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Agency Spotlight

By Shawtair Thompson

Mayoral Fellowship Newsletter



STEPHANIE
RAWLINGS-BLAKE
MAYOR

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Mayor's Office of Immigrant and Multicultural Affairs

It is often that we hear how the Mayoral Fellowship Program boosts the professional skills and enhances career choices for the participants lucky enough to be chosen. However, the Mayoral Fellowship Program does not just offer benefits to the Fellows, but also to participating agencies. I got the chance to interview one such agency to learn about the lasting effects of the Mayoral Fellowship program.

Catalina Rodriguez, now the Director of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant and Multicultural Affairs, worked closely with Mayoral Fellow, Lindsey Bishop, and another intern to coordinate numerous meetings with public, private and nonprofit agencies around Baltimore City. This coordination was in effort to work on the New America's Task Force initiative. The goal of this initiative was to promote the immigrant population as a target population for the Mayor's signature Grow Baltimore initiative.

The project was successful enough that a separate office grew out of the work done by Ms.

Rodriguez and the help she received from the program. The office is continuing its work to implement the 34 recommendations that came out of the research and interviews conducted during the course of that ten week Mayoral Fellowship Program. Ms. Rodriguez also notes that because of the limited operating time of the Fellowship, the process was greatly accelerated, exceeding the expectations and practices in other cities.

At the conclusion of the Fellowship, Ms. Bishop submitted her report. But of course, the work does not end for agencies after ten weeks. Information from this report was rolled into a larger, comprehensive plan that guides the office today. The benefits of which are that the Mayor's Office of Immigrant and Multicultural Affairs is no longer an idea with a goal, but an office with a strategic plan that will assist in achieving the outcomes that will not only benefit the City's diverse immigrant population, but Baltimore City as a whole.

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Lunch with the Mayor

By Shawtair Thompson

The Mayoral Fellowship Program has been an ongoing institution through the Mayoral administrations. Part of this program involves the chance to have a discussion with the Mayor of Baltimore City. This year's Mayoral Fellow class had the opportunity to ask the Mayor questions about the rewards and challenges of running a large city and respond to her questions about their academic backgrounds and the projects they are working on.

It is safe to say that everyone was excited and a little anxious before heading into the lunch. The nervousness subsided with the good food, but the excitement remained. As they ate, the Fellows introduced themselves and their varied backgrounds. They expressed their excitement about their current projects and future goals. The Fellows also got the chance to learn more about Mayor Rawlings-Blake and her hopes for the City.

When asked, the overall impression of the group was that the Mayor really cares about the City and its continued development. This is, in essence, why the Mayoral Fellowship Program still continues today; to generate creative ideas and solutions for a better Baltimore.



DARIN BAYLEY

Interview by Drew Tildon



Tell us a little about yourself and the program.

I am the Special Assistant to the Mayor's Chief of Staff, as well as the Program Director of the Baltimore City Mayoral Fellowship Program. I have the privilege of working with this talented cohort, which is tasked with tackling some of the policy issues facing the City.

What do you hope fellows will get out of the program?

I hope Fellows have the opportunity to hone their research and analysis, public presentation, and time management skills. In the beginning, Fellows are being asked to drink from a fire hose of information, but by the conclusion of the program, they will become quasi-experts in their area of focus. This seems like a tall order for individuals who are with a city agency for only ten weeks, but I know this group is up to the task!

What do you hope Baltimore City will get out of the fellowship?

If this program is a success, Baltimore City will get impactful recommendations that will be implemented to make city government a) more efficient, b) more responsive, and c) more transparent. The Mayor is always striving to deliver the best product she can to the City, and my hope is that they will be a strong partner in this process with her and the city agencies that touch the lives of countless Baltimoreans.

What is one piece of advice you would give the fellows?

I think the most important thing Fellows can do is listen. I cannot stress how important it is for this group to solicit feedback before constructing recommendations, and I think they'd be wise to heed the advice offered from citizens and their colleagues across city agencies.

