

Opportunity Youth Programs based in Urban and Metropolitan Universities

A SCAN OF THE FIELD

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THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is devoted to developing a brighter future for millions of children at risk of poor educational, economic, social and health outcomes. Their work focuses on strengthening families, building stronger communities and ensuring access to opportunity, because children need all three to succeed. They make grants that help federal agencies, states, counties, cities and neighborhoods create more innovative, cost-effective responses to the issues that negatively affect children: poverty, unnecessary disconnection from family and communities with limited access to opportunity.

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COALITION OF URBAN AND METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITIES

The Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities (CUMU) is the longest-running and largest organization committed to serving and connecting the world's urban and metropolitan universities and their partners. With our founding, CUMU took the lead in defining the concepts of university-community engagement and stewardship of place. CUMU is dedicated to its member institutions and to the creation and dissemination of knowledge on the issues that face our urban and metropolitan campuses and the communities we serve.

Introduction

In the United States, nearly five million, or one in nine, young people between the ages of 16 and 24 are classified as “opportunity youth.” That is, they are neither in school nor in the workforce. This presents broad economic and social challenges for entire communities. CUMU member institutions can play a key role in addressing the barriers leading to these high levels of disconnection from education and employment.

This report identifies encouraging university-involved opportunity youth programs from across the CUMU membership and is a direct response to needs identified at a meeting between CUMU member institutions and the Annie E. Casey Foundation at the 2018 CUMU Annual Conference.

Following a competitive RFP process, the Center for Community Planning and Development in the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs at Cleveland State University was selected to carry out this important work. Their research will help to establish new avenues for employment and educational opportunities that can be replicated across North America. In this report, researchers highlight

- ♦ a scan of the field with summary inventory of opportunity youth programs of CUMU member institutions
- ♦ survey results of opportunity youth program participants
- ♦ a case study analysis of six opportunity youth programs at CUMU member institutions

CUMU is proud to partner with Cleveland State University to implement this research project and is grateful to the Annie E. Casey Foundation for their advocacy and financial support that makes this research possible.

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Research Lead



The Center for Community Planning & Development at the Levin College of Urban Affairs at Cleveland State University

The Center strengthens the practice of planning and community development through independent research, technical assistance, and civic education and engagement. The Center works in partnership with public, private and non-profit organizations, local governments, and development and planning professionals.

Expertise

- ♦ **Planning, program development and evaluation** to foster resilient, just and prosperous communities, improve the quality of life, attack the causes of poverty and inequality, and advance the sustainable development of urban regions.
- ♦ **Public policy research** to inform policymakers as they respond to issues related to housing and neighborhood development and change.
- ♦ **Data development and dissemination** to promote the exchange of information and data and technical assistance about community planning, development and housing issues.
- ♦ **Convening and engaged learning** to link the university and the community in the dynamic exchange of ideas, expertise and knowledge on issues of importance to the future of Northeast Ohio communities. Provide opportunities for students and faculty to extend classroom learning to real-world applications.

ABOUT THE LEAD AUTHOR

Molly Schnoke

Project Manager
 Community Planning and Development and Levin College Forum Program
 Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs



Molly joined the Levin College of Urban Affairs in 2006 and has experience in managing and coordinating research projects in program evaluation and survey research. Her work includes applied research studies and projects on neighborhood and community development, including issues of foreclosure and housing, workforce development, and economic inclusion.

Molly also oversees the Unger Program which serves to support and foster economic and community development through independent research and civic education and engagement. Molly has worked with the Brookings Institution's Metropolitan Policy Program to monitor and report on work taking place around regional economic strategies for Northeast Ohio and has done work with the Center for Economic Development. She also oversees the Levin College Forum Program.

Previously, Molly was assistant director of research at the Center for Regional Economic Issues at Case Western Reserve University. Molly earned a B.A. in political science from The Ohio State University and an M.A. from The University of Akron.

OVERVIEW AND HISTORY OF OPPORTUNITY YOUTH PROGRAMS

If the belief that “birth should not be destiny underpins the idea of the American Dream—where hard work, determination and merit dictate success—that belief has continually been curbed by reality that unequal access to opportunity has long segregated many in society to achieving that dream”¹. Unequal access to opportunity appears in many forms, but ultimately it severely constrains the future possibilities for millions of young Americans.

¹ Taken from <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2019/02/14/no-room-at-the-top-the-stark-divide-in-black-and-white-economic-mobility/>

Opportunity youth are defined as young people, ages 16-24, who are not employed nor pursuing education (Wright, 2018). According to Belfield et al. (2012), these youth are not fulfilling their potential, therefore they are a missed opportunity for society and the economy. Opportunity youth are less likely to be employed and more likely to be reliant on the government for support. In addition, these young people tend to have lower quality of health and have an increased likelihood of criminal involvement (Belfield et al, 2012). To show how dire the situation is for opportunity youth, about 1 in 9 young adults aged 16-24 in the United States is currently disengaged from school and employment (Mendelson et al, 2018).

The notion of opportunity youth has always existed, with some proportion of young adults having been disconnected from their communities at various times in our history. What has changed is the evolving view of youth that at one time were considered in negative terms.

In the 1940s when high school graduation rates increased to an all-time high of 50 percent, the term “dropout” arose to describe the portion of the population who did not finish high school. In the 1980s researchers favored the term “at-risk youth.” Finally, in 2012, the term “opportunity youth” came about to describe these individuals in a manner that could communicate the prospects and possibilities for these youth rather than terms and descriptions that focused on limitations. (Kamenetz, 2015)

Following the Great Recession, the number of disconnected youth increased and by 2010 had reached 5.8 million². Although the number of opportunity youth has decreased since the mid 1990’s, these youth still make up a large proportion of the population. According to Almeida and Allen (2016), 1.2 million students drop out of high school every year. Resulting in 40 percent of young people between the ages of 16-24 being unconnected to school or work at some point during this influential portion of their lives (Almeida and Allen, 2016). There are also differences in disconnection between teenagers and young adults. The Population Reference Bureau for Junior Achievement’s February 2019 report found that the percent of 20 to 24 year olds who were disconnected was near double that of teenagers between 1970 and 2017³.

While these youths are disconnected from society, they are costing the national economy and themselves large sums of money. Belfield et al (2012) estimated that each opportunity youth inflicts an immediate taxpayer burden of \$13,900 per year and an immediate social burden of \$37,450 per year (in 2011 dollars). After an opportunity youth reaches the age of 25, he or she will consequently inflict a future lifetime taxpayer burden of \$170,740 and a social burden of \$529,030 (Belfield et al, 2012). Additionally, the longer they wait to obtain help, the more their prospects of acquiring the skills and credentials needed to contribute to the local economic and society decrease (Almeida and Allen, 2016). Beyond the calculation of costs to society – largely in the form of welfare payments and public expenditures for criminal justice related supports – there are mental health costs associated with disconnection: the human considerations of emotional and behavioral costs to the young individuals who struggle to find food, shelter and safety.

² *Trends in the Number, Share and Characteristics of Disconnected Youth: Implications for Future Policies and Programs*, Final Report prepared by the Population Reference Bureau, February 2019.

³ *Trends in the Number, Share and Characteristics of Disconnected Youth: Implications for Future Policies and Programs*, Final Report prepared by the Population Reference Bureau, February 2019.P.5

Overview and History of Opportunity Youth Programs

PROGRAMS

Starting with youth programs after World War II, organizations for disengaged young people have existed for decades. Many programs are created when funding through a grant is available, however, these organizations also tend to die when the funding runs dry (Thompson, 2017). Another challenge faced by opportunity youth programs is a lack of follow through. As stated by Allen et al. (2016), “No one set of institutions currently takes responsibility for their [opportunity youth’s] progress and no publicly available database tracks that progress”. In addition to a lack of information on the youth going into these programs, there is very little information on the programs themselves. For example, where are they located, who do they serve, what is their purpose, etc. Below I will outline some of the major opportunity youth programs across the United States.

Jobs for the Future (JFF) was created in 1983 in Boston, MA, and today they have active programs in 46 states. The purpose of this nonprofit organization is to guarantee that all low-income young people and workers have the abilities and credentials needed to succeed in society. The programs hosted by JFF help young people get into a family supporting career, through education assistance, skills training, career advice, and internship placement. This is a very successful organization that helps over 40,000 secondary school students each year, 25,000 postsecondary students, and over 10,000 low-skilled workers. (JFF, 2019)

In the year 2000, another major opportunity youth nonprofit organization, Year Up, was founded in Boston, MA. Year Up has a mission similar to Jobs for the Future, they state “Year Up’s mission is to close the Opportunity Divide by providing urban young adults with the skills, experience, and support that will empower them to reach their potential through professional careers and higher education.” (Year Up, 2019). Specifically, Year Up focuses on preparing youth for careers in information technology, operations, finance, sales and marketing, and customer service (Seldon & Milway, 2016). Similar to JFF, this organization has been very successful, with more than 13,000 alumni across 16 cities (Seldon & Milway, 2016). However, even though there are countless graduates from these two programs, there is no research that looks into the success rate of graduates after they finish.

A different type of program is the Opportunity Youth Forum created by the Aspen Institute’s Forum for Community Solutions in 2012. The three goals of this initiative are “to reconnect opportunity youth to education and employment at higher rates; to catalyze the adoption of effective approaches in education and career attainment, leading to family-sustaining careers; and to promote local, state, and national policy changes to increase the replication and scaling up of these approaches.” (Allen et al, 2014). Within the Opportunity Youth Forum is a menu of programs that communities can engage with, among these is the 100,000 Opportunities Initiative. This program, created in 2015, is collaboration with the Rockefeller Foundation, Starbucks Coffee Company, the Schultz Family Foundation, and Walmart to work towards employing at least 100,000 opportunity youths by 2018 through apprenticeships, internships, training programs, and both part-time and full-time jobs. (Aspen Institute, 2019)

Youth Villages, a national non-profit with the mission of helping children and families live successfully, has operated a program since 1999 designed to provide young adults with the resources and tools necessary to make a “successful transition to adulthood”⁴. YVLifeSet assists former foster youth in a wide-range of activities including finding and maintaining employment and applying for college or finishing

⁴ <https://www.youthvillages.org/yvlifaset/>

high school and/or obtaining a GED. Youth aging out of the foster care system are a particularly vulnerable population and often lack any family or financial support. They face higher rates of homelessness, mental health issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder and unemployment when compared with youth who have not been involved with the child services systems.

AN EVOLVING UNDERSTANDING OF OPPORTUNITY YOUTH

Recently, a shifting perspective on the consequences of teenagers and young adults who are disconnected has emerged. With disconnection come high social and economic costs. However, this population is also at risk for significant long-term emotional, behavioral, and health problems. Recent research has suggested that a public health approach to opportunity youth built around a conceptual model of adaptive change, prevalent in adolescence and youth, identified through developmental stages.

Although many opportunity youth organizations are nation-wide, large scale nonprofits, most programs are small and city specific to serve the needs of the youth in that region. Examples include Youth Opportunities Unlimited, a Cleveland-based nonprofit that caters to young people in the Cleveland

area. They host career building workshops, training programs, and hiring events at the local community colleges and public halls. Similar programs can be found in cities across the US and globe. For example, the Baltimore City Opportunity Youth Collaborative, San Diego Youth Opportunity Pathways, Los Angeles, YouthSource Centers, and the Denver Opportunity Youth Initiative (Allen et al, 2014). These organizations are particularly successful because they know the region and the population of youths they are serving, therefore events can be more specialized and more useful. And while they engage and partner with local colleges and universities, the programs are not administered through institutions of higher education.

But more importantly, disconnectedness encompasses broad, pervasive and overlapping forms of disadvantage whether they originate in the communities in which these youth are embedded or in their family and social networks. It includes aspects such as underfunded and underperforming schools, community safety and violence, substandard and or segregated housing. These disadvantages impact disconnection and operate over the course of an individual’s lifetime. They not only impede academic success and job prospects, but set in motion disconnection that can impact health, familial and personal relationships, civic and political engagement, incarceration, substance abuse and decreased life expectancy. Disconnection perpetuates wealth gaps that impact wider community social segregation – leading these patterns to be reproduced in future generations.

Further understanding of disconnection recognizes that disconnection does not occur overnight nor is it a static state. Youth are not connected to the system one moment and fully disconnected the next. Disconnection occurs over time and grows or diminishes in degree. Viewed in this way, the programs and services designed to re-engage opportunity youth, whether they are community or university-based, should take into consideration the individual’s path to disconnection and the evolving nature of it so that they might better identify the supports and services necessary to achieve success.

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FIELD SCAN OF OPPORTUNITY YOUTH PROGRAMS

A web search of the 103 CUMU member institutions was conducted to identify if there were any programs specifically for Opportunity Youth. For half of the universities, no program that specifically targeted youth ages 16–24 was identified. For the other half there were varied programs across the membership focusing on this age group. However, few of the programs specifically looked at youth in that age group that were disengaged; instead programs that could be identified tended to focus on keeping youth from becoming disengaged in the first place. Programs that focused on youth that were already disengaged tended to live outside the university system. Figure 1 below shows the distribution of programs across the five identified focus areas.

SCAN OF OPPORTUNITY YOUTH PROGRAMS ACROSS THE CUMU MEMBERSHIP

Most programs that were identified in our examination of university-led initiatives focus on strategies to prevent or reduce disconnection rather than on re-engagement strategies.

Almost half (47%, 26 universities) of the programs found were focused on College Access. These programs tended to focus on keeping youth engaged from high school directly into the university. Many targeted specific demographics like specific school systems (University of Michigan–Dearborn), at-risk communities (California State University San Bernadino), foster youth (University of Massachusetts–Lowell), or intellectual disabilities or differences (University of North Florida).

Ten programs (18%) focus on Barrier Remediation. They focus on conflict resolution, mediation, and restorative justice (University of Massachusetts–Boston), reducing youth violence (The University of Chicago), reducing risky behavior (University of Michigan–Flint), and inspiring hope (Weber State University).

There were seven programs (13%) found that are focused on Workforce Development. Programs include streamlining the workforce credentialing process (Miami Dade College), promoting military careers (Simon Fraser University), promoting in-demand careers (Stockton University), and support services to aid in employment (Metropolitan State University of Denver).

The remaining 12 programs focused on Research, School Completion, and the Prevention of Disconnections for Opportunity Youth. Some of this is being done from an academic standpoint (York University), while others are focused on community service (Indiana University Northwest).

Opportunity Youth programs exist at varied institutions across North America. The oldest program found dates to 1967 (Buffalo State College). Forty programs (39% of all programs) are in universities that are a part of a larger, usually statewide, university system. Twelve programs (12%) are found at universities that have a Christian religious affiliation. Two programs are located at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs).

There is no constant funder across the CUMU membership for Opportunity Youth programming. For the eleven programs that identified dedicated staff, there were an average of 8 people working internally on Opportunity Youth programs. Only one yearly budget was found, however, funding sources for many programs were identified which included individual donors, grants, the Federal Government, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. Department of Education, local Chambers of Commerce, and the United Way. No university identified hard dollar funding for their work with Opportunity Youth which begs the question of the level of dedication to working with Opportunity Youth at the administrative level of universities.

