



Next Steps

Next Steps For Martha's Vineyard



Recommendations To Expand Opportunities For Youth And Young Adults

A Research Report

By ACE MV, Inc. Adult & Community Education of Martha's Vineyard
Spring 2022

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Adult and Continuing Education of Martha's Vineyard, established 2008

Acknowledgements

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We also thank the stakeholders who participated in multiple surveys, conversations, and listening sessions to share their professional experiences with disconnected youth on Martha’s Vineyard. And we extend heartfelt thanks to the young people who agreed participate in subject interviews to share their needs, fears, and hopes about their personal and professional lives with the researchers from UMass Chan Medical School. We value your voices and perspectives, and we hope this project advances the work done on Martha’s Vineyard to help you succeed.

Research Lead Team

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Executive Summary

ACE MV was selected by the Dukes County Health Council as their 2021 research partner with this goal: **identify young people (ages 16-26) who are not employed or enrolled in educational opportunities to better understand how they can be supported in their personal and professional lives.** A group of 8 Rural Scholars traveled to the Vineyard where they conducted 55 stakeholder interviews across many areas of youth engagement, workforce development, education, and health care; they also interviewed a sample of 13 youth subjects. While the results of the Rural Scholar study provides our MV community a list of actionable areas to consider strengthening youth programming, and including young persons in doing so, there are gaps in the results. Specifically, research does not adequately represent the voices of our Brazilian and Wampanoag young adults, communities that we believe to be widely underrepresented and underserved by Vineyard programs. After the Rural Scholars study concluded, ACE MV brought many of the stakeholders back together to review the results and to compile this list of recommendations for town leaders, agencies, employers, and leaders in education.



Beyond **housing, key needs are advanced education opportunities, food access, and mental health services.** Importantly, the researchers heard frequently the need for mentorship—for caring adults to step up to mentor a youth or young adult, and for employers to offer apprenticeship and internship opportunities. The researchers noted that systems must be built to house these opportunities and frame the context in which mentorships are most successful.

While Martha's Vineyard offers scenic beauty and life with a small community feel, the results of the 2021 Rural Scholars study led by University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School students shows many opportunities await our Island community for bolstering youth programming and coming together to provide a better life for our young people (ages 16-24). By doing so, community leaders may ensure a sustainable future for our Island. Young people are a great asset to our community for many reasons. They will carry forward the key infrastructure of our island. For example, the future of health care, local business, education, and local government rest on the upcoming generations to be knowledgeable and passionate about maintaining Martha's Vineyard's future. Our surveys show that Island youth and young adults possess a strong desire to stay here or to return after college, and that they are passionate about our community's wellbeing. We hope that this report will help to pave the path for MV's young people to thrive and to prepare for taking responsibility of our Island for years to come.

Key Findings

- 1 Youth and young adults on Martha's Vineyard are more vulnerable to food inequity and basic needs than most people realize, and they require increased access to basic services such as food, mental health, & housing.
 - 2 Youth are asking for mentorships with caring adults, while stakeholders recognize the value of mentoring but have yet to implement Island-wide systems that support successful opportunities.
 - 3 Resources are needed much earlier in a child's life than are currently provided; career exploration and advancement of positive self-identity must begin in elementary school and be additionally celebrated in middle school.
 - 4 Towns have a tremendous influence on social and educational services; as such, towns need to financially invest in programs, permitting, laws, and zoning that will open doors for youth and young adults.
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RECOMMENDATIONS

SECTION 1

By Social Need or Category

Categories:

Housing & Basic Needs	5
Education, Continuing Ed, and Workforce	5
Mental Health, Substance Use, & Counseling..	7

The information in both sections is the same; please refer to whichever is most useful to your agency.

SECTION 2

By Stakeholder Group

Stakeholder Groups:

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In these lists, Island stakeholders are tasked with specific recommendations that are a direct result of the Rural Scholars study.

We hope these actions will be embraced by Vineyard leaders to improve access, equity, health, and success for all Martha's Vineyard children, teens, and young adults.

SECTION 1: RECOMMENDATIONS BY SOCIAL NEED OR CATEGORY

HOUSING & BASIC NEEDS



Housing options are limited and expensive, creating a barrier to safe, affordable options for youth and young adults. According to the Rural Scholars research, this may have created a sense of normalcy in relying on staying home (with parents) rather than living independently. Basic needs include food access; according to the Food Pantry (a program of Island Grown Initiative), the Pantry does not track the 16-26 age group but estimates that 10-15% of all served at the Pantry are in this age range. Given that 1,100 individuals were served in November 2021, this means that 110 – 165 Vineyard youth and young adults sought food and essential supplies at the Food Pantry that month.

