



American Youth  
Policy Forum  
*25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

## From Diversion to Reentry: How Community-Based Programs Support Federal and State Policies for Systems-Involved Youth

An AYPF Study Tour  
Washington, DC  
November 30, 2018

Young people involved in the foster care and juvenile justice systems often face significant challenges during multiple stages of their education and career journey. As a result, only 51 percent of youth in foster care graduate high school and nearly 2 percent will complete college. For youth involved in the juvenile justice system, [only about 12 percent](#) will graduate high school (or obtain a GED). Title I, Part D of the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*, provides funding to states to establish or improve educational programs for **neglected or delinquent** youth, or those who may be **at risk of involvement** in the justice system. There are also new provisions to improve education within juvenile justice facilities and promote successful **reentry** for youth who are returning to their schools and communities after incarceration. For youth at-risk of entering foster care, the *Family First Prevention Services Act* allows states to now access funding for prevention services without removing youth from their homes, which includes substance use, mental health and family wraparound supports to stabilize families that are likely to enter the child welfare system. The role that community-based programs play in helping to execute successful programs for systems-involved youth is extremely critical. Federal initiatives, such as **Promise Zones** and the newly implemented **Opportunity Zones** are examples of federal and local collaborations to transform low-income and under resourced communities.

We will bring together a group of bipartisan congressional staff with expertise in child welfare, juvenile justice, education, and workforce to tour and learn about [Living Classrooms](#) Target Investment Zone and [The Choice Program](#) at University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Both programs have been nationally recognized for improving outcomes for systems-involved youth through a range of holistic supports that include diversion and prevention; restorative practices; family engagement; intensive case management; afterschool programs; and job training.

### Goals of this study tour include:

- Highlighting successful and effective programs that are holistically supporting youth involved or at-risk of entering the juvenile justice and foster care systems through the use of diversion and reentry supports.
- Engaging with and learning from program staff and youth about their experiences as a recipient and administrator of services.

- Gaining a better understanding of how community-based best practices can help inform the implementation of federal and state policies.

## Agenda

Friday, November 30<sup>th</sup>

- 9:00am Board Bus for Living Classrooms**  
The bus will pick up participants at Peace Circle on Capitol Hill. The drive to Baltimore will take approximately one and a half hours.
- 10:45am Arrive at Living Classrooms Headquarters, Frederick Douglass – Isaac Myers Maritime Museum/Park**  
1417 Thames St.  
Baltimore, MD 21231
- 10:45am-11:00am Welcome and Opening Remarks**  
Betsy Brand, Executive Director, American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF)  
James Bond, President and CEO, Living Classrooms Foundation
- 11:00am-11:20am Framing the Day and Introductions**  
Samaura Stone, Senior Policy Associate, AYPF  
Jesse Kannam, Policy Associate, AYPF
- 11:20am-11:24am 4 minute walk from Headquarters to Fresh Start Program led by Cheryl Riviere, Program Director, Fresh Start, Living Classrooms**
- 11:24am-12:00pm Site Visit #1: Fresh Start Program**  
802 South Caroline Street  
Baltimore, MD 21231

Participants will have the opportunity to tour the Fresh Start building and learn about the carpentry and computer programming/coding programs that are offered to youth. There will be time to ask questions and also view the equipment.

### Site Description:

Fresh Start is a 40-week job skills training program that serves out-of-school youth, ages 16-19, most of whom are referred by the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services. The program uses carpentry as a medium to teach reading, writing, math, history, and science. Youth also receive classroom instruction and one-on-one tutoring. The curriculum is designed to increase self-reliance, teach problem solving and academic skills, and demonstrate how academic skills and knowledge are used in a practical work environment. Students increase their math, reading, and writing levels by an average of 1.5 grade levels while in the program. 75-80% of Fresh Start graduates remain employed and/or in school for three years after completion of the program.

**12:00pm-12:08pm 2 minute drive from Fresh Start to Community Center**

**12:08pm-12:30pm Site Visit #2: POWER House Community Center**  
316 S. Caroline Street  
Baltimore, MD 21231

Participants will be able to briefly tour the POWER House Community Center to hear about the various services that are provided for youth and adults, as well as the importance of holistic “one-stop” services and resources that focus on the full spectrum of youth development and workforce readiness.

