



LONG BRANCH NEIGHBORHOOD

ACTION PLAN

Prepared for the Governor's Office for Children
ENOUGH Initiative - FY27

JULY 2026



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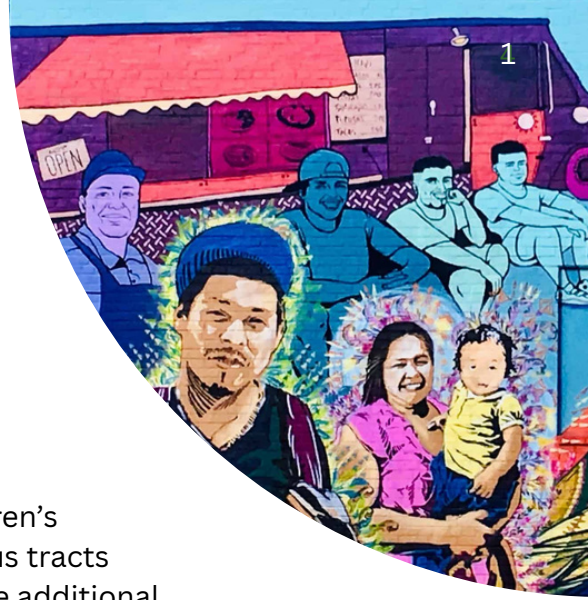
01

Overview of the Community

Geographic Boundaries

Community Health and Empowerment through Education and Research (CHEER) and Long Branch Thrives operate within the Long Branch neighborhood of Silver Spring in eastern Montgomery County. This community has been designated as an Equity Focus Area by the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission due to its high concentration of low income and non-English speakers.

Long Branch Thrives primarily serves the Governor's Office for Children's qualified census tract **24031701900**. It also serves surrounding census tracts with schools having 80% or higher child poverty concentration. These additional census tracts include 24031702000; 24031701702; 24031702301 (refer to the CSNA for a map of these areas).



History of the Neighborhood

Long Branch's history reflects both suburban development and a long tradition of cultural diversity.

Initially a small farming crossroads, Long Branch transformed during the New Deal and post-World War II eras, when developer E. Brooke Lee helped expand housing, parks, schools, and infrastructure.¹ During this same period, Long Branch became home to growing immigrant and minority populations (noted by current residents and community leaders): a significant African American community in the 1940s–60s, followed by Cuban immigrants in the 1960s–70s, Southeast Asian families in the 1970s–80s, and, since the 1990s, large numbers of Hispanic and Ethiopian residents. **This layered immigration story made Long Branch a landing place for newcomers seeking affordable housing and community support and resulted in about 40% of residents being foreign-born.**²

In recent decades, Long Branch has benefited from community-driven initiatives and planning interventions. The approved Long Branch Sector Plan envisioned a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly, multicultural community, centered around two proposed Purple Line stations, aiming to enhance transit access, connectivity, and housing affordability.³ Small minority-owned businesses and active community institutions, including CHEER (Community Health and Empowerment through Education and Research), have played central roles in supporting diverse residents and working alongside schools and health partners. Additionally, placemaking efforts like “Long Branch Festival” have provided public gathering spaces, reinforcing local cultural identity and social cohesion.⁴ Inclusive economic strategies, emphasizing zoning reforms, technical assistance, and support for local businesses, further strengthened the neighborhood's entrepreneurial and social assets.⁵



History of the Neighborhood Cont.

Despite these efforts, Long Branch continues to face entrenched challenges. Community residents and leaders note that:

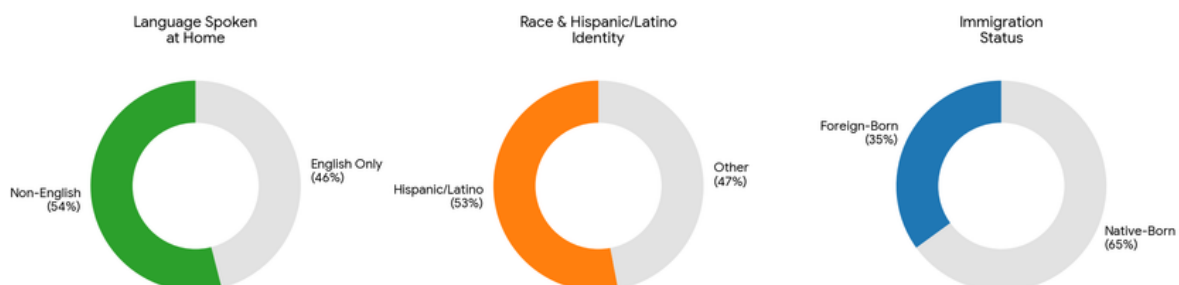
- Long Branch remains predominantly residential with only small retail nodes and virtually no true economic corridors, business districts, or healthcare facilities, meaning many residents must travel outside the neighborhood for employment, services, and healthcare.
- Most residents in the community are renters and the community has among the lowest median incomes in Montgomery County, with many families facing inadequate access to neighborhood amenities, schooling stability, and health resources.
- Parks are largely limited to streamside green spaces (along Sligo Creek and Long Branch), but lack well-lit recreational infrastructure, such as soccer or basketball courts, limiting safe gathering places for youth.
- The Piney Branch corridor, in particular, suffers from high concentrations of apartment dwellings, elevated crime rates, and persistent underinvestment.
- Traditional methods of service delivery have often failed to reach Long Branch's large low-income, non-English-speaking population effectively.

Accounting for both Long Branch's rich history of immigrant resilience and its persistent inequities is essential; only by embracing this full context can leaders shape a more equitable and thriving future for the community.

Neighborhood Residents

There are approximately **15,200 residents** living in all four census tracts named above, with roughly 3,200 of those residents living in tract 24031701900. ⁶ These four tracts include approximately **3,900 children under 18** (~26% of the total population, slightly higher than state and county averages of around 22%), who are part of over 5,400 households. ⁷ Roughly 700 of these children live in priority tract 24031701900, which also includes just over **1,300 of the total households**.⁸

The Long Branch community is highly diverse, with nearly 53% of residents living in the priority tract identifying as **Hispanic or Latino**. ⁹ There is also a rich history of immigration in the community, and **35%** of residents in the priority tract are **foreign-born** which includes a significant number of Central/South-American and African-born residents. ¹⁰ In the priority tract, nearly **54%** of residents **speak a language other than English at home**.¹¹



Neighborhood Residents Cont.

39% of residents in the priority tract live **under the poverty line**, roughly five and a half times the rate of poverty in Montgomery County as a whole (7.1%) and more than four times the rate of poverty in the state of Maryland (9.3%).¹² This rate is even higher among children living in Long Branch Thrives' priority census tract—especially Hispanic / Latino children:

	All Residents	Hispanic / Latino Residents
# Children (% of all children)	693 ¹³	495 ¹⁴ (71%)
% Children living in poverty	66% ¹⁵	90% ¹⁶
# Families (% of all families)	637 ¹⁷	389 ¹⁸ (61%)
Median household income	\$75,054 ¹⁹	\$31,355 ²⁰



Who We Are

In response to Governor Moore's initiative to eradicate childhood poverty through wrap-around services and support to families, a coalition of partners, led by CHEER, began the hard work of changing the lives of Long Branch children and families. We are Long Branch Thrives. All of us in the coalition have roots in serving Long Branch through programs, outreach, services, food, care and dedication. We are nonprofit and community based organizations. We are private companies and governmental entities. We are committed community members. We are all joined together under the mission stated in our North Star.



SECTION

02

Overview of Community Strengths, Needs, & Opportunities

Community Strength and Needs –Engagement Process

The top needs identified and addressed in this NAP are informed by the comprehensive CSNA included with this application, which was developed through an inclusive and collaborative process that intentionally centered the voices of residents, youth, and partner organizations. To ensure the assessment reflected both lived experiences and reliable data, the process integrated qualitative and quantitative methods, with multiple opportunities for community members and partners to shape the findings and priorities.

A series of **partner-driven workgroups and convenings created the foundation for this process**, including weekly Backbone partner meetings, monthly All Partner meetings, and bi-weekly Data Research sessions. This infrastructure provided regular opportunities for partners to identify barriers, map assets, and align on shared priorities within the four ENOUGH result areas.

Community voices were engaged through a structured series of **large community meetings** and smaller, targeted outreach efforts. 9 major community meetings were held over the 18 month NAP development period. Additionally, in the June 18, 2025 and June 9, 2026 community meetings, CHEER and partners presented a draft neighborhood action plan to residents and partners for plan adoption. These gatherings consistently drew broad participation—averaging 70 people per session, with youth comprising 35 percent of participants during the first three meetings covering the High-Quality Childcare and Education result area. Altogether, our community meetings gathered over 750 contacts. The discussions, conducted in both English and Spanish, enabled residents to articulate community assets, establish prioritized goals, and define what success should look like for all four result areas. To reach groups less represented in large convenings, the process also incorporated **surveys** at local schools and community events and **focus groups** with community members.

750+

Community
Contacts Reached

11

Major Community
Meetings (Including 2 Plan
Presentations)

35%

Youth Participation
in First 3 Meetings
(High-Quality Childcare &
Education)



Community Strength and Needs –Engagement Process Cont.

All community input was combined with a robust **evidence-based research strategy**. Long Branch Thrives leveraged existing asset maps including previous CHEER-led studies like the Long Branch Collective Action for Youth (LBCAY) Stakeholders Assessment completed in August 2020 and a report from LBCAY's youth focus groups, gap analyses, and GOC data dashboards, while also incorporating publicly available datasets such as the ACS 5-Year Estimates and CDC Places. This desk research allowed the team to align resident perspectives with statistical trends, grounding the CSNA in both qualitative insights and quantitative data.

After the completion of the community input to High-Quality Childcare and Education result area, Long Branch Thrives met in a day-long **Strategic Visioning Session**, which convened partners and community members to refine and prioritize core issues. Using structured facilitation and breakout discussions, participants weighed urgency, feasibility, and potential for impact to identify the most critical priorities for Long Branch Thrives to address (See CSNA for high-level overview of session agenda and attendees). Importantly, attendees left with not only shared priorities but also personal commitments toward implementation, ensuring the assessment translated into community-driven action. Similar sessions after the conclusion of each result area were conducted. The results for all the result areas were presented to the community for comment and feedback on June 9, 2026, which resulted in strong affirmation for the plan.



Community Strengths/Assets

It has long been recognized that overall, Long Branch's greatest strengths are the diversity of its people who contribute to the community and the resources, programs and services that are available to the Long Branch community. The people contribute time, energy, hard work and entrepreneurial zeal to the vitality of Long Branch.

From our conversations and from surveys, residents named strong civic and community leaders as a key strength of the community. The Community Ambassador Team (CAT), composed of ten bilingual Long Branch residents, are trained by the CHEER Empowerment and Leadership Development team to help identify community members' highest needs and connect families to available resources. They are deeply involved in community affairs and have children attending Long Branch feeder schools. They help inform decision-making processes and are at level 5 (Leadership) of the community "Ladder of Engagement" model used by Long Branch Thrives. The five step ladder of engagement categories are awareness, interest, participation, commitment and leadership. Their advocacy has led to demonstrated results with stronger and more equitable relationships with local government agencies to achieve community goals. Examples include community-led walks with elected officials and agency representatives to bring infrastructure and pedestrian safety improvements in Long Branch (e.g. crosswalks, stop signs, lighting, parking enhancements, and improved parks).

Long Branch has an organized business sector which serves the community in many positive ways. For example, there are many local grocery stores and food retailers that provide culturally appropriate, fresh foods for the community.



Community Strengths/Assets

Local organizations and programs help the community function and provide a platform on which to build. The Long Branch Network of Service Providers was established over ten years ago to share information on services offered and the communities needs. This network has now evolved into Long Branch Thrives, with a commitment to shared action under the ENOUGH grant. Below is a representative list of key organizational assets in Long Branch.

CHEER (Health Team)

The CHEER health team are State certified community health workers whose case management services include extending health care access through the Affordable Care Act, and the Montgomery Cares and Care for Kids County health programs, which supports undocumented immigrants get access to health care. The health team also assists community members get access to federal programs, such as SNAP. CHEER also provides food assistance through a variety of programs.