TOWNS

- A. Incentivize use of homes that are vacant (roughly 60% of homes on the Vineyard are NOT occupied year-round). For instance, towns can offer tax incentives for homeowners who switch their home from an empty residence to a rental property especially for Island workforce
- B. Create innovative incentives for community care; for instance, reduce rent for students/trainees whereby a homeowner/landlord earns tax benefits or subsidies for renting to a person between ages 18-26 or to a person who is a student in a certificate/license/degree program
- C. Expand zoning laws to allow more apartments and single unit dwellings, as many young people attempting to work and live here are single, and often are forced to live with their parents.
- D. Actively address nitrogen loading limitations and lack of storage capacity with the intent to allow more single unit dwellings
- E. Prioritize renters as highly as homeowners, recognizing the value renters bring to the Island economy, especially on a year-round basis
- F. Support the Housing Bank efforts, approving passage of Housing Bank development, articles and policies
- G. Actively recruit and invite youth and young adults to participate in housing committees and speak at meetings about their personal experiences and needs
- H. Town housing committees should prioritize rentals over ownership, actively creating new single-unit dwellings specifically for young people, workforce, retirees and elders needing to downsize.

EMPLOYERS

- A. Invest in employer housing options, using MV Hospital and Harbor View Hotel as models

HOMEOWNERS

- A. Offer affordable rental options to youth/young adults who are in school or a training program
- B. Lobby your town leaders to offer subsidies for landlords who rent to youth/young adults
- C. If selling your home, contact the Island Housing Trust for use as workforce housing

IGI/FOOD PANTRY

- A. Begin tracking the numbers of individuals served within the following age ranges: 16-18, 19-26.
- B. Consider expanding food pantry services into the high schools, and/or through the YMCA Teen Center

EDUCATION, CONTINUING ED, & WORKFORCE



Many youth on Martha's Vineyard do not want, or are not able, to complete a college degree. It is estimated that as many as 50-75% of Vineyard high school graduates leave the Island for college or university but drop out within the first year, returning to the Island without a degree.

One of the most prominent recommendations from the Rural Scholars and from many of the stakeholders we interviewed was for mentorship of youth by adults. [The National Mentoring Resource Center](#) and [Big Brothers Big Sisters](#) offer helpful definitions of mentorship.

HIGH SCHOOLS (BOTH MVRHS AND MVPCS)

- A. Establish formal mentorship programs for students with adult volunteers as well as local employers. This school-wide mentorship program would be in addition to any mentoring groups that might already exist at your school.
- B. Expand business relationships to improve and expand job and career fairs
- C. Seek additional town funding to defray the cost of Co-Op/Work experiences
- D. Embed a system for follow-up with graduates into the Guidance Department, maintaining a database of graduates' contact info
- E. Include professional, vocational, and gap year opportunities in the Annual Job and Career Fairs, with increased representation of businesses and employers, and integrate student skill building workshops before and after the fairs.
- F. Offer paid work study and Co-Op opportunities for undocumented students (as allowed by law)
- G. Formalize a system for CTE wherein Advisory Board members and employers provide regular, scheduled mentorships in a professional capacity
- H. Dramatically expand the MVRHS Career and Technical Education Program, using local, state and federal funds to purchase equipment, update aging equipment, and implement new programming that address Vineyard-relevant goals including but not limited to veterinary skills, plumbing licensure, electrician training, computer tech professions and web/internet expertise, expanded nursing programming, marine and maritime skills, and certification leading to early childhood education, mental and behavioral health credentials.
- I. Increase parity of CTE program with college-prep pathways
- J. Amend Parent Orientation at MVRHS (reduce the focus on class rank and college matriculation, and increase the promotion of parents' involvement in post-secondary planning with a role of empowering their child/children to take the lead in their career decision-making process)

MIDDLE SCHOOLS (ALL TOWNS)

- A. Establish formal mentorship programs in addition to any mentorship programs that already exist at your school. Create early career exposure and innovative channels for underrepresented jobs/employers to connect with students. Seek community members for personal mentorships.
- B. Emphasize assigning mentors or formal pairings (partnering with MV Boys & Girls Club, for instance) and creating day-long on-site observation visits at places of employment
- C. Establish a Service Learning Program. One middle school on the Island should establish and host a nationally-recognized SL program at the middle school level, arranging bus transportation after school and student engagement from other schools. National standards govern how SL programs function; these are design-based where a student (or a small team of students) works with a mentor. Program is guided by student voice and is academically rigorous.
- D. Teach career terminology, such as salary, career ladders, career pathways, and nonprofit versus corporate career.

