Workforce Development in Southwest Baltimore:
Mapping the Context, Challenges, and Opportunities

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Contents

Executive Summary

The Southwest Partnership (SWP) is a group of 13 partners striving to make "deliberate, positive changes" in the SWP area, which includes the neighborhoods of Barre Circle, Pigtown, Franklin Square, Hollins Market, Mount Clare, Poppleton, and Union Square.

Workforce development is an important aspect of any urban area, and in order to meet SWP's vision of an "awesome, healthy, architecturally beautiful, diverse, cohesive community of choice built on mutual respect and shared responsibility," it is especially essential to develop and sustain training and educational opportunities, a healthy job market, and access to those jobs for local residents.

Working in partnership with the SWP, the project team therefore addressed the topic of workforce development within the SWP area, and throughout the Baltimore City as a whole. We analyzed demographic factors that contribute to residents' ability to work, job and industry data that sets the context for the area and City, and existing programs from a variety of providers. The goal was to better define workforce development challenges, as well as identify local opportunities.

Our research and maps revealed that residents of the SWP area do face more significant challenges than the residents of Baltimore City as a whole, but also revealed that there are existing opportunities that residents can access, which are presented in an interactive map now available to the public. This report also makes a series of recommendations and suggests further research that can help the SWP achieve its goals.

Background and Research Area

Workforce Development in Southwest Baltimore

The team examined the subject of workforce development in Southwest Baltimore City, working with the Southwest Partnership to better define workforce development challenges, as well as identify local opportunities. The Southwest Partnership (SWP*)* is made up of seven neighborhoods and six anchor institutions striving to make "deliberate, positive changes" in the SWP area, which includes the neighborhoods of Barre Circle, Pigtown, Franklin Square, Hollins Market, Mount Clare, Poppleton, and Union Square.

Historically, Baltimore City's ports, steel mills and rail yards contributed to a strong regional economy, abundant employment opportunities, and stable wages. However, over the past 50 years, changes in the labor market across U.S. cities have put pressure on workers to attain at least some education or training beyond high school (Baltimore Metropolitan Council). This is particularly true in Baltimore where many residents have either dropped out of high school—or completed and gone no further—and suffer from high unemployment and low wages as a result. Among the lowest educated workers—those without a high school credential—more than 25 percent are unemployed, and many more do not participate in the labor force at all (Job Opportunities Task Force). Increasing socioeconomic disinvestment in Baltimore City and racial segregation across the region have further intensified challenges in the area.

Southwest Partnership members are working collaboratively to address deep-seated issues of disinvestment, disenfranchisement, and lack of a community voice, and have initiated a community planning process in an effort to "grow neighborhood power and determine [their] own destiny" (SWP website). To fulfill the Southwest Partnership's vision of an "awesome, healthy, architecturally beautiful, diverse, cohesive community of choice built on mutual respect and shared responsibility," it is crucial to develop and sustain training and educational opportunities, a healthy job market, and access to those jobs for local residents. The project team has analyzed neighborhood and citywide demographics, as well as workforce

development and other relevant data, to make recommendations to the Southwest Partnership on how local residents may access training and educational opportunities that may help better connect them with area jobs that both match their skills and provide opportunities for career growth.

Research Questions

To identify workforce development opportunities, the team sought to more clearly define the profile of the local workforce and the socioeconomic factors that make it more viable or vulnerable. Analysis then focused on identifying jobs-skills gaps and the areas in which workforce development opportunities are most critical. Lastly, we looked at a large number of existing workforce development programs throughout the City and region, and then refined the results to those within Baltimore City that are free or low-cost, and accessible by public transportation to residents in the SWP neighborhoods.

- ***What is the socioeconomic profile of the local workforce?***
    - What is the age of local workers?
    - What is the level of education and skill of local workers?
    - What are the employment and unemployment rates in Southwest Baltimore?

- ***What factors especially challenge local workers in finding stable employment?***
    - What is the level of poverty in Southwest Baltimore?
    - What is the level of disability in Southwest Baltimore?
    - What languages other than English are spoken in Southwest Baltimore?
    - What percentage of local workers are veterans?

- ***How do the current skill levels of workers compare to jobs available? Are there good matches or mismatches of jobs and worker skill levels?***
    - What are the different levels of skilled work available in Southwest Baltimore?

- What are the skill levels of local workers?
- What is the ratio of differently skilled jobs to local workers with corresponding skill level?

- ***What industries are growing in Baltimore City and the region?***
  - What industries can provide low- and mid-skilled workers stable, livable wages?
  - What industries provide career pathways and opportunities for advancement?

- ***What education and training opportunities are available for workers to help them better access employment in growing industries?***
  - What are the adult basic education and/or continuing education opportunities offered by the area's community colleges?
  - What are the job training opportunities offered by non-profit organizations, the area's community colleges, or other training providers?
  - Which of these programs are free, low-cost, or eligible for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) training grants provided by the federal government, and administered by the City of Baltimore?
  - Where are the City's (and the SWP area's) public libraries where residents can access high-quality online training opportunities and other job-search resources?
  - Are all of these locations accessible by public transportation?
  - Is there any one online source that currently provides information (and maps) the program information for the adult basic education providers, training providers, and public libraries throughout the City?

Variables Examined

Major Factors Impacting Workforce Capacity
- Ages of local workers
- Skill levels of local workers by way of education level

- Participation in workforce: employment and unemployment

- Different skilled jobs in area

- Identified opportunity industries

- Poverty rates

- Disability rates

- Number of veterans

- Languages other than English spoken

- Existing adult basic education and/or continuing education at the City's community colleges

- Existing training programs at the City's non-profit training providers and other training providers

- Existing resources and internet access at the City's public libraries

- Public transportation access to education programs, training programs, and public libraries

To get to the heart of the issue of workforce development, it was important to look at who exactly lives in Southwest Baltimore, and how those populations compare to the rest of the City.

There are certain factors about a person's background that makes them not only susceptible to being unemployed or underemployed, while other factors may put them in a good position for workforce development opportunities.

