

**Thriving Children  
Thriving Families  
A Thriving Baltimore**

# A New Sense of Urgency

A majority of Baltimore's young people face unacceptable odds. Systemic poverty and institutional racism, and the inequities that flow from these, prevent our young people from having a fair shot at healthy, fulfilling lives.

We can change these odds. We have resources and the will to do it. But we've lacked the strategic alignment and sustained commitment to activate these assets on behalf of our children and families.

In summer 2019, I created the Mayor's Office of Children & Family Success to spark a collective sense of urgency and drive that alignment. The lift is big. It is imperative. Change begins now.

— Mayor Bernard C. "Jack" Young



# The Unacceptable Odds

Children who grow up in Baltimore are at a statistical **disadvantage.**



## We are young

Nearly 1/3 of all Baltimore residents are 24 and younger.



## Our time is short

95% of brain growth for children everywhere happens 0-6 years. In Baltimore, the window for building a strong foundation is especially short.

**33%**

young mothers don't get early prenatal care

**61%**

5-year olds enter kindergarten unready

**34%**

6-12 graders experience hunger


**83%**

3-5 graders don't meet expectations in English & math

**51%** MD youth experiencing homelessness live in Baltimore

**42%** children experience 3+ traumatic events before adulthood

And yet, our children are our greatest **opportunity.**



—  
“It is easier to  
**build strong  
children** than  
to repair  
**broken men.**”

These words attributed to Frederick Douglass 150 years ago still ring true. In Baltimore, we must nurture our children for the betterment of our city. And to do that we must make our families whole.

**The challenge: How do we move the needle?**

# First Step: Going to the Community

Our communities know what children and families need to thrive. And children- and family-serving agencies and programs know what it will take to push existing supports to a new level.

So, we asked them to help inform our office's priorities and set **our strategic direction**.



**dozens**

of interviews and discussions with city leaders

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**14**

city & state agencies completed surveys

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**400+**

residents participated in 14 community design sessions

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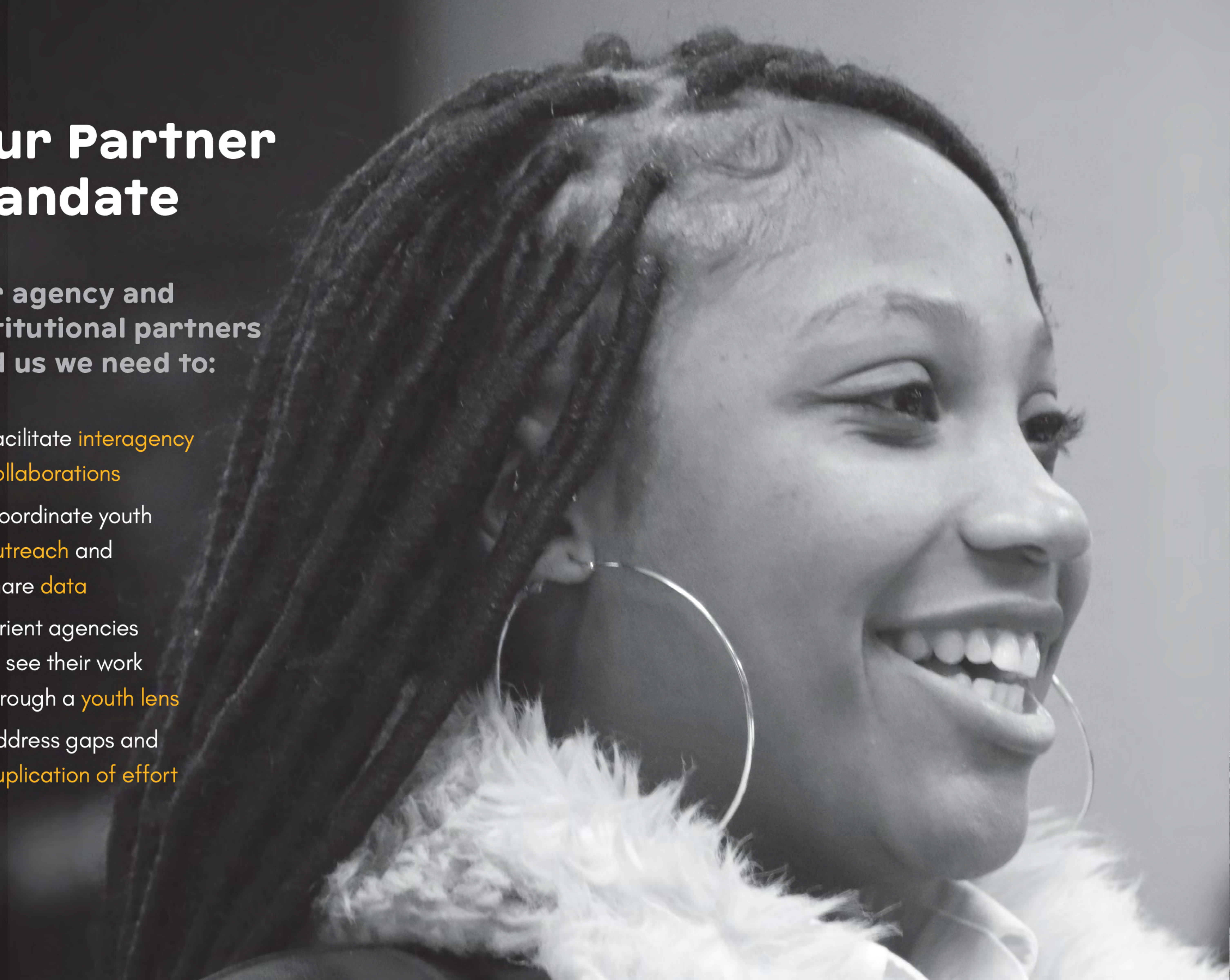
**845**

