



## Strategic Consultation Grantees

### Dirt Beneath Our Feet: Assessing Soil Health on Urban Vacant Lots

**Katalin Szlavecz**, Research Professor, Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, Johns Hopkins Krieger School of Arts & Sciences

**Michael Braverman**, Commissioner, Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development

The goal of the proposed study is to characterize risks and identify potential beneficial uses of vacant lots by conducting a large scale environmental assessment focusing on of urban soil health. To achieve this, soil health will be assessed in 200 vacant lots by a combination of in situ soil screening as well as laboratory analyses. Site selection will be prioritized in consultation with the Department of Housing and Community Development that manages vacant lots. Soil contamination levels will be evaluated according to EPA guidelines and background concentration levels in Maryland, and the soil quality results will be reported back to DHCD. Results of this study provides the City a clearer picture to identify areas that can be strategically considered for green space, as well as evaluating conditions in already existing green spaces.

### Feasibility and Needs Assessment for Vaccinating Clinic Attendees of the Baltimore City Health Department, Sexual Health Clinic Population, Against HPV

**Mary Carol Jennings**, MD MPH, Assistant Scientist, Department of International Health; Academic Director/Core Faculty-General Preventive Medicine Residency Program Academic Director/Core Faculty, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

**Elizabeth Gilliams**, Baltimore City Health Department Sexual Health Clinic

This project will support an ongoing Baltimore City Health Department effort to improve and integrate the clinical offerings available at its recently co-located sexual health, vaccination, and family planning clinics in East Baltimore. As the City's sexual health clinic plans to transition to a new economic strategy that bills for services, its leadership is interested in better describing an evidence-based investment case for whether or not to include HPV vaccines in their clinical offerings, to better protect its patient population against cancers and other clinical manifestations of HPV infection. The adult population receiving services at the Eastern sexual health clinic at the Baltimore City Health Department may benefit from the clinic offering HPV vaccination, but the feasibility and case for investment are unclear. The BCHD Eastern Sexual Health Clinic has asked Dr. Jennings to assess stakeholder interest – including for clinicians, administrators, and most importantly patients – and to assess existing data, to develop the case for whether or not it makes sense to invest the time and resources into adding this new service. If our project is selected for funding, it will accomplish the development and presentation of an “investment case” to inform that decision.

## **Food Access and Diet Quality of Adolescents from SNAP Households in Baltimore City: A Partnership with the Baltimore City Department of Planning**

**Susan Gross**, Associate Scientist, Department of Population, Family and Reproductive Health, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

**Holly Freishtat**, Food Policy Director, Baltimore City Department of Planning

In Baltimore City, an estimated one in three young people experience food insecurity, or limited access to safe and nutritious foods. The Baltimore City government is committed to reducing youth food insecurity, and recently submitted an application to implement a pilot of the Summer SNAP Benefits program in 2020, with a particular focus on adolescents ages 14-18. The data collected from this Strategic Consultation Grant (SCG) proposal project will provide the context to inform the results of the evaluation of the Baltimore City Summer SNAP Benefits pilot program. The specific aims of this study are: (1) to examine dietary patterns among food secure and food insecure youth in Baltimore, and (2) to identify environmental and social contextual factors of food-related behaviors among food secure and food insecure youth in Baltimore. We will utilize three main data collection activities—demographics surveys, 24-hour dietary recalls (24HR), and virtual transect walks—in 30 youth recruited from YouthWorks, Baltimore’s youth employment program. Understanding how adolescents make food choices and access food can lead to community driven solutions that can be translated into policies to help increase food security and improve health equity for the Baltimore City youth.

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## **Impact of Baltimore City's Dockless Vehicle Program on Mobility and Equity**

**Johnathon Ehsani**, Assistant Professor, Department of Health Policy and Management, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

**Meg Young**, Shared Mobility Coordinator, Baltimore City Department of Transportation

Mobility is a key determinant of health, affecting access to medical care, nutritious food and other essentials. Dockless vehicles (including e-scooters, bikeshare and e-bikes) are transforming our urban mobility systems, with the potential to improve access to mobility for those without access to a personal vehicle or living in areas underserved by transit, and displace many short-distance trips now taking place in private motor vehicles. Baltimore City has one of the nation’s most progressive policies on equitable access to dockless vehicles, requiring vendors to redistribute their vehicles on a daily basis to twenty high priority mobility zones. The proposed research will evaluate the impact of Baltimore City’s dockless vehicle program on mobility and equity. Findings will allow city officials to understand the impact of the equity zone policy and refine the regulation in the upcoming legislative session to further advance their goal of improving mobility in underserved areas.

## **Ready for School? Supporting Data-Informed Early Childhood Strategies in Baltimore City**

**Lieny Jeon**, PhD, Assistant Professor, Johns Hopkins School of Education

**Elizabeth Tung**, Program Director of School Readiness, Family League of Baltimore

Young children's school readiness has critical implications for their later health and well-being. Multiple Baltimore city and quasi-city entities put forth efforts to offer various services to birth to age 5 children and families that address children's needs and ultimately improve children's school readiness and later outcomes. As a city-level effort to collectively accomplish the goal of having all Baltimore City children enter school ready to learn, this project seeks to partner with the Baltimore City Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), a strategic early childhood partnership group. We first propose to support the ECAC to create a Baltimore City early childhood Data Development Agenda, which would help the city to plan and implement data-informed early childhood policies and practices. The data development agenda would be used by ECAC partners in the next five years to establish a stronger city-level data system. In addition, we will use existing data on seven Baltimore City birth cohorts born between September 2007 and September 2014, provided by multiple city entities, to analyze changes in Baltimore City school readiness over time, accounting for demographics, developmental needs, and birth records of children. This will support ECAC in making data-informed decisions on early childhood strategies.

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## **Support of the Mayor's Office of Child and Family Success, African American Male Engagement (AAME) and My Brother's Keeper - Baltimore**

**Philip Leaf**, PhD, Professor, Department of Mental Health, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

**Andrey Bundley**, EdD, Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Children and Family Success

The Mayor's Office of African American Male Engagement (AAME) was created in 2017 and it became part of the Mayor's Office of Children and Family Success (MOCFS) in July 2019. AAME and MOCFS have asked Dr. Leaf to aid them in creating more positive opportunities and outcomes for boys and young men of color, especially African American males. Funding from the UHI will allow Dr. Leaf to attend the weekly AAME staff meetings and to provide support to the new Mayor's Children's Cabinet and MOCFS. They have asked Dr. Leaf to work with them to help identify programs in Baltimore already positively supporting the lives and trajectories of boys and young men of color and to aid in the linkage of agencies and community-based programming to better support Baltimore's boys and young men of color, especially African American boys and youth. Where there are gaps in Baltimore, Dr. Leaf will work with staff from AAME and MOCFS to identify programs that could fill these gaps. He also will work to expand activities created by AAME in Park Heights so they can be implemented in other Baltimore communities, building on current efforts of AAME.