

INNOVATING UNDER PRESSURE
THE STORY OF THE 2009 RECOVERY ACT
SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE:
CHICAGO, DETROIT, INDIANAPOLIS & MARION COUNTY,
PHOENIX & MARICOPA COUNTY

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Contributors from the four featured communities are acknowledged in each case study.

ABSTRACT

On February 17, 2009, President Barack Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) into law, providing \$1.2 billion in targeted funding for the workforce investment system to generate employment and training opportunities for economically disadvantaged youth nationwide. Congress and the U.S. Department of Labor encouraged states and local workforce investment boards to use the funds to create meaningful work experiences for these young people in summer 2009.

This study documents the implementation of the ARRA summer youth employment initiative in four featured communities. Brandeis University conducted interviews and site visits over a two-week period in each community and developed case studies describing the recessionary challenges and strategies in the four communities during summer 2009: Chicago, Illinois; Detroit, Michigan; Indianapolis and Marion County, Indiana; and Phoenix and Maricopa County, Arizona. These four communities received an infusion of more than \$37 million and provided an estimated 16,650 summer jobs for low-income and disadvantaged youth.

This report describes the local context for implementation, provides insight into specific assets and innovations that were used to achieve the community goals, and identifies elements of best practices and lessons that may inform future summer youth employment initiatives.

DISCLAIMER

This report was prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Office of Policy Development, Evaluation and Research by The Center for Youth and Communities and the Sillerman Center for the Advancement of Philanthropy, Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University, under Grant Agreement # MI-19096-09-60-A-25. The views expressed are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the U.S. Department of Labor, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement of same by the U.S. Government.

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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FULL REPORT

PART 1

I. Introduction	1-2
A. Historical Context	
B. Organization of the Report	
II. Overview of the Study	3-5
A. Objectives and Methodology	
B. Study Sites	
III. Key Findings: Leading Best Practices and Management Innovations	5-15
A. New Operating Structures: Mission Driven and Results Oriented Leadership	
B. Strengthened Public-Private Partnerships	
C. Meaningful Work and Learning for Youth	
D. Continuous Improvement	
E. Responsiveness to Local Needs and Strengths	
IV. Summary of Common Challenges	15-16
A. Eligibility	
B. Funding/Cash Flow	
C. Job Matching	
D. Assessment and Reporting	
E. Green Jobs	
V. The Main Ingredients	16-17
A. Leadership Trumps All	
B. Cross-Sector Partnerships are Necessary	
C. Incorporation of Youth Development Principles Adds Quality and Skills	
D. Alternate Pools of Money and Flexible Lines of Credit are Helpful	
E. Think Big: Consider the Role of Work and Learning in Preparing Youth for Post- secondary Education, Work, and Life.	

PART 2

VI. Case Studies

Chicago, Illinois	19-41
Detroit, Michigan	42-61
Indianapolis and Marion County, Indiana	62-87
Phoenix and Maricopa County, Arizona	88-107

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On February 17, 2009, President Barack Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) into law, providing \$1.2 billion in targeted funding for the workforce investment system to generate employment and training opportunities for economically disadvantaged youth nationwide. Congress and the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) encouraged states and local workforce investment boards to use the funds to create meaningful work experiences for these young people in summer 2009.

This study documents the implementation of the ARRA summer youth employment initiative in four featured communities: Chicago, Illinois; Detroit, Michigan; Indianapolis and Marion County, Indiana; and Phoenix and Maricopa County, Arizona. Brandeis University conducted interviews and site visits over a two-week period in each community and developed case studies describing the recessionary challenges and strategies in the four communities during summer 2009. These four communities received an infusion of more than \$37 million and rose to the occasion by innovating under pressure, planning and learning from mistakes, and seizing the opportunity to put more than 16,650 young people to work. This is one of two studies that USDOL funded to document the summer 2009 experience in local communities.¹

This report describes the local context for implementation, provides insight into specific assets and innovations that were used to achieve the community goals, identifies elements of best practices that may inform future summer youth employment programs and related initiatives, highlights common challenges, offers ingredients for success, and draws attention to some lessons learned.

The Four Communities

Their Experience. Although three of the four communities had maintained modest publicly and privately funded summer youth employment programs, the ARRA funding represented the first major infusion of Federal funds for summer youth employment in over a decade. Institutional memory related to the former Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) under the Job Training Partnership Act² (JTPA) was often limited. However, each community had some experiential assets. For example, the large scale of Chicago's efforts to continue summer youth employment efforts without Federal funding gave them a base of relationships and knowledge on which to build quickly: youth-serving organizations and agencies were already working together on many levels and had developed a Youth Ready Chicago website that could be used in the 2009 summer youth employment initiative (SYEI). In Detroit, recent citywide efforts by a core group of leaders to create the Detroit Youth Employment Consortium and the Youth Development Commission provided a strong base for the 2009 SYEI. Detroit also had the advantage of local individuals with institutional memory about the 1990s SYEP. Phoenix and Maricopa County were able to build on recent progress toward greater collaboration and take advantage of local leaders' institutional memory regarding the SYEP and youth development. Indianapolis and Marion County did not have the advantage of local institutional memory or recent SYEP experience, but

¹ The other study is *Reinvesting in America's Youth: Lessons from the 2009 Recovery Act Summer Youth Employment Initiative* (Mathematica Policy Research, February 2010), by J. Bellotti, L. Rosenberg, S. Sattar, A. M. Esposito, and J. Ziegler.

² The Job Training Partnership Act, a US Federal law passed October 13, 1982, was the Federal job training legislation before it was replaced by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

benefited from a strong workforce investment board and a commitment from the Mayor's office.

The Recessional Context. Each community started the summer with local challenges as well as assets. One important point is that in all four, the summer 2009 employment situation for both youth and adults was much worse than in prior years. The Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University reports that national teen joblessness increased by 16% during the period from 2000 – 2009, to 29.2%. Young people with limited education and from low-income families had a 60% labor underutilization rate.³ In addition, while Detroit's economic situation was the most dire, all four communities were experiencing varying degrees of adversity, such as foreclosures, local industry deterioration, and layoffs and furloughs for public employees (some of whom were needed to create a successful SYEI). At the same time, all four communities had many assets – including committed and competent leaders, entrepreneurial spirit, extraordinary willingness to work together, high energy, a culture of learning and continuous improvement, and young people eager to work.

Their Goals and Priorities. Like the 20 study sites in the USDOL/Employment and Training Administration (ETA) evaluation conducted by Mathematica (see Footnote 1), the four featured communities in the Brandeis study shared three primary goals:

1. Serving as many youth as possible.
2. Spending the ARRA funds quickly and wisely with transparency and accountability.
3. Providing meaningful summer experiences to participating youth.

ASSETS AND INNOVATIONS

Beyond those goals, driven by the ARRA and ETA guidance, each of the four communities tied the SYEI to a local vision and built on existing and new partnerships to carry it out.

