LAYC CAREER ACADEMY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL



Annual Report: 2025-26 School Year
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Board Chair: Lori Kaplan

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. School Description **3**

A. Mission Statement 3

B. School Program 3

1. Summary of Curriculum Design and Instructional Approach 3

2. Parental Involvement Efforts 4

II. School Performance and Progress **5**

A. Mission, Goals, and Academic Achievements 5

1. Meeting our Mission 5

Pathway Programs: 8

The MA Pathway: 8

The IT Pathway: 8

The College Pathway: 9

2. Meeting our Goals and Academic Achievements 9

B. Unique Accomplishments 9

III. School Year 2025-2026 Data Report **13**

IV. Appendices **16**

APPENDIX A. Staff Roster for the 2025-2026 School Year 16

APPENDIX B. Board Roster for the 2025-26 School Year 24

APPENDIX C. Finances 27

I. School Description

A. Mission Statement

LAYC Career Academy engages and empowers older youth and young adults by providing a college preparatory education, career training in high-growth occupations and/or college-credit classes.

B. School Program

1. Summary of Curriculum Design and Instructional Approach



Career Academy's goal is to help students achieve their college and career objectives through a challenging and relevant curriculum and intensive, individualized wrap-around services and supports that address obstacles that might otherwise derail their progress. Career Academy serves 200 students each year and 95% of our students are working or enrolled in college within six months of graduation.

After more than a decade in operation, we have a strong reputation among young adults for helping our students make academic gains, secure high school credentials and college credits, and develop the skills they need for success in high-growth career sectors. The goal from our founding has been for every student to exit the school fully prepared for a career and/or college, and that goal remains the same today. By the time they graduate, all students have earned a high school diploma. Those who participate in the school's postsecondary programs also earn either a Microsoft Office Suite certification or an Internet Computing & Core Certification. Postsecondary students have also completed

coursework in one of the school's specialized pathways: Medical Assistant (MA), Information Technology (IT), or College Pathway.

In order to meet our students where they are and help them to progress at the pace that works best for them, we have created educational programs that are highly flexible and personalized. We offer part-time and full-time enrollments. Because Career Academy students are often older than their peers in traditional high schools, they are determined to meet their goals as quickly as possible. At the same time, they are often balancing school with conflicting demands on their time, such as employment or care-giving for a family member. With an evidence-based, personalized learning model, Career Academy administrators, faculty, and staff tailor individual schedules to meet each student's needs, using classroom lessons, one-on-one instruction, and online learning tools to support achievement and keep students engaged and motivated. Crucially, we offer all of our programming at no cost to our students, meaning they graduate debt-free and ready for a sustaining professional career and/or college.



School faculty and staff are also committed to building community and are intentional in creating and sustaining a school environment in which students feel safe and valued. Career Academy students are supported by a team of student support specialists (also known as S3s), who are adviser-advocates helping youth with non-academic issues like the need for clothing and shelter, parenting, or caring for an elderly relative. Our College and Career Access Department provides comprehensive professional development and works one-on-one with students to ensure that they will be successful in higher education, work, or both. All Career Academy staff have been trained in restorative practices and use those principles to build community in and out of the classroom.

2. Parental Involvement Efforts

As is appropriate and healthy for them, Career Academy staff encourage students to

involve their family in their educational growth. Many Career Academy students do not have educational support in their home environments. Ninety-two percent of our students in the 2025-26 school year (SY) were over 18, and many live on their own or are parents themselves.. Twenty-three percent of our students were ages 25-30.

Staff encourage and support students in their efforts to cultivate positive relationships with family and/or other caring adults, however that looks. During the enrollment process, for example, students can bring a family member or other supportive adult to join the orientation session and provide additional background information on the student's educational and personal history. Additionally, our S3s work with students on their interpersonal relationships by helping them process any trauma they have from prior negative relationships, giving them tools to repair those relationships if possible and wanted, and/or identifying other adults who can provide support. S3s also conduct home visits and invite adults who play positive roles in our students' lives to school events and activities.

II. School Performance and Progress

A. Mission, Goals, and Academic Achievements

1. Meeting our Mission



Career Academy meets its mission by providing every student with high-quality and accessible academic and occupational programming, non-academic support essential to success, and college and career preparation. Career Academy enables young adults to make significant educational gains while also increasing their confidence; developing critical soft skills; gaining work experience and college credits; and/or securing marketable IT and health care-related credentials.

We pride ourselves on being an inclusive organization dedicated to serving all young adults who are in need of our services, regardless of circumstances. At Career Academy, students benefit from an affirming and inclusive environment that offers job training and educational programs. We also value and support diversity through culturally sensitive programming.

Career Academy's audited enrollment in SY26 was 200 students. Of that, 49.5% identified as African American, 44.6% as Hispanic/LatinX, and 5.9% as other. Sixty-two percent identified as female and 38% as male. Our students came from all eight DC Wards, with 35% residing in Wards 1 and 4 and 31% in Wards 7 and 8. Our students also face extraordinary challenges with resilience. One in three students identified as unhoused at some point during the school year, close to one in five were differently abled with special needs, one in five were pregnant or parenting, and nearly all students qualified for free and reduced meals.



In the classroom, Career Academy students have different needs and goals. Some students come with high school credentials, others wish to earn a GED, and still others want to learn English language skills. Some students want to explore college-level courses, while others are primarily attracted to the MA and IT Pathways. To meet all of these different needs, Career Academy offers students literacy and numeracy classes, a college preparatory education, career training in high-growth occupations, and the opportunity to take college-credit classes. Our model is built on competency-based graduation and promotion requirements, and our curriculum is designed to ensure college and career readiness. Our innovative and personalized design has produced strong student outcomes: 95% of our graduates are working or enrolled in college within six months of graduation.

The transition to adulthood has changed dramatically for this generation as compared to

those preceding it. According to the US Census Bureau:

- More young adults are living in poverty and fewer are employed compared with Baby Boomers in 1980.
- Young adults earn $2,000 less today annually than young adults did in 1980 when adjusted for inflation.
- Unlike prior generations of young adults, the majority of Millennials have never been married.
- More young adults live with their parents as compared to the same age group in 1980. The pandemic has intensified this trend. In July 2022, half of adults ages 18 to 29 were living with one or both of their parents. This is significantly higher than the share who were living with their parents in 2010 (44% on average that year) or 2000 (38% on average).