What do you believe sets Baltimore's Mayoral Fellowship apart from other similar programs?

In one word, I'd say "access." I think it's rare for Fellows to have as much high-level interaction as the Baltimore City Mayoral Fellows receive over the course of ten weeks. It's great to know that the Mayor and her Senior Team care a great deal about the insights these Fellows will bring to the table, and as a result of this expectation, Fellows have the opportunity to meet with titans of business, government, law and the non-profit world. We want the Fellows to be incredibly well-informed about the recommendations they will be offering by the end of the program, and having the ability to bounce ideas off of influential members of the community can be really helpful with that process.

Meet the Fellows

Amit is a second year graduate student. A native of India, he has been in Baltimore for little over a year. He finished his undergraduate studies in Information Technology from India and is currently pursuing double masters in Computer Science and Engineering Management at the Johns Hopkins Whiting School of Engineering. He has been previously associated with the City as an intern during which he found out about and became interested in the Mayoral Fellowship.

In keeping with his technical background, Amit has been assigned as a Fellow in the Mayor's Office of Information Technology. He is working on the *open data project*, which deals with management of the City's public data. His role involves integrat-



Amit Mehta

ing the data and upgrading the processes that are used to upload the data to make it more efficient. He is also assisting in modeling and summarizing the public data, which would facilitate the creation of compelling visualizations, making it easier for the citizens to understand the data.

The Mayoral Fellowship has afforded Amit the opportunity to interact with numerous stakeholders at various levels within the City. Being a non-native, these encounters have not only allowed him to appreciate the difficulties faced by the City, but have also facilitated a better understanding of the cultural subtleties that are unique to Baltimore. From getting to know the other Fellows to watching his very first baseball game at the hallowed Camden Yards, he has thoroughly enjoyed his experience so far as a Mayoral Fellow. After finishing the Fellowship, he would love to continue to be involved with the City while he works towards finishing his studies.

Drew Tildon is a Baltimore City native and a Mt. Washington resident. After graduating from the Park School of Baltimore in 2011, she began attending Northwestern University. She is looking forward to graduating in March of 2015 with a B.A. Her two majors are Political Science and Theatre and she will also earn a Musical Theatre Certificate.

When she isn't studying she can be found rehearsing for student and university sponsored theatre productions or working with her a cappella group, THINK A Cappella, as the co-music director and Cape Town Project producer. One of her proudest accomplishments thus far is her work on THINK A Cappella's philanthropy: The Cape Town Project, a biennial service trip to South Afri-

ca. The trip serves as an opportunity for group members to teach music workshops to children affected by the AIDS epidemic.

When Drew learned of the Baltimore City Mayoral Fellowship program, she was immediately interested. Once accepted into the program, she was placed with the Chief of Staff, Kaliope Parthemos, and the Director of Policy and Communications, Kevin Harris. Drew is currently working on the Mayor's Grow Baltimore initiative. Over the course of her Fellowship, she hopes to create a cohesive Grow Baltimore plan that defines the roles of various city agencies and other non-government stakeholders.

While Drew initially plans to pursue a career in acting after graduation, she is also going to take the LSAT in June of 2015 and apply to law school. She looks forward to exploring her two passions and, as her Grandmother says, maybe she'll be a singing, dancing, acting lawyer!

Drew Tildon



Meet the Fellows cont.



Shawtair Thompson

Shawtair Thompson is currently a graduate student at Notre Dame of Maryland University. She will earn her Master's degree in Nonprofit Management this summer along with induction into the National Business Honor Society. She earned her Bachelor's degree from Cornell University with double majoring in

Sociology and Near Eastern Studies and a minor in Inequality. Before starting the Mayoral Fellowship, Shawtair worked with seniors and disabled persons as a service coordinator providing case management and event planning in a residential setting.

