

Schools, youth service providers and future youth center programs work to become safe, trauma-informed, culturally responsive and equitable.

Youth Center hiring will reflect the experiences and diversity of youth served, intentionally creating living wage jobs and career pathways.

Youth input and time is valued and compensated. Their leadership is empowered and meaningful.

STRATEGIES

- Provide youth leadership and leadership development opportunities at the Youth Center
- Expand Youth Advisory Board Countywide
- Include a youth voice in any community-wide assessment by a funder
- Develop and make available youth leadership programs and leadership development programs at the Youth Center and in the community
- Expand access to youth leadership opportunities in the community

- Coordinate student internships
- Train mentors. Develop a single-point of access to build on existing mentoring programs
- Provide incentives to encourage youth participation
- Provide youth employment opportunities at the center
- Offer free Saturday morning classes on life skills (languages, cooking, finances)
- Provide free music and art activities at youth center
- Provide opportunities to participate in strengths-based assessments and coaching, like CliftonStrengths
- Use social media as an outreach or exploration strategy

- Train staff on developmental relationships, crisis response and trauma-informed approaches to programs and interventions
- Ensure youth center staff and leadership reflect demographics and lived experience of youth
- Ensure signage, verbiage, décor, set up, structure, staff, safety mechanisms are welcoming for all
- Link non-profits and service providers to Youth Center for presentations and in other ways
- Provide resources for the youth center staff to support parents/caregivers in connecting with resources for employment, housing, food, etc.
- Provide training for parents and caregivers on how to be effective communicators with youth

- Co-locate FCPS resources and services at the Youth Center
- Co-locate Library, City and community resources at the youth center (e.g. Access to FCPL Databases, Resources (homework help, live tutoring, video and TV, Parks and Rec programming, Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, STEM resources, Tech Frederick, etc.)
- Offer tutoring in Spanish and/or other languages spoken by youth
- Offer adult education classes on-site; have computer lab available for virtual classes or homework, etc.
- Expand access to Summer Jobs Program
- Expand access to, or co-locate college and career programs at the Youth Center
- Provide access to Frederick County Workforce Services Youth Career Exploration and Job Readiness Programs

- Provide expanded options and access for after-school sports
- Provide free coaching for a variety of sports (partner with City and County Rec programs, YMCA, Boys and Girls Club or other partners)
- Co-locate physical and mental health services—case management and crisis response
- Co-locate basic needs resources at Youth Center, including Food Pantry
- Offer long term support/resources for youth so they don't have to go back to an abusive home or relationship, referral connections for safe housing
- Provide virtual hang-out space where youth can express feelings and emotions (e.g. FCPL Discord Program)
- Offer meals and snacks, available at all times

PRECONDITIONS

- Youth and families are aware of and use supports for youth in the county
- Authentic interest and enthusiasm by adult community and business leaders for youth input and participation

- Community provides affordable, high-quality enrichment programming
- Youth have places to connect to like-minded community for social connections

- Youth and families have knowledge of immigration processes
- There are cultural awareness and understanding from the broader community
- Parents and caregivers are connected to youth
- Other caring adults (teachers, faith leaders, etc.) are connected to youth
- Youth have access to trained and representative (BIPOC, LGBTQ etc.) adult mentors
- Youth have access to like minded community for social connections

- All youth have consistent, reliable access to transportation to school
- Students feel safe at and on their way to and from school
- Culturally appropriate, relevant academic support is known and available

- Youth have access to physical activity, and safe places to play/recreate
- Youth have access to green space
- Youth have safe places and opportunities for rest, relaxation and sleep
- Youth have safe and reliable housing
- School schedules align with youth biology and circadian rhythm
- Youth have consistent access to healthy food
- Youth have access to convenient, culturally appropriate, trauma-informed and youth-centric care
- Youth have access to resources on stress management and mental well being

SHORTER-TERM OUTCOMES

- All youth have access to coordinated high-quality youth leadership/leadership development opportunities
- Youth engage in leadership/leadership development opportunities aligned with their interests and strengths

- All youth have access to enrichment opportunities through coordinated high quality programming
- Youth utilize enrichment programming aligned with their interests and strengths

- All youth are supported by a community network of caring adults
- Youth form positive relationships with adults in their lives
- Youth build healthy peer relationships
- Youth are supported by safe and nurturing relationships

- Youth attend school regularly
- Youth obtain regular health care
- Youth come to school healthy and ready to learn
- Youth want to succeed and graduate
- Youth have educational supports that meet their individual needs

- Youth are physically active.
- Youth spend time outdoors.
- Youth are well rested/get enough sleep
- Youth regularly eat healthy food.
- Youth obtain regular physical and mental health care (including dental)

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

A representative and broad span of youth participate in all levels of community decision-making

Youth engage in self-discovery, exploration and healthy risk-taking

Youth experience safety and belonging in the community

Youth succeed academically and are prepared to transition to post-secondary education or training

Youth are healthy physically, mentally and emotionally

IMPACT

Frederick youth are empowered to achieve their full potential and make a healthy transition to adulthood as contributing members of their community.