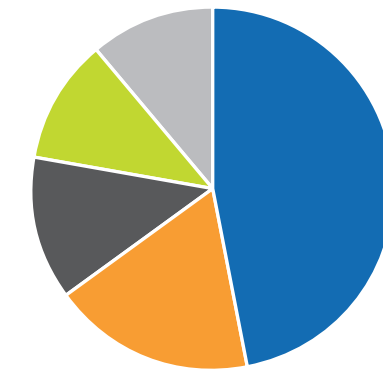


Figure 1: CUMU Member University Opportunity Youth Programs by Focus Area

Count of Program Type		
Barrier remediation	10	18%
College access	26	47%
Research	6	11%
School completion	6	11%
Workforce development	7	13%
Grand Total	55	100%

Field Scan of Opportunity Youth Programs

COMMUNITY-BASED OPPORTUNITY YOUTH PROGRAMS

The creation of the inventory of opportunity or disconnected youth programs and the resulting analysis and observations gleaned from community-based opportunity and disconnected youth programs not affiliated with or connected to CUMU member institutions or their opportunity programs is the discussion that follows.

To develop an inventory of community-based opportunity or disconnected youth programs not affiliated with or connected to CUMU member institutions or their programs, the research team conducted a scan of publicly available information from internet websites. The scan specifically targeted opportunity or disconnected youth programs currently operating in CUMU member institution cities.

The criteria used to identify community-based opportunity or disconnected youth programs operating in cities where CUMU member institutions were located included:

- ◆ Programs serving youth ages 14 to 25
- ◆ Programs serving youth not in school
- ◆ Programs serving unemployed youth
- ◆ Programs offering accredited diploma completion
- ◆ Programs offering academic enrichment
- ◆ Programs offering GED preparation
- ◆ Programs offering high schools equivalency testing
- ◆ Programs offering career counseling
- ◆ Programs offering workforce preparation
- ◆ Programs offering certificate training

RESULTS

The criteria applied to the search yielded fourteen (14) community-based opportunity or disconnected youth programs operating in cities where CUMU member institutions were located. The cities included: Carson, CA; Fullerton, CA, Los Angeles, CA; Pomona, CA; San Bernardino, CA; San Diego, CA; Buffalo, NY; Staten Island, NY; Baltimore, MD; Philadelphia, PA; AND Washington, DC.

The community-based opportunity or disconnected youth programs listed above were operated by public, private and nonprofit sector organizations. The specific types of entities engaged in opportunity and disconnected youth programs were: Workforce Development Consortia; Social Service Collaboratives; Independent Nonprofit Organizations and Chambers of Commerce. The organizational design of these entities are operationally structured to provide a broad array of services and supports that wrap-around opportunity and disconnected youth addressing barriers preventing successful career and academic attainment. **See Table 1**

Table 1: Opportunity Youth Programs at Community Based Organizations

Organization Name	City, State	Program Name	Program Type	Population Served
The Buffalo and Erie County Workforce Development Consortium	Buffalo, NY	Youth Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Career counseling ◆ Referrals for high school equivalency preparation ◆ GED preparation ◆ Certification training ◆ Workforce preparation 	Youth, ages 14-21
Buffalo Urban League	Buffalo, NY	Youth Life Opportunity Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ GED preparation ◆ Certification training ◆ Workforce preparation 	Youth, ages 17-21
Service Collaborative of WNY	Buffalo, NY	WNY YouthBuild	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ GED preparation ◆ Certification training ◆ Workforce preparation 	Youth, ages 16-24
City of Carson	Carson, CA	Youth Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ GED preparation ◆ Academic enrichment ◆ Workforce preparation 	Youth, ages 14-21
Orange County One Stop Center	Fullerton, CA	Youth Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Accredited diploma completion program ◆ Workforce preparation 	Youth, ages 17-24
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce	Los Angeles, CA	Opportunity Youth and Smart Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ GED preparation ◆ Academic enrichment ◆ Workforce preparation 	Youth, ages 16-24
JVS SoCal	Los Angeles, CA	Youth Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ GED preparation ◆ Academic enrichment ◆ Workforce preparation 	Youth, ages 17-21
Goodwill Southern California Youth Centers	Pomona, CA	Youth Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ GED preparation ◆ Academic enrichment ◆ Workforce preparation 	Youth, ages 14-21
Employment Development Department, State of California	San Bernardino, CA	Youth Employment Opportunity Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ GED preparation ◆ Academic enrichment ◆ Workforce preparation 	Youth, ages 15-25
Opportunity SD	San Diego, CA	Disconnected Youth Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ GED preparation ◆ Academic attainment ◆ Workforce preparation 	Youth, ages 16-24
Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow	Staten Island, NY	Youth Adult Internship Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ GED preparation ◆ Academic enrichment ◆ Workforce preparation ◆ Workforce internships 	Youth, ages 16-24
Job Opportunity Task Force	Baltimore, MD	Opportunity and Disconnected Youth Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ GED preparation ◆ Workforce preparation 	Youth, ages 16-24
JEVS Human Services	Philadelphia, PA	Opportunity Youth Academy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Workforce preparation ◆ Job placement for youth and adults involved in the judicial system 	Youth, ages 17-21
DC Alliance of Youth Advocates	Washington, DC	Disconnected Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ GED preparation ◆ Academic enrichment ◆ Workforce preparation 	Youth, ages 16-24

Field Scan of Opportunity Youth Programs

FIELD SCAN ANALYSIS AND OBSERVATIONS

An analysis of the information resulting from the scan indicated that the criteria used to determine eligibility for youth in community-based opportunity or disconnected youth programs varied by program definition, age range, services offered, program goals and program outcomes.

Community-based opportunity or disconnected youth program definitions in many instances included eligible youth who were not disconnected from an educational environment or employment situation. The inclusion of youth beyond those who are disconnected influenced both program goals and outcomes. The stated and largely agreed upon age range for disconnected youth eligibility is 16 to 24. Many of the community-based programs age range started as early as 14 and ended as late as 25 years.

When analyzing program goals and outcomes, most if not all of the community-based programs reviewed were much more heavily focused on career and employment training and connection than accredited diploma completion programs that connect youth to institutions of higher education, thus creating a pipeline from high school to college. With program goals primarily being successfully preparing youth for the workforce and becoming gainfully employed, it is obvious that to improve connections among CUMU member institutions and other community-based opportunity or disconnected youth programs it will be necessary to structure an engaged communication and planning process resulting in the mutual redesign of existing programs to create program synergies and establish an academic-focused opportunity or disconnected youth pipeline.

Once the community-based organizations and CUMU member institutions have agreed upon a mutual redesign of their existing opportunity or disconnected youth program definition, goals and outcomes, age range, and services offered, there must be specific attention given to understanding the dynamics, efficacy, commitment and resources required to effectively support and enrich educational and employment opportunities for disconnected youth. The initial analysis and observations will be tested as this research project evolves towards its conclusion.

OPPORTUNITY YOUTH PROGRAM INTERVIEWS

The research team created a CUMU Opportunity Youth Program Interview protocol. The interview protocol design was adapted for use for both CUMU member institutions and community-based organizations. The interview protocol included an introduction and summary of the research project sections in addition to the questions asked of each person interviewed.

METHODOLOGY

The interview protocol was composed of eight (8) questions. They are:

- ♦ Program background
- ♦ Program operations
- ♦ Program goals and objectives
- ♦ Challenges and strengths
- ♦ Opportunities and future outlook
- ♦ Knowledge of university opportunity youth programs in your community
- ♦ Any other comments about your program

The research team used multiple outreach strategies and activities to identify the individuals that would be interviewed from both the community-based organization cohort and CUMU member institution cohort.

Initially the environmental scan table listing community-based organizations not affiliated with or connected to CUMU member Universities but located in CUMU member cities that offer services and supports to Opportunity Youth developed by the research team was used as the source for outreach to community-based organizations for interviews.

Additionally, calls were made to CUMU member institutions for which the field scan did not identify opportunity youth-like programming.¹ Institutions were identified at random from the member list. Ten (10) CUMU institutions were reached by phone. The research team asked if they knew of any opportunity youth-like programming currently occurring on campus. Calls were made to various departments on campuses including: offices of civic engagement, student services, provosts, and enrollment departments.

INTERVIEWS OF CUMU MEMBER-BASED OPPORTUNITY YOUTH PROGRAMS

This section will provide a description of the landscape of approaches and solutions in a variety of communities working to address opportunity youth. The hope is that the culmination of this will provide a base for understanding some unique challenges and opportunities for existing programs, contextualize community specific priorities and the context for program implementation and operation, as well as identifying best practices for defining success in the field.

The summary of responses to the interview protocol, an analysis of the responses and the conclusions reached are organized to record and understand interview responses from CUMU member institutions operating Opportunity Youth programs for disconnected youth and young adults.

¹ Since no direct individual was initially identified, it is possible that the research team

Opportunity Youth Program Interviews

Outreach Strategies

The research team began with the list of all CUMU member institutions for which an opportunity youth-like program had been identified from the scan of the field. The first set of institutions that were contacted were ones who were provided to the research team as having Opportunity youth programs². There were eight (8) of these programs. An additional thirty-four (34) CUMU members were identified who had attended the 2018 CUMU Annual Conference Opportunity Youth session.

OUTREACH RESULTS

The research team experienced the following responses to their outreach activities:

- 12** of the CUMU member institutions contacted by email and phone agreed to participate in the interview process;
- 3** of the CUMU member institutions initially contacted by email expressed interest in participating, but indicated that either the department or person we had reached were not best suited to participate;
- 1** of the CUMU members agreed to participate in the interview process but only provided responses in writing;
- 2** of the CUMU members that agreed to participate in the interview process did so with the assurance of anonymity³; and
- 4** member institutions responded with email declining participation.

Analysis of Interview Responses

When assessing the information received from the programs interviewed, the research team organized its analysis by a review of the key themes identified by interviewees who engage in Opportunity Youth programming. Seven major themes emerged from the interviews.

Funding: Overall, the most commonly mentioned challenge was funding. College and universities across the country face increased financial pressures as enrollments fluctuate, state funding decreases and community and philanthropic supports for higher education shifts. None of the institutions interviewed were immune to these financial pressures. All expressed concern and challenges related to funding for their programs. However, participants reported a variety of funding streams for their opportunity youth programs. These ranged from charitable and philanthropic grants, state grants and partnerships with national organizations through which funding was secured.

Though none reported that their source of support came from instructional or university general fund dollars, a number of the departments or program staff did receive funding for other activities from their institutions⁴. This funding helped to

² These 8 institutions self-reported to CUMU that they conduct or have conducted opportunity youth programming.

³ All interview participants are provided confidentiality. An additional two requested participation protections beyond that.

⁴ One interviewee reported that they did receive funding from the state for instructional dollars related to credit recovery for high school students, but this was not part of the college's instructional dollars.

support other activities of these departments and staff. This means that all of the opportunity youth programs that participated in this study needed to secure funding to carry out their work from sources external to the institutions in which they operate. All reported external funding sources for their programs. In some cases this including funding full time staff positions associated only with the opportunity youth related program. In one instance a university is set to hire an opportunity youth coordinator who would serve as a liaison to students seeking assistance with anything from food to housing.

Colleges and universities have complex budgeting processes. The compilation of funding for opportunity youth programs creates administrative and reporting challenges for universities and colleges. Different funding streams, such as dollars secured from federal grant programs, impose different reporting and spending requirements and constraints than do philanthropic or charitable dollars, though those have their own set of challenges. Varying grant deadlines and funding program changes also mean that these opportunity youth programs must work more to provide for enough funding for continuity of their programs at differing points throughout the fiscal year. This makes for an ever changing patchwork of funding programs must administer to carry out their activities. Interview participants expressed frustration in how difficult it can be to not only secure funding for their programs from outside sources, but then to work through the bureaucratic university systems once funding is identified. One respondent reported that this was "Most complex financial relationship they have on the entire campus".

Source of funding creates other complications for opportunity youth programming within colleges and universities. Charitable and philanthropic support is often not provided in greater than two to three years funding cycles. This means that grant awards may not continue or be successful for longer than a few years. With such short commitments in funding, programs face difficulty in creating long-term sustainable programs within the structure of their institutions. Funding uncertainty is no less true for government grant dollars either. Shifts in funding priorities and government programs, whether through budget allocations or leadership changes mean that these programs can end just as quickly as they started. Without long-term investment and a reliance on external funding these programs are on shaky ground, as one interview participant described it. It also suggests that universities face great challenges in even starting new opportunity youth programs.

One participant indicated that their program had ended when the grant program ended (they had engaged in the program even knowing that it was likely that funding would run out) and another indicated that while they were working to secure additional funding for their program, their funding was coming to an end and they were unsure if they would be able to continue with the program. Even programs that operate with external communities partners where some of the funding comes through a nonprofit experiences funding difficulties.

Moreover, funding is a barrier for many institutions as these programs are costly to operate. Interviewees pointed out that the scope and intensity of services required to successfully support opportunity youth in their programs required significant amounts of resources, including staff time and funding⁵.

Leadership: Though the research team did not directly ask participants about challenges and opportunities related to institutional leadership as it relates to opportunity youth programs, each interviewee as some point in the interview touched on factors relating to leadership as being critical to both the success and challenges

⁵ Funding closely correlates with challenges and issues related to activities and services that go beyond the classroom.

Opportunity Youth Program Interviews

faced by their programs. In some cases, opportunity youth programs reported that they were required to have buy-in from top leadership at their institutions to create or continue their respective programs. In one instance, the request to even pursue additional funding and support for the program from external sources needed to go through the university president first. Another interviewee shared that though their administration is very supportive of their program it was a hard sell and they continue to have to make the case for why the university should be involved in this kind of activity.

Interviewees described conversations where institutional leaders questioned why a university or college should engage in this type of programming and if it was appropriate for the university to provide the kinds of services that opportunity youth may require.

- ◆ How could engaging in opportunity youth programming translate into increased enrollment?
- ◆ What types of support services could the university be expected to provide?
- ◆ What types of external partnership and relationships was the institution committing to in engaging in this activity?; were just some of the questions interviewees indicated were raised by leaders of their institutions.

Our interviewees noted the importance of communicating to university leadership the importance of addressing their questions and providing them with evidence that, where appropriate, these kinds of programs do translate into enrollment for the university.

Interviewees also identified leadership as an issue not just at institutions, but in the community. Three interviewees detailed the circumstances surrounding the creation of their programs as having originated from external requests to the university from community leaders, including elected officials and their administrations to either create opportunity youth programs or be part of existing programs addressing opportunity youth. The source of the request to the university impacted the universities response and thus, level of support. Institutions that were approached by community leaders to participate indicated that their university leadership provided a higher degree of support for the program. This included approving the continuation of program, working through university bureaucracy and grants management support.