Shawtair learned about the Mayoral Fellowship Program while searching out new services for her residents and thought the program sounded like a great opportunity. As a Mayoral Fellow, Shawtair is currently working on the procurement process and regulations with the Baltimore City Law Department. Using critical analysis, research and agency cooperation, Shawtair hopes to make the procurement process more efficient and effective for the City and public.

After the completion of the Fellowship program and her Masters degree, Shawtair hopes to gain a permanent position with the city government. Shawtair's long-term goals include starting a business in the form of a non-profit or social enterprise and later pursuing a doctorate degree.

On a personal note, Shawtair enjoys being creative in her free time. She is an avid diy-er and enjoys repurposing old things around the house. Currently, her projects include crocheting, home-made body products, and paper art. Shawtair also has a passion for learning about people and other cultures and hopes to be able to visit South America in the near future.

Originally from Gorham, ME, Adam moved to Maryland to attend Goucher College in Towson, MD, where he graduated from in May 2014, with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and a minor in German.

While at Goucher, Adam participated in a number of different extracurricular activities, including Vice President of the Class of 2014, President of the Goucher College Democrats, and as a member of an a cappella group.

He also studied abroad in Lüneburg, Germany, for a semester where he studied German language and the politics of the European Union.

After learning about the Baltimore City Mayoral Fellowship at a job fair on campus, Adam applied. Upon acceptance, he was placed with the Baltimore Police Department

(BPD). At the BPD, Adam works within the Office of Internal Oversight (OIO) in the Force Investigation Team, or FIT, on issues involving police use-of-force. Fundamentally, the FIT looks at instances of police usage of force, and analyzes the *tactics* and *training* that the officer utilized in the situation, given its specific circumstances, and then looks at what changes can be applied to BPD training.

In the BPD, Adam is working to gather data from the last 10 years on police use-of-force, analyzing both the officers and the other members involved in the incidents, and assisting with the enhancement of the Use of Force Training Program.

After completion of the Fellowship, Adam will be a first-year student in the University of Southern

Adam Mosey



Maine's Masters in Public Policy and Management program. He will also continue his service in the Army National Guard. After achieving his advanced degree, Adam hopes to continue in public service—ideally as a legislative assistant—in Maine, Baltimore/Washington DC, or abroad.

Alumni Spotlight by Amit Mehta



Elizabeth Tatum

Hometown: Shippensburg, PA

Fellowship Year: 2013

Agency Placement: CitiStat

Project: Smart Baltimore

Academic Background: BS in English Education from Taylor University. MPA from Fels Institute of Government, University of Pennsylvania.

Current Employer: Maryland Department of Human Resources

Why did you choose to participate in the Baltimore City Mayoral Fellowship (BCMF) program?

Along with having some family roots in Baltimore, while in graduate school, I was interested in exploring the possibility of working for local or state government.

I knew that Baltimore has experience with and has successfully tackled some of the challenges

typical in many American cities. I wanted to see how that was done. I thought it would be a very good training ground.

Fondest Memory

The best outing we went on as Mayoral Fellows was a bike tour led by Baltimore Heritage.

Not only did we bike through pretty interesting parts of the City together, we also learned about the history of the various development projects and how the City has changed over the years. On the whole, the outing was a really nice tribute to Baltimore: to what it was and what it will be.

What did you accomplish by the end of your summer with BCMF?

The goal of my project was to map the sources of a set of CitiStat performance indicators.

Documentation of these sources provides a comprehensive reference point for decision makers, data analysts, line staff, and others. And in some cases it allows reports to be automated. This saves time, saves money, and helps to ensure the integrity of the data.

I would have to look up the exact number, but by the end of the summer, I had mapped hundreds of indicators for the Fire Department, the Bureau of Water and Wastewater, and the Bureau of Solid Waste.

How did BCMF shape your life and your career goals?

The Mayoral Fellowship was helpful to me in a number of ways. It confirmed that working for local or state government was the right place for me.