Alignment with Local Policy Goals



These alignments create possibilities for deeper collaboration, including funding, as budget processes align with meeting strategic objectives, and provide a rationale for public entities to support the collaboration and the youth center in multiple ways.

Office of Children and Families (Frederick County)

The Office for Children and Families as part of the Local Management Board (LMB) develops a Community Plan every three years, the most recent of which covers FY21-23.¹³

The four prioritized results and five indicators selected by the LMB are:

- **Communities are safe for children, youth, and families:**
 - Child maltreatment as measured by the rate of children (ages 0-17) with indicated or unsubstantiated child abuse or neglect findings
- **Families are safe and economically stable:**
 - Homelessness: Percent of public-school children who are homeless on September 30, 2019
 - Child poverty: the percent of children under 18 living in poverty
- **Youth have opportunities for employment or career readiness:**
 - Number of youth aged 16-24 not working and not attending school
- **Youth complete school:**
 - Educational attainment (high-school graduate including equivalency)

A Frederick Youth Collaborative/Center (FYC) has the potential to contribute to/impact all four of these indicators over the long term as part of the larger effort in Frederick County.

In the short term, the youth center would expand opportunities for employment and career readiness programs, and as noted earlier, quality out-of-school programs can contribute to closing the income-achievement gap.

The table below describes a few possible examples:

POTENTIAL PROGRAMMING →	ASSUMPTIONS →	OUTCOME/INDICATOR IMPACTED
Coordination with organizations supporting youth experiencing homelessness, adding additional programming to stabilize and house youth experiencing homelessness.	Additional resources more accessible because of youth center. Intentional outreach and services to homeless youth.	Percent of public school children who are homeless.
Case Manager or Program Navigator for disconnected "opportunity youth."	Additional resources more accessible because of youth center. Intentional outreach and services to disconnected youth.	Number of youth 16-24 not working or attending school.
Quality out-of-school programming including enrichment and academic support.	Additional resources/programming more accessible because of youth center, strong connection with school districts and effective marketing to youth.	Educational attainment.

City of Frederick Strategic Plan

The formation of the Frederick Youth Collaborative and the creation of a youth center as envisioned supports several objectives in the City's 10-year strategic plan:

Under Strategic Goal #2 – Social Well-Being

- 2.01 Reduce both chronic and episodic homelessness and provide adequate affordable housing choices in the city.
- 2.02 Maintain safe and vibrant public spaces through strengthened community policing, programming, civic engagement, and environmental design.
- 2.04 Support neighborhood accessible arts and recreation opportunities, infrastructure, and programming.

- 2.05 Maintain and expand programs that serve the most vulnerable populations.
- 2.06 Increase the span of healthy life for residents, reduce health disparities, and achieve equal access to preventative services.

Strategic Goal #4 - Competitive Employment

- 4.01 The City will employ a diverse, high-quality, and innovative workforce, enhancing services to residents and increasing competitiveness as an employer.
- 4.05 Foster and enhance a robust, diverse, and well-trained workforce.

Frederick County Public Schools Strategic Plan

FCPS Aspirational Goal #1: "FCPS will equip each and every student to be an empowered learner and an engaged citizen to achieve a positive impact in the local and global community" can be supported through the activities of the FYC, specifically through impact on measurable Goal #2, and #6:

- FCPS will have 80% of schools at each level meeting their annual achievement targets for every student group by 2025, both in reading and math.
- FCPS will increase the four-year cohort graduation rate to, and not drop below, 95% by 2025.



Barriers to Expanded Collaboration

Community members identified some of the underlying reasons and potential pitfalls of forming such a collaboration:

IDENTIFIED BARRIER	RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS
Lack of trust within marginalized communities, both individuals and small nonprofits.	<p>Build trust through an intentional and focused effort to include and honor voices that have not previously been included.</p> <p>Make sure all decision-making is fully transparent, through a jointly agree-upon charter that ensures representation and has a clear decision-making process (e.g. define and follow a simplified Robert's Rules).</p> <p>Make all meetings public and allow for public input on agenda items within a specified time limit.</p> <p>Name systemic racism as a cause for disparities in health and achievement.</p> <p>Develop and use anti-racist language and back it up with action.</p> <p>Be intentional in the use of positive, asset-based language.</p>
Criteria for participation in various programs differs, and there is no common database to support collaborative efforts or measure success objectively.	<p>Provide philanthropic support to establish backbone organization to facilitate adoption of common measurement tools.</p>
There is hesitancy in the community about larger scale collaboration—we are new to it.	<p>Develop a clear structure for decision making, maintaining a focus on improving outcomes for all youth in the community.</p> <p>Provide support for program improvement, evaluation, and data aggregation through a learning process that benefits providers individually as well as the collaborative effort overall.</p> <p>Provide training on facilitative, collaborative, leadership.</p>
Politics constrain actions by individual providers.	<p>Keep explicit focus on youth outcomes, creating accountability through measurement of success, supporting already agreed-upon objectives of public entities.</p> <p>Develop common language that shifts the narrative around youth to a positive framework.</p> <p>Explicitly align youth center work to support policy objectives.</p>
Providers don't have a common base of knowledge around developmental relationships, trauma, ACEs, and youth development.	<p>Provide training to youth providers and establish a trauma-informed framework around all collaborative initiatives, including the youth center.</p>

