

2014 BENCHMARKING REPORT

SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

UNITED STATES

MCAULEY MINISTRIES



**LOS ANGELES
CONSERVATION
CORPS**

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Executive Summary:

BACKGROUND:

McAuley Ministries is a public foundation and the grant making arm of the Pittsburgh Mercy Health System (PMHS). The foundation continues the legacy of the Sisters of Mercy by focusing grant-making on the Pittsburgh neighborhoods traditionally served by the Sisters—the Hill District, Uptown, and West Oakland—and the sponsored ministries of the Sisters in southwestern Pennsylvania.

In 2014, the Board of McAuley Ministries on reviewing and approving a grant application for a summer youth employment program, expressed a desire to fund and support a more aspirational model. They seek a summer youth employment program that focuses on meaningful work and places an emphasis on the training and development of youth employees. The expected outcome would be that youth workers exiting the program would be skilled and empowered to take the skills they developed on-the-job and in training, into a higher-level position and/or career. DLJ & Associates (DLJA) was contracted to determine if programs fitting this aspirational model already existed in the communities served by McAuley Ministries and in the US. To accomplish this, DLJA reviewed the summer youth employment programs targeted towards ages 15 – 19 years in the identified geographic areas, and benchmarked those operations to the best programs around the nation.

This report includes information on the operations of summer youth employment programs from in the US marketplace.

METHODOLOGY:

In trying to determine which youth employment programs to benchmark in the US marketplace, assistance was sought from Ms. Mala Thakur, Executive Director of the [National Youth Employment Coalition \(NYEC\)](#). The NYEC is a national membership network whose mission focuses on improving the effectiveness of organizations that seek to help youth become productive citizens.

Ms. Thakur recommended the following organizations for the project review:

1. Arizona Call A Teen
2. CASES
3. Good Shepherd Services
4. Larkin Street Youth Services
5. Los Angeles Conservation Corps
6. Our Piece of the Pie

KEY FINDINGS:

UNITED STATES:

- After examining a number of national youth employment programs, DLJA noticed a similar theme emerging; one of commitment and engagement to accomplish goals with scarce resources. Ms. Thakur recommended the organizations listed as operating some of the best workforce development programs for youths between the ages of 15 – 19 years; programs that also seek to train and develop their targeted youth populations into becoming more productive members of society.
- The programs identified utilize different models for youth employment, but all have documented evidence of being effective in

achieving their goals. Most have been recognized nationally for the work they do.

(three months – one year), with possibilities for more extended involvement. Additionally, they devote resources and attention to staff training and development.

Program Assessment and Outcomes:

The best practice programs focus on and rigorously track and measure the performance of its youth employment programs against the achievements of the youths involved and the funders' long-term goals.

1. Nationwide, there are very few youth-serving programs that can provide evidence of effectiveness.
2. While it is great to have worthy goals, organizations need to demonstrate that they are helping young people achieve those goals.
3. They must be able to provide information on the impact of programs serving youth.
4. Strong data collection and evaluation is central to increasing funders' knowledge on what works in youth employment practices.

Job Readiness and Career Training:

The best practice programs reinforce what was observed at the local level – job readiness and career training skills are essential to sustaining employment and are a necessary component to any youth program. Most of these programs require youths to complete the training aspect first, before they can be placed in jobs and internships.

Qualified Staff and Longer Term Engagement:

The best practice programs invest resources to hire qualified staff to work with students for an extended period of time and to closely monitor the transition from training to employment. These programs stress longer-term support

The Benchmarking Project

Summary Overview

*PROGRAMS	MISSION OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM	# YOUTHS PER YEAR	EMPLOYERS	TRAINING/SKILLS PROVIDED
Arizona Call A Teen (ACYR) Phoenix, AZ	The jobs initiative serves two purposes: (1) Allows young people from low-income families a chance to earn money for work while learning important workplace skills; and (2) Provides assistance to local governments, schools, for profit and nonprofit organizations by matching them with young workers eager to take on everyday tasks or special projects.	500+ Served	Employers are local businesses and there is no monetary cost to a business to operate as a worksite; wages are paid by ACYR.	Training is focused on work readiness and occupational skills. A strong emphasis on education; HS completion, GED preparation, and postsecondary education and advanced training.
CASES New York, NY	The goal of Career Exploration is to excite young people about the idea of work and expand their perception of what careers are open to them.	90+ served	Employers are local businesses and there is no monetary cost to a business to operate as a worksite; a stipend is paid by CASES	A one month structured class that helps participants develop basic job skills and knowledge about potential career paths.
Good Shepherd Services (GSS) New York, NY	The Learning to Work initiative aims to expand students' knowledge of college and career options, and foster valuable workplace skills to help them both finish high school and prepare for future success.	3900+ Served	Employers are local businesses and there is no monetary cost to a business to operate as a worksite; a stipend is paid by GSS.	In-depth job-readiness and career exploration workshops that train students in basic professional skills.
Larkin Street Youth Services (Larkin Street) San Francisco, CA	Other than shelter, what the kids at Larkin Street need most is a safe way to support themselves. In response to this crucial need for our youth, Larkin Street offers Hire Up, a collection of comprehensive education, employment, and career services for homeless and at-risk youth.	3000+ Served	Employers are local businesses and there is no monetary cost to a business to operate as a worksite; an hourly stipend is paid by Larkin Street.	A Job Readiness Certification class, Professional Development workshops - résumé writing, mock interviews, time and money management, etc.
Los Angeles Conservation Corps (LA Corps) LA	Young Adult Corps -The Corps' hallmark youth and workforce development program offers conservation and environmental work projects to our youth. Corpsmembers gain invaluable paid work experience and job training that will lead them toward future employment.	1400+ served	LA Corps is the employer and pays a stipend.	On-the job training, vocational training,
Our Piece of the Pie (OPP) Hartford, CT	The focus of our Workforce Development Services & Vocational Training is to help youth identify their career goals, and attain the employment skills needed to make their goals a reality.	600 + Served (avg.)	Employers are local businesses and there is no monetary cost to a business to operate as a worksite; a stipend is paid by OPP.	Career Competency Development Training - Interpersonal Communication, Problem Solving & Decision Making, Customer Service, etc.