LAYC Career Academy began by serving 16- to 24-year-old students because our goal was to help young people make a successful transition to adulthood. We raised our age limit to 30 in 2023 because we saw that young people are still trying to establish themselves professionally, personally and academically late into their twenties. We have designed our program to specifically meet the needs of young adults. Our full academic curriculum and students' day-to-day activities are as follows:

The academic year consists of three trimesters, each of which is divided into two sessions of approximately six weeks. Each trimester, students take the CASAS exam in reading and math to assess progress (for returning students) and determine course placements (for new and returning students). Students are placed in courses that align with their levels: for example, students who need support acquiring English language skills are placed in an English Language Learner (ELL) cohort until they earn a score of 228 in listening and 236 in reading on the CASAS exam; students seeking a GED are placed into our GED cohort until they pass the exam.

Based on these assessment results, instructors will decide how to level their courses to best align with student needs. Instructors integrate technology into the curriculum to provide more tailored lessons and assignments for each student. They also connect the curriculum to the health care and IT sectors, as well as students' other interests in order to make the subject matter more engaging. Instruction is provided in small groups, and teachers collaborate across subject areas, often team-teaching or coordinating lesson plans for a more dynamic and contextualized presentation.

High School Diploma/GED Program and ELL Classes:
On average, a quarter to one-third of our students enter Career Academy seeking a high school diploma or, for immigrant students, stronger English language skills. GED students take English, math, social studies, and science classes. English Language Learners focus on strengthening their reading, writing, and speaking skills. Eighty percent of students overall increased their reading and math skills by two grade levels or more in SY26.

Literacy and Numeracy Classes:
Youth and young adults everywhere need help gaining the skills they need to move into gainful employment post-graduation. According to 2023 data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, math and reading scores are at their lowest points in decades. Locally, Career Academy staff have seen a large number of students enrolling in the school that do not have the literacy and numeracy skills needed to succeed in higher education or a long-term career, causing them to remain in low-wage jobs and/or pay for expensive remedial classes in college.

To address this, Career Academy offers a module one class for both the Information Technology and Medical Assistant cohorts to quickly help students to increase literacy, numeracy, and technology skills needed to be successful in the job market.

Students enrolling in the IT Pathway start by taking the first module, which consists of one class focused on strengthening math skills, Quantitative Methods in IT, and one class focused on strengthening writing, reasoning and literacy skills, Advanced Seminar in IT & Society. Students also complete their Internet and Computing Core Certification. After finishing module one, students move on to study for the A+ certification and prepare for internships in the field of Information Technology in order to graduate.

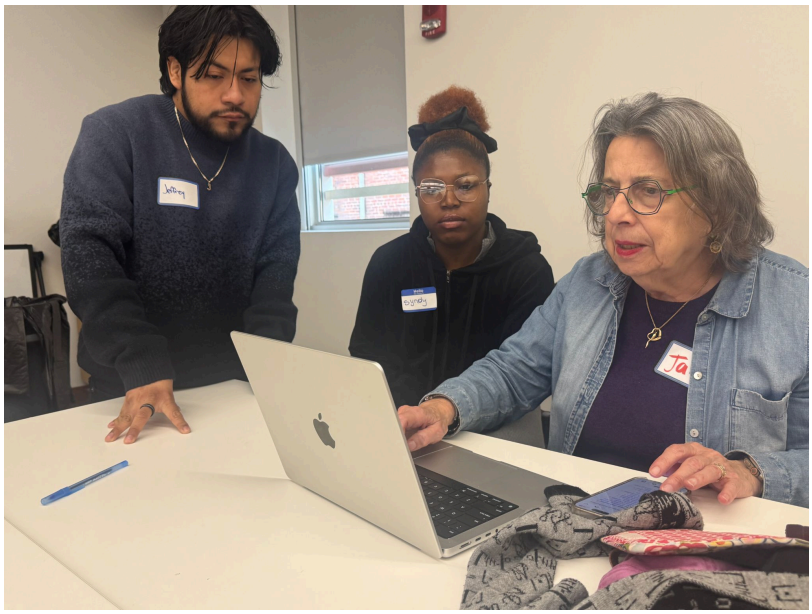
Similarly, students enrolling in the MA Pathway start with their first module, which consists of one class focused on strengthening math skills, Quantitative Methods in Healthcare, and one class focused on strengthening writing, reasoning and literacy skills, Advanced Seminar in Healthcare & Society. They also complete an Excel certification. After finishing module one, students move on to study for medical assistant certifications and prepare for externships in the healthcare field in order to graduate.

Pathway Programs:

The MA Pathway:
In preparation for work as medical assistants, students learn to provide direct services to patients (e.g., how to obtain vital signs, administer an EKG, and perform spirometry and venipuncture). They master autoclave techniques, become CPR- and AED-certified, and develop basic billing and coding skills. Students then spend their final trimester in an internship at a local healthcare organization, with hosts like MedStar and Johns Hopkins hospitals, A Plus Medical Center, Community of Hope, Mary's Center, and Whitman-Walker Health. Students who complete this pathway graduate as Certified Clinical Medical Assistants.

The IT Pathway:
IT Pathway students learn to install, configure, maintain, and troubleshoot networking hardware, software, and peripheral components of computers and operating systems, including Microsoft Windows. Students graduate with the skills to find successful careers as IT help desk specialists, one of the fastest growing occupations in the region. Like

students in the MA Pathway, IT students also complete an internship, giving them the tools to function in a professional environment. IT students are required to pass the IC3 and A+ exams in order to graduate and many elect to earn the Microsoft, Network+, and Security+ certifications as well.



The College Pathway**:**

Early exposure to college-level classes helps students gain confidence and experience that will enable them to navigate a college campus and complete college-level coursework more effectively. College and Career Access Department staff help College Pathway students research departments and programs within colleges and universities, arrange individual college visits and group tours, help students apply for financial aid, develop course schedules, and take dual enrollment classes through a partnership with the University of the District of Columbia. To exit from the College Pathway, students must earn at least six college credits.

To assist our students in reaching their academic and career goals, Career Academy offers a robust continuum of support services that are designed to help students navigate challenges associated with housing stability, food insecurity, caregiving and parenting, mental health, and more. Finally, up to and after graduation, students and alumni receive help with job placement and other transition services.