- *Public-Private Collaboration and Leadership:* In Detroit, ARRA funds supported work and learning experiences for more than 7,000 youth. Three emerging regional industries were targeted for development and placement: green jobs, healthcare and the creative arts. Programs provided a positive youth development approach coupled with integrated work and learning for many of the young workers.
- *City Hub & Spoke Model:* Chicago brought together a wide range of people to work on the SYEI. Through this "all hands on deck" approach they developed a creative array of summer work experiences. Chicago's "Hub" and "Spokes" model (the Hubs were organizations that recruited and managed the Spokes, which were the SYEI worksites) helped them operate more efficiently on their way to serving nearly 8,000 youth.
- *Partnership, Work & Learning:* In Indianapolis and Marion County, planners responded to high youth unemployment and low high school graduation rates. In a strong partnership with several schools, they designed a program in which most of the 645 youth participants attended class for half a day and worked for the other half of the day.
- *City-County Coordination:* Phoenix and Maricopa County planners brought city and county workforce development together and established an accessible SYEI that offered

³ Sum, Andrew et al. "Labor Underutilization Impacts of the Great Depression of 2007-2009." The labor underutilization rate includes people who are unemployed and underemployed as well as those who would like to work but are not actively looking (sometimes called discouraged workers, the hidden unemployed, or the labor force reserve).

a range of jobs to 1,140 youth, was able to match participant interests and jobs in many cases, and hired a set of line staff (career advisors and case managers) who worked closely with youth and worksites to enhance the SYEI experience for both.

BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS

In all four communities, leadership teams took up the challenge to enhance and expand their summer programs and tied the opportunity to local strategic goals. In contrast to thinking of the 2009 SYEI as a one-time infusion for summer jobs, they used it as an opportunity to build out their vision for the healthy development of youth and communities. Dedicated, smart, hardworking employment and training professionals, community leaders, and partners established new operating structures; developed and strengthened public/private partnerships; involved youth in meaningful work and learning experiences that incorporated best practice principles from youth development; and demonstrated a commitment to continuous quality improvement (using data, learning from mistakes, and focusing on quality) on their way to providing thousands of young people with opportunities to work, earn, and learn.

A. New Operating Structures for Results Oriented Leadership

Under the auspices of the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS), Chicago created a Hub and Spokes network of program providers and worksites that included private employers, public agencies, nonprofits, and the city's major cultural institutions (the Hubs were organizations that recruited and managed the Spokes, which were the SYEI worksites). Encouraged and supported by the newly formed Youth Employment Consortium, Detroit established a new collaborative approach using a strong partnership between the Detroit Workforce Development Department and nonprofit intermediaries. Phoenix and Maricopa County Workforce Connection leadership developed a coordinated regional strategy that provided consistency across the city, suburbs, and rural areas for the first time. With strong leadership from the Indianapolis Private Industry Council, Indianapolis and Marion County developed a network of contractors, including several schools, to create a program explicitly linking education and work.

B. Public-Private Partnerships

Detroit philanthropic organizations provided the spark, strategy and political will to develop a citywide, cross-sector partnership approach for youth development and youth employment. Chicago's summer programs built on an existing effort to create a comprehensive citywide youth development strategy involving the city's youth employment programs, public schools, housing and park district agencies, business groups, and the citywide after-school program. Indianapolis and Marion County expanded its network of partners with a commitment to workforce development, youth, and education. Phoenix and Maricopa County established a new level of city-county coordination in order to streamline key processes and reach communities that had never participated in summer youth employment activities.

C. Meaningful Work and Learning for Youth

The concepts of meaningful work and learning were reflected in policies and approaches in all four communities, and all four communities had programs that provided rich work-based learning opportunities and reflected the elements of high quality youth employment and youth development programs: meaningful work, connections to learning, involvement of caring adults, opportunities for leadership, age and stage appropriate assistance, and access to a system of supports and

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opportunities. Chicago's recent experience with large-scale summer youth employment activities enhanced local commitment to quality worksites, helping to ensure that a number of jobs included both meaningful and learning-rich work. In Detroit, the youth development focus of the pre-existing Detroit Works for Kids initiative provided a foundation of commitment and knowledge that ensured attention to, and creativity about, quality work experiences. In Indianapolis and Marion County, the educational component of the 2009 SYEI added a learning dimension to the experience of all youth participants, and some worksites offered outstanding opportunities for meaningful work and learning. Phoenix and Maricopa County also came to the 2009 SYEI with a commitment to youth development principles, and were able not only to generate a range of worksite options, but also to provide case managers and career advisors who worked directly with both youth and worksites to ensure more meaningful, learning-rich work experiences.

D. Continuous Improvement

Leadership and staff in all four communities were committed to "getting it right." Staff across the communities demonstrated resilience, determination, and a willingness to learn from experience. Detroit was committed to a strategic focus on new partnerships within the context of regional industries, including health care, green jobs and the creative arts, as well as a commitment to total quality management and best practice in youth development. Chicago and its Hubs made constant adjustments to meet the challenges of documenting eligibility and worked diligently to apply best practice in a variety of settings. Indianapolis and Marion County worked to design programs that met employer and local labor market needs and connected work and learning. Phoenix and Maricopa County applied a learning organization approach to improving program quality and operations and applied best practice in integrated project-based learning.

CHALLENGES

All of the communities struggled at least to some extent with certifying large numbers of youth as eligible, addressing budget issues, matching youth with jobs, reporting, and creating new opportunities in green industries. These challenges were magnified by the issues of timing and time.

A. Eligibility

Three of the four communities faced serious struggles with the need to document WIA eligibility for thousands of young people in a short time frame. The process was made more challenging by the fact that eligibility for some common programs aimed at low-income families (e.g., National Free/Reduced Price Lunch program) could not serve as proxies for WIA eligibility. Eligibility issues often meant delays for youth ready to start summer jobs (and for their employers) as well as less staff time devoted to program monitoring and technical assistance. These issues may have served as barriers to enrollment, since the youth most in need may have been least able to provide the required documentation. The fourth community (Indianapolis and Marion County) had fewer documentation problems – possibly due in part to a state rule allowing self-attestation of income.

B. Funding/Cash Flow

Nonprofit organizations in every community had to move quickly to raise funds and create new (or extend existing) lines of credit in order to meet the up-front costs of

staffing and payroll for large numbers of summer workers while waiting for reimbursement. While some communities (notably Detroit) were able to create funding pools and provide short-term loans, and Chicago's Commissioner of DFSS committed funds to cover disallowed costs, the SYEIs' financial demands limited the participation of smaller community-based organizations.

C. Job Matching

In all four communities, the short time frame and the challenges of documenting eligibility limited the opportunities for local programs to carefully and consciously match participant interests to jobs. There were some successes (e.g., through Chicago's and Detroit's central application database), but in many cases eligible youth were simply placed in available jobs.

D. Assessment and Reporting

The rapid start-up also meant that work readiness assessment, data management, and reporting systems were often unable to handle the volume of data to be entered; the numbers of young people to be assessed; or the need to utilize the data out of existing systems for summer reporting. In some cases this was exacerbated by outdated and/or inadequate software (e.g., in Phoenix and Maricopa County).

E. Green Jobs

While all of the communities were able to establish some "green" jobs, numbers were limited and the jobs often represented work in traditional green industries (agriculture and forestry vs. solar panel production, for example). Detroit offers the best example of developing green jobs through a private sector partnership devoted to the "Greening of Detroit."

