

Jessica Cardott

Regarding Maryland General Assembly SB0101 on funding for the University of Baltimore's Shaefer Center for Public Policy.

January 16, 2024

My name is Jessica Cardott and I work for the Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED), managing grants that provide employment and supportive services to Baltimore City residents impacted by substance use disorder. I am also a recipient of the scholarship for public managers to enroll in the Certified Public Manager (CPM) program offered by the Shaefer Center at the University of Baltimore. I am testifying about the impact that this funding has had on my capacity to serve Baltimore City.

Baltimore City has a serious drug problem. Between November 2021 and November 2022, Baltimore City recorded 958 overdose deaths and 4,536 non-fatal overdoses.¹ These numbers are over triple and quadruple, respectively, the numbers for Baltimore County, the second highest-ranking county in Maryland. People with drug dependence often face complex barriers to employment such as a lack of family-sustaining work, lack of education, discrimination, criminal records, disabilities, and "profound discouragement" regarding work as a compounding barrier.² Inversely, employment is a critical component of recovery from substance use disorder (SUD) and employment is also reported as one of the highest priorities for people in recovery.³

Soon after I began CPM Cohort 12 in January 2023, I learned about an emerging best practice employment model for people in recovery from substance use disorder called Individual Placement and Support (IPS); the IPS model has a rate of 55% employment and retention for people in this population, while other supportive employment models only have a rate of 25%.⁴ I was able to apply the time, education and guidance I was receiving in the CPM program to research the model, apply for a grant opportunity to get this program funded, and produce a strong rollout plan. I credit my participation in the UB CPM program with increasing MOED's capacity to provide evidence-based programming to an additional 300 residents in recovery, a population at high risk for fatal overdose, and with some of the largest barriers to employment.

The CPM program has also strengthened my aptitude as a public manager and leader in service to Baltimore City. Thanks to learning new concepts and getting strong refreshers on topics like lean management, strategic planning, and performance management, I have the tools to strategically leverage resources to serve residents and help make MOED's American Job Centers a leader in utilizing best practices. I am so grateful for the opportunity I received to strengthen my skills and better serve the city. I only hope that others will continue to be provided this opportunity for the betterment of Maryland services and residents.

Thank you to Chair Guy Guzzone for his consideration of this proposal.

¹ Maryland Opioid Operational Command Center. (2023, March 23). Overdose Data Dashboard. <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/c546d22ec4a946cbb700a282f53c6eb7/>

² Lidz, V., Sorrentino, D.M., Robison, L., & Bunce, S. (2004). Learning from Disappointing Outcomes: An evaluation of prevocational interventions for methadone maintenance patients. *Substance Use & Misuse*, 39 (13 & 14), 2287-2308.

³ Magura, S. & Marshall, T. (2020). The Effectiveness of Interventions Intended to Improve Employment Outcomes for Persons with Substance Use Disorder: An Updated Systematic Review. *Substance Use & Misuse*, 55(13), 2230-2236.

⁴ Bond, G. R., Drake, R. E., & Becker, D. R. (2020). An update on Individual Placement and Support. *World Psychiatry*, 19, 390-391. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20784>