



JOHNS HOPKINS
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Innovation Fund for Community Safety IMPACT REPORT

2021-2024

Introduction

Building on its long-standing commitment to improving public safety in Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University launched in 2021 the Innovation Fund for Community Safety, a four-year, \$6 million commitment to support innovative, community-led interventions designed to reduce violent crime. Since then, the university has worked in partnership with 11 grassroots community organizations to advance projects tackling the root causes of violence and providing financial support, technical assistance, data collection and analysis, and research.

Baltimore’s challenges are complex, but we firmly believe that the solutions lie within our communities. From workforce training and after-school programming to harm reduction and outreach, these 11 organizations answered the challenge with compassion, creativity, and innovation, and together, they are helping build a brighter future for our city.

Highlighted in the Ten for One, the new strategic framework that will guide the university through the end of the decade, is a desire and commitment to deepen partnerships with our neighbors and invest in the vitality of our city and the communities around us. As part of this commitment, Johns Hopkins University is excited to renew its \$6 million investment in the Innovation Fund for Community Safety to support new projects in 2025 and beyond, with a focus on safety in the built environment, wrap-around social services, and violence interruption.



“We believe the Innovation Fund can play an important role in supporting local solutions—some big and complex, others targeted and straightforward—to spark immediate or near-term improvements in public safety, explore what will work at scale across our city, and build momentum for change.”

– President Ronald J. Daniels, Johns Hopkins University



Johns Hopkins University is proud to share the stories of our 11 community partners, selected during the first cycle of the Innovation Fund for Community Safety, whose projects sought to make our communities safer and healthier.

And we are incredibly excited to continue supporting this important work in the years to come.

Focus Areas

Each of the funded projects relates to one or more of the following focus areas:

- Environmental improvements to specific locations
- Wrap-around support services including counseling, coaching, job training and/or placement, and other services
- Youth interventions and leadership that promotes academic and employment success
- Community mediation

A selection advisory committee reviewed all applications for the Innovation Fund for Community Safety and made recommendations for funding in spring 2021.

The committee comprised of 12 individuals, including six community members who are Baltimore residents not affiliated with Johns Hopkins. Committee members were selected based on their involvement in the community and experience in public safety.

House of Ruth Maryland

Abuse Intervention Supportive Services

Founded more than 40 years ago, House of Ruth is a well-known haven for victims of domestic violence and their children. Today, it is recognized as one of the nation's most comprehensive domestic violence centers. House of Ruth Maryland addresses the root causes of domestic violence by confronting the systems and behaviors that perpetuate it, and by providing victims with the services necessary to rebuild their lives safely. In 2021, House of Ruth Maryland received funding from the Innovation Fund to expand their Abuse Intervention Supportive Services program. The program provides co-located supportive services to reduce criminal recidivism for individuals with a history of intimate partner violence.

Over a three-year period, House of Ruth's program engaged more than 1300 participants in their unique behavior change program and wraparound services such as MOED and Family Tree. After completing the Abuse Intervention Supportive Services Program, 88% of participants reported being less likely to be verbally abusive towards their partner, and 93% reported being less likely to be violent towards their partner. The success of this program is attributed to its mentorship component, where past participants serve as mentors and supportive partners. It also aligns with Mayor Brandon Scott's mission to empower community partners and city agencies to actively co-produce public safety and prevent violence through a trauma-responsive, healing-centered, and equity-based approach for the benefit of all Baltimoreans.

1300+
participants in behavior
change program

88%
of participants reporting
less likely to be verbally
abusive

93%
of participants reporting
less likely to be violent

The Be.Org



Foodie Science

Since 2014, Tonee Lawson and Be.org have worked tirelessly to facilitate the social and emotional growth of Baltimore's young people through STEM education, college- and career-readiness, and after school programming that nurtures youth to develop their character, talents, and leadership skills. Under the Innovation Fund, Be.Org developed a unique after-school program for youth in select schools in East Baltimore.

The popular program called Foodie Science teaches youth to make affordable healthy food choices and leverages the application of scientific principles through a lens of cooking and baking. The program works with youth from high risk areas to promote community building, youth leadership, and supports students' social and emotional learning. Students reported that they felt more confident in their conflict resolution skills and were less likely to engage in risky behaviors after completing the curriculum. The program created a safe space for students, encouraging them to build a community and environment conducive to healthy and positive relationships.

B-360

Sound of Summer

Brittany Young founded B-360, an organization that utilizes dirt bike culture to end the cycle of poverty, disrupt the prison pipeline, and build bridges in communities. Through education, community engagement, and career preparation, B-360 equips youth and young adults with the skills to secure educational and career opportunities while changing the perception of dirt bike riders. Through culturally relevant programming, B-360 teaches students the engineering and design process behind dirt bikes. In partnership with the Innovation Fund, they have solidified their impact in East Baltimore by serving more than 700 youth and young adults, improving environmental conditions, and creating employment for young adults who previously had an unclear path forward.

