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## **Major New Occupational Skills & Career Training Initiative Launches to Serve Baltimore's Young People, Help Employers Fill Hiring Needs**

*CareerBound to provide apprenticeships, academic and support services*

[CareerBound](#), a major new occupational skills training and career preparation initiative for young people in Baltimore, launched this week with a goal of helping thousands of participants build skills and move into family-supporting careers over the next several years.

CareerBound had a formal launch May 15, with more than 150 community leaders from government, nonprofits, universities, corporations, philanthropy, and youth leaders in attendance, a reflection of the broad partnership supporting the initiative. CareerBound's lead partners are [Baltimore's Promise](#), Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools), and the Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED).

CareerBound was developed to offer new training and career opportunities to young people, opening new pathways to jobs in high-growth industries for City Schools students and graduates who may not be interested in pursuing a traditional four-year college immediately following high school. The initiative expects to serve 8,300 youth by 2030 — a major increase in the city's occupational skills and career training capacity. It builds on the success of [Grads2Careers](#), which launched in 2018, also as a partnership of Baltimore's Promise, City Schools, and MOED.

"CareerBound represents a major leap forward in Baltimore's commitment to creating career opportunities for young people," said Julia Baez, CEO of Baltimore's Promise. "We have built a broad coalition of employers, occupational training institutions, funders, government agencies, and the school system — all of whom are committed to this smart approach that will expand career opportunities for our young people as they leave school."

CareerBound will have five central components, or elements, to fully meet the needs of Baltimore's young people:

- **In-school youth apprenticeships** that connect City Schools' students to high-quality careers in healthcare, construction, information technology, and other popular pathways.

- **Grads2Careers** occupational skills training for recent City Schools graduates who are not planning to enter college full-time within the next year, prepping them for career-track jobs in high-growth industries.
- **Academic acceleration** to include academic support and life skills development for rising 9th graders through post-graduation – to help young people build the skills needed to thrive in their respective pathway.
- **An alumni track** to allow Grads2Careers program graduates in certain pathways to pursue additional, stackable workplace credentials to increase their wage potential.
- **Coordinated resources** including wraparound supports – such as mental health, transportation and childcare assistance – to remove barriers to learning and success.

“Today is a powerful moment that represents how an actual seed of an idea has come together across sectors and across neighborhoods on behalf of the young people of Baltimore,” Dr. Sonja Santelises, Baltimore City Public Schools CEO, told attendees at the CareerBound launch. “The beautiful part about CareerBound is that it’s saying to our young people we have heard you – that you actually do want opportunity, that you do want to earn a family-sustaining wage. With CareerBound we are saying we believe in you, we believe in your promise.”

“CareerBound is a perfect example of a cross-sector partnership, between Baltimore’s Promise, City Schools, and the Mayor’s Office of Employment Development, and also bringing employers and the private sector to the table,” said Carmel M. Martin, Special Secretary, Maryland Governor’s Office for Children. “I’m excited that this program embraces wraparound supports, which are critical. We know that you can have the best training program in the world, but if people need childcare or support with transportation or support with healthcare issues, that training program isn’t going to be successful.”

A study conducted by the Baltimore Education Research Consortium showed that 26% of City Schools’ class of 2009 were not connected to either education or the workforce the fall after graduation. That same population was only making an average annual salary of \$11,000 six years after graduation. Those findings illustrated the need for a broad career landscape for students who wanted to enter the workforce after high school graduation and move toward earning family-supporting wages.