



Youth Programs & Initiatives



FY 2022 Annual Report

“We have a powerful potential in our youth, and we must have the courage to change old ideas and practices so that we may direct their power toward good ends.”

- Mary McLeod Bethune

Executive Summary

County Executive Steuart Pittman has pledged to make Anne Arundel County The Best Place - For All and has engaged with residents frequently and consistently since taking office in 2018. One constituency that was not actively engaged early on was youth. Given that our younger residents, ages 10-24, make up 18.5% of the County’s population, it was important to create opportunities for youth involvement.

Programs such as the Youth Corps, the Youth Advisory Council, the County Executive Office Intern Program, and the summer Government Academy have resulted in several tangible outcomes. Other county departments continue their youth outreach and engagement efforts as well.

The Joint Initiative to Eliminate the Opportunity Gap, a partnership with Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS), has selected a focus on kindergarten readiness.

This report is a compilation of information about the youth programs administered by the County Executive’s Office from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022.

Any feedback or questions about this report or youth engagement opportunities in Anne Arundel County government can be submitted via email to Dr. Jennifer Purcell, Director of Special Projects, at expurc99@aacounty.org.

Youth Engagement Opportunities

All programs can be found at aacounty.org/youth or on the new Youth Engagement Activity Hub (YEAH!)

Youth Corps

Open to any youth in Anne Arundel County.
All groups below are automatically members of the Youth Corps.

Youth Advisory Council

Competitive Application
Monthly Meetings
Advise County Executive

Internship

Year-Round Opportunities
Paid/Unpaid Office Tasks
Curriculum

Government Academy

6-wk summer program
Paid/Unpaid
Intro to Government

Other County Programs

Department of Health
AACPD Minority Youth Advisory Council
AACPS Let’s Talk Justice
AACo Public Libraries
Partnership for Children, Youth & Families
Department Internships

Background

Anne Arundel County has always offered programs and services that impact youth, but direct engagement opportunities have varied from administration to administration. The County Executive (CE) recognizes the importance of interacting with and listening to a constituency that includes almost 20%* of county residents.

Funding for an internship program was approved in the FY20 budget, but was removed in FY21 when the COVID-19 pandemic demanded that the county tighten its belt.

The Youth Advisory Council, proposed by the FY20 interns, was modeled after a similar council that met under the Owens administration. Due to the overwhelming response to the call for applications, the CE created the Youth Corps and a more formal internship program overseen by the Director of Special Projects.

Funding for COVID relief supported Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation's (AAWDC) FutureSuccess and job training programs. With this funding, the CE's Office was able to partner with AAWDC to develop a 6-week Government Academy.

The response to COVID also strengthened the relationship among the CE's Office, government agencies and the school system, which resulted in enhanced supports for youth in need of food, technology, and other services.

The Joint Initiative to Eliminate the Opportunity Gap continued its work throughout the pandemic and provides opportunities for youth to participate on formal boards and commissions.

Finally, several departments and agencies also work with youth. There are many opportunities to collaborate, share resources, and meet shared objectives in the future.

* 18.5% of county residents are ages 10-24.



Tara Kim and Conor Curran testify in front of County Council.

“Two years ago, we created new youth initiatives and invigorated older programs to ensure youth have a voice in county government, and I am pleased they continue to engage with me and my staff. This report highlights these programs and shares how youth are working to improve Anne Arundel County for all people who live here. Our county is in good hands with these future leaders.”