B-360's impact throughout the Baltimore Metropolitan area has been significant as they continue to grow as an organization and change the narrative around dirt bike riding. The success of the program lies in its leadership and curriculum, which exposes participants to STEM concepts and

cognitive reasoning. Their multipronged approach includes improvements to community spaces in East Baltimore, a diversion program for non-violent dirt bike offenses, and a robust education curriculum uniquely tailored to Baltimore's youth.

B-360 exists at the unlikely intersection of three lanes; unrecognized potential, dirt bike culture, and STEM education.



I AM MENTality



I AM MENTality Health & Wellness Program

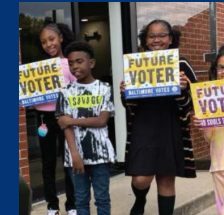
Darren Rogers has prioritized the wellbeing of at-risk boys in the Baltimore area by providing them with critical direct services like leadership development training, mentorship, and mental health counseling. The I AM MENTality Health and Wellness Program engages young boys and their guardians to share resources, make informed decisions and create long-term plans for their future successes. The program provides trauma informed mentoring to promote overall well-being and helps mold young Baltimoreans into transformational leaders positioned to impact their communities.

Through initiatives such as health and wellness classes, leadership workshops, and educational trips, the program offers a multifaceted approach to youth development. By fostering positive relationships between mentors and mentees, youth gain a sense of belonging and support, steering them away from negative influences. The program served close to 900 youth and continues to add sites across Baltimore.

No Boundaries Coalition

Block Captain Boot Camp

No Boundaries Coalition empowers residents to lead community transformation through training, education, and base building. Since 2008, No Boundaries Coalition has united Central West Baltimore to foster community through civic engagement and transforms community members into homegrown leaders and advocates for their neighborhoods. The organization aims to empower community members to change the trajectories of their households and communities.



In 2021, No boundaries Coalition received funding from the Innovation Fund to expand their Block Captains Bootcamp. This program aimed to demystify the processes of local and state government and assist with navigating city services, as well as principles of self-advocacy, financial literacy, and basic community organizing. Through various community events, street fairs, and neighborhood enhancements through mini-grants, participants reported an increased feeling of community cohesion and belonging.

Charm City Care Connection

Safety at the Margins

The mission of Charm City Care Connection is to promote health, self-determination, and self-advocacy for individuals affected by drug use, stigma, poverty, and inequities, with a primary focus on serving individuals who use drugs. Founded in 2009 by local students in collaboration with East Baltimore community leaders, Charm City Care Connection aims to create a future free from disparities in health and healthcare access. Their work is rooted in dignity, justice, and respect and centers members of affected communities in the planning and programming of their organization.

Under the Innovation Fund, they were able to grow their Safety at the Margins program. This program works to increase safety for people who use drugs and people who do sex work in East Baltimore through the presence of trained outreach staff in areas with high levels of activity. The Safety at the Margins program engages with an average of 300 individuals per month, with 61% of clients participating in activities, resulting in approximately 6000 clients served. Charm City Care Connection's

program has filled a gap and created an opportunity for people who use drugs and sex workers to have their basic needs met through connecting them to long-term case management and other wrap-around services. Additionally, the center promotes general wellbeing through weekly yoga, art therapy, acupuncture, and 'ladies day' for female identified participants.

300 individuals per month are engaged by the program

61% of clients participate in activities

6000 clients have been served

WombWork Productions

Existential Determinants of Health

WombWork Productions aims to empower youth, families, and communities through performing arts and use cultural healing modalities to reduce violent behavior among youth. A prominent partner of WombWork Productions is Virtues Project, which started in 1991 as a response to acts of violence and suicide in youth. It quickly grew into a global initiative to help young people develop authentic self-esteem and encourage the practice of virtues in everyday life.

WombWork Productions expanded their Existential Determinants of Health program under the Innovation Fund. This program provides forums for creative expression of individual and collective experiences to promote personal healing and collective cohesion. Inspired by the social determinants of health, this initiative orients participants towards the “existential determinants of health” encouraging them to address mental, physical, spiritual, and financial aspects of their being. Participants received financial literacy, recovery services, health maintenance, trauma, and social support.



St. Vincent De Paul of Baltimore

Good Harvest Occupational Skills Training Program

St. Vincent de Paul supports communities in Baltimore by addressing the root causes of poverty. Since their founding in 1965, St. Vincent de Paul has remained committed to providing services and programming to underserved communities including homeless services, early childhood education, healthy food access, and employment training. Their outstanding work with employment services earned them an Innovation Fund grant in 2021.