Expanding Capacity for Collaboration



Proposed Collaborative and Management Structure Governance



To grow youth services, and improve outcomes for children and youth, the capacity of the community for collaboration will need to expand. This requires a structure for it to grow into and is a years-long process. The diagram below¹⁴ shows how this can work.

The Ready by 21 Theory of Change



We recommend that the city or county serve as the fiscal host and administrative backbone of an independent organization that facilitates community-wide collaboration to improve outcomes, although another organization with the HR and finance systems could also serve in this role. This organization would also include supervision of building staff and management of evaluation and data systems.

To keep the facilitative organization “Frederick Youth Collaborative (FYC)” (actual name to be determined later) grounded in the community, it should be integrated into a larger community structure that provides for clear decision making and the flow of information between community organizations, youth, and site-based leadership.



These components could include:

- Director - Responsible for execution/ oversight of strategic plan
- Program coordinator - Responsible for nuts and bolts program management (partnership agreements), youth stipended staff
- Site manager - oversees building functions, facilities management
- Youth staff (front desk, program assistance)



- 3 larger non-profit EDs
- 3 smaller non-profit EDs serving at-risk population
- 3 culturally specific non-profits EDs (Hispanic, Black, Asian)
- City and county reps (Staff Leadership) (4)
- FCPS reps (2)
- Business leaders (2)
- Philanthropic leaders (2)
- Elected officials (1)

- 3 youth reps from high schools
- 3 youth reps from larger non-profits
- 3 youth reps from church youth leadership
- 3 youth reps from culturally specific youth advisory
- 3 youth reps from SHIP with lived experience of homelessness

- Parent representatives (2)
- Faith community representatives (3)
- Neighborhood leadership (2-3)
- Non-profit program staff (direct services)
- FCPS school community liasions (2-3)
- Health providers (behavioral, physical)
- Trauma-informed Frederick representative (1)
- At-large members (3-5)

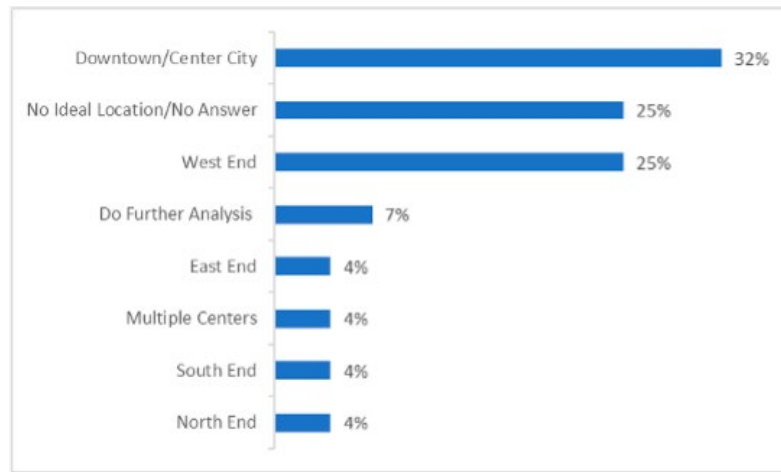
FYC Leadership Council Membership

Based on our assessment to date, potential representation on the Leadership Council could be as follows (Please note that this does not represent a final list and is provided as a general guideline only):

3 Larger nonprofits	Leadership from YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, TBD
3 Smaller nonprofits	SHIP, I Believe in Me, City Youth Matrix, others TBD
3 Culturally specific nonprofits	Centro Hispano, Asian American Center, Spanish Speaking Community of Maryland
3 At-large representatives	ARC, Heartly House, Mental Health Association, others TBD
Frederick City representation	Parks and Rec, Public Housing
FCPS representation	Students Services Director, Achievement Specialist for School Culture, Homeless Education Program Administrator
Frederick County representation	Office of Children Youth and Families, Child Advocacy Center, Library
Trauma-Informed Frederick/ACES Workgroup	TBD
Business leaders	TBD
Philanthropic leaders	Aushman Family Foundation, Delaplaine Foundation Inc., Community Foundation of Frederick County
Elected officials	TBD (Alderman, mayor, county executive)

Development Process, Management, Funding and Location

Multi-year process and timeframe: The establishment of a management entity of the youth center is critical to the success of a downtown youth center, requiring future conversations and trust-building among providers and schools (see Implementation Plan p.42, and Proposed Governance and Management p.31).



