



# THE BALTIMORE TIMES

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PARIS BROWN OF THE THE BALTIMORE TIMES NAMED

**DIGITAL INNOVATOR**

OF THE YEAR 2025 BY LOCAL MEDIA ASSOCIATION

SEE ARTICLE ON PAGE 9



## Funding Will Help Local Nonprofit Keep Families in Their Homes

### Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service Receives \$200,000 'Housing for Everyone' Grant from the TD Charitable Foundation

**BALTIMORE (April 17, 2025)** – Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service (MVLS), the state's largest provider of pro bono legal services for low-income residents, has received a \$200,000 *Housing for Everyone* grant from the TD Charitable Foundation, the giving arm of TD Bank, America's Most Convenient Bank®. MVLS is one of 36 nonprofits selected from over 270 applicants for this annual grant program, which has supported affordable housing initiatives since 2005.

Access to housing remains a significant challenge across the country, along with sustaining homeownership. Rising property taxes, increasing insurance premiums and costly home repairs place a considerable financial burden on many homeowners, particularly those with limited incomes. The TD Charitable Foundation's 2025 *Housing for Everyone* grant is a critical initiative aimed at addressing these challenges. This year's program specifically supports organizations that provide post-purchase assistance to help individuals and families maintain long-term housing stability.

"MVLS will proudly use this grant to support our Tangled Title Program, which helps homeowners untangle complicated title issues and gain access to home repair programs, tax credits and other support," said MVLS Executive Director Susan Francis. "Too often, generational wealth is lost because of unresolved

legal matters. MVLS is changing that, allowing families to stay in their homes and older adults to age in place with dignity."

Last year, MVLS helped preserve over \$4 million in home equity, and with this grant, aims to return \$4.5 million more – all in an effort to protect families, build generational wealth and keep communities strong.

"Building generational wealth through sustained homeownership is one important way for families to ensure long-term financial security, which is why we are so proud to support the incredibly important work of Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service through the *Housing for Everyone* grant program," said Paige Carlson-Heim, Director of the TD Charitable Foundation. "By providing the critical services and support needed for families to remain in their homes, this organization is helping to create the foundation for individuals and families to thrive."

Through its 19th annual *Housing for Everyone* grant program, the TD Charitable Foundation awarded \$7.2 million to organizations supporting low- to moderate-income homeowners across its footprint. This year's grantees were chosen for programs that help families stay in their homes, including foreclosure prevention, legal aid, property tax relief and energy efficiency upgrades. Since 2005, the program has invested over \$63 million in more than 620 affordable housing initiatives.



*MVLS Executive Director Susan Francis*

*Photo courtesy of MVLS*

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## Focus Movers Takes Care of Moving Needs, Gives Tips for Smooth Move

By Andrea Blackstone

Kermit Fowlkes, owner / CEO of Baltimore, Maryland based Focus Movers LLC (Focus Movers Relocation Service) founded his business out of necessity and because of a friendly suggestion.

"Focus Movers came to inception in 2009 due to job loss. A friend (Kemani Bracey) has an extensive history of entrepreneurship throughout the lineage of his family and kept trying to convince me to explore the life of an entrepreneur versus the current tradition of working a normal work life. After my loss of employment, he saw this as an opportunity for me to assist him in his endeavor to start a moving business.

Fowlkes added, "With my skill set he just knew that I'd surely be able to help him, and as repayment he'd return the favor in helping me start my own business. Everything went and worked out exactly like that."

### The Journey Continues

Today, a six-man moving team provides packing services, residential and commercial full-service moves, local and long-distance moving relocation service, and labor-only services if clients have their own truck. Service is provided in the entire region of Maryland; Arlington and Alexandria in Northern Virginia; the Washington DC Metropolitan area; and York, Lancaster, and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Focus Movers partners with various local moving companies, such as James Wildy and Wildy Way Services, when business ramps up during the warmer months of the year.

"We have and provide 16-foot and 26-foot trucks with the majority of our services," said Fowlkes. "We are a fully licensed, bonded and insured moving

company. This is always a big deal for clients because the safety of their furniture and possessions is always their main concern. Coverage and assurance are major when you are being trusted to get things relocated, no matter the size of the job."

Focus Movers provides last-minute jobs that may include relocation services due to domestic violence, eviction, filling in when other movers did not show up, poor planning with a move, or tired people who want a hand.

### Moving Tips:

**Purge items or hold a yard sale before moving.**

Save sentimental belongings but get rid of items that you do not need. Fowlkes suggests that the less items that must be moved, the less you have to pay a moving company.

"Sometimes a fresh start isn't as bad as it seems, especially when those older unused items can help pay towards your move or newfound interest," he added.

### Properly prepare for your move.

Remember, efforts to save time, save you money. Clients can pre-pack and label their boxes; stage smaller furniture or items closer to exits; and break down furniture in advance of the move, if possible.

### Decide what you will pack yourself.

Fowlkes recommends that his clients pack small and manageable items.

"Remove items from dressers, empty cabinets, pack small toys and miscellaneous things within reason," he said.

### Take precautions against damaging your items.

"The first key to packing is to never overpack. Boxes should not be too heavy



*Focus Movers provides moving services in the entire region of Maryland; parts of Northern Virginia; the Washington DC Metropolitan area; and portions of Pennsylvania. Kermit Fowlkes, founder of the company, started his entrepreneurial journey after experiencing job loss in 2009.*

*Photos: Terrell Mayes of TaMaze Media*



*Kermit Fowlkes sits inside of the box truck. Focus Movers Staff: Back row, left: Tyrone Huntington, and Lindell Bowen (center). Back row, right: Joseph Gentile; front, right, Daniel Thomas; and front, middle, Orin Davis.*

for one person to lift," said Fowlkes. "Packing, using plastic wrap, newspaper and bubble wrap also is good to use on kitchen and glassware."

### Find out which items may not be insured.

"Moving insurance typically does not cover automobiles; boats of any sort; self-packed items; live plants; documents/ paperwork; and high-value items that are not declared before the move," Fowlkes stated.

