



*A personalized approach
to career planning*

CareerCatchers

Annual Report Fiscal Year 2020



Letter from Executive Director



March 2021

Dear Friends and Supporters,

2020 was a challenging year for all of us and, most importantly, for our clients. CareerCatchers stepped up to the challenge. In a year of unprecedented unemployment, business closings, virtual school for all children, lack of computers and internet connectivity, and numerous related hardships, I am honored to say we helped 800 clients with new services and old services delivered in new ways, all delivered with compassion.

In early spring we vowed to serve clients to help them cope with the chaos in their lives:

Through our contacts and sources **we identify employers who are currently hiring**, and send a weekly information-based email to all clients. We also have a special page on our website, on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn with the same information. While COVID-19 shut downs have resulted in many layoffs, there are also new job opportunities created to deal with the increased demand for delivery of goods, for health care providers and remote-ready workers. We let clients know that we can help them complete applications via phone and email. The client response has been amazing and positive.

This is a great time for clients who have computers and internet access to consider **improving their workplace skills**. Realizing that many clients need help accessing the free online classes that we have identified, we developed a list of volunteers who help clients register for and start training classes. The result was a quantum increase in the number of clients who undertook training in 2020.

Our commitment **to increased outreach** to Domestic Violence victims -- and all of our clients --reaped dividends. We offered support in applying for unemployment benefits, added workshops, and provided training. We saw a sustained and large increase in workshop attendance. And with the huge changes to unemployment filing we helped well over 100 clients receive the expanded benefits.

And we rose to the challenge when the Montgomery County Government asked us to serve as **a processing agency for Emergency Assistance Relief Payments (EARP) program**, which provides cash assistance to residents in need.

These and our other endeavors resulted in the **52% increase in clients served from 2019 to 2020**.

In times like this it is most evident that growing our capacity is not a luxury but a necessity. Given the daunting landscape facing current and prospective CareerCatchers clients in 2021, we plan to redouble our efforts in the months ahead to meet our clients' needs. The County has pledged their support and asked us to serve up to 300 residents facing eviction. We promise to use that support to consolidate the improvements we have already made and to make CareerCatchers' services available to even greater numbers of clients.

All of the work we do would not be possible without the contributions of our staff, clients, board, partners, volunteers, and donors. 2020 was a rewarding year for us: we served more clients than ever despite the unprecedented times that we all faced.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mariana', written on a white rectangular background.

Mariana McNeill

Moving Forward Beyond COVID-19

This year, COVID-19 has brought many new challenges to our community, and especially to our clients. We adapted our career counseling services to reflect COVID-19 realities, and provide support to cope with the resulting devastating economic and personal impacts. Our clients face a multitude of barriers, such as lack of health care, transportation, and child care; limited access to technology; and crowded living conditions. These challenges to daily living and employment, difficult enough under normal circumstances, are exacerbated by crisis. In mid-April, once we had begun adjusting to working in this new, virtual environment, we reached out to our clients and partners to let them know we were ready -- resulting in a rise in returning and new clients. Our pro-active approach for staying in touch and establishing connections with our clients by phone, emails, Zoom, and other videos/audio platforms helped reduce their feelings of isolation and hopelessness. We seamlessly switched all of our counseling services to remote, expanded Job Club to accommodate many more participants on Zoom, and started a new Empowerment Workshop series at the request of clients. In July we began sending a [weekly curated email blast](#) to inform our clients and partners of program news, current job openings, and community resources. This information, along with other COVID-19 related resources, helps clients and partners be proactive in addressing opportunities.

View our latest resources
(careercatchers.org/latest-resources)

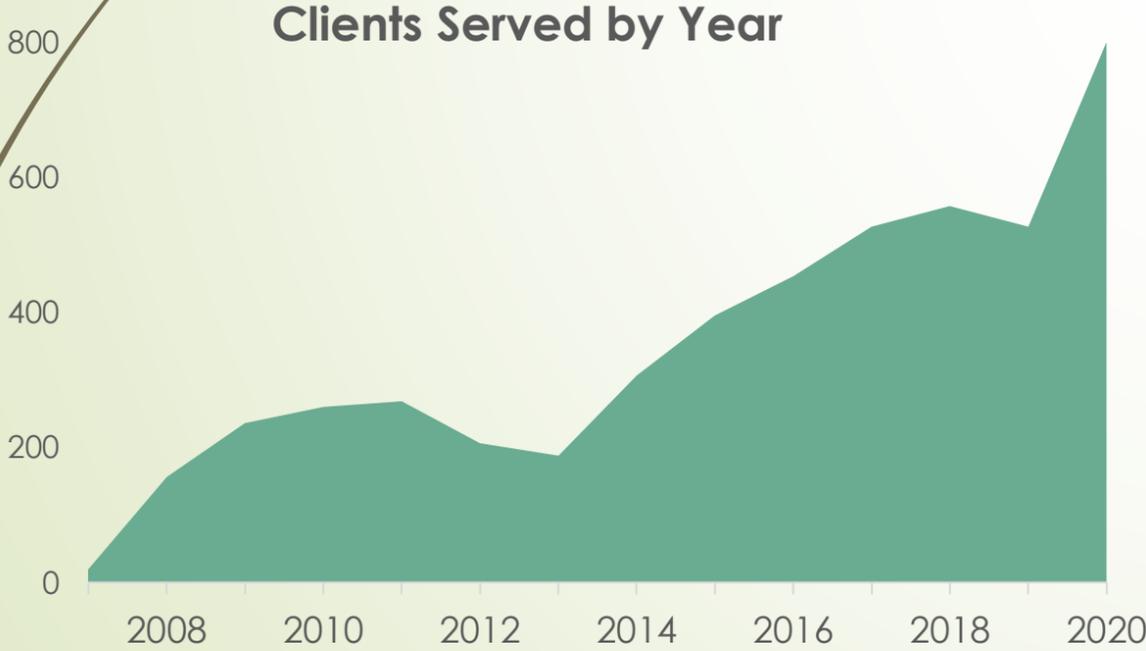
Hear our clients' experiences
(careercatchers.org/community-testimonials)

