



OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE-BALTIMORE

Solutions Summit Action Plan for Jobs, Justice, and Behavioral Health

This 16-point plan of recommendations for initiatives at the city level results from discussion and a vote by a broad gathering of Baltimore residents at the Solutions Summit on December 10, 2016. The event was the culmination of an extensive community debate and decision-making process, which included research that produced three white papers and half-day fora organized by three planning committees focused on jobs (on October 29), criminal and juvenile justice (on October 22), and behavioral health (on October 1). Kurt Schmoke, Eddie Brown, Mark Fetting and Mary Miller co-chaired the whole Solutions Summit process, which the Open Society institute-Baltimore conceptualized and supported. Mayor Catherine Pugh opened the summit, which was attended by numerous policymakers as well as members of all sectors of the city. A diverse set of corporate, foundation, and individual donors sponsored the event, which reflected the desire of an engaged public for new policies to address some of the greatest challenges facing Baltimore. Summit participants, Open Society Institute-Baltimore, and other organizations and individuals throughout the city are now prepared to work with Mayor Pugh and City Council members to develop these recommendations further so that they can be adopted and put into practice. (For more information, go to solutionssummitbaltimore.org)

Jobs

1. Use local government hiring, procurement and contracting mechanisms to generate jobs for residents and business opportunities for minority-owned companies, small businesses, and microenterprises.
2. Support the development of social enterprises, worker-owned cooperatives, other alternative business models and worker protections to increase employment and self-employment for jobseekers who face barriers to work, including returning citizens, independent or contingent workers, and small entrepreneurs.
3. Address Baltimore's severe basic skills gap by expanding the availability of community-based and workplace-based adult education, GED, and ESL services and by linking curricula and instruction to the occupational skills required to obtain available jobs.
4. Connect youth, young adults, returning citizens, and others who have limited employment experience to work-based learning opportunities, such as apprenticeships, internships, and paid work experience, and to entrepreneurship training.
5. Provide case management, coaching, and supportive services that help job seekers to participate in job training and workers to succeed on the job, such as: legal services to address criminal record expungement, child support arrears, and immigration status; transportation, housing and child care assistance; and, mental health and substance use disorder treatment.

Criminal and Juvenile Justice

6. Increase the transparency of the Baltimore Police Department.

7. Work with the Baltimore City state legislative delegation to introduce and enact a public local law to transfer the Baltimore Police Department from nominal state control to full Baltimore City control.
8. Remove legal and systemic barriers to employment for returning citizens and other individuals with criminal records.
9. Advocate for school discipline reform by improving the conduct of school police, amending the Baltimore City student handbook, and reallocating funds from punitive school discipline practices to restorative justice practices and peer mediation.
10. Allocate resources to support Baltimore City school students through increased wrap-around services for students and their families and increased access to social workers to address family challenges (including housing, medical and behavioral health, and legal assistance needs).

Behavioral Health

11. Conduct a full landscape scan of treatment and service providers throughout the city, including eligibility requirements, insurance types accepted, levels of care, services available, and number of people served annually. Include in this scan service gaps by provider type, level of care, and geography. Publish this inventory in print and online, and create a mechanism to ensure that information in the inventory is verified and updated regularly. Ideally, create an online platform with live, continuously updated data on available treatment slots and program capacity.
12. Create a funding model that uses discretionary funds to support case management and peer recovery specialist services in order to provide wraparound and care coordination services to meet consumers' needs.
13. Coordinate and launch a communications and public awareness campaign aimed at normalizing substance use disorders, changing public perception of people dealing with addiction to reduce stigma, and educating the public about treatment and recovery options.
14. Advocate for fair, non-discriminatory zoning standards that permit outpatient and residential programs to locate in communities under the same standards as other medical services.
15. Develop a training program to educate both new and veteran physicians and other front-line medical professionals on substance use disorders, treatment options, and prescribing guidelines to reduce stigma against people dealing with addiction and the overutilization of addictive pain medications. Explore possibilities of requiring such training for city physicians and other practitioners as part of their continuing education and incorporating it into medical school curricula.

Racial Equity

16. Establish an Office of Racial Equity within the mayor's office that is charged with bringing racial equity to all city programs and removing systemic barriers to the fair and just distribution of resources, access, and opportunity.