

LET'S TALK



W O R K F O R C E D E V E L O P M E N T I N M O N T G O M E R Y C O U N T Y

Voices & Viewpoints

March 2014

Montgomery Moving Forward asked people to share their views on workforce development in Montgomery County.

What follows are just some of the observations and insights we heard from leaders and experts across sectors – as well as from several residents who have participated in workforce programs.

See what others are saying – and then add your voice to the conversation.

"There is incredible potential for making something great happen with workforce development in Montgomery County. We already have many positive things going on – including political will, some very strong programs and models, and many people who are committed to helping everyone in our community, not just a select few. Because we have so many pieces of the puzzle already in place, I think we have the opportunity – and the obligation – to become a model for the region."

Luisa Montero, Director
LAYC/Maryland Multicultural Youth Center

Maryland Multicultural Youth Center, which is the Maryland branch of the Latin American Youth Center, serves more than 1,000 youth each year at four locations in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. MMYC manages Montgomery County's youth-workforce program and focuses on serving young people ages 14-24. MMYC has 40 employees and an annual budget of \$3.4 million.

"The culture at Marriott was established in 1927 at its original nine-seat root beer stand in Washington, DC. The core of the culture is taking care of associates who, in turn, take care of the guests. This means providing dignified and respectful workplaces, competitive pay and benefits, and training and career opportunities. We develop careers on-the-job and by leveraging technology. Marriott has 24/7 global recruitment and learning management systems. Our Learning Management System houses thousands of e-learning courses and our recruitment system provides access to hundreds of jobs."

Steve Bauman, Vice President, Global Learning Deployment
Marriott International

In 2013, Marriott International had \$12.8 billion in annual revenues and 300,000+ managed and franchised employees worldwide, with around 5,400 employees in Montgomery County. The company and the J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation support hospitality and culinary education in the County through the University of Maryland, Universities at Shady Grove and Montgomery College. Marriott also recruits and hires local graduates for operations and HQ-centric jobs in the County and beyond.

"Helping to create jobs is job one for Montgomery County. We have a very diverse workforce, and we need to make sure that job opportunities are available in all sectors of the economy. Going forward, we especially need to focus on reducing unemployment and underemployment. We need to get more people back to work and in good careers that will allow them to take care of their families and contribute to a more stable economy."

Steve Silverman, Director
Department of Economic Development
Member, Montgomery County Workforce Investment Board

The Department of Economic Development stimulates job growth and encourages business location and expansion in the County. DED's mission is to make Montgomery County a globally competitive and highly diversified knowledge-based economy.

"For the last several years, employment has been the number two item of inquiry among the thousands of older adults who contact the Jewish Council for the Aging, second only to housing issues. When clients call us for job-search assistance, you can hear anxiety and panic in their voices. Many older workers already face age discrimination, and if they have been unemployed or underemployed for any length of time, that works against them, too. In addition, everything about the typical hiring process is designed to screen people out, not in. The job-search experience can be demoralizing, and we see the human impact every day."

David Gamse, Chief Executive Officer
Jewish Council for the Aging of Greater Washington
Member, Montgomery County Workforce Investment Board

Jewish Council for the Aging (JCA) is the older-worker expert at the MontgomeryWorks One-Stop Center in Wheaton. Last year, 3,575 older workers attended JCA's annual 50+ Senior Employment Expo, and thousands of others are served by its employment services, including more than 100 very low-income workers placed at 51 County-based on-the-job training sites. JCA has an annual budget of \$5.5 million and 59 employees, 54 of whom live in the County.

“Employers should not have to import workers. From mechanics to engineers, we can prepare a skilled workforce in our own community. But, poverty hinders success. We know that nationally, less than 8% of students from the lowest income quartile obtain a bachelor’s degree six years after high school graduation. With a sense of urgency for our future, higher education, employers, the school system, philanthropy and nonprofits must ensure that everyone in our community – parents and their children – can access pathways to success necessary to thrive not just survive, to fuel our economy with skilled workers, and to propel our community forward.”