ACE MV

- A. Expand accredited classes and community college options.
- B. Assess target employment areas most needed in the community (for economic stability and environmental sustainability), seeking community perspective on value and needs.
- C. Add civics classes to ACE's existing career readiness and life skills classes, teaching young Vineyarders about local governmental structure, advocacy, and running for office.

MV BOYS & GIRLS CLUB

- A. Consider developing a mentorship program for 18-26 year olds, either personal-based or career-based.
- B. Teach career terminology such as salary, career ladders, career pathways, and nonprofit versus corporate careers.



EMPLOYERS

- A. Actively participate in high school Job and Career Fairs.
- B. Volunteer with middle schools, high schools, and the MV Boys & Girls Club by offering job shadowing, talks about your profession, resume/application support, mock interview lessons, and participating in the internship programs through both local high schools.
- C. Seek ways to bring youth and young adults into your work location, as field experience is key to a youth's ability to discern relevant career pathways

TOWNS

- A. Approve budget requests from both high schools to fund mentorship/apprenticeship and workstudy opportunities to enhance economic development and stability in each town
- B. Approve budget requests from both high schools to expand guidance departments to perform outreach to graduates and provide career counseling/coaching as needed for young adults.
- C. Approve budget requests from both high schools to dramatically expand Career and Technical Education options, including the purchase of new equipment and hiring of teachers for trades and technical instruction.

BANKS

- A. Provide a mortgage discount to homeowners who rent to workforce members or to students/trainees in an accredited program.

MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE USE, & COUNSELING



Boredom, isolation, and stress can lead to increased social/behavioral health concerns and substance use. Additionally, substance use can be generational, where families who fail to access needed services perpetuate substance abuse indefinitely. Even where substance use is not an issue, mental health services are severely lacking on the Vineyard.

TOWNS

- A. Prioritize the establishment of an Island-based full-service mental health treatment facility. Work with Island clinicians and providers and collaborate with other towns to make an on-Island treatment facility a reality.
- B. Approve budget requests from both high schools to fund full-time social workers and full-time school psychologists
- C. See housing recommendations, above.

HIGH SCHOOLS (BOTH MVRHS and MVPCS)

- A. See mentorship recommendations above.
- B. Provide students with a diversity of mental health counseling options and provide students with choices in working with a guidance counselor or therapist
- C. Fund and hire a full-time advanced behavioral health clinician
- D. Continue to foster diversity (cultural, racial, gender) in guidance and counseling staff
- E. Increase social and economic services for recently arrived youth from Brazil, especially access to internships and to attorneys for education on obtaining citizenship

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS

- A. Create a culture shift that engages and celebrates children of diverse backgrounds, especially Wampanoag and Brazilian children. Rural Scholars report that in their subject interviews, some young persons expressed that by the time they reached high school, their confidence had evaporated due to lack of positive cultural-based interactions with teachers and school administrators.

YMCA

- A. Build a stronger partnership with MVRHS to include youth ages 16-26.
- B. Promote two-way incentives for MVRHS students and Y patrons.

C. Provide membership incentives (discounts?) for young adults enrolled in continuing ed classes or training programs.

MVCS

- A. Prioritize on-Island therapists rather than sending youth and young adults off-Island for treatment.
- B. Prioritize the establishment of a dedicated, Island-based full-service mental health treatment facility/detox/substance use rehab facility.
- C. Increase the number of mental health practitioners with experience serving youth through recruitment, internships, training opportunities, and housing placements.
- D. Increase social and economic services for recently arrived youth from Brazil, especially access to internships and to attorneys for education on obtaining citizenship

Nonprofit Organizations

- A. Launch a Youth Summit as a formal annual or quarterly event, bringing together agencies that support youth and young adults, and bridging silos (use Island Food Equity Network as a model)
- B. Organize the Summit by age groups, empowering agencies to strengthen services and assess needs by age
- C. Provide more leadership and feedback opportunities for youth and young adults