****A synopsis of each program can be found in Appendix B***

Key Findings



DLJA's main findings are:

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES:

The best practice programs focus on and rigorously track and measure the performance of its youth employment programs against the achievements of the youths involved and the funders' long-term goals. Nationwide, there are very few youth-serving programs that can provide evidence of effectiveness. While it is great to have worthy goals, organizations need to demonstrate that they are helping young people achieve those goals. They must be able to provide information on the impact of programs serving youth. Strong data collection and evaluation is central to increasing a funders' knowledge on what works in youth employment practices. Examples of assessment tools that emerged from our best practice programs:

- Employers are asked to keep track of the youth's time by completing bi-weekly time sheets, evaluate their progress (i.e., punctuality, hygiene, getting along well with others, etc.), and maintain contact with the career advisor to address needs or concerns.
- Our Piece of the Pie (OPP) rigorously tracks and measures its performance by their youth's achievements and progress towards the long term and intermediate achievements that mark a successful transition to adulthood. OPP tracks demographics, efforts, process, and outcome data. OPP analyzes data and information by program, and youth participants in each service area which allows for elaborate and detailed orient reporting. Since May 1, 2006, OPP has been using the Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) software developed by Social Solutions to manage this impact.
- LA Conservation Corps tracks their participants after they have exited the program. The corpsmembers are tracked by case managers for up to 12 months to ensure their success with full-time employment; and, if applicable, their educational endeavors. Case managers call and visit corpsmembers at work to check on their progress and to help them resolve any problems that may arise after they secure employment. During the visits, case managers provide additional job placement and employment retention services, as needed.

JOB READINESS AND CAREER TRAINING:

The best practice programs reinforce what was observed at the local level – job readiness and career training skills are essential to sustaining employment and are a necessary component to any youth program. Most of these programs require youths to complete the training aspect first, before they can be placed in jobs and internships. Examples of job readiness and career training that emerged from the best practice snapshot:

- Support from a career advisor to address challenges that may prevent youth from completing a post-secondary program, access to educational resources, and guidance in life and career decision-making. A career advisor will also work closely with youth to facilitate the transition between training and employment.
- Career Competency Development Training: – 90 hour course led by a workforce development specialist (WDS). This leads to a work readiness credential.
- Students placed in internships receive in-depth job-readiness and career exploration workshops that train them in basic professional skills. After students have been matched with an internship site and begin work, they take part in weekly group seminars to discuss any work related issues, progress, and learning. The seminars are facilitated by the summer youth program staff or the worksite staff.

QUALIFIED STAFF AND LONGER TERM ENGAGEMENT:

The best practice programs invest resources to hire qualified staff to work with students for an extended period of time and to closely monitor the transition from training to employment. These programs stress longer-term support (three months – one year), with possibilities for more extended involvement. In addition, they devote resources and attention to staff training and development. Examples of investment in qualified staff that emerged from the best practice snapshot:

- The average relationship between a youth and OPP staff members spans 4-and-a-half years. These adults, called **Youth Development Specialists (YDS)**, serve as a mentor and coach, building a lasting, personal relationship that spans the entire time that a young person is enrolled at OPP.
- A Career Advisor will also work closely with youth to facilitate the transition between training and employment.

- Youth typically participate for at least one year, with a coordinated set of follow-up activities for at least 12 months following program completion.

Conclusions:

The local and national benchmarking reinforces the fact that there is no one set model for an effective youth employment program. The analysis indicates that around the US, summer youth employment programs are operated by diverse organizations, focused on different things (e.g. construction, art, conservation), and employ different approaches. What is common among the local and national organizations is a commitment and focus on the engagement and development of youth workers.

Summer employment programs and training for disadvantaged youths is drawing local, as well as, national attention as a strategy to break the cycle of poverty. It is essential that funders, local governments and other community organizations interested in summer youth employment activities take the lead in building partnerships that can develop and build the capacity and effectiveness of local and national summer youth employment and training programs.