**Site Description:**

POWER House community center is located directly in Baltimore's largest public housing community, Perkins Homes. POWER is an acronym for Providing, Opportunities, to Work, Expand, and Rise. Year-round out-of-school time programming provides services in five core areas: Education and Career Development, Character and Civic Development, Health and Life Skills, The Arts and Cultural Enrichment, and Health and Wellness. In addition, the POWER House offers financial literacy, English as a Second Language, GED preparatory classes, and job training courses for adults weekly. POWER House's Teen Club, serves high school students, providing them with academic support and enrichment activities to meet the program's goals of increased academic achievement and graduation rates, readiness for higher education, and improved behavior and attitudes toward learning.

**12:30pm-12:35pm 5 minute travel time via charter bus from POWER House Community Center to UA House**

**12:35pm-1:00pm Lunch with Program Staff and Participants at Site Visit #3: UA House**  
1100 E. Fayette Street  
Baltimore, MD 21202

**Site Description:**

The UA House at Fayette operated by Living Classrooms is the heartbeat of the [Target Investment Zone](#) and serves over one hundred students daily with academic enrichment, health, sports and physical fitness education, and career development. It also serves adults with workforce development, career services, entrepreneurial development, and GED and ESL support. Services have been developed as a response to the community's assessed need for intervention that supports the academic and social development of youth by providing year-round out-of-school-time programming for elementary, middle, and high school students, as well as adults living in East Baltimore.

**1:00pm-1:45pm Closing Discussion: How can state and federal policies improve outcomes for youth transitioning back into the community?**  
Linda Kellum, Case Management Specialist Supervisor, Baltimore City Division, Maryland Department of Juvenile Services  
Justine Buckingham, Case Management Specialist III, Baltimore City Division, Maryland Department of Juvenile Services

Cheryl Riviere, Program Director, Fresh Start Program, Living Classrooms  
Tykiem Sanders, Student Representative, Fresh Start Program, Living Classrooms

**1:45pm-2:00pm**      **15 minute travel time via charter bus from UA House to The Choice Program at UMBC**

**Site Visit #4: The Choice Program at UMBC**

University of Baltimore's John and Frances Angelos Law Center  
1401 N. Charles St.  
Baltimore, MD 21201

**2:00pm-2:15pm**      **Flying Fruit Café Social Enterprise Tour**

Participants will start the visit by touring and speaking with youth from the Flying Fruit Café, operated by students from the Choice Program.

**2:15pm-2:55pm**      **Program Overview and Discussion**

Eric Ford, Director, The Choice Program  
Frank Anderson, Associate Director, The Choice Program  
Elysabeth Stuehrmann-Salbego, Department of Social Services, AmeriCorps Member  
Colleen Chatfield, Department of Social Services, AmeriCorps Member  
Stuart Blair, Department of Social Services, AmeriCorps Member  
Rachina Hill, Choice Program Parent

**Choice Department of Social Services Foster Care Diversion Program Description:**

The Choice DSS Foster Care Diversion Program provides intervention services to families who are at risk of entering the foster care system. The program serves youth ages 13-17 in Baltimore City, and their families. Families are referred from the Department of Social Services (DSS). The program offers voluntary services aimed to prevent out of home placement of youth and preservation of the family unit through intensive mediation and informal counseling, family centered activities, and connections to key support services in the community. Program services include job readiness and employment development, assistance in navigating school and court systems, 24/7 crisis intervention, and case management.

**2:55pm-3:00pm**      **Break**

**3:00pm-3:45pm**      **Bridging Policy and Practice: Maryland's approach to Diversion and Reentry for Crossover Youth**

Betsy Tolentino, Executive Director of Pre-Adjudication Services & Reform, Maryland Department of Juvenile Services

After touring and learning about community-based programs in Baltimore that are serving systems-involved youth, participants will now have the opportunity to learn about how the state is implementing policies and practices to support crossover youth in their pursuit of education and employment.

**3:45pm-4:00pm      Key Takeaways and Reflections**

**4:00pm                Study Tour Concludes**