Sunflower Bakery
Caring is our main ingredient

STRATEGIC PLAN

Sunflower Bakery enables pathways to employment for teens and young adults with learning differences through pre-employment exposure and workforce development training in Pastry Arts and Hospitality. Sunflower combines the hard skills of these fields with the soft skills of employment readiness to provide rigorous, industry-driven training producing well trained graduates.

sunflowerbakery.org

MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE DC METRO AREA'S ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

The unmet need for workforce development training for people with disabilities in the DC metro area is enormous: 2.5% of DC area residents ages 18-64—over 70,000 people—have cognitive disabilities, and represent only 4% of metro area's workforce *(Annual Disabilities Statistics Compendium, 2020)*.

This gap arises, in part, when young adults turn 22 and age out of the school system. Transitioning from school to work means going from consistency and structure to an uncoordinated and underfunded system where there are not enough training programs in private, public, or nonprofit sectors and the ones in existence face funding and staffing shortages. Thus, the need for programs and employment training outstrips availability putting competitive employment opportunities out of reach.

However, there are proven economic and social benefits for employing people with disabilities, which include increased profitability, competitive advantages, and a more inclusive work environment *(Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation, 2018)*. Employing people with disabilities provides these advantages not only to businesses, but to the broader DC metro area as well.

Employment Status of People With and Without Disabilities in DC Metro Area (ages 18-64)
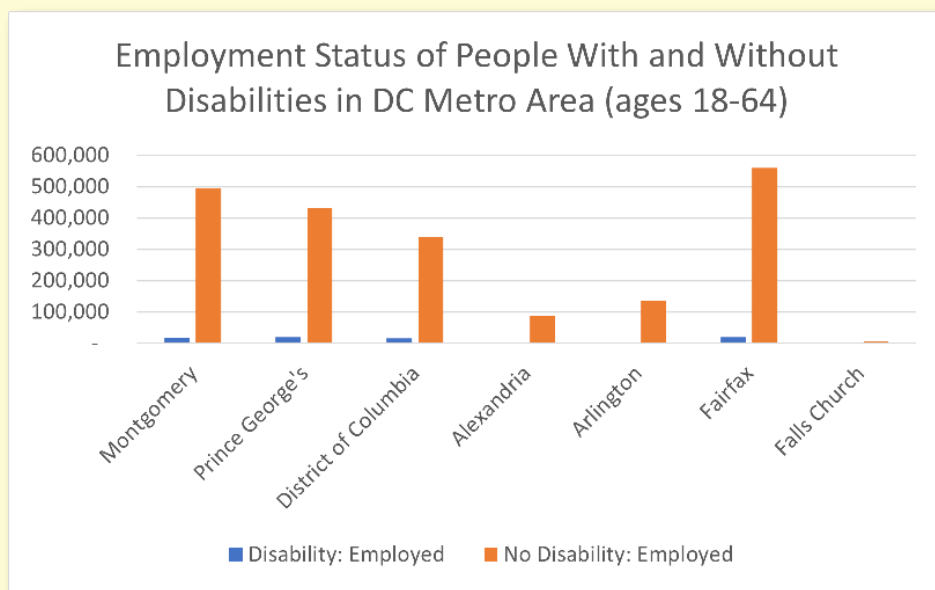
In order to connect adults with disabilities and employers, there is still a great deal of work to do. The current important discourse on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) still does not fully include the disability community, and doing so will ensure a more level playing field for people with disabilities to have the opportunity to be contributing members of society. This requires education and skilled training programs as well as educating employers on the benefits of employing adults with disabilities, both for their own businesses and for their communities.
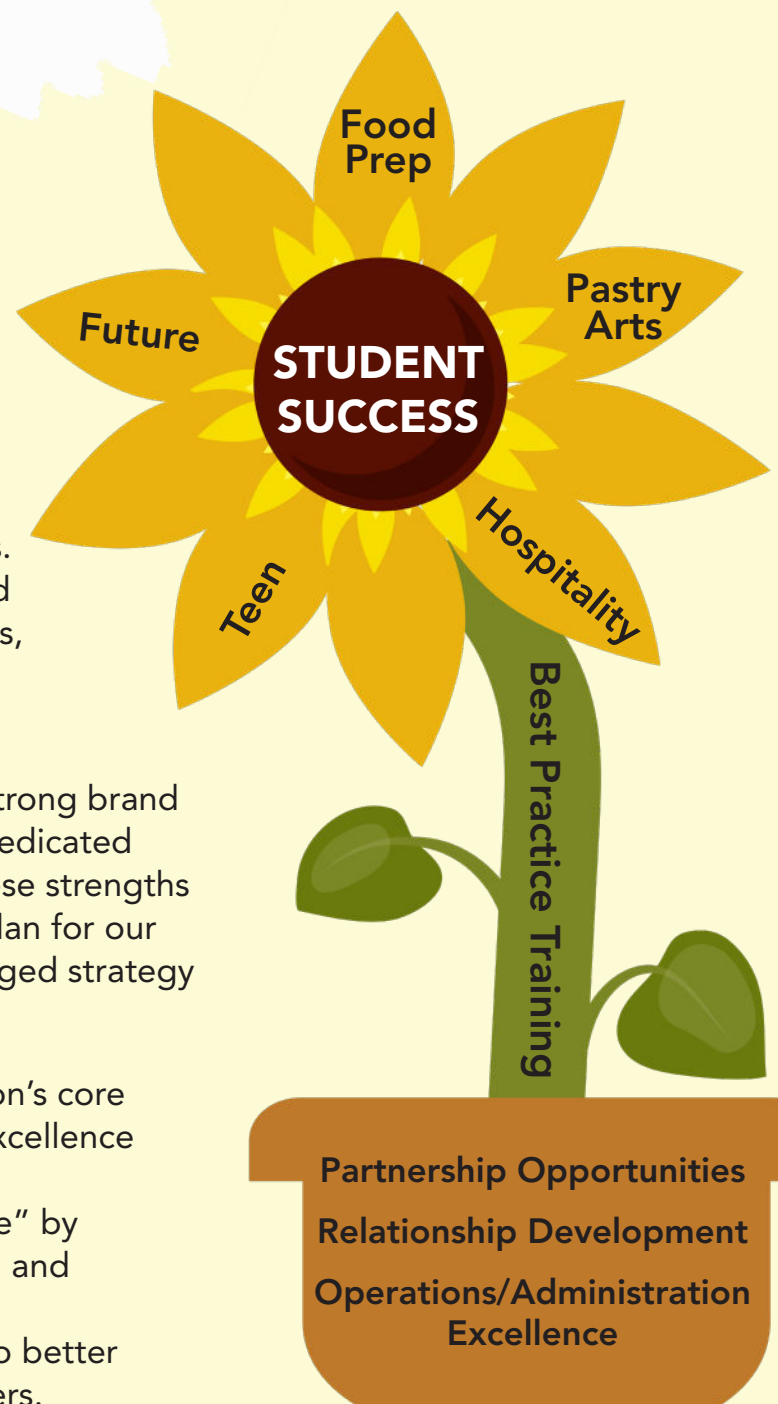
BUILDING OUR HIGHEST-IMPACT FUTURE