### Know which items a moving company will not or cannot pack because of regulations.

Items such as firearms, liquor, flammable items, cleaning supplies or hazardous material, live animals or plants are on Focus Movers' list. Personal possessions, including money and jewelry, should not be placed or requested to be placed on Fowlkes' moving trucks.

### The joy of entrepreneurship.

Fowlkes believes that assisting others in life is extremely valuable.

"The most rewarding part of what I do in business is mostly the impact of connecting with many different people of all walks of life. To assist others in life is super invaluable." Betsy Gardner, a Baltimore, Maryland resident and repeat customer shared that Focus Movers stands out because of their professionalism, reliability, and exceptional customer service.

"The owner, Kermit, is very hands-on, and also ensures that every move is handled with care. He consistently goes above and beyond to make the process smooth and stress-free. His dedication to helping people extends beyond his business. He's also actively involved in the community, which really shows his character and values," Gardner stated. Please visit <https://focusmovers.com> to learn more about Focus Movers Relocation Services.



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## From Historic First to Abrupt Exit

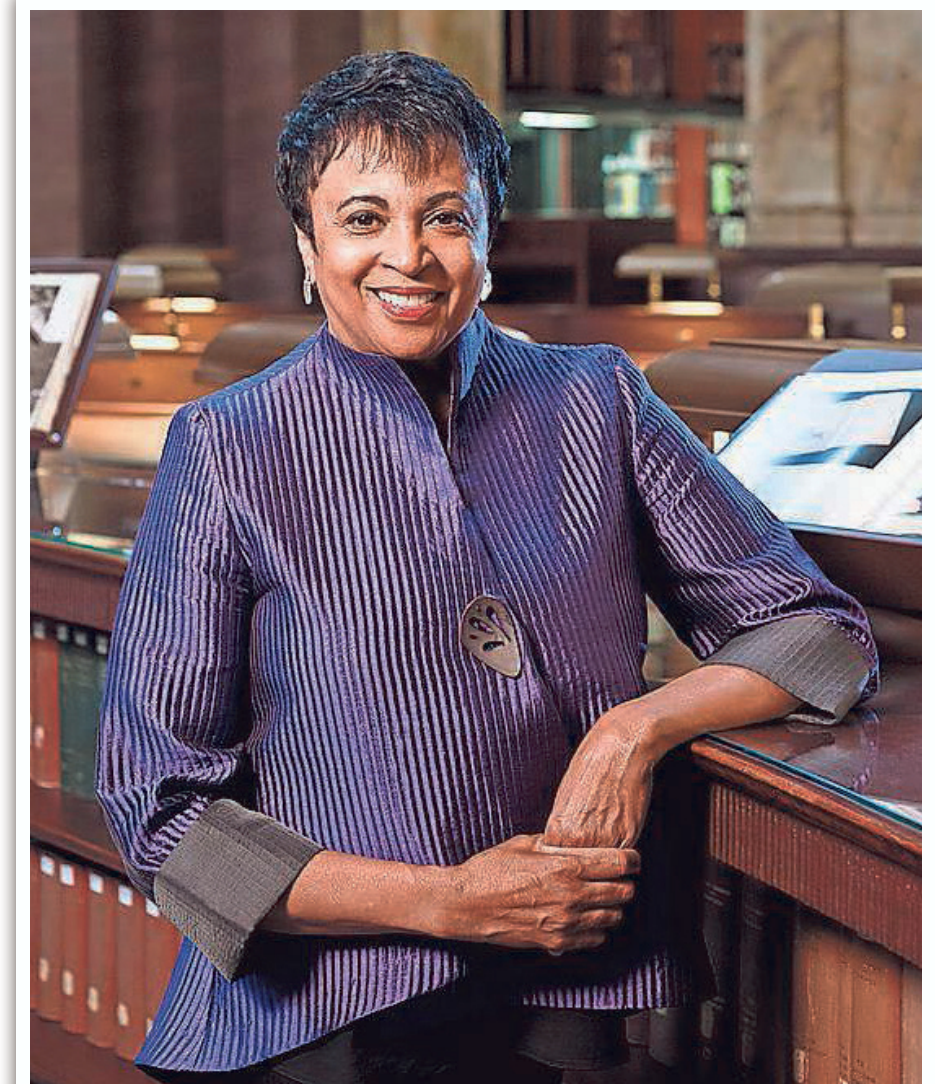
# Trump Abruptly Fires First Carla Hayden: The First Black Woman to Serve as Librarian of Congress

By Lauren Burke

President Donald Trump abruptly fired the Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden on May 8, 2025. Hayden made history in 2016 as the first woman and first African American to run the Library of Congress. Her firing arrived in the form of an abrupt email in the evening hours.

There are fears that President Trump may also target a second prominent Black federal official, Smithsonian Chief Lonnie Bunch, for no other reason than the perceived political bias in a position not known for partisan activity. "Carla, on behalf of President Donald J. Trump, I am writing to inform you that your position as the Librarian of Congress is terminated effective immediately. Thank you for your service," the terse communication to Hayden read. The Library of Congress confirmed that Hayden had been informed she was fired by the White House. According to the Associated Press, Hayden "recently faced criticism from a conservative advocacy group aligned with Trump's political allies. The group, the American Accountability Foundation, accused her and other library officials of promoting children's books with what it called "radical" themes."

Since his return to office, Trump's Administration has been focused on removing anyone who may disagree with their policy agenda. Many of the removals have introduced a sense of partisanship that Washington hasn't seen in certain sectors such as the Library of Congress. "This is yet another example in the disturbing pattern of the President removing dedicated public servants without cause—likely to fill the position with one of his 'friends' who is not



*Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden in the Library's Main Reading Room, September 1, 2020. Photo: Shawn Miller/Library of Congress. (Wikimedia Commons/Photo by Library of Congress Life)*

qualified and does not care about protecting America's legacy," wrote House Democrat Rosa DeLauro in a statement on Hayden's firing. "President Trump's unjustified decision to fire Dr. Carla Hayden as the Librarian of Congress is deeply troubling and just the latest

example of Trump's assault on the legislative branch of government. It's also the latest demonstration of his blatant disregard for public servants who dedicate their lives to serving the American people," wrote U.S. Senator Alex Padilla of California in a statement late on May 8, 2025.

