Bunting Neighborhood Leadership Program:
Strengthening Communities Through Transformative Leadership
Established in 2016, the Bunting Neighborhood Leadership Program (BNLP) is a one-of-a-kind initiative that aims to equip the next generation of Baltimore’s community activists with the knowledge, skills, and tools to be transformative leaders.

**Why BNLP?**

- The Goal is to enhance the capacity of young, passionate Baltimore community advocates with the skills to help improve the trajectory of health in their communities.
- Under the guidance of a community advisory board, we identify and work with engaged community leaders to serve as faculty.
- Authentic community voice is at the center of the training.
- A safe environment is provided to be transparent and vulnerable and grow through peer support, reflective learning and faculty guidance.
- An opportunity to learn from a structured curriculum that combines the history of Baltimore, theories on leadership and community development, research and policies, and evidence-based practice.
- The structured curriculum includes multiple sessions on the following topics
  - Deconstructing Racism
  - Building Relationships and Community Organizing
  - Systems Management and Operations
  - Communications
  - Policy and Advocacy

“*The Bunting Fellowship is exactly what Hopkins should be doing. It uses the Hopkins’ vast resources to harness the potential of young leaders in Baltimore to be among those who create Baltimore’s future.*”

— Barbara Mikulski
U.S. Senator (Ret.)

**Integrated Learning**

As part of their training, BNLP fellows undertake a two-year unifying project that integrates many of the components that are taught during BNLP including understanding a neighborhood through diverse strategies through: asset mapping; listening to diverse perspectives that include residents, businesses, and district representatives; analyzing available neighborhood data and developing a plan of action and a proposal.
The goal is for Fellows to be able to identify an issue and marshal all the information and data needed from multiple sources and perspectives to effectively develop a plan—in collaboration with the community with which they work—that has strong community engagement and backing and can be successfully implemented. It is a practical application of all lessons learned on leadership and community development.

Program Evaluation

The BNLP expanded evaluation plan includes:

- A survey of incoming fellows to better understand both their backgrounds and their aspirations
- An assessment of knowledge, skills, and networks established to be done at the end of each 6-week module
- A final presentation that integrates all aspects of training through the Unifying Project described above
- A strengthened assessment of community impact
- An ongoing assessment of personal and professional development and growth
- A supervisor assessment of employee performance and advancement

Authentic Community Engagement for Positive Health Outcomes

As a result of the connections made and training received, BNLP alumni have gone on to achieve many successes that benefit the health and well-being of Baltimore neighborhoods.

BNLP Fellows have:

- Led various community programs and initiatives in BNLP target neighborhoods;
- Created a Diversity and Inclusion Committee at Living Classrooms;
- Convened the first ever Maternal Health Symposium in Baltimore for expecting mothers;
- Gained the sponsorship of Councilman Bill Henry of Baltimore’s Fourth District and support of Councilman Brandon Scott of Baltimore’s Second District, which lead to the passing of legislation April 2018 that requires Baltimore City landlords to earn licenses prior to renting any unit and
requires contractors to inspect homes prior to rental to ensure the safety of the family;
- Participated as a member of the selection committee for the new Baltimore City Health Commissioner;
- Presented testimony at public hearings;
- Organized youth health conferences;
- Served on the state legislative committee to study health worker certification;
- Gave the keynote address for the Baltimore City Health Department conference on youth, substance abuse, and mental health;
- Been selected for national policy fellowships;
- Enrolled in graduate school.

Diverse Faculty

Fellows receive instruction, mentorship, and guidance from thought leaders, community organizers, and educators from across Baltimore.

2019 BNLP Faculty include:

- **Lawrence Brown**  
  Associate Professor, Morgan State University
- **Robert Blum**  
  Professor, Bloomberg School of Public Health
- **James Calvin**  
  Professor, Carey Business School
- **Vincent DeMarco**  
  President, Maryland Citizen’s Health Initiative
- **Seema Iyer**  
  Director, Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance
- **Pamala Martin**  
  Administrator, Department of Population Family and Reproductive at Johns Hopkins University
- **Bishop Douglas Miles**  
  Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (BUILD)
- **Laiza Otero**  
  Organization Development Consultant, Johns Hopkins University
- **Howard Ross**  
  Principal Consultant, Cook Ross
- **Nick Seaver**  
  Burness Communications
- **Shiree Skinner**  
  Director of Development, Beacon House DC
Under the guidance of our faculty, fellows:

- Develop a plan of work on a priority issue for, and with, the community;
- Develop the skills to understand community issues through a variety of means, from community dialogue to data analysis;
- Learn to draft budgets, write op-eds, present at city and state hearings, develop a policy plan and prepare grant applications;
- Engage in learning through self-study, discovery learning, case studies, and reflection;
- Receive mentoring, coaching, and technical assistance to help guide them in meeting their learning goals.

“The Bunting Leadership Program has provided practical leadership instruction, information, tools, and networking opportunities that have corresponded precisely to what I needed in my workplace each week.”