Sunflower Bakery's work responds directly to the challenges facing young adults with learning differences offering workforce development training opportunities leading to employment. As part of a working bakery, Sunflower uses food as a tool for training focusing on young adults (18+) who have an interest in baking, hospitality, and related industries. Since our founding in 2009, we've impacted the lives of over 500 young adults and teens, all while providing delicious, high-quality, kosher baked goods to our community.

Sunflower has a successful track record, a strong brand identity, a diversified funding base, and a dedicated community of partners and supporters. These strengths have enabled us to build on our past and plan for our highest-impact future through a three-pronged strategy that focuses on:

- Further strengthening the organization's core through operational efficiency and excellence in administration;
- Maximizing our impact "where we are" by growing in place at our Halpine Road and Executive Boulevard locations; and
- Growing and diversifying programs to better serve our students and their employers.

Under these three priorities, Sunflower will continue to place students at the center of our strategic decisions to ensure choice and opportunity for brighter futures. This will entail maximizing our programmatic and operational capacity at our current locations as well as ensuring best practices in training and continued alignment with industry standards. Undergirding this work requires high-performing teams and continued process improvements to ensure effective and efficient systems and structures.

Food Prep

Pastry Arts

Future

STUDENT SUCCESS

Hospitality

Teen

Best Practice Training

Partnership Opportunities

Relationship Development

Operations/Administration Excellence

OUR FY 23-25 PLAN & GOALS

To build on our work enabling pathways to employment, Sunflower Bakery ultimately seeks to foster greater acceptance of neurodiverse individuals by the community at large so that our society is more just and inclusive. To realize this theory of change, we plan to operationalize our strategic priorities across three fiscal years.

FY23
STRENGTHEN THE CORE

Maximize program quality and impact.

Operate brilliantly through efficiency.

FY24
MAXIMIZE IMPACT IN PLACE

Continue to grow training programs incrementally.

Pilot new program to provide more choice.

FY25
GROW & DIVERSIFY PROGRAMS

Formalize new program.

Continue to scale training programs.

Maximize capacity.

From FY 23 to FY 25, Sunflower Bakery's primary goal is to increase the number of students in our workforce development programs by 50%, going from 40 in FY 23 to 60 in FY 25. This growth will require additional employment opportunities for our graduates and we will deepen current employer partnerships and engage with new employers to meet this demand. We will reach this goal through our current programs and via a new training program in food preparation that will build upon our current curricula with enhancements focused on the skills needed to prepare ready-to-eat foods. Another training option will provide more choice attracting a wider range of students, offering graduates more high-demand employment opportunities, and further diversifying Sunflower Bakery's social enterprise work.

As part of Sunflower's growth model, measuring outputs and outcomes is essential to understanding impact, and Sunflower will be evolving and enhancing our key performance indicators to reflect our programmatic, employment, and engagement goals. By FY 25, Sunflower Bakery's incremental growth model, expansion of training programs, and focus on excellence in administration and operations will position the organization to engage in partnerships and expansion opportunities for further growth and measurable impact.

FY23-25: Grow Incrementally

Bar chart showing student growth by fiscal year and program:
- FY21: 20
- FY22*: 33
- FY23: 40
- FY24: 52
- FY25: 60

Legend: Pastry Arts, Hospitality, New food prep program