

The City of Frederick
Mayor's Innovation Showcase
Returnships



FREDERICK
MARYLAND

Mayor Michael O'Connor

January 30, 2026

Frederick, Maryland

- Second largest city in Maryland, home to about 90,000 residents
- In 2023, Frederick participated in the Good Jobs, Great Cities Academy
 - 16 cities working to develop innovative and scalable city-supported solutions



Frederick is the 'City of Clustered Spires' for its many historic church steeples visible downtown.

GJGC Outcomes and Workforce Innovation



- 4 Pillars for Workforce Development in Frederick
 - Fair Wages and Good Jobs
 - Return to Work Pathways
 - Engaging Emerging Adults (ages 14-24)
 - Career Connected Learning
- Career Connected Learning has expanded to include Fellowships, Internships, Apprenticeships and the country's first municipal Returnship program



What is a Returnship?

- Maryland saw the steepest drop in workforce participation among mothers of elementary-aged children during the pandemic
 - In 2019, about 90 percent were in the labor force. By 2020, that fell to roughly 74 percent, a 16-point drop and the largest decline in the nation.
- Returnships are six months, part-time, and competitively paid, offering structure and support to step back into a career

Returnships in Action

- First Returnship: Economic Development
- Funded through the Office of the Mayor
- Designed to scale across City departments
- Focused on real workforce outcomes and participant career advancement

Questions: mayor@cityoffrederickmd.gov