View our upcoming events
(careercatchers.org/events)

CareerCatchers Mission and History

Diversity and Inclusion Statement

To support a full productive life for all with whom we come in contact, CareerCatchers champions policies and practices which empower a just, inclusive and equitable nation and recognize the dignity of all individuals. Our vision, programs, and mission build on the core values of diversity, equity, and inclusion. We believe in being compassionate to all individuals. This belief informs our actions, including creating a racially equitable environment, and a feeling of inclusion and belonging for all of our clients, staff, volunteers, and board members.



Since 2007, CareerCatchers has been delivering intensive, individualized and sustained counseling to Montgomery County’s most vulnerable citizens. Our mission is to provide individualized employment and job skills counseling to ensure stable employment; identify and encourage participation in workplace skills and training programs; and enhance self-esteem and foster empowerment. The goal is to support our clients as they move out of poverty and away from continuously working in minimum wage, dead-end jobs.

CareerCatchers’ clients are underserved and unemployed residents in Montgomery County and the region. Since the organization’s inception in 2007, we have served over 2,500 clients. In 2018 and 2019, we served over 500 clients per year; in 2020 we assisted 800 clients. CareerCatchers’ clients span the non-mutually exclusive groups of domestic violence victims, homeless, foreign-born, those with disabilities, the previously incarcerated, youth aging out of foster care, and disconnected youth.

- At least 90% of clients are from Montgomery County, where nearly 20% of the population lives in poverty and 58% speak a language other than English in the home.
- Our clients are 79% women, 49% Black/African American, 56% between the ages of 30-49, and 64% born outside the U.S.

Meet the team



Mariana A. McNeill

*Executive Director/
Co-Founder*



K. Kunda

Program Director



Chris Stephens

Career Coach



Carl Edgecombe

Career Coach



Emma Kunda

Volunteer Coordinator



Sokunthea Soeun

*AmeriCorps VISTA
Fundraiser*



Justin Dignan

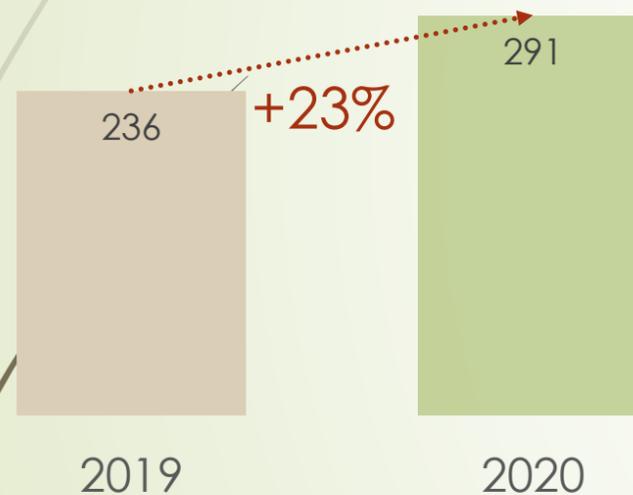
*AmeriCorps VISTA
Data Analyst*

Direct Career Counseling Services

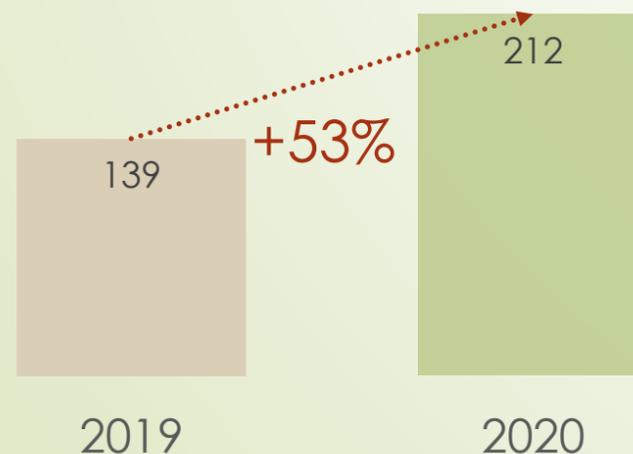
Every client who comes to us has a journey to share. All are hoping to find ways to support themselves and their families.