CHEER's Health Team

Montgomery Housing Partnership (MHP)

The Long Branch Business League is staffed and supported by Montgomery Housing Partnership, a nonprofit housing developer which owns and operates many properties in the Long Branch community. MHP serves as an agent of civic and community support for the community. They have the capacity to acquire and develop housing and support commercial development that would benefit Long Branch.

Long Branch Recreation Community Center

The Long Branch Recreation Community Center operated by the County Recreation Program hosts sports and fitness programs for youth and adults, hosts a senior center, and provides space for community meetings. An outdoor County swimming pool is adjacent and operates during the summer.



Long Branch Recreation Community Center

CHEER Neighborhood Gardening Program

Through saving third spaces on private property, the program provides access to fresh, nutritious and culturally-valued food through collaborative gardening that unites people across cultural and socioeconomic divides and strengthens community resilience. This program engages community members with safe and healthy outdoor spaces on a weekly basis, and includes incentives with farmers market tokens which further increases consumption of fresh local produce while supporting local farmers.

Long Branch Housing Action Team

LBHAT is a community organization that is working to implement the affordable housing goals set during the Long Branch Housing and Community Development Stakeholder process in 2022.



Long Branch Housing Action Team

Primary Care Coalition

Although there are no medical facilities in Long Branch, Long Branch Thrives has a partnership with the Primary Care Coalition. The Primary Care Coalition (PCC) of Montgomery County connects vulnerable and low-income residents with high-quality healthcare. They achieve this by partnering with safety-net clinics, hospitals, and public health agencies to coordinate services for the uninsured and underinsured. PCC administers two County programs, Montgomery Cares and Care for Kids which provides for medical care to uninsured County residents regardless of immigration status. Holy Cross Hospital is also one of the partners which is the closest medical facility and also conducts preventative health education to the Long Branch community.

TESS (Takoma-East Silver Spring) Center

TESS Center provides navigators who help community members access government social services and also hosts nonprofit services for housing and pro-bono legal advice.



Tess Center

Community Strengths/Assets Cont.

Long Branch Business League (LBBL)

The Long Branch Business League is staffed and supported by Montgomery Housing Partnership, a nonprofit housing developer which owns and operates many properties in the Long Branch community. MHP serves as an agent of civic and community support for the community. They have the capacity to acquire and develop housing and support commercial development that would benefit Long Branch.

Clifton Park Baptist Church

The Long Branch Consolidated Services Hub at Clifton Park Baptist Church with funding and in partnership with the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services provides access to an array of services which include free grocery distribution, diaper and clothing assistance, and onsite case management. Case management support is provided by Catholic Charities and CHEER's Health team.

Community Ambassador Team

Community Ambassadors are Long Branch community members who have advanced skills for leadership and community organizing through CHEER's leadership development program. They have the linguistic and cultural skill and knowledge needed to act as ambassadors between the community and the programs and institutions and organizations that serve them.

Long Branch Collective Action for Youth

LBCAY is a coalition of youth serving organizations in the Long Branch area that provides youth requested programs such as financial literacy, college tours, and job readiness training.

Story Tapestries

Story Tapestries is an organization that uses art in various mediums to support the social and health wellbeing of students and families in Rolling Terrace Elementary School. They also organize programs that support WorkForce Development especially in the High Quality Childcare and Education result area.

Children's Opportunity Alliance (COA)

COA is a nonprofit organization that is promoting the expansion of high quality childhood education.

Community Schools

Community Schools Programs at Rolling Terrace and New Hampshire Estates Elementary Schools.

Linkages to Learning

Linkages to Learning operates the two school based health centers at Rolling Terrace and New Hampshire Estates Elementary Schools. They provide a nurse and a counselor to family members of any student referred with special needs.

Long Branch Library

Long Branch Library hosts educational programs and youth enrichment and meeting space located at the heart of the community.

Montgomery County Community Action Agency (CAA)

The Community Action Agency provides programs and access to services to combat poverty, such as Head Start, and the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance programs. This Agency serves as the umbrella for the TESS Center located in Long Branch.

Maple Tree Support Group

The Maple Tree Support Group connects primarily Ethiopian residents to learn together about community resources and to plan joint activities for their own enrichment and recreation. Currently, the group is focusing on workforce development initiatives around digital literacy and effective communication support, in addition to family wellness.



Linkages to Learning



Long Branch Library



Children's Opportunity Alliance



Clifton Park Baptist Church

Community Needs

The need-identification process resulted in the identification of **eleven areas of need** raised by the community, with the top needs and associated outcomes addressed through a co-designed set of **comprehensive logic models (see Appendix)**.²¹

These outcomes were selected because of their importance to residents, the urgency of the need, as well as Long Branch Thrives' ability to address their root cause factors through assets already in place in the community.

The core need identified by residents as a theme across all phases of the community planning process is a need to feel safe and for a sense of belonging. This need was expressed most strongly by and for children and youth. Parents do not feel that parks and public places are safe. Children and youth especially need safe spaces where they can engage in fun and enriching activities that fill their time out of school with fun and learning, build positive relationships with peers and adults, and create a sense of belonging. There is almost no access to organized sports. Older youth need more opportunities to work and serve their communities. They also need life skills not taught at school, such as financial literacy and job readiness. They also need help with college and career navigation. There is also a need for more and better early childhood education. There are almost no licensed childcare centers in Long Branch and there is very little help for parents navigating the child care resources that are available.

Another strongly articulated need was for the ability to pay their rent and pay for food and many other basic needs. The way that community members wanted to be able meet these needs was by finding more and better employment that matched their skills and abilities and that would raise their income. Many need help to overcome language barriers, and barriers to work authorization. They also need training to qualify for skilled jobs available in the area. Another strongly articulated need was for access to health care. There are no medical care facilities in Long Branch. The nearest clinic and the hospital are both about 3 miles away from the center of Long Branch. Many have no health insurance and medical care is too expensive. So many go without care. There is a need for both help navigating the health care system and meeting or navigating around its high costs.

A summary of the community needs are stated in the following tables:



Childcare (Early Childhood Education)



Need Description: At Rolling Terrace Elementary School, which covers the majority of Long Branch Thrives' service area, just 17.3% of students demonstrated proficiency on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) in the 2022-2023 school year.²² This was 61% lower than the '22-'23 rate in Montgomery County (44%) and 59% lower than in the state of Maryland (42%).²³ Local parents have expressed discomfort navigating existing early childhood systems, and workshop participants noted opportunities to increase parent knowledge of early childhood resources to increase their engagement with them and improve Kindergarten

Root Cause Factors:

- Need for improved resources to help parents guide their children through key early learning milestones
- Need for higher-quality, affordable childcare options with focus on kindergarten readiness
- Need for greater awareness among parents of available supports for early childhood, including existing childcare options

Children & Youth Spaces and Activities



Need Description: In Long Branch Thrives' primary service tract in 2023, the chronic absenteeism rate for all students K-12 is 34% higher than Montgomery County's overall (35.6% in Long Branch Thrives' service area vs. 26.6% in the County) and 20% higher than the state's (29.8%).²⁴

Youth have also expressed the need for more activities that capture their interests, such as sports programs, art, music, and knowledge and skill building, activities that would benefit their future. They also requested spaces where they can build friendships and relationships with each other and create a sense of belonging. ([Session 3 Notes Goal 2 Youth Activities and Spaces](#))

Root Cause Factors:

- Need for improved resources to help parents guide their children through key early learning milestones
- Need for higher-quality, affordable childcare options with focus on kindergarten readiness
- Need for greater awareness among parents of available supports for early childhood, including existing childcare options

Education and Career



Need Description: The percent of Long Branch youth ages 18 to 24 who have a high school diploma or GED equivalent is 68.4% according to the American Community Survey. This is 20.1% less than the County level of 85.6%. Of those who do graduate less than half (49.2%) enroll in College for the following semester. At community meetings residents including youth expressed the lack of support for navigating opportunities for work and college as major concerns. ([meeting notes](#) Phase 1 session 3) Middle and high school youth have reported that school does not offer important life skills programs such as financial literacy and job readiness. (LBCAY 2023) The percentage of Long Branch youth ages 16 to 19 who are neither in school nor working is 12.8%. This is almost 3 times the County (4.3%). (Data sources provided by GOC, ENOUGH Datahub June 2026)

Root Cause Factors:

- Many immigrant families have no experience or knowledge of college or career planning and preparation, consequently parental knowledge and support is limited
- There is a shortage of career and college counselors for youth
- There is a lack of opportunities for youth in Long Branch. This includes work, paid internships, and Student Service Learning opportunities. There are more opportunities in downtown Silver Spring, but transportation and time are barriers.
- Lack of awareness of College opportunities including scholarships and financing



Human Connections & Social Wellbeing

Need Description: Loneliness and Social isolation are highly correlated with poor health, especially poor mental health. In the Long Branch Area the prevalence of people reporting that they are always, usually, or sometimes lonely is 38.2%. This is 17% higher than Montgomery County as a whole (32.5%). (CDC Places) In Community meetings throughout the planning process a strong desire for a sense of belonging and inclusion was frequently expressed for adults and especially for youth. Isolation is seen as a major contributor to mental distress. A desire for a community full of social interaction, engagement and fun was frequently expressed within different topics of discussion and in all phases of the planning process.

Root Cause Factors:

- Drug, alcohol, and safety concern at parks keeps people from using and socializing at parks
- Lack of accessible third spaces, social gathering spots, such as coffee shops, community centers where people can meet regularly to socialize
- Due to lack of employment opportunities and the high cost of childcare, Immigrant mothers are isolated at home and lack opportunities to learn English and engage in self development
- Not enough playful activities for families
- Not enough information on activities and opportunities shared to all members of the community.
- Not enough English classes are available to everyone who needs it.
- Lack of social time for kids at school
- Too few counselors for adults and youth who have cultural competence

* Source ([Meeting 2 Notes](#) March 3 2026)



Healthy Food Access

Need Description: The Long Branch Thrives area has a food insecurity rate of 30.3% which is 153% higher than the Montgomery County rate (12%). (calculated from CDC Places website) It also has diabetes prevalence rate of 12.7% which is 81% higher than the County rate (7%). (calculated from CDC Places website) County data indicates that areas where food insecurity and diabetes prevalence are high results in a very high number of emergency room visits for diabetes. (in [Healthy Montgomery website](#) on Type 2 diabetes) Long Branch Community Meeting participants highlighted the need for access to healthy food, especially fresh produce, as a priority concern. The ability to select the food that they buy and/or grow was also important to their sense of health and well being, but that need is widely unmet. Choice gives sovereignty and reduces waste that occurs when people receive pre-packaged items. ([Meeting 2 Notes](#) March 3 2026)

Root Cause Factors:

- Lack of money to pay for food, due to lack of employment
- Limitations on the quantity and accessibility of food provided at Food distributions
- Barriers to travel to food distribution and local grocery stores including safety and physical barriers due to construction of the Purple Line.
- The Community Garden at Long Branch Local Park has just 16 plots; there is an online waitlist for this and all Community Gardens on Montgomery County Park land.



Healthcare Access

Need Description: In the Long Branch Thrives area 35.4% of all adults ages 19 to 64 have no health insurance. This is 346% higher than Montgomery County (7.2%) and 421% higher than Maryland (6.8%). There is also a disproportionately low health insurance rate for children in Long Branch. Among children under 19 5.2% have no insurance, which is 41% higher than for the County and 21% higher than the State.(from CSNA p. 14) At Long Branch community meetings residents identified the lack of any medical care facilities in Long Branch as an urgent need for both insured and uninsured residents. The nearest medical facilities are about 3 miles away at Mary's Center Clinic or Holy Cross Hospital. Consequently many residents are not accessing primary care and instead deferring medical care until they have to go to the hospital emergency department, which is medically and financially the worst way to get care. ([Meeting 2 Notes](#) March 3 2026)

Root Cause Factors:

- Lack of Health Insurance and high costs of medical care.
- Transportation is a barrier because of the distance and time it takes to get to medical facilities and appointment
- There are not a sufficient variety of services available at the clinic. Specialty care is not easily accessible to those who need it.
- Lack of available appointments at medical clinic
- There are language barriers in getting care and in getting information on medical care for those who are not native English speakers.