St. Vincent de Paul received funding to support the Good Harvest Occupation Skills Training Program, a program that engages opportunity youth and prepares them for careers in the culinary industry. By the end of the grant period, nearly 120 students successfully completed training and received a ServSafe certification which confirms sufficient food safe knowledge to protect the public from foodborne illness. The success of this program is based on

the strong case management provided to every program participant. In addition to providing a solid foundation in the culinary arts, the program provided job training and placement opportunities, mental health support, and a variety of other social supports for their students.



This program is committed to providing services and programming to underserved communities including homeless services, early childhood education, and more.

Casa de Maryland

McElderry Multiracial Organizing Project

CASA de Maryland works tirelessly to bring immigrant communities in Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania out of the shadows and into greater power, dignity, and legitimacy. CASA is a nationally recognized Latino/immigrant organization in the city with decades of experience in grassroots organizing and coalition building in diverse communities. In 2021, CASA received funding from the Innovation Fund to support the McElderry Multiracial Organizing Project, a project that supports mediation and relationship building between Black and Latino communities in McElderry Park in hopes to alleviate racial tensions and violence.

This project aimed to bring two communities together through organizing, antiracism and leadership training, community building events, and youth programming. Additionally, the McElderry Multiracial Organizing Project addresses three of the major outcomes of interest to Baltimore City, including: perception of neighborhood safety, adverse childhood experiences, and the employment or education of youth ages 16 to 24. Two stand out subprojects led by youth at CASA were the “Granny Project” and the Mi Espacio afterschool program. The “Granny Project” trains older community leaders to provide cooking demonstrations for teens and their families. The Mi Espacio program provides after school leadership and enrichment for first and second-generation immigrant students. The program’s success can be attributed to the dedication and passion the staff and community members have for their neighborhoods.



“Community organizations have great ideas on what can make a difference for community safety. The Innovation Fund has helped bring these ideas to life.”

– Dr. Josh Sharfstein

Pro Bono Resource Center

510
clients have been
served

79%
of clients have
been removed
from tax sale

2024
brought an
announcement
from the mayor
to benefit eligible
clients

Stable Homes, Safe Communities

The Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland offers free legal services to disadvantaged individuals, families and communities. The organization focuses on expanding the reach of free legal help in the state by recruiting, training, mentoring, and supporting volunteer lawyers who work within their local communities and providers to represent the most vulnerable populations such as the disabled, abused, homeless, or working poor. In 2021, Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland received funding for their Stable Homes, Safe Communities program in East Baltimore.

This program was funded to offer free legal clinics to address tax sale prevention, home foreclosure prevention, service navigation, and life planning to preserve home ownerships and intergenerational resources. This niche program served 510 clients, with 79% of clients removed from tax sale prior to auction allowing families to stay housed. The program reduces the risk of homelessness and violence through stabilizing communities and securing safe and affordable housing. The Pro Bono Resource Center advocated to Mayor Scott to cancel the annual tax sale, resulting with an announcement in April 2024 that he will remove all owner-occupied properties with assessed values of under \$250,000 from the tax sale. These outcomes have led to a feeling of safety by keeping low-income Baltimore residents in their homes, reducing debt, and homelessness, for clients at risk of tax sale and foreclosure.

Fund for Educational Excellence

The Mildred A. Allen Equestrian and Arabber Cultural Center

The Mildred A. Allen Equestrian and Arabber Cultural Center is a social enterprise led by fourth-generation Arabbers, Dorothy and David Johns, at the historic Bruce Street Stable. Responding to the contemporary crises of food insecurity, chronic disease, and youth unemployment in the Sandtown-Winchester district, the Bruce Street Stable transformed a 19th century entrepreneurial tradition of horse cart-drawn food delivery to meet the needs of the 21st century.

For a decade, it has served as a vital hub for fresh produce distribution and life skills development for vulnerable residents. In 2021, The Mildred A. Allen Equestrian and Arabber Cultural Center received funding to bring equine and art therapy, wellbeing workshops, workforce and life skills training, and cultural heritage education to Baltimore's most vulnerable youth. Their program's success is largely due to their youth mentorship model in which youth participants serve as "Arabber Ambassadors" to promote their progress and learnings from the Arabber Cultural Center.



The first cycle of the Innovation Fund for Community Safety has been instrumental in shaping the fund's approach to supporting community-based programs and increasing community safety through innovative methods in Baltimore. Johns Hopkins University is incredibly proud of the work our grantees have done to directly support innovative approaches to creating safer communities for Baltimoreans.

We are excited to pledge an additional \$6 million toward the continued collaborative efforts for community safety.

Our collective vision for a safer Baltimore drives us forward, guided by the belief that every resident deserves to feel safe, secure, and supported in their community.



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