# Fibroids: Untangling an Underdiscussed Health Issue in the Black Community

By Andrea Blackstone

May is Women's Health Month, a time to focus on women's health issues and raise awareness about common conditions such as fibroids, which are also known as leiomyomas or myomas. Dr. Tomeka Roberts stated that these benign tumors can attach in or around the uterus. The peak time of prevalence is when women are in their 30-40s.

"They are often diagnosed during women's reproductive years," the OBGYN said. "The most common symptoms are irregular vaginal bleeding, heavy cycles, pelvic pressure and pain."

Dr. Roberts stated that the most common tests to find fibroids are transvaginal ultrasounds. However, MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) is usually used for surgical planning.

African American women are affected by fibroids at a higher rate than women in other populations.

"Uterine fibroids (leiomyomas) are the most common benign pelvic tumors in women and are the major indication for hysterectomy. Fibroids are more common and more severe among African American women," the National Library of Medicine reported. "Fibroids should be considered a public health issue, given the magnitude of the problem and the costs of health care for this disease."

Additionally, "ultrasound evidence shows that more than 80% of African American women and approximately 70% of white women will have uterine fibroids by age 50."

Dr. Roberts mentioned that a study has linked vitamin D insufficiency with increased fibroid risk in Black women. She further stated that the study (<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/>

PMC5330388/) also opens a potential pathway to prevention.

Women who have been diagnosed with fibroids should be mindful of what they eat.

"It is thought that a diet high in red meat and low in fruits and vegetables can increase fibroid prevalence," said Dr. Roberts. "I usually tell my patients to stop eating red meat and eat only lean meats, fruits, and vegetables. Anything that makes the body healthier like reducing sugar intake and exercise will help with symptoms. Some studies show increasing vitamin D intake may help."

Since alcohol raises the level of hormones needed for fibroids to grow, and it triggers inflammation, consuming alcohol can increase the risk of fibroids. Additionally, too much estrogen can worsen fibroids, according to Healthline.

"Fat cells make more estrogen, so losing weight may help prevent or slow the growth of fibroids," Healthline further reported.

"Obesity is a known risk factor for fibroids. It is disproportionately higher for African Americans due to complex reasons. These include racial disparities, lifestyle factors and genetics," Dr. Roberts indicated.

Dr. Roberts noted that two methods to remove fibroids include having a hysterectomy (removal of the uterus with the cervix attached) and undergoing a myomectomy (removal of fibroids and leaving the uterus).

The best course of action to take to address fibroids depends on if childbearing is complete.

"If you want to conceive or want to keep the option to conceive, then you must discuss with your GYN which is best for you. Some myomectomies and hysterectomies can be performed

minimally invasively," Dr. Roberts explained.

Newer surgical options that are uterine sparing include uterine artery embolization, radiofrequency ablation, and MRI-focused ultrasound.

"Uterine artery embolization (UAE) is a procedure to treat fibroids without surgery. Uterine fibroids are noncancerous (benign) tumors that develop in the uterus (womb). During the procedure, the blood supply to the fibroids is cut off. This typically causes the fibroids to shrink," the National Library of Medicine (<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007384.htm>) noted.

Radiofrequency ablation, which is a minimally invasive surgical procedure, uses heat to target fibroids one by one. The size of them is significant and the procedure is "ideal in improving symptom management and overall quality of life," per National Library of Medicine (<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10415057/>).

Focused ultrasound treatment for uterine fibroids, which is a noninvasive treatment, has been available to women in the U.S. since a treatment system was approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 2004, according to Focused Ultrasound



**Gynecologist Tomeka Roberts, M.D., shares risk information about fibroids, risk factors, and treatment options.** Photo: Sam Jasper Photography

Foundation (<https://www.fusfoundation.org/diseases-and-conditions/uterine-fibroids>). Focused ultrasound energy heats and destroys the targeted tissue at the focal point. This process is repeated until the entire selected volume is destroyed, Focused Ultrasound Foundation further reported.

Sometimes women who have fibroids do not get satisfaction from their doctors. Dr. Roberts suggested getting a second opinion.

"Hysterectomy is not the only option for fibroids. If you do decide on surgery, please ask your doctor how many they have performed, how many people do they treat that have fibroids, and if they are comfortable with minimally invasive options," she stated.

Visit <https://www.tomekarobertsmd.com/home-3> to learn more about Dr. Roberts.



## Don't Count Them Out: Remember to Address the Health Needs of Children and Young People

By Andrea Blackstone

May is Children's Mental Health Awareness Month. Parents and caregivers of children and young people can be champions for their mental well-being.

According to the National Library of Medicine (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK587174>), "nearly 20% of children and young people ages 3-17 in the United States have a mental, emotional, developmental, or behavioral disorder, and suicidal behaviors among high school students increased more than 40% in the decade before 2019. Mental health challenges were the leading cause of death and disability in this age group."

Dr. Ajita M. Robinson, LCPC, NCC, a licensed clinical professional counselor and national certified counselor, owns Friends in Transition Counseling Services.

"Parenting is no small joke, especially when many of us are still learning how to feel our own feelings without guilt or shame. But the beautiful thing is, it's never too late to shift how we show up for our kids emotionally. Many of us are parenting our children while re-parenting ourselves," said Dr. Robinson.

Dr. Robinson explains three things parents or guardians can do to teach young people to better manage their emotions.

### 1. Normalize the full range of emotions.

Dr. Robinson noted that all feelings are valid, including joy, sadness, anger, fear, and even the ones that make us uncomfortable as adults.

"Children need to know it's okay to cry when they're hurt or frustrated, to

get angry when something feels unfair, and to feel excitement without being told to 'calm down.' Too often, we rush to quiet or fix their emotions because we are uncomfortable. But when we do that, we unintentionally teach them to disconnect from themselves,"

Dr. Robinson explained.

She said to "let them feel and let them know there's no such thing as a 'bad' feeling—only feelings that need understanding."

### 2. Model emotional expression—not suppression.

Dr. Robinson pointed out that we do not have to be perfect parents.