We chose four main traits to look at when it came to demographic factors: education, language, disability status, and veteran status. This data can be used by programs aimed at people who face challenges in those four categories. For example, those without a high school diploma or GED may be interested in workforce development programs that can get them a GED. Those who speak Spanish or Mandarin as a primary language may want to develop their English skills to better position themselves in the workforce. The disabled may need help in marketing themselves to potential employers. Veterans have many work programs tailored to them, not to mention respect and reverence for their service status. All of these groups need workforce

development, so it is good to look at how these groups' numbers compare to the rest of the City.

Having gathered a more complete profile of the Southwest Baltimore workforce, the team sought to draw connections between workforce characteristics and employment outcomes. Skill level as it relates to employment was examined with the goal of identifying jobs-skills mismatches, and particularly the impact of lower skill levels on a worker's access to stable, higher paying employment. The team was able to perform such an analysis using the U.S. Census' Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) datasets and comparing data detailing Workplace Area Characteristics (WAC) and the Residential Area Characteristics (RAC).

Analyzing the existing workforce development opportunities available to SWP residents began by looking at a broad array of different programs throughout the State, using a variety of resources, from the *Maryland Workforce Exchange* to *Train Baltimore* to independent research based on leads to programs cited by the *Job Opportunities Task Force* and *Baltimore Metropolitan Council*.

After arriving at a list of results that included over 1,200 programs (with individual providers often offering a variety of programs), the results were scrubbed using a variety of factors that were determined by the initial research questions—which of these programs are within the City? Which of these programs are free, low-cost, or eligible for WIOA training grants? Which of these programs are accessible by public transportation?

Lastly, based on the experience of building and launching operations at ten federally funded, City-operated workforce development career centers throughout New York City (http://www.nyc.gov/html/sbs/wf1/html/contact/contact.shtml), analysis could acknowledge the crucial role that the City-operated career centers and public libraries can play in workforce development, and included that in the results.

This approach created a list of 55 quality providers (including the career centers and public libraries) within Baltimore City. Then, one step further, the information was applied to existing public transportation maps available through ArcGIS Online to show how residents can actually get to each of these providers.

Analysis Results

Socioeconomic Profile of Local Workforce

Analysis of the four factors above included how they spread themselves across the Southwest Baltimore Partnership area, as well as how they compared to the rest of the City. Examining the SWP area neighborhoods will allow community stakeholders to know where best to target their work, while comparing to the regional context helps to understand what is truly going on.

As the map in the Appendix shows, there are those who are disabled and in poverty in Southwest Baltimore. In portions of six of the seven neighborhoods, more than 10 percent of the population is poor and disabled. The partnership's western edge is the most affected area. When compared with Baltimore City, the Southwest Partnership has a much higher proportion of disabled adults in poverty, with the intersecting block groups containing 8.9 percent of people who are below the poverty line and disabled, compared with 5 percent for the City as a whole.

Looking at education, the measure was percentage of people without a high school diploma or a GED. The map in the Appendix looks at both education and language, which are discussed later. Within the partnership area, there is a wide spread of high school graduation statuses. A few block groups see less than 15 percent of their adult population without a diploma. But one area in Poppleton has more adults without a high school diploma than with. Most of the other worst block groups are scattered along the partnership's western edge. Compared to the City, 28.2 percent of adult Southwest Partnership residents are without a high school diploma, while 21.3% for the city. The disparity is not as large as it is with the poor disabled.

To measure language skills, both proficiency at English and language spoken at home were mapped. Around the SWP area, Spanish is a major language in the eastern portion of Franklin Square as well as Mount Clare, and any programs for Spanish speakers should be aimed in these areas. Asian languages are heavily spoken in Union Square, while some other languages, mostly Indo-European, dot Hollins Market and Pigtown. In terms of language proficiency of people aged 18-64, there are 7,146 people in the City of Baltimore who either speak English "not well" or "not at all;" 246 of them (3.4 percent) live in the Census block groups overlapping with the SWP. For context, the SWP area is about 2.9 percent of the City's population. So while there are more non-English speakers here than in some areas of the City, the map shows even higher densities elsewhere.

Veteran status was the fourth trait examined for the demographic study. Over 33,000 veterans call Baltimore home. The map shows that Baltimore's veteran population is relatively spread-out, both around the City and within the SWP area. One block group in Poppleton is almost 15 percent veteran, but the area as a whole is closer to 5.8 percent, compared to the 7 percent average for the City. As it turns out, more than 60 percent of veterans are over 55, meaning that they may be disinclined to rejoin the workforce.

Jobs-Skills Comparison

U.S. Census' Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) datasets were used to identify the different skilled work available in Baltimore City and the Southwest Partnership neighborhood. Those jobs were then compared with the skill levels of the neighborhood's workers. Two datasets at the block level were used for smaller-scale accuracy: the Workplace Area Characteristics (WAC) dataset and the Residential Area Characteristics (RAC) dataset. WAC data represents the workplaces in an area and how many jobs of a certain skill level are available. RAC data represents the residency of workers in the area, and hence the number of local workers for jobs available.

Skill level was determined by education level, with low-skill defined as a high school diploma or less, mid-skill defined as an associate's degree or some amount of college education, and high-skill defined as a bachelor's degree or any other advanced degree. To identify jobs-skills mismatches, a ratio calculation compared three different levels of skilled jobs (low/mid/high) with three different levels of skilled workers (low/mid/high). The results from the WAC/RAC ratio compare the number of differently skilled jobs in an area with the number of workers who have the skills required to perform that job.

When the ratio number is larger, there is a larger mismatch, meaning there are jobs at a certain skill level available but workers without the appropriate level of skills to fill them. When the number is smaller, there is a closer match of jobs to workers. There are many empty values which indicate areas that either are not residences of workers, not workplaces, or that may be public spaces such as parks. These empty values may also represent smaller, privately owned businesses that do not provide employment insurance and therefore are not captured in this data.