Anchor Institutions: Anchor institutions, whether they are hospitals or universities, are place-based entities, deeply embedded in their respective communities by their mission, investments, resources and relationships. These institutions have control over vast resources that have the potential to improve the communities in which they operate and the lives of its residents. By applying what the Democracy Collaborative terms “anchor mission, these institutions are consciously applying their long-term, place-based economic power, in combination with their human and intellectual resources, to better the long-term welfare of the communities in which they reside⁶”. By working to align institutional programs and services to meet the needs of low-income communities, these anchors can serve to address long-standing - community’s challenges, such as impacting vulnerable and disconnected youth.

Institutions interviewed for this study consistently indicated that their institution felt strongly about being a good neighbor and member of their community and often self-identified as being an anchor institution. They connected their work and programming around opportunity youth as being part of their mission as anchor

⁶ <https://democracycollaborative.org/democracycollaborative/anchorinstitutions/Anchor%20Institutions>

institutions in their communities. Beyond the importance of the program itself, interview participants indicated that this was also an internal institutional/program strategy to engage university leadership and secure support and commitments for opportunity youth programming. Viewed as part of a broader institutional mission to connect and support their local communities, these programs’ efforts to be included in the overall institutional priorities were geared towards program sustainability.

As more colleges and universities embrace their role and responsibility as anchors for their communities, there may be greater prospects for opportunity youth programming to be part of their anchor strategies and investments in their neighborhoods.

Spectrum of Credentialing: Interview participants described programs at their respective institutions that ranged from offering vocational training and certifications to credit recovery and high school equivalency completion to enrollment in college courses.

The variety of programmatic offerings indicates that there is not a one-size-fits-all model to re-engagement of opportunity youth, but also that local context, including program partners and funders as well as the local economy and businesses need to be taken into consideration when creating opportunity youth programs. Furthermore, these considerations are not unique to colleges and universities, but extend to community-based non-profits working to assist opportunity youth as well.

The nature of higher education in the U.S. is evolving, in some cases shifting from a focus on four years degrees to two year degrees and certificates. Several interviewees acknowledged both the changing perception of college as well as the need for colleges and universities to expand and re-shape their programming to reflect the changing nature of the economy. This has resulted in institutions offering or considering offering a wider variety of educational offerings. One interviewee acknowledged that it is not always an associate or university degree that a student needs. This doesn’t mean that there isn’t a role for colleges and universities though. They have started working with their local workforce board to engage in discussion about offering national career readiness certificates or some level of credentialing of workforce readiness.

Several interviewees also acknowledged that opportunity youth have enough barriers that they might not be able to go to school full time and so that should not always be the goal of institutions. Universities and colleges could better engage with local employers to offer employer-specific or sector targeted credentials. Some are already doing this.

A newly published report on training in manufacturing by the Center for International Studies noted that life-long learning is critical to the manufacturing sector. They found that institutions of higher education should “identify “on-ramps” into advanced manufacturing jobs as well as “off-ramps” for people who might be looking for their next career move. Lifetime learning across multiple employers and career paths will require socializing the costs to allow more modularity and mobility”. And that “Apprenticeships should result in modular, portable credentials for employees⁷”.

⁷ Training the Next Revolution in American Manufacturing, Center for Strategic and International Studies, July 2019. https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/190722_Carson%20et%20al_Manufacturing_WEB_v4.pdf

“As more colleges and universities embrace their role and responsibility as anchors for their communities, there may be greater prospects for opportunity youth programming to be part of their anchor strategies and investments in their neighborhoods.”

Opportunity Youth Program Interviews

An interviewee illustrated that micro credentialing would also help to address other challenges that opportunity youth face, such as the ability to commit long term to achieving a degree, deliver faster time to employment post education completion and or reduce the costs associated with a degree. Furthermore micro credentialing would allow individuals who face skills gaps and aren't ready for formal education yet to become employable with short term skills training.

It was also unclear to those interviewed for this report, how interested and able opportunity youth are to attend college as full time traditional students.

Outreach and Engagement: The research team asked interviewees how they identified and recruited opportunity youth to their programs. Finding applicants for the opportunity youth programs in general was often mentioned as a significant challenge. The first was simply that no one organization or institution had good contact information for individuals who had dropped out of the educational system. Even local school districts did not possess contact information for their former students. Some programs indicated that they advertised at local community and recreational centers, though that still did not reach their target population. A number of institutions have community partners through which they conducted outreach and recruitment activities and rely heavily on them for their program enrollment. But this is a population that is doggedly difficult to connect with and track. Even programs that recognized the difficulty in reaching opportunity youth admitted that it was by far more challenging than they had anticipated. This issues also contributed to increased costs and program delays. Interviewees reported that their most successfully recruitment and engagement efforts were the results of effective community partners and feedback from their clients.

Not Just Opportunity Youth: In addition to the variety of program offerings provided by respondent institutions, often the programs described were targeted towards a broader constituency than just opportunity youth, though they were captured in these programs as well. They recognized that their programs were not singularly geared towards reaching opportunity youth. In this sense, they cast a much wider net in who they assisted, reached and served.

In other instances, interviewees described how their programs intentionally placed opportunity youth with other clients and students who were not previously disconnected or disengaged. These mixed cohorts, they said, proved to be more effective than program cohorts that were made up of only opportunity youth. This intentional mixing provided opportunity youth with other perspectives, experiences and mentors. Program staff reported that this resulted in better outcomes such as longer program participation and retention as well as successful program completion.

Additionally, some programs focus on subsets of the opportunity youth population, such as youth coming out of foster care, individuals involved in the juvenile and criminal justice system and disabled youth specifically.

Almost all of those interviewed expressed opinions and ideas related to the need for an evolution of understanding of the definition and categorization of opportunity youth and disengagement. These opinions stem from two different roots. The first is that once enrolled in a program, especially educationally within the university, they are no longer considered opportunity youth. One interviewee succinctly described this by saying that to their university, these students would now tracked just as another other student is. Another asked at what level of retention are they then no longer considered opportunity youth? If completion of a program is success, they might still not go on to full enrollment or seek additional education, and how would a university or college know or track if they were employed once leaving campus?

Furthermore, because engagement is a continuum and these individuals move in and out of periods of disengagement and re-engagement the definitions need to be more fluid. Disconnection and disengagement does not occur overnight. Disengagement can be constant or episodic. And what triggers disengagement can vary at different points in an individuals' life. Many interviewees described a spectrum of disengagement rather than a singular status is engaged or disengaged.

Moreover, those interviewed for this report felt strongly that while their participants in some cases did not meet the technical definition of opportunity youth, the only thing keeping them from becoming opportunity youth is the handoff directly to the community college or university program from high schools or community-based programs.

This makes it especially challenging for these institutions for which some set of their existing student population may be holding on by a thread and are one crisis or defining moment away from becoming fully disengaged or disconnected.

Beyond the Classroom: Those interviewed for this report highlighted entire sets of activities and services that went far beyond just the classroom and educational instruction.

Opportunity youth require an entire spectrum of services that are not traditionally provided by institutions of higher education, in order to be successful. And this also oftentimes involves more intensive interactions with students than universities are used to being. Whether it was described as a lot of hand-holding or high-touch, interviewees described the need to provide intensive level of assistance to the participants in their programs. Oftentimes, the scope and skill sets needed from staff are not what one would generally find in a university as well. Even programs that currently do not offer such services recognize the need for them for their students. Interviewees understand that traditionally, colleges don't know what to do with a student who shows up for class late because they slept on the street last night. And they generally aren't prepared to assist even when they've been asked. It's most often a faculty member that is on the front line of finding out which students are in crisis, but they don't know what to do in that situation. One program is working to bring on a new staff position within the university that will act as a liaison for opportunity youth at the school. This position will assist students in navigating supports and systems external to the university, but necessary to student success, such as housing, food, employment issues, childcare, etc.

“Those interviewed for this report felt strongly that institutions of higher education will have to start providing students with these non-traditional, social-service-like assistance if they are to truly address and assist in helping opportunity youth move to re-engagement and break the cycle of repeated disengagement.”

In this way, universities and colleges, it was suggested, should re-target their efforts in raising money for student support. Every year, millions and millions of dollars are given to colleges and universities for scholarships, especially for underserved and disadvantaged youth. But the thinking that providing enough financial aid for all of these student to attend college tuition free would result in success is short sighted given the scope of challenges and issues that opportunity are confronted with. It was said by one interviewee that for every million dollars given for scholarships, a university would need an additional twenty million to provide enough support for all of the services and help that these students need.

Those interviewed for this report felt strongly that institutions of higher education will have to start providing students with these non-traditional, social-service-like assistance if they are to truly address and assist in helping opportunity youth move to re-engagement and break the cycle of repeated disengagement.

Opportunity Youth Program Interviews

Evolving Challenges: Opportunity Youth face a myriad challenges, not just to education or employment, but in establishing consistency and stability in general. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Adverse Childhood Experiences can contribute to poor life outcomes including a variety of risky health behaviors, chronic health conditions, low life potential, and even early death.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) is the term used to describe all types of abuse, neglect, and other potentially traumatic experiences that occur to people under the age of 18. See Figure 2.⁸

Students are increasingly coming to colleges and universities having faced adverse childhood experiences, such as homelessness, abuse, food insecurity, family instability, and the list goes on. No longer are institutions able to overlook the personal

lives of those that they seek to educate. One respondent succinctly said “If you have a food pantry on campus, you have opportunity youth.” If colleges and universities are unable to equip themselves to deal with the potentially traumatic experiences that opportunity youth present with, they will ultimately be unsuccessful in getting them re-engaged in the long term. This means that getting into the college is only the beginning of the battle most of these students will face. Furthermore, these traumas and life challenges not only impact student academic success, but also their social integration into the life and opportunities that college campuses offer young adults.

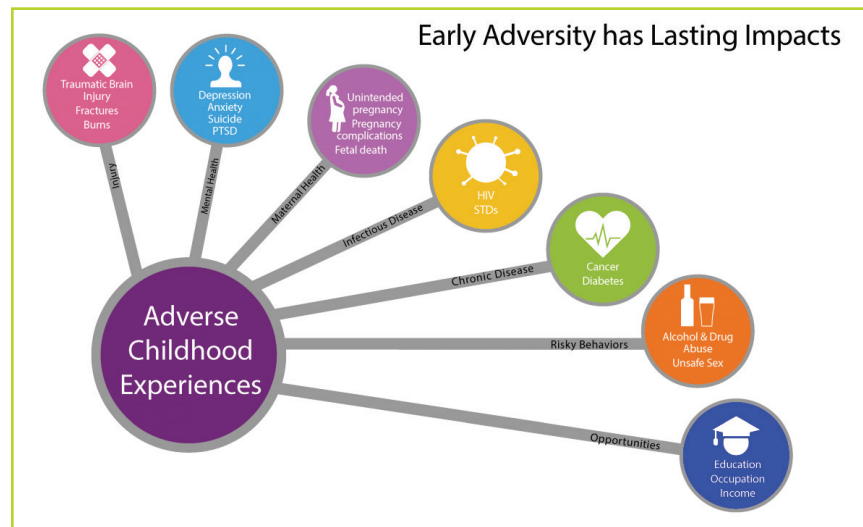


Figure 2: Adverse Childhood Experiences

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Violence Prevention

INTERVIEWS OF COMMUNITY-BASED OPPORTUNITY YOUTH PROGRAMS

An element of scope of work leading to the creation of this report “A Scan of the Field: Urban and Metropolitan University Opportunity Youth Programs included conducting an environmental scan of community-based organizations not affiliated with or connected to CUMU member Universities but located in CUMU member cities that offer services and supports to Opportunity Youth.

Based on the environmental scan, the research team created an inventory of community-based organizations operating Opportunity Youth programs in CUMU member institution cities. The research team proposed to conduct 4-5 interviews with leadership and/or management staff of community-based organizations in urban and metropolitan communities to compare Opportunity Youth program elements and outcomes between and among the community-based and university cohorts.

The summary of responses to the interview protocol, an analysis of the responses and the conclusions reached are organized to record and understand interview responses from community-based organizations operating Opportunity Youth programs for disconnected youth and young adults.

Outreach Strategies

The research team’s outreach strategies to community-based organizations with Opportunity youth programs included the following:

- ♦ Contacting one (1) community-based Opportunity Youth Program organization in different regions of the county listed in the environmental scan table previous created;
- ♦ Moving to contact all community-based organizations listed in the environmental scan table if the regional outreach contact strategy is unsuccessful;
- ♦ Contacting community-based organizations with contact information on their website; and
- ♦ Contact community-based organization whose Opportunity Youth programs were in existence for three (3) or more years.

Outreach Activities

The following activities were conducted by the research team in support of the outreach strategies:

- ♦ The research team using information gleaned from the environmental scan emailed one community-based organization operating Opportunity Youth project in the Eastern, Northeastern, Mid-Western and Western regions of the country. This outreach activity was unsuccessful.
- ♦ The research team using information gleaned from the environmental scan expanded their outreach to every community-based organization operating Opportunity Youth project listed in the environmental scan table.
- ♦ Each community-based organization was emailed four (4) times;
- ♦ Additionally, the research team made phone calls to each community-based organization listed in the environmental scan table to solicit their participation in the interview process
- ♦ Each community-based organization was called four (4) times.

OUTREACH RESULTS

The research team experienced the following responses to their outreach activities:

8 of the fourteen **14** community-based organization contacted by email and phone declined to participate in the interview process;

3 of the **14** community-based organizations failed to respond to both email and phone outreach;

3 of the **14** community-based organizations agreed to participate in the interview process.

Given the difficulty with the outreach responses, the research team conducted interview with three **3** community-based organizations operating Opportunity Youth programs.

⁸ <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/acestudy/aboutace.html>

Opportunity Youth Program Interviews

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW RESPONSES

As a result the outreach conducted by the research team three (3) of the fourteen (14) community-based organizations operating Opportunity Youth programs were interviewed using the interview protocol designed to solicit information about their Opportunity Youth programs and their perspectives about their programs' effectiveness and efficiency.

The three (3) community-based organizations operating Opportunity Youth programs that participated in the interview process were: JEVS Human Services in Philadelphia PA; Youth Opportunities Unlimited in Cleveland OH; and Opportunity San Diego in San Diego, CA. The research team conducted interviews with senior leadership and/or key program management staff from each organization. When conducting the interviews, the research team informed the interview participants that their comments would remain confidential and not be directly shared with CUMU or the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW RESPONSES

When assessing the information received from the three (3) individuals interviewed, the research team organized its analysis by a review of the similarities and differences of community-based organizations Opportunity Youth program elements. For an individualized view of each community-based organization interviewed, there is a completed program design template that provides more detailed information about each organization's Opportunity Youth programs in the appendices of this report.