ENOUGH Result Area: Safe and Thriving Communities

Environment & Beautification

Need Description: During the Community planning process residents prioritized “more green space, parks, gardens, and trees where children, youth, and adults can grow, pick food, and engage in sports and other outdoor activities.” The only Community Garden on Park land in Long Branch rents just 16 plots (10’ x 20’ each) and a long wait list. CHEER’s Neighborhood Gardening Program has added 460 ft² of gardening space on private properties available for communal use. Residents have called for more growing space available to all. Their vision also included more spaces for “education, science, music, art, culture, creativity, nature, and the environment.” They were specifically interested in the currently vacant Flower Theater as a potential center for culture, arts and activities. There is currently no other comparable community space. ([Vision document](#) phase 1) There was also concern about trash and the lack of public participation in the environmental quality of the neighborhoods. ([meeting notes](#) goals from phase 1 passed on to phase 2)

Root Cause Factors:

- Lack of prior investment in Long Branch facilities, parks and public spaces
- Lack of resident participation in maintaining and improvements in Long Branch spaces.
- Lack of accountability means and incentives for property owners/managers to establish and maintain quality of public spaces

Public Safety

Need Description: Long Branch residents have elevated the need for safe, high-quality public spaces as a top-tier priority. Safer and higher quality spaces for the community to both gather informally and host events / programming will contribute to higher rates of social connection (highlighted in another top need) and improved opportunities for beneficial youth and family programs (e.g., after school activities, childcare, parenting classes, etc.).

Despite overall reductions in crime, residents at community meetings expressed major concerns about safety in the Long Branch community. One of the major complaints is that drug activity and alcohol abuse by people in the parks makes the parks feel unsafe. There is also persistent gang activity and a recent high profile gang related murder in a Long Branch Park. A second major area of concern has been a consistently high concentration of pedestrian injuries and death on local roads.

Root Cause Factors:

- Community members are not organized to take collective action to advocate for their safety
- Lack of youth programming and constructive activities leads many to drug use or gang activity that threatens the community.
- Economic hardships and lack of access to opportunities and resources has led youth and adults into actions of despair that make the community unsafe.
- Lack of investment in Long Branch infrastructure has made the roads feel unsafe due to poor lighting and other safety features.

Housing

Need Description: Long Branch has 62 Troubled properties , which is 79% of the properties listed by the Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs for the whole County. Trouble properties are multifamily rental properties that have severe housing code violations. (FY25 DHCA [Troubled Properties Report](#)) Long Branch also hosts a large portion of the County’s naturally occurring affordable housing. Yet the construction of the Purple Line light rail is anticipated to increase property values and development incentives that threaten to increase rents and displace low income families to make room for development. The community welcomes the completion of the Purple Line, which is expected in 2027, but has advocated for a strong provision included in the East Silver Spring Communities Plan by MNCPPC for no net loss of affordable housing (See ESSCP on Montgomery Planning Website). At community meetings residents expressed a strong desire for efforts to bring neighbors together into mutual support and they requested help and support for bringing residents’ concerns and issues to property managers to protect themselves from mistreatment and poor housing conditions.(Notes from Phase 2)

Root Cause Factors:

- Long Branch has an aging housing stock that requires high levels of maintenance, rehabilitation, and redevelopment
- There is a lack of resources and funding to incentivize property owners to rehabilitate and maintain properties because low rents in Long Branch do not make it worthwhile
- Renters have language and cultural barriers that make it difficult to understand the housing rights and responsibilities and the housing accountability system.
- Large numbers of residents are isolated from each other creating obstacles to mutual support and collective efforts to improve their neighborhoods.
- Purple Line construction is bringing changes to housing markets and creating conditions that require adaption and innovation.

ENOUGH Result Area: Economically Secure Families



Support Business

Need Description: Residents at community meetings see local businesses as an asset for community building and information that promotes safety and growth for community members. The local businesses provide for the culturally specific needs of community members. Business growth is needed to address other community concerns for safety, and the ability of the business community to meet the future needs of the community.

Root Cause Factors:

- Lack of information on community needs and preferences
- Lack of knowledge and business skills for current and future businesses
- Lack of space for community members to meet, gather and exchange with each other



Workforce Development

Need Description: In 2024, labor force participation for ages 20 - 64 was 86.9%. This was higher than that of Montgomery County overall, 85.2% (See ENOUGH Data Hub Source: Maryland Department of Planning). Despite this 39.0% of all residents and 65.9% of children in the community live under the poverty line and the median household income for Long Branch is \$70,450, which is 53.2% of the Montgomery County median, \$132,450. ²⁵ These discrepancies suggest that Long Branch residents are facing significant underemployment and a lack of access to high-quality jobs and living wages. Residents at community meetings indicated that the training and workforce opportunities available do not meet employment demands and that resident experience does not match job availability ([Meeting notes](#) Phase 2 Session 2 p, 2)

Root Cause Factors:

- Need for improved resources to help parents guide their children through key early learning milestones
- Need for higher-quality, affordable childcare options with focus on kindergarten readiness
- Need for greater awareness among parents of available supports for early childhood, including existing childcare options



SECTION

03

Vision for the Community

North Star

Throughout the process of developing the Community Strengths and Needs Assessment and this Neighborhood Action Plan, Long Branch Thrives has engaged partners and residents on their vision for the future and their collective path forward for the Long Branch community. Below is the draft North Star co-developed by Long Branch Thrives:

Long Branch is a thriving, inclusive, and culturally vibrant community where all families and youth, regardless of background or economic status, are safe, supported, and empowered to live healthy, joyful lives. Children grow up with equitable access to housing, education, economic opportunity, and care from birth through adulthood. Our diverse residents lead the way in building a connected and supportive community for all, with a unified voice that shapes systems to meet our needs. Residents and partners collaborate to create strong local infrastructure and shared spaces to learn and connect. Rooted in belonging, equity, and collective power, the Long Branch community models what is possible when neighborhoods build from within.

Based on the community voice, North Star, CHEER and partners have identified the following priorities within each of the ENOUGH Result Areas. These priorities were selected because of their importance to residents, the urgency of need, and this collaborative's capacity to address its root causes while leveraging the existing strengths and assets of the community.

High-Quality Childcare and Education 	Safe & Thriving Communities 	Economically Secure Communities 	Healthy Families 
Children and Youth Spaces and Activities Enriching, accessible, and inclusive indoor and outdoor activities are available throughout the community Childcare Adequate, affordable child care is accessible and available to Long Branch families Education and Career Youth will succeed in their pursuit of education and skills development and/or find employment that leads to a career	Public Safety Long Branch is and feels safe with regard to pedestrian safety and crime Housing Housing in Long Branch is affordable, accessible, and safe Environment and Beautification Long Branch has safe, beautiful, clean, and green public spaces that are accessible for the community to utilize, beautify, and maintain	Small Businesses Long Branch has a safe and thriving business districts that serves community needs Workforce Development Long Branch residents are gainfully employed in meaningful work that matches their skills and passions	Healthcare Access Long Branch Residents have access to affordable healthcare Human Connections and Social Wellbeing Community members have solid social networks which strengthen the experience of belonging, capacity for resilience, and sense of wellbeing Healthy Food Access Long Branch residents have access to healthy food that supports their health and well being

Theory of Change

Our Theory of Change centers on a clear belief:

IF

Long Branch Thrives fosters a community of resident leaders and partners and supports them to leverage their strengths through participatory, asset-based, and relationship-centered approaches;



THEN

residents of Long Branch and partners will better advocate for and co-create a healthier, economically stronger, more connected and resilient community with increased sense of belonging and quality of life.



This plan translates that vision into a roadmap for the next five years - strengthening Long Branch Thrives internal capacity, deepening community leadership, and building the systems and resources needed to sustain our mission. We are using this theory of change as a community wealth building approach to lift employment, inspire entrepreneurship, and make Long Branch a fertile environment for human thriving.



SECTION

04

Prioritized Actions and Milestones

Areas of Opportunity for Urgent Action and Early Wins (Where to Drive Action Over the Next 5 years)

The voice of residents throughout the Community engagement process has been clear and specific. **Of the 11 needs identified through the CSNA process, 4 topics of need will be addressed through prioritized actions in FY27.** These are areas where we see significant gaps and where our partners have had success in providing these services.

- **Childcare/ECE** (ENOUGH Result Area: High Quality Childcare and Education)
- **Workforce Development** (ENOUGH Result Area: Economically Secure Families)
- **Health Care Access** (ENOUGH Result Area: Healthy Families)
- **Housing** (ENOUGH Result Area: Safe & Thriving Communities)

These prioritized actions will address the following barriers:

Key Community Concerns

1. Many services are not located in Long Branch and residents must travel to avail themselves of the services.
2. Impersonal support, language barriers, inadequate understanding of the community being served and information addressing the residents' particular needs leaves most residents feeling isolated and frustrated.
3. Information is presented in ways the community does not consume or understand.
4. No medical services are located in Long Branch.
5. Very few opportunities to learn or develop job skills exist in Long Branch.
6. Parents are not utilizing early childcare programs because they don't know how to access programs due to various barriers (e.g not knowing about the various ECE programs, need for assistance with filling out applications, and not knowing how to access childcare scholarship).
7. Neighbors, and more specifically renters, are disconnected from each other, which prevents them from meeting with their neighbors to share resources and get support for addressing housing and neighborhood conditions.



Overarching Strategy: The Thrive Center

An Economic Mobility Engine Room for Long Branch

The Thrive Center is **Long Branch Thrive’s human-centered, community-driven model for connecting families to opportunity**. Across every phase of engagement, residents were consistent and specific: they do not need to be told where services are, they need someone to facilitate effective connections to the exact resources they need, when they need it. What has been missing is **effective navigation that owns the outcomes** rather than handing off through a referral. The Center is built to do exactly that, organizing three integrated functions — *resource navigation, administrative advocacy, and case management* — around one coordinated point of access.

This design is grounded in a well-documented problem. Nationally, roughly half of the benefit dollars families of which are eligible, go unclaimed²⁶, and personal, in-person help is what changes that: people who receive application assistance enroll at 77%, versus 60% for those who do it alone.²⁷ In a community as heavily immigrant as Long Branch, the stakes are higher still, nearly one in four adults in mixed-status families avoid programs they qualify for out of fear of punitive actions, and roughly six in ten report risk of falling deeper into poverty.²⁸ Trusted, bilingual, community-based navigators are the proven remedy.²⁹ The Thrive Center puts that remedy at the center of the plan.

The model is built on four evidence-based design principles:

1. No Wrong Door (systems-design principle)

However or wherever a family enters - the front desk, a partner program, a community school, a community health worker - they are routed to what they need rather than bounced between agencies. It is a place of **direct connection, not referral**, to ensure people seeking resources and services are reliably connected to providers that align to their needs. The approach is an established coordinated-access standard adapted here from the health and human services field. Improving the “front door” of community services in this way is consistently linked to better resident experience, building trust in providers, and improving overall outcomes.³⁰

2. One-Stop (co-locate resources and services)

Under one roof, resource connections are bundled, not scattered. Families are empowered to connect to public benefits, tax preparation (VITA/EITC), financial counseling, legal services, and health-coverage enrollment all in one trusted location with trusted providers. When people enroll across all the programs they qualify for, child outcomes improve and poverty falls³¹, and coordinated in-person assistance measurably raises both take-up and retention.³² Latino residents in particular rely on in-person assistants at higher rates than other groups³³, which makes co-location the highest-ROI move available to Long Branch. This is the “solid return” case: higher claim rates, better retention, and dollars kept in the community.

Overarching Strategy: The Thrive Center Cont.