2. Meeting our Goals and Academic Achievements

Goal	Progress Toward Goal Attainment
LAYC Career Academy PCS has adopted DC PCSB's Annual School Performance Index Report & Evaluation (ASPIRE) as its goals and academic achievement expectations for SY-25-26.	DC PCSB will publicly report the school's performance on ASPIRE annually.

B. Unique Accomplishments

We moved to a beautiful new facility!

After a 2.5 year process, LAYC Career Academy finally moved into a newly renovated 31,000 square foot new facility in SY25-26. The new space is conveniently located 1.5 blocks from Union Station to make commuting by public transportation easy for students coming from all eight wards. Career Academy celebrated in the spring by hosting a ribbon cutting where alumni, staff, students, and supporters of the school toured the facility, enjoyed a short program, and partook in some light refreshments.



Exemplary Performance on ASPIRE
LAYC Career Academy is proud that it attained a level 1 on ASPIRE demonstrating exemplary performance in SY25-26. Only 14 out of 131 campuses achieved level 1 two years in a row and Career Academy has met this mark for three years in a row.

LAYC Career Academy is growing!
LAYC Career Academy is growing! In SY25-26, the school hit its enrollment ceiling for the first time with a robust waitlist. A lot of this growth has been driven by the medical assistant program, which had a waitlist of over 100 students for its training program alone. The growth of the medical assistant program started after the pandemic and the school added a classroom paraprofessional in January 2024 to help accommodate more students. We then added an additional instructor in December 2025 as enrollment in the medical assistant program grew by 50% from SY25 to SY26.

Dramatic growth in engagement for GED students

As part of Career Academy's strategic plan, the school set out to strengthen the attendance and persistence of the school's GED students. In particular, the school focused on the students who are working to strengthen their literacy and numeracy scores to sit for the GED exam. This group historically had attendance and persistence rates 15% lower than the scores for the school as a whole, so Career Academy staff set the following goals to make improvements as part of the strategic plan:

1. Attendance rate for GED students increased from 55.2% in Year 1, to 65% by Year 5 (2030)
2. Persistence rate for GED students increased from 54.6% in Year 1, to 65% by Year 5 (2030)

Career Academy just finished its first full year of plan implementation, and our GED students have already ***exceeded the goal set for 2030 with an attendance rate of 68% and a persistence rate of 71%!*** Instead of lagging 15 points behind their peers, our emerging readers are catching up to the school as a whole, which earned 77.7% in persistence and 75.6% for attendance in SY25-26, which are high rates for non-compulsory institutions like adult education schools and programs.

So what fueled this success? The school:

1. Hired a classroom assistant to work one-on-one and in small groups with students who needed more individualized attention and assistance with emotional regulation
2. Incorporated use of technology.
    a. The GED Coordinator created an AI avatar of herself to help students with their assignments out of class
    b. We added the IXL app in order to help emerging readers build stronger skills. IXL is now being used in addition to AZTEC, which is an app used by students with more advanced numeracy and literacy skills who are close to completing the GED.
3. Started offering a block schedule to give students more time to dive deeper into subjects
4. Offered a second year of its cash transfer program. Historically, the school found that the number one reason students left the school before graduation was to work. The school started offering the cash transfer program in SY25 in order to help students pay for expenses like rent, groceries and utilities so they could stay in school.
5. The school updated the system it uses to address challenging student behaviors in a restorative manner. This improved communication contributed to the improved engagement of pre-GED students.

IT Pathway students are champions!

Four LAYC Career Academy students earned first place, champion-level recognition at the 2026 Washington, DC Qualifier for the Microsoft Office Specialist U.S. National Championship, achieving exceptionally high scores on certification exams that assess advanced skills in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and other Microsoft Office applications.

As Washington, DC Champions, all four students were invited to represent the District of Columbia at Certiport's 2026 Microsoft Office Specialist U.S. National Championship in Nashville, Tennessee. At the national competition, they competed against Microsoft Office Specialist champions from across the country for scholarships, prizes, trophies, certificates, and national recognition.

One LAYC Career Academy student earned a 6th-place national finish, demonstrating an outstanding level of skill and achievement.



The success of these four students highlights the strength of the Career Academy's technology training and its commitment to preparing students for industry-recognized certifications and competitive opportunities at both the local and national levels.

In addition to the success in Microsoft competitions, LAYC Career Academy also started offering an AI certification this year. Five students successfully passed the Generative Artificial Intelligence Foundations certification in SY26. The school plans to expand this pilot in SY27 to ensure that students are keeping up with emerging technology to remain competitive in the evolving IT job market.

MSA Accreditation

Finally, LAYC Career Academy hosted a visiting team from the Middle States Association for a re-accreditation visit in March 2026. The visiting team was highly complimentary of the school noting that "Your collective passion for education and unwavering support have created an environment where students can thrive and dreams can take flight. Your commitment to fostering a culture of empathy, respect, excellence, inclusivity and collaboration is contagious and is everywhere. LAYC Career Academy is truly an amazing place." The visiting team finished their visit by recommending that LAYC Career Academy should be re-accredited for the next seven years.

Alumni Association

The Career Academy Alumni Association was officially launched! Events included an alumni gathering at the new build ribbon-cutting ceremony and a CPR recertification event for medical assistant alumni.

Growth in Career and College Programming

- We signed MOUs with two universities (UDC and Trinity Washington) to increase the number of free college credits students can obtain through their coursework at the Career Academy.
- We added 5 new employer partners to our Medical Assistant externship program, including our first pediatric placements with PM Pediatrics and Washington Pediatric Associates.

