



UNIFIED PLAN 2021

LONG BRANCH COLLECTIVE ACTION FOR YOUTH (LBCAY)

LBCAY is a 3-year collaborative effort, funded through the Montgomery County Council, designed to improve agency coordination and outcomes for school-age youth in the Long Branch area of Montgomery County.

CHEER

Community Health and Empowerment
through Education and Research



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES FOR LONG BRANCH



The LBCAY community, as defined by Montgomery County government, is located within the red line on the map above.

LBCAY organizations are those operating in the Long Branch area of Montgomery County. While these organizations provide services in the Long Branch community, many of their offices are physically located outside of the boundaries presented in the map above.

Participating organizations, agencies and institutions include:

Adventist Community Services of the Greater Washington Area
Brass Ring LLC
Carpe Diem Arts
Community Bridges
CONEXO at New Hampshire Estates
Enterprise (ACE Academy at Park Montgomery)
Identity, Inc
Latin American Youth Center (LAYC)
Montgomery College
Montgomery County Collaboration Council
Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
Montgomery County Recreation Department
MC TESS Center (Takoma, East Silver Spring)
Passion for Learning

Acknowledgments:

LBCAY would like to acknowledge the following individuals for their leadership throughout the process of developing the Long Branch Collective Impact for Youth unified plan: Carson Henry and Sarah Bluestein representing the YMCA Youth & Family Services, Bruce Baker and Vanesa Pinto from CHEER, and Lynn Sobolov, independent consultant. We also recognize the contributions of Clara Parker and Richelle Barber for their support in training and assisting our LBCAY teen leaders, as well as the first cadre of youth participants engaged in the Youth Participatory Action Research process. Danielle Wolfe and Halelujha Ketema, CHEER interns from the University of Maryland Public Health program, also played an important role in the collection of important data from the community.

Initiative Overview

The Long Branch Collective Action for Youth (LBCAY) collaborative was established in fall of 2019 to improve agency coordination and outcomes for youth in the Long Branch area of Montgomery County. The project is funded through a Montgomery County Community Grant awarded to the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington, Youth & Family Services branch (YFS), in FY2020. YFS and Community Health and Empowerment through Education and Research (CHEER) are the lead organizations for the LBCAY project.

LBCAY is designed to improve outcomes for school-age youth in Long Branch by increasing organization-to-organization coordination, communication and sharing of resources focusing on those who are at-risk of underachieving academically and professionally and who may become disconnected.

CHEER was selected as community organization lead because of its extensive work and connections in the Long Branch community, familiarity with the Collective Impact model, and leadership in convening initial stakeholder conversations. CHEER has worked with stakeholders across sectors to include the Long Branch community, pertinent Montgomery County agencies, Montgomery County Public Schools, non-profit organizations, and the business community, to develop the unified plan outlined in this document.

LBCAY operates within the Long Branch neighborhood in the eastern portion of Montgomery County, between Langley Park and Silver Spring, less than two miles from Old Town Takoma Park. Long Branch has vibrant and active community members with valuable institutional and organizational assets, including viable local businesses and an array of

capable youth-serving organizations. The focus for this work is the Piney Branch corridor because of its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, disproportionate crime rates and high volume of apartment-based dwellings.

Minorities account for more than half of the population in the county and in fact, Long Branch residents represent nearly 50 countries. Of the six schools in the neighborhood, on average, 60% of students receive Free and Reduce Price Meals due to financial need and 36% of students are non-native English speakers.

The methods and processes traditionally used in making resources accessible have not been effective in reaching the residents that need them. In order to bridge this gap, residents in the affordable housing communities of Park Montgomery and New Hampshire Estates have developed effective strategies to adapt to challenging circumstances. These include regular residents-led community meetings to address common concerns at Park Montgomery and participation in CONEXO at New Hampshire Estates with direct advocacy and outreach to elected representatives.

There are also physical community assets that provide spaces and programs for Long Branch youth. These include the Long Branch Public Library, the Long Branch Community Recreation Center (currently operating as a men's homeless shelter during COVID-19), community rooms in affordable housing communities such as New Hampshire Estates and Park Montgomery, Clifton Baptist Church, Sligo Creek Park, and Long Branch Local Park and Community Garden.