THE MAIN INGREDIENTS

While the study yields many reflections about the SYEI, five main ingredients for success stand out:

A. Leadership trumps all.

Leaders in these four communities were strong, resilient risk takers who shared three core management qualities: mission focus, results orientation, and a commitment to monitoring for continuous improvement.

B. Cross-sector partnerships are necessary.

Adaptive capacity⁴ helped the four communities to make the most of this opportunity. The Federal government might consider providing assistance to increase community capacity to build the local leadership and partnerships needed to respond effectively to new and demanding circumstances as they arise.

C. Incorporation of youth development principles adds quality and skills.

With so many youth involved in so many communities across the United States, an opportunity exists to engage and educate youth on other critical life and work skills

⁴Adaptive capacity is the ability of an organization to ask, listen, reflect, and adapt in a changing environment. Christine Letts, *High Performance Nonprofit Organizations* (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1999).

issues (e.g., financial literacy, health). This aligns well with broader youth development goals.

D. Alternate pools of money and flexible lines of credit are helpful.

Communities with such resources (particularly Chicago and Detroit) had important flexibility with respect to moving quickly, paying youth, and cash flow.

E. Think big: Consider the role of work and learning in preparing youth for post-secondary education, work, and life.

The summer of 2009 re-opens the door to broader links between employment and training and education – “year-round summer” with creative project-based and work-based learning for academic credit has proven to be a valuable pathway for young people struggling in traditional classrooms.⁵ The 2009 SYEI also suggests that investing in the transition to post-secondary education and credentials can lead to valuable outcomes for older youth.

LESSONS LEARNED

All communities turned learning under pressure into an opportunity. They made mistakes and miscalculations and faced unknowns, but these led to lessons learned. As noted earlier, each of the communities strove for continuous improvement - their philosophy seemed to be that mistakes and challenges represented learning opportunities. Lotteries, eligibility events, full-court press attention to payroll problems, debit cards instead of checks, vouchers, a “rolling start” for enrollment, and techniques for developing “instant handbooks” were just a few of the ways communities dealt with serious challenges. The following lessons were culled from conversations about what the communities would do differently next time, or what advice they would give other communities embarking on an SYEI:

- *Focus on the quality and training of worksite supervisors to enrich the youths’ learning experience.* All communities made efforts to ensure supervisory and worksite quality. For example, Phoenix and Maricopa County developed and implemented a deliberate process of orientation and training, including a worksite supervisor’s handbook, and hired staff (called career advisors or case managers) whose responsibilities included worksite monitoring and support. With a relatively large number of such staff, communication with worksites was relatively frequent.

⁵*Evaluation of the Educational Component of The Summer Youth Employment and Training Program.* December 1998. Prepared by Social Policy Research Associates and Brandeis University, for the Office of Policy and Research, Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, DC. (DOL Contract No: K-4687-4-00-80-30).

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“Work Based Practices,” in *School-To-Work*, Arnold H. Packer, Marion Pines. Princeton, NJ: Eye on Education, 1996.

Other communities struggled more with worksite and supervisor preparation, support, and monitoring. For example, in Chicago, informants at both DFSS and the Hubs said that time spent addressing eligibility issues took time away from quality assurance and worksite monitoring. In Indianapolis and Marion County, the organization that had contracted to monitor worksites had planned for 50 worksites, but the actual number was more than 200. Informants in all communities, however, strongly believed that doing more to promote high-quality supervision would have directly enhanced the quality of the youths' experience.

- *Prepare for creative financing options, including covering unintended costs to worksites.* In Chicago, the DFSS Commissioner authorized staff to streamline the eligibility review process, and, where necessary, to allow participants to begin working while eligibility determination was still underway (with completion of necessary paperwork to follow); she would cover disallowed costs with other funds. The Detroit program had the benefit of a fund established by the Skillman Foundation to cover unexpected costs and short-term loans. The Phoenix and Maricopa County leaders crafted agreements that standardized the rates of pay for youth and also developed a process through which agencies sent projected expenditures to the city and county in advance of payrolls so that checks could be processed based upon the projections. The projected figures provided cash in the bank to cover the real payroll; differences between real and projected payroll figures could be adjusted in subsequent pay periods.
- *Streamline eligibility determination, assessment, and orientation.* Two communities (Phoenix and Maricopa County and Chicago) used the promising practice of eligibility events for youth. These worked especially well in Phoenix and Maricopa County but both communities would try them again (Chicago leaders compiled a list of suggested improvements to help theirs go better in the future.) Indianapolis and Marion County had the least problematic experience with determining youth eligibility. Two factors that may have contributed to a smoother process were a state rule allowing self-attestation of income and the fact that they had a relatively smaller number of youth applications to process.
- *Create a seamless infrastructure for data management, payroll options, and other critical processes.* Despite employing various creative strategies, such as using debit cards instead of checks in Indianapolis and Marion County, all of the communities experienced data management and payroll problems that affected their ability to ensure quality. Data entry alone was a serious problem for most of the four communities. For example, the Illinois data management system that the Chicago program had to use was old and regularly crashed. Staff entered data on evenings and weekends (when the system was less overloaded) and the program used interns and hired temporary data entry workers. In Indianapolis and Marion County, the program's multiple, separate data systems meant that there was no single database on participants and activities. Because of the dysfunctions of the Phoenix and Maricopa County older, time-consuming, and very limited system, many SYEI providers developed dual information systems, a level of decentralization that made it difficult to analyze program-wide data.
- *Consider vouchers for transportation and clothing for participating youth.* The youth who are the target of the SYEI often lack good access to transportation and professional clothing. Transportation to worksites in particular was a problem in all four communities, especially when jobs that would interest youth were not located near their homes. Phoenix and Maricopa County's voucher system was very helpful in this regard, enabling some youth to take jobs that were good matches and

enabling other youth simply to take a job. Many of the young people interviewed said that these supports were very important, and that access to a summer job without supports would have proved inadequate.

- *Match jobs and educational offerings to participants' skills, interests, and locations.*
The four communities found that their lofty vision of "great matches" quickly turned to the reality of getting kids to work – communities couldn't job match as much as they would have liked. The strategies used by the four communities were a good start. For example, applications included a place for youth to list preferences and career interests, and all four communities developed mechanisms to help match youth and jobs by location (to minimize transportation problems). However, all four communities considered job matching a critical factor in youth success and wanted to improve their job matching ability.
- *Acknowledge that no one can go it alone.*
A key element of success in all four communities was the presence of pre-existing collaborative relationships on which to build. For example, in Chicago, the Out-of-School Time initiative leaders had already established the Youth Ready Chicago website, which provided a common portal and single point of entry for young people to apply for summer jobs and a single point of entry for employers looking for summer job applicants. In Detroit, the organization that was the chief strategist for the 2009 SYEI had come into being in 2008 as a direct outcome of ongoing collaborative efforts, stimulated by Skillman Foundation investments, to "create conditions where all children are safe, healthy, well-educated and prepared for adulthood." This type of collaboration not only expands the resources available for implementation, but also strengthens and elevates the process of developing a vision.

Forming internal collaborative working groups or teams to share the responsibility and establish an "all hands on deck" strategy also contributed to success in the four communities. All four communities demonstrated this level of collaboration. The Chicago and Detroit SYEI experiences were especially noteworthy in this regard.