C. List of Donors (at the level of $500 or higher)

Allison Bromley
Capital for Children
April Elliott
Daren Firestone and Nicole Hanrahan
Fitzpatrick Charitable Foundation
The Greater Washington Community Foundation Health Equity Fund
Lori Kaplan
Justin Rydstrom
Narahari Sastry

III. School Year 2025-2026 Data Report

Campus	School Year	Metric	Source	Value	Numerator	Denominator
LAYC Career Academy PCS	2025-2026	Grades Served	PCSB	Adult (Alternative)	—	—
LAYC Career Academy PCS	2025-2026	Overall Audited Enrollment	PCSB	200.00	—	—
LAYC Career Academy PCS	2025-2026	Adult Enrollment	PCSB	200.00	—	—
LAYC Career Academy PCS	2025-2026	Suspension Rate	PCSB	0.00	0.00	200.00
LAYC Career Academy PCS	2025-2026	Expulsion Rate	PCSB	0.00	0.00	200.00
LAYC Career Academy PCS	2025-2026	Instructional Time Lost to Discipline	PCSB	0.00	0.00	22157.00
LAYC Career Academy PCS	2025-2026	In-Seat Attendance Rate	PCSB	72.32	19015.00	26293.00
LAYC Career Academy PCS	2025-2026	Mid-Year Withdrawal Rate	PCSB	—	—	—
LAYC Career Academy PCS	2025-2026	Mid-Year Entry Rate	PCSB	—	—	—

Total number of instructional days: 186

Teacher and Admin Data Points

School	**Teacher Attrition Rate:** 20.00%
School	**Number of Teachers:** 10 To align with OSSE's definition, "Teacher" is defined as a full-time, school-based employee who instructs any core or non-core academic subject. This includes general or special education teachers instructing students in the "core" subject areas of English language arts, math, science and social studies, as well as non-core subjects such as arts, foreign language and physical education. This excludes student support professionals (e.g., speech therapists or social workers, counselors, librarians, coaches, principals, special education coordinators, program coordinators, deans, office staff, custodians, or any other non-instructional personnel).
School	**Teacher Salary Schedules** Provide schedule by steps and grades, if applicable. If inapplicable, LEAs may provide minimum, average, and maximum teacher salaries and include the link to the webpage this information can be found on your school's website. Note: LAYC Career Academy developed a salary schedule that was implemented in FY25 and can be found here: https://laycca.org/careers-2/
School	**Teacher Demographics** In a chart, include the racial identity, gender, and years of teaching/education experience for all your teacher staff, using the definition above.

Teachers By Race, Gender and Years of Experience

Race	Gender	Years Experience
Latino	F	1
Afro-Latino	M	26
Latino	M	7
Black	F	10
White	F	9
White	F	10
Afro-Latino	M	10
Latino	F	3
Black	M	2
Latino	F	1

School	**Executive Director:** $172,144.92

Principal: $142,659.00

Director of Academics: $132,375.00

IT Pathway Director/Instructor: $127,674.60

Special Education Coordinator: $118,486.20

Disclaimer: Career Academy acknowledges that DC PCSB's review and publication of this annual report does not imply concurrence or disagreement with the content herein.

IV. Appendices

APPENDIX A. Staff Roster for the 2025-2026 School Year

Senior Student Support Specialist: N'Kosi Ayize brings a wealth of experience and passion to his role as Senior Student Support Specialist. A third-generation Washingtonian, Mr. Ayize served as Career Academy's fitness professional for three years before transitioning to student support. He possesses an extensive background in administration, case management, youth programs, and interactive conflict resolution. He is also a certified personal trainer, martial arts instructor (Capoeira Angola), productivity specialist, and he is currently completing his TAE Psychodrama certification. In 2022, he was named a Restorative Justice Fellow for DCPCS. An avid origami artist, Mr. Ayize embodies the Capoeira philosophy of approaching challenges with a positive attitude and a smile.

ELL Instructor/Coordinator: Ariel Berroa

Mr. Berroa was born in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, came to the US at the age of 19, and quickly learned English and earned his GED. While he was an AmeriCorps volunteer from 2013-2015, he worked with middle school students, facilitated health education workshops, coached a soccer team, and provided ELL support. Also during this time, he found his passion for working with youth, using his own experience to encourage them to find their education and career paths. At Career Academy, he teaches ELL students and enjoys working with immigrant populations. In November 2024, Mr. Berroa was cast in the nationwide public awareness campaign "When You Graduate, They Graduate," presented by the Ad Council and the Dollar General Literacy Foundation. The campaign highlights the powerful ripple effect of an adult earning a high school diploma/GED and how that achievement can positively influence an entire family. Being part of the campaign is a meaningful extension of Mr. Berroa's own story and his lifelong commitment to demonstrating the transformative power of education. Mr. Berroa holds a degree in business management from The Catholic University of America.

Student Support Specialist: Aliannys Castellanos

Ms. Castellanos was born and raised in Venezuela. She earned her medical doctor degree from Universidad del Zulia (LUZ) in Venezuela in 2016. Her passion for helping others has always been an important part of her professional journey, particularly supporting youth and adults as they work toward their personal, academic, and career goals. Ms. Castellanos joined the Career Academy in January 2024. As a student support specialist, she primarily supports students in the English Language Learning (ESL) program by providing individualized guidance, identifying student needs, and connecting students with academic and community resources. She works closely with students to address barriers that may impact their attendance, education, and overall success. She also plans student-centered workshops based on identified needs and helps coordinate schoolwide Community Days that promote student engagement, strengthen connections among students and staff, and foster a sense of belonging within the school community.

Director of Academics: Ivette Cruz

Dr. Cruz is a 25-year veteran educator who began her career in K-12 schools and decided to continue growing professionally by entering the field of adult education and

bilingualism. She became academic director of Ana G. Mendez University System, where she provided leadership on all academic programs while guiding the implementation of the discipline-based dual-language immersion model. After almost four years in this position, Dr. Cruz decided to join Career Academy as the director of academics to continue helping underserved students in their efforts to pursue a GED or career. Dr. Cruz has a bachelor's in child development from the University of Puerto Rico, a master's in educational leadership from the University of Phoenix, and a doctorate in Educational Leadership with a focus on Adult Education from the American College of Education. She is a former member of Maryland's Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (MDTESOL) board, where she was the editor of the newsletter. She served on DC OSSE's 2019 Title III Advisory Committee, a group of stakeholders from different schools that offered insights on policies and regulations for English language learners. She also participated in the first mentoring and induction program development professional learning community at OSSE in 2020.

ELL Instructor/Coordinator: Elena Espinosa
Ms. Espinosa is an ESL teacher with eight years of experience helping adult learners build their English skills. Originally from Quito, Ecuador, she holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ). Elena is a native Spanish speaker and also speaks Portuguese, so she understands firsthand what it takes to learn a new language. Her love of travel led her to teaching. Exploring new places sparked her curiosity about different cultures and showed her how English connects people around the world. Today, she brings that same curiosity to her classroom, where she creates a welcoming space for students from many backgrounds to grow in confidence and reach their goals.