DeRionne P. Pollard, President
Montgomery College

Montgomery College is a public, open admissions community college with campuses in Germantown, Rockville, and Takoma Park/Silver Spring, plus workforce development/continuing education centers and off-site programs throughout the County. The college serves nearly 60,000 students a year, through both credit and noncredit programs, in more than 130 areas of study.

"CVS has great in-house training opportunities, and many people – including me – have worked their way up in the company. We are currently developing more partnerships in Montgomery County to help us create more pathways for people to find good jobs, including workforce initiatives that focus on youth, veterans and people with disabilities. Another key group for us is mature workers. Our store managers often find that workers over age 50 are the best employees they've ever had – we just have to find the right accommodations to be sure we can retain these workers."

Stacey Butler, Manager of Regional Learning Center NW
Washington DC & Workforce Initiatives
CVS Caremark

CVS Caremark is the largest pharmacy health care provider in the United States, with 200,000 employees nationwide. CVS has 23 stores and approximately 2,000 employees in Montgomery County.

“When I was 17, I got in trouble with the law and was arrested on Christmas Day and spent the night in jail, on a charge that had a potential 15-year sentence. My Mom was also really sick at that time, and my girlfriend broke up with me. I was feeling really sad and just wanted to give up. My Mom got better, but I was still worried all the time about going to prison. About a month before my 18th birthday I stopped going to school, and kind of gave up on my life and my future. At my final court date, I was given community service and ordered to pay restitution, and they gave me a second chance to get my life together.

It was a relief that I wasn’t going to prison, but I was behind in school and was ashamed and disappointed to be 18 and still be a sophomore in high school, so I dropped out. Then a friend introduced me to Maryland Multicultural Youth Center, and I signed up right away to get my GED, which was my main goal to start with. After I earned my GED, I participated in the Montgomery County Conservation Corps at MMYC, which was a new experience where I got to know a lot of really good people. Now I’m working on a youth documentary about people in situations like mine – showing how struggling young people can succeed when groups like MMYC give them a chance – and that project is enhancing my video and design skills.

My plan now is to go to Montgomery College and study anything I can about business and try to get the best grades possible. I also want to get a job and help my Mom. I’m very entrepreneurial by nature, and my long-term goal is to get an MBA, maybe even at a school like Harvard or Stanford. The environment at MMYC has helped me grow so much as a person. It gave me opportunities to use my skills and get feedback and pushed me forward. I feel so ambitious now, like I could do something big.”

Edgar, Maryland Multicultural Youth Center Program Participant

"When we talk about the workforce in Montgomery County, we tend to think about the uncertainty of the future. But I look around and I see the uncertainties are happening here and now. We fool ourselves by thinking trends will affect us tomorrow, when what we're facing today is as real as it gets. Our community is diverse *today*. Our workers need training *today*. We're missing key pieces *today*. We're facing operational challenges right now, and we need to find solutions right now."

Manny Ocasio, Vice President of Human Resources
Holy Cross Health

Holy Cross Health has an annual budget of \$500 million and 3,200 employees, including 1,000 nurses. The Holy Cross Health system currently includes Holy Cross Hospital, a 443-bed, nonprofit teaching hospital in Silver Spring that cares for more than 192,000 patients each year. As a not-for-profit provider, Holy Cross Health has a history of reinvesting its earnings into innovative and sustainable community benefit programs, with particular emphasis on underserved and vulnerable community members.

"Workforce development is important because when it is successful it can fundamentally change the course of someone's life, both financially and mentally. Done well, it can also provide a pathway for other applicants and employers to imitate and follow to success. For instance, JSSA has begun work on pilot programs for job applicants on the autistic spectrum that will hopefully provide new best practices."