Thousands of young people and their communities used the 2009 SYEI as a springboard for the healthy development of youth and communities. Many youth directly benefited from the investment, and communities established credible cross-sector partnerships that hold the promise of continued investment. The four communities featured in this report accomplished most of their goals and learned valuable lessons to apply to future SYEIs.

PART 1

I. INTRODUCTION

A. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In a global economy where the most important skill you can sell is your knowledge – a good education is no longer a pathway to opportunity – it's a prerequisite.

President Barack Obama, Address to Congress, February 25, 2009

In February 2009, President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) into law, providing \$1.2 billion in targeted funding for WIA youth activities, especially focusing on summer jobs for economically disadvantaged youth nationwide. The 2009 summer youth employment initiative (SYEI) under ARRA represented a major influx of funds and a significant challenge: how to design and roll out a summer jobs program in less than four months that could provide meaningful work and learning experiences for the nation's youth and ideally cultivate more 21st century workforce skills as President Obama emphasized in his Address to Congress, just days after signing the ARRA, in February 2009.

Of course, this is not the first time the Federal government has supported summer youth employment programs (SYEPs). Indeed, for more than three decades it funded large-scale SYEPs, serving close to 600,000 low-income youth each year in the 1990s. Previous studies by Brandeis University and others¹ confirmed that when work and learning were combined in rigorous and creative ways on worksites and in classrooms, young people realized gains in math and reading and were better prepared for the transition to school. Indeed, the 1990s saw the emergence of USDOL demonstrations like "Summer Beginnings" and STEP which incorporated and tested best practices for contextualized project-based and work-based learning, implementation of SCANS skills and competencies,² innovation in assessment strategies, and serious case management to provide supports and opportunities for young people and help benchmark their progress.

¹*Evaluation of the Educational Component of The Summer Youth Employment and Training Program*. December 1998. Prepared by Social Policy Research Associates and Brandeis University, for the Office of Policy and Research, Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, DC (DOL Contract No: K-4687-4-00-80-30).

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"Work Based Practices," in *School-To-Work*, Arnold H. Packer, Marion Pines. Princeton, NJ: Eye on Education, 1996.

²A broad list of academic and workplace skills developed by the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS).

In other words, under prior workforce development acts³, summer programs not only provided jobs, but because of the continuity of Federal funding, states and communities also had the mandate and opportunity to develop an effective infrastructure for managing, implementing, and evaluating the large scale programs.

While some communities had maintained modest publicly and privately funded summer youth employment activities over the years, the ARRA funding represented the first major infusion of Federal funding in over a decade. For workforce development professionals and their partners in education, business, government, and the nonprofit sector, the 2009 SYEI called for a new, or renewed, way of doing business – an opportunity to set up or strengthen the management infrastructure, partnerships, systems, and programs that would be needed to provide meaningful summer jobs for the nation's youth.

Because of the unique history of summer jobs programs and the presence or absence of institutional memory, this has been something of a “re-learning” and experimental year for summer youth employment practitioners and policymakers – and by any measure, a challenging one where entrepreneurs and leaders in bureaucracy had to work together at breakneck speed to realize results.

The 2009 SYEI offered a substantial challenge to the workforce development “field” in Chicago, Detroit, Indianapolis and Marion County, and Phoenix and Maricopa County, and they rose to the occasion by innovating under pressure, planning and learning from mistakes, and seizing the opportunity to put more than 16,650 young people to work. This study zooms in on these four communities and their experiences in the 2009 SYEI.

Each community started the summer with local challenges as well as assets. The case studies also discuss these in detail. One important point is that in all four communities, the summer 2009 employment situation was much worse for teenagers (as well as their parents and other adults) than in prior years. The SYEI was very appealing in this context. It would offer needed summer jobs for teens that would not be available otherwise: as a large YouthWorks Indy employer commented, “We wouldn't have been able to hire kids. Older people are coming back in the job market for jobs that normally go to teenagers. YouthWorks Indy provided the only way these kids got summer employment.” In addition, however, and equally important to many leaders in the four communities, the SYEI would allow more youth to be around working adults, an especially critical exposure with so many adults out of work – especially in the neighborhoods in which eligible youth lived.

B. ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

Part 1 of the report provides an overview of the study, then presents key findings focusing on operating structures, partnerships, meaningful work and learning, continuous improvement, and responsiveness to local needs and strengths. After a summary of common challenges, Part 1 concludes with a summary of the “main ingredients” necessary for success. Part 2 presents in-depth case studies of the four communities which detail the recessionary conditions and community assets, and recovery and reinvestment actions in each community; they also highlight best practices and management innovations. Each case is a unique representation of what happened in the 2009 SYEI. Though the protocol was standard for each community, the story unfolded differently, as reflected in the presentation of each case.

³The acts that preceded the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 were The Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962, the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973 (which included the Youth Employment Demonstration Projects Act (YEDPA)), and the Job Training Partnership Act of 1982 (JTPA)..

II. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

A. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The summer 2009 Brandeis study had the following four objectives:

1. Conduct special documentation to capture “best practices” and management innovations in the SYEI and identify challenges.
2. Learn and disseminate lessons from this summer program and do so in a way that inspires and motivates local communities to mobilize positive and creative opportunities for youth transition to adulthood.
3. Help USDOL/ETA and philanthropic partners to identify policy, programs and system design implications and what can be done by pointing to experience in four featured communities.
4. Produce four “deeply layered and highly textured” case studies and an overarching lessons learned report.

The study was intended to complement the other research being conducted during the 2009 SYEI – specifically, ETA’s own monitoring and data collection and the ETA study conducted by Mathematica in 20 communities.⁴

To achieve these objectives, four communities were selected among those participating in the ARRA summer youth employment initiative. The site selection process involved seeking communities that were open to this in-depth study and that had local leadership that would provide matching funds to support the study. Nine senior researchers from Brandeis visited each community (in teams of two) for two weeks in July and August 2009, conducting interviews and focus groups as well as observing worksites, classes, and activities. The researchers also reviewed performance reports for each community and researched the recessionary conditions.

The Brandeis study team used qualitative, case study methods in the context of “appreciative inquiry,” which is defined as follows:

An approach to organizational change that focuses and builds on the strengths and potential of an organization. Every organization has something that works right – things that give it life when it is most alive, effective, successful, and connected in healthy ways to its stakeholders and communities. AI [appreciative inquiry] begins by identifying what is positive and connecting to it in ways that heighten the energy, vision, and action for change.⁵

Appreciative inquiry starts with the notion that “something is working here” and then asks, “what is it, and how, and why?” It acknowledges problems and challenges but

⁴ The other study is *Reinvesting in America’s Youth: Lessons from the 2009 Recovery Act Summer Youth Employment Initiative* (Mathematica Policy Research, February 2010), by J. Bellotti, L. Rosenberg, S. Sattar, A. M. Esposito, and J. Ziegler.

⁵ David L. Cooperrider, Diana Whitney, Jacquelin M. Starvos, *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook For Leaders of Change, 2nd Edition* (Brunswick, Ohio: Crown Custom Publishing, Inc., 2008).

frames them as “lessons learned” – how did communities deal with the problems and challenges?