Additional funding needs: New sources of funding for the center and for individual organization’s offerings will be needed to supplement the existing programming that will continue in parks, neighborhood sites, and schools, as well as expanded offerings at the youth center. Competition for funding was identified as a barrier given the limited funding that currently exists (see Potential Financing Models p.38).

Location: Most providers support a downtown location with public transit access.

The location for the center must be easily accessible for youth and their caregivers given the need for access to public transportation. Additionally, parking should be easily available for parents, providers, and young adults. Although there are pockets of need throughout the county, the most concentrated needs are in and around the city of Frederick.

Organizational Leadership

Our recommendation is that the FYC have a director, hired by, and accountable to the Leadership Council. The fiscal host would provide staff supervision and HR functions for the director of the FYC, but the job performance evaluation criteria would be determined by strategic direction determined by the Leadership Council of the FYC.

The FYC Director will provide leadership and management for the following functions:

- Coordinates site staff (building scheduling, facilities management)
- Contracts with providers including a community partner agreement
- Supervises other staff as determined by the FYC
- Staffs the FYC Leadership, FYC Community Advisory Council and the FYC Youth Advisory Council

Community Partner Agreement

We recommend a community partnership agreement that defines requirements for use of space and options for participation in outcome evaluation and professional development.

Other aspects of the agreement could include:

- Data privacy
- Liability insurance
- Data access
- Background checks

- Program design
- Program evaluation
- Space requirements
- Staff qualifications and experience

Data Sharing

Data about youth and how systems support youth can be summarized at the population level, program level, and individual level. Below we look at each of these different levels of data and describe examples of each in how they relate to the core youth outcomes:¹⁵

Example outcome: Youth are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy

Whole population level – data that summarizes characteristics or results for a specific geographic area(state, metro area, county, city, zip codes and neighborhoods – also tracts, block groups and blocks) E.g., percent of students ready reporting they have felt sad or hopeless for more than two weeks in a row)

Program level – data that summarizes characteristics or results for a specific program or service (school mental health supports, mental health supports at the youth center, students on Medicaid health coverage) E.g., percent of students participating in youth center programs that report they have felt sad or hopeless for more than two weeks in a row in Frederick County

Individual/student level – data that describes an individual (child, adult) E.g., an individual student’s name, grade, school name and mental health screening scores, case management notes. Personally Identifiable Information (PII): includes information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual’s identity, either alone or when combined with other personal or identifying information that is linked or linkable to a specific individual.

De-identified (or anonymized) data: de-identification is the process used to prevent someone’s personal identity from being revealed. This kind of data is often used in research and evaluation efforts where knowing an individual’s name isn’t necessary.

This differs from case management and service coordination where it is important to have personally identifiable information. More information on data de-identification can be found via the U.S. Department of Education and the Future of Privacy Forum.

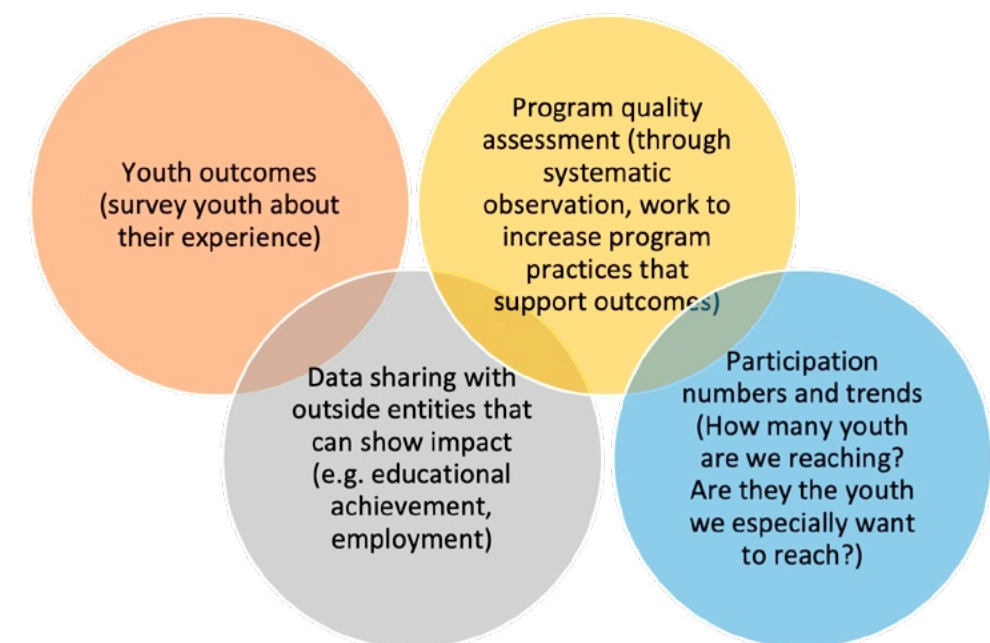
Systems level – data that reveals how resources, decision-making power and opportunities are distributed to inform policies and practices within institutions, organizations and programs that are interdependent and/or related. E.g., availability mental health supports by neighborhood.