Findings indicated that relative to rest of Baltimore City, the Southwest Partnership neighborhood has a decent match of jobs with the skill levels of local workers. The highest mismatch ratio in the neighborhood is 11.5, meaning there are approximately 11.5 high-skilled jobs available that are not currently filled by local high-skilled workers. The mismatch ratio does increase as it relates to higher-skilled jobs, but that is constant across the City. At the neighborhood level, the highest job-skills mismatch in high-skilled jobs appears near the Railroad Museum and Hollins Market. At the city-wide scale, higher jobs-skills mismatches occur near the downtown area and going north toward and around the University of Maryland Medical Center.

It is helpful to keep in mind the differences between the two scales of this data. The numbers at the neighborhood level are much smaller with the maximum ratio of 8 versus the city-wide level, where the highest ratio reflects up to 2,386 jobs not currently filled by local residents.

Opportunity Industries

The maps spatially confirm what has been long known and experienced in Baltimore—there is an increasing gap between the skill level of the local workforce and the skill level required of stable, well-paying employment. Baltimore's regional *Talent Development Pipeline Study* asserts that "85% of all new jobs that will be created in the region between 2012 and 2020 are expected to be outside of Baltimore City" and largely inaccessible by current public transportation. The study emphasizes the importance of mid-skilled jobs and industry-led strategies that create career pathways programs for low- and mid-skilled workers. Mid-skilled jobs are not only more accessible, but can serve as an important bridge to higher-skills training and job opportunities.

The study recommends six sectors or industries for the development of career pathway programs that provide high numbers of mid-skilled jobs and that are increasingly locating in Baltimore City. The six opportunity sectors are: Healthcare, Construction, Information Technology, Transportation and Logistics, Business Services, and Manufacturing.

The study's findings, as well as the Opportunity Collaborative's *Baltimore Regional Workforce Development Plan* further confirm these six sectors as "opportunity industries." U.S. Census LEHD datasets provided information on the spatial distribution of jobs in by these industries. These data have been used to map job distribution in and around the Southwest Partnership neighborhoods. While there are few jobs located within the neighborhood itself, there are many jobs in these industries located nearby and in areas relatively accessible to the neighborhoods by public transportation.

Workforce Development Resources

As mentioned in the initial presentation to SWP, and as highlighted in above, there are certainly workforce development challenges within Baltimore City and the SWP area. However, one way to address those challenges is through providing, supporting and sharing information about quality workforce development programs that can help create opportunities for neighborhood residents.

And while research shows that there is a network throughout the City aimed at helping to close the "skills gap," offered by providers ranging from the State of Maryland, the City of Baltimore, and the many foundations and non-profit community organizations operating throughout the City, research and analysis revealed 55 high-quality providers throughout Baltimore City, with four of them within the SWP area, and another four nearby. These providers include the City of Baltimore, community colleges, non-profits/foundations, and public libraries. However, this range of providers does not seem to be much of a network and is disjointed and difficult to navigate, a finding arrived at through the research process, which was reinforced in the initial presentation to the SWP.

The State, City, and organizations such as the Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC) and the Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) have laid out strong and aspirational steps for growth across the City and region, and for creating connections among these providers. However, as these locations were geocoded and mapped, it became clear that providing the map to the public as an interactive, online, and updatable resource could immediately help strengthen this. This way, an SWP resident now has a strong starting point to see opportunities available within their immediate area, and how to reach providers that may help them in achieving their career goals.

Recommendations

1. The SWP could work with the City and organizations like BMC and JOTF to help better align workforce development programs with key opportunity industries.

2. The SWP could work with the City and organizations like BMC and JOTF to strengthen relationships between local workforce development services and employment centers, especially those employment centers with identified opportunity industries.

3. The City recently closed one of its three career centers. And while federal funding cuts should be considered, these locations can serve as a crucial gateway and roadmap to residents seeking educational opportunities, training opportunities, and jobs. The SWP should encourage the City to do everything it can to open more of these centers, and operate them purposefully, instead of closing them.

Future Research

Even with the progress that has been made, further research can and should be done to optimize the way the Southwest Partnership handles workforce development. With a few more related projects, every ounce of potential in this vibrant neighborhood can be put to work, which will help the area's overall economy and wellbeing.

As with many other social science research problems, there is a lack of good data on the topic. Online data sources based off statewide lists or national surveys cannot provide the pinpoint accuracy needed to give a complete and genuine picture of the situation on the ground, in the neighborhoods.

Specifically, further research should begin by first adding to and perfecting the list of workforce development providers and getting a better picture of who lives in the neighborhood and how many people are unemployed and underemployed and could use specific types of help.

First, the list of workforce development providers used for this project is based on data from the State of Maryland, the Job Opportunities Task Force, and independent research. There is no reason to believe the State data, which was a primary source, has any systemic flaws, or that any of the other data is inaccurate. However it is possible that there are ways Southwest Baltimoreans can improve their job chances that this research has not revealed. Leveraging the human capital of SWP can help fill in gaps in the information. SWP staff, partner organizations, and other members of the community are likely aware of even more opportunities that can be added to the compendium created.

