

Collectively We Rise: The Business Case for Economic Inclusion in Baltimore

New Report highlights ongoing economic inclusion strategies to create jobs in Baltimore; Calls for broader participation supported by people-focused investments.

A new report released today by the Baltimore Integration Partnership, “Collectively We Rise: The Business Case for Economic Inclusion in Baltimore,” calls on businesses, institutions and government partners to expand and grow economic inclusion while encouraging a focus on transportation, small business development and workforce readiness strategies.

The report finds that economic inclusion is strategically critical for Baltimore to make progress into long standing socio-economic challenges and deep rooted poverty. Substantial disparities continue to exist between Baltimore’s persons of color and the white population relative to education, employment, economic opportunity and income. The report does find, however, that the City continues to benefit from billions of dollars of new and planned investment and is home to 18 healthcare and education institutions, often called “anchor institutions,” that are the area’s largest employers and investors. The report documents how community and political leaders, leading businesses, and anchor institutions are working to leverage ongoing investment, hiring, and purchasing powers to address the disparities and create local jobs through economic inclusion.

Interviews outline that these strategies are impactful but require a firm commitment from business owners and decision makers. “In order to make significant and meaningful strides, organizational leaders must believe in and drive change” says Donna Jacobs, Senior Vice President, Government, Regulatory Affairs and Community Health University of Maryland Medical System. “Our long-term efforts have been consistently monitored, filtered through and reported to a designated Board level committee which includes community leaders, and our System CEO and CFO.”

Those sentiments were echoed by Towson University President Kim Schatzel. “Addressing economic inclusion requires large institutions like ours to embrace its role as an economic engine for Greater Baltimore. At Towson University, intentional hiring, purchasing and investment strategies are just the newest tools we are leveraging to fulfill our anchor mission—and it is exciting to be on this journey with our higher ed and healthcare colleagues around the region.”

The report finds that partnerships with community organizations, nonprofits and business groups are important for success. “Baltimore is fortunate to have dozens of intermediaries in workforce and small business development helping prepare individuals for jobs and business

growth,” said Kurt Sommer, Director of the Baltimore Integration Partnership. “The organizations cover numerous sectors and employment pathways. With a broader array of business partners and investors that can bring to the table economic opportunities, we can make a deeper impact.”

The report finds that there are benefits for businesses that undertake these strategies including helping them enhance their brands, reach new markets, grow sales and foster employee satisfaction.

Over 3 dozen strategies, initiatives and partnerships led by businesses, higher education institutions, hospitals, community organizations, government, faith-based groups and others are documented including the UM Partnership for West Baltimore, HopkinsLocal, City Seeds, Baltimore Gas and Electric, Made in Baltimore, Port Covington, the Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Healthcare and many more. Case studies highlight how businesses and institutions are diversifying their procurement and spending with minority and local firms to support jobs and how partnerships with one of Baltimore’s many workforce development organizations can prepare and place area residents in employment while meeting business hiring needs. Also highlighted are a range of development projects that have created community benefits through hiring and contracting strategies and have helped foster reinvestment of key corridors.

Willy Moore, CEO of Southway Builders noted, “We have had great success with both community hiring and minority business engagement. Last year we subcontracted over \$20 million of work to Baltimore City certified minority and women owned businesses, and through a partnership with Project JumpStart, we promoted the placement of eager industrious previously unemployed City residents into permanent positions with our subcontractors. Those JumpStart grads are provided with opportunities to go through apprenticeship, and eventually become journeyman tradespeople earning well above a living wage. This is great for us, for our subcontractors, and best of all, it is great for the City!”

Cindy Plavier-Truitt, Humanim’s Chief Business Officer said, “Through the growing ecosystem of collaboration among anchors, non-profits, government and the local business community, our culinary social enterprise, City Seeds, was able to create 28 jobs for residents with barriers to employment in Baltimore City as a result of anchor contracting. Additionally, through our School of Food business training program, we have helped connect rising food and beverage entrepreneurs with larger scale purchasers helping to grow the small business economy in Baltimore City.”

The report also finds that public transportation remains a key challenge. While city employment is growing and many organizations are involved in inclusion strategies, the suburbs are now home to the lion’s share of jobs requiring regional approaches. Data finds that 74% of the region’s jobs are now located in the suburbs where 84% of job growth is expected to occur over the next 10 years. A large share of City low-income residents are dependent on the bus.

"Baltimore must align targeted skills training, job placement, and critical support services to grow the city's workforce and address the staggering racial disparities. However, even the most well-trained workforce is useless without adequate and accessible transportation to jobs," says Caryn York, Executive Director of the Job Opportunities Task Force. "The lack of an accessible and efficient public transit system that equally services all of Baltimore eliminates most job opportunities for low-wage workers, particularly communities of color."

The report was commissioned by the Baltimore Integration Partnership, a collective impact initiative comprised of area anchor institutions, foundations, nonprofit and community partners as well as government stakeholders working since 2011 to promote economic inclusion as the "business cultural norm" in the region.

"*Collectively We Rise* is a blueprint for building enduring collaborations across Greater Baltimore's business, non-profit, and government sectors. While there is work still ahead, our combined commitment to economic inclusion is another positive step along the path to building a better Baltimore" said Marylou Yam, President of Notre Dame of Maryland University.

The Baltimore Integration Partnership Board Member Organizations

<i>Annie E. Casey Foundation</i>	<i>Kaiser Permanente</i>
<i>Associated Black Charities</i>	<i>LifeBridge Health</i>
<i>Association of Baltimore Area Grantmakers</i>	<i>Loyola University Maryland</i>
<i>Baltimore Metropolitan Council</i>	<i>Maryland Institute College of Art</i>
<i>Baltimore Workforce Funders Collaborative</i>	<i>Morgan State University</i>
<i>Bon Secours Baltimore Health System</i>	<i>Notre Dame of Maryland University</i>
<i>City of Baltimore</i>	<i>Reinvestment Fund</i>
<i>Coppin State University</i>	<i>Towson University</i>
<i>Goldseker Foundation</i>	<i>University of Baltimore</i>
<i>Job Opportunities Task Force</i>	<i>University of Maryland Baltimore</i>
<i>Johns Hopkins Hospital and Health System</i>	<i>University of Maryland Medical Center</i>
<i>Johns Hopkins University</i>	

For More Information

Kurt Sommer

Director, Baltimore Integration Partnership

ksommer@abagrantmakers.org