



Young Men United (YMU) Initiative Overview

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

YMU exists to provide a set of services critical to supporting young men of color to and through a college and/or career pathway that reflects their individual desire and affirms/reinforces the belief in their own capability. Housed within United Way of Central Maryland (United Way), YMU operates within a greater ecosystem of programs in our community that serve young men of color. Our goal is to provide a layered and integrated set of services to YMU participants through a school-based initiative that coordinates with several of these organizations.

Central to United Way's approach, we aim to:

- Recognize the many experts in this field in our communities
- Serve as connector to elevate and link existing programs to create a collective impact strategy
- Partner with schools to serve their students
- Value a learning orientation, continually assessing and modifying the initiative based on lessons learned and with input from our partners.
- Amplify lived experiences and expertise of young men of color to continually enhance YMU program model

Central to YMU's programmatic approach:

- Opportunities for introspection as well as career and pathway exploration
- Long-term engagement, consistency and coordination
- A layered and integrated set of services provided to YMU participants and their families
- Coaching, navigation and mentorship throughout participants' journey to college/training and career success
- Individualized approach to academic and career pathway supports
- A mental health orientation
- Integrated family involvement and support
- Creating a sense of belonging: YMU will engage participants in cohorts to offer peer support, recognition, comradery and shared accountability

Participants will have the opportunity to explore and assess their assets and aptitudes and be encouraged to dream big. We want them to know that we believe in them and the possibilities are endless. Equipped with the information, guidance and support they receive through the initiative, YMU participants will be poised for high school and college/training success that will

propel them into a career of their choosing, one that will provide personal satisfaction and financial stability.

With a central YMU theme of “exposure” (to industries, jobs, people, post-secondary pathways, etc.), in addition to programming and supports, we want to ensure the young men have the opportunity to travel off-site for interesting field trips and civic engagement.

YMU programming will take place primarily at partner schools. Recognizing the challenges of after school programming (students may already be involved in after school activities such as sports and clubs, may be working, etc.), we encourage organizations to be creative and innovative using data, research, and your own experience to determine what is needed to achieve outlined program goals. We continue to discuss scheduling options with YMU partner schools.

Who Will YMU Serve?

YMU seeks to serve students and the families of those students who have a strong desire to receive support to reach their higher education and career goals but who may not necessarily see the path forward. Our goal is to focus on serving those students who need, and welcome, additional support to get there. YMU will serve:

- Students who identify as Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx, Native American, and male
- Students who attend YMU partner schools
 - Partner schools identified for Year 1 (2022-23 school year):
 - Benjamin Franklin High School
 - Patterson High School

Students will be selected through an application process and onboarded to YMU in their sophomore year of high school. The application process will seek to identify:

- Students who express a desire to graduate high school and pursue post-secondary education (associate's or bachelor's degree) or training/certification
- Students who express an interest in/commitment to actively engaging in YMU program activities
- Students with a demonstrated commitment to educational success (based on school attendance and school performance). Please note, at this point we expect to set a target minimum 9th grade GPA of 1.75 (lower than our originally planned 2.0) recognizing the challenges that COVID-19 has had on many students. This target is subject to change based on input from program partners and data from partner schools.
- Students who demonstrate other commitments, such as family support, community involvement, employment and extracurricular activities

YMU anticipates students from low-income families, including first and second generation college students and English language learners (ELL).

Number of Students YMU Will Serve

YMU will commence serving students at the beginning of their 10th grade year in Fall 2022 and follow participants through high school graduation, into and through their chosen post-secondary pathway and support their transition into the start of their career.

For future initiative cohorts, we will begin serving students either the summer preceding or at the start of their 10th grade year. Each YMU participant will remain with YMU on a timeline that coincides with their chosen post-secondary path. For instance, those who pursue a bachelor's degree, will receive support through YMU for a total of seven years, those who choose a 2-year degree, certification or training program will be supported accordingly, through their post-secondary program graduation/completion and transition into career.