Program Similarities

Each of the community-based organizations interviewed for this study focused their services and programmatic activities on a specific age range, youth ages 16 to 24. Their programs activities and supports targeted youth who are out-of-school and unemployed. In each interview it was stated that their organization's focus on disconnected youth was precipitated by demographic data indicating that this population represented a significant number of youth and young adults in each community. And thus, the need for programmatic interventions in these communities where the disconnected youth and young adult population ranged between 20,000 and 50,000.

The interviews conducted revealed that programs were primarily designed to aid the Opportunity Youth with employment training to build the capacities of youth engaged in their programs to successfully obtain and retain viable employment that provided pathways for future upward employment mobility. Each community-based organization included soft-skills training in addition to training that targeted high-growth sectors such as information technology, health care and building and construction trades. Community-based organizations also offer through their activities certificate programs to strengthen the competitiveness of their program youth so that they would successfully be able to compete for employment opportunities where certifications were required.

All the individuals interviewed representing community-based organizations stated that another goal of their Opportunity Youth programs for disconnected youth and young adults was to engage in activities that enhance the educational attainment and capacities of the disconnected youth and young adults involved in their programs. Each community-based organization's Opportunity Youth program menu included services and support to address the completion of high school and

encouraged pursuit of a college education. Whether through offering high school equivalency training and/ or connecting youth to college education opportunities, each community-based organization employed case management staff that worked with individual youth to make sure they were able to secure their academic futures.

The types and primary funding sources used to support operation of each of the community-based organization's program were similar. Each program receives support from the federal, county and city governments. They also receive funding support from local philanthropy in their communities. But even though the funding sources used to support their programs are relatively stable, these sources do not completely provide the complete array of funding support needed to ensure all the costs related to these programs are completely covered. Each of the community-based organization's representatives interviewed wanted to impress upon the research team that to successfully operate their Opportunity Youth programs they needed to seek additional sources of funding such as small grants and conducting fundraising events to fill the gap between the funding they receive and the cost to effectively operate the program.

After reviewing the feedback from the individuals interviewed it became evident that each community-based organization was a participant in a larger coalition of public, nonprofit and business organizations working in partnership to provide wrap-around services and support to disconnected youth and young adults participating in local Opportunity Youth programs.

These coalitions included organizations such as United Way, the Chamber of Commerce, local community colleges, colleges and universities, local workforce investment boards and public and clinical health care. These partnership work in concert to address the stability and continued participation of the youth. Everyone interviewed also agreed that the most difficult aspect of working with this population is trying to find members of the disconnected population and keeping them continually and consistently engaged in program activities.

Everyone interviewed acknowledged that generally, their program metrics were for the most part determined by the organizations that provided operating support. Community-based organization representatives expressed that their program guidelines and the data collected related to their Opportunity Youth programs needed to expand to provide more robust data and information.

Program Differences

The representatives from community-based organizations operating Opportunity Youth programming for disconnected youth and young adults in their respective communities expressed several unique aspects to their programs. Though each organization's programmatic agendas included services and support to aid youth to becoming employed and/or going to college, there were varying degrees to which each community-based organization's services and supports were emphasized. And though each community-based organization's entrance into the Opportunity Youth programming space was precipitated by significant numbers of disconnected youth and young adults in their communities, their program mix between educational attainment and employment preparation was based on the individual population served and the needs of the individual population.

“Whether through offering high school equivalency training and/ or connecting youth to college education opportunities, each community-based organization employed case management staff that worked with individual youth to make sure they were able to secure their academic futures.”

Opportunity Youth Program Interviews

All the community-based organization's representatives interviewed indicated that staffing Opportunity Youth programs was a critical aspect in creating highly effective programming. The staff required to support and sustain Opportunity Youth services and activities were defined by the needs of the individuals in each cohort each year. This means that each program is revised or modified based on the needs of the population, available resources to support that population, and environmental conditions.

Differences exist in the number of Opportunity Youth programs offered by the community-based organizations interviewed. Youth Opportunities Unlimited in Cleveland in its three-year experience offered one (1) programs that were specifically for disconnected youth and young adults. JEVS Human Services located in Philadelphia over its eight-years of operating Opportunity Youth programming has created eleven (11) programs for disconnected young adults and youth. Opportunity San Diego has been operating in the Opportunity Youth space for the last five-year period, providing one (1) program for disconnected youth and young adults.

CUMU MEMBER PARTICIPANT SURVEY

The research team had proposed to design a survey that would be sent out to the participants/clients of existing CUMU member opportunity youth programs. The goal of the electronic survey was to examine the impacts on program participant outcomes including perceptions of the program, attainment of employment, employment stability, and status of housing. The research team expected a low response rate assuming the survey could be administered via text and taken on a phone.

None of the opportunity youth programs from which the research team requested participation agreed to have their program clients participate in a survey. Several noted the difficulty in reaching their clients, one indicated that they are not the organization that is responsible for tracking program participants, another indicated that they get opportunity youth through a community partner who is already extremely protective of their clients. Still others revealed a strong commitment to protecting what is already a vulnerable population and declined directly to even entertain the request.

Criteria for Success

Program design, community needs, and the individual set of needs and supports that opportunity youth may benefit from are all local in context. Based on interviews with CUMU program providers, external providers of opportunity youth services and programs this report examines criteria to measure the success of existing CUMU member programs. For the purposes of this report, success is established as participant completion of the program.

It is very important to note that success can be defined in other parameters outside of program completion. This might include outcomes such as securing employment during the course of the program, obtaining benefits such as food assistance, child care and access to mental health services that would otherwise not have been delivered, absent program participation.

Below is a further explanation of these strategies as well as the additional of several others.

Additionally, success does not necessary mean that a program participant will be employed or continue on to degree completion.

- ◆ While the specific approach of each program are unique, there are three common principles that underlie strategies to reach and serve opportunity youth:
- ◆ Work to identify and provide targeted and individualized assistance to each program participant (wrap-around services) with the recognition of the intensity of providing services to opportunity youth.
- ◆ Recognition of the benefits of small cohorts/classes where opportunity youth are not the only participants
- ◆ Working to align programming around long-term institutional priorities and anchor-based strategies.

Cohorts are small and opportunity youth are not the singular participants.

Opportunity youth are provided the best chance at successful completion of the program when they are not the only demographic of participants enrolled in a program. Having exposure to and learning from and with individuals from other backgrounds provides opportunity youth with experiences and an environment that might otherwise be inaccessible for most opportunity youth. Examples include older workers retraining for different careers, first-time college bound students, college student mentors, older students returning to complete their degrees, etc. The exposure to these other participants influences opportunity youth program attendance, program retention and commitment to enroll in college.

On the other hand, this also means that while opportunity youth are program targets, institutions of higher education may not recognize these as opportunity youth-based programs.

Funding streams are not from single source. Programs included in this study have either ceased or are in jeopardy of ending due to the funding constraints. Some of them were part of a pilot program of grant. While engaging in a pilot initiative can get a program started on campus, ensuring that there is funding from more than just a single source can mitigate the impacts when the pilot initiative ends and limit disruption if a program had to be altered or rehabilitated to suit a new funder. Source of funding is also a consideration in the scope of services that a program is designed to provide. Programs that provided services to opportunity youth beyond just classroom instruction or job training reported greater success with opportunity youth than those that did not. But these services are not often covered in the grant programs that currently support opportunity youth programming. Some institutions in this study are working to identify and secure additional, external sources of funding such as philanthropic grant dollars, to enable them to provide expanded program services to opportunity youth. Programs that are not reliant on a single grant or source of funds are likely to be more sustainable as well.

Provide wrap around support services and individual assistance. Programs included in the study that reported successful completion of the program by opportunity youth worked to tailor services to individual program participants. This meant having one-on-one meetings and sessions with opportunity youth to determine and identify their array of needs and individual challenges. It meant that programs had to provide a high touch environment for opportunity youth. It also means that program staff need to have a deeper level of personal knowledge of the youth

Opportunity Youth Program Interviews

in the program to help those facing serious problems in their personal lives. This can include identifying issues related to food insecurity, homelessness, domestic violence and safety issues and issues with mental health. This is generally outside of the scope of services and activities that staff and faculty at institutions of higher education are trained to or know how to provide. It can leave staff feeling constrained in the ability to provide assistance and in some cases overwhelmed. Institutions that were better at providing these types of interventions reported that they were better able to get opportunity youth to successfully complete the programs.

Program Support and Buy-In from Leadership at the Highest Levels of the Institution. Leadership buy-in is crucial for program success and sustainability. Programs reported that they were able to better weather funding complications, program and recruitment challenges and navigating the university bureaucracy when they had achieved support from university leadership. This was reported at both the provost (chancellor) and president level of the institution.

Tracking opportunity youth programs – effective if it is tied to a larger institutional priority or strategy such as an anchor institution initiative and framework.

Taking into consideration the characteristics and attributes of some of the success that programs in this study have had, the research team identified several critical questions that institutions participating in or initiating opportunity youth programs can examine to assist in determining readiness and program success.

Findings & Recommendations

This study demonstrated that there is, first, a significant amount of activity across the country focused on disengaged and disconnected youth and youth adults and that there is not a one-size-fits all model for institutions of higher education. Furthermore, some are more suited to working within their local communities to engage with opportunity youth or community organizations that already provide such programming and services.

Second, the pathway to a successful program lies in more than just the educational based services that institutions of higher education provide, such as career counseling and assistance with financial aid. Often, adjacent services like substance abuse support, transportation, housing, child and family care and food security can be the deciding factor in participants successfully re-engaging in the educational system. And because they generally have a host of stressors and life traumas, providing wrap-around services is essential to their success. Approaches that blend educational and social support services that target multiple needs of the youth these institutions are serving will be more successful than those that focus on improving access to higher education and credit recovery and completion alone.

This is however an expensive proposition for universities and colleges to undertake. Opportunity youth programming is costly and securing the funding to support such work is challenging. Furthermore these are not services that many have experience and expertise in offering. Either partnering with existing community-based organizations or working with national organizations may be a more practical and sustainable approach. This could also come in the form of programs providing space on campus for external non-profit social services agencies to have a presence on campus and provide services to not just opportunity youth, but to all students in need.

Effectively engaging opportunity youth requires efforts to creatively integrate them with non-opportunity youth individuals. Programs that strategically target mixed cohorts of participants and that introduce them to other people and experiences on campus and within the institutions will be more effective in keeping them engaged and connected to the programs.

Opportunity youth face numerous challenges and barriers to maintaining engagement in higher education. Programs that provide financial incentives – beyond free tuition or scholarships - or access to paid internships can assist in keeping opportunity youth attrition rates down. Financial incentives can also be used as outreach and recruitment tools for programs, as reaching disconnected youth can at times be exceedingly difficult. Strategies that utilize communication pathways that appeal to this population should be pursued. Traditional advertising and recruitment will not be effective in engaging this population in education-based programs.

For prospective institutions of higher education interested in engaging in opportunity youth programming understanding the landscape of existing community-based organizations that engage in opportunity youth program should be considered. Partnering with existing programs, whether they are locally grown or nationally focused, should be explored.

In years past in both community and economic development circles, the mantra that a rising tide lifts all boats was generally accepted as truth. Today, discussions have shifted and more and more policymakers, elected officials and community and civic organizations recognize that the economy is growing, but not everyone is benefiting. And those that do see benefits, are not benefiting equally. If the urban communities where CUMU member institutions are to succeed, all of their communities and the residents in them must also have equal opportunity for success.

CONCLUSIONS

The research team's analysis of the responses from community-based organizations operating Opportunity Youth programs has led to the following conclusions about the strength and challenges these organizations confront when working with disconnected youth and young adults. The research team's conclusions are listed below:

1. One challenge expressed by those interviewed by the research team was that the funding received from governmental entities to operate Opportunity Youth programs did not fully provide the level of funding required to effectively meet the basic needs of the disconnected youth and young adults. Program operators' experiences have led to the perspective that it cost more to serve this population because they are disconnected from all civic, social, educational and employment community sectors requiring intensive and consistent contacts and engagement to establish and maintain the program connections.
2. Another challenge identified by each person interviewed was maintaining consistent contact with Opportunity Youth once they are participating in programming. Case management staff spends a significant amount of their time maintaining contact and engaging this population.
3. Both a strength and challenge when reviewing the feedback from those interviewed was the operational emphasis and balance between offering programs that focus on employment and education attainment for this population of youth and young adults. It was evident that the primary focus for each community-based organization was developing programming that successfully transitioned this population from unemployed to employed. The sources of funding and related program outcomes from governmental entities may be the reason for this determination.
4. We were also made keen aware that outreach to this population was difficult and at times nearly impossible due to this population being disconnect from most communication pathways used by the community-based organizations. More outreach strategies that use communication pathway that appeal to this population need to be investigated and pursued.
5. A strength we discovered was the staff working in these community-based organizations. We were very impressed by the dedication and commitment demonstrated by the community-based organizations senior leaders and staff to work tirelessly to reach out and maintain contact through the services and supports needed by their community's population of disconnected youth and young adults.

CASE EXAMPLES

Case Example: Community-Based Organization



YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES UNLIMITED

Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.) is a nonprofit organization established in 1983 located in Cleveland, Ohio. The mission of Y.O.U. is “to help teens and young adults succeed by providing educational and workforce opportunities, skills development and access to career pathways.” The organization “envisions a greater community working together to ensure that every young person is ready to pursue a path to economic self-sufficiency” is this organization’s ultimate vision for the future.

Y.O.U. is currently led by its President and CEO Craig Dorn. Mr. Dorn became President and CEO in 2018 after serving as a staff member for more than 30 years. There are one hundred (100) full-time equivalents staffing the organization and the programs offered to young people by Y.O.U. The Y.O.U. case management staff are among the first people a young person meets when he or she engages with the organization. Their empathy and knowledge of Y.O.U.’s programs, young people’s lives and the opportunities Y.O.U. makes available to them play a critical role in their success.

The organization’s board of directors is chaired by Jason Therrien. Mr. Therrien leads the Y.O.U. board comprising thirty-three (33) members from the public, private and nonprofit sectors of the Greater Cleveland community. The board provide guidance through its governance role and is primarily responsible for fund development activities to assure that the financial resources required to support the organizations administrative operations and programs are available.

Y.O.U. Programs and Services

Y.O.U.’s program and services are focused on ensuring the youth and young adults are ready to pursue a path to economic self-sufficiency through mentoring, employability skills, industry-based credentials training and educational attainment. In FY2018, Y.O.U. offered several programs and services for youth in young adults that included:

- ♦ Jobs for Ohio Graduates Program (JOG) offered in 14 area high schools across Northeast Ohio focused on employable skills, career development and leadership skills. This program helps teens with significant barriers to graduation get on a path to post-secondary success through either permanent employment, college, credential training or joining the military. The JOG program had 778 participants in FY2018 and is part of Jobs for Americas Graduates which offers dropout prevention programs in 33 states.
- ♦ Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) is the largest summer jobs program in the region for youth and young adults in Northeast Ohio. This critically important program provides participants with a paid work experience, professional mentors and job skills. It also introduces them to financial capability and potentially connects them to a full-time job following their experience. In FY2018, 1,645 youth and young adults participated in Y.O.U.’s Summer Youth Employment Program.
- ♦ Day One Program provides young adults ages 17 to 24 who graduated high school or earned their GED with opportunities to pursue credentials and find permanent employment. Participants receive support from Y.O.U. case managers and job coaches during their training and for a minimum of one year following it. They receive training in the following areas: Customer Care, State Tested Nursing Assistant, Logistics and Information technology. In FY2018, 318 young adults participated in the Y.O.U.’s Day One Program.