APPENDIX A

Synopsis of Youth Employment Programs: United States

PROGRAMS	PROGRAM DESIGN	PROGRAM CONTENT	PROGRAM ASSESSMENT	OVERALL
<p>ARIZONA CALL A TEEN YOUTH RESOURCES (ACYR) Phoenix, Arizona</p> <p>ACYR's mission is to transform lives, build futures, and strengthen communities through developing our greatest resource... Youth.</p> <p>We support this mission by providing education and workforce development programs of high quality and accountability, and which are firmly grounded in youth development practices and principles.</p>	<p>ACYR assists low income youth ages 14-24 with education and employment goals. We are contracted with both the Maricopa County and City of Phoenix Workforce Connections to prepare these young adults with the skills to gain employment.</p> <p>Targeted youths are economically disadvantaged and demonstrate one or more specific barriers to employment and/or higher education e.g. involvement in the juvenile system, pregnant or parenting, homelessness, educationally disadvantaged, etc.</p> <p>Career advisors provide assistance with education and career planning that includes completing work readiness training and a paid work experience.</p> <p>The training assists youths by helping them explore career options and to determine what field is right for them before they attend school or advanced training. ACYR works with employers throughout the valley to offer real world work experiences.</p> <p>The jobs initiative serves two purposes:</p> <p>1) Allow young people from low-income families a chance to earn money for work while learning important workplace skills; and</p> <p>2) Provide assistance to local governments, schools, for profit and nonprofit organizations by matching them with young workers eager to take on everyday tasks or special projects.</p>	<p>Jobs Program The jobs component emphasizes competency attainment in three employability skills areas: Pre-Employment/Work Maturity, Basic Education, and Job Specific Skills. This component also includes a strong case management approach to service provision.</p> <p>There is no monetary cost to the business or organization if they agree to become a worksite; wages are paid by ACYR for up to 200 hours and they are covered under ACYR's worker's comp and general liability insurance. Businesses can also take advantage of the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), a Federal tax credit available to employers for hiring individuals from certain target groups (youths) who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment.</p> <p>Career Pathways Programs The Career Pathway component is comprised of three interconnected elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-term (10-20 weeks) training in a high-demand area, provided by a local community college (e.g. Medical assistant, nursing, caregivers, pharmacy, entrepreneurs). • Hands-on experience in the targeted career path, where youth are placed with industry employers for practical application of the skills learned in the classroom. Internships are developed with the intent of full-time job placement following successful completion of training. • Support from a Career Advisor to address challenges that may prevent youth from completing post-secondary programs, access to education resources, and guidance in life and career decision-making. A Career Advisor will also work closely with youth to facilitate the transition between training and employment. 	<p>Primary outcomes include attainment of specific skill sets and credentials, Job placement, and entry into/completion of postsecondary training, with a major emphasis on long-term employment.</p> <p>For the jobs program, employers are asked to keep track of the youth's time by completing bi-weekly time sheets, evaluate their progress (i.e., punctuality, hygiene, getting along well with others, etc.), and maintain contact with the Career Advisor to address needs or concerns. Keep in mind that many of these young workers have little to no work experience and the program is designed to allow them to learn how to be a productive, contributing employee. Employers may choose to offer as little as one or multiple positions.</p>	<p>How many served?- ACYR Youth Programs annually provide workforce development activities and services to just over 500 youth.</p> <p>Youth typically participate for at least one year, with a coordinated set of follow-up activities for at least 12 months following program completion. Training is focused on work readiness and occupational skills and there's a strong emphasis on education: HS completion, GED preparation, and postsecondary education/advanced training.</p> <p>Employers/Jobs Employers are local businesses who partner with ACYR. Jobs: Medical Assistant, Nursing Assistants, Pharmacy Technician, Conservation projects.</p> <p>External Training Providers for Career Pathways Program Local Community Colleges who Provide Training in the Career Pathways Program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estrella Mountain Community College/SouthWest Skill Center (Pharmacy Technician, Medical Assistant, Nursing Assistant) • Phoenix College/Phoenix College Downtown (Pharmacy Technician, Conservation and Resource Management Field School Program) • GateWay Community College (A+ Certification) • Bureau of Land Management/Student Conservation Association <p>ACYR, has an established charter school at their downtown location.</p>

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<p>CASES (The Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services) New York, NY</p> <p>The mission of CASES is to increase public safety through innovative services that reduce crime and incarceration, improve behavioral health, promote recovery and rehabilitation, and create opportunities for success in the community.</p> <p>CASES' youth programs aim to help New York City's justice-involved young people, ranging in age from 13-20, to lead productive, crime-free lives. Their approach is distinguished by individualized case management, evidence-based programming, and group activities that build positive peer associations.</p>	<p>The Court Employment Project (CEP) is an alternative-to-incarceration program for youth ages 16-19 facing felony charges.</p> <p>The program combines a strengths-based, youth development focus with accountability to the courts. The youth development model emphasizes youths' skills and abilities in helping them set high expectations for their own educational, vocational and social development.</p> <p>Their approach is distinguished by individualized case management, evidence-based programming, and group activities that build positive peer associations.</p> <p>CASES court staff screen defendants in Supreme Court, advocate for participation in the program with judges and prosecutors, and report to the courts on participant progress and compliance.</p> <p>Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education - school placement and liaison services, • Employment - Career Exploration • Clinical services - on-site substance abuse and mental health counseling. • Extra-curricular activities - arts classes, sports teams, excursions and cultural events. • Legal education seminars and legal services. <p>Employment Goal-Setting: Participants work with a coordinator to research fields of interest, take a personal inventory of strengths and challenges, learn about the educational and training requirements necessary to meet their career goals, and plan concrete steps that will help them achieve their desired careers.</p>	<p>Career Exploration: Career Exploration adapts the school-to-work model and takes a holistic approach to career preparation for court-involved youth. This model fills a gap in employment services for youth who often miss out on school-based employment programs because of disruptions in their education.</p> <p>The goal of Career Exploration is to excite young people about the idea of work and expand their perception of what careers are open to them.</p> <p>Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment readiness training - a month-long structured class that helps participants develop basic job skills and knowledge about potential career paths. Participants visit job sites, host guest speakers from a variety of industries, tour local colleges, and engage in other activities aimed at broadening their knowledge of educational and vocational options. • Internship placements - 10 week placements at local businesses. While CASES pays 100% of participant stipends, internship providers offer close supervision, mentorship and challenging work assignments. • Academic support - referrals to on-site classes, education-focused training activities to support the college application process, and college field trips • Alumni services - ongoing support and advice to graduates through monthly networking events in the areas of employment, education, and legal counseling. 	<p>Career Exploration uses the following to assess success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of participants who earn their high school or GED diploma, or continue to pursue their education. • Number of participants who found employment in the year following program completion. • Number of participants who were not convicted of a felony within 2 years of graduation. 	<p>How many served? Just over 90 participants a year.</p> <p>Employers/Jobs: CASES works with area businesses, non-profits and government agencies interested in hosting interns and offering unsubsidized employment to participants from our Career Exploration program.</p> <p>Employers in dozens of fields, including art, law, education, retail, politics, journalism, construction and technology are able to give significant exposure to participants' fields of interest. While CASES pays 100% of participant stipends, internship providers offer close supervision, mentorship and challenging work assignments.</p> <p>Participants are connected to internships that complement their interests and provide them with first-hand knowledge of potential career paths. An active alumni network also ensures that program graduates continue to build skills and make contacts that will support their personal and professional development.</p> <p>The staff conducts regular visits to job sites to lend support to their clients and their employers.</p>