"Perfection is not the goal—authenticity is. Kids benefit from seeing the adults in their lives express real emotions in healthy, constructive (and age-appropriate) ways," according to Dr. Robinson.

She added, "That might sound like saying, 'Mommy is feeling overwhelmed right now, so I'm going to take a minute to myself,' or 'I felt hurt when that happened, but I'm working through it.' Those small, honest moments show our kids that it's okay to feel, and it's okay to need a moment to regulate."

Dr. Robinson and her family members have a daily quiet time in their home. She shared that the practice started during the early days of the pandemic, when the lines between work, parenting, and rest completely disappeared.

"With no commute or transition time, I found myself jumping straight from heavy therapy sessions into parenting—and it was overwhelming. So, I created a buffer," said Dr. Robinson.

She usually takes a short nap or

recalibrates after work.

"My kids get to choose how they spend that time as long as it respects everyone else's space and peace. It's become a rhythm that helps all of us regulate and reconnect with ourselves. The truth is, kids are always watching us. When they see us naming our emotions, setting boundaries, and using healthy coping strategies, they learn how to do the same, not just in childhood, but for life,"

Dr. Robinson noted.

**3. Respect their boundaries—even when you're the parent.** "Okay, this one might make some folks shift in their seats a little—but hear me out: children deserve boundaries, too. Yes, even the little ones. That means letting them say no to hugs, knocking before you enter their room, and giving them space when they ask for it," Dr. Robinson explained.

She added that respecting their boundaries is not about giving up authority, but it is about teaching children that their body, their time, and their emotions belong to them.

"That's how we help our kids feel safe—not just physically, but emotionally. When we model respect for their boundaries, we're not just raising well-behaved kids—we're

raising future adults who know how to advocate for themselves, set healthy limits, and recognize what safety feels like," Dr. Robinson proclaimed.

Dr. Robinson pointed out that emotionally safe kids grow into emotionally grounded adults who can handle hard conversations, navigate conflict without blowing up, and connect with compassion instead of control.

Visit <https://fit-counseling.com/about/dr-ajita-m-robinson> to learn more about Dr. Robinson. Clients are currently served through online sessions in Maryland, Washington, DC and Missouri.



**Dr. Ajita M. Robinson**

*Photo: Shalia Watts of WhatsGrit*

# Harlem Reclaims Big Apple Birthright After 87 Years

By Iger Rolyat

The Harlem Tourism Board is hosting a special presentation as part of this year's NYCxDesignFestival on Tuesday, May 20, 2025 at the Harlem Renaissance Marriott Hotel where they will feature the “Birthplace of the Big Apple” sculpture, created by board member, Regi Taylor, HTB's Creative In Residence. The commemorative monument premieres 87 years after Harlem first ‘defined’ the Big Apple as its own. The official Big Apple announcement will take place during Harlem Week in August.

The “[Big] Apple, (noun), the big town, the main stem, Harlem” was the official definition ascribed to New York City in 1938 by Maestro Cab Calloway in the first dictionary published by a Black man in American history, and the first time “The Big Apple” was defined in print to mean New York. “This evidence makes it clear that the globally iconic New York City nickname, “The Big Apple,” is a cultural legacy of Harlem evolved from organic slang,” explains sculptor, Regi Taylor, “making Harlem the Birthplace of the Big Apple.”

“The evidence could not be more clear according to former Manhattan Borough Historian Doris Rosenblum, who declared after a thorough review of the research report that “I do believe you are correct regarding the derivation of ‘The Big Apple’,” according to Taylor.

While the generally accepted theory of “The Big Apple's” trajectory to pop culture status is attributed to 1920s horse racing writer, John FitzGerald, who acknowledges first overhearing the phrase discussed between two Black stable hands 1,300 miles from New York at a New Orleans race track, perhaps exposing his limited readers

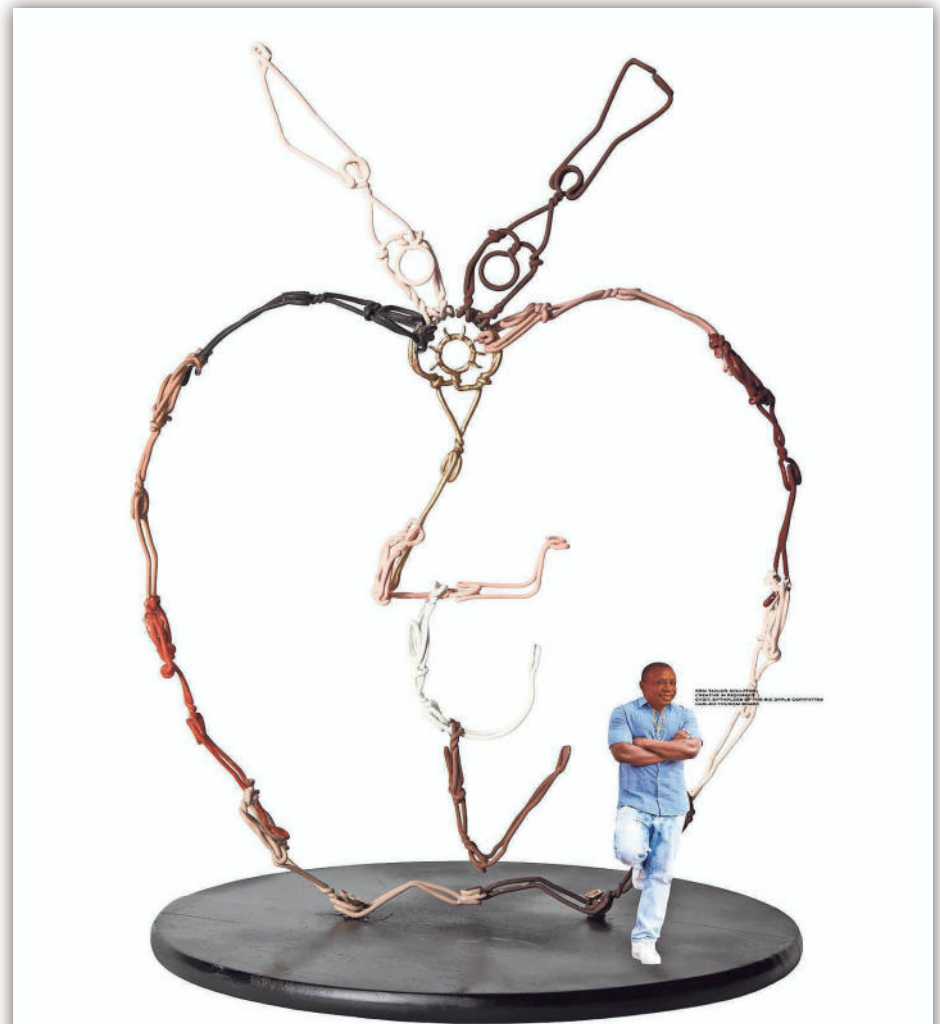
to the term, his contribution falls short to explain how the rest of the planet became enlightened.