Ways data is used	Questions and examples	Data types
Public reporting Publishing reports and dashboards on local outcomes and priorities for the partnership	How is our community doing as a whole related to high school graduation, youth substance use, mental health and the rest of our core outcome areas? To what extent do racial disparities exist?	Population and systems level
Prioritization of strategies Helping to inform what outcomes the partnership should focus on and what strategies contribute to those outcomes	How can our data inform the priority outcomes we should focus on as a partnership or through our collaborative action network strategies? What target strategies should we focus on to advance racial equity?	Population, program and systems level
Research and policy analysis Performing research and helping to inform policy questions	Do health issues contribute to school attendance? To what extent does the number of years of preschool contribute to kindergarten readiness?	Individual and systems level
Program evaluation Analyzing what programs are effective	What local programs or practices help increase student well-being or achievement?	Individual and program level
Service coordination and delivery/case management Help ensure students get the services they need and help organizations access the data they need to support students	How do we help coordinate the right programs and services to the right children or students at the right time? How can community-based organizations access student data to better serve students?	Individual and systems level
Continuous improvement Helping ensure frequently reported data is available for continuous improvement projects	Are my rapid-cycle improvement interventions having the desired impact?	Individual and program level
Providing data to partners Providing data, analysis and/or reports and dashboards to local partners	What are the enrollment characteristics of my program? What are the needs of my target population? How are we making progress on our shared goals?	Population, program, individual, and systems level

Program Quality and Outcomes

Getting Reliable Information About Youth Outcomes Across Various Programs

Because research clearly shows that certain youth experiences and outcomes are critical to further success, to truly have an impact across the community, a common language needs to be adopted that will track progress and allow for program improvement. This tracking should be done in a way that supports programs and their growth and should not be used punitively or as a gatekeeping tool.



Data from the Frederick County YRBS survey can be used as a baseline against which programs and initiatives can measure improvement. When the community tackles a specific problem and sets a target for improvement, the MYRBS is a useful tool to track changes over time. While individual programs don't drive community-wide outcomes, they can compare the prevalence of indicators among those who participate in their programs versus those who don't.

Youth Outcomes and Program Quality

For outcomes to be reliably measured across programs, a common tool needs to be adopted. We recommend that the FYC work toward common adoption of the Survey of Academic and Youth Outcomes, (SAYA) a research-validated assessment tool that measures:

- Program experiences (engagement, choice, challenge, social environment, etc.)
- Future expectations (future planning, aspirations, college planning, etc.)
- Sense of competence (reading, writing, math, science, getting along with others, etc.)

Adopting a common framework for outcomes and program quality is a key defining feature of out-of-school time networks across the country and is key to their success and sustainability. The results from a common tool can be aggregated into a shared database that shows collective improvements and impact.

To understand the specific practices that can support the achievement of these outcomes, we recommend that the FYC also work toward a common adoption of the Youth Program Quality Assessment, a research-based tool that is the basis for numerous improvement initiatives in the US and abroad.



Consider an Integrated Data System¹⁵

Integrated data systems (IDS) link administrative and program data from multiple data sources, and may include records on childcare, education, juvenile justice, vital statistics, workforce development, employment and earnings, child welfare and other social programs. They integrate data across agencies and institutions down to the individual level and can aggregate data up to the level of the family, household, school, neighborhood, and larger geographies. IDS may be hosted at city or county offices, state agencies, university centers or independent nonprofit organizations. IDS require the linking of individual data across multiple independent data systems. This requires access to technology to store and link the data, and the technical expertise to clean, conform, link, and analyze data. It also requires the capacity to manage the effort – to bring a wide variety of partners to the table, negotiate data-sharing agreements and implement basic data governance structures. However, there are a few defining characteristics that separate IDS from other data-sharing efforts:

- IDS are more sustainable. An IDS is a long-term proposition with a clear organizational home, defined governance structure, financial backing and charter. They permit data on individuals to be linked over time and can retain historical data at the individual level.
- They are flexible in that they are designed to answer a variety of questions based on local institutional, political and community interests. Rather than being associated with a single project or study, IDS serve as a kind of “public utility” for their stakeholders in this civic infrastructure.
- They have a robust governance structure. IDS must have a program governance team whose primary role is keeping confidential data secure and ensuring that data are used responsibly.