— Lashelle Stewart, 2017 BNLP Fellow

Professional Growth

Each year we welcome a unique group of dynamic leaders with a wealth of neighborhood knowledge and a passion for serving Baltimore. Since 2017, 20 community leaders have been accepted in to the Bunting Neighborhood Leadership Program and have consisted of activists, healthy food marketers, educators, youth advocates, community organizers, entrepreneurs, and more.

“What I’ve appreciated the most about BNLP is that it brings the City of Baltimore and its most pressing public health issues to the forefront and allows me to do a small part to help the city and its residents.”

— Laiza Otero, BNLP instructor

My expectations of Rashad participating in such a program like BNLP has been met and greatly appreciated. BNLP impact on Rashad’s performance can be observed through a growth of confidence and the understanding of his role here at the District. Through conversation, Rashad credits receiving additional on boarding support from his follow cohort members and others throughout his BNLP experience.

— Sabrina Sutton, Baltimore City Public Schools
13 Fellows have graduated and seven more began the program in January 2019.

Seven graduates have been promoted to neighborhood and city leadership positions.

Fellows have increased work performance by leveraging the tools and resources provided during weekly sessions.

Of the 13 who have graduated, six are currently working with advocacy groups and politicians to implement policy agendas developed during the fellowship.

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<tr>
<td><strong>Academy Manager</strong> of the Practitioners Leadership Institute, Baltimore’s Center for Urban Families</td>
<td><strong>Health and Policy Analyst</strong> for the Baltimore City Health Department</td>
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<td><strong>Deputy Director</strong> of Baltimore Healthy Start</td>
<td><strong>Executive Director</strong> of Baltimore Healthy Start</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Program Manager</strong>, Leadership Development &amp; Advocacy, Community Law in Action</td>
<td><strong>Special Assistant</strong> to Baltimore City Health Commissioner</td>
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<td><strong>Site Director</strong> for the YMCA of Central Maryland</td>
<td><strong>Director</strong> of the Under Armour House on Fayette</td>
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<td><strong>Program Manager</strong> for ReCast Baltimore to Program Director of ReCast Baltimore</td>
<td><strong>Assistant Director</strong> of Baltimore City Health Department’s newly established Office of Youth and Trauma Programs</td>
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<td><strong>Director</strong> of Special Program at the Baltimore Urban Leadership Foundation</td>
<td><strong>Co-Founder and Executive Director</strong> of Front Office Sports Academy</td>
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Shifting the Trajectory of Community Health

While program director of ReCast Baltimore, Larry Simmons noticed that despite the high number of corner stores in Baltimore, very few offered healthy food options at affordable prices. During his BNLP fellowship, he developed a policy agenda focused on increasing access to healthy and affordable foods in one of Baltimore’s largest food deserts, Central West Baltimore. Working with the Health Department and advocacy groups such as the Resident Food Equity Advisors Program, Larry established a food policy initiative in collaboration with the Department of Planning that aims to support corner stores providing healthier options at more affordable prices. Larry is one example of BNLP Fellows who partner with community agencies and organizations to strengthen healthy communities.

BNLP provided the opportunity for me to dig deeper, learn more, and broaden my perspective of this awesome city we call home. From the start of the program I was able to apply the lessons learned to improve the effectiveness of my work in the communities and with the families I serve every day. I am grateful to have participated in such an awesome experience!

Advocating for Policy Change

Elyse Preston, associate director of Maryland Out of School Time (MOST), splits her days between advocacy and coalition-building to strengthen and sustain education funding reform.

Since completing the BNLP fellowship, Elyse has been active in expanding after-school programming for young people. Last year she traveled to Annapolis to speak with legislators about the importance of after-school programs. Now she is working with Delegates Eric Eversole and Mary Washington to craft legislation that defines community schools in Maryland, with the goal of garnering support to strengthen a statewide program. It is because of her passion for after school policy changes for youth that Elyse decided to apply for and subsequently received the White-Riley-Peterson Policy Fellowship. Elyse works to empower community members to harness their stories to expand education funding.

I have been able to articulate my passion and interests and was provided the tools, knowledge, and connections to build a stronger and more compassionate Baltimore with inspirational leaders who share a similar vision.
Establishing Programs for Positive Health Outcomes and Equity

Jasmine Campbell directs the Under Armour House on Fayette, a hub that supports the academic and social development of disadvantaged youth by providing year-round out of school time programming for students of all ages, believes in the importance of remaining culturally specific when thinking about community engagement.

Jasmine measures her success by what she’s been able to accomplish since her participation in the program including: creating a variety of new community programs, increasing community utilization and attendance at the community center, fostering new partnerships, certifying her staff through a youth development training program, and establishing a Diversity and Inclusion Committee at Living Classrooms. In addition, the BNLP experience has motivated Jasmine to go back to school! Jasmine has recently completed her first year in the MBA program at Johns Hopkins University.

“The fellows, the faculty, the panelists, and presenters have been so helpful in supporting the growth of us as leaders who thoroughly understand the complexity of the issues facing our communities.”