PROGRAMS	PROGRAM DESIGN	PROGRAM CONTENT	PROGRAM ASSESSMENT	OVERALL
<p>GOOD SHEPHERD SERVICES New York, NY</p> <p>Good Shepherd Services is a leading youth development, education and family service agency with more than 80 programs that serve over 26,000 children, youth and families each year. Focusing on under resourced communities in Brooklyn and the Bronx, they provide a broad array of individual, family and school-based services that give young people and families the opportunity to take ownership of their future, making a difference today and for the next generation.</p>	<p>The Learning to Work (LTW) program is a funded initiative of the New York City Department of Education in partnership with Good Shepherd Services. It places high school students, between the ages of 16 and 21, from Good Shepherd's transfer high school and GED programs in high quality internships in the public, private, and non-profit sectors.</p> <p>It falls under Good Shepherd's Multiple Pathways to Graduation Program.</p> <p>Good Shepherd helps youth who participate in the LTW program to build skills and gain exposure to career paths in a safe learning environment. They offer comprehensive job-readiness workshops covering such topics as appropriate work behavior, interviewing skills, money management, and resume creation. The skills and interests of each student are assessed to determine potential work areas. They also reach out to local businesses to help create opportunities for the young people, provide the stipends for the internships, and ongoing supervision and support during the placement.</p> <p>An LTW Coordinator works to identify paid internships related to student interests, matches students with internship sites, and provides support to both the students and the employers to ensure that the internship experience is a success.</p>	<p>Participation Requirements: to participate in the LTW program, a student must be in good academic standing, maintain good attendance at school, be able to make a 3 month commitment to an employer, and be available to work between 5 and 15 hours per week.</p> <p>Training: All students who are placed in internships receive in-depth job-readiness and career exploration workshops that train them in basic professional skills. After students have been matched with an internship site and begin work, they take part in a weekly group seminar with our Internship Coordinators to discuss any work related issues, progress, and learning.</p> <p>There is no financial cost to the businesses or organizations where students are placed. Good Shepherd Services pays each student a stipend for their internship hours. In addition, the staff provides ongoing supervision and regularly follows up with participants' workplace supervisors to check on their progress, offer advice, and help resolve any issues that may arise.</p> <p>As some of the students attend class during the day while others attend in the evening, the pool of LTW interns are available to work a variety of shifts – days, afternoons, evenings, and weekends – depending on the worksite's needs.</p> <p>All of the students involved in this initiative are highly motivated to work and learn. Because of various challenging life situations, most of them have had far less exposure to careers and the working world than other young people. By partnering with Good Shepard in the Learning to Work program, businesses help young people maximize their potential for independent, successful adulthood.</p>	<p>The Learning to Work (LTW) component of the Multiple Pathways to Success program is assessed based on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the graduation rates of students who participate; 2. Their level of engagement in school after the program. <p>Rationale: LTW contributes to the program's success, especially with the students at greatest risk for failure. A 2010 evaluation by Metis Associates shows that high school students who were farthest behind (11 or fewer credits after three years in high school) increased by more than 3.5 times their chances of graduating if they attended a LTW program, as opposed to a traditional high school. LTW students reported high levels of engagement and satisfaction far greater than in their previous schools. Students with internships graduate at higher rates and are more engaged (YES survey 2011).</p> <p>Research shows that teen employment contributes to positive outcomes for youth and their families. Teens, who work in high school, especially those from low-income families, are less likely to drop out of high school, become teen parents, or engage in criminal behavior (Shierholz 2012; Sum 2012).</p>	<p>How many served? The Multiple Pathways Program serves just over 3,990 students in the Bronx, Manhattan, and Brooklyn.</p> <p>Employers/Jobs: Students are placed at local businesses, government and non-profit agencies such as administrative offices, senior centers, cultural institutions, child care centers and hospitals.</p> <p>Positions they hold: Administrative Assistant, Customer Service, Data entry, File Clerk, Office Aide, receptionist, Nursing assistant, Medical Records, Patient escort, Veterinarian Technician assistant, and many more.</p>