- ♦ The Adult Resource Center (YRC) is a drop-in center that provides employment and career planning assistance, educational support and case management services to youth and young adults ages 14 to 24. Y.O.U. collaborates with Towards Employment, a local workforce development nonprofit organization to operate the YRC on behalf of Ohio Means Jobs Cleveland-Cuyahoga County. Nine hundred seventy-one (971) youth and young adults were served by the YRC in FY2018.
- ♦ The Internship Program is a collaborative partnership program between Y.O.U. and dozens of areas schools and companies throughout Northeast Ohio to offer internship opportunities to high school juniors and seniors. The internships, 120-hour, mentor-guided work experiences allow students to explore potential career interests. The Internship Program had 148 participants in FY2018.
- ♦ Opportunity Youth Program targets youth and young adults ages 14 to 24 who are not in school or employed. The program participants receive case management services and can engage in activities that build skills for employment, a credential and/or opportunities for enhanced educational attainment. This program had 1,758 youth and young adults participate in FY2018.

Program Partnerships/Collaborations

Y.O.U. is a member of The Cuyahoga County Workforce Development Consortium. The Consortium comprises The Center for Families and Children’s El Barrio; Ohio Guidestone; Towards Employment; Cuyahoga Community College’s Advanced Technology Academy; Cuyahoga County Department of Health of Human Services; and Ohio Means Jobs Cleveland-Cuyahoga County. These organizations work together to serve youth and young adults ages 18 to 24 years old—by providing them with subsidized work experiences or credential training. During FY2018, this Consortium served 791 youth and young adults.

Y.O.U.’s fiscal and programmatic year begins on July 1st and ends on June 30th. Y.O.U. had an annual income in FY2018 of **\$15,922,736**. The income sources in FY2018 are as follows:

- ♦ Government contracts: **\$12,623,563**
- ♦ Foundation/Grants: **\$1,942,139**
- ♦ Corporation and individual gifts: **\$683,996**
- ♦ United Way: **\$268,517**
- ♦ Special events: **\$236,041**
- ♦ Investment and miscellaneous income - **\$168,480**

During FY2018, Y.O.U.’s operating expenses totaled **\$14,837,141**.

The following is a list of expenses in 2018:

- ♦ Community-Based Programs - **\$11,298,944**
- ♦ School-Based and Entrepreneurship Programs - **\$1,663,395**
- ♦ Fundraising - **\$402,690**
- ♦ Administration - **\$1,472,112**

Case Study Sources

The information provided in this case study about Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.) was obtained from an interview with Craig Dorn, President and CEO of Y.O.U.; Y.O.U.’s website; and from Y.O.U.’s 2018 Annual Report.

Case Example: CUMU Member Rutgers–Camden



RUTGERS UNIVERSITY–CAMDEN YE2S CENTER AND COLLEGE ACCESS

Like many communities across the country, Camden has experienced industrial decline, population loss, loss of manufacturing employment and economic stagnation. The city has shifted its focus from manufacturing to education and medical institutions, commonly referred to as Eds and Meds, in an effort to tackle economic revitalization.

According to the US Census, nearly 40% of Camden’s 16–24 year old live below the poverty level.

Youth Employment and Education Success Centers provides programming for disconnected youth with Rutgers acting as the lead facilitator of the state’s Youth Education and Employment Success (YE2S) Centers.

They report engaging over 7,500 participants since 2008 through educational programs and direct services for disconnected youth. YE2S Centers bring stakeholders and community partners together around the vision of Building Productive Futures for the Youth of New Jersey. The work of Youth Success Centers encourages community collaboration and increases the use of best practices in youth service.

The YE2S Center model focuses on lifelong learning and career development by building bridges between the needs of disconnected young people and individual and integrated delivery of counseling, training, and placement services

The YE2S Center at Camden was established in 2012 and was led by key partners including Rutgers University, the Community Planning & Advocacy Council, the City of Camden, and Camden City Public Schools.

The Camden YE2S Center was located in the heart of the city’s Centerville neighborhood, at the Isabel Miller Community Center and community park. The center provided case management and work readiness training in Camden, and of advocacy for young people during a transition back into Camden schools. Their work included providing assistance to connect adjudicated and other disconnected youth to educational opportunities, including assistance navigating school enrollment, identifying programs among community partners, and work with the Camden City School District.

Beyond the YE2S Center the University operated piloted a college access program. The program began approximately two years ago and ended in early 2019.

Funded by a New Jersey Department of Labor grant, the program provided training and access to certificate and job training programs. The grant was written jointly by two lead entities: Camden County college (Center for Family Services) and Rutgers Camden. This was the first time that Rutgers University–Camden had worked on a of this kind grant.

The funding request was for \$2 Million and was split evenly between the two partners. The monies were originally provided as a demonstration grant as part of efforts from the US Department of Labor. In addition to Camden there were four other locations across the country that participated in the demonstration program.

The project was designed to pilot a new approach that would impact the way the county and the college could alter the adult basic education programming they offered. Their role was to deliver the educational services to program participants. Project partners understood that the traditional model of students coming to classroom everyday was not going to be effective for this population. Instead, they designed to program to provide flexibility and freedom to program participants.



Camden, New Jersey	Camden City		Camden County		Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington metro		New Jersey		United States	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Population Total	75,550	100.0	510,996	100.0	6,065,644	100.0	8,960,161	100.0	321,004,407	100.0
15 to 24	11,640	15.4	65,113	12.7	808,670	13.3	1,150,716	12.8	43,721,015	13.6
15 to 19 years	5,421	7.2	32,169	6.3	397,144	6.5	575,048	6.4	21,219,050	6.6
20 to 24 years	6,219	8.2	32,944	6.4	411,526	6.8	575,668	6.4	22,501,965	7.0
Educational Attainment: Population 18-24	8,257	100.0	44,534	100.0	573,591	100.0	796,641	100.0	31,131,484	100.0
Less than high school graduate	1,443	17.5	5,772	13.0	68,005	11.9	92,320	11.6	4,169,856	13.4
High school grad (incl. GED)	3,712	45.0	14,237	32.0	179,305	31.3	224,905	28.2	9,479,784	30.5
Some college or associate's	2,782	33.7	18,354	41.2	245,079	42.7	357,976	44.9	14,222,740	45.7
Bachelor degree or higher	320	3.9	6,171	13.9	81,202	14.2	121,440	15.2	3,259,104	10.5
Labor Force/Employment										
Labor force participation rate		Value		Value		Value		Value		Value
16 to 19 years		28.8		36.1		36.3		32.1		37.7
20 to 24 years		67.7		79.1		72.5		72.0		74.4
Employment/Population ratio										
16 to 19 years		21.8		28.3		27.8		25.2		29.6
20 to 24 years		57.8		69.9		62.3		62.4		64.5
Unemployment rate										
16 to 19 years		24.1		21.8		23.2		21.2		20.7
20 to 24 years		14.7		11.4		13.6		12.9		11.6
Poverty	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
16-24 w/poverty status known	9,736		56,896		659,136		965,122		36,196,402	
16-24 below poverty level	3,865	39.7	9,366	16.5	129,974	19.7	134,100	13.9	7,981,774	22.1
Median Household Income (\$)	26,105		65,037		66,285		76,475		57,652	

Source: American Community Survey, 2013-2017 5-year estimates

Case Example: CUMU Member Rutgers–Camden



The program would be on-site at a community center but most of the participation would be completed online and with tutors who were placed on-site.

In an effort to best identify what services were needed, project partners wanted to figure out what challenges and obstacles existed for each individual student. With this information they worked to guide them through the pipeline of educational programs and determine what other technical training and services they could provide.

Rutgers Camden's participation was precipitated by a request from leadership at the city to engage in the program and grant request. Reporting that 33% (thirty-three percent) of the residents in the City of Camden are under the age of 24, project partners and leaders felt that there was a significant enough population in the city that they needed to step in and assist.

Additionally, Rutgers Camden was brought in to assist city leadership in thinking through different models of service delivery.

Rutgers Camden understood that research existed on engaging this population which included recommendations for providing training and education simultaneously.

Rutgers Camden reported a significant number of challenges. Beyond all of the educational challenges that they faced, students needed extensive help with navigating almost every aspect of life outside of the classroom. They report needing to provide assistance in getting things such as social security numbers and drivers licenses, they needed to help students in addressing homelessness, and child care.

Program Operations

The program was housed within Community Engagement department at the University. It was seen by leadership as solely as an engagement project. This however, that gave them the ability to better shape the project.

The program operated off campus requiring them to engage extensively with their IT department to move all the tech off-site. They ended up contracting out some of the work to complete the off-site office.

The program also engaged with an office on campus that provides teacher preparation. This allowed them to connect to potential instructors.

A program director was hired. The program director was responsible for hiring all of the instructors, mainly adult basic education instructors. Rutgers Camden reported that they had very little involvement by the faculty. For participants in the program who wanted to and had the ability to enroll in college, Rutgers Camden had a partnership with Camden Community College where these students could continue their education.

Program Goals and Objectives

Rutgers Camden reports that they were able to engage over 100 opportunity youth during the duration of the program. This was in spite of the knowledge that they might not continue because it was a demonstration grant.

The goal was to get them through the entire program in one year, including access to a certified training partner, and to move them to a paid job or long term internship.

Outreach and Engagement: Rutgers Camden reported that they learned very quickly that moving youth participants through the program would prove to be “almost utterly impossible”. They reported that the city didn't keep good records on where these youth were or what had happened to them:

“The youth are called “disconnected” for a good reason”. Finding them was a great challenge. The program staff resorted to physically going to community recreational centers and hanging up flyers to advertise the program. Just gaining access to the opportunity youth took a lot of leg work and time. Furthermore, program staff worked with the officers in the juvenile court system where they were able to get them to make referrals through diversionary programs offered by the court. The program reports that this outreach method proved more successful than other methods that they employed. The program also worked with key non-profit organizations in the community to share information about the program and to make referrals. However staff reported that the students themselves were the best referral source. They incentivized the students to bring in their friends by providing them gift cards. Even with the intensity of their efforts, Rutgers Camden reported an approximately and unfortunate 50% (fifty percent) dropout rate.

Challenges: At Rutgers Camden, the project started 6-8 months behind the original timeline. While this posed logistical challenges, the greatest impact was felt on the funding side of the project. Because this was a demonstration grant and pilot project, the timing of the funding played a critical role in the programs operations. By the time the project was fully underway the grant funding had run out. Going into the program, Rutgers Camden understood that given the nature of the funding source, both the funding and the program might not continue.

The program ultimately ended when the funding ran out. Rutgers Camden had reported that they do not have plans at this stage to continue the program or to seek funding to re-start the program.

Case Example: CUMU Member MCC



METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE (OMAHA, NEBRASKA)

According to the American Community Survey, Omaha reports smaller percentages of both 16-19 year old and 20-24 years old who are unemployed than the U.S. as a whole. They also have higher labor force participation rates and educational attainment than the U.S.

The Program: Anenue Scholars

The program at Metropolitan Community College is “Avenue Scholars”. It was designed to help the college partner with organizations that serve opportunity youth. Program personnel strive to connect low-income, first-generation college students with paths into the workplace, thereby breaking the cycle of poverty. This can mean short term job training and engagement with youth while they are still in high school.

The program understands that technically, the students involved are not opportunity youth, since they go right into a sort-of post-secondary educational program. However, it is believed that the only thing keeping them from becoming opportunity youth is the handoff directly to the community college from high school. To this end, they have a program designed to engage high school students.

Upon program completion each participant will have received education and training, work experience and acquired work ready skills. This includes: graduating from high school, completing relevant career education or training, has a successful work history (standard of 150 hours of part-time employment for high school students, and \$1,500 earned annually from part-time employment in a career-related field for students at the postsecondary level) as well as having the ability to overcome barriers to employment, financial, physical, and mental well-being and has access community resources and services when necessary. **See Figure 3.**

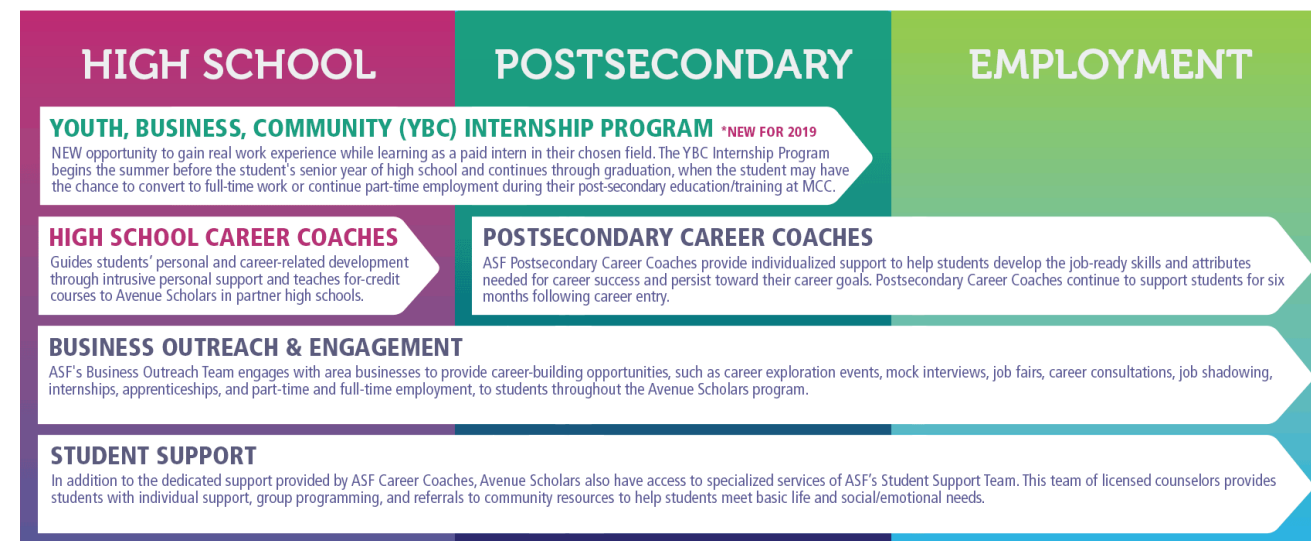


Figure 3: Avenue Schools Program Design. Source: <https://www.avescholars.org/our-program/>

Metric	Omaha City		Douglas County		Omaha-Council Bluffs Metro		Nebraska		United States	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Population Total	463,081	100.0	549,706	100.0	914,190	100.0	1,893,921	100.0	321,004,407	100.0
15-24 years	64,532	13.9	73,065	13.3	119,143	13.0	266,057	14.0	43,721,015	13.6
15 to 19 years	31,325	6.8	36,341	6.6	60,638	6.6	129,066	6.8	21,219,050	6.6
20 to 24 years	33,207	7.2	36,724	6.7	58,505	6.4	136,991	7.2	22,501,965	7.0
Educational Attainment: Population 18-24	46,017	100.0	50,984	100.0	81,557	100.0	190,260	100.0	31,131,484	100.0
Less than high school graduate	5,062	11.0	5,622	11.0	9,057	11.1	20,452	10.7	4,169,856	13.4
High school grad (incl. GED)	13,449	29.2	14,919	29.3	24,710	30.3	51,762	27.2	9,479,784	30.5
Some college or associate's	21,238	46.2	23,460	46.0	38,225	46.9	97,466	51.2	14,222,740	45.7
Bachelor degree or higher	6,268	13.6	6,983	13.7	9,565	11.7	20,580	10.8	3,259,104	10.5
Labor Force/Employment										
Labor force participation rate		Value		Value		Value		Value		Value
16 to 19 years		50.9		50.4		52.6		52.2		37.7
20 to 24 years		82.3		82.7		83.7		82.6		74.4
Employment/Population ratio										
16 to 19 years		42.8		42.7		45.1		44.8		29.6
20 to 24 years		75.7		76.3		76.3		76.2		64.5
Unemployment rate										
16 to 19 years		16.0		15.4		14.1		14.0		20.7
20 to 24 years		7.7		7.5		7.0		6.9		11.6
Poverty	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
16-24 w/poverty status known	53,196		60,393		99,282		215,319		36,196,402	
16-24 below poverty level	12,002	22.6	12,663	21.0	17,625	17.8	48,021	22.3	7,981,774	22.1
Median Household Income (\$)	53,789		58,640		62,345		56,675		57,652	

Source: American Community Survey, 2013-2017 5-year estimates

Case Example: CUMU Member MCC



The Avenue Scholars program provides an array of additional support services to student participants. Students are served by a full-time Counselor who provides assistance through short-term counseling, crisis intervention, problem solving, navigation of the child welfare system and juvenile courts, connection to community resources, and small group experiences.

