



# Creating New Opportunities for Baltimore's Young People

A COMMUNITY UPDATE FROM THE  
BALTIMORE CHILDREN & YOUTH FUND  
FEBRUARY 2020

## Investing in Children & Youth

The Baltimore Children & Youth Fund (BCYF) has established itself as a new force for creating wonderful opportunities for the city's young people. In its first year, BCYF awarded grants to dozens of organizations serving children and youth in innovative and meaningful ways.

BCYF has touched the lives of thousands of young people, giving them the chance to take part in a range of programs, from academic support and science exploration to dance and photography. These are the kinds of experiences that all young people need to feed their curiosity, learn about their world, build confidence and stay on track in school.

BCYF is committed to a new kind of grantmaking that is driven by the community. A community task force came up with a road map for the Fund and community members made up the review team that made grant awards. This community-driven grantmaking is unusual in the philanthropic world and has established BCYF as a national model receiving wide attention from others in the field.

BCYF has also succeeded in its goal to promote racial equity to help reverse decades of disinvestment in communities of color. BCYF has invested time, expertise and resources expanding the infrastructure of nonprofit groups - many led by people of color - providing services in areas of the city that have too often missed out on support for essential youth-focused programming. The BCYF team has led trainings and provided one-on-one technical advice to dozens of community-based organizations.

Over the next year, BCYF will take the final steps to become a stand-alone entity, fulfilling the original vision for the organization. A new board of directors, comprising leaders, thinkers and activists from across the city, will oversee the work and permanent staff will be hired. In this new structure, BCYF will be firmly positioned to invest in the young people of Baltimore for generations to come.

## A New Kind of Grantmaking

BCYF was conceived in 2015 by then-Baltimore City Council President Bernard C. “Jack” Young to permanently dedicate a meaningful share of city resources to expand programming for young people. The proposal to create a fund with dedicated revenue won more than 80 percent support in a November 2016 referendum. Under the measure approved by voters, 3 percent of Baltimore’s annual property tax revenues are dedicated to BCYF, to be spent exclusively on supporting programs for young people.

After the referendum, a 34-member task force created the framework for the new fund. The task force included community leaders, youth program service providers, Baltimore City government representatives, student leaders and other key stakeholders and was co-chaired by Adam Jackson, CEO of Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle, and John Brothers, President of the Program for Charitable Giving at T. Rowe Price Foundation.

### BCYF Guiding Principles

BCYF is pursuing a new type of grantmaking that is inclusive, grounded in the community and focused on addressing racial disparities. BCYF is committed to:

**Elevating authentic youth and community leadership**

**Increasing investment in historically under-resourced communities and the children and youth who live there**

**Developing leaders of community-based organizations and leaders of color**

**Promoting racial equity and inclusion**

**Working transparently and being accountable**

The task force recommended that the Fund:

- Support a range of programs, including pilot projects, small organizations and organizations that have little or no prior grant experience – as well as other more-established organizations;
- Make grants for general operating needs and make multi-year grants;
- Help build the capacity of grantees; and,
- Be administered by Associated Black Charities, a leading intermediary with experience working in disenfranchised communities and advancing racial equity.

## Getting Round One Underway

In November 2017, the City Council approved authorizing legislation to designate Associated Black Charities (ABC) as the Fund’s interim operator and authorized ABC to allocate up to 10 percent of the Fund’s resources for administrative costs. The balance –\$10.8 million – was to be distributed in grants to Baltimore organizations serving children, youth, young adults and supporting programs. Some funds were devoted to community capacity building and technical assistance, as well as to support the infrastructure of the Fund and the grantees.

Over the first half of 2018, ABC brought on a team to lead the Fund’s work and develop a framework for participatory grantmaking in which the community would have a meaningful role. The Fund held six community sessions to hear from city residents, which led to a range of recommendations and the establishment of three priority investment areas. After an open application process held independently of ABC, the Fund established a team of 24 Baltimore city community members with diverse backgrounds, ages, and grant-review experience to serve as grant reviewers. Panelists were chosen based on diverse representation of geography, age, race, and gender. The Fund provided in-depth training to the grant review panel, which made grant decisions that were forwarded to ABC.