Tal B. Widdes, Chief Operating Officer
JSSA—Jewish Social Service Agency

JSSA, a nonprofit headquartered Rockville with an annual budget of \$16 million, provides services and support to more than 35,000 individuals and families each year in the Washington metro area. With an annual budget of \$533,000 and nine staff, JSSA's Supported Employment Program serves 100 individuals with disabilities (95% in Montgomery County), providing career exploration, skills assessments, workforce readiness and adjustment training, job development and ongoing workplace support services.

"As a small, woman-owned information technology and business development consultancy, our mission is to equip business leaders to connect with and transform the marketplace. We are excited to see government, education, businesses, and nonprofits work collaboratively to bring the right people and resources together to spur economic development across Montgomery County through skills training and job creation."

Kelly Taylor Leonard, CEO & President
Taylor-Leonard Corporation

Taylor-Leonard Corporation is headquartered in Montgomery Village. The company's client list includes nationally recognized nonprofit organizations and large publicly traded organizations, but its passion rests ultimately with helping small to mid-sized businesses by delivering consulting services and training solutions.

"Workforce development, for workers at all levels, is critical to an individual's sense of agency, the well-being of our community, and our economic health. Many English learners want to improve literacy in order to learn to fill out a job application, improve their job trajectory, or pursue a career path or entrepreneurial goal. For instance, one of our grantees had an adult student from Guatemala who spoke no English when he began attending Workforce ESOL classes. He was a dedicated student – even bringing his 18-year-old son to class— but after three months, he found a job and stopped attending. He recently contacted his former instructor and expressed an interest in continuing to build his English literacy skills, sharing that he would like to operate his own construction business one day. He knows he must be proficient in English in order to succeed."

Kathy Stevens, Executive Director
Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy (MCAEL)

MCAEL has 2.5 employees and an annual budget of \$1 million, which includes \$660,000 in grants to programs that deliver English language instruction. The MCAEL network serves around 22,000 adult English language learners who work or live in the County.

“Workforce development requires an infrastructure – a community-wide connective tissue that ties people and resources together making it easy for workers and employers to get the assistance and care they need. Montgomery County is fortunate to have an infrastructure in place that many communities do not, including a high functioning Workforce Investment Board that provides services to youth, job seekers and employers. Now we need to expand and rejuvenate that system of services so that it can reach all Montgomery County residents and businesses that need assistance.”

Barbara Kaufmann, Director, Workforce Services
Montgomery County Department of Economic Development
Director, Workforce Investment Board

The Workforce Investment Board (WIB) and the Division of Workforce Services, within the Department of Economic Development, ensure that the County has a well-prepared, educated, trained, and adaptable workforce to meet the current and future needs of business, and that the County's workforce has the tools and resources to successfully compete in a global economy. The WIB's mission is to help businesses succeed through workforce services. The WIB is composed of business representatives (51%), community leaders, and public officials, appointed by the County Executive and approved by County Council.

"If we want a bright future for our community, then we must give our children every educational opportunity to succeed. These opportunities happen when we all come together – schools, businesses, nonprofits and government agencies. Innovation comes from strong partnerships and Moving Montgomery Forward will help us strengthen these bonds."

Joshua P. Starr, Superintendent
Montgomery County Public Schools

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) is the largest school district in Maryland and 17th largest in the nation, with more than 151,000 students at 202 schools. MCPS has 22,236 employees, including 11,836 teachers (85% of whom have a master's degree or equivalent). The MCPS operating budget for FY2014 is \$2.23 billion.

“One concern for many businesses in the County is the shortage of engineering and technology workers so we need to be sure we have postsecondary pathways that address these needs, including an increased focus on math and science. At the same time, we also need to engage in a larger discussion about training versus higher education. A bachelor's degree may not be the most appropriate goal when there are other routes to good jobs. Another growing concern is the need to protect our investment in K-12 education – we want kids who have a strong foundation from MCPS to stay in County. This means creating affordable live, work, play communities that will attract young adults.”

Marilyn Balcombe, President & CEO
Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce

The Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce serves, represents and advocates on behalf of Upcounty businesses and nonprofits to in enhance the business environment and quality of life in our community. The GGCC creates business-to-business opportunities while promoting and strengthening the local business climate.