Collective Impact Process

Collective impact is an outcome-driven multi-sector partnership strategy used to facilitate a common agenda, shared outcomes and measurement, mutually reinforcing activities, and continuous communication. LBCAY uses the Theory of Aligned Contributions to make population level improvements to youth development services. Aligned Contributions articulates the necessary and sufficient conditions needed to achieve desired results amid realities present in complex adaptive systems. The intent of LBCAY is to eliminate service delivery gaps and achieve coordination among organizations that will better steward nonprofit community investment for the purpose of improving opportunities for youth in the Long Branch area.

The unified plan presented in this document is the result of completing the collective impact process over the last two years. This plan was finalized through consent-based approval of steering committee and key stakeholders.

The work began shortly before the COVID-19 outbreak and continued in the months in which subsequent actions were taken to mitigate community spread. This situation presented a challenge to the project leaders since much of this work is generally advanced through face-to-face meetings, establishing trusting relationships over time and using strategies originally designed for closer contact with participants. All of the meetings with community providers were conducted by Zoom. The teen leadership group was also established virtually, though conditions in the summer of 2021 permitted a small group to meet in

person with adult guidance and proper safety protocols for the Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) training sessions.

Major Action Steps completed in the Unified Planning Process:

- Formed the LBCAY steering committee including two representatives from the YMCA-YFS, two representatives from CHEER, three members of the Whitworth-Kee evaluation team and one independent project consultant
- Engaged key stakeholders to identify community needs, determine a common agenda, vision and goals and provided Spanish-speaking interpreters during Zoom meetings in order to engage all participants
- Identified broad measures of success for the selected goals
- Gathered information through online platforms including stakeholder meetings, youth focus groups representing the African and Latinx communities, and surveyed community stakeholders
- Hosted both in-person youth discussions (adhering to current COVID protocols) and Zoom meetings with youth participants
- Formed a community teen leadership group and provided training in Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR). Youth used this model to collect information specific to their chosen area of focus (Career readiness and Job Training)
- Conducted asset mapping to identify resources and inform gap