Harlem Renaissance jazz impresario, Cab Calloway, however, who first defined “The Big Apple” in his “Hepster's Dictionary, Language of Harlem Jive,” which sold over two-million copies internationally and was adopted by the New York Public Library as its official glossary of popular slang, does explain the global circulation of the nickname.

Taylor uncovered the obscure origins of “The Big Apple's” cultural orbit from an extensive examination at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem. His findings were subsequently authenticated by historian Rosenblum. After getting the green light on his research and his proposal to build an outdoor commemorative Big Apple sculpture from Community Board 10 in Central Harlem, Taylor joined with the Harlem Tourism Board to put in motion a Big Apple public education campaign and has undertaken exploratory steps to construct the monument.

To support Taylor's efforts, fellow Harlem Tourism Board member, Gary Jones, CEO of manufacturer, New York City Jewelry Connection, has created a spectacular pendant developed by Taylor from the original sculpture design - <https://hbcuamazing.com/products/birthplace-of-big-apple-sterling-silver-pendant> - to fundraise the project. Supporters who purchase “The Big Apple” pendant before the May 20 NYCxDesign Festival may choose any t-shirt as a thank you gift from this exclusive selection of Birthplace of the Big Apple collectibles <https://www.teepublic.com/user/harlem-crossroads-of-the-diaspora>.

As a bonus gift, all will receive a virtual copy of Cab Calloway's



Birthplace of the Big Apple Sculpture Harlem, New York City

A 26-FOOT TALL, 18-FOOT WIDE, ICONIC SCULPTURE CONTOURED AS A HEART-SHAPED APPLE COMPRISED OF FOURTEEN SIX FOOT TALL, MULTIPLE-FLESH-COLORED FIGURINES DEPICTING NEW YORKERS AS A COMPOSITE SMILING FACE IN PROFILE. PHONETICALLY READING LUV THE BIG APPLE, ROTATING 360 DEGREES CLOCKWISE EVERY 24 HOURS AD INFINITUM, COMMEMORATING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CAB CALLOWAY AND GWEN BARRETT, HARLEMITES WHOVE MADE THE BIG APPLE THE QUINTESSENTIAL CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL POP CULTURE DESTINATION AND TREND-SETTER.

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*Regi Taylor, sculptor, Creative in Residence and chair of the Birthplace of The Big Apple committee. Courtesy photo*

1944 6th edition of the “Hepster's Dictionary” as an additional keepsake. Contact [villageofharlem@gmail.com](mailto:villageofharlem@gmail.com) for t-shirt and dictionary details.



# Paris Brown of The Baltimore Times Named Digital Innovator of the Year by Local Media Association

By Local Media Association Staff

Paris Brown, publisher of The Baltimore Times, has been named an Innovator of the Year by Local Media Association for her adoption of AI to drive efficiency, content improvements and audience development.

While many in the news business have treated artificial intelligence as a threat, Brown has embraced AI as an opportunity.

“Improve the quality of life of our readers, that’s our mission,” said Brown. “We’re not afraid of AI. It’s our friend. It helps us serve our audience.”

Brown and the team at The Baltimore Times have creatively applied AI to everything from content creation and distribution to audience engagement and new AI-powered content experiences.

“I use it as a personal assistant every day,” noted Brown. She uses it for everything from drafting and editing to helping her manage project timelines. For content creation, the Times has used AI to help generate unique print and digital covers and illustrations, and even come up with the headlines and titles for key audience initiatives like “Pedals for Resilience,” their tribute to the history of Black cyclists. The team also used AI to create a more engaging, interactive experience for audiences who attended the in-person Pedals for Resilience installation.

Artificial intelligence has also been important to the Times in deepening the value of its coverage of health issues important to the Black community. Brown has used AI partners to automate and create audio versions of the Times’ health stories, and to enable listeners to choose both



*Paris Brown,  
Publisher of The Baltimore Times  
Courtesy photo*

the avatar and ‘voice’ of who reads the stories to them. This innovative use of AI expands the reach of the Baltimore Times’ reporting to audiences where literacy may be a barrier; and having a choice of voice and tone better represents the community the Times serves.

Through her ongoing willingness to experiment with AI tools, Brown has modeled what innovative local news leadership looks like.

Brown had this to say about being named an LMA Innovator of the Year:

“Local Media Association, thank you for recognizing me as Digital Innovator of the Year. I am honored that the work at The Baltimore Times is being acknowledged. Our small size and agility enable our team to lead iteratively, seeking new ways to inform, empower, celebrate and engage our audience, while securing the revenue

we need to stay relevant. In today’s digital news landscape, this nimbleness has allowed us to pilot, pivot and refine cutting-edge news products rapidly. Innovation has been in our DNA since we launched with a mission to spotlight positive stories about Black America when others overlooked them almost 40 years ago. I am building on that foundation in ways that are both necessary and timely for our continued survival. By forging strong partnerships, enhancing our tech stack and harnessing AI, I believe The Baltimore Times can amplify its impact, scale operations and build capacity beyond what

our size alone would allow. This blend of collaboration, creativity and smart technology is not just our survival strategy—it is our formula for thriving well into the future.”