**- County Executive
Stuart Pittman**



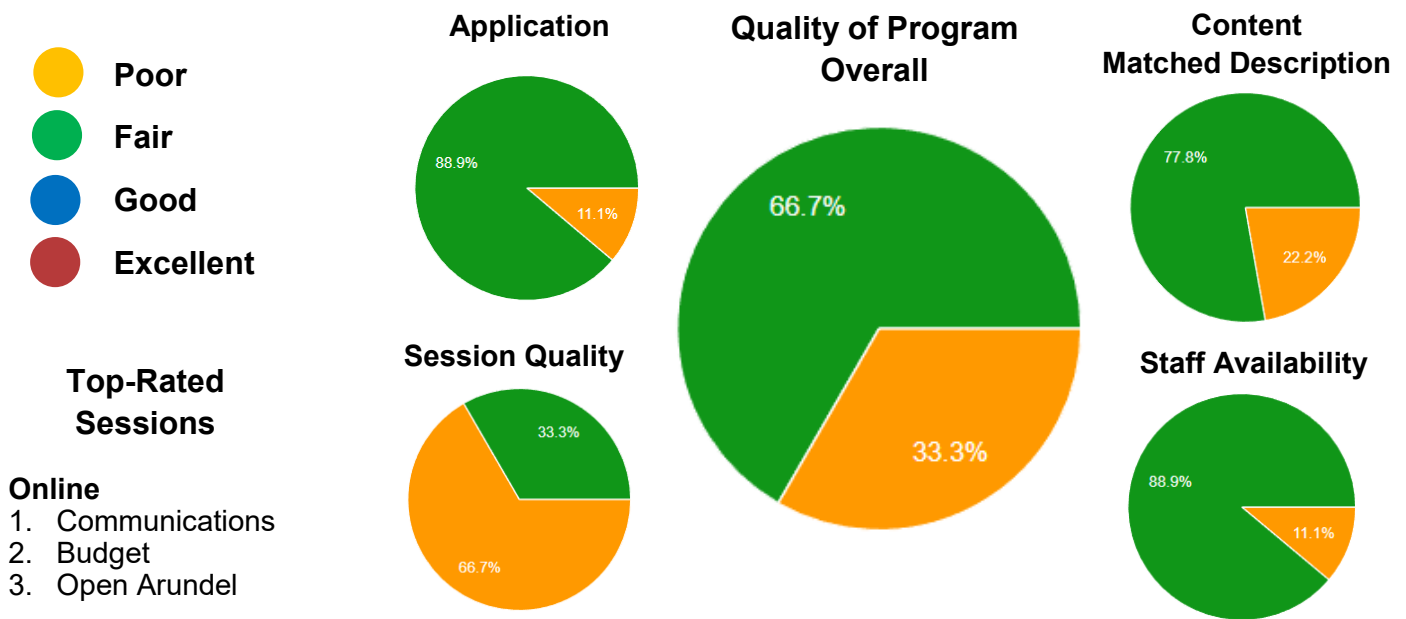
Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation (AAWDC) offers a summer internship program, FutureSuccess, for youth each year. In March 2021, the CE's Office hired a part-time Youth Engagement Coordinator to develop and pilot test a program for youth interested in county government. The content focused on 3 C's: community engagement, COVID's impact on our work, and career opportunities.

Twenty-one students interviewed for 10 positions. The program ran from June 28, 2021 to August 6, 2021.

The 2022 program hosted 13 interns between July 5, 2022 and August 12, 2022. The biggest programmatic difference between 2021 and 2022 was the addition of real work experience within a county department three days each week. The Government Academy curricular days decreased from four to two days a week. Both programs culminated in a final session featuring student-prepared interactive presentations with the County Executive and his leadership team.

Nine of ten students evaluated the program in 2021. Data for 2022 are currently under review and not included in this report.

The charts below show that all students rated the program either good or excellent. A detailed evaluation report is available as a separate document.



Top-Rated Sessions

- Online**
1. Communications
 2. Budget
 3. Open Arundel
- In-Person**
1. EDI
 2. Office of Law
 3. Youth Engagement
- Site Visits**
1. Traffic Maintenance
 2. Fire Academy
 3. Police Academy
 4. Courthouse



Surprising Stuff:

“You can foster a cat or dog for cheap, the light signals are way bigger in person, and simulators are really expensive.”