In Montgomery County, the median household income is more than \$108,000 annually, yet more than 9.5 percent of households are estimated to have an income of less than \$25,000 per year.

Clients Seen Intensively by Year



Clients Attending Training by Year



CareerCatchers provides intensive, one-on-one career counseling and workforce development training programs to job seekers. Clients work with Career Coaches with these objectives:

- Locating and applying for jobs matching interests and career goals;
- Evaluating abilities and determining skill sets;
- Identifying online training programs to improve workplace skills;
- Creating tailored resumes and cover letters;
- Providing interview practice and feedback;
- Finding ways to maintain employment.

We encourage participation in one-on-one counseling sessions, which serve to improve psycho-social health using the Empowerment Theory (knowledge dissemination, access to training, counseling); build self-esteem; increase job readiness; and boost career prospects. Once our clients are employed, we continue to provide coaching for up to two years to boost employment retention.

Our goal is to get every client into training programs and/or long-term careers. We help individuals find and maintain meaningful employment in career-oriented jobs, with the goal of moving towards financial independence and self-sufficiency. Our Career Coaches utilize an individual employment plan to assess clients' needs. The plan encompasses employment goals (short-term and long-term), client's qualifications, barriers, and an action plan towards achieving desirable outcomes.

Programs

Job Club

CareerCatchers hosts virtual Job Club sessions each Wednesday, led by our team of experienced workforce professionals and guest presenters. Attendees reinforce their knowledge of evolving job markets and employment skills. Participants also benefit from group interactions, increased accountability among attendees, networking opportunities, and emotional support designed to lower the risk of job search frustration. Discussion topics include résumé and cover letter writing, job applications, mock interviews, and more. These sessions help clients build and utilize their networks in order to market themselves more effectively.

Learning Communities

CareerCatchers' Learning Communities use a case study approach with other local non-profit workforce development organizations to increase their expertise in helping the disadvantaged find meaningful employment. The goal is to support a network of community agencies who work to move clients toward self-sufficiency through employment. In 2020, CareerCatchers held two Learning Communities. Participants expanded and enriched their capacity, leading to better outcomes for their clients, and the identification of areas of overlap and redundancy. We offered 2020 Learning Communities virtually and developed a Zoom-based methodology for future sessions. We use this methodology internally as well.

Empowerment Workshop

The weekly Virtual Empowerment Workshop Program, provides a safe environment for clients to discuss the challenges of COVID-19 and strategies for coping in this stressful time. Sessions cover Establishing Boundaries, Self-Esteem, Managing Emotions, and other topics requested by attendees.

"Career Catchers has helped me—both the Job Club and the Empowerment Workshop. Having been new in the country, I had no idea how to package and present myself when looking for a job, the do's and the don'ts when attending interviews, writing a resume, and much more. Through attending the sessions, I have been empowered. Having come from an abusive relationship, I had lost myself. However, by attending the sessions and having discussions, I have learned so much." –E.L client

Volunteer Program

Through our volunteer network, we offer assistance to clients who want to take skills training, improve their English, or develop basic computer skills. Our Career Coaches identify classes for clients, and then our volunteers work one-on-one to help them succeed. A significant number of our clients are immigrants, with English as their second language. Our Volunteer Coordinator matches these individuals with English tutors. Among the population we serve, there also is a need to improve their basic computer skills. We work with volunteer educators who teach 4 and 6-week virtual courses on computer basics, Excel, Microsoft Word, Google Docs, Bookkeeping Basics, and QuickBooks. As a result, many participants have expressed a significant boost of confidence after receiving help with their language and computer skills.