### About Paris Brown:

Paris M. Brown, Publisher of The Baltimore Times, brings a wealth of experience spanning three decades in business development and marketing to her leadership role. As the steward of a publication approaching its 40th anniversary, Brown has skillfully guided the organization through a digital transformation while staying true to its founding mission of promoting positive community stories that improve readers’ quality of life.

Under Brown’s leadership over the past four years, The Baltimore Times has embraced a digital-first approach that has significantly increased digital

revenue through targeted campaigns and innovative revenue models. Her forward-thinking strategy positions the publication at the cutting edge of media technology, incorporating: artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance content creation, distribution and audience analysis; virtual reality (VR) experiences that transport readers into immersive storytelling environments; augmented reality (AR) features that bring print content to life through interactive digital elements.

Brown’s leadership philosophy centers on deep community partnerships that highlight The Baltimore Times’ commitment to community involvement, giving voice to untold stories through the publication’s platforms. Initiatives under her leadership embody her innovative approach to community engagement, including:

**Best of Black Baltimore:** With local corporate support, launched the first city-wide celebration of Black businesses that gives voice to the community residents through its digital voting campaign that recognizes local Black businesses and their community impact.

**Creatively Black Baltimore:** In partnership with renowned artist Larry Poncho Brown, co-created the region’s largest pop-up exhibition of Black art, showcasing local talent and cultural expression, drawing national and international media attention, creating a local tourist destination and expanding The Baltimore Times’s audience to include the creative community audience.

# Jordan McNair Foundation Hosts Summit Empowering a New Generation of Athletes

Day-long Inaugural Draws Over 100 Students to Learn the Ropes for Next Stage of the Game

By Adrian Harpool

Washington, DC (May 13, 2025) On Saturday, May 10, 2025, Eastern High School in Washington, DC buzzed with energy and inspiration as more than 100 student-athletes from across the District gathered for the 2025 KOBY High School Student-Athlete Summit. The one-day event, hosted by The Jordan McNair Foundation in partnership with The KOBY Blueprint, provided young athletes with powerful tools to navigate the challenges of athletic and academic life.

The summit featured an impactful lineup of expert panel discussions, self-advocacy training, and safety education workshops. The initiative aimed to equip student-athletes and their families with the resources, knowledge, and encouragement they need to succeed both on and off the field. Sessions tackled pressing issues such as mental health, the changing landscape of college recruitment, and the critical role of Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) rights in shaping athletic futures.

Marty McNair, co-founder of The Jordan McNair Foundation, welcomed attendees with a message rooted in legacy and purpose. “This summit represents everything we stand for—empowering young people to believe in themselves, to advocate for their well-being, and to plan for a future that goes beyond sports,” McNair said.

One of the most compelling parts of the day was a special screening of “Pain into Passion,” the emotional documentary chronicling the life and legacy of Jordan McNair, the University of Maryland football player whose tragic death from heatstroke in



(L-r): Marty McNair, JMF Co-Founder and Jahir Love, NIL agent.

2018 became a national wake-up call for athletic safety. The screening was followed by a panel featuring mental health professionals, coaches, and former athletes, all emphasizing the importance of physical and emotional safety in competitive sports.

Workshops such as “Can My Child Play?” and “The 5th Quarter” provided parents and guardians with valuable insights on supporting their athletes beyond game day—highlighting everything from concussion awareness to navigating the complexities of scholarships and NIL opportunities.

“This was a truly holistic approach,” said participating parent, Angela Brooks. “My child walked away with not only inspiration but practical knowledge about how to advocate for themselves in every space they enter—classroom, locker room, or boardroom.”

A major highlight of the summit was the Self-Advocacy and NIL Workshop, where sports agent Jahir Love shared his expertise on how athletes can ethically and effectively navigate the evolving landscape of NIL opportunities. “Athletes at the high school level are



(L-r): Marty McNair JMF Co-Founder, Khalil Brooks, student, Wendel France JMF Team, Tonya House JMF Co-Founder, Angela Brooks, parent. Photos: Shey Carrion

now faced with decisions that can affect their brand, their education, and their eligibility,” Love stated. “We want these young people to be smart, strategic, and safe. NIL isn’t just about money—it’s about building long-term value and learning how to handle responsibilities that come with visibility.”

Love emphasized the importance of mentorship and legal literacy for student-athletes entering the world of endorsements and personal branding. “It’s not just about getting a deal—it’s about understanding what that deal means. That’s why events like this summit are crucial. They give students and parents a chance to ask questions and prepare for real-life situations they’ll soon face.”

The summit also served as a networking hub. Educational organizations, community leaders, and sports professionals connected with students and families, offering mentorship and information about future programming. Representatives from local colleges, nonprofit organizations, and advocacy groups were on-site to provide guidance on scholarships, health resources, and academic support.

Attendees were encouraged to follow up with resources shared during the summit, including access to legal aid services, athlete safety education modules, and ongoing community forums coordinated by The Jordan McNair Foundation.

The KOBY High School Student-Athlete Summit stands as a meaningful tribute to Jordan McNair’s legacy and an example of how local communities can rally around student well-being and leadership development.

As the event closed, the message was clear: the future of youth athletics lies not just in talent, but in knowledge, preparation, and empowerment. And thanks to events like this, student-athletes in Washington, DC are more equipped than ever to lead with confidence, integrity, and purpose. “The turnout and engagement we witnessed today was incredible. Student-athletes participating from schools throughout DC show the hunger for growth, safety, and leadership among our youth,” said Jordan McNair’s mother and JMF Co-founder, Tonya House.



# THE BALTIMORE TIMES

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By Rosa Pryor

Hello everyone, how are you? We hope your Mother's Day was all that you hoped for and like myself, for those who have lost their mothers, I am so sorry, and you can still celebrate with a smile and remember her by cooking her favorite meal or just going to her grave site with her favorite flowers.

Let me tell you, the month of May is kicking off our spring season with a BANG! I am so excited to see all the upcoming social events with live entertainment. Not knocking my DJs, but Honey Child! There is nothing like the musicians on stage doing their thing!

I don't remember if I told you about the Pikes. Well, it is the theater located at 921 Reisterstown Road, in Pikesville, Maryland. The grand opening was last week. You can watch classic, independent, and first-run films. A space is available to host special events. There is also a concession stand featuring delicious food and refreshing drinks and lots more. Why don't you go over and check it out?