Key outcomes include data that is currently school data, which is protected by strict student data-privacy regulations. However, there are exceptions to the FERPA regulations, which can be utilized to usefully share and use data. Building a relationship with the schools is key to creating the trust and the pathways needed to share aggregate student data that shows the impact of out-of-school time programs on school attendance and academic achievement. Such an agreement would require a release from parents that youth programs be able to share participation information (just the fact that a youth is participating in a program) with the schools and that programs collect name and date of birth from their participants. Programs should track how many youths they are reaching and their demographics (age, gender, race, and poverty).

For a comprehensive resource on the topic of data sharing, please see the “Data Sharing Guide” compiled by Strive Together.





Potential Financing Models

Capital Costs

A variety of public funding mechanisms may be available to assist with the capital costs, pending local government approval. Community Development Block Grants can assist with the “construction of public facilities and improvements” which can include, for example, neighborhood centers and the conversion of school buildings for eligible purposes. Tax Increment Financing may be another option for building improvement or construction.

Operating Costs

- **Diversified Revenue:** Additional revenues will be required to facilitate the structured collaboration and outcome measurement needed to ensure program impact and sustainable operations. Revenue sources should be diversified and represent both public and private sources, including but not limited to: individual donations, foundation grants, federated giving campaigns, business sponsorships, federal, state, county, and city funding and rental income.
- **Local Government (City/County) Funding:** Clear and explicit alignment with local government goals and a formalized accountability structure that satisfies elected and appointed officials will make local government funding more likely.
- **Federal Funding:** Partnerships comprised of local agencies, such as schools and mental health providers, can apply directly to the federal Departments of Education, Justice, and Health and Human Services which jointly administer the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative for a grant to promote healthy development and prevent violent behavior through afterschool activities. Keep in mind that afterschool programs can also compete for many discretionary grants by framing program goals in terms of the particular grant’s focus, from reducing violence

(Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative grants) to increasing job skills (Youthbuild), to providing college readiness activities (GEAR UP).

Other sources of federal funds could potentially include:¹⁶

- 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC)
- Funds for afterschool programs that serve primarily Title I students and offer programming that advances student academic achievement
- Typically administered by the state education agency, such as the Department of Education
- Funds awarded as direct support grants for three to five years
- Eligible applicants (although dependent also on state-specific criteria) include schools, community-based organizations, and public or private organizations

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)

- Funds to help needy families with children, promote job preparation and work, reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies, and encourage formation of two-parent families
- Typically administered by the state’s social services agency
- Up to 30% of TANF funds can be transferred to CCDF, increasing state’s ability to fund afterschool programs
- States have a lot of flexibility in using TANF funds and many, such as Illinois, have successfully used them for afterschool programs
- Eligible applicants vary by state-specific plans for using the funds

Title I (of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965)

- Funds to provide support services for disadvantaged students
- Typically administered by the state education authority such as the Department of Education
- These funds are used for a variety of programming but can be used for afterschool programs—a decision made at the individual school or district level
- Eligible applicants include school districts and other local education agencies

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

- Funds for Mentoring Opportunities for Youth Initiative
- National Mentoring Resource Center (Training and Technical Assistance for Youth Mentoring Programs - Program Capacity Building)



Budget

These functions will be carried out by a so-called “backbone organization.” The budget is incomplete due to current unknowns, but a rough estimate is shown below:

Line Item	Annual Cost	Description
Staff		
Director	\$75,000.00	
Facilities Manager	\$55,000.00	
Program Manager	\$55,000.00	
Contract		
Building security		TBD - Based on building design, hours of operation, number of entrances, etc.
Cleaning		TBD - Based on building design, hours of operation, number of entrances, etc.
IT contract		TBD - phones, office equipment, docking stations, software, tech support, Wi-Fi, internet connection
Building maintenance		TBD - HVAC, electric, flooring, pool, etc. Based on building design, mechanicals, etc.
Program		
Youth stipends for front desk	\$75,000.00	Rough estimate based on 500 hours per year for 10 youth at \$15 per hour.
Youth internships/stipends	\$75,000.00	Could include VISTA, AmeriCorps, other community partner-driven positions, etc.
Supplies		
Program supplies	5,000.00	Miscellaneous supplies
Office supplies	5,000.00	Paper, pens, printer cartridges, etc.
Building supplies	5,000.00	Cleaning products, tissues, pens, hospitality items etc.
ESTIMATED TOTAL	340,000.00	