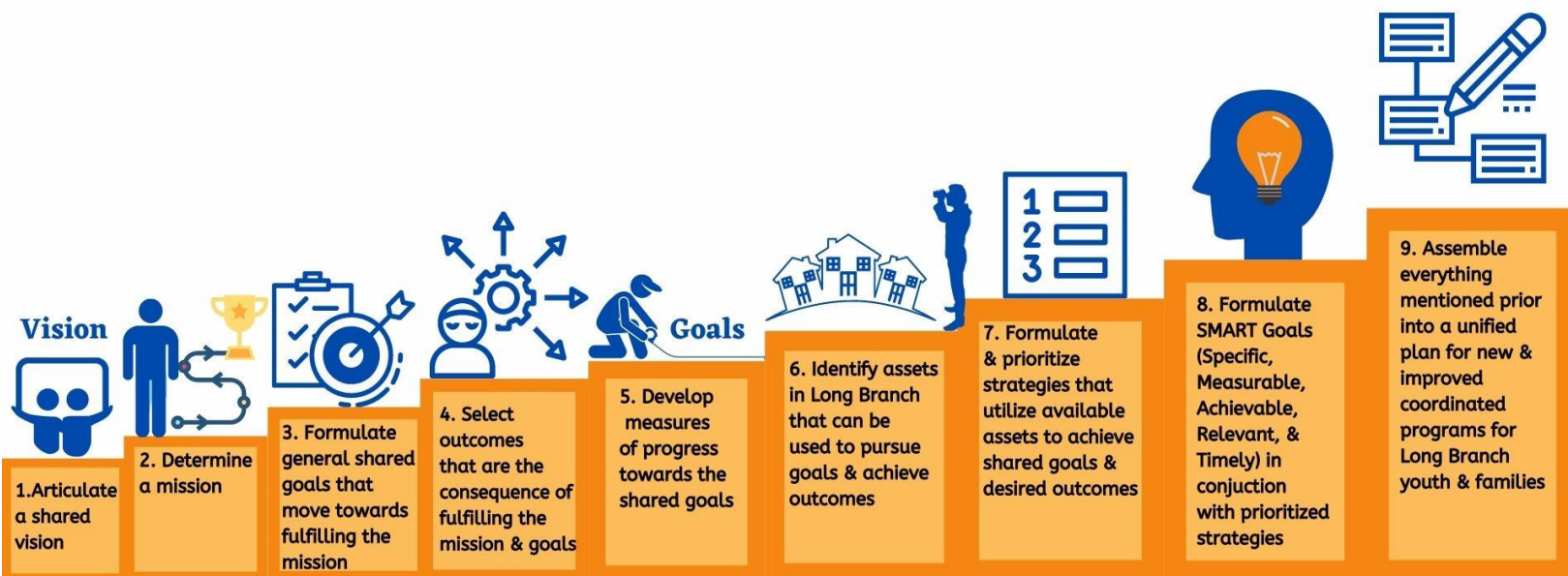
analysis

- Met regularly with the LBCAY stakeholders to receive feedback and finalize the unified plan for approval

Long Branch Collective Impact for Youth Unified Plan Process Map



Long Branch Collective Action for Youth (LBCAY) Nine Steps to the Long Branch Unified Plan for Youth and their Families



Unified Plan

VISION/OUTCOMES STATEMENT:

Youth-serving providers in the Long Branch Community working together to increase positive outcomes for school-aged youth

Long Branch Collective Action for Youth envisions:

- A peaceful community where young people safely travel to high quality facilities and spaces to study, learn, play and be a part of the Long Branch community.
- An informed, well connected, and welcoming community that provides easy access to information and wraparound resources to everyone, especially parents.

LBCAY unifies stakeholders to ensure the Long Branch community will:

- Provide many opportunities for youth to engage in a range of out-of-school time activities including sports, recreation, STEM and arts that are physically and culturally accessible to all youth.
- Facilitate diverse and positive supportive relationships with adults (mentors) and with peers that enables them to develop integrity, empathy, caring and a spiritually grounded character.
- Provide a diverse learning environment that offers vocational training, job training (with community-based job and service opportunities), academics and college preparation.
- Promote learning environments that feature youth-led classes and opportunities for youth to share thoughts and opinions across

cultures.

- Eliminate identified service delivery gaps and achieve coordination among organizations that will better steward nonprofit community investment leading to positive outcomes for youth.

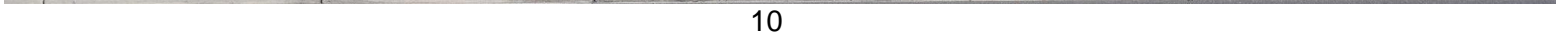
MISSION: LBCAY helps school-aged children and families in the Long Branch community make connections to services, programs and supports that addresses their unmet needs and promotes positive youth development.

GOAL: The main goal of the LBCAY initiative is to eliminate service delivery gaps and achieve coordination among organizations that will better steward nonprofit community investment leading to positive outcomes for youth.

STRATEGIES:

- Unify youth-serving organizations in the Long Branch community and define measures, community assets, and actions.
- Develop and expand communication plans by engaging community members, including youth, and other stakeholders, media, funders and prospective participants to strengthen social media presence using popular platforms.
- Expand the variety of out-of-school youth activities offered in the community
- Encourage universal participation and accessibility in school out-of-school time activities
- Facilitate and encourage parent involvement in out-of-school time activities and provide communication about their importance
- Intentionally connect organizations and community members to improve access to resources and supports
- Support and promote the emotional well-being of youth and families

Recognize where expansions of services are needed and



LBCAY GENERAL GOALS AND MEASURES BY ISSUE AREA

1. YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Youth participate in out-of-school activities in which parents are given opportunities to be informed and engaged

Measures

- Percent of youth engaged in out of school activities
- Variety of programs and age groups served
- Number and location of facilities offering low cost youth programs
- Percent of parents who participate in parent engagement activities

2. ORGANIZATIONAL COORDINATION

A unified effort expanding youth programs that improve youth outcomes

An entity exists that performs the following functions:

- Establishes and operates an effective communication network among youth serving organizations
- Develops and operates a community outreach communication system for the Long Branch community as a whole
- Creates proposals for implementation of planned expansion of programs
- Increases coordination of co-located programs
- Establish and operate a strong referral system between organizations that increases number of organization-to-organization referrals

- Conducts shared program evaluation and lessons learned that produces learning organizations
- Identifies community groups and involves them with youth development projects/programs

Measure

This entity will establish performance measures and qualitative measures to assess success at these functions

