

The Paschalville Partnership's State of the Community: 2019 Report

Transforming Library Services for Job Seekers in Southwest Philadelphia



Welcome to the Paschalville Partnership's third annual State of the Community Report, highlighting the innovative work occurring in the Southwest Philadelphia community around Paschalville Library.

The Partnership brings together two strategic goals of the Library: serving job seekers and nurturing mission-driven partnerships. Nearly a third of Library users report visiting the Library to look for a new job or learn new skills. Throughout our system, we support them with computer and internet access, résumé assistance, seminars and workshops, and more, and in Southwest Philadelphia, the Partnership extends this support by connecting job seekers with skills-training opportunities, adult education, and financial empowerment through its collaborating organizations.

As we've worked together over the past three years to implement a common agenda, the Partnership has learned a lot, including what truly helps community members find good, sustainable jobs and what makes a collaboration productive and impactful. This report presents much of this insight.

Moving forward, I am pleased to announce that the Partnership is now embracing a third strategic goal of the Library—engaging with the community. Over the coming year, we will be rethinking our role as a community catalyst. You can read more about this exciting new phase on page 2 of this report. We look forward to continuing this initiative to strengthen Philadelphia's workforce and improve the livelihood of its citizens.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Siobhan A. Reardon".

Siobhan A. Reardon
President and Director
Free Library of Philadelphia



Welcome Fair for New Americans



Fall Job Fair



Paschalville Library

The Paschalville Partnership is a collaboration of 11 organizations spearheaded by the Free Library of Philadelphia. The Partnership operates in the service area of Paschalville Library, which is located in Southwest Philadelphia at 70th and Woodland Avenue, and has developed a common agenda following the principles of collective impact. *This program is made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.*

Three years ago, the Paschalville Partnership began implementing a common agenda for serving job seekers in the community. The work we've done so far is presented on the next page. But in the end, what difference have we made to the community? Thanks to ongoing data collection, we are pleased to share some of the highlights of our impact:

- A majority of job seekers who visited one of the Job Readiness Labs (JRLs) or who participated in an Employment Boot Camp felt they understood more about and had greater confidence in conducting a job search, according to post-program surveying.
- In a general survey of visitors to Paschalville Library, when asked about securing a job, 61 percent of respondents said the library "helped a little" or that "they couldn't have done it without the library."
- An estimated 36 percent of community members who connected to the PA CareerLink® system through the Partnership went on to find a job.
- Of adult learners who were assessed at the myPLACESM campus at the Southwest Community Development Corporation (CDC) JRL, 68 percent took the next step of enrolling in a class, a higher enrollment percentage than the overall myPLACESM system.

And yet, broader trends for the community suggest that the tide has not turned—the percent of the adult population participating in the labor force, after ticking up in recent years, is back down to where it was when we started. And unemployment in the community is going up, in direct contrast to the city's declining rate.



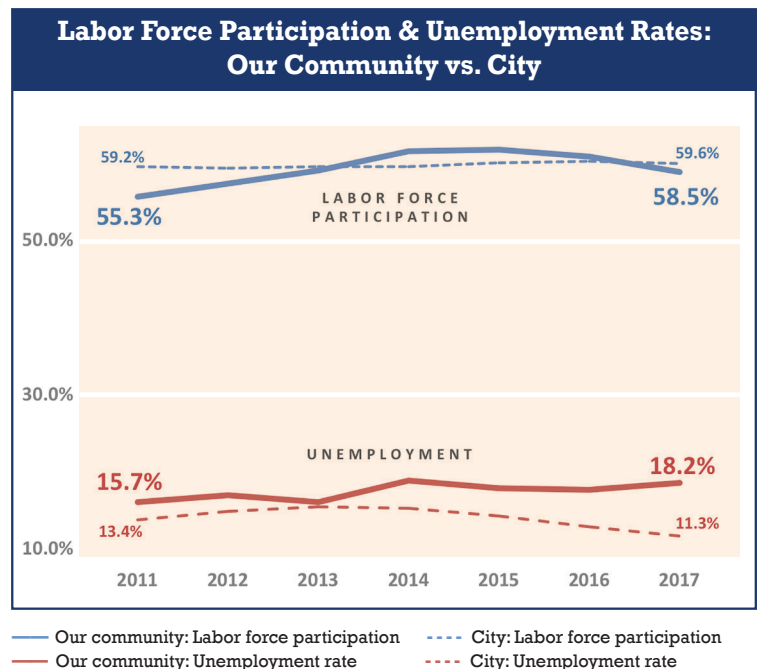
The Paschalville Partnership's Neighborhood Ambassadors

Bearing this in mind, the Paschalville Partnership has decided to go back into planning mode. This time, we are putting the community front and center. For the next year and a half, we will be working with a consultant team comprised of residents to craft an action plan that builds on community assets and takes its cues from what the community cares about. And keep an eye out for our Neighborhood Ambassadors: their job is to build relationships with community members, so that they can inform our work and articulate a supporting role for the Partnership. The Institute of Museum and Library Services is supporting this new phase of our collaboration as part of an innovative funding program called the Community Catalyst Initiative. More information is available at imls.gov.

