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Junior Achievement of Central Maryland and the Maryland Dept. of Education Launch Summer Program Targeting “Special” and “Non-Tradition” Students

The three-week program is designed to retain and motivate 200 high school students to complete their career and technical education.

BALTIMORE, MD April 5, 2021 - [Junior Achievement of Central Maryland Inc. \(JA\)](#) and the Maryland Department of Education Division of Career and College Readiness are partnering on a three-week program this summer designed to retain and motivate up to 200 high school students considered “special” or “non-traditional” to complete their career and technical education.

Junior Achievement has received an \$80,000 grant from the Department of Education to launch the pilot program aimed at students in the Business, Management and Finance Career Cluster.

“We are thrilled to be working with the Maryland Department of Education on this exciting summer program that will benefit so many students in the region,” said Jennifer Bodensiek, President, Junior Achievement of Central Maryland. “The program will focus on intensive instruction on creative problem solving, rapid business planning and thinking like an entrepreneur. We believe this program will have a positive impact on the lives of students who might otherwise receive little attention.”

“The Maryland State Department of Education is committed to preparing our future workforce through robust CTE programming,” said State Superintendent of Schools Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D. “Together with Junior Achievement, we are preparing students to become business owners and entrepreneurs. With the program content aligning with Business, Management, and Finance CTE programs of study, students will be able to apply what they learn over the summer in their middle and high school courses.”

Nontraditional students are defined as students who are enrolled in programs where one gender comprises less than 25 percent of an occupation, for example, boys in cosmetology or girls in construction. Special population students, on the other hand, are defined as students with disabilities, homeless individuals, youth who have aged out of the foster care system or individuals from economically disadvantaged families to name a few.

The program, called JA Entrepreneurship Summer Experience, runs from July 12 to July 30 and is aimed at students entering grades 8, 9, and 10. JA and the Department of Education will recruit students who are in the Business, Management and Finance Career Cluster. They also



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will continue the program into next year and are committed to providing students - regardless of race, religion, age, gender, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or any other legally protected characteristic - access to economic opportunity.

The first week of the program will focus on problem solving, where students will learn and apply 'Design Thinking,' an innovative process for problem-solving used by entrepreneurs to brainstorm customer-centric ideas. Week two will challenge the students to think like an entrepreneur where they will be tasked with learning entrepreneurial principles, strategies, and skills through others' experiences and apply them to their own lives. During the final week students will practice rapid business planning where they will learn about business planning foundations using the Lean Canvas, a streamlined, one-page business plan template.

A portion of the funds will be used to recruit and train educators to teach students the content around the Business, Management and Finance Career Cluster. Industry experts, business executives and volunteers will also participate and bring the content to life by sharing their knowledge and experiences. In addition to educating the students their mission is to inspire them to succeed in a rapidly changing economy.

The program will take place virtually and in person. In person instructions will be held at Junior Achievement's new, state-of-the-art Regional Workforce and Innovation Center at 1725 Twin Springs Road in Baltimore.

About JA of Central Maryland

Junior Achievement of Central Maryland is part of the largest organization dedicated to inspiring and preparing young people to succeed in a global economy. Through a dedicated volunteer network, JACMD provides hands-on programs that show more than 30,000 K-12 students each year the realities of how careers, money, and business ownership work. JA experiences are proven to give students the edge in college completion, career readiness, earning potential, and business start-up. For more information, visit www.centralmaryland.ja.com

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