3. YOUTH RELATIONSHIPS

Youth realize progress toward healthy social and emotional behavior

Measures

- Number of connections that youth have to adults and the diversity and quality of those relationships
- Level of connection and time spent with peers
- Youth Mental Health Status
- Youth Mental Health support system and services offered
 - Number of families and individuals getting screenings and evaluations

4. EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Youth successfully transition to career or higher education

Measures

- Number of youth enrolling in college
- Number of youth engaged in career track activities (jobs or training)
- Number and percent of youth who have career and/or college plans.
- Number of High school seniors participating in Summer Rise internships
- Number of Career exploration events and activities

- Number of youth who understand college financial supports available to them.

5. OUTREACH AND REFERRAL TO SERVICES AND RESOURCES

Families raising youth get holistic support in addressing needs

Measures

- Number of community organizations that provide guidance on how to connect with and support youth and families and that make supportive connections to families and youth.
- Number of youth and families in case management and getting services and participating in programs.
- A third-party entity exists that evaluates programs and ensures fair access to program participation (see Organizational Coordination above)

6. YOUTH VOICE AND YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Youth become leaders

Measures

- Number of youth getting SSL hours and amount of hours
- Number of events and programs organized by youth and the number of youth participating in these events and programs.

LBCAY Focus Areas 2021/2022

Methodology for the Development of Focus Areas and Priorities

The focus areas were developed and prioritized after a series of virtual stakeholder discussions, followed by the use of an online tool to prioritize the top five areas of focus. Teen leaders were included in the prioritization process and their opinions were given additional weight in determining the final list.

Once the list was produced, it was again disseminated to stakeholders who were asked to provide final input before establishing the priorities below

SMART Goals, Tasks, Strategies and Potential Partners

1. College and Career Readiness

Coordinate with existing programs in order to target youth who can most

benefit (i.e., middle school youth); expand technology access to and awareness of college and career readiness resources to youth and parents.

SMART Goal A: By December 2022 engage 30% Long Branch Middle and High School students in college and post-secondary information programs and ensure that programming is available to all middle schoolers and

SMART Goal B: By December 2022, work with community partners to identify, reach out to and connect an additional 10 disconnected youth in the Long Branch community to services and supports

Tasks/Strategies

A.

- Explore best practices and strategies related to post-secondary education and career opportunities for both engaged and disconnected youth
- Establish relationships with Long Branch middle school counselors related to post-secondary career and job information/opportunities for their students
- Create a baseline to measure Long Branch middle and high school students' post- secondary/career expectations and an understanding of how students currently obtain information related to careers and post-secondary education
- Formulate, plan and implement a strategy utilizing best practices and knowledge of current methods of communication with students
- Connect middle school students with mentors preparing for or working in desired fields
- Evaluate strategies to identify barriers to accessing information and programming for engaged youth

B.

- Determine with partners what qualifies as “disconnected” such as
- Excessive absences/Truancy (middle school age youth)
- Not enrolled in school or employed (high school age youth)
- Access existing baseline data available through sources such as MCPS, the Collaboration Council and County Stat on number of disconnected youths
- Provide college/career information and strategies targeting disconnected youth with partners
- Track the effect of these strategies on the participants’ post-secondary decisions
- Evaluate strategies to identify barriers to accessing information and programming for disconnected youth

Potential Partners

ACE Academy at Park Montgomery

Community Bridges

Liberty’s Promise

Linkages to Learning – YMCA

Identity

Montgomery College

Montgomery County Collaboration Council

Montgomery County Public Schools

- *Eastern Middle School*
- *Silver Spring International Middle School*
- *Blair High School*

Passion for Learning

Worksource Montgomery’s East Silver Spring initiative

County Stat

2. Internships/Volunteer Opportunities

Develop internship and volunteer opportunities for youth at community

businesses and organizations and create a coordinated one-stop shop for community members to access these opportunities online. Conduct in-person outreach to encourage youth and parents to access opportunities. Provide translated materials.