Darling, if you like to hand dance, well, Shirley Duncan has the party for you! She is hosting her "All White Taurus Birthday Day Party" that will include her birthday celebration at the 5 Mile House, located 5302 Reisterstown Road on Saturday, May 17 from 2 to 7 p.m.

"Tribe 55+ from Root to Sky" presents a Collaborative Exhibition Celebrating Black Women Artists and Writers 55+ event. A Visual &

## Spring is Beginning with A Lot of Live Entertainment Events



*Rollex Band will be performing live at the Vulcan Blazers, 2811 Druid Park Drive, on Sunday, May 18, from 5-9 p.m. For more information, call Lisa at 443-858-1966 or 410-790-9333.*



*Artscape will be entertaining again this year on the weekend of May 24 and 25 featuring dynamic music and entertainers such as Little Brother, Tweet, Fantasia, Tanner Adell, and Robin Thicke.*

Literary Talk & Lunch will be held on May 22 from 1-3:30 p.m. and a Closing Reception will be held on May 31 from 1- 3:30 p.m. at the MAXgallery, located at 126 N. Madiera Street. If you are into art, then I suggest that you check it out.

The last thing I want to tell you about is one of my musical sons, Art Sherrod, Jr, who will perform at "Rams Head Onstage, 33 West Street, Annapolis, Maryland, for an unforgettable night on Saturday,

May 31, at 8 p.m. You must check this out. He makes his sax talk to you.

Alright, my dear friends, I have to go now. I will inform you when my new book launches, hopefully real soon. Until then, remember you can call me at 410-833-9474 or email me at [rosapryor@aol.com](mailto:rosapryor@aol.com) and send your press releases by email or mail to: 214 Conewood Avenue, Reisterstown, Maryland. **UNTIL THE NEXT TIME, I'M MUSICALLY YOURS.**

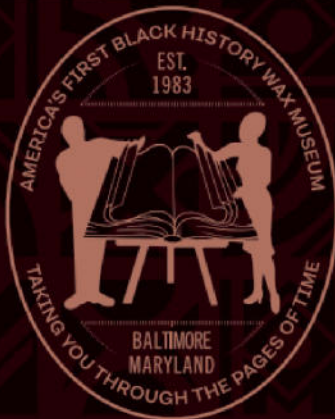


*Jazz vocalist, Marianne, and husband, Howard Katz, a fantastic couple and founders of "Jazzway 6004." "Jazzway 6004" is a creative arts, non-profit organization and concert series venue that presents 6-8 concerts per year. Their next concert is Sunday, June 1 and 2, from 2-5 p.m., with a "Donor Appreciation Party" in Baltimore County, near Lake Roland Park in the home of the jazz vocalist. For more details, contact them by email at [m2katz@comcast.net](mailto:m2katz@comcast.net).*





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## Ravens Defensive Rookies Provide Hope

By Tyler Hamilton

The Baltimore Ravens went heavy on defense during the 2025 NFL Draft. In total, six of the Ravens' 12 draft picks were to improve the defense. Here's a list of the prospects:

**Round 1, Pick 27:** Safety Malaki Starks from Georgia.

**Round 2, Pick 59:** EDGE Mike Green from Marshall.

**Round 4, Pick 129:** Linebacker Teddye Buchanan from California.

**Round 6, Pick 178:** Cornerback Bilhal Kone from Western Michigan.

**Round 6, Pick 210:** Defensive Lineman Aeneas Peebles from Virginia Tech.

**Round 6, Pick 212:** Cornerback Robert Longerbeam from Rutgers.

Ravens head coach John Harbaugh is excited about the additions. He spoke about them after getting a first in person look at the new players during the rookie minicamp last week.

"I mean all those guys are really good players – they're draft picks – and you start with Malaki [Starks] and down through," Harbaugh said. "And we drafted all those guys for a reason, and they're guys who made plays at a high level in college, disruptive-type players, every one of them. So yes, we'll see. I think they can ... They all have a shot. We'll see how they do."

Harbaugh said he liked the size and explosiveness he saw from Green, a projected first-round pick that fell to the Ravens on Day 2. Green had some off-the-field issues that caused him to transfer from Virginia to Marshall.

But he posted 17 sacks to lead all FBS players. The Ravens have the culture in place to help Green stay on the right track.

"This team has a lot of great culture that's been going around," Green said. "You think about the guys that [have been] through here, Ray Lewis, Terrell Suggs, it means a lot since I'm a defensive player as well. Coming to the Ravens is a blessing in disguise. I don't think there's a better franchise I can be a part of than the Ravens."

Green didn't mention Hall of Fame safety Ed Reed when he touched on the defensive greatness the Ravens had in the past. But that's OK. Starks, a safety selected in the first round, could be the next great defensive back with versatility like Reed's.

"I hope [Malaki Starks] learns how to be like an All-Pro. That's kind of what you hope [for]. You hope for the best, and plan for the best, too. I expect him to do really well. He's our first-round pick. To whom much is given, much is required, and nobody understands it better than him as a young guy. I'm really impressed with his maturity. He broke the huddle today. That's not an easy thing to do your first time. So far, so good," stated Harbaugh.

Starks will get to do so alongside All-Pro Kyle Hamilton. Starks has already spoken to Hamilton and looks forward to working with the veteran safety group that also includes Ar'Darius Washington.

"They know so much football, and watching tape, you see it. They just move so fluidly," Starks said. "They're on a different level of [having] knowledge of football, and I want to get there. So, just being able to be a sponge and listen and really just dive into it with those guys, and everybody in the room, too, as well. I'm excited."



*Aeneas Peebles*

*Photo: Phil Hoffman/Baltimore Ravens photos*

Peebles, a sixth-round pick, felt he should have gone higher. He's using his draft drop as motivation that will continue to fuel the chip he already had on his shoulder. Like the other rookies, he's excited to play alongside some of the top-level defensive players already on the Ravens.