As for demographic and socioeconomic data, the scale of the SWP area is not small enough (nor is the SWP research-rich enough) to conduct a full census of the area. However, it may be possible to survey residents and achieve a lower margin of error than that of the American Community Survey data. Conducting a localized survey can serve several ends. Reducing the margin of error on this data makes it more meaningful, which is useful when presenting data in pursuit of a grant or other funding. Furthermore, the survey will allow the data to be displayed in more meaningful geographic units. The Census Bureau's block groups, which is the smallest unit of analysis for American Community Survey data, have extremely little in common with the neighborhoods that the partnership's service area is divided into, making the data less powerful. Being able to use a customized geography for everything from veteran status to underemployment will make it simpler and easier to operationalize the findings. A survey also allows for more traits than are available at the block group level. Data such as prior conviction status, number of children in a household, and desire to find a job could potentially be even more helpful in focusing workforce development efforts.
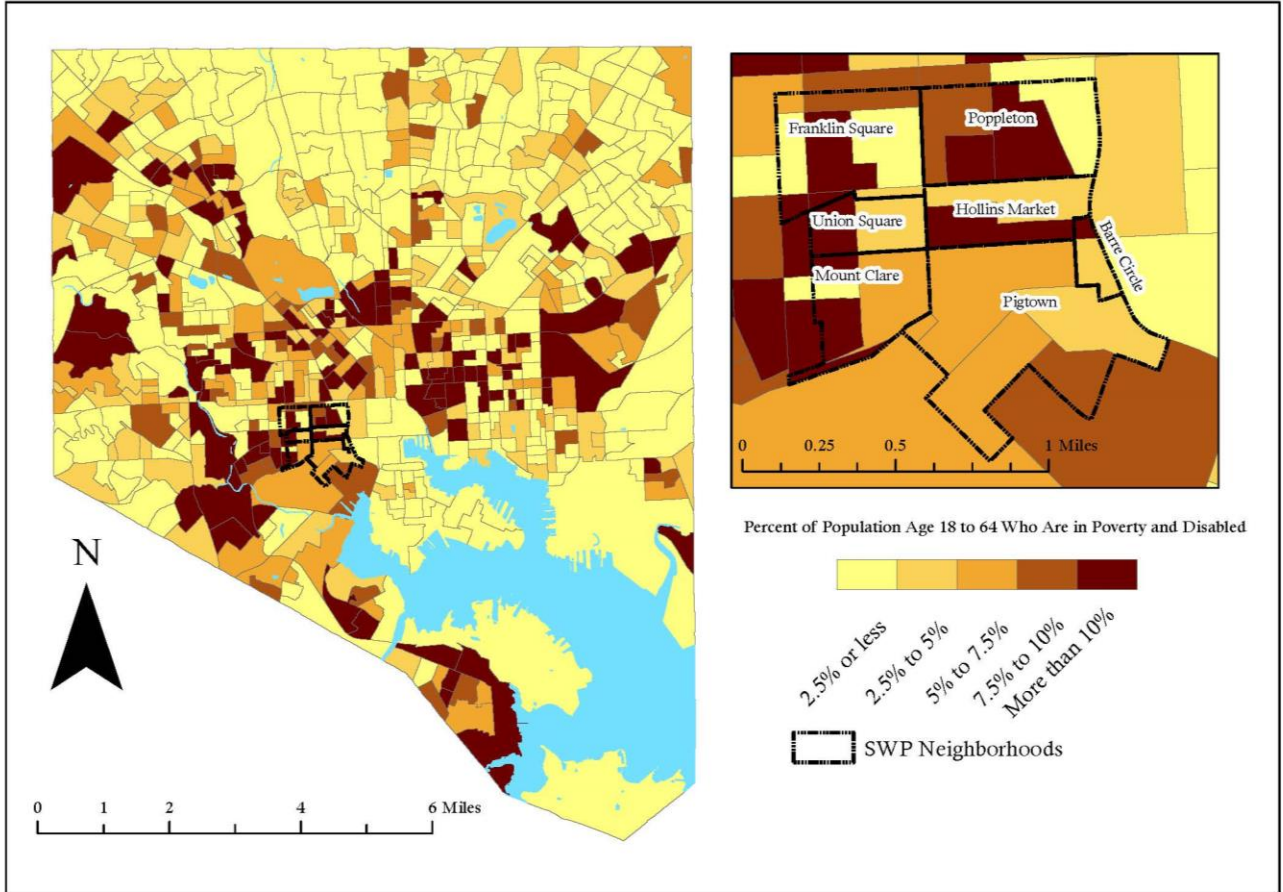
Local data could also help solve the issue of calculating underemployment. This report used local business and resident data to line up jobs and workers at similar skill levels; it was an effective proxy given the data available. But with more data and local surveying, people could be asked "Are you working a job commensurate with your qualification level?" and get data that may be more detailed. This can resolve some of the issues with the inaccuracy and missing results for the LEHD data. Expanding the data is a stepping-stone for more research opportunities and achieving real-life outcomes.

Beyond the data, it's also worthwhile to look at the quality of the resources available for job enhancement. More research is needed on the factors that specifically encourage upward movement in the workforce. It would be good to know if better transportation, more in-person classes, or online certifications would help more unemployed people to become employed and more underemployed people to achieve the jobs they want.
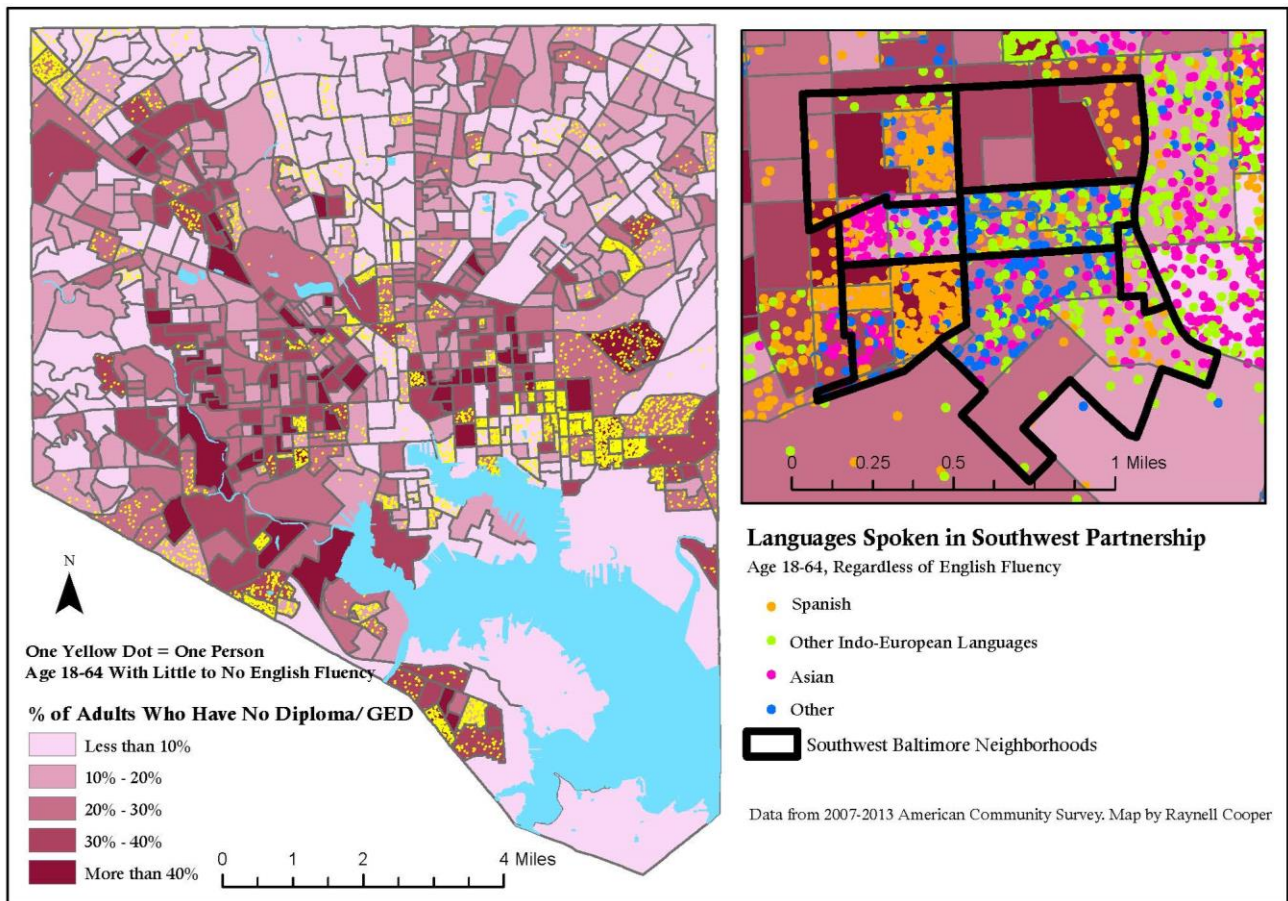
Appendix