Avenue Scholars reports that currently, there are about 300-400 students in the program, though this number has grown significantly since the program began.

The program indicated that they feel Avenue Scholars can serve as a gateway to a college program, and in many cases the youth fit into the opportunity youth definition. There is a high school completion program at the college, as well as credit recovery. The program reports that they assist youth in discovering their interests and strengths.

They offer programmatic classes during the credit recovery period and if the participant finishes the high school requirements during this process, the student receives a diploma directly from their high school and not a GED or special diploma. The program feels that this is an important distinction.

Program Operations

Nebraska has the third-lowest unemployment rate in the nation. However, there are pockets of unemployment in the Omaha area. At the same time the program reports that there is a critical shortage of qualified employees.

The program focuses on a set of 5 industry clusters in the Omaha area. They have indicated that the largest sector in need of qualified employees is the transportation logistics (heavy operators) sector. Health care is another area they provide education training and services. The program increasingly hears from hospital representatives that are starting to talk about the workforce shortage issues.

Avenue Scholars operates with the understanding that it is not always an associate degree that a student needs, so through cooperation between the local workforce board and the college, they have started issuing a national career readiness certificate, designed to signify some level of credentialing of workforce readiness.

Furthermore, opportunity youth usually face barriers that can keep them from going to school full-time. To help with this, Avenue Scholars has 230 employers that have signed on to agree to employ students who received the workforce readiness credential. This agreement has been in place for several years and is managed through the local workforce board.

The program reports that outcomes for some of the Avenue Scholar program students are known, but not all. They indicate that tracking them is difficult.

Challenges & Strengths

The program indicated that they see an increased importance on the need to identify and define the services that are available to their students. The college does not know what to do with students who show up for class late because they slept on the street the previous night. Oftentimes it is a faculty member who is the first to know of the personal issues affecting students. However, they are unlikely to know what to do in this situation. In this way, the program has identified a chance to hire an opportunity youth liaison at the college.

“Omaha has a lot of money. They could give a million dollars for scholarships and all the students could get to go to college for free. But what would still be needed is another \$20 million to help them with all the other services to help them be successful.”

The challenge is bringing the level of support for these student needs to be brought to scale. The college is working to actively bridge the gap between the educational needs and the social service needs of these students.

The term Opportunity Youth is a relatively-recent one. And the program reports that the college currently doesn't define any of their students as opportunity youth. However, they believe that they are serving that population with perhaps 70% of the student population on campus might otherwise qualify as opportunity youth. Furthermore, half of their student population is under 24 years old.

More recently, the college has become much more receptive to the idea that their student body includes many who are homeless or near-homeless, and/or are overcoming a criminal record, and/or face hunger; and the college has shown more interest in addressing these problems.

To serve this population “There's nothing ‘short term’ in this work”.

APPENDIXES

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Appendixes

APPENDIX A: CUMU MEMBER INSTITUTIONS OPPORTUNITY YOUTH-LIKE PROGRAMMING

University Name	City, State	University System	Program Name	Program Type
California State University San Marcos	San Marcos, CA	Yes	ACE Scholars	college access
Louisiana State University Shreveport	Shreveport, LA		Alpha Phi Alpha	college access
Medgar Evans College	Brooklyn, NY	Yes	Brooklyn Pipeline	college access
University of San Diego	San Diego, CA		CASA's Youth Engagement Initiative	
University of Massachusetts - Boston	Boston, MA	Yes	Center for Peace, Democracy, and Development	barrier remediation
Temple University	Philadelphia, PA		Center for Social Policy and Community Development	workforce development
The University of Chicago	Chicago, IL		Chicago Center for Youth Violence Prevention	barrier remediation
California State University San Bernadino	San Bernadino, CA	Yes	College Opportunity for All (COFA)	college access
Metropolitan State University of Denver	Denver, CO		Denver Opportunity Youth Initiative	workforce development
University of Arkansas at Little Rock	Little Rock, AR	Yes	Educational Opportunity Center	school completion
California State University LA	Los Angeles, CA	Yes	Educational Opportunity Program	college access
Buffalo State College	Buffalo, NY	Yes	Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)	college access
California State University Northridge	Northridge, CA	Yes	Educational Opportunity Resilient Scholars Program	college access
Loyola University Chicago	Chicago, IL		Empowerment Pipeline	college access
University of Massachusetts - Lowell	Memphis, TN		Equal Chance for Education Opportunity Scholars Program	college access
University of Massachusetts - Lowell	Lowell, MA	Yes	Foster Youth Resources	college access
University of Illinois at Chicago	Chicago, IL	Yes	Great Cities Institute	research
California State University Fullerton	Fullerton, CA	Yes	Guardian Scholars Program	college access
University of Houston	Houston, TX	Yes	Homeless Youth Initiative	barrier remediation
Virginia Commonwealth University	Richmond, VA		Mary and Frances Youth Center	barrier remediation
Miami Dade College	Miami, FL		MDC-Career Connect	workforce development
Johns Hopkins University	Baltimore, MD		Mentoring Assistance Peer Program	school completion
University of Minnesota	Minneapolis, MN	Yes	Minnesota Youth Institute	barrier remediation
University of Dayton	Dayton, OH		Montgomery County Juvenile Court's Evening Reporting Center	barrier remediation
University of Michigan - Dearborn	Dearborn, MI	Yes	Neighborhood Service Organization	college access
New York University	New York, NY		NYU's Opportunity Programs	college access
Simon Fraser University	Burnaby, BC		Opportunities for Indigenous Youth	workforce development
Stockton University	Galloway, NJ		Opportunity Youth Collaborative	workforce development
Metropolitan Community College, Nebraska	Omaha, NE		Opportunity Youth Initiative	school completion
Wagner College	Staten Island, NY		Port Richmond Partnership	research
Oakland University	Rochester, MI		Pre-College Programs	college access
Florida Atlantic University	Boca Raton, FL		Pre-Collegiate/Youth Programs office	college access

University Name	City, State	University System	Program Name	Program Type
University of Pennsylvania	Philadelphia, PA		Reconnected: Opportunity Youth Toolkit	research
California State Polytechnic University	Pomona, CA		Renaissance Scholars	college access
University of Tennessee at Chattanooga	Chattanooga, TN		Southern Appalachian Educational Opportunity Center	college access
University of Southern Maine	Portland, ME		Southern Maine Youth Transition Network (SMYTN)	barrier remediation
Marquette University	Milwaukee, WI		Student Support Services	college access
Indiana University Northwest	Gary, IN		Summer Reading Programs for Children and Adults	school completion
York University (Canada)	Toronto, ON		The ACT for Youth Project	research
University of North Florida	Jacksonville, FL		The Arc Jacksonville On Campus Transition at UNF	college access
University of Nevada - Las Vegas	Las Vegas, NV	Yes	The Center for Academic Enrichment & Outreach	college access
College of Staten Island	Staten Island, NY	Yes	"The Percy Ellis Sutton Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge Program (SEEK) Accelerated Study in Associate Program (ASAP) Collegiate Science & Technology Entry Program (CSTEP)"	college access
Cleveland State University	Cleveland, OH		The Sullivan-Deckard and Helen Packer Scholarship Opportunity Programs & The Pratt Center	college access
Rutgers University - Camden	Camden, NJ	Yes	The YE2S Center Model - Youth Employment and Education Success Centers	workforce development
Rutgers University - Newark	Newark, NJ	Yes	The YE2S Center Model - Youth Employment and Education Success Centers	workforce development
California State University Dominguez Hills	Carson, CA	Yes	Toro Guardian Scholars	college access
Saint Louis University	St. Louis, MO		Transformative Workforce Academy	
Washington State University Tri-Cities	Richland, WA	Yes	TRIO	college access
University of Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh, PA	Yes	TRIO Student Support Services	school completion
Southern Illinois University - Edwardsville	Edwardsville, IL	Yes	TRIO Upward Bound	school completion
The University of North Carolina at Charlotte	Charlotte, NC	Yes	UNC Charlotte Urban Institute	research
University of North Texas at Dallas	Dallas, TX	Yes	UNT Dallas Upward Bound	college access
The Ohio State University	Columbus, OH		Young Scholars Program	college access
University of Michigan - Flint	Flint, MI	Yes	Youth Empowerment Solutions	barrier remediation
Weber State University	Ogden, UT		Youth Impact	barrier remediation
University of Louisville	Louisville, KY		Youth Violence Prevention Research Center	barrier remediation

APPENDIX B: CUMU MEMBER OPPORTUNITY YOUTH PROGRAM INFORMATION

University Name: Buffalo State SUNY

City, State: Buffalo, NY

Program Name: Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)

Program Type: College Access

Website: eop.buffalostate.edu/about-eop

Program Description: EOP targets those with limited financial resources and poor preparation. The program provides counseling and tutoring support services to disadvantaged students. Participants are provided with a counselor whose only responsibility is to provide academic and personal support to program students. Tutoring is offered at levels above the average for the university. Direct Aid funds are available for college expenses excluding tuition. Foster youth are eligible for extra services and funding.

History: Established in 1967.

Metrics: There have been over 45,000 EOP graduates from 45 campuses in the SUNY system. At Buffalo State, there are typically 750 EOP students enrolled, with about 200 new students each year. About 93 percent of EOP students have family incomes of less than \$25,000 per year. EOP students typically contribute over \$4,000 annually towards their educations.

Staff: 12 (6/18/19)

University Name: California State Polytechnic University

City, State: Pomona, CA

Program Name: Renaissance Scholars

Program Type: College Access

Website: <https://www.cpp.edu/~ssep/renaissance-scholars/index.shtml>

Program Description: The program provides students with workshops, mentoring, tutoring, academic advising, life skills seminars, year-round housing, financial assistance, educational enrichment and community building activities.

Renaissance Scholars must meet all of the following criteria:

- ◆ Current or foster youth
- ◆ Qualify as an independent student
- ◆ Demonstrate high personal motivation
- ◆ Demonstrate academic potential to succeed in college
- ◆ *History:* Established in 2002 with 10 students.

Metrics:

- ◆ Current Students :42
- ◆ Graduates to Date: 87
- ◆ Scholars Admitted in Fall 2018: 12
- ◆ Average Cost of Attendance: \$28,919

- ◆ 93% first year retention rate
- ◆ Graduation rate over 50%, compared to 5% national graduation rate of former foster care youth.
- ◆ 30 graduates are pursuing or have completed a Master's or Advanced Degree

Staff: (6/19/19): 21 total in student support, 2 with "Renaissance" in title

University Name: California State University Dominguez Hills

City, State: Carson, CA

Program Name: Toro Guardian Scholars (TGS)

Program Type: College Access

Website: <https://www.csudh.edu/tgs/>

Program Description: Supports students who were formerly in foster care. Support includes the following:

Academic

- ◆ Priority registration
- ◆ Career counseling
- ◆ Student development and leadership opportunities

Holistic

- ◆ Peer mentorship for support and guidance
- ◆ Access to no-cost and low-cost health services
- ◆ Resources for internships
- ◆ Emergency and housing support
- ◆ On-campus networking opportunities
- ◆ Special events and community-building activities

Financial

- ◆ Scholarship
- ◆ Book grants
- ◆ Financial literacy workshops

Staff: 2 (6/19/19)

External Partners: Pacific Gateway <https://www.pacific-gateway.org/>

University Name: California State University Fullerton

City, State: Fullerton, CA

Program Name: Guardian Scholars Program

Program Type: College access

Website: <https://www.fullerton.edu/guardianscholars/>

Program Description: The program is targeted at former foster youth. Support services areas include academic, professional, and lifelong learning. Education can take place at a university, community college, or trade school. In addition to financial support, the program offers the following benefits:

- ◆ Access to year-round on-campus housing

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- ◆ Priority registration
- ◆ Summer enrichment programming
- ◆ Individual counseling / life coaching
- ◆ Life skills workshops
- ◆ Educational and community enrichment activities
- ◆ Student drop-in center
- ◆ Center for Scholars support services
- ◆ Computer lab and free printing

History: Began in 1998, with 3 students

Metrics: Over 100 scholars have earned undergraduate degrees. Many Guardian Scholars have also earned Master's degrees in fields such as social work, counseling, education, and international business.

Staff: 19 (6/19/19)

External Partners: The following community partners have all helped students in various ways:

- ◆ The John Burton Advocates for Youth
- ◆ OC United
- ◆ Together We Rise
- ◆ The Orangewood Foundation
- ◆ Olive Crest
- ◆ iFoster
- ◆ California College Pathways
- ◆ Foster Care Counts
- ◆ DCFS Independent Living Program
- ◆ Orange County Social Services Agency

University Name: **California State University LA**

City, State: Los Angeles, CA

Program Name: Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)

Program Type: College Access

Website: <http://www.calstatela.edu/eop>

Program Description: EOP targets undergraduate students from California who have struggled in school because of economic or personal challenges. Academic support and counseling are provided during the college application process and throughout tenure at Cal State LA. These are the eligibility requirements:

- ◆ California resident or AB540/2000 status
- ◆ First generation college student (parents have not earned a four-year college degree)
- ◆ Educationally disadvantaged (do not meet the CSU admissions guidelines)
- ◆ Low-income and meet the EOP Family Income Guidelines.