Feedback from Participants

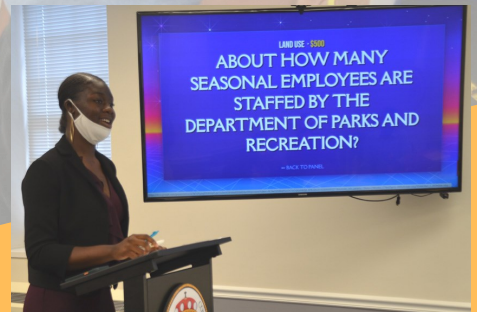
“Even if some of us didn’t necessarily want to go into government, I think we all came away with a greater appreciation and understanding of the work that goes into keeping our community running.”

“I’m so glad that I got the opportunity to be involved in this program. It was well organized, given lots of thought, and has made me feel that I have a personal connection to my government.”

“More hands on would be nice, but overall this was a great experience.”

“I loved the group discussions so much. Everyone was very engaged and it helped me to overcome my public speech anxiety.”

Photos from top right: County trivia Jeopardy game, driving simulator at the Police Training Academy, communications workshop, filming a commercial at Arundel TV. On left: CPR and Stop the Bleed session at the Fire Academy



Internships

The County Executive's Internship Program is designed to identify and develop the talents of our county's youth and young adults. There are opportunities for high school juniors and seniors as well as college undergraduate and graduate students throughout the year. The program provides students with an opportunity to experience the fast-paced nature of a professional office, to build networks and relationships, to experience the role of public service in communities, and to develop new knowledge and skills that may give direction to their professional lives. Internships are available in the fall, spring, and summer. See aacounty.org/youth for specific information.

This year's interns were selected through a competitive application process. They attended Chesapeake High School, Chesapeake Science Point, and South River High School, and were interested in law, STEM fields and social policy.

Two have now graduated and are attending the University of Maryland and Yale University.

When asked what they liked best about the internship, they noted experiencing how the legislative and executive sides of government work together, on-site visits, and planning the Youth Corps event. Interns are selected each spring.

Interns, Maya Holloman, Daniela Pena, and Adam Taifouri participated in a youth vaccination campaign as a civic engagement project.

"This internship has really shown me how big of an impact local government has on our lives and I think that I gained knowledge that would be useful in my life regardless of what I decide to do in the future."

- Maya Holloman

"The staff are both understanding and genuinely invested in our professional growth. The internship itself was very organized, and I feel I left a better version of myself in comparison."

- Adam Taifouri



Do you know the 9 P's of Public Testimony?

"A Guide to Effective Public Testimony" is a 3-fold brochure, created by former intern Anthony Morgan, that explains how to give compelling testimony for the bills and resolutions youth care most about!

KEEP DOING WHAT YOU LOVE

Stay up to date with your COVID vaccines!

aacounty.org/youth

2021-2022 High School Intern Program Outcomes

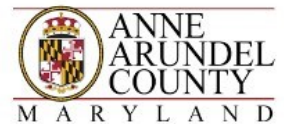
- ◆ Attended 27 sessions and site visits with county departments and staff to expand knowledge of local government
- ◆ Managed Youth Corps recruitment and communication
- ◆ Co-authored and distributed 17 issues of *E-News*
- ◆ Attended community engagement events and County Council meetings
- ◆ Participated in a marketing campaign promoting COVID vaccines
- ◆ Acted as the internship and Youth Corps liaisons to the Youth Advisory Council
- ◆ Assisted in selecting the 2022-2023 Youth Advisory Council
- ◆ Planned and facilitated the Youth Corps “It’s a Snow Day” event



Summer Internships

Each summer, the County Executive’s Office hires an intern to coordinate the Youth Government Academy (see page 4).

The coordinator is typically a college student and interns work approximately 10-12 weeks. Kaila Hodge (2021) and Simone Flynn (2022) both did an outstanding job.