MA Program Director: Tony Duran
Mr. Tony was born and raised in Alexandria, Virginia. He completed his Bachelors in Science in Health Sciences at Virginia Commonwealth University and a Masters in Education from Liberty University. Currently, he is working towards his PhD in Instructional Design. Mr. Tony serves as the Medical Assistant Program Director at Career Academy. Prior to working at Career Academy, he worked with gastroenterologists editing and designing online curriculum. Mr. Tony has been working in education ranging from K-12 to adult learners since 2017.

Math Instructor: Folly Ekoue
Folly Ekoue Zondodji (Mr. E) serves as a math instructor at the Career Academy. Born in Lome, Togo, Mr. E moved to Virginia in 2005. He received his bachelor's degree in accounting from George Mason University. Mr. E hopes to break down math related anxiety, connect math to everyday life, and support young adult learners in achieving their educational and career goals.

Principal: Jacqueline Fernandez-Romero
A prominent educator, scientist, and community activist, Dr. Fernandez-Romero taught science at Career Academy for several years and served as its interim principal starting in summer 2017 through April 2018. She became principal in May 2018. She has received honors and awards for her scientific research, community involvement, and mentorship of minority students in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields. Before

joining Career Academy, she worked in the space biosciences division at NASA's Ames Research Center as a microbiologist and as a teacher at schools in DC and New York. Dr. Fernandez-Romero obtained a bachelor's degree in Raza studies and microbiology from San Francisco State University, and she earned a master's in education from Lesley University. In 2017, she completed her doctorate in curriculum and instruction with a concentration in STEM education from Texas Tech's University Global PRISE (Pragmatic Researchers in STEM Education) program.

Student Support Specialist: Daniel Flores
Mr. Flores was born and raised in Northern Virginia. He first attended the University of Valley Forge for music production and youth ministry and now he is currently finishing his degree in business administration at Northern Virginia Community College. Mr. Flores joined LAYC Career Academy in June, 2023 as a Student Support Specialist. In this role, he follows his passion for helping the youth by supporting students in their many struggles of life and connecting them to different resources offered both in and outside of school. Mr. Flores aims to help students to be GREAT in everything they do.

Medical Assistant Instructor: Ms. Arline Gomez was born and raised in the northern Virginia area. Growing up, Ms. Gomez always ventured into Washington, DC with her family on the weekends and dreamed of working in a city. She is a passionate healthcare worker that has always had a heart to educate her patients and now serves as an educator to future medical assistants at LAYC Career Academy. Ms. Gomez obtained her bachelors of science degree in nursing at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) and pursued alternative medical work aside from nursing. From being a clinical technician in a hospital setting to a medical coordinator in a temporary foster care facility, Ms. Gomez expanded her vast medical experiences and now uses them as real life scenarios for her students.

Special Education Inclusion Specialist:
Mr. Connor Griffith is a Maryland native and the special education inclusion specialist dedicated to supporting students with their individual needs and helping them build confidence while working toward their goals. Mr. Griffith holds a high school diploma from The Avalon School and is currently completing the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) Foundations of Special Education professional learning program. Mr. Griffith has experience working in a variety of fields centered around working with and supporting people, including several years in the restaurant industry with a small family-owned business. These experiences have helped develop strong communication, teamwork, patience, adaptability, and interpersonal skills. Mr. Griffith is passionate about creating a supportive and welcoming environment where students can recognize their strengths, develop important life skills, and work toward their future goals.

Co-Founder & Executive Director: Nicole Hanrahan
Ms. Hanrahan leads the senior team that manages the school's day-to-day operations and supports the board of directors as it guides the school's overall direction, sets policy, and monitors school performance. Prior to her current role, she was the chief operating and strategy officer at the Latin American Youth Center where she helped the organization to grow and deepen its impact for youth in Washington, DC and Maryland. Before joining the Latin American Youth Center, she served as a director at Community Wealth Ventures,

where she helped nonprofits and foundations build capacity and improve sustainability. Prior to that, she directed workforce development programs in New York, Chicago, and Boston. Ms. Hanrahan is a board member for the DC Workforce Investment Council and a member of Leadership Greater Washington. She holds a bachelor's degree in public policy from Brown University and a master's degree from the Harvard Business School.

GED Coordinator / Instructor : Dieudonna Harris
Mrs. Dieudonna Harris is a passionate educator with over 15 years of experience in secondary and adult education. She holds a B.A. in mathematics from Albany State University and an associate's degree in drafting & design from Albany Technical College. Mrs. Harris has taught in both public and private school settings across Georgia and Virginia, where she has consistently improved GED attainment rates and driven student growth. Additionally, helped students improve performance on standardized assessments. Mrs. Harris is known affectionately by students as "Ms. Dee." She brings an encouraging, practical, and student-focused approach to the classroom while blending academic rigor with real-world application. Since joining LAYC Career Academy in 2024, she has focused on GED preparation, curriculum alignment, and differentiated instruction. Mrs. Harris is a member of the National Society of Leadership and Success and the Mathematical Association of America. She is dedicated to helping students build the skills, confidence and mindset needed to succeed, both in the classroom and beyond.

Student Support Specialist: Jessica Hernandez
Ms. Hernandez is a first generation college graduate and is from Alexandria, Virginia. She earned a bachelor's of social work from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). She always had an interest in helping people in all walks of life, especially in the education system. Ms. Hernandez began as an intern at LAYC Career Academy in the student support department in the summer of 2022 and then joined the staff full time as a Student Support Specialist in June, 2023. She has worked with many students, especially students in the Medical Assistant (MA) Program, to connect them with resources, provide encouragement, and to help them reach their academic and career goals.

Community Engagement Specialist: Kyle Jackson
Mr. Jackson, a native of Prince George's County, earned a bachelor's degree in mass communication with a concentration in advertising from Towson University in 2020. While at Towson University, he started his career as a promotions and events associate with PepsiCo. After PepsiCo., he then went on to become a career resource specialist where he was able to help people in underserved communities gain employment. In February of 2024, Mr. Jackson joined LAYC Career Academy as the community engagement specialist fusing his passions of mass communication and community outreach. Through this position, Mr. Jackson is able to use his education and people skills to expose adult learners to Career Academy programs and help them reach their goals.