Inspiring Success: Gwen's Story

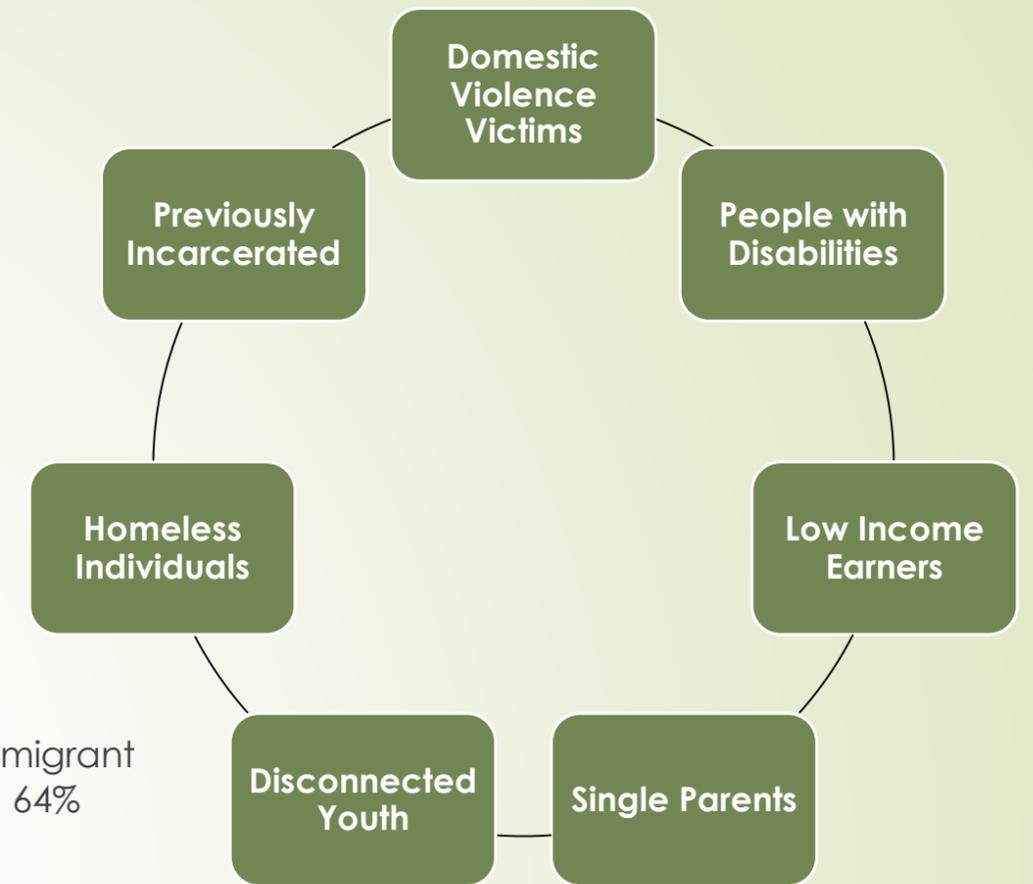
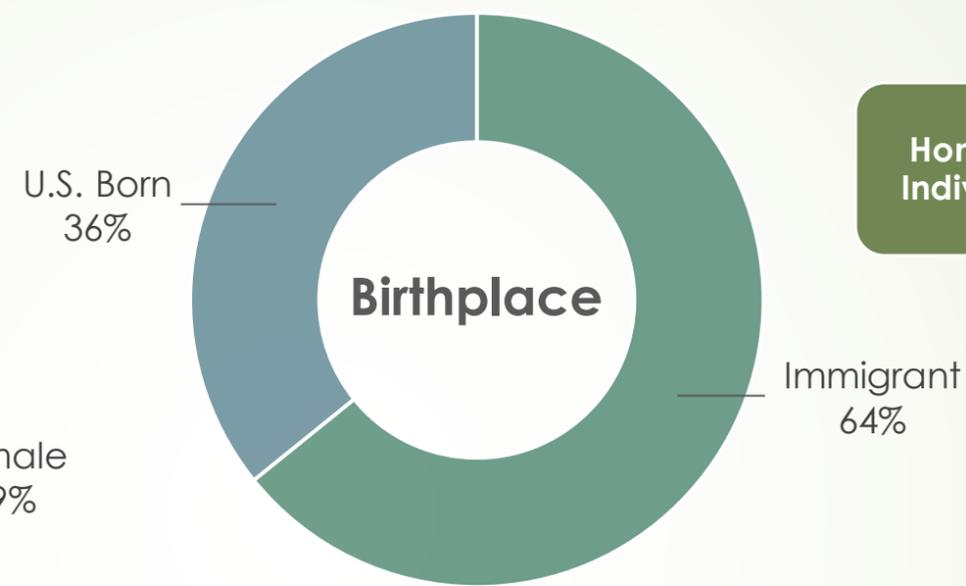
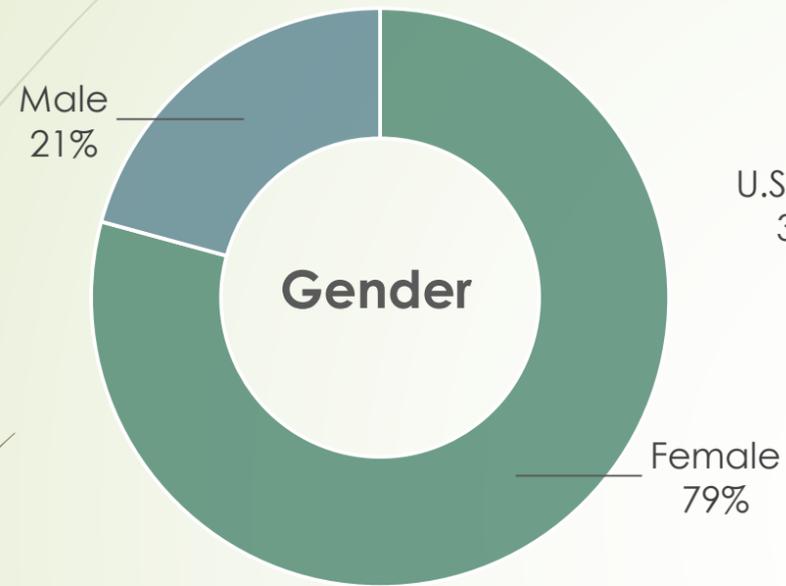