Executive Citation

The Residents of Anne Arundel County, Maryland Salute

Kaila Hodge

in recognition of outstanding service as a County Executive Intern during the spring and summer of 2021. Thank you for your interest in county government and commitment to youth engagement. You have made an outstanding and enduring contribution to the residents of the County by organizing our inaugural Government Academy. We will use this innovative program, which you have co-created, as a model for years to come. We extend our sincere appreciation and best wishes in all of your future endeavors.

Thank you for helping to make Anne Arundel County The Best Place – For All.

STUART L. PITTMAN
County Executive
August 2, 2021



Youth Advisory Council



The Anne Arundel County Youth Advisory Council (Council) was established by Executive Order in August 2020 to give young people in the county the platform to discuss concerns and provide feedback and recommendations regarding county policies and issues that affect them.

Advisor: Jennifer Purcell, PhD, Director of Special Projects

The Council includes homeschool, private school, public schools and higher education students as well as non-student youth representatives from the County. Up to twenty youth serve on the Council.

2021-2022 Accomplishments:

- Created three committees based on areas of interest: Community projects, legislative, and outreach.
- Submitted written testimony in support of Bill 98-21 to support the youth member of the Human Relations Commission to have voting rights.
- Submitted verbal testimony in support of Bill 108-21 regarding the distribution of firearm safety, training, suicide prevention, and mental health literature.
- Promoted and participated in the Winter 2022 Youth Corps “It’s a Snow Day” event.
- Provided feedback to the Department of Recreation and Parks on the Land Preservation Parks and Recreation Plan.
- Assisted with planning of the Human Relations Commission’s Critical Race Theory event. One member served as a panelist.



The group’s final project was to draft legislation ([Bill 77-22](#)) to codify the Youth Advisory Council and ensure the County administration hears youth voices and perspectives long into the future. County Executive Pittman supported their request for submission to the County Council. The bill was introduced July 18, and a public hearing is scheduled for September 6, 2022.

Isabella Steinbach poses with Chief of Staff, Dr. Kai Boggess-de Bruin, at the final YAC meeting of the year.



The Youth Engagement Activity Hub (YEAH!) is the result of the CE Office’s 2020-2021 interns’ civic engagement project. They began research in Fall 2020 and presented the concept to the CE’s Leadership Team in December 2020. Upon approval, they worked with the Office of Information Technology to design a platform that was for youth, by youth. Activities fall into 8 categories: Activism, Charitable events, County-wide events, Education, Environment, Government programs, Mental health and Other. Interns keep the YEAH up-to-date during the school year.

View the page at aacounty.org/yeah.

The Youth Corps was created in response to the overwhelming number of applications received for the inaugural Youth Advisory Council. The Youth Corps is open to anyone under the age of 23 who is interested in engaging with the county government or their community.

The purpose of the Youth Corps is to connect with the County Executive’s Office, keep up-to-date with issues pertaining to youth in the county, and build a network of individuals committed to improving the county for everyone who lives here.

During the school year, members receive a bi-weekly *E-News* newsletter from the County Executive’s Office and invitations to participate in special events and learning experiences. There is no requirement for participation, so members can be active in community initiatives or simply learn about community programs and resources.

This year, the Youth Corps was invited to an “It’s a Snow Day” event at the Office of Emergency Management in Glen Burnie. Participants learned about the county departments that help keep people safe during the winter months, watched a mock ice rescue, sat in snow plows, and collected clothing and non-perishable food items for residents in need.

There are 185 members in the Youth Corps.