Director of Career Services: Erica Lloyd
In her role as director of college and career services, Ms. Lloyd is passionate about helping Career Academy students prepare to make the transition to the career they wish to pursue. Ms. Lloyd came to the Career Academy with a bachelor's degree in history and a master's degree in teaching from the University of Virginia, as well as over twenty years of experience

in the nonprofit sector. She first served as the program director of a youth development program in Charlottesville, mentoring over 60 youth from the third grade through their transition to college. She then moved to Port-au-Prince to work as the research director of a nonprofit organization in Haiti. In 2019 Ms. Lloyd returned to the DC area, where she was born and raised, and joined the Career Academy in 2022.

Student Support Specialist: Pedro Luna
Mr. Luna was born and raised in San Salvador, El Salvador and now calls DC home. He earned a bachelor's degree in psychology and marketing from the Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas" (UCA) in El Salvador. Mr. Luna is passionate about providing support to the immigrant community in the greater DMV area. He joined LAYC Career Academy to continue providing support to our student body and giving back to the immigrant community. He is also an avid soccer fan and youth soccer coach.

Academic Support Coordinator: Nicolas Matheus
Mr. Matheus was born in Maryland and is the first-generation American born to immigrant parents from Venezuela and Italy. He holds an associate's degree from Montgomery College, a bachelor's degree in English with a focus on communication and technology from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, and a master's degree in cloud computing from University of Maryland, Global Campus, along with several advanced Excel certifications. With close to a decade of experience in educational and administrative roles across Washington, DC, and Maryland, Mr. Matheus has worn many hats at Career Academy. He developed personalized learning plans and created innovative lesson plans for various classes as an instructor. In his role as the college & career coordinator, he guided students in securing internships, jobs, and college placements. He has also coordinated the GED program to help students earn their diplomas since beginning his career at Career Academy. His expertise in technology and Excel automation enhances operational efficiency and effectively supports both staff and students.

Data and Testing Coordinator: Jing Meng
Jing Meng was born and raised in Tianjin, China, one of China's four major municipalities. She came to the United States at age 18 to attend Indiana University Bloomington (Go Hoosiers!) where she obtained a bachelor's degree in public and nonprofit management. With more than 10 years of experience in education, Ms. Meng has worked in K–12 teaching, preschool administration, learning technology, and student support. She holds an M.Ed. in curriculum and instruction and an M.S. in learning design and technology from George Mason University, as well as a certificate in learning technologies with a concentration in e-learning. In 2021, one of the students she coached represented the United States and won first place in an international Chinese speech competition and was featured in Chinese television, and Ms. Meng received an honor instructor award in the Chinese Bridge Competition. Ms. Meng is now the data and testing coordinator at LAYC Career Academy PCS, supporting student data tracking and reporting, testing, learning management system administration, and learning technology. Supporting students and teachers and helping them succeed are at the heart of her work.

Media Resource Center Coordinator: Yulisa Morales

Ms. Morales is a first-generation college graduate who obtained her bachelor's degree in social work with a minor in homefront readjustment for armed services at Virginia State University. She was born in Alexandria, Virginia, and her parents are from El Salvador. Ms. Morales began her journey at the Career Academy in July 2024, where she supported students with disabilities who were pursuing their GED. She offered one-on-one and group support in classroom settings and provided resources and guidance for postsecondary transition goal planning. She now serves as the Media Resource Center Coordinator, in which she supports students from all pathways. She conducts workshops, academic support, and digital literacy support for the students. Ms. Morales' passion has always been to help individuals see their potential and provide resources along the way. She enjoys seeing people thrive and grow in resilience.

Assessment and Operations Support Specialist: Theodore Mott
Mr. Mott is a proud DC native who joined LAYC Career Academy in 2025. He is a product of DC public schools, with a brief sojourn to Grinnell College in Iowa for a bachelors of arts in political science. In his role as assessment and operations support specialist, Mr. Mott supports students through testing, data collection and reporting, student account management, and operational support. He loves watching students learn and grow, and is grateful to aid their journey however he can. Mr. Mott also enjoys a wide range of hobbies, including sampling DC carryouts and cycling.

GED Behavioral Support Specialist: Katheryne Pardo
Ms. Kathy joined LAYC Career Academy in 2024 as a GED behavioral support specialist. As a proud first-generation college graduate, she earned her bachelor's degree in human development and family science from George Mason University. Her own educational journey has shaped her passion for encouraging young people to believe in themselves and recognize their potential. Ms. Kathy understands that every student comes with their own story, strengths, and challenges, and she is passionate about creating a space where students feel seen, heard, supported, and empowered to succeed. She believes strongly in the power of restorative practices, meaningful relationships, and trauma-informed care. In her role, Ms. Kathy strives to meet students where they are, celebrate their growth, and help them build the confidence and skills they need to reach their goals both inside and outside of the classroom.

Reading, Writing, and Social Studies Teacher: Christina Perez
Ms. Perez was born and raised in Florida by a single-mother from the middle-east, who succeeded in business, in spite of not learning to read or write. Due to middle-eastern culture, Ms. Perez did not value education until "experimenting" at a local community college. With the help of patient, inspiring, and FUN teachers, Ms. Perez realized her dreams to positively impact others who faced educational challenges such as ESL or Dyslexia. She graduated in 2003 from the University of Florida with a master's degree from the college of education. Teaching in settings from elementary school to community college, hoping to bring equity into the learning environment, with a priority goal to help students love learning in turn, becoming life-long learners (who eventually own their education). Ms. Perez is confident everyone can achieve more than they can imagine and teachers are able to help students find how. For fun, Ms. Perez teaches fitness classes and regularly volunteers with Montgomery Homeless Coalition, Hospice, Night to Shine, and other organizations to learn more about

populations and give back to her communities that had been generous to her family. Ms. Perez's favorite pastime is spending time with her three adult children and a sweet dog named Lucy Lui.

Operations Manager: Ericka Rivera
Ms. Rivera is an experienced educator of 18+ years. She began her teaching career by working part-time as a kindergarten teacher's assistant while she was in college. She soon discovered that her passion was teaching and within a year she shifted career paths and became an early childhood educator. She earned her associate's in child development and in 2017 she won the "*Excellence in Care and Education*" award from her company, chosen out of more than 15,000 teachers. She came to Career Academy in December 2020 with a great desire to bring her experience and skill set into helping special education students and to teach science. She is currently in the process of earning a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies and leadership from Old Dominion University.