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<p>LARKIN STREET YOUTH SERVICES San Francisco, CA</p> <p>The mission of Larkin Street Youth Services is to create a continuum of services that inspires youth to move beyond the street. They will nurture potential, promote dignity, and support bold steps by all.</p>	<p>Larkin Street provides homeless and at-risk youth in San Francisco between the ages of 12 and 24 with the help they need to rebuild their lives. Larkin Street gives them a place where they can feel safe; rebuild their sense of self-respect, trust, and hope; learn school, life and job skills; and find the confidence to build a future.</p> <p>With 25 comprehensive youth service programs located throughout San Francisco in over 14 sites, Larkin Street Youth Services is now an internationally recognized model, successfully integrating housing, education, employment and health services to get homeless and at-risk kids off the streets.</p> <p>HIRE UP: EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AT LARKIN STREET Larkin Street's comprehensive education and employment services, Hire Up, provides young people with the opportunities, resources, and guidance they need to succeed. From schooling to immediate work to soft skills training to career-track experience, Larkin Street Youth Services works with each youth to ensure that they are getting the education and developing the employment skills they need to successfully create an independent and successful life off the street.</p> <p>Larkin Street's Hire Up program includes YouthForce, Job Readiness Class, Institute for Hire Learning, and Wire Up.</p>	<p>YouthForce is a program for youth able to do entry-level work but who have not yet completed education or training for a specific career path. YouthForce youth work in supervised day labor crews, cleaning facilities of local businesses, washing graffiti off walls, moving furniture, stuffing envelopes, and completing other employment tasks for an hourly stipend. Youth learn important skills like following directions, teamwork, and accountability, and it helps build their work ethic.</p> <p>Job Readiness Class (JRC) helps street kids explore career possibilities. Youth receive counseling and help to create individual plans for economic stability. The JRC curriculum includes résumé writing, mock interviews, and other pre-employment skills required for a successful job search. Staff also invite guest speakers to help expand the kids' perspective about what they can do with their lives.</p> <p>After completing the Job Readiness certification Class, youth have the option to apply to Hire Up's Institute for Hire Learning (IHL), a highly competitive program offering paid internships with local businesses and organizations. IHL also helps youth access and afford formal vocational training, enabling them to work themselves into a higher income bracket. IHL participants may pursue internships in an impressive array of career areas, including culinary arts, veterinary care, and multimedia.</p> <p>Wire Up is an intensive 15-hour computer and technology skills course offered to youth in Larkin Street's on-site computer lab. The Wire Up curriculum, which includes vocational training in basic computer applications and website design, is linked specifically to the skills that businesses in the technology sector say they need most. Wire Up classes run in conjunction with JRC to offer training for an advanced set of technical skills.</p>	<p>Programs are assessed by collecting data on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of youths placed in jobs each year where they make a living wage. • Number of youths who gain marketable computer and technology skills. • Demographics • Services Utilized • Program Exit information <p>Larkin Street uses the data collected to constantly reflect on and analyze how the programs are doing, where they have the greatest impact, how to improve service delivery, and what needs done to respond to the evolving needs of homeless and runaway youth. In addition, program data is used to inform peers and policymakers on characteristics, presenting issues, and service needs of runaway and homeless youth.</p>	<p>How many served? Each year, Larkin Street provides education and employment services to just over 3,460 youths.</p> <p>Employers/Jobs: IHL Internships - Employers are local businesses who partner with Larkin Street. E.g. Goodwill Industries, Low Income Investment Fund, and Pacific New Service.</p> <p>Jobs: IHL arranges internships for youth with local for-profit and non-profit businesses in the areas of, customer service; data entry; gardening; culinary arts; animal care; multimedia arts; writing and editing; pier support services; and much more.</p> <p>Training: Throughout each IHL internship, participants gain extra support by attending professional development workshops on topics such as time and money management, self-care and crisis management. These workshops focus on teaching advanced skills to help youth succeed in their internship and beyond, as they head toward permanent employment. One-on-one counseling with Larkin Street staff offers a safe place for youth to discuss successes and struggles both with the internship and with life.</p>

PROGRAMS	PROGRAM DESIGN	PROGRAM CONTENT	PROGRAM ASSESSMENT	OVERALL
<p>LOS ANGELES CONSERVATION CORPS Los Angeles, CA</p> <p>The LA Conservation Corps is the nation's largest urban corps and LA's pre-eminent youth development organization. They exist because they are concerned that 1 in 5 of LA's young adults is both out of work and out of school and sees no path out of poverty.</p>	<p>LA Conservation Corps assists 14 – 24 year-old urban youths.</p> <p>The programs prepare these young people with life skills and work experience by employing them in conservation projects such as building parks, planting trees, refurbishing hiking trails, building community gardens, removing graffiti, recycling and educating the community in how to protect the ocean and the LA River.</p> <p>The program also provides youth with a high school education in the affiliated charter school. The ultimate goal is to prepare LA's at-risk youth for post-secondary education, living wage jobs and to inspire them to change themselves, their communities and the world.</p>	<p>Conservation Programs: Young Adult Corps -The Corps' hallmark youth and workforce development program offers conservation and environmental work projects to youth. Corps members gain invaluable paid work experience and job training that will lead them toward future employment.</p> <p>Support and Transition Services: The Support & Transition Services Department includes a dedicated team of case managers and support staff who provide the critically-needed counseling and assistance to help youth participants address the personal challenges they face and remain enrolled in our work and education programs.</p> <p>Case managers help corps members focus on their individualized service plans which include their personal, educational and occupational goals, and map out the practical steps they need to take in order to achieve them. Corpsmembers receive information regarding other post-secondary education institutions and assistance as needed with applications and financial assistance forms.</p> <p>One-on-One Mentoring - Current project includes the Corps Member Mentoring Program during which Council members are paired up with and mentored by Corps administrative and program staff. Corps members learn how to interact with adult figures and how to serve as mentors for their peers.</p>	<p>Once our corps members have exited the program, they are tracked by case managers for up to 12 months to ensure their success with full-time employment and, if applicable, their educational endeavors. Case managers call and visit corps members at work to check on their progress and to help them resolve any problems that may arise after they secure employment; at this time, the Corps will provide additional job placement and employment retention services as needed.</p> <p>Programs are assessed by collecting the following numbers:</p> <p>Conservation Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of youths provided with summer employment opportunity and work experience • # of conservation activities engaged in <p>Support and Transition Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of Corps members exited to jobs • # enrolled in college at exit • # earned vocational training certificates • # received Workforce Investment Act-funded services • # received Workforce Readiness Training certificate • # completed Financial Literacy Training • # provided with life skills/personal development training • # received case management services • # participated in Work Readiness classes 	<p>How many served? Annually, LA Conservation Corps hires and trains just over 1400 middle and high school students, and unemployed, out-of-school young adults.</p> <p>Work and Training Programs: Work and training programs offered through their Young Adults Corps: Recycling Across Los Angeles, Community Garden Construction and Management, Urban Forestry Tree Planting Programs, Community Enhancement Team, Urban Park Construction/Landscaping/Irrigation, Vocational Training Program - Brownfields Job Training Program, Vocational Training Program - Youthbuild</p> <p>Clean & Green Program - Over 1,000 middle- and high school- aged youth join the Clean & Green program each year. Young corps members spend weekends and school vacations gaining invaluable job skills</p> <p>SEA Lab - Located in Redondo Beach, SEA Lab is a hands-on science facility that provides marine education programs to more than 20,000 youth each year. Other SEA Lab activities include the Traveling Tidepool Mobile Exhibit, beach and coastal clean-ups, summer camps, bluff restoration, and private parties and special events</p> <p>Partnership with a charter school.</p>