Sample of Content Included in 17 Issues of E-News:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| National Night Out | MLK Day of Service |
| Government Academy | Walk & Roll Anne Arundel |
| Community Policing Survey | Libraries |
| Census Data Reports | Website Redesign |
| Budget Town Halls | Prevailing Wage Legislation |
| Litter Sweep Campaign | Green Infrastructure |
| County Response to Tornadoes | Women’s History Month |
| GVIT Community Meetings | Intern Applications |
| Tree Lighting Ceremony | YEAH! and County Trivia |
| Youth Engagement Survey | and much more! |
| State of the County Address | |





Joint Commission on the Opportunity Gap

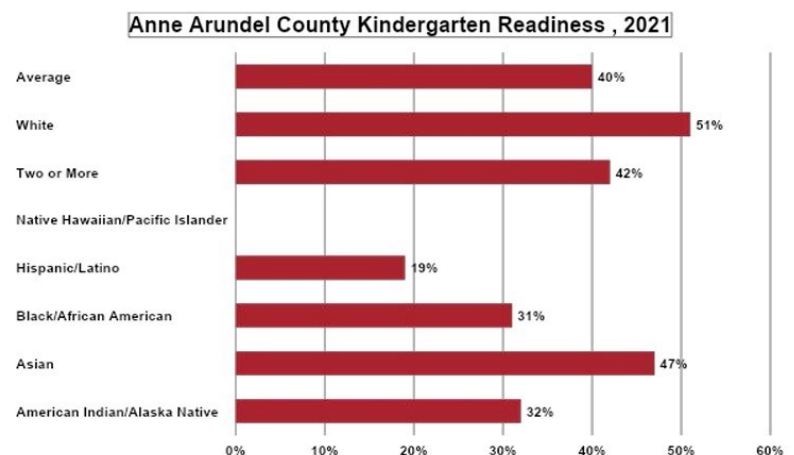
The Joint Commission on the Opportunity Gap (JCOG), created by Executive Order #47 on May 18, 2021, was formally announced via press conference on August 31, 2021. Six members each were appointed by County Executive Pittman and Superintendent Arlotto. The Commission's first task was to select an additional three members.

The Commission was created to address persistent disparities in academic performance between White students and Black students including data gathering, policy recommendations, and engaging the public to promote transparency and accountability.

Since then, the Commission has:

- ◆ Held thirteen meetings
- ◆ Created three committees that mirror the task force's priority recommendations: social determinants, data/transparency, and equity
- ◆ Completed a data analysis on Kindergarten scores disaggregated by race & ethnicity
- ◆ Discussed the GARE equity lens with EDI Director, Pete Hill
- ◆ Provided updates to the Board of Education (BOE) in February 2022 and the County Executive in May 2022
- ◆ Created an FAQ document
- ◆ Sent a letter to the BOE regarding the search for a new superintendent
- ◆ Learned details about equity initiatives at AACPS and the MD Blueprint implementation

Anne Arundel County Kindergarten Readiness Disaggregated by Race and Ethnicity, 2021



Maryland Report Card, 2022

Improving kindergarten readiness remains a top priority of the Commission.

Detailed information
and documents are available at
aacounty.org/JCOG



“The ideal characteristics of a Superintendent include open-mindedness, transparency, compassion, and fearlessness. We need a warm and energetic motivator who is ambitious in implementing programming that focuses on the opportunity gap, while leading AACPS towards a future where all of our students’ collective and individual needs can be met.”

- Excerpt of a letter sent to Board of Education by Chair Peggy Cruz on behalf of the Commission



Looking Ahead to Next Year and Beyond

Our youth programs are still quite new, and we are always looking for ways to improve the youth experience and increase engagement. We welcome your input and ideas to make that happen.

Remember, youth are our future. They need to be part of the discussion! The County Executive's team is pleased that young people are choosing to get involved with county government in one way or another.

Together, we will make Anne Arundel County...

The Best Place - For All

Programs are open to all youth without regard to gender, race, color, national origin, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital or family status, genetic information, veteran's status, or any other characteristic protected by law.

"The Youth Advisory Council has been advocating for policies that will benefit every family in our community. Its goal is to engage young people and show them that county government is dedicated to serving every resident, regardless of age. County Executive Pittman has been a great partner in this work as we learned about the many moving parts of his office. We even have legislation in the works that will codify this council so every administration going forward will benefit from the youth perspective. Support the bill and help us ensure that youth voices are always heard."

- Conor Curran, YAC Chair

aacounty.org/youth

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