Photo by Michael Ventura

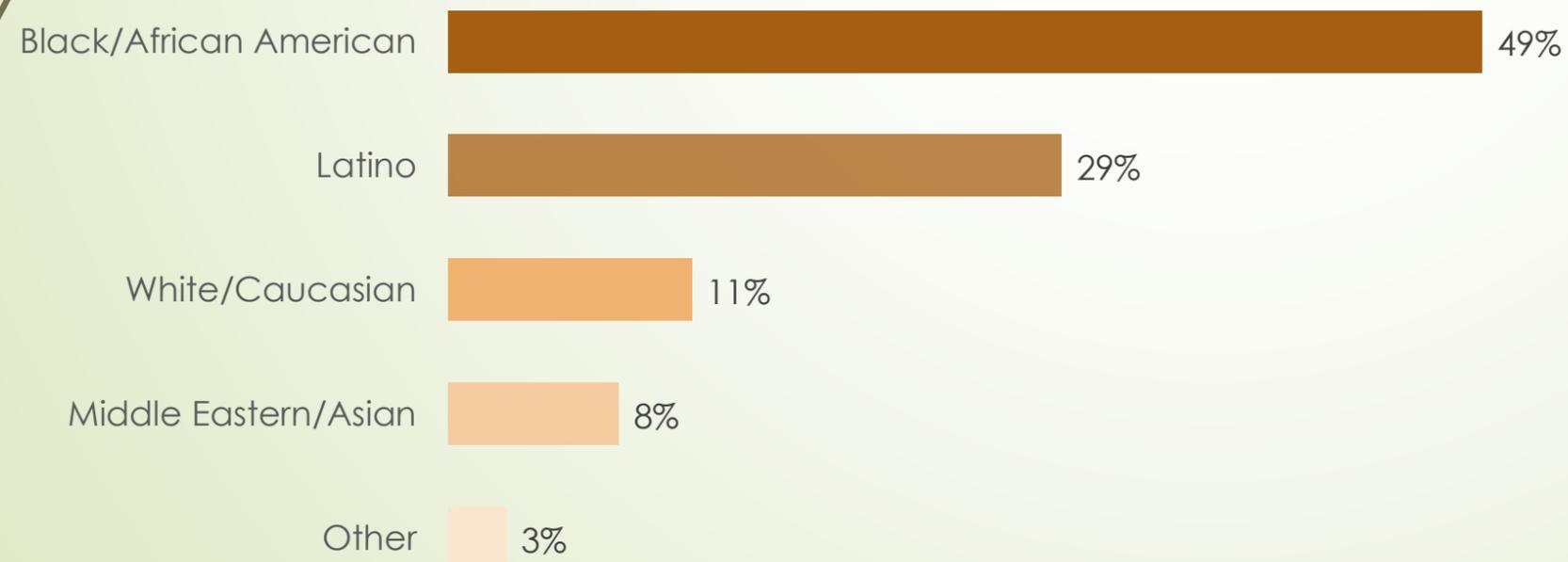
Gwen Cain says she went to the Montgomery County Crisis Center in late 2018 after she escaped her abusive marriage. There she was referred to the county's Abused Persons Program. After the staff ensured that she and her three kids were safe and had legal assistance, they connected Cain with CareerCatchers, "I went there with an open mind," she says. Cain, 46, who hails from the Caribbean, had been working as a health administrator at Suburban Hospital in Bethesda for \$15 an hour and needed a higher-paying job to support her family. With CareerCatchers' guidance, she obtained her bachelor's degree in health care administration online from the University of Phoenix. CareerCatchers also helped her update her resume, conducted a mock interview and connected her with recruiters. In December 2019, she landed a program coordinator position with the Henry M. Jackson Foundation in Bethesda. Then the pandemic hit and Cain was laid off in April 2020. CareerCatchers stepped in to help her again. The first place she sent her resume, the Department of Veterans Affairs, responded within a week. She started a remote executive administrator position in August. CareerCatchers taught her to negotiate her salary and, as a result, the new job gives her a substantial pay boost and other benefits. Cain says,

"It's very empowering. When you're in a situation like that, you don't feel like you're valued anymore," Cain says. "CareerCatchers made you feel valued—made you feel that you do have skills." (adapted from [Bethesda Magazine](#)/ and [YouTube](#))

