



Building a Workforce for the Future: Supporting Apprenticeships and Job Training

We have a recruitment crisis in public service and a skills gap in our economy- and we can solve both by investing in our own young people.

Anne Arundel County should stop waiting for the private sector to lead the way on workforce development and start acting as the model employer our community needs. If we're going to meet the Blueprint's ambitious goals - thousands of high school graduates with internships and apprenticeships each year - county government needs to step up.

Here is my plan to dramatically expand apprenticeships and job training in my first term.

First, here are the core values that I'll use when making decisions:

- **Invest in Homegrown Talent.** We shouldn't have to look outside the county to find talented workers. If our residents don't have the skills to fill open jobs, it is our responsibility to provide the training they need.
- **Government Must Lead by Example.** We cannot ask private businesses to invest in apprenticeships if the county government isn't willing to do the same. We must be the first to step up.
- **Early Exposure Matters.** Waiting until graduation to talk to students about careers is too late. We need to reach students in high school, showing them that a career in public service is a viable, honorable, and stable path.

Specific solutions to create pathways to success for our residents:

1. Meet and Exceed the "Blueprint" Goals

The *Blueprint for Maryland's Future* sets an ambitious goal: by 2030, **45%** of high school graduates should complete a Registered Apprenticeship or earn an industry-recognized credential. To hit this target, we need an "all-hands-on-deck" approach.

- **Empower the AAWDC:** The Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation (AAWDC) is our primary engine for this work, and they are doing a great job working to expand internships and apprenticeships. As County Executive, I will appoint board members who will keep this good work going, ensuring AAWDC continues to hand-in-glove with our schools to deploy career coaches who can connect students with real-world opportunities.
- **Coordinate the Ecosystem:** We will break down the walls between the school system, the community college, and local businesses, ensuring that every state dollar allocated for the Blueprint is used effectively to build pipelines into local industries.

2. The County as the "Model Apprentice Employer"

We will not just fund apprenticeships; we will create them. I will direct every county department head to identify roles that can be filled through apprenticeship programs.

- **Public Safety Pipeline:** We need more first responders and we will partner with high schools to create a paramedic and firefighter track, where students can begin their training before they graduate and start the fire academy directly after high school.
- **Public Works & Trades:** The Department of Public Works (DPW) needs skilled tradespeople. We will expand apprenticeships in public works, allowing high school seniors to gain hands-on experience in maintaining our infrastructure, with a clear path to full-time county employment.
- **Expand What Works:** The Department of Recreation and Parks has already begun successful training programs for childcare staff. We will treat this as the pilot for the rest of the government, scaling their success to other departments. And we'll expand the childcare program, which will allow us to open more before- and after-school care slots.

3. Local Hiring Preference

If you live here, you should have the first shot at working here.

- **Prioritize Residents:** We will explore the legality of implementing a **Local Hiring Preference** for county government jobs. Similar to the preference points given to veterans, qualified residents of Anne Arundel County should be given priority in the hiring process. This keeps tax dollars in our community and strengthens our local economy.