Demographic Maps

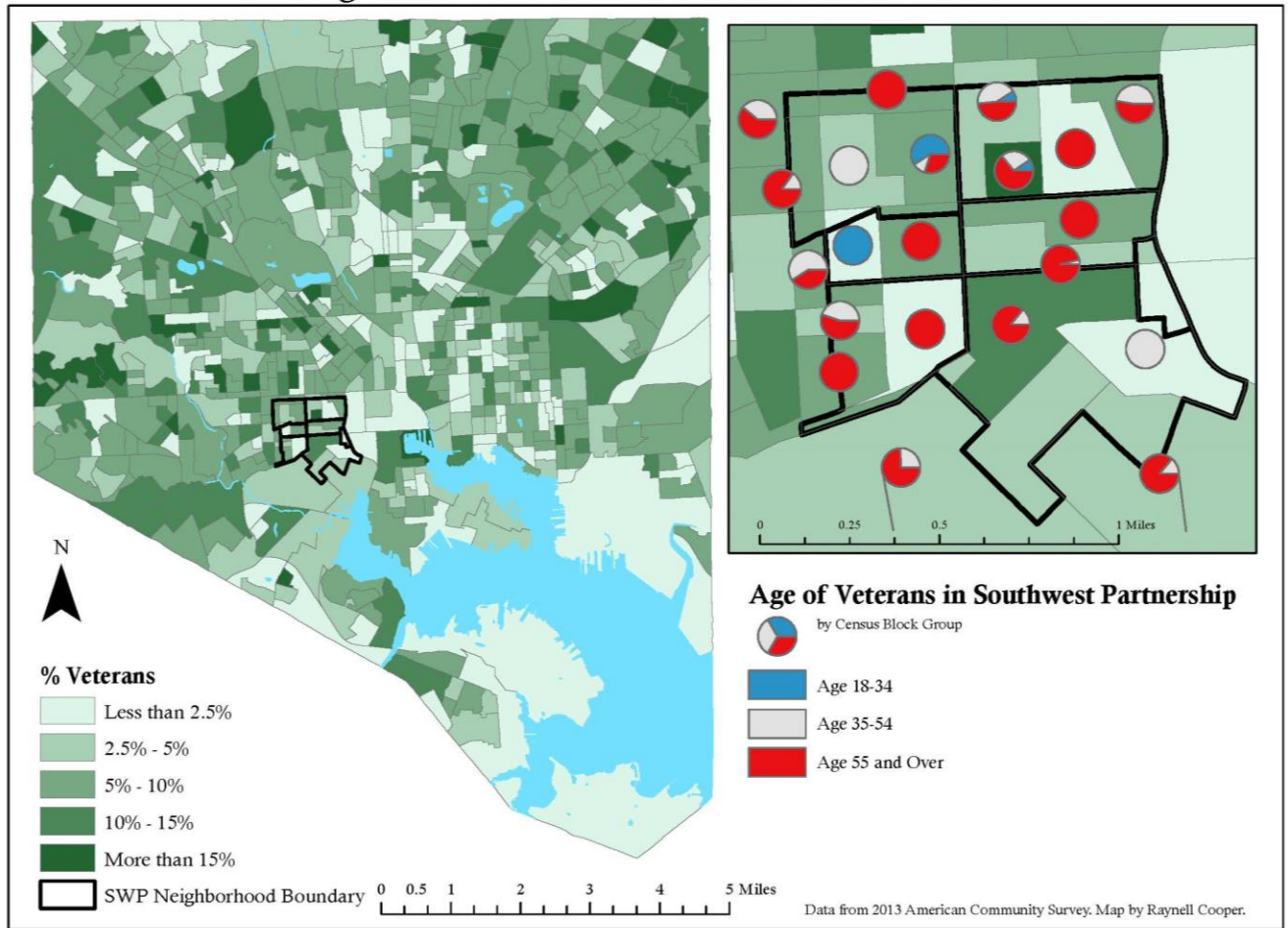In the Most Need: Poverty and Disability in Baltimore

Franklin Square
Poppleton
Union Square
Hollins Market
Barre Circle
Mount Clare
Pigtown