SMART Goal: Through the 2021-2022 school year increase the number and variety of internship opportunities provided to Long Branch middle and high school students by 15% of the current level

Tasks/Strategies

- Assess the available internship and volunteer opportunities available for students to identify areas for growth and variety
- Identify number of participants and grade levels of students currently attending workshops related to career development to determine which groups need additional outreach and recruitment.
- Work with partners to identify barriers to information for these students
- Establish current baseline number of Long Branch students participating in internships and volunteer experience
- Provide outreach to community organizations, businesses, and other institutions to offer more internships and volunteer experiences for youth
- Develop a list of Long Branch volunteer/internship opportunities and incentives for participation
- Expand the number of schools offering internship and volunteer opportunities, connect them with existing organizations with opportunities
- Work with business and organization partners to Expand types of jobs represented in teen internship/job programs to cover more fields of work including trades such as plumbers, electricians, pharmacy technicians, etc.

- Work with business and organization partners to Increase the variety and accessibility of Student Service Learning (SSL) opportunities

Potential Partners

City of Takoma Park – Summer Youth Employment Program

Clifton Park Baptist Church

Long Branch Business League

Montgomery County Collaboration Council

Summer Rise

TeenWorks

3. Youth Spaces

SMART Goal: By the 2022-2023 school year, youth will have three walkable, safe, accessible dedicated community spaces providing out-of-school activities in Long Branch.

Identify spaces located in the Long Branch community for youth to convene and use for engaging activities in which they have expressed interest.

Tasks/Strategies

- Define what makes a space “safe and comfortable” for youth
- Identify program space needs (areas, activities to be provided, etc.)
- Identify suitable empty spaces in Long Branch and who owns them
- Engage county government/nonprofit partners to support efforts to secure youth spaces
- Find safe and accessible places where youth can gather to socialize that have the following characteristics:

- Nurturing space, including the people who oversee programming
- Foster creative energy and ideas
- Youth ownership over their own programming

Potential Partners

Long Branch Business League

Montgomery County Council

Real Estate Agents

To be determined non-profits with potential space to share

4. Youth Leadership Program

Engage youth in leadership development and advocacy

SMART Goal: By June 2022 a teen youth leadership club of at least 10 Long Branch high school and middle school youth uses Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) to select, investigate and address at least one priority issue.

Tasks/Strategies

- Identify community-based organizations to sponsor/host YPAR activities
- Train community organizations, community members, parents, and youth in YPAR
- Conduct a community event to engage youth and community members in selecting issue areas for discussions and potential research
- Conduct short surveys of youth on potential topics for research and action
- Engage cohorts of middle and/or high school youth to select a priority issue or concern

- Identify and partner with related clubs and organizations at local area middle and high schools, such as the “Difference Makers” social service group as well as those provided through youth-serving organizations to share information, resources, and potential participants

Potential Partners

CASA

CHEER

Difference Makers

Montgomery County Collaboration Council

Montgomery County Public Schools

5. Parent Engagement and Support

Utilize best practices to engage parents and establish parent support groups. Recognize and address trauma experienced by parents and children through increased awareness and community support, access to resources, and trauma-informed care when needed.

SMART Goal: By January 2022, establish three Parent Support groups in the Long Branch Communities

Tasks/Strategies

- Identify locations of newly developed parent groups based on expressed interest/need from community.
- Conduct outreach to gather potential parent participants, using one - on one personal approaches.
- Secure funding and recruit culturally informed mental health specialists to provide support in groups and ensure mental health services are available when needed.
- Assess interests and experiences that people have that can be shared to address identified needs.
- Assess organization resources and community assets through

Community Health workers.

- Plan for continuity of activities that build resilience and sustained relationships that support them

Potential Partners

CHEER

CONEXO (located in the New Hampshire Estates affordable housing community)

Montgomery College – Gloria Bonilla

Montgomery County Collaboration Council

Montgomery County Public Schools/Parent Community Coordinators

YMCA Linkages to Learning



For more information about the Long Branch Collection Action for Youth or the LBCAY unified plan, please contact:

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Bruce Baker, bruce@communitycheer.org

Links to reports:

[LBCAY Youth Focus Group Qualitative Findings](#)

[LBCAY Stakeholders Assessment - WhitworthKee Consulting](#)

[Long Branch Community Visioning Survey Results](#)

[Overview of LBCAY Youth Participatory Action Research \(YPAR\) activities](#)

Links to additional information related to LBCAY:

[Anne E Casey Foundation Theory of Change](#)

[Collective Impact Model \(Collective Impact Forum\)](#)

[Montgomery County Collaboration Council YPAR guidebook](#)