“There are many things people in their 50s and 60s know very well, but there's also a new landscape of things you need to 'learn how to learn' – like becoming comfortable with social media. Basically, you have to be ready for the next new thing. The Career Gateway Workshop at the Jewish Council for the Aging helped me get a much better idea of how to pursue a new career, and it also helped me know what the challenges are and gave me some ways to unlock those doors. Our class was very diverse, with people from a wide variety of work experience – many of whom were under intense pressure to find a job. The encouragement the class offered and the sense of community it fostered felt like a really good way to support people on the path back to the workplace.”

Peter, Jewish Council for the Aging Program Participant

“To stay prosperous, we must get ALL the county’s children on higher education/career pathways. Those who attend college or technical school see higher earnings, less unemployment, better health, more fulfilling work, more opportunity, and more socioeconomic mobility. BY 2018, 66% of all jobs in Maryland will require postsecondary education. But too many motivated students do not enroll in higher education within a year of high school graduation. These students, disproportionately from low-to-moderate income and minority families, are falling off the path to prosperity simply because they do not know how to get through the complicated college admissions and financial aid process.”

Nancy Leopold, Executive Director
CollegeTracks

CollegeTracks gives low-income and first-generation college students the chance to go to colleges where they can succeed, with enough financial aid and continuing support so that they can attain a degree. Since 2003, CollegeTracks has served 2,300 students, and it currently works with 800 high school and college students each year. CollegeTracks is a nonprofit business with 11 employees and an annual budget of \$800,000.

“Montgomery County faces the dual challenge of changing demographics and culture, as well as changing workforce needs. We have to respond proactively to both types of change if we want our students be successful in college and careers. Part of our strategy is to use schools as facilitators that connect students with specific educational goals with employers with specific workforce needs and training capacity. This type of interaction can make education more engaging, and help students be better prepared, as they better understand what employers need and expect.”

Timothy B. Warner, Chief Engagement and Partnerships Officer
Montgomery County Public Schools

The Office of Community Engagement and Partnerships helps schools engage the communities of the children and families MCPS serves to promote student learning.

“I was raised in Damascus and I attended Montgomery County Public Schools my entire life. I graduated from Damascus High School in 2009 and I made the decision to attend Montgomery College for the first two years of my college education. As is the case for many college-bound students, money was one of the main factors behind my decision to go to Montgomery College. I was blessed to have been awarded the Montgomery College Board of Trustees Scholarship, which covered my tuition and fees for two years. My first semester at Montgomery College was one of the best semesters I had in my entire college path...and I formed close relationships with many of the staff there. To this day, I still keep in contact with my counselor at Montgomery College. In fact, she was one of the key players in helping me transfer to The Universities at Shady Grove.

When I was nearing the end of my studies at Montgomery College in 2011, I made plans to transfer to a four-year institution. Unfortunately, my father, who is a diabetic, became ill that year and was unable to continue working. With one child already in college, and another one preparing to enter college, my parents became tight on money and I felt I should stay near my family and start working a full-time job so I could save money for college. After two amazing years at Montgomery College, I felt like I had reached the end of my road, and I was upset and discouraged. It was around that time that USG held its Spring Open House, and I decided to go...to cut a long story short, I simply fell in love with it. I loved the people, the campus, and the atmosphere.

I made the decision to apply to the UMCP Biological Sciences program that very same day. USG offers a very personalized learning experience, and it provides students with countless opportunities to emerge as a leader in any field. I am proud of how far I come, I am proud of what I am doing, and I am proud to be a student at USG. I plan to graduate in May 2014, and I would love to join the Peace Corps as a Health volunteer in either North Africa or the Middle East. Ultimately, I hope to attend the University of Maryland, School of Medicine program at USG.”