residents completed an online survey

# Our Partner Mandate

Our agency and  
institutional partners  
told us we need to:

- ▶ Facilitate *interagency collaborations*
- ▶ Coordinate youth *outreach* and share *data*
- ▶ Orient agencies to see their work through a *youth lens*
- ▶ Address gaps and *duplication of effort*



# Our Community Mandate

**70%**  
of surveyed residents say their neighborhoods aren't good places for children and families.



**“The youth are not respected in this city,  
particularly youth of color.”** –survey respondent

Data makes it clear. The community makes it urgent.

**62%**

of Black boys  
enter kindergarten  
unprepared

**33%**

of Black male high  
school students  
do not graduate

**94%**

of males entering  
juvenile justice  
system are Black

**17%**

Unemployment rate  
for Black men  
(vs. 4% for White men)

**69%**

of known homicide victims  
in 2018 were Black men  
(31% of them 25 or younger)

**Baltimore’s most underutilized asset: boys and men of color.**





# Residents also let us know that...

Our communities are **Rich.**

Our communities are **Resilient.**

Our communities are **Resourceful.**

Residents identified 864  
unique people, places and  
programs they proudly call  
their “hidden gems.”

# Strategizing to Move the Needle

With a call to action coming into focus, we began organizing ourselves to make the lives of children and families better.



*We incorporated programs from other agencies:*

- ▶ Baltimore City Community Action Partnership
- ▶ Office of African American Male Engagement
- ▶ Head Start

*We began building capacity by:*

- ▶ Engaging and activating youth
- ▶ Advancing policy
- ▶ Maximizing data and technology
- ▶ Deepening community and partner relationships
- ▶ Changing the narrative about Baltimore's youth

*And after a decade without a leadership body focused on young people, we launched the Baltimore Children's Cabinet to:*

- ▶ Partner for impact
  - ▶ Improve and align policies
  - ▶ Strengthen practices & programs
  - ▶ Drive intentional decisions that are good for young people
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Guidance from the community, our partner agencies and the children's cabinet all point to:

## A Clear Role for Our Office

To organize and resource Baltimore to deliver an ecosystem of support that strengthens families by improving educational attainment and socioeconomic mobility, and positions all communities to thrive.



**75% of surveyed residents gave this role a full 5-star rating**

## Clear Priorities in Our Work

1. Increase early childhood development
2. Decrease youth food insecurity
3. Decrease youth homelessness
4. Increase youth literacy
5. Increase trauma-informed care for youth
6. Increase youth diversion practices
7. Break down historical barriers to success for Black boys and young men



# LOVE FEAR

With this strategic framework as our North Star—and love for our children, community and city as our core value—we will radically improve the lives of children and families in Baltimore.

**The work is vast.**

**The stakes are  
195,000 young lives high.**

**We can't do it alone.**

[bmorechildren.com](http://bmorechildren.com) / [@bmorechildren](https://twitter.com/bmorechildren)

## If we...

- ▶ Align and strategically direct our resources
- ▶ Advance family-centered policies
- ▶ Collaborate with the community
- ▶ Ask our young people not, *What is wrong with you?* but, *What happened to you?*

## ...we will move the needle.



MAYOR'S OFFICE OF  
CHILDREN & FAMILY SUCCESS