3. Pathways Community HUB (*case management and regional infrastructure*)

Our approach works to see families to and through reception of the resource and service they need to ensure their change in condition is met. The Center's case management runs on the Pathways Community HUB model: standardized "Pathways" that identify, track, and resolve each medical, behavioral, educational, and social risk factor to completion, and that ties case closure to outcomes. It is simultaneously a case-management method and a regional-infrastructure model, which means the Thrive Center can both prove its impact through real community outcomes rather than simply counting activities.³⁴

4. Wrapped in a Two-Generation lens, Protective Factors (*the connective tissue*)

Navigation and case management are delivered through a **Two-Generation (2Gen) approach**³⁵ and CSSP's **Strengthening Families / Protective Factors** framework. For 2Gen, whatever door a parent enters, such as, for a job search or a benefits question, the child's needs (early education, health, food) are engaged in the same encounter, and vice versa. For Protective Factors, parental resilience, social connections, concrete support in times of need, knowledge of parenting and child development, and children's social-emotional competence are the lenses that turn "we serve individuals" into "we build family and community capacity."

Finally, the Center is deliberately a **third space** — a welcoming, non-clinical community place³⁶ where people gather and belong. This matters on its own terms in a community where 38.2% of residents report loneliness (CSNA), and it is also what makes navigation and case management actually reach the isolated residents who need them most.

How the model shows up at the Thrive Center

Design Principle	What It Is	How It Works at the Thrive Center
No Wrong Door	Coordinated single point of access; direct connection, not referral.	A bilingual Neighborhood Resource Liaison greets and does a warm intake; every entry point (partner, school, CHW) feeds the same system so no family is bounced.
One-Stop/Single Shop	Benefits, tax prep, financial and legal help, and coverage enrollment in one place.	Partners deliver benefits screening, EITC/VITA, and enrollment on-site; CHWs enroll residents across Medicaid, SNAP, Montgomery Cares and more in a single visit.
Pathways Community HUB	Standardized pathways that track each risk factor to closure and tie closure to outcomes.	Intakes open Pathways in the shared database; scheduled follow-up is required until each need is resolved, producing the outcome data behind the RBA Plan.
2Gen, Protective Factors	Serve parent and child together; build family protective factors.	A parent's job search triggers child care/education check; family capacity grows
Third Space	A welcoming community place that builds connection and belonging.	Open, multilingual, non-clinical space with meeting and class rooms partners use for training, gatherings, and services.

High-Quality Childcare & Education

IMPACT: Long Branch children have affordable, high-quality early care and education and the out-of-school and career supports to stay on the path from birth to career.

RATIONALE: Kindergarten-readiness runs ~60% below the Maryland average and families are disconnected from subsidies and providers. Only 68.4% of youth 18–24 hold a diploma/GED (20.1 points below the county), fewer than half (49.2%) enroll in college the next semester, and 12.8% of 16–19-year-olds are disconnected from work and school (~3× the county). Youth and parents named the lack of navigation for work and college — and missing life-skills programming — as top concerns.

OUTCOME INDICATORS: Increase kindergarten-readiness rate; Increase share of 0–5 infants and children meeting developmental milestones; Increase high-school completion & post-secondary enrollment; decrease disconnected-youth rate

Early Childhood Education

Strategy / Program	Evidence base	Lead partner	Key progress measures
YEAR 1 (ENOUGH-funded) Expand the Neighborhood Ambassador Program Train ambassadors to directly connect families to Pre-K/Head Start, subsidy vouchers, and early-intervention services.	Evidence-informed — community navigator model; COA pilot; cohort of 10 already trained in 2026. ³⁷	Children's Opportunity Alliance (COA)	# of families receiving navigation support % family satisfaction with navigation support # of applications completed with ambassador assistance (Pre-K, Head Start, WPA, CCS, etc.) # of successful enrollments into early childhood programs \$ amount of financial support available for childcare % of children retained in ECE programs after 6 months
YEAR 1 (ENOUGH-funded) Childcare Provider Education Program Builds the skills, credentials, and career pathways of the early childhood workforce, expanding access to high-quality early childhood education while creating economic mobility for residents.	Evidence-informed — expanded ECE Access; ³⁸ workforce credentialing; 2Gen economic mobility.	Story Tapestries	# childcare providers recruited to complete training for MSDE clock hours # of MSDE-required clock hours earned by providers # of residents recruited to participate in 90-hour Childcare training program % of resident participants completing the 90-hour Childcare training program % of participants reporting increased knowledge and skills % of trained participants becoming certified childcare providers
YEAR 1 (ENOUGH-funded) Provider Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Coach local providers against the Maryland State rating system; produce data to drive early-childhood systems change.	Evidence-based — MD quality-rating framework; Lesnick et al. 2010.	COA, Story Tapestries, local providers	# providers engaged in CQI # providers improving rating tier

K12 Education, Youth Development, & Career

Strategy / Program	Evidence base	Lead partner	Key progress measures
YEAR 2-5 Out-of-School-Time Programming Homework help, tutoring, mentorship, sports, arts, and SEL for elementary/middle youth.	Evidence-informed — Out-of-School Time (OST) programs deliver significant academic, behavioral, and social-emotional benefits. ³⁹	CHEER , MCPS / MC Rec	# of OST programs implemented in the Long Branch area by Thrives partners # of youth participating in OST programs implemented in Long Branch by Thrives partners % of youth reporting increased connection and sense of belonging because of their participation in OST programs % of youth reporting increased knowledge, skills, and/or abilities because of their participation in OST programs # of parents engaged in their child(ren)'s OST programs % of youth reporting satisfaction with their OST programs
YEAR 1-5 Expand Youth Exploration & College and Career Readiness/Employment Add career exploration and college financial aid to Youth Exploration Clubs; integrate 16–24s into the workforce model; internships/SSL for 12–18s.	Evidence-informed — 4-year Youth Exploration Club track record (CHEER); College and career readiness approach ⁴⁰	Identity / Passion 4 Learning / Civic Circle , Interfaith Works	# of Youth Exploration Clubs serving Long Branch youth # of participants enrolled in Youth Exploration Clubs % of participants reporting increased knowledge, skills, and/or abilities because of their participation in Youth Exploration Clubs % of participants reporting satisfaction with Youth Exploration Clubs
YEAR 1-5 Expand Youth Opportunity Center Opportunities Provide GED and employment training and placement for youth (16 to 21) not in school or work	Evidence-informed — Identity Inc, in the Takoma Park/Long Branch area delivers trauma-informed, culturally ⁴¹ competent services.	Identity	# of Youth Opportunity Centers serving Long Branch youth # of youth served by Youth Opportunity Centers % of participants reporting increased knowledge, skills, and/or abilities because of their participation in Youth Opportunity Centers % of participants reporting satisfaction with Youth Opportunity Centers
YEAR 3–5 Youth & Community Facilities Working Group Identify and plan spaces for youth and community activities. ENOUGH funds pre-development/planning only; construction via leverage.	Evidence-informed — Programs for youth "third spaces" (neutral gathering spots outside of home and school) prioritize safety, civic engagement, ⁴² and skill-building.	Montgomery Planning/Parks/Recreation Dept., MHP , residents	# of sites identified & feasibility completed # of development plans completed \$ of funding secured

Economically Secure Families

IMPACT: Long Branch residents are employed in meaningful, living-wage work, and a thriving local business district serves the community and creates opportunity.

RATIONALE: 39% of residents and 65.9% of children live below poverty, and median household income (\$70,450) is just 53.2% of the county (\$132,450) with signals of deep underemployment. Residents said available training does not match real openings. The Purple Line (2027) brings both opportunity and displacement risk, and residents see local businesses as anchors for community, safety, and culturally specific needs.

OUTCOME INDICATORS: Increase in median household income; increase 6-month employment retention; decrease in household poverty/underemployment; increase in business diversity & new entrepreneurs

Workforce Development

Strategy / Program	Evidence base	Lead partner	Key progress measures
YEAR 1 Long Branch Workforce Success Initiative (ENOUGH-funded) Interfaith Works (IW) employs/supervises a Lead and Support Vocational Counselor: assessments, individualized employment plans, resume/interview prep, employer matching, retention coaching, benefits counseling — co-located and case-conferenced at the Thrive Center.	Evidence-based: IW Vocational Services Program. Year-1 in Long Branch achieved 50% placement supporting progress toward self-sufficiency. ⁴³	Interfaith Works	# of participants in employment support activities # of participants placed into employment (1st year) # of employment plans completed with vocational counselor % worker satisfaction with job/skill alignment % employment retention at 6 months
YEAR 2 Community-Based Workforce Education Language classes, employability/soft-skills training, and courses tied to local demand — delivered at the Thrive Center.	Evidence-informed — Expanded community-based training opportunities for underserved populations through strategic membership network of workforce development providers ⁴⁴	IW, Worksource Montgomery, Montgomery College, CHEER, and partners	# of employment skill building classes taught # of employment skill building class participants % of participants demonstrating proficiency with knowledge/skill taught % of participants using knowledge/skill in employment or to gain employment

Local Business & Economic Vitality

Strategy / Program	Evidence base	Lead partner	Key progress measures
YEAR 1 Long Branch Business Survey & Assessment Baseline the district: business diversity, gaps vs. demand, success measures. Foundational and low-cost.	Evidence-informed — market-assessment / Main Street methodology.	Long Branch Business League (Main Street) , MHP	Objectives, scope and methodology defined Data gathering and survey completed Baseline & gap analysis completed Business marketing and recruitment strategies and success metrics defined
YEAR 2 Business Support & Recruitment , Workers Collaboration Training for owners/entrepreneurs; recruit to fill gaps; match trained residents to local employers (bridges the Workforce table).	Evidence-informed — Business support and worker collaborative initiatives ⁴⁵	MHP/LBBL , Workforce team	# of business and entrepreneurship classes taught # of class participants % of participants demonstrating proficiency with knowledge/skill taught % of participants using knowledge/skill in business or to start a business # new businesses opened # of residents employed % of residents employed retained for six months or more
YEAR 2 Long Branch Clean & Safety Team Keep the business district clean and safe so patrons, visitors, and residents feel welcome.	Evidence-informed — clean-and-safe district model. ⁴⁶		Coverage hours # of bags of trash removed # of patrons assisted # of projects completed % of patrons rating business district as safe and clean on survey



Healthy Families

IMPACT: Long Branch families can access affordable local health care, nutritious food, and the social connection that underpins physical and mental health.

RATIONALE: 35.4% of adults 19–64 are uninsured (346% above the county) and there is no medical facility in Long Branch, so residents defer care to the emergency department. Food insecurity is 30.3% (153% above the county) and diabetes prevalence 12.7% (81% above). And 38.2% of residents report loneliness (17% above the county) — a driver of poor mental and physical health.

OUTCOME INDICATORS: Decrease in uninsured rate; increase utilization of local health services; decrease non-emergency ED use; decrease in food insecurity; increase in clinical measures improvements (HbA1c/BMI); decrease in social isolation

Healthcare Access

Strategy / Program	Evidence base	Lead partner	Key progress measures
YEAR 1 (ENOUGH-funded) Health Coverage Enrollment Community Health Workers (CHWs) enroll residents in Medicaid, ACA, Montgomery Cares, Care for Kids, and SNAP with retention follow-up.	Evidence-informed — CHW enrollment; personal assistance lifts take-up 77% vs. 60% (CLASP).	CHEER CHW program	# of Visitors seeking health care access or health insurance % of health care applications submitted # of people enrolled in Health Coverage # of SNAP applications submitted # of people enrolled in SNAP # of renewal applications
YEAR 1 (ENOUGH-funded) Long Branch Nurse Advice Line PCC extends nurse triage to Long Branch to route non-emergency needs and cut avoidable ED visits.	Evidence-informed — nurse-triage / navigation (Transforming 911) ⁴⁷ Washington DC Fire and Emergency Medical Services - Nurse Triage Calls. ⁴⁸	Primary Care Coalition	# of calls taken from Long Branch residents # of callers accessing primary care (on followup) # of callers using Emergency Department % of patients reporting satisfaction with advice provided in follow up % indicating that they were better off by making the call
YEAR 1 (ENOUGH-funded) Mobile Healthcare Access Mobile primary-care visits [Once per month (1st -3rd), twice/month (4th-7th), three times/month (8th-12th)] A permanent clinic is the long-term goal (capital — leverage in Y3–5).	Evidence-informed — mobile-clinic access model ⁴⁹	Casa Rubén, PCC	# of primary care visits in Long Branch % of mobile clinic patients enrolled in health insurance, Montgomery Cares, and Care for Kids % of mobile clinic patients using Emergency Department for health care % of patients reporting satisfaction with care provided in follow up % of patients improving self reported health status at follow up
YEAR 2 Health & Wellness Classes Community-requested health topics delivered at the Thrive Center (in person/virtual).	Evidence-informed — community health education ⁵⁰	Holy Cross	# of classes offered # of participants % demonstrating understanding of knowledge taught % Satisfied with the class on feedback survey