Shahina, student at The Universities at Shady Grove (selections from her remarks to Montgomery County House Delegation, February 2012)

“Montgomery County has changed. Its residents’ average income, level of education, countries of origin and access to opportunities are very different than in times past. The County has become a place where there are only winners or losers; for those who can manage to access the opportunities that exist, their pathway is golden. Those that can't are usually isolated and disadvantaged. Unable to complete their education, and unprepared for the jobs available, they remain disconnected. They are left behind.”

Diego Uriburu, Executive Director
Identity, Inc.

Identity partners with Latino youth and their families to build pathways that lead to quality education and meaningful employment, overall wellbeing, and self-determination. Identity serves 4,500 clients each year, with an annual budget of \$5 million and 57 employees. Identity is part of the Latino Youth Collaborative, which worked with more than 100 individuals from across sectors for more than a year to develop recommendations that were endorsed by the County Executive, who allocated \$100,000 in next year’s budget to develop a youth workforce strategic plan.

"Montgomery County has a barbell-shaped employability problem. There are opportunities in both the entry-level and advance-level positions, but not as many opportunities in the middle. It's difficult to retain employees who feel stuck in entry-level jobs, and those workers tend to cycle in and out of social assistance programs. When you combine that dynamic with some of the other things that make our community unique – including very diverse demographics – it’s essential that we develop more career pathways that offer sustainable opportunities for advancement."

Ellie Giles, Director of Operations
Montgomery Business Development Corporation

MBDC was established in 2010 by the County Council as an apolitical organization to provide a business-friendly perspective regarding economic development issues, including strategic planning, retaining and attracting business, and legislative and regulatory advocacy.

"We're not going to be able to really address poverty in the County unless there's a good job strategy along with a good housing strategy. Our community is essentially not affordable for many people, so we must have well-articulated, well-supported strategies that can help workers/residents achieve economic stability and mobility. In addition, we need a two-generation anti-poverty and workforce development system. We need to get today's workers on career paths that allow them to make a living wage and support their families – and we also need to get kids on track to success in the workforce all the way from pre-K."

Uma Ahluwalia, Director
Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
Member, Montgomery County Workforce Investment Board

The Health and Human Services department is responsible for public health and human services that help address the needs of the community’s most vulnerable children, adults and seniors. HHS has more than 120 programs and delivers services at more than 20 locations in Montgomery County, and it is the largest department in County government, with more than 1,600 employees.

"Montgomery County is a successful place in many ways, yet we have many people languishing at the margins – people who aren't participating in the economy or the public square. Our shared prosperity depends on our skill and will to activate the talent of those living on the margins. It's not a sustainable algorithm if we have a small portion of the population that is well paid, well connected, and well resourced and a larger, growing portion that has limited access to these advantages. We need an inclusive workforce development system and economic framework that is moving at the rhythm of a changing Montgomery County. Pumoja Tutashinde! (Together we will win!)"

Ronnie Galvin, Executive Director
IMPACT Silver Spring

The mission of IMPACT Silver Spring is to build neighborhood-based networks that ignite inclusive local economies and vibrant communities. IMPACT is a nonprofit business with 11 employees and an annual budget of \$800,000.

“There is no single route to a career with Social & Scientific Systems. We are looking for candidates who have a high level of both technical skills and soft skills –the ability to problem-solve, communicate, multi-task, collaborate, adapt, learn and grow. Successful candidates take many different pathways including certificate programs, associate’s degrees, four-year degrees and graduate degrees.

Kevin Beverly, Executive Vice President
Social & Scientific Systems

Social & Scientific Systems, an employee-owned company with over 600 staff working in the United States, Africa and Asia, and annual revenues of \$120 million, is headquartered in Silver Spring. 300+ of SSS staff are in Montgomery County. The company’s mission is to improve public health worldwide by providing technical, research, and program management services to government and other clients. This support enables policymakers, medical professionals, communities, and citizens to improve public health knowledge and to mitigate the effects of devastating diseases, such as HIV/AIDS.

“Montgomery County of the 21st century is very different than Montgomery County of the 20th century. We have a large pool of underserved people who need access to education and training, and we have employers – here in the County and across the region – looking for qualified workers. Everyone needs to take ownership of workforce development. It’s not just the responsibility of a single agency or business or sector. We all need to find ways to take on this challenge.”