## BCYF's Round One Summary

During the first grant cycle:

- 488 organizations applied for grants.
- BCYF approved grants totaling almost \$9.6 million to 84 organizations in August 2018. Recipients were located across Baltimore. Some were firmly established while others were less experienced but had promising programming to engage with children and youth.
- Two-thirds of the recipients are led by African Americans.
- BCYF provided technical assistance for grantees to build their operational capacity and provided support to help grantees have background checks done and obtain insurance.
- ABC provided support related to financial management and management information.

A full list of Round One grantees can be found at [bcyfund.org](http://bcyfund.org).

Along with the grants, BCYF provided hands-on support to help grantees improve their ability to receive, spend and document grants. The BCYF team provided technical assistance to people interested in applying for grants; they also provided support to grantees, including helping them prepare for continuation grants.

# \$9.6 MILLION

GIVEN TO

# 84 YOUTH-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS

## Continuation Grants

In Year 1, there were delays in fund disbursements to many grantees, due in large part to the time required to bring grantees into compliance with contractual requirements for funding. It was essential for BCYF to exercise due diligence as a steward of public resources and simultaneously build capacity in the inaugural class of grantees. This process proved to be very timely, but nonetheless necessary.

In fall 2019, BCYF announced plans to make continuation grants to Round One grantees. A continuation grant will be offered to all 2018 grantees, provided they meet all reporting and compliance requirements of their first grant agreement. Continuation grants will afford members of the BCYF's inaugural cohort the opportunity to perform and demonstrate the impact of their work, while giving BCYF more time to learn from the performance and results of its first piloted portfolio.

Prior to receiving a continuation grant, all grantees will work in partnership with a dedicated technical assistance provider to review their Round One performance and develop a refined program plan, timeline, budget and performance targets for the

continuation grants. These analyses may result in some reductions in grant amounts, as appropriate.

## BCYF's Future

In early 2020, the Baltimore City Council and mayor will consider legislation to permanently establish the Baltimore Children & Youth Fund as an independent entity. Under the legislation, BCYF will:

- Serve as steward for children- and youth-focused funds generated.
- Be governed by an interdisciplinary body of Baltimore City residents, young people, philanthropic stakeholders and government officials;
- Report regularly to Baltimore City government and concerned citizens;
- Be subject to city audits and other reporting requirements.

In 2020, BCYF is poised to become a stand-alone organization with a board of directors and permanent staff – as intended originally by city leaders who conceived the idea of a new youth-focused fund – and ABC's role will end as of June 30, 2020. A full list of mandated tasks undertaken by ABC to incubate BCYF and support its transition may be found at [bcyfund.org](http://bcyfund.org).

A panel of prominent Baltimoreans has been identified to serve one-year terms on BCYF's initial board of directors and will be responsible for overseeing the organization. Each of these board members has deep ties to the community and has been involved in some aspect of BCYF's work. Members include people from philanthropic institutions, nonprofit leaders and engaged community members. A full list of BCYF's initial slate of board members is available at the BCYF website: [bcyfund.org](http://bcyfund.org). Board recruitment and expansion efforts will continue in 2020.

Establishing BCYF as a stand-alone organization will give it more permanence and will allow it to

hire full-time staff, continue to build its capacity and strengthen its ability to make grants and provide critical support to community-based organizations serving the city's young people.

The Fund will maintain its focus on race-equity in its grantmaking and technical assistance and will continue to include the community in its work. The Fund will also continue to build its organizational partnerships, working in collaboration with stakeholders across the public, private and philanthropic sectors to expand much needed opportunities for Baltimore's young people. Kids across the city will continue to have access to high-caliber opportunities – and all of Baltimore will benefit.



**“BCYF allowed us to do our work the way we always imagined we could do it. The Fund allowed our impact to be greater because they gave us the resources to do it.”**

**- Saran Fossett, AZIZA PE&CE**