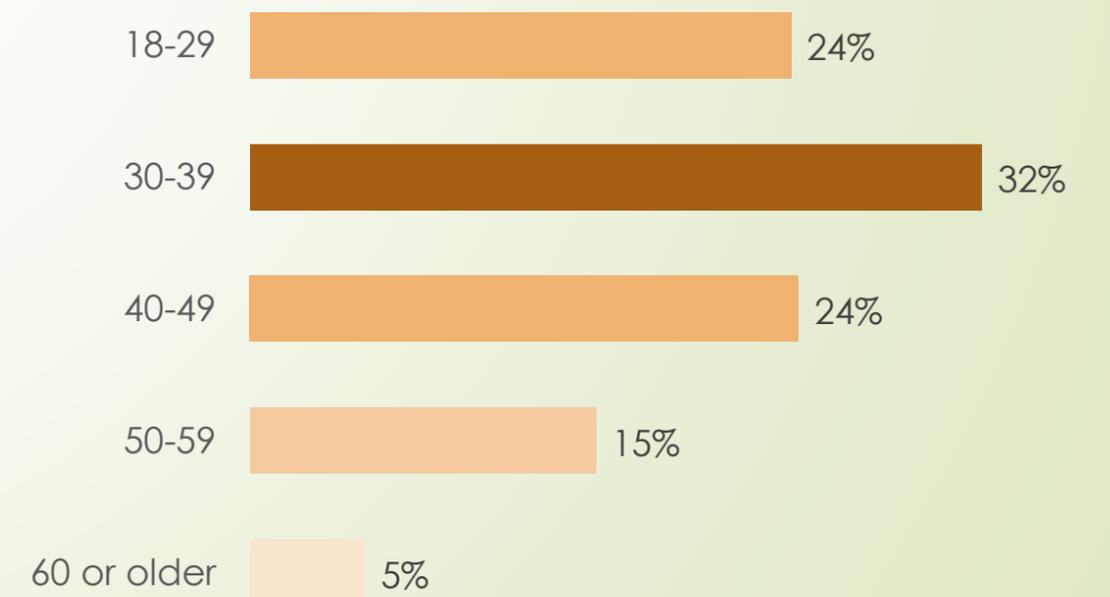
Who We Served



Ethnicity/Race



Age



Expanded Services

800

clients were assisted by CareerCatchers staff.

Our clients are current clients, new referrals from county partners, those receiving EARP assistance, and attendees of our training programs for the community and Montgomery College students.

"I'm extremely grateful to CareerCatchers. Their one-on-one guidance was invaluable at a crucial time when I needed assistance. Their patience and expertise helped me navigate a complicated application to present my work experience in the best possible light. Thank you!"

-Client, J.M

"Your team has really gone above and beyond in rising to the challenges brought on by the pandemic. You are such a valued partner to our program and to my clients, thank you!"

-Partner, M.F

291

clients were seen intensively.

Our career coaches prioritized checking in with clients to establish connections and to be sure that they receive personal contact. Even after clients start a new job, we continue to offer services. This year, 140 clients received post job placement support.

53%

of clients were new referrals.

This year, over half of our new clients were referrals from the 3-1-1 hotline seeking EARP assistance and attendees of our training programs for Montgomery College students.

How We Helped

73%

of clients seen intensively participated in training.

212 clients started at least one workforce development training. CareerCatchers' direct training programs included Job Club, Empowerment Workshops, and classes and tutoring offered by volunteers.

CareerCatchers also helped clients start courses on Alison.com, Coursera, GCFLearnFree, and through Montgomery College.

"With your help, I received a \$500 (EARP) check today. This is the equivalent of my three-year pension in China. I have thankful tears."

-EARP recipient, J.P

112

clients were assisted with filing for Unemployment Insurance.

These clients were either directly assisted one-on-one with filing for Unemployment or attended one of our Unemployment Insurance workshops.

"I have no words to communicate how I feel. AB is God send. In the past individuals didn't have the patience and that made me amazingly frustrated so I would simply stop. With AB's help I know I will acquire my GED."
-Client, R.B, matched with a volunteer

127

families directly assisted by CareerCatchers received EARP payments.

\$142,000 was the approximate total amount of payments received through our efforts.