Food, Connection & Wellbeing

Strategy / Program	Evidence base	Lead partner	Key progress measures
YEAR 1 Expand Food as Medicine Program Produce prescriptions , CHW follow-up , nutrition education for residents with diet-related illness.	Evidence-based — CHEER model since 2017; documented HbA1c, BMI, and behavior improvements.	PCC / Casa Rubén , CHEER	# of eligible people enrolled and receiving food % of participants completing the program % of people using culturally valued, highly nutritious fresh food % of participants improving on one or more clinical health measures (HbA1c, BMI, etc) % of participants reporting improved nutrition behaviors % of participants improving self reported health status
YEAR 2 Expand Food Assistance Continue and grow food assistance for residents who do not qualify for SNAP/federal programs.	Evidence-informed — local food-assistance delivery. ⁵¹	CHEER , Crossroads / FarmShare	# of food assistance recipients using culturally valued, highly nutritious fresh food Pounds of food distributed % satisfaction with food assistance received # of participants self-reporting improved health status
YEAR 2 Community Gardens Expand garden space (from the current 460 sq ft) for growing food on private and/or public land to distribute to Long Branch Residents?	Evidence-informed — CHEER Neighborhood Gardening Program Model since 2020 ; ⁵² Community Gardens and enhanced food access. ⁵³	CHEER , Montgomery Parks/Planning , DEP , local orgs	# Sq ft of Garden space added # of pounds of fruits and vegetable produced/cultivated in Long Branch % of people using culturally-valued, highly nutritious fresh food % satisfaction with community gardening program # of participants self-reporting improved health status
YEAR 1 Community Info Hub & Neighbor-to-Neighbor Connections A physical gathering point plus practices that build self-sustaining networks of mutual support and community events — the Thrive Center as “third space.”	Evidence-informed — social-connection / third-place model; loneliness → health risk. ⁵⁴	CHEER , LBBL / MC Rec	# of Thrive Center Hub visitors % satisfied with information and services provided # of Events hosted # of Event Participants % of Partner satisfaction with facilities provided # of buildings/neighborhoods contacted and assisted # of neighborhood-led events or activities conducted # of residents engaged in neighborhood-led events and activities # of buildings/associations that have identified and selected shared issues or concerns to address # of participants reporting that they know and are engaged with one or more of their neighbors because of the Neighbor-to-Neighbor Connections Program # of participants reporting decreased isolation because of the Neighbor-to-Neighbor Connections Program

Safe & Thriving Communities

IMPACT: Long Branch is and feels safe, with quality affordable housing for residents and green, welcoming public spaces.

RATIONALE: Long Branch holds 62 “troubled properties” (79% of the entire county’s list) and a large share of the county’s naturally occurring affordable housing, now threatened by Purple Line–driven value increases and displacement; residents have fought for a no-net-loss provision (ESSCP). Parks feel unsafe amid drug and gang activity (including a recent park murder), pedestrian injuries are concentrated on local roads, and there is only 460 sq ft of community garden space – residents want more green, gathering, and cultural space (e.g., the Flower Theater).

OUTCOME INDICATORS: No net loss of affordable housing; increase residents in safe/healthy homes; decrease displacement; decrease in pedestrian injuries/deaths; decrease violent & property crime; increase access to green/public space

Housing

Strategy / Program	Evidence base	Lead partner	Key progress measures
YEAR 1 (ENOUGH-funded) Neighbor-to-Nighbor Housing Support Connect neighbors to build the capacity to act collectively on housing and neighborhood conditions.	Evidence-informed — collective-efficacy / mutual-support model. Built on CHEER’s community improvement process for building community relationships, since 2012 - [Presented at Maryland Non-Profits Annual Conference 2024]	LBHAT , Renters Alliance , MHP	#of rental communities assisted with forming neighborhood groups #of neighborhood groups that have identified and selected shared issues or concerns to address #of neighborhood group-led events or activities conducted #of participants in neighborhood group-led events % residents reporting they feel more connected to their neighbors because of their neighborhood groups % residents reporting that at least one residential or community need was met because of their neighborhood groups
YEAR 2 Protecting Tenants Initiative Tenant-rights training, connection to legal services, tenant-association formation, and support for the right of first refusal.	Evidence-informed — tenant organizing & legal-services model. ⁵⁵	LBHAT , Renters Alliance , CASA , MD Legal Aid	# of properties supported # of residents trained in tenants rights and housing action # of tenants referred to housing support partner (Renters Alliance, MD Legal Aid, etc) # of tenant associations organized # of tenants reporting that one or more housing issue was favorably resolved % of community members reporting that they have a sense of control over their living situation
YEAR 3–5 Affordable Housing Development & Preservation Property-level assessment, preservation and potential development via the Purple Line Preservation Network and other partnerships, including those that can leverage capital; Monitor the enforcement no-net-loss of affordable housing; Planning is Year 2–3	Evidence-informed — UMD NCSG assessment and PLPN preservation; capital construction unallowable under ENOUGH. ⁵⁶	LBHAT , UMD NCSG , PLCC/PLPN , MHP , HOC	# of affordable housing development or preservation projects proposed # of projects implemented \$ invested in projects # of affordable housing units constructed/preserved

Safe & Green Public Spaces

Strategy / Program	Evidence base	Lead partner	Key progress measures
YEAR 2 Crime & Drug-Prevention , Community-Police Engagement Pair youth activities with drug-prevention education, community-police engagement at events, and Crisis Center linkage for behavioral needs.	Evidence-informed – community-policing , youth-diversion ^{57, 58} approaches.	CHEER , local police , MC Crisis Center	# of engagement events that pair youth with drug prevention education # of community events with police participation # of public safety calls resulting in referrals to social service providers # of people reporting feeling safer in their neighborhood
YEAR 2 Pedestrian & Traffic Safety Community-led assessments of lighting/crosswalks, safety walks with agencies/officials, and Reactmap advocacy. Low-cost, resident-led.	Evidence-informed – community-led safety assessment; Montgomery ⁵⁹ Planning tools.	CHEER , Montgomery Planning	assessment plan developed # of community members participating in assessment activities # of agencies, elected officials participating in community walks/meetings # of hazard action items reported # of action items implemented
YEAR 2 Environmental Action Conduct community cleanups, tree plantings, and environmental stewardship activities.	Evidence-informed – stewardship models. ⁶⁰	CHEER , Montgomery Parks/Planning , DEP , local orgs	# of environment action events (trash clean ups, tree plantings, etc) # of people participating in events # of people reporting an improvement in their environment and surroundings
YEAR 3-5 Flower Theater / Community Third Space Plan and develop a cultural/arts and gathering space. ENOUGH funds pre-development/planning; construction via leverage.	Evidence-informed – third-place / social-infrastructure ⁶¹	Montgomery Planning , Flower Theatre owner , MHP , residents and LBBL	# of sites identified & feasibility completed # of sites/ plans approved \$ of funding secured # of spaces/facilities created # of community members using the space



Milestones

Initial Implementation Milestones

Building on the tables above, the collaborative will move towards the following recommended sequence of implementation milestones at a glance.



SECTION

05

Financial Strategy

Sustainability Plan

In many ways, the Long Branch Thrives Team's work together is just beginning. Now that we have completed our CSNA and NAP, we are ready to implement programming for all four ENOUGH result areas: High Quality Childcare and Education, Healthy Families, Economically Secure Families, and Safe and Thriving Communities.

To maintain our momentum, the leadership team for Long Branch Thrives will continue to meet monthly, and stakeholder group meetings will continue to occur quarterly, along with direct community feedback and participation. Decisions will be made collectively by all stakeholders/partners, ensuring that partners stay engaged and invested in the program. Through quarterly reviews, the partnership will conduct ongoing evaluations and adjustments. New data, changing community needs, and progress toward established goals will be considered. This iterative process ensures that the Neighborhood Action Plan remains responsive and effective over time.

Quarterback Sustainability

CHEER and the other Long Branch partners work together to secure additional funding. We leverage existing connections and actively pursue new funding opportunities. CHEER is primarily funded by Montgomery County, the City of Takoma Park, the Takoma Foundation, Kaiser Permanente, and the Montgomery County Collaboration Council. Individual donors also play a key role in CHEER funding. Many of these funding relationships have been in place for over a decade, demonstrating trust and sustained support from a diverse range of funders.

CHEER has established a Fundraising Circle (committee). This committee strengthens and expands funding streams. The Fundraising Circle invites existing and potential funders to community events and programs. This committee ensures government agency participation in CHEER efforts and community meetings. CHEER has systems in place to ensure continued financial support for the organization's initiatives and the collective impact of the partnership. CHEER is also working with 20 Degrees, a Washington, DC-based consulting firm that works with nonprofits to develop new revenue streams, improve financial resilience, and enhance organizational infrastructure.

Additional Funders and Commitments

In addition to existing GOC funding, the project has prospected additional funders including RWJW, Cafritz Foundation, and Greater Washington Area Community Foundation, Healthcare Initiative Foundation and NBCUniversal to name just CHEERs list. We believe these funders are well-aligned with the mission of our ENOUGH initiative and will work to cultivate their support over the next year.

Essential to our sustainability, Long Branch Thrives has strong community support from both community members, organizations, and government entities. We receive in-kind contributions, including time and expertise, from a number of supporters, including Montgomery County Public Schools, MoCo Department of Recreation, community volunteers, and a large cadre of MoCo agencies to support resource fairs and the ambassadors.

Additional Funders and Commitments Cont.

The successful implementation of our NAP will help secure the long-term financial sustainability of Long Branch Thrives. Long Branch Thrives facilitates strong community functionality, which makes community wealth generation possible. When people in communities receive resources in education, job training, care, healthy food, and housing to promote physical and emotional wellbeing, local businesses, industries, and organizations also grow stronger. When these wealth creating entities see the impact Long Branch Thrives has on the community, they will be incentivized to support Long Branch Thrives as an investment for their own future. Rather than charity, Long Branch thrives will seek partnerships with these local businesses and organizations through the lens of a business model that benefits both parties. When we address the top needs of the community, the whole community thrives. An empowered community sustains itself.



SECTION

06

Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Risks and Mitigation Strategies

The collaborative has proactively identified a set of potential risks facing the work ahead and outlined key mitigation strategies to implement.

