

The READY Institute at USG

Ensuring High-Value Talent Pathways in Montgomery County

The mission of the Universities at Shady Grove (USG) is

- To support and expand pathways to affordable, high-quality public higher education that meet the distinctive needs of the region and are designed to support workforce and economic development in the state; and
- to achieve these goals through partnerships and collaborations with academic, business, public sector and community organizations that promote student success, high academic achievement and professional advancement.

Now more than ever, with evolving job markets and increasing costs, community members - including students, families, employers, and educators - are raising important questions about the value of a college education.

For 25 years, USG has delivered on its promise, offering high-value programs that help meet the critical talent needs of local employers.^{1,2} Collective impact best practices call for five key elements: A common agenda, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and backbone support organizations.

USG serves as a backbone organization for Montgomery County, along with MCEDC and others, working with cross-sector partners to achieve collective impact in building an inclusive talent pipeline for the region. To unify and strengthen shared measurement systems for regional talent goals, County Executive Marc Elrich led public and private support to launch the READY Institute at USG.

The nationally regarded Maryland Longitudinal Data System (MLDS) Center, partnered with the Maryland Higher Education Commission, the Maryland Department of Labor, and other State agencies, helps answer some important questions about the trajectory of students, including postsecondary data for those who continue to study and work in Maryland after high school. In collaboration with the University System of Maryland, our new READY Institute data dashboards build on MLDS data and answer more questions about Montgomery County's talent pipeline - including for graduates who continue their education and careers outside Maryland, with national data from industry-leading sources (*see p. 2*).

READY stands for Resilient Education for All, Designed for You! Now led by nationally recognized education and workforce expert Dr. Rudy Ruiz, our team engages with state agencies, educational institutions, and industry leaders to organize and share the most comprehensive and robust education-to-career data available, organized by industry hub.

The long-term goal for the work of the READY Institute and our employer engagement strategy is to establish the USG campus as the prime location to complete a degree or attain a credential because of our campus community's deep connection to and understanding of "what it takes" to be competitive for workforce opportunities in our region's high-demand, high-skill sectors.

¹ Data indicate each USG graduating class represents an individual 10-year ROI of \$300K+ per graduate and over \$1B per cohort: [Ranking 4,600 Colleges by ROI](#). Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce (2025).

² [USG Pathway by the Numbers: Cost Savings Snapshot](#) (2025).

The READY Institute at USG will help answer the community's questions with publicly accessible data dashboards, organized and searchable in alignment with the region's high-demand industry sectors (sample below).

Students and families want to know...
which pathways available in Montgomery County are...

- (1) aligned with their interests, strengths, and values; and
- (2) worth their investment of time and resources.



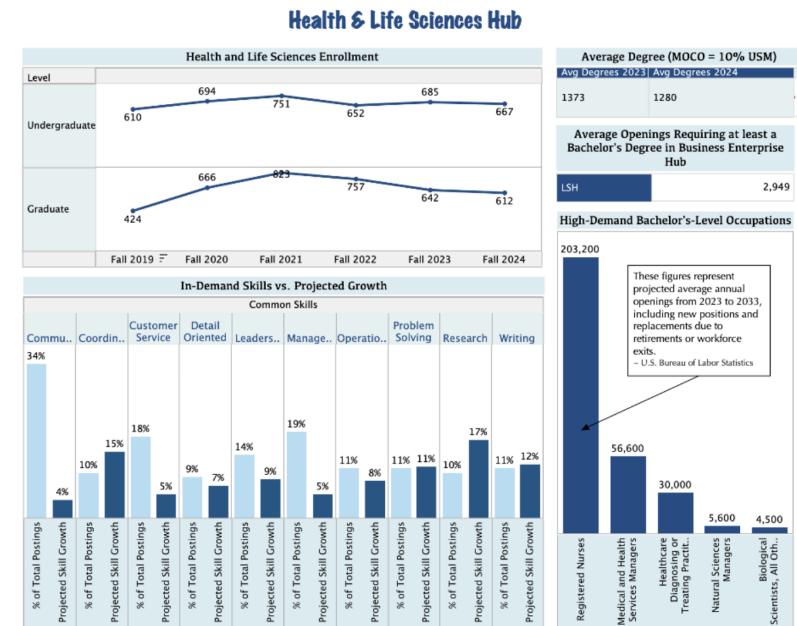
The RIASEC model of personality types adopted by MCPS in alignment with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, in collaboration with Worksource Montgomery's MoCo CAP (Career Advising Program), are aligned to the Dept. of Labor's O*Net Online.

Educators want to know...
how Montgomery County alumni are doing at the next stage - in their careers and earnings, and how to continually ensure students develop needed competencies.



With feedback from local employers, Montgomery County (incl. MCPS, MC, and USG) collaborated to determine nine career competencies, adapted from best practices developed by the National Assoc. of Colleges & Employers (NACE). At USG, students' experiences developing these competencies are captured using the HireU app.

Employers and civic leaders want to know...
how education offerings and opportunities will ensure the talent pipeline needed in Montgomery County.



Data Sources

- Academic Analytics: Information on alumni employment, earnings, and communities of residence, inclusive of those living/working outside Maryland.
- BLS: Bureau of Labor Statistics
- DLLR: Maryland Department of Labor
- Lightcast: Incl. state and federal sources, as well as continuous scraping of publicly available data from over 65,000 sources. Complete list of sources [here](#).
- MC: Montgomery College
- MHEC: Maryland Higher Education Commission
- MLDS: Maryland Longitudinal Data System
- MSDE: Maryland State Dept. of Education
- USG: Universities at Shady Grove
- USM: University System of Maryland
- WSM: Worksource Montgomery



The Universities
AT SHADY GROVE



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at USG