42%

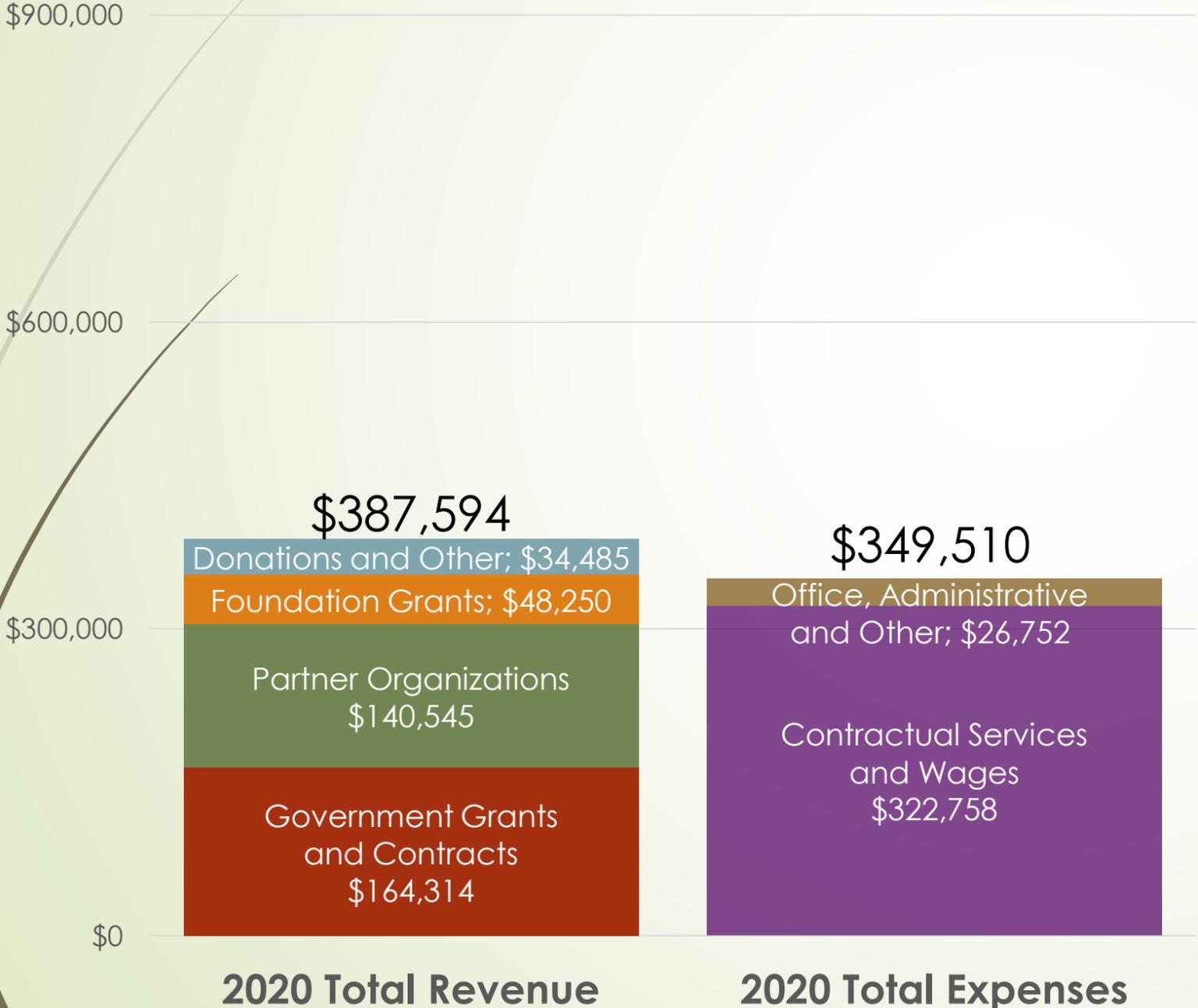
of clients seen intensively started a new job.

106 CareerCatchers' clients started new jobs in 2020. \$3,700,000 was the approximate total value of these jobs on an annual basis. Some of the jobs clients started include: Human Services Specialist, Bus Driver-Ride-On, Canvass Director in Training, Caregiver, Case Manager, CNA/GNA Store Manager, Community Health Worker, Companion Caregiver, Contract Writer, COVID Support (Temperature Checker), Warehouse Worker, Customer Agent, Data Entry Consultant, Delivery Driver-Postmates, Delivery Driver-Squeezed. © Copyright CareerCatchers 2021