History: Created in the late 1960s at Cal State LA. In 1969 California established EOP as a state-funded organization.

Funding Source: State of California

Staff: 19 (6/19/19)

University Name: **California State University Northridge**

City, State: Northridge, CA

Program Name: Educational Opportunity Resilient Scholars Program

Program Type: College Access

Website: <https://www.csun.edu/csun-eop/eop-resilient-scholars-program-rsp>

Program Description: The program identifies student potential for success at the pre-college stage and continues through an interactive admissions process. The program focuses on former foster youth. Students have access and a personal point of contact with over 20 campus departments including the health and counseling centers, financial aid and admissions & records, the career center and student housing. These are the eligibility requirements:

- ◆ California resident or AB540/2000 status
- ◆ First generation college student (parents have not earned a four-year college degree)
- ◆ Educationally disadvantaged (do not meet the CSU admissions guidelines)
- ◆ Low-income and meet the EOP Family Income Guidelines.

Funding Source: EOP is state supported.

Staff: EOP Central Office: 6, EOP Admissions: 3, Advising Resource Center/EOP: 6*, EOP/Trio Student Support Services Program (SSSP): 2*. *=one person works in both.

University Name: **California State University San Bernadino**

City, State: San Bernadino, CA

Program Name: College Opportunity for All (COFA)

Program Type: College Access

Website: <https://www.csun.edu/csun-eop/eop-resilient-scholars-program-rsp>

Program Description: This appears to be a day of connection. It brings together K-12 award-winning master educators from Manuel A. Salinas Creative Arts Elementary School and CSUSB, providing learning, art, and celebration, including special presentations and lessons for the elementary students by CSUSB faculty, staff and student volunteers.

External Partners: Manuel A. Salinas Creative Arts Elementary School

University Name: **California State University San Marcos**

City, State: San Marcos, CA

Program Name: ACE Scholars Services

Program Type: College Access

Focus: Foster Youth

Website: <https://www.csusm.edu/ace/>

Program Description: The program supports former foster youth. The mission is “to transform the lives of foster youth through higher education”. According to their web site, CSUSM serves more former foster youth per capita than any other

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university in the nation. They also claim an 86% persistence rate, which they report compares very favorably with the national average of 50%.

History: Program was started in 2007. A memorandum of agreement (MOA) was signed in 2008 between San Diego County officials and the university. First, county entities help prepare foster youth academically. Once the foster youth enter the program, ACE provides support in obtaining a degree. Support services provided by the university and ACE program include the following:

- ◆ Personal help with college entrance forms
- ◆ Academic, career, and personal counseling
- ◆ Priority registration
- ◆ Year-round on-campus housing
- ◆ Career development and internship opportunities
- ◆ Financial assistance
- ◆ Transfer grants
- ◆ Social activities
- ◆ Personal development training
- ◆ Career assistance after graduation

Metrics: The program has resulted in almost 50 graduates since the founding year of 2007. About 60 students are currently enrolled. 100% of the applicants who meet minimum requirements are accepted into the program. CSUSM is “the only university in the US to offer guaranteed admission to former foster youth.”

Budget: 54% staff salaries, 27% working scholarships, 13% gap scholarships, 4% emergency fund, 2% enrichment activities (<https://www.csusm.edu/ace/giving/financials.html>)

Funding Source: 79% of the operating revenue comes from individual donors, 11% from grants, 9% from the state, 1% in-kind (<https://www.csusm.edu/ace/giving/financials.html>)

Staff: 4

External Partners:

1. San Diego County
2. San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency
3. Child Welfare Services Department

University Name: Cleveland State University

City, State: Cleveland, OH

Program Name: The Sullivan-Deckard and Helen Packer Scholarship Opportunity Programs & The Pratt Center

Program Type: College access

Website: <https://www.csuohio.edu/engagement/fostering-success-and-leadership-programs>

Program Description:

The Sullivan-Deckard and Helen Packer Scholarship Opportunity Program targets youth who are aging out of foster care. Professional guidance, educational support, and peer mentoring are provided to these students in their pursuit of an undergrad-

uate degree. Benefits include the following:

- ◆ Residential summer workshop to prepare for university life
- ◆ Funding for tuition, books, fees, and year-round campus housing
- ◆ Structured system of academic advising and learning support services
- ◆ On-campus employment, contingent upon Federal work study award, and access to Career Services
- ◆ Professional mentoring, peer assistants, tutoring and success coaches

The Pratt Center also targets those who have experienced foster care. The program is designed to provide engaged learning activities, and features the following:

- ◆ Participation in an intensive summer transition plan designed to prepare students for University life or participation in the fall and spring semester workshops
- ◆ A structured system of academic advising and learning support services
- ◆ Professional mentoring, peer assistants, tutoring and success coaches
- ◆ Lunch and learns (12 per academic year)

University Name: College of Staten Island

City, State: Staten Island, NY

Program Names: The Percy Ellis Sutton Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge Program (SEEK) , Accelerated Study in Associate Program (ASAP) , Collegiate Science & Technology Entry Program (CSTEP)

Program Type: College Access

Website: <https://www.csi.cuny.edu/academics-and-research/specialized-programs/opportunity-diversity-programs>

Program Description:

SEEK targets students who need enhanced academic support and financial assistance and who are accepted to a associate degree program, but not for the general baccalaureate . Benefits include the following:

- ◆ Counselors and staff
- ◆ Academic advisement
- ◆ Enhanced financial assistance
- ◆ Help with the financial aid application process
- ◆ Personalized services and academic support in the Learning Center
- ◆ Free academic and other workshops
- ◆ In-depth career building opportunities
- ◆ Computer facilities with technical assistance
- ◆ Leadership training

ASAP students agree to pursue a full-time associate degree program in approved major, on way to baccalaureate degree. Benefits include the following:

- ◆ Dedicated ASAP advisor to guide progress from entry to graduation
- ◆ Enhanced career development and academic support services
- ◆ Priority registration
- ◆ Tuition waivers for unmet tuition after financial aid awards
- ◆ Free use of MetroCard or campus parking

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- ◆ Funding towards textbooks

CSTEP targets historically underrepresented and economically disadvantaged students who pursue STEM degrees. Benefits include the following:

- ◆ Paid internship/summer research opportunity if GPA is high enough
- ◆ Stipends for work on campus or in middle or high school
- ◆ Educational workshops
- ◆ Additional scholarships based on GPA
- ◆ Tutoring from CSTEP peer-tutoring program

History: SEEK began at City College of New York (CUNY). SEEK was signed into law in 1966.

Metrics:

SEEK: about 230,000 low-income students

CSTEP: 15,533 graduates from independent, CUNY, SUNY, and two-year community colleges (1986-2010)

95,985 CSTEP students served statewide since 1986

44 programs throughout the state

About 5,700 students currently enrolled in CSTEP in the state

Funding Source: CSTEP: The Division of Academic Affairs and the New York State Department of Education.

Staff: SEEK: 19; ASAP: 16; CSTEP: 2 (as listed on web site)

University Name: Florida Atlantic University

City, State: Boca Raton, FL

Program Name: Pre-Collegiate/Youth Programs office

Program Type: College Access

Website: <http://www.fau.edu/youth/>

Program Description: The program works with FAU departments and external partners to provide educational immersion programs for non-enrolled minors in surrounding communities. Activities include the following:

- ◆ Camps
- ◆ Clinics
- ◆ Workshops
- ◆ Conferences

Goals of the program include the following:

- ◆ Collaborate with internal and external constituents on training, planning, scheduling, marketing, and evaluation of pre-collegiate programs
- ◆ Work with colleges, departments, and external to provide general guidance and support, or to arrange for programming details for youth programs by coordinating housing, meals, publicity, pre-registrations, registrations, financial management, risk management, transportation, and facilities
- ◆ Assist in the development of comprehensive marketing materials for University pre-collegiate programs, including coordination and streamlining of marketing efforts and assisting with development of internet/website interface for constituents

Staff: 2

University Name: Indiana University Northwest

City, State: Gary, IN

Program Name: Summer Reading Programs for Children and Adults (within the Center for Urban and Regional Excellence (CURE))

Program Type: School Completion

Website: <https://www.iun.edu/cure/ways-we-engage/outreach.htm>

Program Description: The program is designed and taught by the Institute of Reading Development, a nationwide leader in reading skills instruction. Its goal is to increase reading speed and learning, and love for reading.

History: 1996

University Name: Johns Hopkins University

City, State: Baltimore, MD

Program Name: Mentoring Assistance Peer Program

Program Type: School completion

Website: <https://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/center-for-prevention-of-youth-violence/resources/programs/mentoring.html>

Program Description: Each year, approximately 4,000 upper-class students mentor approximately 200 freshmen throughout their entire first year. There are organized planned events for individual mentees. In addition, mentors meet bi-monthly to organize social, academic diversity, and community service programs..

University Name: Louisiana State University Shreveport

City, State: Shreveport, LA

Program Name: Alpha Phi Alpha

Program Type: College Access

Website: <https://www.lsus.edu/student-life/student-organizations/greek-life/alpha-phi-alpha-fraternity-at-lsus->

Program Description: The program aims to develop leaders, promote brotherhood and academic excellence, while providing service and advocacy for communities. Activities include the following:

- ◆ Voter registration (“A Voteless People is a Hopeless People” – developed by the fraternity in the 1930s)
- ◆ Project ALPHA to help teenage males learn about their roles in preventing untimely pregnancies
- ◆ ALPHA Academy: program that helps prepare high school students for college
- ◆ “Go to High School, Go to College”: Counseling for youth on the importance of post-secondary education while introducing them to promising professions

University Name: Loyola University Chicago

City, State: Chicago, IL

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Program Name: Empowerment Pipeline

Program Type: College Access

Website: <https://www.luc.edu/diversity/resources/empowermentpipeline/studentleadershipopportunities/>

Program Description: This program was created and is run by students. It aims to break the school-to-prison process by connecting college students (“Advocates”) with high school youth. Advocates take on the following roles, among others:

- ◆ Identity and experience role models for high school students
- ◆ Provide opportunities for youth to explore their interests in pursuing higher education
- ◆ Organize workshops and activities for visiting students
- ◆ Build awareness of obstacles and challenges underrepresented students face accessing college
- ◆ Build awareness of barriers to retention

History:

Metrics: 30 high school students participated in the overnight program March 17-18, 2018

Staff: 6-8 Advocates are chosen each year

University Name: **Marquette University**

City, State: Milwaukee, WI

Program Name: Student Support Services

Program Type: College Access

Website: <https://www.marquette.edu/educational-opportunity-program/programs.php>

Program Description: Student Support Services (SSS). This program is open to first-generation college students and/or from low-income families. The program offers the following:

- ◆ Five-week residential experience during the summer before freshman year
- ◆ One-on-one and group academic-year tutoring
- ◆ Career and personal counseling
- ◆ Individualized financial aid counseling and financial assistance

Metrics: Assisted over 2,000 first generation college students and students from low-income families in obtaining a college education

Staff: 1969

University Name: **Medgar Evans College**

City, State: Brooklyn, NY

Program Name: Brooklyn Pipeline

Program Type: College Access

Website: ares.mec.cuny.edu/pipeline

Program Description: Students from Central Brooklyn are guided through their

K-12 experience, and helped to transition into college. Programs target students, parents, teachers and leaders.

History:

Metrics: 450 students were enrolled in Fall 2018; 2,543 students to-date have participated; 1,800 students to-date have received college credits; \$1.5 Million tuition savings 2017-2018 for parents

Staff: 3 (6/24/19)

External Partners: Buffalo Public School, HEAF, Moving Mountains, PS 5 Ron McNair, School of Professional & Community Development - SPCD

University Name: **Metropolitan Community College, Nebraska**

City, State: Omaha, NE

Program Name: Opportunity Youth Initiative

Program Type: School completion

Website: <https://www.unitedwaymidlands.org/initiative-opportunity-youth/>, and <https://www.unitedwaymidlands.org/2018/07/09/6462/>

Program Description: The program targets opportunity youth (OY). The Opportunity Youth Alliance consists of more than 40 agency partners that work to connect youth to basic need services, educational opportunities, and employment prospects. The Alliance believes that the greatest need is to effectively and efficiently connect youth to the most appropriate services, and has mapped existing services and resources that serve disconnected youth in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro area. The Alliance has developed and implemented the Opportunity Youth Hub, housed at Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, and expanded the latter’s existing work with youth aging out of foster care.

The Hub helps program providers access community resources for their young clients and provides direct navigation services to OY.

Navigation coaches assigned by the Hub support the success of OY in three ways:

- ◆ **Ensure Stability:** To help an OY achieve stability, a coach connects the youth to community resources such as housing supports, health services, clothing assistance, food access and more.
- ◆ **Re-Connect the Youth:** Once a youth has secured basic supports, the Hub coach leverages local partnerships to connect him or her to education, training and employment prospects.
- ◆ **Provide A Safety Net:** The young adult will face continued barriers while he or she develops the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed. Therefore, the Hub and the OY’s assigned coach also act as a safety net while the youth continues down the path to stability.

History: Began serving clients on June 1, 2017

Metrics: Estimated 8,000 OY living in their area. Goal is 100 OY per year. 2017: 100 served. 2018: 199 served.

Funding Source: United Way

External Partners: United Way of the Midlands Alliance Members (more than 40 agency partners, including government, non-profit, for-profit employers), <https://www.unitedwaymidlands.org/2018/07/09/6462/>

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Created with help from national Forum for Youth Investment, guidance from the Aspen Institute, and research from the Department of Education

University Name: Metropolitan State University of Denver

City, State: Denver, CO

Program Name: Denver Opportunity Youth Initiative (DOYI)

Program Type: Workforce Development

Website: <https://denverchamber.org/about-us/affiliates-doyi/>

Program Description: The program targets Opportunity Youth (OY), of which they estimate there are close to 9,000 in Denver alone. DOYI coordinates nonprofit, government and business organizations in partnering to create a pipeline for OY that includes the following:

- ◆ Securing support services like housing and affordable child care
- ◆ Education and training opportunities
- ◆ Work experience
- ◆ Job placement

Pilot programs include the following:

- ◆ GED Plus pilot program: allows students to earn college credit while they study for their GED. The program serves youth in 3 Denver schools
- ◆ Workforce navigator: provides personalized support to help opportunity youth find the next step in education or work
- ◆ Workforce intermediary: dedicated to help connect opportunity youth to the business community and post-employment support through WorkLife Partnership

Funding Source: Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce, Aspen Community Solutions, Colorado Health Foundation, Daniels Fund, The Jay & Rose Phillips Family Foundation of Colorado, Rose Community Foundation, US Chamber of Commerce Foundation

Staff: 66 (at Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce)

External Partners: Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce + 29 others

University Name: Miami Dade College

City, State: Miami, FL

Program Name: MDC-Career Connect

Program Type: Workforce Development

Website: https://news.mdc.edu/press_release/jpmorgan-chase-commits-700000-to-miami-dade-colleges-workforce-development-program-to-provide-skills-training-for-hundreds-of-miamis-youth/

Program Description: The target group are 100-150 Miami-Dade County students per year ages 16-24 who are earning college credit. The program is designed to shorten the time it takes to be job-ready. The program aims to strengthen MDC's career pathway programs in information technology, trade, and logistics in Greater Miami.