PROGRAM	PROGRAM DESIGN	PROGRAM CONTENT	PROGRAM ASSESSMENT	OVERALL
<p>OUR PIECE OF THE PIE (OPP) <i>Hartford, CT</i></p> <p>Mission: Helping urban youth become economically independent adults.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support youth to graduate from a 2 – 4 year college and/or vocational certification. • Support youth with obtaining gainful fulltime employment. 	<p>Helps 14 to 24 year-old urban youth become successful, economically independent adults.</p> <p>Pathway to Success is OPP's main program. It offers a unique combination of academic, workforce and youth development services in three settings: high schools, community colleges, and the urban communities they serve.</p> <p>The average relationship between a youth and OPP staff members spans 4-and-a-half years.</p> <p>When a young person comes through OPP's doors, he or she is immediately connected with a trained, caring and proactive adult staff member who serves as a mentor and coach, building a lasting, personal relationship that spans the entire time that young person is enrolled at OPP. These adults, called Youth Development Specialists (YDS), help the youth find the spark that ignites their desire to improve their lives. They help young people navigate past barriers, and toward high school graduation, a college degree or vocational certification, and sustained post-education employment -- the keys to economic independence.</p> <p>The YDS assesses a participant's status and needs, and work with each youth to determine an individualized service plan – a pathway to a long-term educational and/or employment outcome.</p> <p>OPP operates in the Community Colleges, and High Schools.</p>	<p>Our Pathways to Success Model provides the following workforce development services, youth work with a Youth Employment Specialist (YES):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Career Competency Development Training: – 90 hour course led by a workforce development specialist (WDS). This leads to a work readiness credential. Competencies include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interpersonal Communication, Problem Solving & Decision Making, Customer Service, Good work habits, Job Search Methods, Money management techniques, Basic Skills & Personal Qualities, Computer Literacy, Resume, Portfolio and application development, interviewing skills - Internships - Youth engage in a 6-8 week internship where new workplace skills are fostered within a supportive environment. Youth receive stipends based on their attendance and participation. - Job Placement -Youth learn job search techniques, and are given job leads and interview opportunities. - Retention Services - Youth maintain relationship with a YES for up to a year to ensure workplace transition and leverage a sense of self sufficiency and independence - Vocational Trainings - Youth earn nationally recognized certifications which make them more marketable to employers. E.g. Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) Certification, National Professional Certification in Customer Service & Retail. 	<p>OPP rigorously tracks and measures its performance by the youth's achievements and progress towards the long term and intermediate achievements that mark a successful transition to adulthood.</p> <p>Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Readiness Credential attainment • Credential attainment - Graduation rates from high school • Placement, retention and credential attainment in post-secondary education - Associates, Bachelor's or vocational programs upon graduation • Graduation rates from the above programs • Placement in unsubsidized employment • Retention in unsubsidized employment - how long employed youths retain employment. E.g.:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2013 76% of our employed youth retain employment for 12 months or more ○ 2012 - 70% ○ 2011 - 73% average <p>Since May 1, 2006, OPP has been using the Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) software developed by Social Solutions to manage this impact.</p> <p>OPP tracks demographics, efforts, process, and outcome data. OPP analyzes data and information by program, and youth participants in each service area which allows for elaborate and detailed orient reporting.</p>	<p>How many served? OPP served an average of 622 youths a year from 2008 – 2011 (2, 486 in total); 853 in 2012, and 840 youths in 2013.</p> <p>Employers/Jobs: The OPP Workforce Development Team collaborates with employers throughout the Greater Hartford area to secure job shadowing, internship, and employment opportunities. Sample job sites: Aaton's Aetna BKM Burlington Coat Factory (East Hartford) PCC Technology Shop Rite of Manchester TJ Maxx Holiday Inn (East Hartford)</p> <p>Jobs: Administrative Assistant, Customer Service, Data entry, File Clerk, Office Aide etc. Administration, customer service and support services roles.</p> <p>Established a charter school (The Learning Academy) in 2012. Long term partnership with Hartford Public Schools to run Opportunity High School (first class graduated in 2011).</p>

APPENDIX B

Quality Standards for Youth Programs

Quality Standards for Youth Programs

The standards below are excerpted from the National Youth Employment Coalition's (NYEC) [PEPNet Guide to Quality Standards for Youth Programs](#). A research- and practice-based guide to improving the quality of programs linking youth to employment and education for a successful transition to adulthood.

[FOR MORE DETAILS ON THE STANDARDS, BUY THE PEPNET GUIDE TO QUALITY STANDARDS FOR YOUTH PROGRAMS](#)

PEPNet Quality Standards: Category 1 - Management for Quality

Management for Quality addresses standards for program management: the foundation for program direction, systems and operations.

Quality management of a youth program is not that different from quality management of a business. The standards in this category encourage program operators to apply practices usually associated with the private sector -- planning, review, analysis, accountability and quality assurance -- to their youth program.

1.1 Mission

- 1.1.1 The program has a written mission statement that accurately reflects the initiative's purpose as it relates to the needs of target youth and the community.
- 1.1.2 Staff, youth participants and other stakeholders can easily articulate the purpose of the program.
- 1.1.3 All aspects of the program form a coherent strategy for supporting and accomplishing the mission.
- 1.1.4 The allocation of the budget and other resources supports the mission.
- 1.1.5 Staff, youth and other appropriate stakeholders revisit the mission every three to five years to ensure its continued relevance.

1.2 Leadership

- 1.2.1 The program creates a management structure that is appropriate to its purpose and needs.
- 1.2.2 The program ensures that roles and responsibilities of senior staff and any responsible boards are clearly defined.
- 1.2.3 The program consistently evaluates the performance of its leadership, including senior staff and board and seeks ways to improve leadership effectiveness.
- 1.2.4 The program hires senior staff with the experiences and credentials needed to achieve the program's mission.
- 1.2.5 The program seeks to have board membership reflect a diversity of backgrounds and skills relevant to achieving the program's mission.
- 1.2.6 The program encourages members of its responsible board to actively participate in organizational activities, to support both the initiative and its youth participants.
- 1.2.7 Program leaders inspire and motivate staff to contribute, learn and innovate.
- 1.2.8 The program implements an effective internal system of two-way communication and feedback between leadership and staff.
- 1.2.9 Program leaders take responsibility for succession planning, that is, planning for turnover of leadership over time.