Social Return on Investment

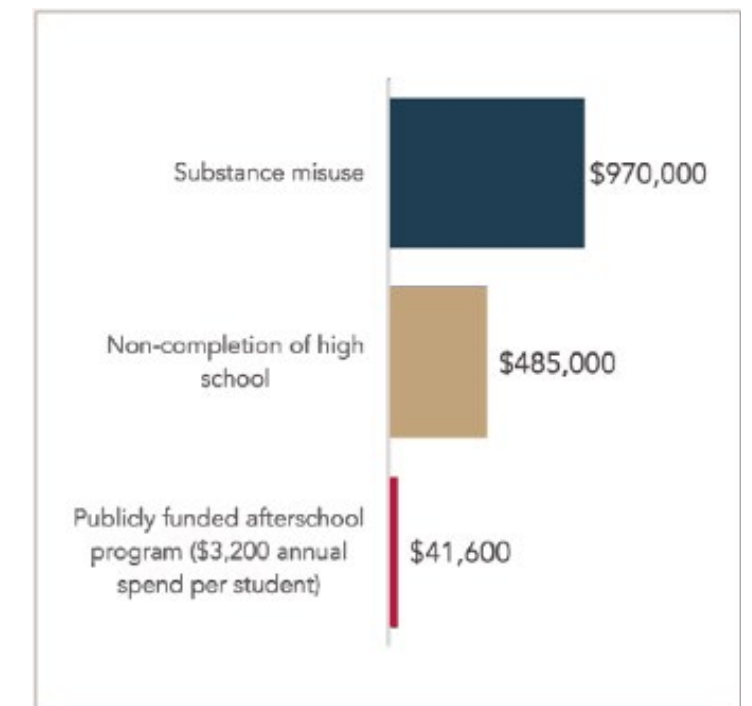
“The dollar value of benefits accrued as a result of high-quality afterschool programming can be seen in terms of economic growth. This growth is largely the product of shrinking achievement gaps, which at present impose the economic equivalent of a permanent national recession.”¹⁷

Figure 5 shows the annual cost of publicly funding an after-school program for one child, K-12 compared to the lifetime lost productivity and public costs of youth who do not graduate from high school, or become addicted to drugs or alcohol.

Outcome areas that have been shown to be impacted by quality out-of-school time programs that generate significant social return on investment include:

- Crime prevention
- Improved physical and behavioral health through the lifespan
- Lower dropout rates
- Lower rates of substance misuse
- Improved high-school graduation rates
- Increased economic investment back into communities

For further detailed information on this topic including the methodology used and the studies these assertions are based on, see the New York State Network for Youth Success publication, *Return on Investment of After-School and Expanded Learning Programs*.



Implementation Steps and Schedule

Implementation Steps	Timeline
YEAR 1	
Convene Frederick Youth Collaborative (FYC) Leadership Council - set meeting schedule, draft, adapt and approve charter (will include purpose, goals, decision-making mechanism and membership).	July- August 2022
Determination by Leadership Council of collaborative convener and staff roles.	August 2022
Form a Youth Center Building Sub-Committee that includes youth-serving professionals and youth to further discuss programming and center design and space needs, expanding on plans laid out in this document.	September 2022
Engage in a strategic planning process focused on youth outcomes that establishes clear priorities for collaborative work including the youth center. Build on assessment work and Theory of Change work already completed. Include youth in the process. (Leadership Council and Youth Representatives)	October - December 2022
Convene Frederick Youth Collaborative Advisory Council and provide for support of its ongoing operation.	September 2022
Convene the Community Advisory Council to give input on the strategic plan, set meeting schedule and staffing.	October 2022
Approve strategic plan. Form work groups based on strategic objectives in the plan.	January - February 2023
Present Youth Center Building Sub Committee recommendations for design firm, future funding structure and creation of partnership agreements and outcomes, included programming and preliminary ideas for use of space.	March 2023
Provide input to design professionals from Advisory and Youth Councils to create vision of space needs and usage.	March 2023
Design professionals meet with Leadership Council to share input from Advisory and Youth Councils.	April 2023

YEAR 2	
Review strategic plan progress and determine Year 2 implementation goals (Leadership Council). Continue meeting throughout the year at frequency determined.	June 2023
Advisory Committee meets to discuss shared programming resources, continue to develop program recommendations for Leadership Council.	September 2023
Design professionals share building renderings of youth center with all three councils.	October 2023
Leadership Council sponsors community forum and shares building renderings with stakeholders such as downtown business association, county and city officials, and schools.	November 2023 - January 2024
Leadership, Advisory, and Youth Council receive findings from community input sessions.	February - March 2024
Leadership Council meets quarterly to advance strategic plan and further collaborative work.	Ongoing



Program and Network Models

There are a variety of models in use around the country intended to improve outcomes for youth at the community level. Youth centers are an effective part of the model when they are embedded in larger structures for community change, with numerous partners. The table below shows some examples of effective projects.