Risks	Mitigation Strategies
IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT	• Particularly for our community events and onsite programs, make participation by invitation only when security is a concern. • Train all program operators in legal rights protocols for immigration enforcement. • Partner with community organizations and agencies providing legal services and/or programs for populations experiencing loss of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and work authorizations. • Organized neighborhood groups, will allow for residents to meet in their apartment building community centers/homes as needed
CHANGES IN PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY NEEDS	• Maintain regular communication with program participants • Provide for interim and post program evaluation and testing. • Provide flexible options for participation (e.g. virtual options, additional class and appointment times, etc.).
LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS TO ACCESSING TRAININGS AND PROGRAMS	• Assess participants' goals to see what challenges they may face. • Assess their ability and willingness to fulfill the legal requirements and institutional processes needed to attain their goals. • Look for institutional partners who can provide support that will mitigate challenges and barriers.
REDEVELOPMENT DISPLACES IMPORTANT COMMUNITY ASSETS, SUCH AS THE BUILDING HOUSING THE THRIVE CENTER	• Establish relationships with property owners in advance to communicate community needs. • Document community use of facilities and communicate to County planners to create leverage in the development approval process to mitigate displacement. • Advocate for new and additional community facilities from Property Owners, Developers, and County. • Advocate for a bond bill to replace the community asset.
DISPLACEMENT OF LOCAL BUSINESS AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING DUE TO PURPLE LINE RELATED DEVELOPMENT.	• Establish commercial land trust • Advocate for legacy business protections from the planning department. • Advocate for the enforcement of no net loss of affordable housing

SECTION

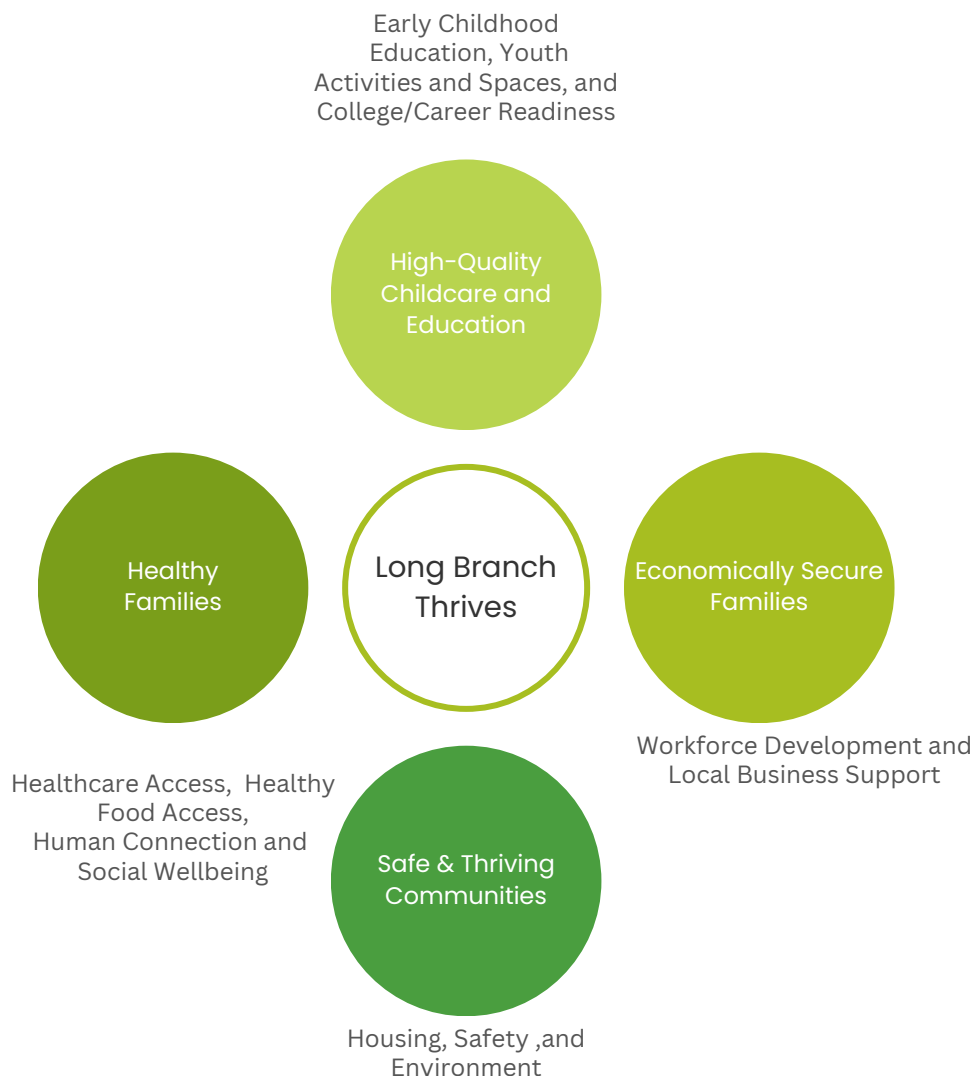
07

Governance and Communications

Governance Plan

Long Branch Thrives is structured to alleviate poverty and increase social mobility using a community wealth framework that puts children and youth at the center. That community wealth framework has three pillars: thriving local business, workforce development that brings residents to better quality, higher wage employment and making Long Branch a safe, healthy and thriving place for all, especially children and youth.

Long Branch Thrives has four governing circles: 1. **Economically Secure Families** (Workforce Development and Local Business Support), 2. **Safe and Thriving communities** (housing, safety, and environment), 3. **Healthy Families** (healthcare access, healthy food access, human connection and social wellbeing), and 4. **High-Quality Childcare and Education** (early childhood education, youth activities/spaces, and college and career readiness). Membership in each of the governing circles will include partners operating programs and community members with an interest in the respective topic areas. CHEER, under the guidance of the backbone team will provide staff support for circles. Each of the governing circles will select representatives to an Overall Shared Outcomes (OSO) team and operate using a consent based decision making process with a vision, mission, and aim, derived from and aligned with the Neighborhood Action Plan. Throughout this project, the Long Branch Thrives governing circles will be providing formal updates on progress, including assessment and evaluation data) to a consistent set of stakeholders, including the Backbone Team, and at the All Partners and Community Conferences described below.



Community Participation in Governance

Long Branch Thrives will also get community input and feedback by participating in regular school meetings, community gatherings, and conducting outreach as described in Tier 1 above. Long Branch thrives will also provide feedback through its communication to the public, such as website, newsletter, emails, text, and flyers.

Community engagement and participation is part of the Long Branch Thrives ongoing governance system. We will work at all five levels of the “ladder of engagement” to make governance participation open to all community members. The ladder of engagement defines five categories of ever deepening engagement.

Long Branch Thrives Ladder of Engagement



Tier 1 (Levels 1-2): Inform and Engage — Raise awareness, share information, and invite deeper participation.

Tier 2 (Level 3): Participate and Research — Active involvement in programs, projects, and community-based research.

Tier 3 (Levels 4-5): Lead and Act — Committed leadership, decision-making, and strategy development.



Community Members at Gardening
Tabling Event at Crossroads Farmers Market



Community Member Participating in the
Long Branch Thrives Community Meetings



Community Member Testifying to the
Takoma Park City Council About Food Security

Community Participation in Governance Cont.

Tier 1

Community members are informed and engaged in ways designed to discover and draw interest, share information, and invite them to engage deeper and further on the topics of interest and/or importance to them.

Tier 2

Engage community members and community groups into participation in programs, projects, and activities. This includes research efforts, such as community forums, data walks, participatory design sessions, and town halls and for some major projects Community Based Participatory Research (CBPAR). Long Branch Thrives must maintain a list of all participants and their participation levels and patterns. Data and notes on community engagement will drive further development of the action plan using an incremental Plan, Do, Study, and Act (PDSA) approach.

Tier 3

Draw leadership from the community. Identify community members who show commitment and leadership capacity. Help them develop their leadership skills by training and offering opportunities to use leadership skills. They will all participate in community based participatory action research and/or plan and implement actions and formulate strategies to achieve community goals. Participants will be incentivized by stipends and other benefits as well as access to resources, training, and relationships.

CHEER will conduct leadership development and embed qualified leaders in each of the four decision making circles with sufficient training and support to fully participate in decisions. A system of linking participants into an Overall Shared Outcomes Circle will enable each of the four governing circles to integrate with each other to ensure that action plans are integrated and mutually reinforcing each other.

Backbone

While the governing circles for each topic area will coordinate and make decisions for operating within their own topic area, the Overall Shared Outcomes team will coordinate and make decisions for the entire Long Branch Thrives Coalition. It will develop policies and procedures for the operation of Long Branch Thrives agreed upon by the consent of all its members. They will also be responsible for reporting to the Governor's Office of Children as required. They will meet at least monthly.

The Long Branch Thrives Backbone team, facilitated and staffed by CHEER, will report to and have two representatives on the Overall Shared Outcomes team.

Partner and Community Conferences

A Long Branch Thrives Partner and Community Member Conference will be held every quarter. All partners and all Long Branch organizations and community members will be welcome to attend. At each conference each of the four topic area circles will present their action plan strategies, report on current programs and operations, and offer reports on milestones achieved, performance measures, and program participant feedback. There will be time for participants to provide feedback, advice, and to commit to supporting programs such as by volunteering or offering in-kind or logistical support.

Long Branch Thrives was built on a simple but powerful commitment: we heard our community, and we are taking action. **Our message is clear: when the community speaks, we listen and we deliver.**

Key Objectives:

- 1. **Inform Residents about Long Branch Thrives and Recruit Residents for Our Programs**— Inform community members that we heard them throughout our community meeting process and connect them to any resources and programs they seek.
- 2. **Prove the value of Long Branch Thrives by highlighting our scalable, sustainable programs across the four ENOUGH pillars**— By demonstrating our measurable success, we aim to secure new funding opportunities and inspire new partners to join Long Branch Thrives.
- 3. **Efficiently Coordinate Internal Efforts**— Ensure partners effectively communicate with each other to prevent communication gaps or silos between themselves and community members.

Audience	Outreach Strategies
Long Branch Adult Residents (Not already connected to our programs)	Community Health Workers (CHW) and Community Ambassadors Team (CAT) outreach, Leveraging relationship with Discover Long Branch, Long Branch Thrives data dashboard on a dedicated website for Long Branch Thrives, Utilizing Linkages to Learning/Community Schools connections, Social media outreach through social media accounts dedicated to Long Branch Thrives, Mass SMS messaging, Monthly newsletter “The Thrives Report”, Traditional media outreach, Targeted flyers, Community event tabling.
Long Branch Youth Residents (Not already connected to our programs)	Youth community ambassador outreach in schools, Utilizing Linkages to Learning/Community Schools connections, Press releases to school newsletters, School event tabling and presentations, Social media outreach, SMS mass messaging, Targeted flyers.
Recruited Participants	Designated partner one-to-one follow-up, Long Branch Thrives Mailing list, Long Branch Thrives SMS lists, Social media, Quarterly satisfaction feedback surveys.
Local Government	Quarterly council meeting presentations on expressed community need from the NAP and Long Branch Thrives milestones, One-on-one meetings with councilmembers, Press releases, Quarterly newsletters, Social media outreach.
Traditional Media (Earned & Local)	Press releases on NAP, LB Thrives programs, and milestones. Focus on storytelling—let a resident share how a Long Branch Thrives program changed their trajectory.
Funders	Extensive media (traditional and social media) outreach on NAP, LB Thrives programs, and milestones. Establishing annual fundraising events for LB Thrives.

Internal Coordination

Effective communication is the foundation of any successful multi-partner collaboration. Without clear rules of engagement, information can become siloed, transparency can become lost, and the overall impact on the community can be diminished. To streamline our information sharing, email will serve as the official record for formal updates and decisions, text messaging will handle urgent logistics, and Google Drive will host all collaborative documents via a shared ENOUGH folder for transparency between all partners. Additionally, we will continue to have regular meetings to foster strategic planning and relationship building with agendas sent out at least 24 hours in advance.

SECTION

08

Data and Evaluation

Evaluation Approach

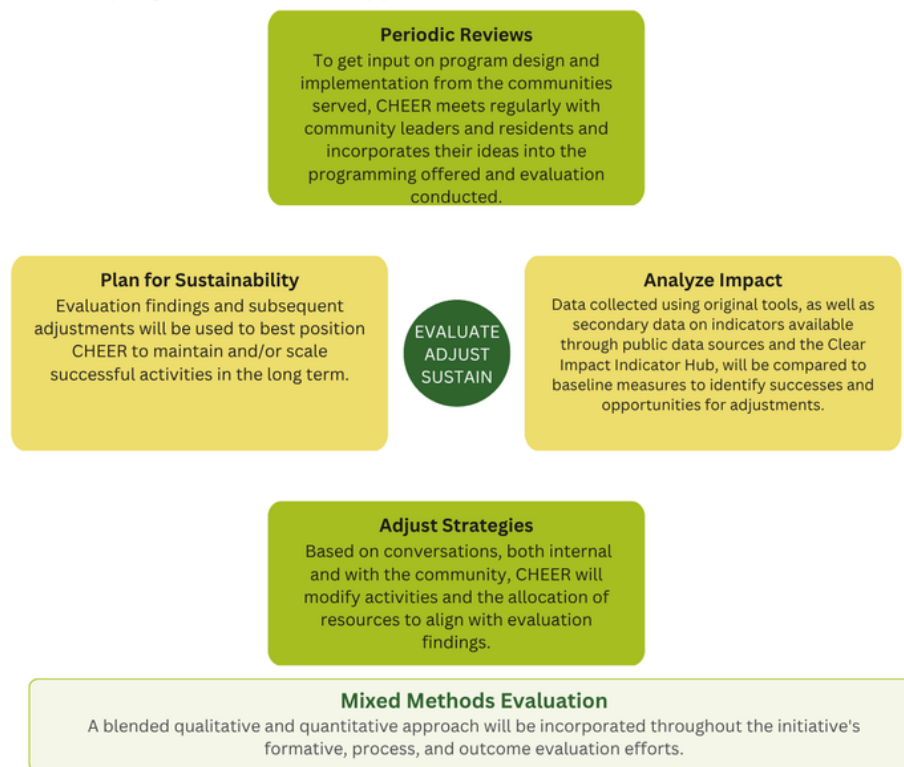
Long Branch Thrives' evaluation efforts will be guided by a comprehensive data and evaluation plan. During planning, the collaborative developed a strong logic model for each result area that informs the key measures and approaches outlined in this plan. We will work with key partners and community members to ensure that the evaluation efforts are realistic and result in accurate, action-oriented findings that inform ongoing program improvement.

