



**Baltimore City Youth Fund
Report to Mayor and City Council August 2019
(Submitted October 14, 2019)**

This report covers activities conducted in August for the Baltimore City Youth Fund (BCYF). The Year 1 grant award period ended on August 31, 2019, except for grantees with a no-cost extension. (The no-cost extensions were offered to all current grantees after ABC's Board of Directors approved the transition plan for the Youth Fund after receiving a "nod" of agreement from the City on this process of having no-cost extensions and Continuation grants after review of Year 1 for existing grantees). The no-cost extension grantees will complete their program activities no later than October 31, 2019.

Grantee Update

The majority of BCYF Year 1 grantees completed their BCYF funded program activities by August 31, 2019 and will submit their final report by September 30, 2019. Thirty-three (33) grantees requested and received a no-cost extension and will submit their final report by November 15, 2019.

Approximately two dozen grantees were still responding to requests for revisions to the Quarter 1 (Q1) and/or Quarter 2 (Q2) expense reports. These grantees have not received their second disbursement. As noted in the July report, the grantees in this category include small, medium and large nonprofits, and fiscally sponsored organizations.

ABC/BCYF reviewed the grantees Q3 programmatic reports in August, after a one-month delay to onboard additional support. About a quarter of the grantees had not submitted their report, which was due June 30, 2019, because they were working on the expense report. (The program narrative and expense report are packaged together.) Due to the grantees' challenges meeting the compliance requirements (insurance and background checks) last year, many of the programs did not begin in earnest until well into Q2 and then gained momentum in Q3. These reports provide greater detail into grantees' progress and challenges than earlier reports.

Among the highlights:

- Civic Works reported that 14 seniors were accepted into 21 different four-year universities and colleges, in addition to students who plan to attend a two-college, apprenticeship or career school. Students received close to \$250,000 in merit-based scholarships.
- Constellation hosted 10 students from St. Francis Neighborhood Center during the company's Take Your Child to Work Day.
- Art with a Heart permanently hired an apprentice from BCYF grantee Youth Empowered Society.

- A student in Youth as Resources, a BCYF grantee, was able to enroll in her high school of choice after being removed for extensive absences and re-assigned to another high school. Instead of dropping out, the student advocated for herself and was able to enroll for her junior year.
- Leveling the Playing field distributed more than \$30,000 worth of donated football equipment to eight programs in Baltimore.

Technical Assistance Update

BCYF held a full-day Summer Institute for grantees and their staff/volunteers on August 17, 2019 at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Sixty-four (64) attendees representing 46 grantee organizations attended. It was a day filled with lively youth performances from grantees Dew More Baltimore and Girls Rise/Girl Scouts of Central Maryland, luncheon keynote by Changa Bell of the Black Male Yoga Initiative, and the following presenters and presentations:

- Sadiq Ali/Maryland MENTOR: Presentation on *Youth Development*
- Maria Broom: Presentation on *Telling Your Story*
- John Brothers/T Rowe Price Foundation: Presentation on *Building, Sustaining and Growing a Team, with Creative Collaboration and Partnerships*
- Dr. Lawrence Brown/Morgan State University School of Community Health & Policy: Presentation on *Racial Justice, Equity, Access, Opportunities & Outcomes: Policies, Practices, Attitudes & Actions*
- Erika Davies/The Racial Equity Asset Lab: Presentation on *Fundraising/Sustainability*
- Marsha Jews/Marsha Jews and Company: Presentation on *Strategic Communications*
- Moderated panel on *Connecting with Nonprofit Resources* with:
 - Pamela King, Open Society Institute – Baltimore
 - Ellie Mitchell, Maryland Out of School time (MOST) Network
 - Carmen Marshall, Maryland Nonprofits (MANO)
 - Ingrid Hitchens-Hall, Community Law Center

The TA (Technical Assistance) team provided grantees with information about other funding, capacity building and networking opportunities and continued to support grantees with completing reporting requirements.

Permanent Intermediary

Articles of Incorporation were filed for BCYF, taking one step closer to becoming the permanent intermediary. An interim board has been identified and will be tasked with determining the permanent governance structure of the organization, drafting bylaws and hiring the organization's leadership. The interim board includes a number of individuals who were involved with BCYF in 2018. These steps are aligned with the City's MOU with ABC and the recommendations from the BCYF task force that BCYF be an independent institution.

Year 2 Funding

ABC/BCYF notified the current portfolio of grantees of conditional continuation awards, pending satisfactory performance in Year 1 and other terms. Grantees' scopes of work must stay within the parameters of what was approved by the BCYF Grant Review Panel in 2018. Grantees will be required to

submit an application and a continuation grant is not guaranteed. There will be a clear transparent process used to make the final decision regarding Continuations using the same values identified by the Task Force.

Fiscal Reviews and Contracting

This is still proving to be a very difficult space for grantees in providing the detailed information required for financial review and verification of expenditure of the grant dollars they received.

ABC uses the following criteria for review and many of the grantees including mid-size grantees indicate that this is much more than they are used to, even with other City grants. It generally takes multiple interactions with the grantees to get the necessary information for sign off on their financial reports. (ABC uses a review process that ensures appropriate documentation to ensure a clear audit trail which includes several levels of verification).

ABC accounts payable staff is spending an average of 20 to 25 hours per week on BCYF grantees financial reviews. To get through all of the reviews of the final quarter reports, ABC may have to bring on a contractual financial person to assist with the timely completion of the reviews.

In addition, we are still providing a significant amount of time and resources on financial technical assistance and this along with the need for more TA to conduct the Continuation assistance required a deeper financial investment into TA for this cohort of grantees. The goals of this TA are twofold: to ensure that the grantees will become much more self sufficient in managing their financial reports going forward and that the correct and appropriate information is provided to support the expenditures of the grant funds. This is in keeping with the initial goals of the original Task Force design for the Youth Fund.

Given the increased activity to establish and support the start up of the new entity, complete the close out tasks and prepare grantees for Year 2 grants, there is an increased amount of activity and responsibility of ABC's grants and contracts officer to manage these agreements.

Miscellaneous

As noted in earlier reports, 33 of 83 BCYF grantees have fiscal sponsors. The majority of grantees had an existing relationship with the fiscal sponsor prior to being awarded a BCYF grant, and most of them are a program of Fusion Partnerships or Strong City. As noted in the July 2019 report and other previous reports, the amount of work required to manage BCYF programs has strained the capacity of our local fiscal sponsors and placed them in a precarious financial situation. Grassroots organizations in particular rely on the contracted services Strong City and Fusion provide as well as fiscal sponsor's day-to-day guidance and support. Unless BCYF can bolster the capacity of Strong City and Fusion, it is likely that one or both organizations will cease supporting BCYF grantees in the future.