0   0.25   0.5   1 Miles

Percent of Population Age 18 to 64 Who Are in Poverty and Disabled

2.5% or less
2.5% to 5%
5% to 7.5%
7.5% to 10%
More than 10%

SWP Neighborhoods

N

0   1   2   4   6 Miles

16

Past Predicts Future: Education and Language Skills in Baltimore

**One Yellow Dot = One Person
Age 18-64 With Little to No English Fluency**

% of Adults Who Have No Diploma/GED

- Less than 10%
- 10% - 20%
- 20% - 30%
- 30% - 40%
- More than 40%

0 1 2 4 Miles

Languages Spoken in Southwest Partnership

Age 18-64, Regardless of English Fluency

- Spanish
- Other Indo-European Languages
- Asian
- Other
- Southwest Baltimore Neighborhoods

Data from 2007-2013 American Community Survey. Map by Raynell Cooper

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Serving Those Who Served: Veterans in Baltimore

% Veterans
- Less than 2.5%
- 2.5% - 5%
- 5% - 10%
- 10% - 15%
- More than 15%
- SWP Neighborhood Boundary

0 0.5 1   2   3   4   5 Miles

Age of Veterans in Southwest Partnership
by Census Block Group

- Age 18-34
- Age 35-54
- Age 55 and Over

0   0.25   0.5   1 Miles

Data from 2013 American Community Survey. Map by Raynell Cooper.

Employment and Unemployment Maps

Unemployment in Southwest Baltimore
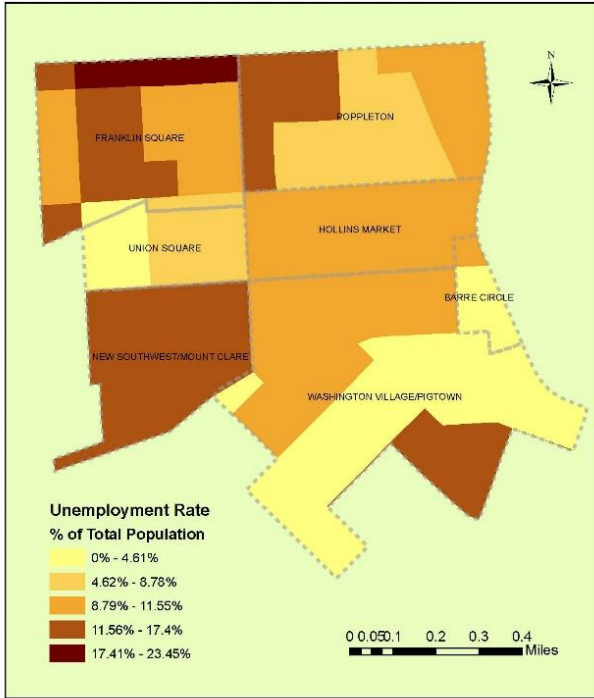
Data collected from 2009-2013 American Community Survey

Employment in Southwest Baltimore

Data collected from 2009-2013 American Community Survey

19

Workers vs. Jobs
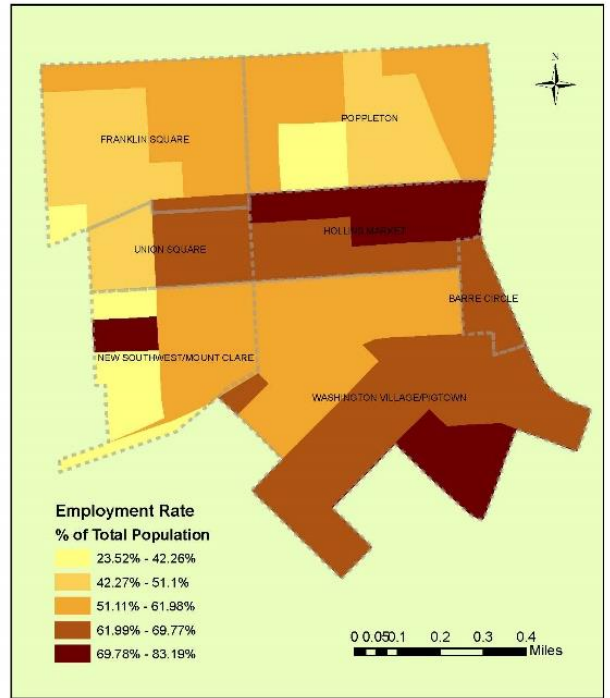
Southwest Baltimore High-Skill Jobs and Workers
Comparing the number of high-skill workers to the number of high-skill jobs

City-Wide Scale
- 0.00 - 0.50
- 0.51 - 1.00
- 1.01 - 3.00
- 3.01 - 10.00
- 10.01 - 1337.00

Neighborhood Scale
- 0.00 - 0.15
- 0.16 - 0.50
- 0.51 - 2.50
- 2.51 - 4.50
- 4.51 - 8.00

