



The Baltimore Youth Data Hub is an integrated data system, linking data across youth-serving organizations into an anonymous system subject to community oversight and strict guidelines, to improve quality of life outcomes for all of our young people.

Baltimore’s youth receive services from multiple public agencies and nonprofits. All of these organizations collect data, but they don’t—or legally can’t—share that data with other agencies that support many of the same youth. This lack of information-sharing prevents Baltimore from strategically, effectively, and equitably meeting its young people’s needs. This disjointed approach to service delivery coupled with a lack of transparency, only exacerbates the current and historical inequities we seek to eliminate.

Building on many of the emerging best practices of other cities, we are developing the Baltimore Youth Data (“the Hub”), an integrated data system that will create a central archive for data that is linked at the individual level, with all potential identifying information removed to protect the privacy of individuals. It offers a secure and sustained system that enables practitioners, policy makers, and researchers the ability to share and use data between multiple agencies and organizations. By linking data across agencies, we will be able to understand the complex, interconnected issues facing children and families in the city and design programs that better meet the needs of the community.

WHAT KIND OF DATA MAY BE INCLUDED?



EDUCATION



HEALTH



HOUSING



CHILD WELFARE



EMPLOYMENT



JUSTICE SYSTEMS



PARTNERS

Hub partners and community stakeholders collaborate on “use cases” — demonstration projects that link data from multiple agencies — to address issues that are important to the community. For example, a Hub use case on “opportunity youth” may link data from foster care, juvenile services, public housing, homeless services, out-of-school time, social services, early childhood programs, education, and employment to understand the causes of long-term disconnection from higher education and workforce opportunities and design programs to intervene early with supportive services.

BALTIMORE YOUTH DATA HUB PRINCIPLES

1. Quality data analysis can only be achieved with an understanding of historical context and competence.
2. Transparency and community trust building are key priorities of data governance, sharing and use.
3. Focus on improving system level program efficiencies and service coordination, not on individual participants.
4. Data will be used to highlight and eliminate racial disparities and inequities.
5. Data use will be ethical, transparent, and enforce high standards of privacy.

HOW CAN THE BALTIMORE YOUTH DATA HUB HELP BALTIMORE?

The “Baltimore Youth Data Hub” brings communities, providers, policymakers and researchers into partnership, to make informed decisions as they create and implement programs and policies designed to eliminate disparities and achieve equitable outcomes for the success of Baltimore’s youth and families.

With the Hub, stakeholders can better understand interrelated needs of communities and compare services and outcomes across groups by gender, race/ethnicity, place, and program-specific subpopulations (e.g. foster youth or youth experiencing homelessness) to address inequities in resources and opportunities.

The Hub will offer a more secure and efficient way for agencies to share data that will help inform policy decisions and program design and better address the diverse needs of the community.



DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

In 2019, we began convening and engaging summer program providers around a collaborative Baltimore Summer Engagement Ecosystem (SEE) project to demonstrate the potential of the Hub to inform our understanding of gaps in summer opportunities and provide intelligence for planning more equitable programs to serve youth in Baltimore throughout the summer.

By integrating data from the Baltimore Summer Funding Collaborative, Baltimore City Recreation and Parks, the Mayor’s Office of Employment Development YouthWorks program, Baltimore City Public Schools, and the Family League of Baltimore, we will have unduplicated counts of participation by Baltimore City children in summer programs. We will also be able to see whether there are gaps in participation across geographic space or time over the summer or gaps in service uptake by age, gender, race, or ethnicity. By understanding patterns of participation, the city can collectively plan to eliminate gaps.

GOVERNANCE, TRANSPARENCY, SECURITY

Administrative data in Baltimore is generated by and belongs to the people of Baltimore. All stakeholders, including the public, benefit from comprehensive data accessed in a way that protects individual privacy and security. The Hub will be governed by a board made up of the executive leadership of the agencies that contribute data and informed by community stakeholders. Only authorized individuals will be allowed to access the Hub and only upon approval of the Governing Board in accordance with its governance policies and procedures.