In addition to this, I think the performance management knowledge I gained was helpful. Moreover, I think it gave me a general orientation to how the government works, how bureaus interface with one another, and how things get done. I think some of those things have been incredibly helpful to me now in my current position with the state government.

Do you have any advice for current Fellows?

I would say that, as a Fellow, you have two things working in your favor: you have a lot of access—to important people and important information—and you have low risk.

“Complete your project well, but also look around and explore other things that interest you.”

You are free to ask questions, offer up ideas, and learn as much as you can. Use that opportunity to explore. Complete your

project well, but also look around and explore other things that interest you.

For example, do an informational interview or have lunch with someone outside of your office. People generally want to be helpful, so learn as much as you can and refine your career goals along the way.

Visit to the Downtown Sailing Club

By Drew Tildon



On a sunny Friday afternoon, the Fellows piled into a car and headed over to the Baltimore Sailing Center for an afternoon of teambuilding activities. Upon their arrival, they were greeted by several sailing center counselors for a quick introduction to sailing. After Sailing 101, the Fellows split into groups of three and four and climbed aboard.

Once in the boat, the Fellows were able to see Baltimore from a very

different perspective. They began their journey next to the Domino sugar factory and quickly sailed out further. Although the original plan was to race the three sailboats, the group quickly agreed that they would rather spend their time exploring the waters and getting to know the ships.

The three groups sailed out past Fort McHenry and weren't far from the Key Bridge when they turned around and headed back toward the Baltimore Sailing Center.

With the few minutes they had left, the Fellows headed toward the inner harbor. They maneuvered around cruise ships and water taxis as they

approached the science center.

As the excursion came to a close, Fellows had the opportunity to park the sailboats at the dock (with the help of a BSC counselor). After climbing out of the boats, Fellows gathered for a photo with the Domino Sugar factory in the background.

The Fellow's time at the Baltimore Sailing Center gave them a hands-on opportunity to explore an integral part of Baltimore City's culture: the Chesapeake Bay.



Changing Perspectives

By Adam Mosey

Roughly 80% of the United States population is urbanized. Working in municipal government offers a unique opportunity to view the inner workings of how cities are run, the issues they face, and the policy innovations that are being undertaken in order to address these issues in a time of austere budgets. As Fellows, we all have prior experiences and expectations that shaped how we anticipated working in Baltimore City government would be. Now that we have several weeks of the Fellowship completed, we asked the members of the Mayoral Fellowship to share how their perceptions have changed.

My time as a Mayoral Fellow has helped me really appreciate the challenges facing the City. It has made me realize that from a single user point of view, most of these problems might seem to have an easy solution. However, when you actually try to consider all the stakeholders involved these seemingly straight forward solutions become impractical. Additionally, the people here have been extremely helpful and fun to work with, which has been a pleasant surprise.

~Amit Mehta

Hailing originally from rural Maine, where our biggest city has roughly sixty thousand residents, working in Baltimore City with over six hundred thousand has been an eye opening and enriching experience. At first, navigating the complex bureaucracies that make up city government seemed like a herculean task. However, with increased exposure and knowledge I realized that each department is intricately linked to one another as well as to the citizens they serve.

~Adam Mosey

My perspective has done a complete 180 thanks to this Mayoral Program. I eventually want to work for the Federal Government in Crime Scene Investigation, but after seeing how a municipal government is run I am very open to working at the City level as well.