The guiding theme for this investigation was “innovating under pressure.” The study focused both on management innovations (using Peter Drucker’s concept of the discipline of innovation⁶) and on best program practices identified in the youth employment and youth development literature⁷, including:

- Meaningful work (more than just a paycheck).
- Relationship with competent, caring adults (i.e., high quality staff and worksite supervisors).
- Youth development principles in place for positive developmental settings (young people and adults working together as partners, with opportunities for youth engagement and leadership).
- Opportunity to combine work and learning and acquire marketable skills that meet local needs; project and work-based learning.
- Age and stage appropriate placements and tasks.
- Evidence of partnerships/coordination for a “system of supports and opportunities.”

This report briefly describes each community’s operations and discusses key findings concerning management innovations and best practices. It also captures the challenges and lessons. The case studies provide detail about each community’s experience. Each case is a unique representation of what happened in the SYEI.

B. STUDY SITES

This section lists the four study sites along with their lead agencies and partners.

- **Chicago.** The Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) was the lead agency for the SYEI, building on their close working relationships with the city’s Out-of-School Time partnership. Other partners included the 34 organizations selected through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to serve as Hubs⁸ – some of which essentially served as funding agencies for a subsidiary network of programs, or Spokes.⁹
- **Detroit.** Core leadership was provided by the Detroit Youth Employment Consortium, City Connect Detroit, the Detroit Workforce Development Department,

⁶ Peter F. Drucker, “The Discipline of Innovation,” *Harvard Business Review: The Innovative Enterprise* (August 2002): 13-15. The three core elements as defined by Drucker are focus on mission, results orientation, and monitoring for continuous improvement/commitment to evaluation as a management and learning tool.

⁷ Eccles, Jacquelyn and Jennifer Appleton Gootman (eds.) *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development*. Community Programs for Youth, National Research Council & Institute of Medicine. Washington, DC, National Academy Press, 2002.

A Primer on Improving the Quality of Academic Enrichment in Summer Youth Employment Programs, 1993. Prepared by Brandeis University as part of the Youth Research and Technical Assistance Project sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Washington, DC.

A Synthesis Report on The Summer Beginnings National Work and Learning Network, 1995. Prepared as part of the Youth Research and Technical Assistance Project sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Washington, DC. Prepared by Brandeis University and Public/Private Ventures.

⁸ The Hub organizations were a mix of city agencies, traditional community-based youth programs, major cultural centers, WIA program providers, nonprofit community development organizations, community-based agencies, faith-based organizations, and for-profit workforce development firms.

⁹ The worksites (Spokes) included non-profit and public institutions, private businesses, and a variety of other entities such as health care-related organizations and arts/media organizations.

the Youth Development Commission, the Skillman Foundation, and the state of Michigan. Job placements were developed in all three sectors – public, private, and nonprofit entities – with nearly a quarter in private businesses.

- **Indianapolis and Marion County.** Led by the Indianapolis Private Industry Council and the Indianapolis Mayor's Office, "YouthWorks Indy" had several key nonprofit and education partners, including Job Works, River Valley Resources, Goodwill Industries, the Greater Educational Opportunities Foundation, the Metropolitan Indianapolis Central Indiana Area Health Education Center, Ivy Tech Community College, Indianapolis Public Schools (with two school sites – George Washington Community High School and Arsenal Technical High School), and three charter schools (Fall Creek Academy, Fountain Square Academy, and Indianapolis Metropolitan High School).
- **Phoenix and Maricopa County.** Led by the Phoenix Workforce Connection and Maricopa Workforce Connection, the program's other partners included city and county government, Arizona Call-A-Teen Youth Resources, Gateway Community College, and a wide range of other public, nonprofit, and for-profit partners.

III. KEY FINDINGS: LEADING BEST PRACTICES AND MANAGEMENT INNOVATIONS

After several years without Federal funding for SYEPs, the 2009 SYEI was a time for "re-learning" about summer youth employment and for experimenting with new ways of doing things. Planning and implementation sometimes occurred in advance of much needed information and funds. Yet, despite tight timelines and numerous challenges, each city succeeded. The programs offered thousands of young people a safe place to be, needed earnings, academic credits and credentials, job skills, connections to the job market, and an important step toward adulthood. Dedicated, smart, hardworking employment and training professionals, community leaders, and partners drove the initiatives. In short, there were many achievements during this "re-learning" year. More specifically, in all four communities, public agencies established new operating structures; developed and strengthened public/private partnerships; involved youth in meaningful work and learning experiences that incorporated best practice principles from youth development; demonstrated a commitment to continuous improvement (using data, learning from mistakes, and focusing on quality) on their way to providing thousands of young people with opportunities to work, earn, and learn. In addition, each program was responsive to the needs and strengths of the local population and local industry. This section addresses each of these in turn.

Strong leadership was a hallmark of all four programs, and leaders at all levels demonstrated both flexibility and resilience. The SYEI was a fast moving train – but it stayed on track. When it veered or tilted off course, the communities recovered. Each community had intuitive and trained people whose passion and commitment to excellence were palpable. Depending on local resources and needs, the communities hired staff, reassigned staff, or contracted with other organizations to implement SYEIs.

- “We were trying to do something extraordinary with ordinary rules. The level of effort to pull this off was the most extraordinary thing I’ve seen in an awfully long time.” (Phoenix Workforce Development Administrator)
- “Real-time problem-solving in this program was phenomenal.” (Indianapolis School Administrator)

A. NEW OPERATING STRUCTURES:

Mission-Driven and Results-Oriented Leadership

Chicago created a Hub and Spokes network of program providers and worksites that included private employers, public agencies, nonprofits, and the city’s major cultural institutions. Detroit established a new collaborative approach using a strong city-intermediary collaborating with philanthropic leadership and investment. Indianapolis and Marion County developed a network of contractors, including several schools, to create a program explicitly linking education and work. Phoenix and Maricopa County developed a coordinated regional strategy that offered consistency across the city, suburbs, and rural areas. The following descriptions briefly elaborate on how each program operated.

City Hub and Spoke Model: Chicago. Youth Ready Chicago used an inventive city Hub and Spoke model with the DFSS¹⁰ at its center. Through an RFP, the City selected 34 organizations to serve as Hubs, which were responsible for recruiting and managing worksites (Spokes) that directly provided summer jobs for and supervised youth, as well as managing the payroll and other costs for the young participants. This approach allowed the City to make program design and management requirements explicit in the RFPs, select Hubs that were committed to carrying them out, bring new agencies and employers into the youth program network, and offer new opportunities for youth. DFSS restricted Hub agency eligibility to organizations with an annual operating budget of at least \$500,000 and a commitment to serve at least 100 young people under their contracts. These restrictions ensured that Hubs would have the financial stability to manage a summer payroll and pay participants in advance of the city’s reimbursement, and that the number of Hubs would be limited (so that DFSS would not have to manage too many small contracts). The program required youth to apply through the Youth Ready Chicago website, which had already been created through the city’s collaborative youth development efforts.