"Just being able to be so close to, I guess I could say, 'legends' and guys I looked up to. Just being able to reach out and call guys like [DL Nnamdi]

Madubuike, and being able to reach out and know that hopefully one day I can turn around and see [ILB] Roquan Smith behind me. Those things like that. That's probably the biggest shock to me," Peebles said.

It won't be long before these rookies will meet and be on the same field as the veterans. That'll give them the opportunity to learn on the job and help carry on the tradition of defensive excellence.



## Employment

Allegis Group, Inc. has the following opportunities in Hanover, MD(& **various unanticipated locations throughout US**): Systems Analyst(Autosys Lead Analyst) (Req# L22-130619): Collect & analyze PeopleSoft 9.2 process data to initiate, dvlp & recommend biz practices & procedures that focus on increased productivity, reduced costs & positive user exp. **Telecommuting Permitted.** Req's: BS(or equiv.)+5 yrs. exp. Salary: \$143,815-\$157,900 per annum. Lead Systems Analyst (Req# 21-13121): Partner w/ Product Owner(s) as a primary point of contact for system related questions & reqs, w/ ability to guide & escalate across product delivery team(s). **Position is a hybrid role & requires employee to work in the ET time zone at the office address in Hanover, MD listed above 60% of the week. Remote work is permitted 40% of the week.** Req's: BS(or equiv.)+10 yrs. exp. Salary: \$142,418 - \$157,900 per yr. Employees may also receive benefits package including a 401(k) company matched retirement savings plan, health plans, paid time off & holiday pay. The company is an equal opportunity employer & will consider all applications without regard to race, sex, age, color, religion, national origin, veteran status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information or any characteristic protected by law. If you would like to request a reasonable accommodation, such as the modification or adjustment of the job application process or interviewing process due to a disability, please email Lauren Lara at [llara@allegisgroup.com](mailto:llara@allegisgroup.com) or call 410-579-3526 for other accommodation options. Submit resume w/ ref. to Req.# to: [resume@allegisgroup.com](mailto:resume@allegisgroup.com).

## Employment

TEKsystems Global Services, LLC. seeks Practice Architect II in Hanover, MD(& **various unanticipated locations throughout US**) **Telecommuting Permitted.** Lead client ServiceNow engagements end-to-end from a technical perspective. Req's: BS(or equiv.) + 5 yrs. exp. Salary: \$197,579-\$202,579 per annum. Certifications: ServiceNow Certified System Administrator, ServiceNow Certified Implementation Specialist & Certified Technical Architect. Employees may also receive benefits package including a 401(k) company matched retirement savings plan, health plans, paid time off & holiday pay. Company is an equal opportunity employers & will consider all applications without regard to race, genetic information, sex, age, color, religion, national origin, veteran status, disability or any other characteristic protected by law. To view the EEO is the law poster click here [https://www.eeoc.gov/sites/default/files/2022-10/EEOC\\_KnowYourRights\\_screen\\_reader\\_10\\_20.pdf](https://www.eeoc.gov/sites/default/files/2022-10/EEOC_KnowYourRights_screen_reader_10_20.pdf). Applicants w/ disabilities that require an accommodation or assistance a position, email [EmployeeRelations@teksystems.com](mailto:EmployeeRelations@teksystems.com). This is a dedicated line designed exclusively to assist job seekers whose disability prevents them from being able to apply online. Messages left for other purposes will not receive a response. Submit resume w/ ref. to Req.# L24-146068 to: [resume@allegisgroup.com](mailto:resume@allegisgroup.com)

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TEKsystems, Inc. seeks Data Engineer in Hanover, MD(& **various unanticipated locations throughout US**) **Telecommuting Permitted.** Educate & perform dvlp efforts supporting a new application they are creating to support the Enterprise Data Mgmt standards for Wells Fargo. Req's: MS(or equiv.)+2 yrs. exp. Salary: \$72.43-\$79.84 per hr. Employees may also receive benefits package including a 401(k) company matched retirement savings plan, health plans, paid time off & holiday pay. Company is an equal opportunity employers & will consider all applications without regard to race, genetic information, sex, age, color, religion, national origin, veteran status, disability or any other characteristic protected by law. To view the EEO is the law poster click here [https://www.eeoc.gov/sites/default/files/2022-10/EEOC\\_KnowYourRights\\_screen\\_reader\\_10\\_20.pdf](https://www.eeoc.gov/sites/default/files/2022-10/EEOC_KnowYourRights_screen_reader_10_20.pdf). Applicants w/ disabilities that require an accommodation or assistance a position, email [EmployeeRelations@teksystems.com](mailto:EmployeeRelations@teksystems.com). This is a dedicated line designed exclusively to assist job seekers whose disability prevents them from being able to apply online. Messages left for other purposes will not receive a response. Submit resume w/ ref. to Req.# L23-142235 to: [resume@allegisgroup.com](mailto:resume@allegisgroup.com).

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Actalent Services, LLC. seeks Project Manager in Hanover, MD(& **various unanticipated locations throughout US**) **Telecommuting Permitted:** Manage multiple center-based/onsite-managed projects through all phases of dvlpmnt, from initiation & planning to execution, monitoring, control & closure while following the Biz Execution Process (BEP). Req's: BS(or equiv.). Salary: \$109,271-\$140,000 per annum. Employees may also receive a benefits package including a 401(k) company matched retirement savings plan, health plans, paid time off and holiday pay. The Company is an equal opportunity employers and will consider all applications without regard to race, genetic information, sex, age, color, religion, national origin, veteran status, disability or any other characteristic protected by law. To view the EEO is the law poster click here [https://www.eeoc.gov/sites/default/files/2022-10/EEOC\\_KnowYourRights\\_screen\\_reader\\_10\\_20.pdf](https://www.eeoc.gov/sites/default/files/2022-10/EEOC_KnowYourRights_screen_reader_10_20.pdf). If you would like to request a reasonable accommodation, such as the modification or adjustment of the job application process or interviewing process due to a disability, please email [actalentaccommodation@actalentservices.com](mailto:actalentaccommodation@actalentservices.com) for other accommodation options. Submit resume w/ ref. to Req.# L22-128023 to: [resume@allegisgroup.com](mailto:resume@allegisgroup.com).

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