YMU will serve at least 250 participants, and their families, over the course of the nine-year initiative. Our current plan for onboarding cohorts of high school sophomores, over the course of three years is outlined below. The number of young men served could increase if additional funds become available.

	Start Date	Number of Students	Projected Completion Date ¹
Cohort 1	July 2022	50	June 2029
Cohort 2	July 2023	100	June 2030
Cohort 3	July 2024	100	June 2031

¹Projection based on participants who attend 4-year college. Those attending 2-year college or career trade training are projected to finish earlier.

NOTE:

- In the 2022 YMU RFP, released in April of 2022, we are focusing on identifying partners to provide programming/support covering the first three years (10th, 11th and 12th grade) that students are enrolled in YMU.
- In the future, we expect to hold a similar RFP process for those YMU Initiative Components to be delivered to YMU participants as they enter and continue through their post-secondary journey, with such services as: college/training journey navigation, mentoring, internship, career prep and transition.

YMU INITIATIVE COMPONENTS

Below please find an outline of the YMU Initiative Components we envision providing to YMU participants during high school. This outline is not intended to be prescriptive but helps to provide an overview of our vision to work with partners to provide overall guidance and a continuum of services to support YMU participants, and their families, through each step of their journey. We recognize the importance and interconnectedness of many of these

components and seek program partners who are willing to work together to provide participants with seamless programming.

- **Journey Navigation/Coaching**

We envision this role to be the backbone of the YMU program. Objectives include: establishing strong relationships and trust with YMU participants and their families and building a community among young men of color where they can provide support for one another and help each other realize their full potential.

The Journey Navigation/Coaching component will help young men identify and pursue their interests and talents by connecting them to existing opportunities. Exploration will include exposure to industries, businesses, post-secondary pathways and community service activities, as well as helping participants set and manage goals and connect those goals to possible college/training and career pathways.

- **Academic Support**

Targeted support to support academic success and high school graduation, including the development of study/executive function skills, content remediation, credit recovery, etc.

- **Post-Secondary (College & Training Program) Prep and Application Support**

Build awareness of post-secondary pathway options for the student and his family. Assist with goal setting and alignment between goals and post-secondary pathway options student will pursue from a programmatic, academic and financial lens.

Assist student in all aspects of college/post-secondary program research, resume development, entrance exam prep, program application, financial aid research and application support, including connections to potential scholarships and grants. Provide guidance to student and family regarding post-secondary enrollment decisions and ensure smooth transition into chosen program.

- **Mentorship**

We want to ensure that program participants have the opportunity to receive support and guidance from mentors that they can relate to and learn from throughout their experience with YMU. United Way recognizes that mentorship can take on many forms and we are open to including mentoring as the primary or sole focus of a partner's work as well as mentoring that is included/embedded in other program components.

- **Financial Education (Student and Family)**

Provide introductory, comprehensive financial education for participant and his family including budgeting, savings, building credit, general loan information, education grants and loans, etc.

- **Resource Navigation/Case Management (Student and Family)**

Connect student and/or his family to needed resources such as: housing stability, food, mental health support, after school programming in areas of interest, etc.

YMU OUTCOMES

Please refer to the YMU Logic Model for a high-level overview of program activities, outputs and target short and long-term outcomes.

ABOUT UNITED WAY OF CENTRAL MARYLAND

United Way promotes equity, creates opportunity, and improves lives. Our 95 years of service to the people of Greater Baltimore have taught us what it takes to change our region for the better. We are proud to be a source of support, compassion, and hope for people who work hard but still can't make ends meet. We strengthen families and communities by taking on systemic challenges and increasing access to basic needs—health, housing, employment, education, and more.

United Way of Central Maryland – Commitment to Equity

United Way promotes equity, creates opportunity, and improves lives by increasing access to education, employment, health, and housing. We achieve equity by dismantling systemic and institutional barriers underrepresented communities face in pursuit of happiness and the quest to realize their dreams. We respect and value all people without regard to race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, national origin or citizenship status, age or ability status. We expect our partner organizations, grantees, staff, volunteers, board members, vendors, and key collaborators to uphold these standards.