Public-Private Collaboration and Leadership: Detroit. A strong city-intermediary collaboration and philanthropic leadership characterized the Detroit program. It was sparked by the newly formed Youth Employment Consortium and built on established partnerships between philanthropy, government, business, and nonprofits; a history of collaboration; institutional memory; and a culture of learning and continuous improvement. The Brandeis study team also discovered a vibrant hidden infrastructure of vision, hope, energy, and leadership – and a true “discipline of innovation” – among a core group of game changers in Detroit. This group – which intends to transform Detroit’s neighborhoods and “create conditions where all children are safe, healthy, well-educated, and prepared for adulthood” – used the SYEI as one instrument of change toward those ends. The funding was attractive, but the opportunity it presented for new ways of doing business in the city was equally attractive. There were five key partners in Detroit’s program. The Detroit Youth Employment Consortium - a group of program providers, employers, funders,

¹⁰In Chicago, the Workforce Investment Board is a separate policy and oversight board, part of the broader Chicago Workforce Investment Council (<http://www.chicagoworkforceboard.com>). DFSS is responsible for managing the city’s WIA-funded youth employment programs.

and other leaders who come together to plan and review youth employment experiences, analyze what works and what doesn't, and consider the future - provided guidance for development of the 2009 SYEI. The Detroit Workforce Development Department (DWDD)¹¹ was responsible for program oversight and issued an RFP for program implementation. City Connect Detroit was awarded the contract to serve as the program-level administrator and overall coordinator of the SYEI, including oversight of an operational partner. The Youth Development Commission, the operational partner with City Connect Detroit, was responsible for day to day operation of multiple aspects of the program. The Skillman Foundation provided financial and technical support to the SYEI. The Brandeis researchers repeatedly heard that Detroit could not have accomplished this without the Skillman Foundation's leadership and resources.

Partnerships, Work, and Learning: Indianapolis and Marion County. To develop YouthWorks Indy, the Indianapolis Private Industry Council (IPIC) and the Mayor's Office - the initiative's central planners - depended upon key partnerships to explicitly link education and work experience, recognizing the city's extremely low high school graduation rates and high youth unemployment. (IPIC, the local workforce investment board, has established itself as the source of workforce development in Central Indiana and has a history of working closely with the Mayor's Office to advance residents' job skills and employment options.) The summer program model was a split day, ½ day school – ½ day work (i.e., most youth participants attended class for half a day and worked for the other half of the day, and jobs were generally shared between two youth). The split day was intended to convey that both work and learning were important; the job sharing aspect was also seen as helping the program to take full advantage of limited work opportunities. Youth were paid for both work and school. IPIC assigned two of its staff members to prioritize overall oversight of the summer program and contracted with two existing partner agencies – JobWorks to recruit youth and determine eligibility, and River Valley Resources to monitor worksites, manage payroll, and be the employer of record. Several other organizations were significant partners from the outset. The planners issued an RFP to select education providers and create three educational tracks: an in-school youth program, an out-of-school youth program, and a medical youth program. Education partners were expected to support educational pathways for all youth, regardless of their current academic status, and many youth earned academic credits or credentials. IPIC turned to its education contractors and the Mayor's office for help enlisting employers from the for-profit, nonprofit, and public sectors.

Streamlined City-County Coordination: Phoenix and Maricopa County. A defining characteristic of this program was streamlined city-county coordination across urban, suburban, and very rural areas. The city and county workforce development systems (the Phoenix Workforce Connection and the Maricopa Workforce Connection) had been working towards the creation of a seamless process across the county, city, and service providers, but the 2009 SYEI intensified the process. They centralized outreach and recruitment, worked together to clarify eligibility criteria, created common application forms and practices, and set up common pick-up and drop-off locations for paperwork. The management design centered around a large number of summer line staff – career advisors or case managers – to provide a work readiness orientation to the youth participants; monitor youth performance and the quality of their work experiences; handle

¹¹The DWDD is the chief administrator for WIA in Detroit.

administrative tasks; serve as problem solvers and liaisons across youth, employers, and the summer program; and offer youth supports such as counseling, case management, and referrals. The high quality backgrounds of the people hired enabled them to do an effective job despite very limited training (limited due to the tight timeline). Using advice from leaders with prior SYEP experience, the city and county standardized pay rates for youth participants and developed a process in which agencies sent projected expenditures to the city and county in advance of payrolls to accelerate check processing.

B. STRENGTHENED PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

All four communities depended (successfully) on partnerships and collaborations. Chicago's summer programs built on an existing effort to create a comprehensive citywide youth development strategy involving the city's youth employment programs, public schools, housing and park district agencies, business groups, and the citywide after-school program. Detroit philanthropic organizations provided the spark to develop a comprehensive, citywide approach. Indianapolis and Marion County expanded their network of public and private partners with a commitment to workforce development, youth, and education. Phoenix and Maricopa County took steps toward greater city-county alignment and also expanded their network.

The efforts in each community required and demonstrated an extraordinarily intensive level of collaboration. The urgency of the timetable moved service providers away from the more competitive business-as-usual model. The collaboration was brought about very quickly and at every level of leadership and program implementation. Each community appeared driven by a philosophy that partnerships were a must. In addition to collaboration between key planners, local CBOs, businesses, faith-based organizations, employers, schools, and philanthropic organizations were involved in every community. At least some of the partnerships had been in formation prior to summer 2009 in all four communities, but the 2009 SYEP strengthened existing connections and forged new ones. At each site, the planners and leaders made every effort to "cast a broad net" and leverage existing partnerships.

Moreover, partnerships/collaborations helped communities navigate around varying levels of institutional knowledge and experience in running SYEPs. Partnerships helped all communities move forward more quickly and at higher levels of effectiveness, no matter what their recent summer youth employment history. Only Chicago had recent experience with large-scale summer youth employment activities. Detroit had run recent but smaller programs; Phoenix and Maricopa County also had recent experience with more modest programs and could call on "veterans" of earlier SYEPs. Indianapolis and Marion County had not run an SYEP since the Summer Youth Employment Training Program (SYETP) in the late 1990s.

Partnerships in the Four Communities: Highlights

Deepening Existing Networks: Chicago. The city's network of existing partnerships from 15 years of experience running year-round and summer programming helped the program to start up quickly. Key partners included the school system, parks and recreation, housing authority, and an after-school umbrella organization that resulted in the creation of both a Youth Employment Oversight Committee and a Youth Ready Chicago website that became the conduit for youth to apply to the summer program. This history also meant that the city had a reservoir of seasoned summer youth employment deliverers, including some with over 15

years of relevant experience. In particular, the city had ready access to nonprofit partners that had a history of serving particular target groups – such as La Casa Norte (expertise in and access to homeless youth), Central States SER (expertise in and access to Hispanic youth), and the Chicago Public Housing Authority (expertise and access to public housing residents) – increasing the likelihood of serving youth in these categories with services that were tailored to their needs.

Private Resources as a Jump-Start: Detroit. The city not only has an array of professionals who possess institutional memory of the large USDOL summer programs from the 1990s; it also has operated summer programs over the last ten years. Even more broadly, a core group of Detroit leaders was already working together to transform the city’s neighborhoods and “create conditions where all children are safe, healthy, well-educated, and prepared for adulthood.” As a result, some aspects of the necessary infrastructure for the 2009 SYEI were already present. One tangible benefit of the existing partnerships was the Skillman Foundation’s commitment to provide a private, limited pot of money as a safety net to, for example, pay youth who were enrolled in, but later proved ineligible for, the SYEI.