0   0.125   0.25   0.5 Miles

N
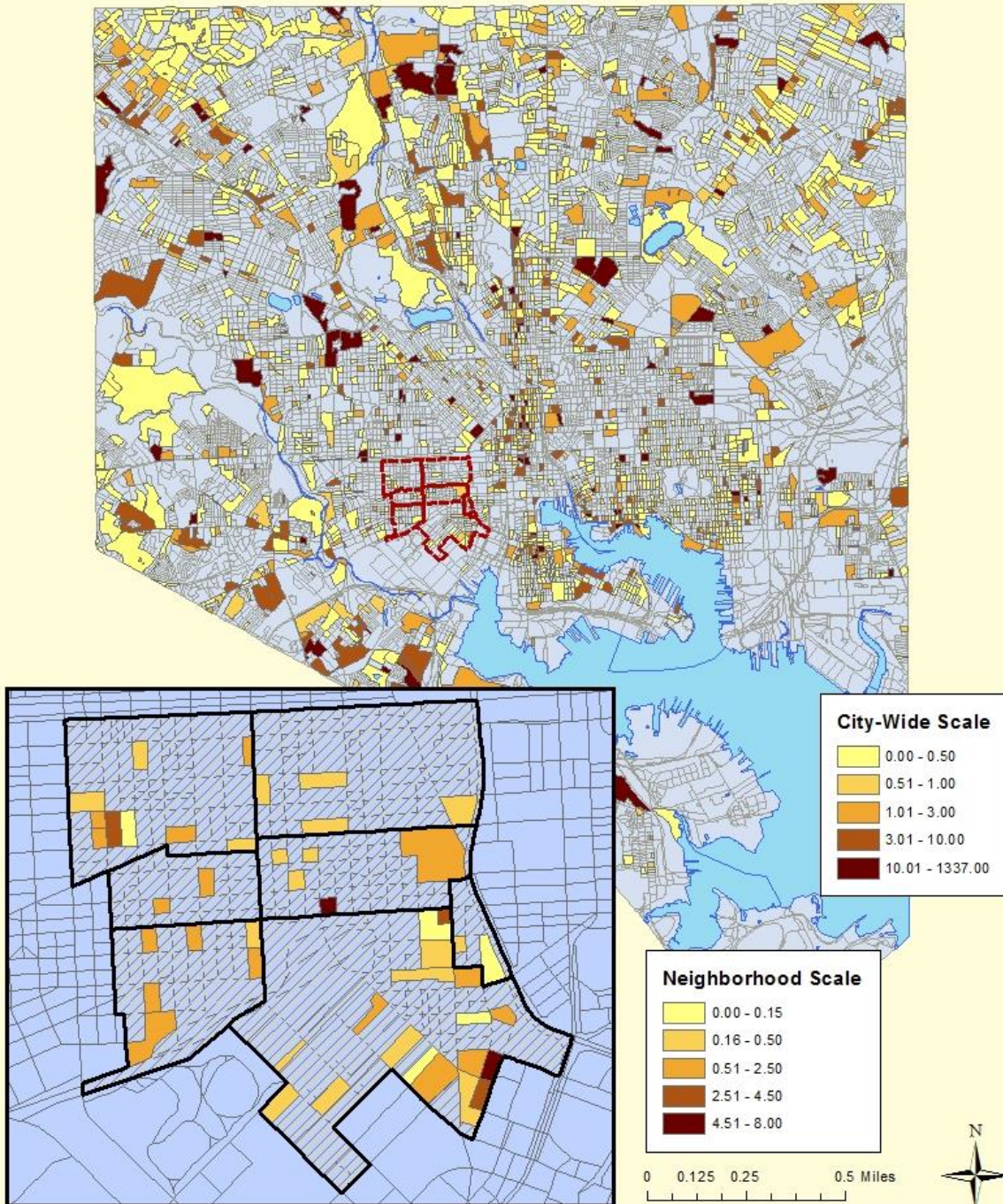
Southwest Baltimore Mid-Skill Jobs and Workers

Comparing the number of mid-skill workers to the number of mid-skill jobs

City-Wide Scale

- 0.00 - 0.50
- 0.51 - 1.00
- 1.01 - 3.00
- 3.01 - 10.00
- 10.01 - 689.00

Neighborhood Scale

- 0.00 - 0.15
- 0.16 - 0.50
- 0.51 - 2.50
- 2.51 - 4.50
- 4.51 - 8.00

0   0.125   0.25   0.5 Miles

N
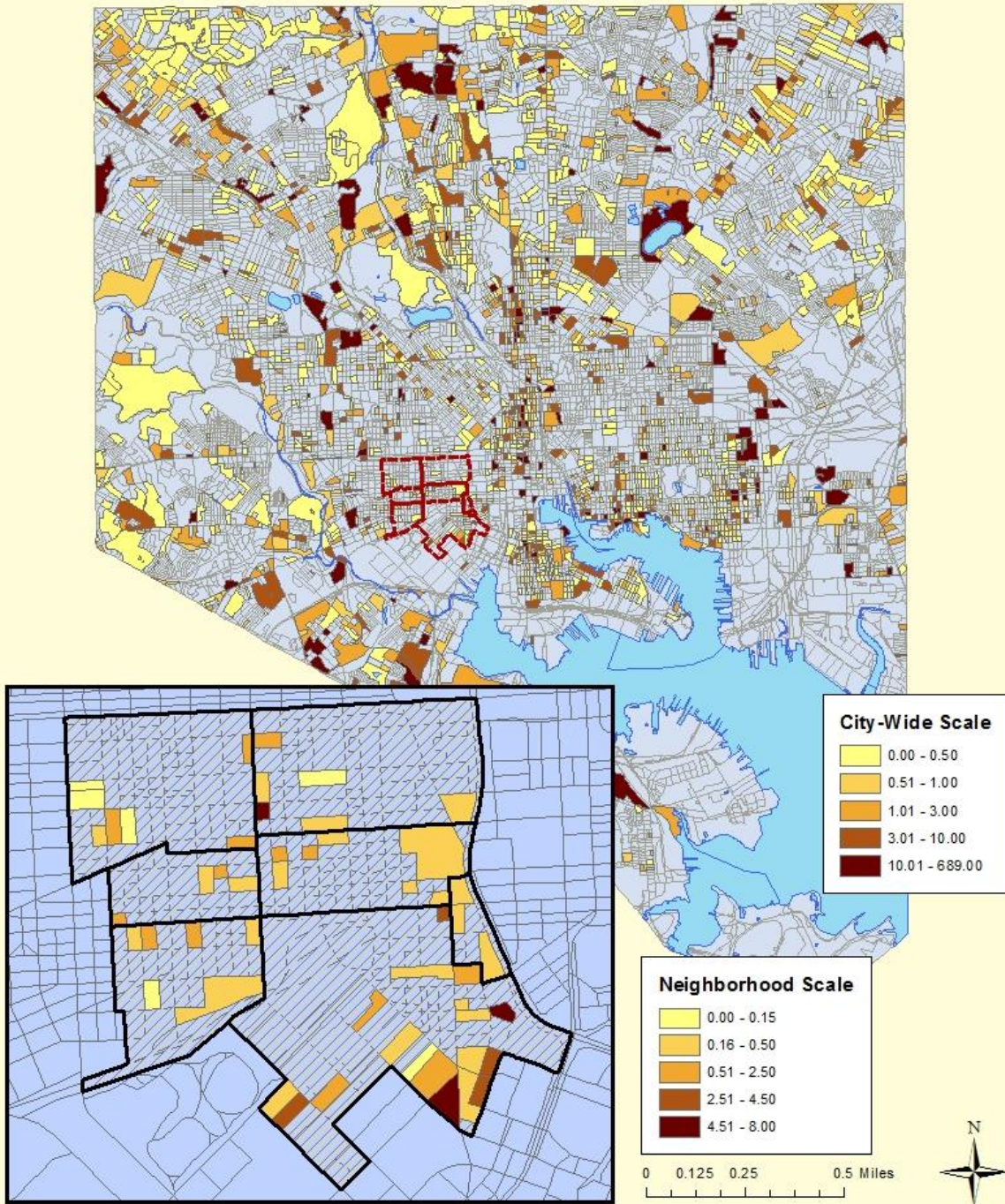
Southwest Baltimore Low-Skill Jobs and Workers