SECTION 2: RECOMMENDATIONS BY STAKEHOLDER GROUP

TOWNS



- Incentivize the use of homes that are vacant (roughly 60% of homes on the Vineyard are NOT occupied year-round). For instance, towns can offer tax incentives for homeowners who switch their home from an empty residence to a rental property especially for Island workforce
- Create innovative incentives for community care; for instance, reduce rent for students/trainees whereby a homeowner/landlord earns tax benefits or subsidies for renting to a person between ages 18-26 or to a person who is a student in a certificate/license/degree program
- Expand zoning laws to allow more apartments and single unit dwellings, as many young people attempting to work and live here are single, and often are forced to live with their parents.
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- Support the Housing Bank efforts, approving passage of Housing Bank development, articles and policies
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- Town housing committees should prioritize rentals over ownership, actively creating new single-unit dwellings specifically for young people, workforce, retirees and elders needing to downsize.
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- Approve budget requests from the high school to expand guidance departments to perform outreach to graduates and provide career counseling/coaching as needed for young adults.
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- Prioritize the establishment of an Island-based full-service mental health treatment facility. Work with Island clinicians and providers and collaborate with other towns to make an on-Island treatment facility a reality.
- Approve budget requests from the high school to fund full-time social workers and full-time school psychologists

REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL



- Establish formal mentorship programs for students with adult volunteers as well as local employers. This school-wide mentorship program would be in addition to any mentoring groups that might already exist at your school.
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- Include professional, vocational, and gap year opportunities in the Annual Job and Career Fairs, with increased representation of businesses and employers, and integrate student skill building workshops before and after the fairs.
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goals including but not limited to veterinary skills, plumbing licensure, electrician training, computer tech professions and web/internet expertise, expanded nursing programming, marine and maritime skills, and certification leading to early childhood education, mental and behavioral health credentials.

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MIDDLE SCHOOLS (from all towns)



- Establish or expand formal mentorship programs. Create early career exposure and innovative channels for underrepresented jobs/employers to connect with students. Seek community members for personal mentorships.
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with a mentor. Program is guided by student voice and is academically rigorous.

- Teach career terminology, such as salary, career ladders, career pathways, and nonprofit versus corporate career.
- (Especially for elementary schools): Create a culture shift that engages and celebrates children from diverse backgrounds, especially Wampanoag and Brazilian children. Rural Scholars report that in their subject interviews, some young persons expressed that by the time they reached high school, their confidence had evaporated due to lack of positive cultural-based interactions with teachers and school administrators.

MV COMMUNITY SERVICES

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IGI/FOOD PANTRY



- Begin tracking the numbers of individuals served within the following age ranges: 16-18, 19-26.
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- Invest in employer housing options, using MV Hospital and Harbor View Hotel as models
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- Seek ways to bring youth and young adults into your work location, as field experience is key to a youth's ability to discern relevant career pathways

ISLAND NONPROFITS



- Launch a Youth Summit as a formal annual or quarterly event, bringing together agencies that support youth and young adults, and bridging silos (use Island Food Equity Network as a model)
- Organize the Summit by age groups, empowering agencies to strengthen services and assess needs by age
- Provide more leadership and feedback opportunities for youth and young adults

BANKS



- Provide a mortgage discount to homeowners who rent to workforce members or to students/trainees in an accredited program.

HOMEOWNERS



- Offer affordable rental options to youth/young adults who are in school or a training program
- Lobby your town leaders to offer subsidies for landlords who rent to youth/young adults
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ACE MV



- Expand accredited classes and community college options.
- Assess target employment areas most needed in the community (for economic stability and environmental sustainability), seeking community perspective on value and needs.
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- Build a stronger partnership with MVRHS to include youth ages 16-26.
- Promote two-way incentives for MVRHS students and Y patrons.
- Provide membership incentives (discounts?) for young adults enrolled in continuing ed classes or training programs.