Donna Kinerney, Dean of AELG
Workforce & Continuing Education
Montgomery College

Workforce Development and Continuing Education (WD&CE) programs at Montgomery College serve approximately 25,000 students, including workers who are going through career transitions, re-entering the workforce, or who need to maintain current technical skills, including licensure and certifications.

“The job market has changed over the last few decades, and today’s students need to bring different skills to the workplace. Employers tell us they are looking for people with technical and thinking skills in addition to core academics. They need workers who know how to find, analyze and synthesize information. Another major change we are facing is that unlike previous generations, today’s students can expect to hold multiple jobs during their lifetime, so they need to be able to constantly adapt their skills.”

Erick Lang, Associate Superintendent
Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs
Montgomery County Public Schools
Member, Montgomery County Workforce Investment Board

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) is the largest school district in Maryland and 17th largest in the nation, with more than 151,000 students at 202 schools. MCPS has 22,236 employees, including 11,836 teachers (85% of whom have a master’s degree or equivalent). The MCPS operating budget for FY2014 is \$2.23 billion.

"The future of healthcare is going to be focused on integrated solutions, which means providers (physicians, nurses, hospitals, pharmacies, etc.) must be able to communicate with each other to understand each patient's plan of care. Colleges and universities should better prepare students for a new way of health care delivery. We also need to create career paths across the continuum of care and across facilities. Providers should partner with each other to develop our pool of healthcare talent. Rather than focusing on talent development for a single hospital or employer, we should think in terms of cultivating Montgomery County talent and Maryland talent."

Marta Brito Perez, Senior VP & Chief Human Resources Officer
Adventist HealthCare
Member, Montgomery County Workforce Investment Board

Based in Gaithersburg, Adventist HealthCare has more than 6,150 employees, including 5,300 in Montgomery County, and annual revenues of \$700 million. Founded in 1907, Adventist HealthCare is the first and largest healthcare network based in the County.

“Knowledge, innovation and creativity drive the economy and are keys to advancing the Montgomery County region’s economic growth and international competitiveness. The long-term economic success of the region depends upon a highly skilled workforce. A college degree has become the essential entry point into the job market, and to remain competitive, workers will need to hone and expand their existing skills by pursuing additional education throughout their careers. What are the required pathways to provide education and training opportunities for meaningful work and careers and continued lifetime access to the County’s educational institutions? The key to meeting this challenge is for the region’s business and education leaders to work together to support the region’s education system to ensure that college is a realistic option for all students who are capable.”

Stewart Edelstein, Executive Director
The Universities at Shady Grove

The Universities at Shady Grove is an innovative model for delivering top-quality higher education degree programs. USG is not one university; instead, it is a collaboration of nine leading public universities in Maryland offering more than 80 upper-level baccalaureate, masters, doctoral and professional degrees and graduate certificates in Montgomery County. Established in 2000, USG serves more than 4,000 full- and part-time students.

“Starting a business isn’t for everyone, but there is endless opportunity right here for wannabe entrepreneurs with strong leadership qualities, including a willingness to fail. To generate even more entrepreneurial activity that would also boost our local economy and competitiveness, we need our schools, policymakers and financial institutions to encourage start-ups.”

Sterling Crockett, CEO & Serial Entrepreneur
Chesapeake Bay Roasting Company

Chesapeake Bay Roasting Company was established in 2002. The idea behind CBRC was simple: create high-quality coffees and connect them to environmental issues that directly impact the health of our regional treasure, the Chesapeake Bay.

Workforce Development is a
coordinated system of talent and
skills cultivation that leads to:

Residents finding good jobs

AND

Businesses finding qualified workers

AND

A robust local economy
that strengthens community

Montgomery Moving Forward

Mobilizing leaders to work across sectors to solve
our biggest problems together



www.nonprofitmontgomery.org
www.nonprofitroundtable.org