Demographics At-a-Glance		
KEY DEMOGRAPHICS	Our Community	City
Total population (2017)	28,238	1,569,657
Population growth (2013–17)	-3.9%	2.1%
Labor force participation	58.5%	59.6%
Unemployment rate (population 16+ years)	18.2%	11.3%
Median household income	\$29,581	\$40,649
Poverty rate (percent of total population)	34.3%	25.8%
Foreign-born population (percent of total population)	22%	13%
Education attainment (population 25+ years)		
Did not graduate high school	21%	17%
High school graduate or equivalent	40%	34%
Some college, no degree	24%	22%
College graduate	15%	27%

Source: US Census Bureau, *American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates* (2013–17; 2009–13)

Note: We use the zip code 19142 to approximate our community in this report.



The Paschalville Partnership leverages the Library as a hub for job seekers by bringing together a broad array of community and city partners in support of Southwest Philadelphia residents. Since 2014, we have been hard at work implementing a common agenda of mutually reinforcing activities in support of job seekers. Here's our progress to date:

The Partnership supports Southwest Philadelphia residents in their job searches.

In the past three years, an estimated 2,200 job seekers have made a total of 3,600 visits to the JRLs located at Paschalville Library and Southwest CDC.

Most job seekers coming to the JRLs do not have a job or are looking for more or better work. JRL services include free computer and internet access as well as one-on-one assistance for creating résumés, setting up email and other online accounts, conducting internet searches, and applying for jobs online.

The Partnership helps Southwest Philadelphia residents hone job-seeking skills.

Close to 1,300 community members have participated in a Partnership program or event in the past three years.

Programming includes weekly workshops on digital literacy, quarterly Employment Boot Camps, biannual community open houses targeting new Americans and the reentry population, and biannual job fairs in the spring and fall.

The Partnership is breaking down employment barriers for Southwest Philadelphia residents. More than 160 community members, referred through a library workshop or a Boot Camp session, have signed up for skills training and other support services provided by PA CareerLink®.

The myPLACESM campus at the Southwest CDC JRL has assessed more than 360 adults—both native and non-native English speakers—who needed English-language instruction; required help with reading, math, and language skills; or wanted to obtain their High School Equivalency (HSE).

To serve this influx of adult learners, we have boosted instructional capacity. Today, there are six adult education programs running in Southwest, three of which are new, and a growing professional network of instructors and volunteers to work with adult learners. Together, these programs offer 16 classes in Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English as a Second Language (ESL), giving adult learners more opportunity to receive instruction in the community.



Meet Timothy. After becoming disabled and losing his home a few years ago, Timothy moved to Outley House, a shelter for men located across the street from Paschalville Library that provides emergency and transitional housing. When the Office of Adult Education started a new tutoring program at Outley House in 2017, Timothy's case manager invited him to join the class, and he was one of the first to register. Residents in the Outley House program receive transportation to Southwest CDC, where they take their initial assessment test at the myPLACESM campus and receive tutoring in the computer lab in the JRL.

Timothy has remained in the program for 18 months and thoroughly enjoys working with his tutors. He puts his fellow learners at ease with jokes and stories and works hard during weekly tutoring sessions. Timothy also signed up for and graduated from an Employment Boot Camp offered at Southwest CDC, completing four days of intensive workshops, résumé writing, and mock interviews in preparation for a job search.

Timothy is now in a new home, but he still travels by bus and trolley to take classes and is working toward earning his High School Equivalency (HSE). In the meantime, Timothy and Roy, one of Timothy's tutors, are happy to see each other every week. As Roy says: "We're taking a small step in solving the world's problems because we're both here trying to do the right thing."



Meet Song. Song is from Korea; she has been studying English since middle school and is an advanced English speaker. When she moved to the US a few years ago, Song took an ESL assessment test at the myPLACESM campus and scored so high that instructors felt they did not have an appropriate class for her. Instead, they recommended that she pursue her HSE.

So she did, enrolling in a community-based class. Song was impressed by the determination of her classmates to complete their HSE: "I saw that they were working so hard at this, and they had had such difficult lives. I thought I should do it with them." After completing the course and passing the test, Song participated in a citywide ceremony for HSE graduates hosted by the Office of Adult Education.

At the same time, Song agreed to become a volunteer, accepting a position to co-teach an ESL class at Southwest CDC. Song thrived in this position and was especially adept at creating visual aids for her students. When her co-teacher moved on to another class, Song became the class's full-time ESL instructor. She continues in this role today and has come to discover the wide range of levels and experiences that adult learners, some of whom have never attended school, bring to her class. This is something she can relate to, as she remembers starting with the English alphabet when she was just a middle-school student in Korea.

This program is made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.



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