Participating Vineyard-based Stakeholders

ACE MV

Holly Bellebuono, Executive Director
Lisette Williams, Career Navigation Specialist
Kim Garrison, Board Member

Chiefs of Police

Bruce McNamee, Edgartown
Erik Blake, Oak Bluffs
Randhi Belain, Aquinnah

Dukes County

Beka El-Deiry, Commissioner of Youth
Delilah Meegan, Social Services Case Worker
Sheriff's Office: Sterling Bishop, Director of Community Outreach

Dukes County Regional

Housing Authority:

David Vigneault, Executive Director

Harbor Homes

Karen Tewhey, Executive Director

Individuals

April Knight, International Psychologist, Clinician and Consultant

Businesses

Chef Deon's Kitchen
Deon Thomas, Owner
South Mountain
Newell Isbell Shinn, Co-Owner and Director of Production
Sweet Bites
Sonia Destefani, Co-Owner
Valerio Destefani, Co-Owner
Homegrown Tours
Dolores Borza, Owner
Tomahawk Charters
Buddy Vanderhoop, Owner

Island Grown Initiative

Sharon Brown, Island Food Pantry Operations Manager

Kayte Morris, Senior Director, Food Equity Programs

Island Health Care

Brian Morris, Island Health Care MH/SUD Access Coordinator
Saul Damier, Substance Use Disorders Complex Case Manager
Haley Dolan, Population health manager

MV Boys & Girls Club

Dhakhir Warren, Executive Director

MV Community Services

Beth Wike, Director of Disability Services
Jennifer Neary, Director of CONNECT to End Violence
Susan Mercier, Program Director for Island Wide Youth Collaborative

MV Diversity Coalition

Sandra Pimentel, Co-Founder

MV Hospital

Marcy Holmes, NP

MV Public Charter School

Peter Steedman, Principal
Sonja Josephson, International Baccalaureate Coordinator
Sarah Smith, College Admission Counselor

MV Regional High School

Amy Lilavois, School Adjustment Counselor
Barbara-jean Chauvin, Retired Assistant Principal and CTE Director
Billy Seabourne, Building Trades Teacher
Dianne Norton, ELL Dept. Chair
John Fiorito, Guidance Director
Lizzy Schule, ELL Instructor
Luiza Mouzinho, Licensed Mental Health Counselor (Bilingual)
Natalie Munn, Science Teacher
Sam Hart, Coordinator of Pathways and Special Projects
Sara Dingley, Principal

Sean Mulvey, Guidance Counselor
Sheila McHugh, Guidance Counselor

MV Public Schools

Leah Palmer, ELL Director for Pre-K to Adult

MV Youth

Lindsey Scott, Executive Director

Oak Bluffs Fire and EMS

Stephen Foster, Deputy Chief

Sail MV

Andrew Nutton, Director of Programs; MVRHS CTE Maritime Instructor

U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary

Joseph Berini, Commander for Flotilla 11-9

Vineyard Health Care Access

Sarah Kuh, Director

Vineyard Transit Authority

Kelly McCarron, Board Member

Wampanoag Women's Center

Jen Randolph, Safe Harbor Program Coordinator

YMCA

Ryan Schwab-Doyon, Director of Alex's Place
Kelly Neadow, Senior Director, Youth & Staff Development
Alexander Lam, Front Desk and Health/Wellness Staff

Youth Task Force

Theresa Manning, Coordinator



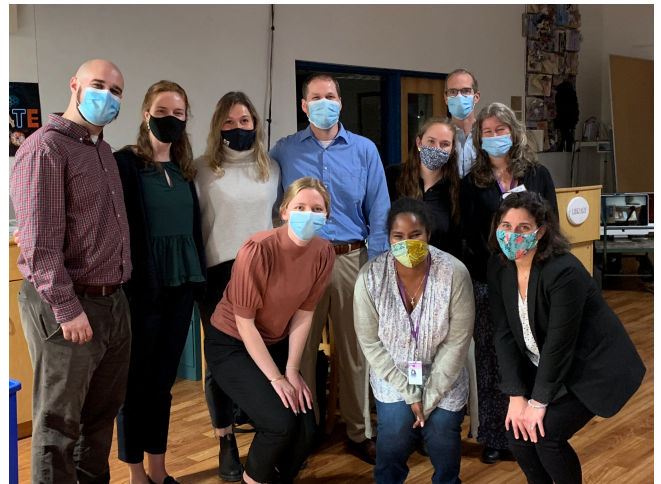


About ACE MV

ACE MV provides advanced and continuing education on the Island of Martha's Vineyard. We liaison with colleges, universities and government agencies to make post-secondary learning affordable and accessible, with certificates, licenses, undergraduate and graduate degrees in business, health care, renewable energy, trades, language, and educator training.

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