1.3 Staff

- 1.3.1 The program ensures that position descriptions and qualifications for staff positions are clearly defined and reflect competencies (knowledge, skills and abilities) needed to perform each position effectively.
- 1.3.2 The program invests in staff development as part of a management strategy to build staff capabilities, reduce staff turnover and achieve program goals.
- 1.3.3 The program involves staff in setting and regularly assessing staff performance goals.
- 1.3.4 The program maintains a safe workplace climate that emphasizes respect and teamwork.
- 1.3.5 The program implements personnel policies and practices that reward high performance.
- 1.3.6 The program provides opportunities for staff advancement.
- 1.3.7 The program intentionally seeks to hire staff of diverse backgrounds relevant to supporting the program's mission, including individuals with backgrounds that reflect those of youth participants.

1.4 Financial Management

- 1.4.1 The program operates on an annual budget projecting income and expenditures and regularly monitors its performance against the budget.
- 1.4.2 The program follows generally accepted accounting procedures, including internal financial controls and maintenance of records.
- 1.4.3 The program considers cost-effectiveness when designing and reviewing services.
- 1.4.4 The program or parent organization has adequate amounts and types of insurance for all aspects of its operations.
- 1.4.5 The program or parent organization obtains an annual audit or independent financial examination based on the accounting requirements to which it is subject.

1.5 Performance Accountability

- 1.5.1 The program establishes strategic organizational goals and creates action plans for how it will achieve its goals.
- 1.5.2 The program engages members of any responsible advisory or governing board, staff, youth and other appropriate stakeholders in goal setting, planning and evaluation.
- 1.5.3 The program defines how the program operates and why.
- 1.5.4 The program sets goals and measurable objectives for organizational and program performance.
- 1.5.5 The program compares its organizational and programmatic performance to relevant comparative data, i.e., benchmarks, where available.
- 1.5.6 The program solicits external evaluations when feasible.
- 1.5.7 The program communicates information internally and externally about the results of its activities.

1.6 Information Management

- 1.6.1 The program has a user-friendly and effective system for collecting and sharing data on individual youth and program activities.
- 1.6.2 The program collects data that is relevant to documenting progress and measuring performance outcomes.
- 1.6.3 Staff can easily and accurately describe who the program serves, the kinds of activities and services each youth is receiving and what these services accomplish.
- 1.6.4 The program implements procedures to collect data on youth progress for at least one year during youth transition from full program participation to independent engagement in positive activities.
- 1.6.5 The program collects, uses and reports organizational performance data.

1.7 Continuous Improvement

- 1.7.1 The program bases improvement efforts on facts, including performance data and feedback from staff, youth and other stakeholders.
- 1.7.2 The program executes regular cycles of planning, implementation and evaluation.
- 1.7.3 The program shares stakeholder feedback, performance data and information about resulting decisions throughout the organization.

1.8 Sustainability

- 1.8.1 The program has both long- and short-term funding plans to support the mission and goals of the program.
- 1.8.2 The program seeks to have multiple sources of financial and in-kind support.
- 1.8.3 The program has sufficient resources, including staff, equipment and supplies, to meet its goals and objectives.
- 1.8.4 The program builds a broad base of community support.
- 1.8.5 The program takes advantage of new opportunities and develops effective responses to potential challenges.
- 1.8.6 The program is able to adapt to meet shifting needs of the community while remaining true to its mission.

PEPNet Quality Standards: Category 2 - Programmatic Approach

Programmatic Approach addresses standards for program design: how the program looks, how the young person experiences the program, how the pieces work together.

The first category of standards dealt with the program's mission and goals and various structures or systems to help manage operations. Now a program needs to consider its design: Who will it serve? What are their needs? How does it address or plan to address these needs?

Whether setting up a new program, assessing an existing program, or making funding decisions, it is important to think about the target participants -- about how they learn, about what motivates them; about how the program wants to provide services and about agencies and organizations it might be beneficial to have as partners.

2.1 Target Youth

- 2.1.1 The program targets, recruits and enrolls young people who would benefit from its services and activities.
- 2.1.2 The program develops referral linkages with other organizations and agencies connected to its target youth.
- 2.1.3 The program ensures frequency and length of participation are sufficient for targeted youth to achieve performance goals.
- 2.1.4 The program designs activities appropriate to the ages and developmental stages of the participants.

2.2 Environment and Climate

- 2.2.1 The program implements policies and procedures to ensure the physical and emotional safety of participating youth.

- 2.2.2 The program maintains an environment, in which youth feel comfortable, cared for, valued and challenged to reach their potential.
- 2.2.3 The program sets and promotes standards of behavior that include clear, consistent and fair rules, limits, expectations and consequences for misconduct.
- 2.2.4 The program enforces standards of behavior consistently.
- 2.2.5 The physical space, programs and services allow youth with and without disabilities to participate and benefit fully.
- 2.2.6 The program identifies and counteracts any instances of racism and discrimination of any type that may occur within its own organization.

2.3 Instructional Approach

- 2.3.1 The program engages youth as active participants in the learning process throughout program activities.
- 2.3.2 The program incorporates content that is personally relevant to participating youth.
- 2.3.3 The program provides opportunities for youth to engage in self-assessment and reflection on their learning.
- 2.3.4 The program is responsive to diverse styles and rates of learning.
- 2.3.5 The program provides youth with opportunities to explore, experiment and test their own ideas.
- 2.3.6 The program uses assessment tools to identify individual learning needs and measure progress.

2.4 Collaboration

- 2.4.1 The program develops partnerships that expand offerings and fulfill program and youth needs.
- 2.4.2 The program continually seeks potential resources and partners.