Reading, Writing, and Social Studies Teacher: Carolyn Robbins
Dr. Robbins was born in Tennessee and lived most of her life in Texas. She earned her BA in sociology and philosophy and her MA in communication and rhetorical criticism from Baylor University. She earned her PhD in communication with a focus on rhetoric and political culture from the University of Maryland, College Park. Dr. Robbins has been teaching in higher education in various capacities since 2016. Her time at the CA began in August of 2024, and she has worked hard to reimagine and redesign the various reading and social studies courses offered here. She enjoys forming relationships with adult learners and helping them achieve their goals and dreams. Dr. Robbins is fluent in English and fluent-ish in Spanish. In her free time, she enjoys reading, going to comedy shows, and forcing everyone she meets to look at photos of her cats.

Special Education Services Instructor/Coordinator: Martha Sanchez
Ms. Sanchez earned a bachelor's degree in international relations from Trinity University. She later attended The George Washington University and earned a master's degree in curriculum and instruction with a concentration in English as a second language and bilingual special education. Ms. Sanchez joined Career Academy in August 2018. She started her career in education working with DC Public Schools as a special education teacher. Since then, she has worked in the field of special education as a teacher, as a transition counselor and as a consultant for several charter schools in the DC area. During the time Ms. Sanchez has worked in special education, she has found that working with students with disabilities and their families is very rewarding. She understands that the special education process can be an overwhelming experience, and because of this she is committed to ensuring that students and their families receive all the support they need to be successful.

Medical Assistant Paraprofessional: Daniela Santos
Ms. Santos was born and raised in El Salvador and came to the United States at the age of 17 in 2016. Her first language is Spanish and, with a lot of effort and dedication, she has been able to adapt to English. She graduated from high school at the Columbia Heights Educational Campus in 2020 and then enrolled at LAYC Career Academy and graduated in 2023 as a medical assistant. She is currently working at Career Academy as a medical assistant

paraprofessional where she teaches laboratory classes to MA students. Ms. Santos loves helping as many people as she can, especially her Latino community.

Registrar: Monica Santos
Ms. Santos serves as the registrar for the school where she coordinates student enrollment. She is a first generation Honduran-American, born in Virginia but raised in Prince George's County. Ms. Santos graduated from the University of Maryland, College Park with a bachelor's in anthropology and sociology. Upon graduation, she began working at a residential facility providing support to undocumented youth. She joined the Career Academy team in October 2020 eager to be a support system for our students and assist them throughout their journey at the school. Ms. Santos is passionate about helping others, especially children and families, as well as learning about different cultures.

Information Technology Program Director / Instructor: Abner Soto-Henry
Mr. Soto-Henry started his career as a technology education instructor at the Workforce Development Center (Centro de Formación y Capacitación Portuaria) in Costa Rica, after graduating from Universidad Interamericana de Costa Rica in San José with a degree in business administration and accounting in 1996.

Mr. Soto-Henry has taught information technology education at Career Academy since the school's inception, specializing in Microsoft certifications, IC3 Digital Literacy certifications, and CompTIA certifications. In total, Mr. Soto-Henry has more than 27 years of experience in education. Originally from Costa Rica, he speaks fluent Spanish, English, and Portuguese, enabling him to connect with the students he serves. He has received numerous notable awards throughout his teaching career. DC United Football Club recognized Mr. Soto-Henry as a Community Star in 2013, and the Hispanic Heritage Foundation & the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics awarded Mr. Soto-Henry this honor in 2015. In 2016, Mr. Soto-Henry was named Teacher of the Year by D.C. OSSE Career and Technical Education. In 2019, D.C. PCSB awarded him the TIERific Teacher of the Year honors and Certiport named him Teacher of the Month in November. The following year, in 2020, the Washington Post named Mr. Soto-Henry as finalist Teacher of the Year. In 2021, Certiport named him as Educator of the Year and later honored to have served as a CERTIFIED Ambassador for two consecutive years (2022-2023). A former professional soccer player, his passion for teaching is only rivaled by his love of the game.

Data Manager: Erin Tarpley
Ms. Tarpley has spent much of her life living abroad. After returning to the United States, Ms. Tarpley has been involved in education in many forms, including as an assistant, a camp-counselor, a mentor, an instructor, an administrator, or a director. She graduated from the University Of Maryland, Baltimore County with a bachelor's in history and a certification to teach secondary education in the social sciences. Ms. Tarpley later went on to earn a master's from the University of Maryland in human resources management with a focus in adult training and learning. Before joining Career Academy, she served in student support at Walden University, taught social sciences in Baltimore City Public Schools, and headed the arts education department for underserved students in the Brooklyn Park area.

APPENDIX B. Board Roster for the 2025-26 School Year

Kate Brannon, Treasurer (2014 to present)
DC Resident: No
Ms. Brannon is the director of financial planning & analysis at Georgetown University. She provides leadership and strategic direction related to the development of the University's budget. Her expertise includes budget development, strategic planning, forecasting, establishing internal controls, and overall financial oversight. Before joining Georgetown University, Ms. Brannon worked at The George Washington University for more than 15 years. Ms. Brannon holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from Elon University and a master's from The George Washington University.

Emmanuel Caudillo, Board Member (2015 to present)
DC Resident: Yes
Mr. Caudillo works for the U.S. Department of Education and is a special advisor to the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics. In this role, he oversees the operational duties of the initiative, outreach to Hispanic-serving institutions, and youth engagement activities. Previously, he was a policy analyst at the U.S. Department of Education from 2009 to 2012. He has also held research positions at Abt Associates and the National Council on Teacher Quality. Mr. Caudillo holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Southern California and a master's in public policy from The George Washington University.