Program/Project Name	Description of Services
<p>Chicago Youth Center www.chicagoyouthcenters.org</p> <p>Also see: www.christopherhouse.org search for Benchmarking Collaborative</p> <p>Governance Structure: Non-Profit, (501c3)</p>	<p>Multiple services and sites, including early childhood community sites, CYC run centers, afterschool programming in schools. Non-Profit status, Non-Profit Board; They also have an Auxiliary Board of young professionals, as well as a CYC Leadership Council, an advising board that provides leadership and insight to the CEO. They work through multiple community locations in 14 Chicago communities with a CY center or Partner. 2 of 3 Center programs have been transitioned to be operated on-site at schools for better access. Org. is 65 years old.</p>
<p>REACH - Ashland Youth Center (Alameda County, CA in the Bay Area) www.reachashland.org/; Also see: www.achealthyschools.org/about/</p> <p>Governance Structure: County Health Department is the Backbone organization, a Leadership Council provides strategic direction. REACH is an acronym for Recreation, Education, Art, Career, Health.</p>	<p>Ashland Youth Center is managed by the Alameda County Health Care Services Agency (HCSA) and the Center for Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC), and is operated with the support of numerous agencies, and community institutions and organizations.</p> <p>Managed by the HCSA and the CHSC, the School District runs the education program; Sheriff's office runs many recreation programs. REACH's 31,500-square-foot facility is in an unincorporated area co-located on the Ashland Youth Complex. Besides the REACH facility, the complex includes a community park in Ashland, a multi-use gymnasium, and a sports field. The REACH facility houses a health and dental clinic, an early Headstart program, library, dance studio, digital media arts center, computer lab, gym, and a career development and employment center. Organization is 10 years old.</p>
<p>RYSE Commons www.rysecenter.org Richmond, CA (Bay Area)</p> <p>Governance Structure: Non-Profit (501c3)</p>	<p>Programs: RYSing Professionals - Cohort model internship for ages 15-21, assisting with career growth and development. Case Management Support: Available for those who express interest in getting regular support in meeting their Education and Career Goals. College Access: Aims to provide youth with knowledge and resources they need to navigate the education system and into Higher Education. Study UP: Tutoring program, drop-in, run Monday-Friday. Media and Arts department elevates youth voice by providing access to industry-standard media equipment, teaching artists and professional training in the area of music, video productions, visual arts and performing arts.</p>
<p>Sprockets - After-School Program Alliance, Saint Paul, MN www.sprocketsaintpaul.org</p>	<p>Sprockets is a network of many different after-school and summer programs. It is a collaboration of community organizations, the City of Saint Paul, and Saint Paul Public Schools. The Sprockets Share Data System collects and stores information from out-of-school time providers across the city. This collaboration allows access to Saint Paul Public Schools aggregate data for youth participating in individual programs. Sprockets is fiscally hosted by the City of Saint Paul Public Library system and governed by a Leadership Council, and a Community Advisory Council.</p>

Footnotes

- ¹ Downtown Safety & Services Initiative Final Report.
- ² For a full list of organizations with representatives interviewed and/or surveyed during this assessment, see Appendices.
- ³ These graphs represent the most recent data available from 2018. Updated data from the 2021 survey will be available Fall 2022.
- ⁴ www.unitedwayfrederick.org/sites/unitedwayfrederick.org/files/UWFC%202020%20Alice%20Report_110620.pdf.
- ⁵ Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) on the Maryland Youth Risk Behavior Survey/Youth Tobacco Survey (YRBS/YTS), presented to the Frederick ACEs Workgroup, shared with SCC Consultants by Pilar Olivo. Created and presented by Nikardi Jallah, MPH MDH, PPHA, Center for Tobacco Prevention and Control, Maryland Department of Public Health.
- ⁶ "What Drives Learning: Young People's Perspectives on the Importance of Relationships, Belonging, & Agency," Center for Promise, Boston University School of Education. 2020.
- ⁷ "What is the Relationship Gap and Why is it Important," Search Institute. 2017. <https://blog.searchinstitute.org/relationship-gap-important>.
- ⁸ The Mentoring Effect. MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership: <https://www.mentoring.org/resource/the-mentoring-effect/>.
- ⁹ U.S. News and World Report. Accessed from: <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/maryland/districts/frederick-county-public-schools/frederick-high-9103>.
- ¹⁰ Statistics from National Center of Educational Statistics, as reported on SchoolDigger.com. Accessed from <https://www.schooldigger.com/go/MD/schools/0033000632/school.aspx?t=tbStudents&st=tbLunch#aDetail>.
- ¹¹ Measure of America. Accessed from: <https://measureofamerica.org/DYinteractive/#County>.
- ¹² Measure of America. Accessed from: <https://measureofamerica.org/youth-disconnection-2021/>.
- ¹³ <https://frederickcountymd.gov/947/Community-Plan>.
- ¹⁴ Accessed from: <https://forumfyi.org/our-approach/>.
- ¹⁵ The content in this section is sourced from from "Data Sharing Guide" 2021, Strive Together.
- ¹⁶ This information was copied directly from the after-school alliance website: <https://www.afterschoolalliance.org/fundingfederalataglance.cfm>.
- ¹⁷ <https://networkforyouthsuccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Return-on-Investment.pdf>.