2.5 Individual Planning and Guidance

- 2.5.1 The program conducts a comprehensive, objective assessment of factors relevant to academic and career goal-setting and service planning for each young person.
- 2.5.2 Staff and youth use assessment data to set appropriate academic and career goals and create an individual written plan for program participation.
- 2.5.3 The program has a system by which an adult or team of adults monitors and manages each youth's individual plan and progress.
- 2.5.4 Youth and staff periodically reflect on progress and revise the plan as needed.
- 2.5.5 The program works with other systems with which its participants are involved, e.g., schools, foster care, juvenile justice, to streamline and coordinate service planning and delivery and avoid duplication.

2.6 Wrap-Around Support

- 2.6.1 The program helps youth identify their personal assets and needs and develop a strategy for support services and asset building.
- 2.6.2 The program connects youth to appropriate support services, activities and opportunities at the program and/or within the community.

2.7 Youth Engagement

- 2.7.1 The program provides progressive opportunities for all participants to make meaningful contributions to program development, decision making and continuous improvement activities.

- 2.7.2 The program provides training and support to staff, volunteers and/or other adults in how to develop youth-adult partnerships and support youth engagement.
- 2.7.3 The program provides youth with training and support, including logistical resources, to enable and enhance their engagement.
- 2.7.4 The program regularly solicits and uses input from youth to tailor program offerings to youth interests and needs.

2.8 Employer Engagement

- 2.8.1 The program involves employers to ensure its workforce development activities are relevant to current employment opportunities and future employer needs in the region.
- 2.8.2 The program works with employers to connect youth to work experiences, work-based learning and employment opportunities.
- 2.8.3 The program provides on-going assistance and support to employers who provide work experience and employment for youth participants.

2.9 Transition Support

- 2.9.1 The program ensures that all youth have a plan for how they will continue to pursue and achieve academic and career goals.
- 2.9.2 The program coordinates with appropriate agencies as a youth prepares for transition.
- 2.9.3 The program design includes appropriate transition activities and supports for at least one year.

PEPNet Quality Standards: Category 3 - Youth Development Competencies

Youth Development Competencies addresses standards for program offerings: what youth need to know and be able to do to successfully transition to work and adulthood and how to help them gain those skills, knowledge and abilities.

A program's management structure and systems, its program goals and its key design features each play a role in shaping what is offered youth participating in the program. The primary factor in deciding what types of activities and services to offer is whether what those young people are doing in a program actually gives them what they need. Do the activities and services a program offers support what youth need to know and be able to do to in order to become responsible adults and workers?

Programs may find it is easier to answer this question if they refrain from thinking in terms of "activities," which basically are a series of things someone does or has happen to them. Think instead about the skills, knowledge and abilities -- the *competencies* -- young people need to gain to become responsible individuals. This is where the principles of youth development come into play.

3.1 Working

- 3.1.1 The program provides opportunities for youth to develop competencies appropriate to securing employment, including resume writing, interviewing and job search skills.
- 3.1.2 The program provides opportunities for youth to develop competencies appropriate to maintaining employment, such as communication, dealing with supervision, and interpersonal and lifelong learning skills.
- 3.1.3 The program provides opportunities for youth to assess career interests and explore a variety of career options.
- 3.1.4 The program provides opportunities for youth to participate in work-based learning activities, such as job shadowing, internships, occupational training, work experience and community service.

- 3.1.5 The program helps youth set personal academic and career goals and create realistic plans to achieve them.
- 3.1.6 The program ensures that youth develop competencies that are relevant to local/regional labor market demands, post-secondary requirements and/or industry standards.
- 3.1.7 The program ensures that youth can communicate the competencies they have gained to employers and others.
- 3.1.8 The program provides youth with access to employment opportunities and placement assistance.

3.2 Academic Learning

- 3.2.1 The program uses accepted assessment tools to identify academic skill levels.
- 3.2.2 The program provides opportunities for youth to gain basic literacy and numeracy skills, including English as a second language.
- 3.2.3 The program designs activities that reinforce the connection between academic learning and work.
- 3.2.4 The program provides youth with opportunities to progress towards a recognized credential, such as the GED, high school diploma, or post-secondary education or training credential.
- 3.2.5 The program helps youth learn how to access post-secondary education or advanced training opportunities.

3.3 Connecting

- 3.3.1 The program develops and nurtures sustained relationships between youth and caring, knowledgeable adults.
- 3.3.2 The program provides youth with opportunities to forge positive peer-to-peer and peer group relationships.
- 3.3.3 The program ensures that activities, materials, tools and organizational structures promote acceptance and awareness of diverse groups, races and cultures.
- 3.3.4 The program provides youth with opportunities to work cooperatively with others.
- 3.3.5 The program works to increase youth's support from family and/or other responsible adults for meeting goals.
- 3.3.6 The program ensures that youth learn how to successfully navigate the community.

3.4 Leading

- 3.4.1 The program provides all youth participants with opportunities to contribute to the program and to the community.
- 3.4.2 The program provides structured opportunities for all participants to lead in the program and community.
- 3.4.3 The program provides youth with training/preparation for leadership opportunities.
- 3.4.4 The program implements a strategy, which may include community service and service learning, to build civic engagement.
- 3.4.5 The program helps youth develop a sense of purpose, e.g., belief in their own ability and desire to contribute to something greater than themselves.
- 3.4.6 The program sets high expectations for youth and holds youth accountable.

3.5 Thriving

- 3.5.1 The program takes steps to prevent or divert young people's engagement in risky behaviors.
- 3.5.2 The program supports youth in accessing physical and mental health-related services.
- 3.5.3 The program supports youth in developing independent living skills, including financial and computer literacy.

3.5.4 The program uses multiple strategies to promote healthy decision-making and teaches youth how to address societal, peer and familial pressures.

For more details on the Standards, buy the [PEPNet Guide to Quality Standards for Youth Programs](#)

This Benchmarking Report provides a picture of the landscape for youth employment programs in the United States and how that landscape is changing. The national benchmarking data provides information on those programs which are making an impact and setting the standards for how youth employment programs should be managed.

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