Comparing the number of low-skill workers to the number of low-skill jobs

City-Wide Scale

- 0.00 - 0.50
- 0.51 - 1.00
- 1.01 - 3.00
- 3.01 - 10.00
- 10.01 - 2386.00

Neighborhood Scale

- 0.00 - 0.15
- 0.16 - 0.50
- 0.51 - 2.50
- 2.51 - 4.50
- 4.51 - 8.00

0   0.125   0.25   0.5 Miles

N

Story Map Screenshots

Workforce Development in Baltimore and the SWP Neighborhoods
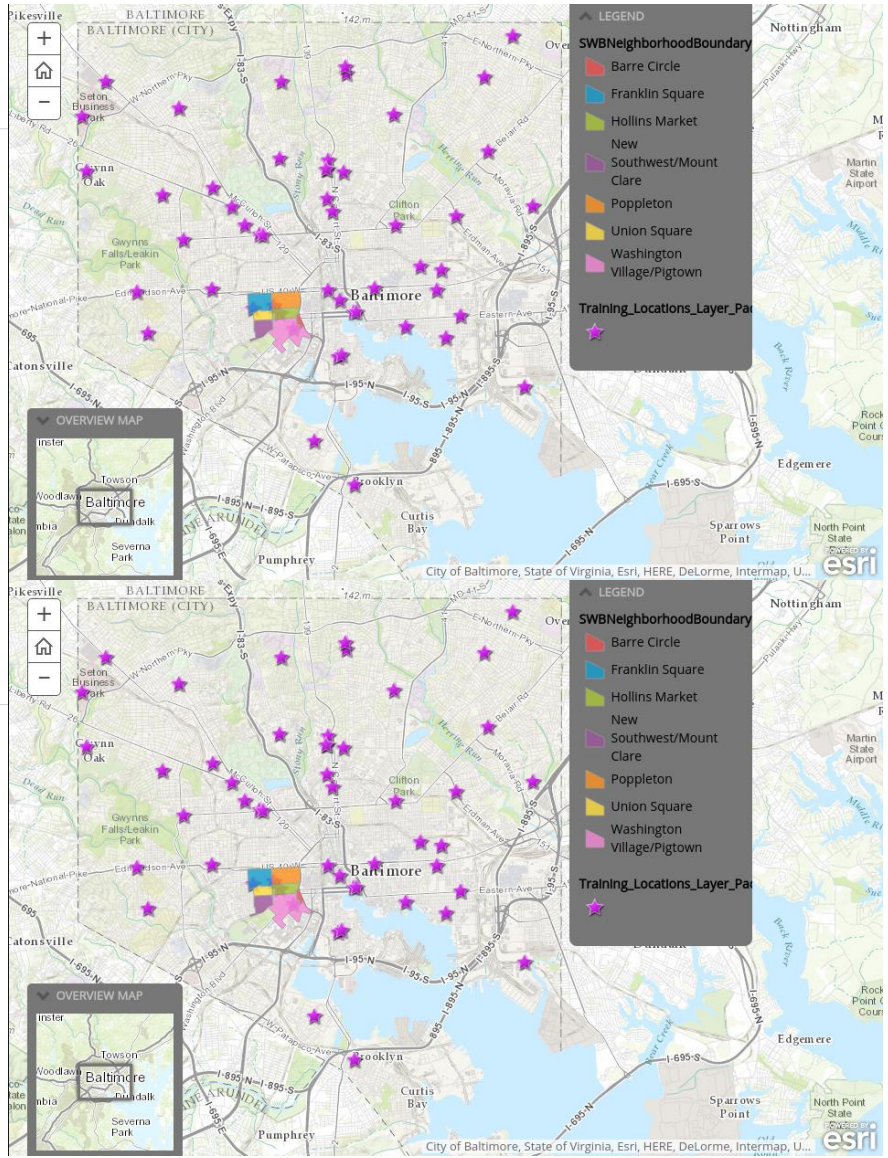
No issues detected

What's the State of Workforce Development Programs in Baltimore Today?

The State, City, and organizations such as the Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) and Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC) acknowledge the challenges, and have laid out strong and aspirational steps for growth across the city and region.

However, in working with the **Southwest Partnership**, we wanted to analyze the current local context in **Southwest Baltimore** and throughout the City.

In doing so, our research has identified **55 free or low-cost programs and services** that are available to residents **today.**

Programs in the SWP

LEGEND

SWBNeighborhoodBoundary
- Barre Circle
- Franklin Square
- Hollins Market
- New Southwest/Mount Clare
- Poppleton
- Union Square
- Washington Village/Pigtown

Training_Locations_Layer_Pa⋯

City of Baltimore, State of Virginia, Esri, HERE, DeLorme, Intermap, U...

Workforce ... [facebook] [twitter] 🔗 ⚙ Edit 🌐 esri

Workforce Development in Baltimore and the SWP Neighborhoods

No issues detected

Transit Accessibility - Light Rail and Charm City Circulator Routes

Several programs (6) are accessible via the city's light rail system (route in beige) or the Charm City Circulator (route in turquoise).

Transit Accessibility - Bus Routes

All 55 programs are accessible via the city's bus system (routes in green).

Next Steps

This interactive map can be updated as more programs develop, and shared with the public.

LEGEND

SWBNeighborhoodBoundary
- Barre Circle
- Franklin Square
- Hollins Market
- New Southwest/Mount Clare
- Poppleton
- Union Square
- Washington Village/Pigtown

Training_Locations_Layer_Pa...

OVERVIEW MAP