History:

Metrics: Targeting 100-150 students per year

Budget: \$700,000 over two years

Funding Source: Grant from JPMorgan Chase

University Name: New York University

City, State: New York, NY

Program Name: NYU's Opportunity Programs

Program Type: College Access

Website: <https://www.nyu.edu/about/leadership-university-administration/office-of-the-president/office-of-the-provost/enrollment-management/opportunity-programs.html>

Program Description: The Opportunity Programs (OP) include the Arthur O. Eve Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP), Collegiate Science Technology Entry Program (CSTEP), Science and Technology Entry Program (STEP), and Building Excellence in Science and Technology Program (BEST). STEP and BEST serve talented and historically underrepresented middle and high school students groups in science, technology, engineering, math (STEM careers) and licensed professions. HEOP and CSTEP serve traditionally under-served and low-income NYU students to obtain admission and receive academic and financial support. HEOP and CSTEP provide a six-week introductory non-credit academic program during the summer prior to the freshman year. OP Program services include the following:

- ◆ Academic and personal counseling
- ◆ Financial counseling
- ◆ Mentoring
- ◆ Academic workshops and seminars
- ◆ Tutoring

History: Founded 1968

Staff: 3

University Name: Oakland University

City, State: Rochester, MI

Program Name: Pre-College Programs

Program Type: College Access

Website: <https://oakland.edu/precollege/>

Program Description: The Pre-College Programs (3: Cinton River Water Festival, Experience OU, Wade H. McCree Incentive Scholarship Program) partner with middle and high schools. The program offers academic, social, career and cultural enrichment opportunities. It also employs university students as tutors, peer mentors and office assistants. The program's core elements are the following:

- ◆ Outreach
- ◆ Recruitment
- ◆ Engagement

Staff: 2

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External Partners: 13 partners within the university, 11 outside the university (includes school districts, city of Auburn Hills, Clinton River Watershed Council, Pure Oakland Water, US Department of Education)

University Name: Rutgers University – Camden, Newark

City, State: Camden, NJ

Program Name: The YE2S Center Model - Youth Employment and Education Success Centers

Program Type: Workforce Development

Website: <http://teemgateway.rutgers.edu/yescenter.html>

Program Description: Rutgers T.E.E.M. is the lead facilitator of the state's Youth Education and Employment Success (YE2S) Centers. YE2S Centers

- ♦ Provide educational programs and direct services for disconnected youth
- ♦ Bring stakeholders and community partners together around a shared vision of Building Productive Futures for the Youth of New Jersey
- ♦ Encourage community collaboration and increase the use of best practices in youth service
- ♦ Connect disconnected young people with individual and integrated delivery of counseling, training, and placement services

The Camden center is located in the middle of the Centerville neighborhood and includes key partners Rutgers University, Community Planning & Advocacy Council, city of Camden, and Camden public schools. The Newark center is a collaboration among Newark Public Schools, the city of Newark, The Nicholson Foundation, Rutgers University, and several community-based organizations.

History: Began in 2008 in New Jersey, 2012 in Camden, 2008 in Newark

Metrics: 7,500 students since 2008. Acknowledged by the White House three times since 2010. Named a Model Program for serving disconnected youth by the National Dropout Prevention Center.

External Partners: Rutgers University, Community Planning & Advocacy Council, City of Camden, Camden City Public Schools

University Name: Saint Louis University

City, State: Saint Louis, MO

Program Name: Transformative Workforce Academy

Program Type:

Website: <https://workforcecenter.slu.edu/twa.jsp>

Program Description: The program aims to make jobs and training available to disadvantaged populations, including dislocated workers, single parents, prisoners, youth, immigrants and refugees, re-entrants, individuals with disabilities, and veterans. Goals of the program include the following:

- ♦ Develop custom educational programming that meets the needs of these disadvantaged groups
- ♦ Provide job placement services. Recognize that job placement will be a significant milestone
- ♦ Support job maintenance as an important end goal as well

- ♦ Grow networking opportunities to increase immersion in the workforce ecosystem. Form symbiotic relationships with key partners and determine how to best serve unmet needs
- ♦ Develop and support outreach programming such as job fairs, corporate job internships, business ownership, organizations or “pledge companies” that commit to hiring and supporting hires and mentorship programs for supporting the individual and the hiring companies

University Name: Simon Fraser University

City, State: Burnaby, BC

Program Name: Opportunities for Indigenous Youth

Program Type: Workforce development

Website: <http://www.sfu.ca/olc/stories/topic/indigenous-employer-opportunities-in-indigenous-youth-canadian-forces>

Program Description: The program targets First Nations, Inuit and Métis Canadians for employment in the military. Summer programs are available for youth. Post secondary education at the university is also available in the form of a program titled Aboriginal Leadership Opportunities Year.

University Name: Southern Illinois University - Edwardsville

City, State: Edwardsville, IL

Program Name: TRIO Upward Bound (in the SIUE East St. Louis Center)

Program Type: School Completion

Websites: <https://www.siue.edu/research/feature-stories/2017/january-march/east-st-louis-center.shtml>, <https://www.siue.edu/upward-bound/>

Program Description: This program provides tutoring, enrichment, and college prep counseling for high school students from low-income families and/or potential first-generation college graduates, in hopes of increasing the likelihood of graduation from high school and enrollment in post-secondary education. The SIUE East St. Louis Center manages three TRIO Upward Bound Program grants. The Veterans Upward Bound Program also serves military veterans from the area, providing assessment, encouragement, and skill enhancement through mentoring, instructing and advising.

History: Founded in 1979

Metrics: 275 high school students

Funding Source: Federal government

External Partners: SIUE East St. Louis Charter High School, SIUE WE CARE Clinic, SIU Dental Clinic, Student Nurse Achievement Program, SIUE Institute for Urban Research, SIUE Small Business Development Center.

University Name: Stockton University

City, State: Galloway, NJ

Program Name: Opportunity Youth Collaborative

Program Type: Workforce Development

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Website: <https://stockton.edu/news/2018/talent-network-youth-opportunity-initiative.html>

Program Description: The program targets youth ages 18-24 who are not currently in school and meet financial restrictions. Those without a high school diploma are encouraged to apply and will be aided in earning a GED. The Retail, Hospitality and Tourism Talent Network at Stockton University and Stockton's Office of Continuing Studies coordinates this initiative to train young adults for careers in the hospitality and tourism industry.

History: Started in 2018

Metrics: Two cohorts of 25 each

Budget: \$300,000

Funding Source: Grant from the state Department of Labor and Workforce Development

External Partners: Lloyd D. Levenson Institute of Gaming, Hospitality, and Tourism Studies at Stockton; JEVS Human Services; Atlantic City Police Athletic League (AC PAL)

University Name: Temple University

City, State: Philadelphia, PA

Program Name: Center for Social Policy and Community Development (CSPCD)

Program Type: Workforce Development

Website: <https://cspcd.temple.edu/youth-programs>, <https://cspcd.temple.edu/youth-employment-project>

Program Description: The Center offers 4 programs:

The Youth Employment Project (YEP) program targets youth ages 16.5 to 21 years, and trains for employment in information technology (IT), customer service, and health information professions. Resources include career educational counseling and academic support. Students can earn an International Computer Drivers License (ICDL), which is an internationally recognized certification. Activities include the following:

- ♦ Workshops, literacy, job readiness
- ♦ Career exploration events, college/vocational school tours
- ♦ Internships
- ♦ Incentives

Achieving Independence Center targets those leaving the dependent care system. Educational support is provided to help students graduate from high school. Two staff are responsible for the following services:

- ♦ High school support and retention (group activities, help with homework, individual counseling)
- ♦ Educational and vocational training linkages and referrals
- ♦ GED linkages and referrals
- ♦ Assistance obtaining higher education (individual counseling, workshops, college tours and fairs, assistance in completing post-secondary, financial aid, and scholarship applications)
- ♦ Education and training grant assistance (individual counseling sessions to

complete the application process)

College Bound Academy is a weeklong overnight summer camp program geared to 9th graders, to expose them to college and career opportunities.

WorkReady is a summer youth work experience program for youth ages 14-18. The following 3 industry sectors are options for worksite placement:

- ♦ Culture and education: primarily at Temple's main campus or at summer camp programs such as The Advocate Center for Culture and Education, and the Beckett Life Center
- ♦ Intergenerational and Healthcare: primarily at senior centers
- ♦ Hospitality and business services: primarily in business offices in non-profits or in hospitality venues

University Name: The Ohio State University

City, State: Columbus, OH

Program Name: Young Scholars Program

Program Type: College access

Website: <https://odi.osu.edu/ysp/>

Program Description: The Young Scholars Program targets first-generation students with high financial need. The Scholars receive:

- ♦ Pre-college preparation through intensive college advising
- ♦ Group and one-on-one academic coaching and mentoring
- ♦ College planning tools and resources
- ♦ Academic, leadership, and social engagement at The Ohio State University
- ♦ Guided major and career exploration
- ♦ An opportunity to attend a world class research university with a generous scholarship

Those in good academic standing receive a robust financial aid package (meeting 100% of demonstrated financial need) consisting of federal and state grants, work-study, and the Young Scholars Award.

Pre-College Programs include the following:

- ♦ Program Coordinators providing college advising, academic monitoring, and support for scholars
- ♦ Academic Year programs including workshops, tutoring, one-on-one and group advising.
- ♦ Campus Visits and Summer programs
- ♦ Scholar ambassadors (undergrads who connect with pre-college scholars)

Undergraduate success programs include the following:

- ♦ Summer bridge experience during the transition from high school to college
- ♦ Academic Success Partners: undergrads in junior or senior year who server as peer mentors to first- and second-year students
- ♦ Success coaches: full-time professional staff
- ♦ Freshman Seminar: workshops, discussion, classroom activities to promote student identity, goal development, study and academic success strategies, and healthy relationships
- ♦ Academic monitoring and intervention

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- ◆ Tutoring/supplemental instruction
- ◆ Second year success seminars
- ◆ Alumni mentoring

History: Founded in 1988

Metrics: Over 3,000 students served since 1988 from the 9 largest public school districts in Ohio. Serves over 1,000 students statewide each year, including 700 in grades 8-12 and 350 undergrads.

University Name: **The University of Chicago**

City, State: Chicago, IL

Program Name: Chicago Center for Youth Violence Prevention

Program Type: Barrier Remediation

Website: <https://voices.uchicago.edu/ccyvp/>

Program Description: The Center is committed to studying and preventing violence in Chicago and brings together researchers, community representatives, practitioners, and policy makers. The primary goals are the following:

- ◆ To understand the nature and causes of youth violence
- ◆ To design and test prevention interventions
- ◆ To partner with the community, providing training and technical assistance to build capacity for schools and community agencies to select, implement, and evaluate evidence-based interventions.

History: Founded in 2005

Funding Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Staff: 4

APPENDIX C: COMMUNITY-BASED OPPORTUNITY YOUTH PROGRAM INFORMATION



City, State: Philadelphia, PA.

Program Name: Project WOW; E3 Power Center City; Opportunity Youth College; Opportunity Youth Academy; The Choice is Yours; Passage to Work; and IT Pre-Apprenticeship

Program Type: Workforce and College Access

Website: <https://www.jevshumanservices.org>

Program Description: These programs were created to provide disconnected youth, ages 16-24, with opportunities to find out who they are and what they want to do. The program offered by JEVS support Opportunity Youth who are interested in reengaging in the pursuit of their education and/or employment. In addition to offering programs that promote Opportunity Youth's educational attainment, JEVS also focused on four (4) career path sectors. These sectors are: Information Technology; Retail; Health Care; and Construction Trades Certifications.

History: JEVS created its initial Opportunity Youth Program in 2012

Metrics: Since 2012, JEVS has served approximately 1,200 youth/year for the years it had operated their Opportunity Youth programs.

Budget:

Funding Source: Federal Government (WIOA and TANF); Private Philanthropy; JEVS Foundation; other small grant opportunities for gap funding

Staff: 40 full-time equivalents (FTE's)

External Partners: South Hampton University; Temple University; City of Philadelphia; Drexel University; Philadelphia Youth Network; Youth Build Charter School; United Way; Communities In Schools; Philadelphia Works (Workforce Investment Board); Philadelphia Academies.



City, State: San Diego, CA.

Program Name: Connect to Careers

Program Type: Workforce and College Access

Website: <https://www.opportunityysd.org>

Program Description: This program for the 41,00 young adults ages 16-24, in San Diego County who are not working or in school. The program was designed to serve as a bridge for their summer program to assure that Opportunity Youth are being mentored, engaged in job preparation activities and a pathway to college and careers.

History: Opportunity Youth San Diego was established in 2014.

Metrics:

Budget:

Funding Source: Federal Government (WIOA); Private Philanthropy; San Diego County; City of San Diego; Annual Opportunity Youth Event Sponsorship; Other grant opportunities for gap funding

Staff:

External Partners: Opportunity San Diego Initiative Partners: Able Disabled Advocacy; Access; Biocom; Corporation for Supportive Housing; Grossmont Union High School District; Imperial County Workforce Development Board; Interfaith Community Services; International Rescue Committee; Kitchens for Good; KRA Corporation; ResCare Workforce Services; San Diego Community College District; San Diego Continuing Education; San Diego Second Chance; South Bay Community Services; YMCA of San Diego County.

Appendixes



City, State: Cleveland, Ohio

Program Name: Opportunity Youth

Program Type: Workforce and College Access

Website: <https://www.youthopportunities.org>

Program Description: This program is for completely disconnected youth who are not involved in any organized educational attainment or employment-related programs. The program serves youth 16-24 years old. The program is designed to provide youth with services and supports to prepare them for either go to college or to become employable based on the needs, desires and capacities of the youth. The YOU program staff continue to maintain contact with the youth in this program for one (1) year after the youth successfully leave the program to assure that each youth has an opportunity to completely transition into their new role and environment.

History: YOU's Opportunity Youth Program began in 2015

Metrics: Since 2015 4,500 youth have participated in the program with 1278 successfully completing the program.

Budget: Approximately \$400,000/year

Funding Source: Federal Government (WIOA and TANF); United Way of Greater Cleveland; Private Philanthropy

Staff: 40 full-time equivalents (FTE's)

External Partners: The City of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County WIOA Board; Towards Employment; United Way of Greater Cleveland