Deep Partnership Base: Indianapolis and Marion County. YouthWorks Indy was brought to scale so quickly because IPIC had a deep partnership base to rely on. IPIC contracted out for virtually all services. They were looking to partner with agencies that had a sense of community responsibility, were already serving WIA participants, and were reliable players in the city. To expand their network, IPIC and the Mayor’s office reached out to all their public and private partners to encourage them to recommend worksites; they also encouraged the schools involved in the SYEI to reach out to their networks – and they did.

Teamwork: Phoenix and Maricopa County. It was a tall order for the city and county to strengthen the relationship between their workforce development systems. City and County workforce development leaders held a number of system-wide meetings beginning in February 2009 to initiate planning the SYEI. One said, “We were two huge entities and we needed to coordinate in more intensive ways. It was challenging, but we did it.” Their teamwork helped to bring their respective networks together as well.

C. MEANINGFUL WORK AND LEARNING FOR YOUTH

The concepts of meaningful work and learning – tied implicitly or explicitly to a youth development approach – were reflected in the policies and approaches in all four communities. All four had programs that provided rich work-based learning opportunities and reflected the elements of high quality youth employment and youth development programs, such as meaningful work, connections to learning, involvement of caring adults, and opportunities for leadership.

For many youth, their summer 2009 paychecks were the first they ever earned, and many were able to help their families financially. Although providing “just a job” is an achievement in itself, all communities attempted to create jobs with meaning. Communities defined meaningful work in somewhat different ways, but common elements were jobs focused on work readiness skills, exposure and opportunity to learn about college and career pathways, the importance of improving the environment, or promoting social justice.

"Summer jobs are not just about getting kids off the street. We want to put kids into meaningful jobs that are pathways to college and careers." (Chicago)

"I was hoping for a job to get off the streets and stay out of trouble. Pay is not the main thing. The main thing is getting good experience. I am learning how to be a leader, how to grow up, how to become someone who younger kids will look up to. It makes me feel good." (Chicago youth)

Based on study observations, several elements of "meaningfulness" were identified that align well with the criteria discussed earlier for effective SYEIs.

- **Work Readiness Skills/Workforce Exposure.** Every program included some element of teaching work readiness skills such as attendance, punctuality, work expectations, and problem-solving. Some of this teaching was formal and occurred at the beginning of and/or throughout the program. But on-the-job training was important as well, and many supervisors helped the young people become "ready" on a day-to-day basis. Some youth participants were able to explore career pathways and options in very intentional ways, through visits, interviews, job shadowing, and presentations. Even when such exploration was not explicitly provided, the youth were exposed to the workforce, and for many this was a big step. Every program offered at least some variety of jobs in different sectors of the economy (for-profit, not-for-profit, government) and in different industries (health care, environmental protection, robotics).
- **Principles of Positive Community Youth Development.** Most communities provided at least some opportunities for positive community youth development, i.e., "young people and adults working together as partners and viewing each other as competent resources to build and sustain just, safe, and healthy communities."¹² For some of the young participants, the 2009 SYEI was their first experience in feeling respected and appreciated.
- **Mentoring.** Most jobs provided supervisor support for social skills as well as vocational training. The quality of the learning experience for youth was dependent on the quality of the mentor/supervisor. Creative worksite supervisors became true mentors for youth. The supervisor's commitment was key to how much additional learning occurred on the job. Jobs with enhanced learning opportunities were those in which supervisors gave youth responsibility, a measure of autonomy, and regular feedback on their performance. Detroit respondents in particular commented on how many "top-rate" supervisors the summer program had, but exemplary supervisors were observed in all four communities.

¹² Susan P. Curnan and Della M. Hughes, "Toward Shared Prosperity: Change-Making in the CYD Movement," *CYD Anthology* (2002) 2-8.

Meaningful Work and Learning in the Four Communities: Highlights

Science and the Arts: Chicago. One example of meaningful work in Chicago was at the world-renowned Museum of Science and Industry, where about 75 young men and women who expressed an interest in science got training in science and science education. They then used their training to work with young visitors to the museum on interactive, participatory projects and to provide hands-on science activities to young people at other facilities such as those of the Chicago Park District. In another example, a group of homeless youth at La Casa Norte used reading, writing, and other skills to prepare and deliver a play/skit in which they explained their experiences as homeless youth and presented it to the community.

The Environment, Journalism, and Community Research: Detroit. The Conservation Leadership Corps, an innovative public-private partnership involving Johnson Controls, the Student Conservation Association and The Greening of Detroit, employed 110 youth in environmental stewardship experiences. Another example of high quality project-based learning was Young Detroit Magazine at Communities in Schools – a youth-run magazine with a mission to “broaden the education of metro area teens through journalism and special programs which create unique opportunities through media.” Yet another was the Youth Engaged in Community Research Project, designed and managed by the University of Michigan, School of Social Work, Good Neighborhoods Technical Assistance Center, in which dozens of young people assessed neighborhood assets and concerns.

Diverse Opportunities: Indianapolis and Marion County. The SYEI considered work “meaningful” if output was valued and job performance mattered. Youth performed more than 50 different types of jobs, including office work, maintenance, camp counseling, and medical assistance. At a minimum, the program intended that work would give youth participants an opportunity to learn real-life problem-solving skills, (e.g., how to deal with supervisors, resolve conflicts with coworkers, and manage time and tasks) as well as basic financial management skills. The program also offered some outstanding examples of meaningful work and learning, in particular the medical youth program.

Career Exploration and Internships: Phoenix and Maricopa County. Some employers attempted to make young people’s experiences more meaningful by infusing “all aspects of an industry” into youths’ experiences to help them see how their summer job fits into the “big picture.” Informal career exploration occurred at a number of worksites through the individual or combined efforts of youths’ supervisors, coworkers, and/or Career Advisors/Case Managers. Three elaborate internship programs, developed in collaboration with Gateway Community College, represented an example of an innovative partnership with considerable resource leveraging. These internships were offered to a limited number of youth with serious interests in entrepreneurship, advanced manufacturing/robotics, or health care. One of the entrepreneurship worksites was Lotus Wei and Wei of Chocolate, two organic product companies. Four young people participated in production activities, sales, and experiential and creative opportunities. The employers’ goal was to raise the young people’s consciousness about life and work, and to empower them to make better choices.

D. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Leadership and staff in all four communities were committed to “getting it right.” Detroit was committed to total quality management and responded quickly to payroll system problems and other dilemmas; in Chicago, the city and its Hubs made constant adjustments to meet the challenges of documenting eligibility. Indianapolis and Marion County worked to design programs that met employer and local labor market needs. Staff across the board demonstrated resilience, determination, and a willingness to work until the task was done in order to ensure that young people made it into jobs. All communities created a culture of learning and reflection.

All communities showed their commitment to functioning as a learning organization in the way they operated their programs (using evaluation as a management and learning tool, continuously improving operations, and reflecting on their work). They convened partners in the planning process, reflected on lessons learned during the summer, and brought partners together to evaluate the experience and how to improve for next year. They also showed their commitment in the way they opened their doors to the Brandeis researchers. They were open and honest about their specific challenges and the lessons they learned in creating a complex summer program for a challenging population within a tight time frame.