Evaluation results will produce real-time feedback which will be used to assess continuous progress and enable CHEER to adjust its programs over time, as needed. Evaluation results will also generate knowledge about program effectiveness and allow CHEER to extrapolate principles about what works, to support expansion and/or replication of program activities. CHEER shares program results with the Governor's Office of Children, the CHEER Board of Directors, Long Branch Thrives Partners, and community leaders and residents. All reporting is shared with aggregate data only; no participants will be identified in any reports.

The general evaluation process will follow an Evaluate, Adjust, and Sustain approach, as outlined below:

Evaluation Process

Evaluate, Adjust, and Sustain Approach



Data Collection

Formative evaluation will be conducted prior to the start of Long Branch Thrives' activity implementation to ensure feasibility and acceptability, keeping in mind the strengths, barriers, and needs of the community. This includes reviewing previously collected data, including community needs assessments, and engaging in community listening sessions to ensure that the proposed programming will be supported by the community members it is intended to serve.

Process and outcome evaluation data will be collected using a variety of data sources that exist in three categories: CHEER-led surveys and internal records; partner-led data collection; and secondary/public records. The section below details each of these categories.

Long Branch Thrives will rely on multiple data methods that CHEER will develop, collect, and/or administer. The table below shows the key evaluation tools linked with result areas, along with the relevant outcomes. All tools still need to be developed.

Evaluation Tool	Result Area	Description	Relevant Outcome(s)	Data Source
Annual Youth Survey	High-Quality Childcare and Education	Annual survey distributed online via key partners each spring	Increased youth connection and sense of belonging Youth have increased knowledge Youth have increased skills Youth have increased abilities Youth enroll in a post-secondary credential or degree-granting program Youth identify or secure career-track jobs	Google Forms/ Sheets
CHEER Records(internal tracking , meeting agendas/ minutes, etc).	Economically Secure Families	Ongoing internal tracking of program activities Internal meeting agendas/minutes (including Community Ambassador Team meetings and community meetings)	Increased small business revenue/growth Fewer predatory businesses (check cashing, liquor) Business community is connected	Google Forms/ Sheets
	Healthy Families		Number of in-person community events Number of people participating in in-person interactive events	Excel Spreadsheets
	Safe & Thriving Communities		Increased community involvement in beautification and environmental efforts Increased area dedicated to locally-grown food Access to the Flower Theater for public participation in the arts and environmental engagement	Apricot Database* Knack Database* *HIPPA-compliant case management software
	High-Quality Childcare and Education		Increased youth engagement (e.g., participation, commitment, and leadership) Expanded # of activities offered Expanded # of locations offering programming Expanded variety of types of activities offered A continuous process for gathering input from youth is utilized Increased number of referrals for childcare resources provided Increased number of development opportunities available (SSL hours, internships, jobs)	
Annual Resident Survey	Economically Secure Families	Annual survey distributed online via key partners each spring	Community members access more products & services locally Business district looks and feels attractive Increased rate of employees in roles aligned with their skill sets	Google Forms/ Sheets
	High-Quality Childcare and Education		Increased parent engagement and involvement More families use high quality childcare for preschool children	
	Safe & Thriving Communities		Improved lighting Improved sidewalks Increased traffic calming measures Increased police presence Community members know their housing rights and have a sense of control over their living situation	
	Healthy Families		Improved healthy nutritional behaviors Increased sovereignty of food choices and resulting satisfaction Improved self-reported health status and mental health More people participate in community activities that bring them into contact and relationship with others Expanded social support networks Increased social / mental wellbeing Fewer people feel isolated	

Evaluation Tools, Part 2: Partner-Led Data Collection

In addition to tools that CHEER will develop and deploy for data collection, Long Branch partners engage in ongoing evaluations of their own programs. Thus, many data points – both outputs and outcomes – will be captured by partner-led records, surveys, and qualitative processes. As part of the governance structure, CHEER will develop shared metrics such that outputs and outcomes are collected in a uniform way across partners and their respective initiatives. Data sharing agreements will be put in place and a centralized data platform will allow partner organizations to enter relevant data for CHEER to compile and analyze, painting a picture of the collective impact of Long Branch Thrives partners.



Long Branch Thrives will rely on multiple data collection points that are publicly available. The table below shows the key data points linked with project phases, along with the data sources.

Evaluation Tool	Result Area	Relevant Outcome(s)	Data Source
Public Data Sources	High-Quality Childcare and Education	Increased financial support for childcare is available	Children's Opportunity Alliance Clear Impact Indicator Hub
		Increased availability of childcare sites and/or Pre-K seats available with EXCELS ratings	Maryland EXCELS
		Increased number of trained individuals who can provide childcare	Clear Impact Indicator Hub (Maryland EXCELS)
		Increased kindergarten readiness scores	Readiness Matters Annual Data https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/school-profiles Clear Impact Indicator Hub
	Economically Secure Families	Increased rate of employment in Long Branch compared to baseline	Worksource Montgomery
	Safe and Thriving Communities	Decreased # of pedestrian injuries and deaths	Zero Deaths Maryland
		Reduced crime (violent crime per 100,000 and property crime)	Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy Crime Dashboard
		Decreased drug activity//Reduced drug use	Clear Impact Indicator Hub
		Decreased gang-related activity	MCPD Data (example): https://assets.montgomerycountymd.gov/files/2026-05/2025%20MCPD%20Annual%20Report%20on%20Crime%20and%20Safety.pdf
		Reduced # of troubled properties	Montgomery Housing & Community Affairs Housing Code Inspection Database
		Retention or increase in affordable housing	National Center for Smart Growth Database / UMD (Purple Line Corridor properties)
		Decreased # of eviction petitions filed each year	Clear Impact Indicator Hub
		Increased # of small businesses in Long Branch	Long Branch Main Street / Long Branch Business League
	Healthy Families	Increased utilization of health care services in Long Branch	Primary Care Coalition (PCC) Data Sources
		Reduction in Long Branch residents using Emergency Department for health care	Maryland Hospital Utilization Data (HSCRC) (via PCC)
		Decreased prevalence of chronic illness Reduction of diet-related chronic diseases	County Health Rankings CDC PLACES Data

Data Management and Analysis

The Long Branch Thrives partners will develop secure data sharing and management protocols, including the use of two-factor authentication and a systems-approach to permissions grounded in least privileged access. Although most data points will be collected, and therefore analyzed, on a yearly basis, some internal data points and most outputs (see logic models) will be tracked, analyzed, and reviewed quarterly. These data reviews will inform continuous improvement of programming.

Given the strong focus on performance measures, most quantitative data analyses will be descriptive in nature; however, some more rigorous analyses may be conducted, such as inferential analyses (e.g., parametric and non-parametric tests), as the data allow. Factors that will contribute to analytic decisions include sample size of cohort and attrition rates. As needed, a statistical software package will be used. Qualitative data analysis will include systematic processes for coding, theming, and synthesizing findings. While the findings from these analyses will determine progress toward performance measures and support ongoing programmatic improvements, without a comparison group, we will be unable to determine causality or the extent to which Long Branch Thrives directly contributed to observed impacts.

Dissemination of Evaluation Findings

The Long Branch Thrives partners will work together to design a thoughtful dissemination plan to ensure that findings from program activities and evaluations therein are widely shared. This plan will include, but will not be limited to, community meetings when data/findings will be shared, the development and sharing of summary documents with key findings and data-driven, community-driven recommendations, as well as the development and submission of the final grant evaluation report. The Long Branch Thrives partners will also seek additional forums to share findings more broadly, including conferences, webinars, websites, and more.