Dean D'Angelo, Board Member (2021 to present)
DC Resident: No
Mr. D'Angelo is a founding partner of Stellus Capital Management and runs the firm's Private Credit strategy and serves on its investment committee. He has over 30 years of experience in investment banking and principal investing. Prior to forming Stellus, Mr. D'Angelo was a director in the Direct Capital Group at the D. E. Shaw group, a global investment and technology development firm, was a principal of Allied Capital Corporation, a publicly-traded business development company, where he focused on making debt and equity investments in middle-market companies. Mr. D'Angelo received his bachelor's in accounting from The College of William and Mary, his master's in international economics and relations from The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at The Johns Hopkins University, and his master's with a concentration in finance, from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

April Elliott, Secretary (2026 to present)
DC Resident: Yes
April Elliott is an attorney at WilmerHale where her practice focuses on complex securities enforcement matters, as well as government and internal investigations. Ms. Elliott rejoined WilmerHale in 2025 after serving as senior counsel to the general counsel and director of legal operations at the US Department of the Treasury (Treasury). Ms. Elliott previously served as senior advisor to the Under Secretary for International Affairs and senior advisor to the Assistant Secretary for International Markets and Development at the US Department of the Treasury. Prior to joining WilmerHale, Ms. Elliott served as an intern for the Hon.

Charles R. Breyer of the US District Court for the Northern District of California as well as at the SEC, and served as a congressional aide.

Noemí Enchautegui-de-Jesús, Secretary (2023 to present)
DC Resident: No
Dr. Enchautegui-de-Jesús is a Senior Professorial Lecturer in the Department of Psychology at American University. Dr. Enchautegui-de-Jesus received her master's and doctorate in community psychology from New York University. She was a postdoctoral fellow with the NIMH's Family Research Consortium III at the University of Michigan. Her research revolves around a core interest in the stressors that affect the mental and physical well being of people of low socioeconomic status, especially individuals and families of African and Latin American descent. Currently, her research activities focus specifically on stressors related to work and to the balancing act between work and family demands among women who juggle low wage jobs and children/adolescents at home. Furthermore, Dr. Enchautegui is interested in the coping mechanisms and resources women use and/or need to deal with these stressors and buffer their impact.

Ana Hageage, Vice Chair (2018 to present)
DC Resident: Yes
Ms. Hageage served in the Biden-Harris Administration as the Chief of Staff for the Employment and Training Administration in the U.S. Department of Labor. Prior to her appointment, she served as the deputy lead for the Community College Growth Engine Fund, turning community colleges into bridges to dignified work for every American learner and worker, starting with almost 6,000 learners in six communities. Throughout her career, Ms. Hageage has developed a deep expertise in workforce development at the local, regional, and national levels supporting economic mobility for underserved workers. She has led national initiatives aimed at scaling industry partnerships and sector strategies and served as a policy advisor to the U.S. Department of Labor under the Obama Administration. Ms. Hageage also has expertise in youth policy and advocacy and has worked on the ground to deliver adult basic education, job readiness training, sector-focused certifications, employment and wrap-around services to opportunity youth. Ms. Hageage holds a degree in cultural anthropology from the University of Maryland and resides in Washington, D.C. with her husband and two sons.

Stacy Kane, Board Member (2025 to 2026)
DC Resident: Yes
Stacy Kane is a co-founder of Washington Leadership Academy and served as the school's executive director until 2025. Under her leadership, Washington Leadership Academy was one of ten public high schools in the country to win the $10 mil Super Schools XQ Prize. Previously, she served as Deputy Director of the Presidential Innovation Fellows program, recruiting top national tech and entrepreneurial talent into the Federal Government. Stacy served on the Founding Board of K.I.P.P. Nashville, worked for College Summit, and taught middle school in Ghana, West Africa. She is a graduate of Emory University Law School and is licensed in the State of Maryland. Stacy earned a Master's of Public Policy degree with a focus on Education Policy, and joint Bachelor's Degrees in Human and Organizational Development and Sociology from Vanderbilt University.

Lori Kaplan, Chair (2012 to present)
DC Resident: Yes
Ms. Kaplan retired as president & chief executive officer of Latin American Youth Center in June 2018 after leading the organization for 30 years. Ms. Kaplan is continuing her involvement with LAYC as special projects advisor to support the leadership transition. In addition, Ms. Kaplan was the original executive director of the Next Step Public Charter School (PCS), which she founded in 1996, and a major force in the development of YouthBuild PCS and LAYC Bilingual Montessori PCS. She also serves on the board of Youth Radio, an award-winning media production company that trains diverse young people in digital media and technology.

Linda Moore, Board Member (2017 to present)
DC Resident: No
Ms. Moore is the founder of the Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom PCS, which opened in 1998 with 35 students in a rented space in a church basement in Ward 1. Today, the school owns its building in Ward 5 and serves 350 students in grades PK3 to 6. It became a Tier 1 school in 2012 and operates with a bilingual education model, with at least half of each students' education conducted in French or Spanish. Ms. Moore has served on the DC Charter School Association board of directors and as the chairperson of the DC Special Education Cooperative. She was inducted into the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools' Hall of Fame in 2013.

Talib Robinson, Alumni Board Member (2021 to present)
DC Resident: Yes
Mr. Robinson works in youth development at Sasha Bruce Youth Work. He is a graduate of the medical assistant and college programs at Career Academy and is working towards a bachelor's degree at the University of the District of Columbia.

Benjamin Ruiz, Alumni Board Member (2022 to present)
DC Resident: Yes
Mr. Ruiz is a graduate of the Information Technology program at Career Academy. He holds an associate's degree and is currently working towards a bachelor's degree from the University of the District of Columbia.

Taylor Whitelow, Board Member (2024 to present)
DC Resident: Yes

Mr. Whitelow is an IT Portfolio Manager with Georgetown University Information Services (UIS), where he brings a commitment to educational impact through strategic technology management and data analytics. With dual master's degrees in business analytics and finance from Georgetown University, Mr. Whitelow began pursuing his third master's degree in business administration at Georgetown in August 2025. His career is built on a foundation of public service and innovation, applying his technical expertise to create accessible and inclusive educational environments. Beyond his professional endeavors, Mr. Whitelow is an avid runner and fitness enthusiast, with a deep passion for music. A former music producer during high school and undergrad, he continues to channel his creative spirit and commitment to growth in every aspect of his work and community involvement.

APPENDIX C. Finances

1. Latest Audited Financial Statements:

Career Academy's latest available audited financial statements may be found on its website: https://laycca.org/compliance-hub/

2. Other Financial Information, Including Budgets:

Career Academy's additional financial information, including latest available budgets, may be found on its website: https://laycca.org/compliance-hub/