~Andrew McGregor

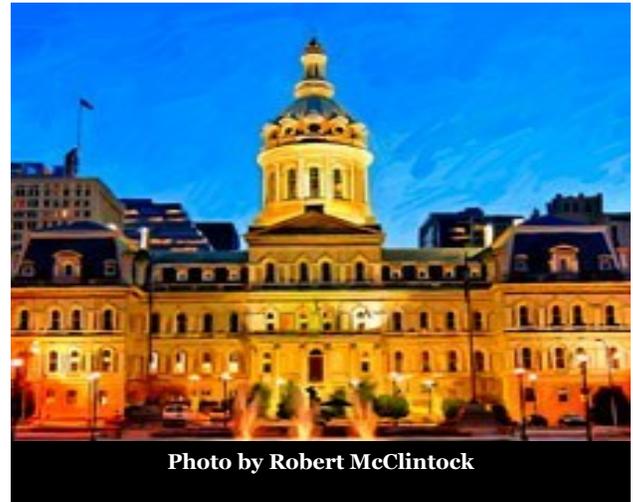


Photo by Robert McClintock

My perception of working in a city government agency has slightly changed since starting the Mayoral Fellowship Program. I did not initially realize just how great of an impact the work we perform daily has on the citizens of Baltimore City. After working here for the past month, I have gained a newfound respect and appreciation for the City that I call home. It is extremely rewarding to see firsthand so many aspects of a functioning city government that works to provide critical services and resources to its residents. It is very interesting to learn about the interconnections between various agencies, even amongst the tasks assigned to other Fellows in the Mayoral Fellowship Program. It also makes me happy to see such a diverse representation of city government employees from many different backgrounds, each with unique perspectives.

~Hanifah Parker-Morrison

Changing Perspectives Cont.

Although I assumed cooperation between agencies would be a challenge with varying priorities for each agency, I've been pleasantly surprised to find that this is not the case for the City of Baltimore. As city government strives to better serve their citizens, it's been encouraging to witness the can-do spirit at the agencies I've been able to interact with.

~Shuchun Wang

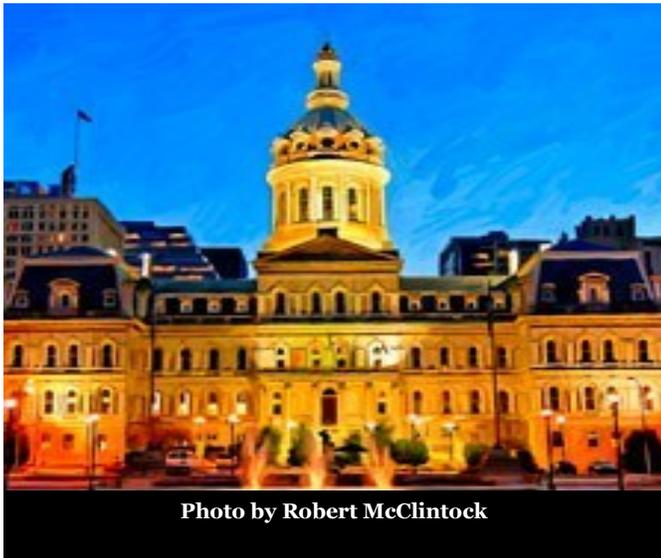


Photo by Robert McClintock

When I began working for the City I imagined being in a bubble, sort of doing work separate from and independent of everyone else. But that assumption was so far from reality. I've met with so many of the departments and agencies, and I've gotten to see how everyone has to work together in order to make this City run. It's been an incredible process seeing how interconnected everyone and everything is. Because of this, I have a greater appreciation of all the people who make Baltimore City a great place to live.

~Shawtair Thompson

Working for the City has made me appreciate what an important role government plays in maintaining stability in the daily lives of Baltimore citizens. Government workers are tirelessly figuring out solutions to problems and implementing new ways to keep the City safe, clean and healthy. The efforts of government workers are what keep this City running.

~Jackson Houbolt

I began my Fellowship expecting to work on brand new initiatives where the city's impact and effectiveness is monitored and evaluated on a regular basis. However, I've learned that few initiatives are "new;" most programs have been tried before under a different title. Also, city officials still struggle with how to measure actual impact; while they are able to track various indicators of progress, they have a hard time evaluating the effectiveness of a given program over the long-term. That said, I am inspired by the efforts I see around me, and I find the constant attempt to streamline city operations fascinating.

~Jessica Clarke