SECTION

09

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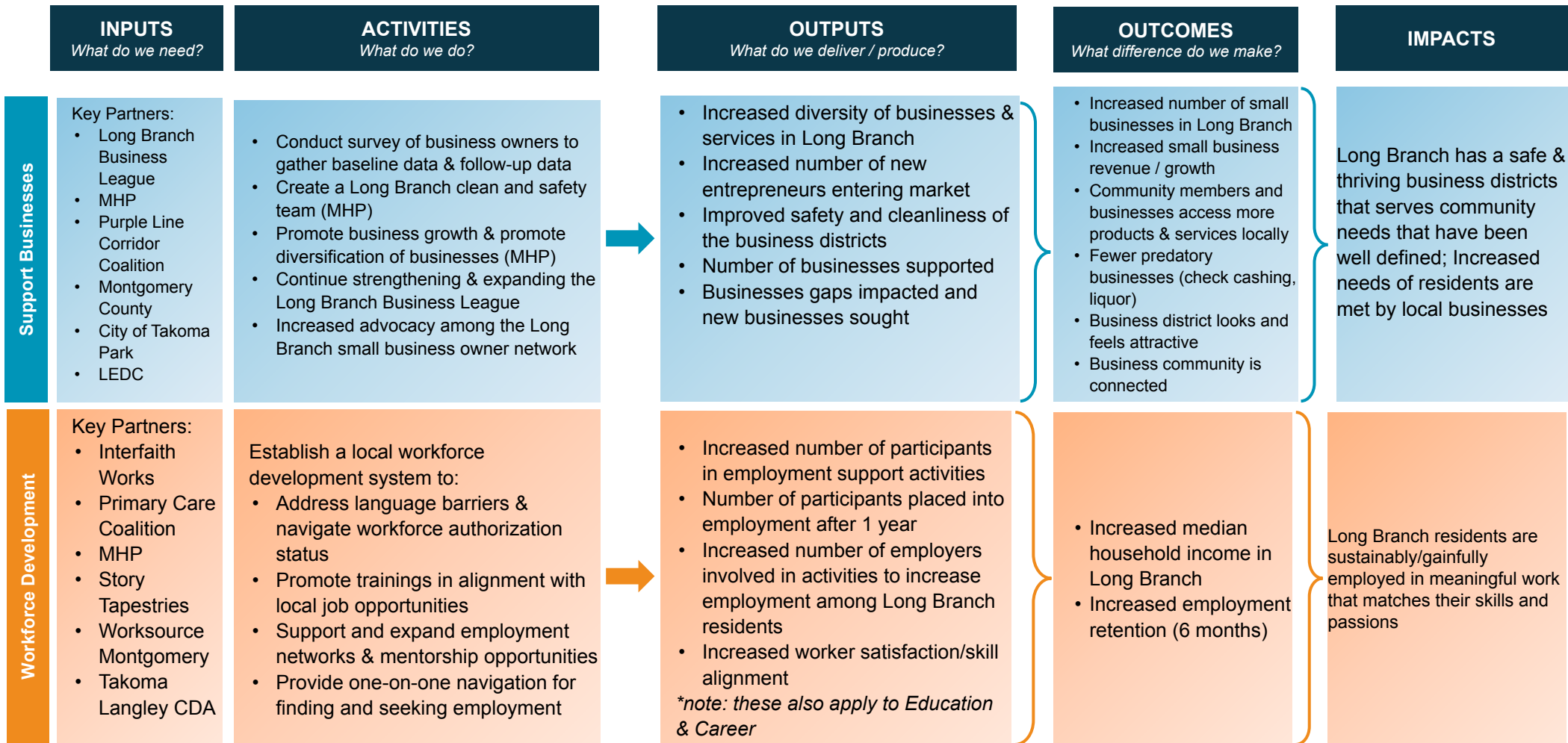
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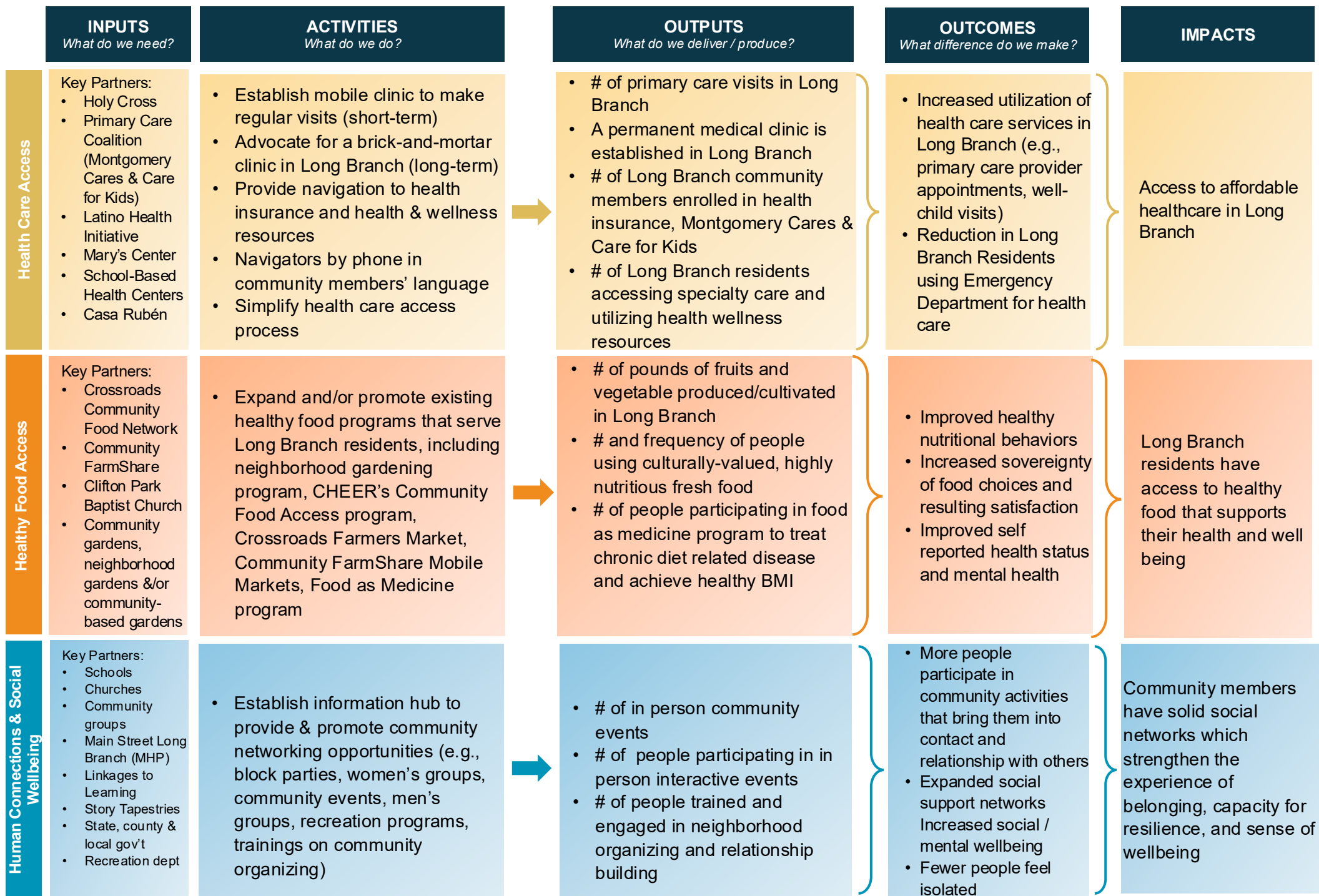
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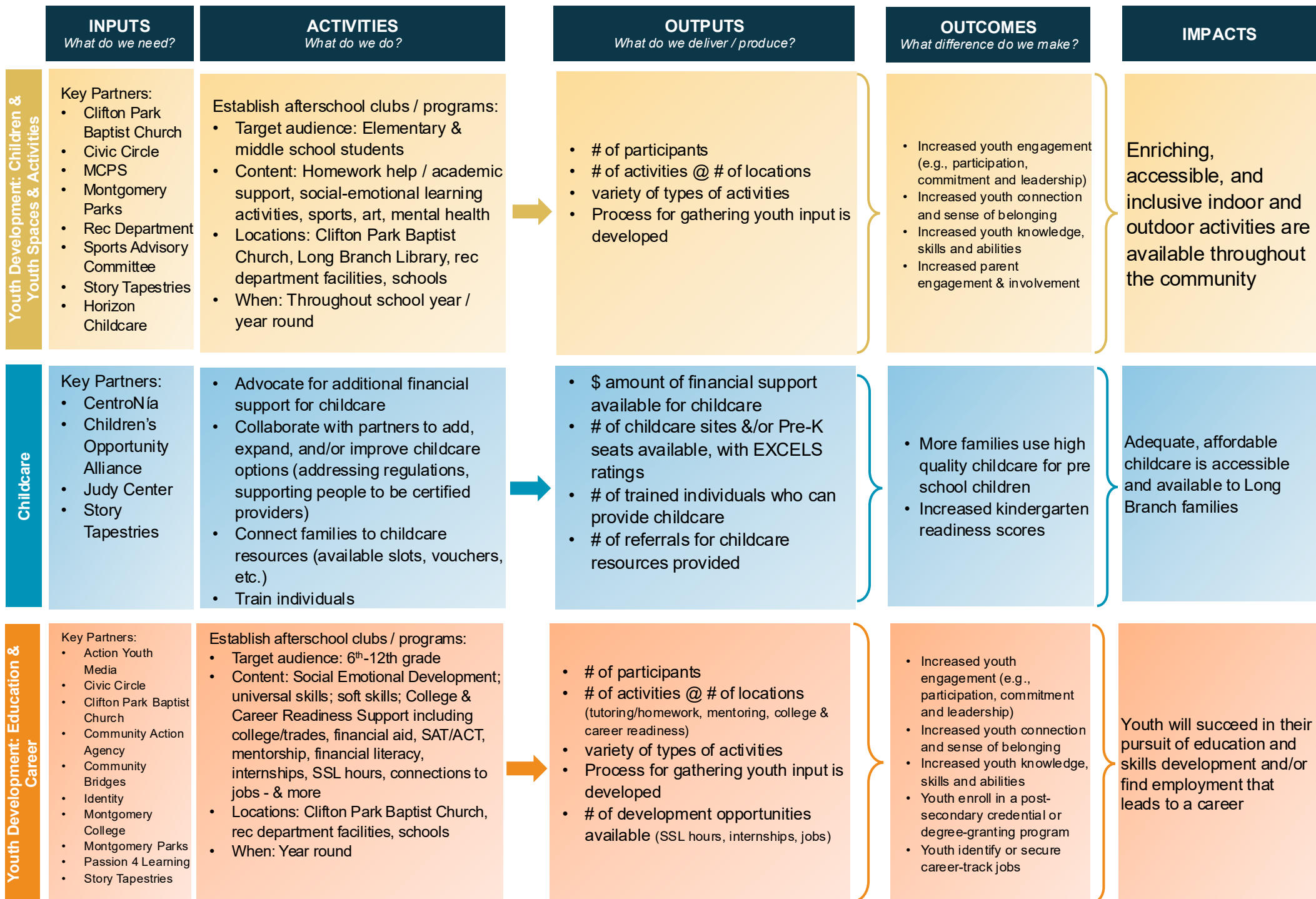
Appendix

CHEER, along with a team of partners, is a recipient of a state grant called The ENOUGH (Engaging Neighborhoods, Organizations, Unions, Government, and Households) Initiative to end child poverty. Economically Secure Families is one of four pillars of the ENOUGH Initiative.

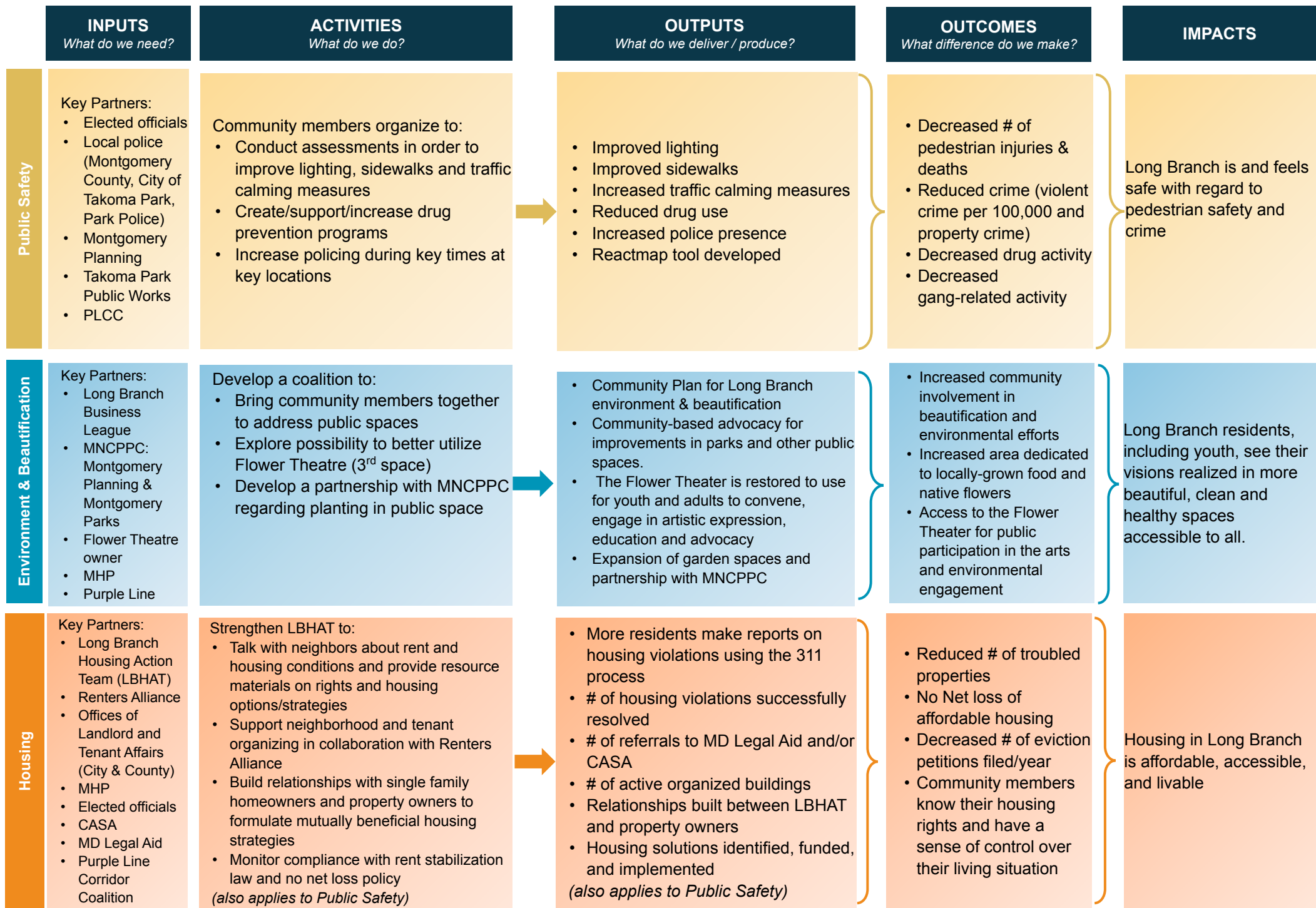




CHEER, along with a team of partners, is a recipient of a state grant called The ENOUGH (Engaging Neighborhoods, Organizations, Unions, Government, and Households) Initiative to end child poverty. Cradle to Career Education is one of four pillars of the ENOUGH Initiative.



CHEER, along with a team of partners, is a recipient of a state grant called The ENOUGH (Engaging Neighborhoods, Organizations, Unions, Government, and Households) Initiative to end child poverty. Safe & Thriving Communities is one of four pillars of the ENOUGH Initiative.



Thank you!