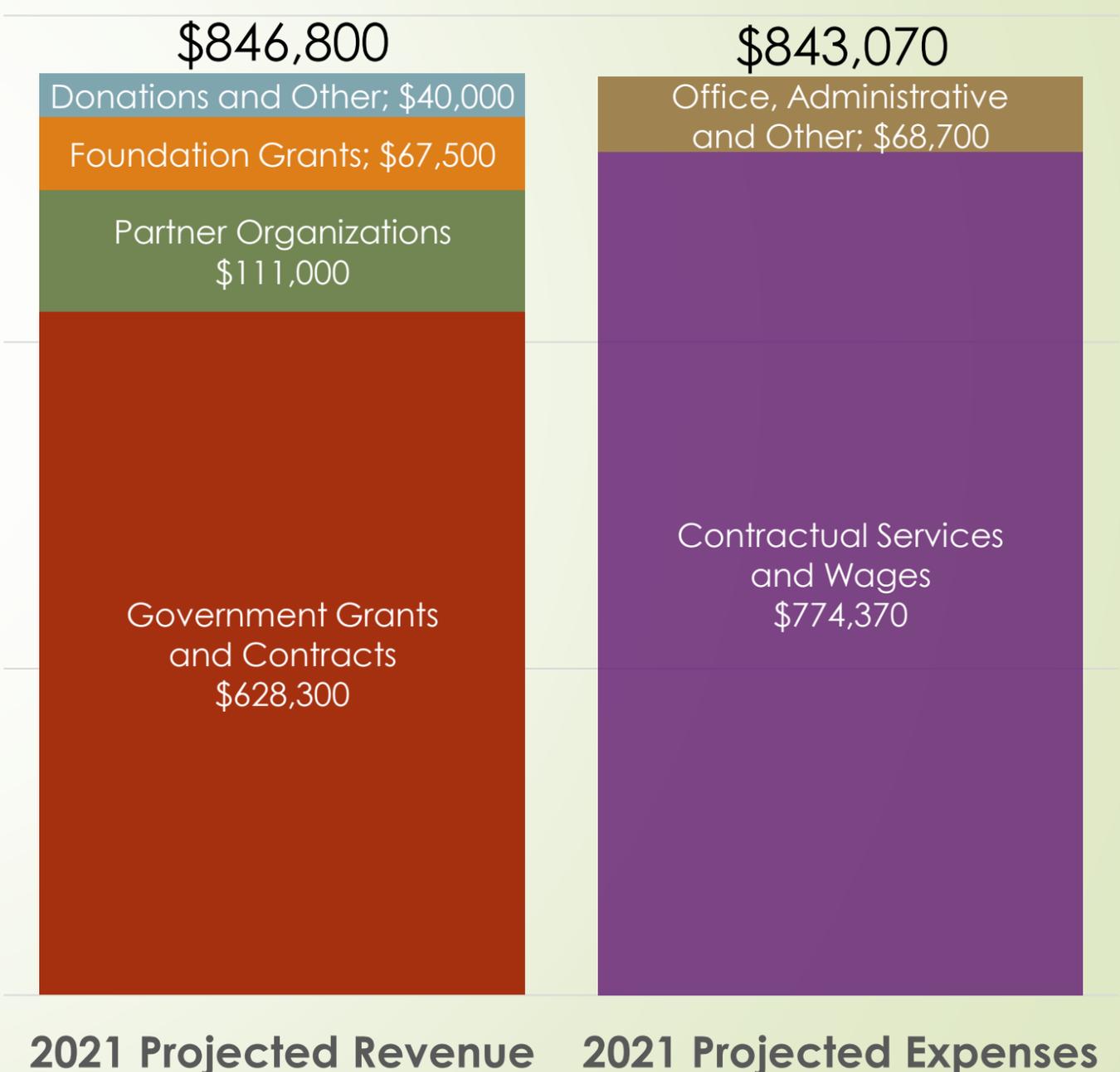
Financial Statements

Note:
 The budget for 2021 is a considerable increase from the prior year amount as the result of a County ESG contract of \$500K/year for two years. Services provided with these funds are restricted to clients referred by the County.

2020 Total Revenue & Expenses



2021 Projected Revenue & Expenses



Board of Directors

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Carol O'Connell

Board Member and Retired Federal Government Executive

Melissa Barrington

Board Member, Former Client, and Budget Analyst for DC Government

Sara Mazie

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Board Emeritus, Retired Employment Services Expert, and CareerCatchers Co-Founder

Mier Wolf

Board Emeritus, Retired Lawyer, and Former Mayor of Chevy Chase, MD



CareerCatchers Board Meeting

Special Gratitude to Our Partners and Donors

Partners

A Wider Circle
Abused Persons Program
Business and Financial Solutions, Inc.
Capital Bank of Maryland
Capital One
Catholic Charities USA
Charity Connect
Charity Engine
City of Gaithersburg, Maryland
City of Rockville, Maryland
Community Bridges
Crittenton Services of Greater Washington
Family Justice Center
Family Services, Inc. Part of Sheppard Pratt Health System
Giving Together, Inc. a Giving Circle
Greater Washington Community Foundation
Holy Cross Health
Home Care Partners
Housing Initiative Partnership
Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County
HP Computers
Identity
Interfaith Works
International Rescue Committee
Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse
Jewish Council for the Aging
Jim and Carol Trawick Foundation
Liberty Promise
Linkages to Learning
Martha's Table
Montgomery College
Montgomery College Community Engagement
Montgomery College Employment Advancement and Retention Network
Montgomery College Office of the President

Montgomery County Behavioral Health
Montgomery County Charles W. Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity
Montgomery County Coalition for Adult English Literacy
Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless
Montgomery County Council
Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
Montgomery County Elections Board
Montgomery County Food Council
Montgomery County Government
Montgomery County Office of the County Executive
Montgomery County Volunteer Center
Washington Area Women Foundation
Montgomery Housing Partnership
WorkSource Montgomery
National Institute of Health
Non-Profit Montgomery
Olney Theater
Phoenix Computers
Seeking Employment Equality and Community
St. Ann's Center for Children, Youth, and Families
Stepping Stones Shelter
Suited for Change
Taproot Foundation
The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region
The Corporation for National and Community Service
The Dwelling Place
The Erie Community Foundation
The National Center for Children and Families
The YMCA
United Therapeutics Corporation
Upper Montgomery Assistance Network

Grants and Contracts

Community Foundation COVID-19 Relief Grant
Boost Grant
Maryland Nonprofit Recovery Initiative
City of Gaithersburg
City of Rockville
Interfaith Works
Catholic Charities
Montgomery County Government
Montgomery College
Montgomery Coalition for the Homeless
Foundation Donations
The Cliff and Deborah White Family Foundation, a fund of the Greater Washington Community Foundation
The Solomon Family Fund
Clark-Winchcole Foundation
Community Foundation
Erie Foundation
Lester Poretsky Family Fund

In-kind Donations

Giving Together- Face Masks
Lions Solution LLC- Chromebook Laptops
Family Justice Center
Sheppard Pratt

Thank You.



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to career planning*

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