All communities acknowledged that they were learning under pressure but turned this into an opportunity. They made mistakes and miscalculations and faced unknowns, but these led to lessons learned. “We had to learn and fix, all with the media watching.” “Mistakes represent learning opportunities.” Lotteries, eligibility events, full-court press attention to payroll problems, debit cards, vouchers, a “rolling start” for enrollment, and techniques for developing “instant handbooks” were just a few of the ways communities dealt with serious challenges. The following lessons were culled from the Brandeis researchers’ conversations about what the communities would do differently next time or what advice they would give other communities embarking on a SYEI:

- *Focus on the quality and training of worksite supervisors to enrich the youths’ learning experience.* All communities made efforts to ensure supervisory and worksite quality. For example, Phoenix and Maricopa County developed and implemented a deliberate process of orientation and training, including a worksite supervisor’s handbook, and hired staff (called career advisors or case managers) whose responsibilities included worksite monitoring and support. With a relatively large number of such staff, communication with worksites was relatively frequent. Other communities struggled more with worksite and supervisor preparation, support, and monitoring. For example, in Chicago, informants at both DFSS and the Hubs said that time spent addressing eligibility issues took time away from quality assurance and worksite monitoring. In Indianapolis and Marion County, the organization that had contracted to monitor worksites had planned for 50 worksites, but the actual number was more than 200. Informants in all communities, however, strongly believed that doing more to promote high-quality supervision would have directly enhanced the quality of the youths’ experience.
- *Prepare for creative financing options, including covering unintended costs to worksites.* In Chicago, the DFSS Commissioner authorized staff to streamline the eligibility review process, and, where necessary, to allow participants to begin working while eligibility determination was still underway (with completion of

necessary paperwork to follow); she would cover disallowed costs with other funds. The Detroit program had the benefit of a fund established by the Skillman Foundation to cover unexpected costs and short-term loans. The Phoenix and Maricopa County leaders crafted agreements that standardized the rates of pay for youth and also developed a process through which agencies sent projected expenditures to the city and county in advance of payrolls so that checks could be processed based upon the projections. The projected figures provided cash in the bank to cover the real payroll; differences between real and projected payroll figures could be adjusted in subsequent pay periods.

- *Streamline eligibility determination, assessment, and orientation.* Two communities (Phoenix and Maricopa County and Chicago) used the promising practice of eligibility events for youth. These worked especially well in Phoenix and Maricopa County but both communities would try them again (Chicago leaders compiled a list of suggested improvements to help theirs go better in the future.) Indianapolis and Marion County had the least problematic experience with determining youth eligibility. Two factors that may have contributed to a smoother process were a state rule allowing self-attestation of income and the fact that they had a relatively smaller number of youth applications to process.
- *Create a seamless infrastructure for data management, payroll options, and other critical processes.* Despite employing various creative strategies, such as using debit cards instead of checks in Indianapolis and Marion County, all of the communities experienced data management and payroll problems that affected their ability to ensure quality. Data entry alone was a serious problem for most of the four communities. For example, the Illinois data management system that the Chicago program had to use was old and regularly crashed. Staff entered data on evenings and weekends (when the system was less overloaded) and the program used interns and hired temporary data entry workers. In Indianapolis and Marion County, the program's multiple, separate data systems meant that there was no single database on participants and activities. Because of the dysfunctions of the Phoenix and Maricopa County older, time-consuming, and very limited system, many SYEI providers developed dual information systems, a level of decentralization that made it difficult to analyze program-wide data.
- *Consider vouchers for transportation and clothing for participating youth.* The youth who are the target of the SYEI often lack good access to transportation and professional clothing. Transportation to worksites in particular was a problem in all four communities, especially when jobs that would interest youth were not located near their homes. Phoenix and Maricopa County's voucher system was very helpful in this regard, enabling some youth to take jobs that were good matches and enabling other youth simply to take a job. Many of the young people interviewed said that these supports were very important, and that access to a summer job without supports would have proved inadequate.
- *Match jobs and educational offerings to participants' skills, interests, and locations.* The four communities found that their lofty vision of "great matches" quickly turned to the reality of getting kids to work – communities couldn't job match as much as they would have liked. The strategies used by the four communities were a good start. For example, applications included a place for youth to list preferences and career interests, and all four communities developed mechanisms to help match youth and jobs by location (to minimize transportation problems). However, all four communities considered job matching a critical factor in youth success and wanted to improve their job matching ability.

- *Acknowledge that no one can go it alone.*
A key element of success in all four communities was the presence of pre-existing collaborative relationships on which to build. For example, in Chicago, the Out-of-School Time initiative leaders had already established the Youth Ready Chicago website, which provided a common portal and single point of entry for young people to apply for summer jobs and a single point of entry for employers looking for summer job applicants. In Detroit, the organization that was the chief strategist for the 2009 SYEI had come into being in 2008 as a direct outcome of ongoing collaborative efforts, stimulated by Skillman Foundation investments, to “create conditions where all children are safe, healthy, well-educated and prepared for adulthood.” This type of collaboration not only expands the resources available for implementation, but also strengthens and elevates the process of developing a vision.

Forming internal collaborative working groups or teams to share the responsibility and establish an “all hands on deck” strategy also contributed to success in the four communities. All four communities demonstrated this level of collaboration. The Chicago and Detroit SYEI experiences were especially noteworthy in this regard.

E. RESPONSIVENESS TO LOCAL NEEDS AND STRENGTHS

All four communities considered their local context when planning the 2009 SYEI. In some cases, this meant thinking about what occupations were likely to be most in demand; in others, it meant addressing what local youth needed. All communities built on strengths in existing partnerships and local commitments to improving local economies as well as conditions for youth.

How the Four Communities Responded to Local Industry and Population: Highlights

Environmental Awareness: Chicago. One of Chicago’s Hubs was Central States SER, a community-based organization, which promoted environmental awareness by providing training on energy efficiency to SYEI participants. The trained youth then conducted energy-efficiency audits of their summer worksites and shared the results with their supervisors in the form of a proposal to upgrade energy efficiency at the worksite.

Skill Building for a New Economy: Detroit. The program emphasized skill building for a new economy – including health related jobs, green jobs, and the creative and performing arts industry and aligned program/job placement with several recessionary challenges. For example, in response to food insecurity, increases in diet-related diseases, and vacant land, the SYEI targeted programs in urban gardening and environmental stewardship. Building on youth interest in the performing and creative arts, as well as a new tax credit that has attracted the filmmaking industry to Detroit, the SYEI supported The Arts Place to prepare young people for this sector.

Education and Occupational Certificates: Indianapolis and Marion County. The program put education at the center of its program – not just putting kids to work – in response to very low high school graduation rates (30.5%) and achievement (only 21% of 10th graders passed the graduation requirement).

Center for Youth and Communities, The Heller School for Social Policy and Management

Planners determined that YouthWorks Indy needed to offer course recovery for youth to graduate on time, test prep to meet high school graduation testing requirements, GED, and courses leading to occupational certificates. The program also responded to local industry by offering course credits in occupational areas where new hires will be needed, such as health care and apartment maintenance.

Phoenix and Maricopa County: Integrating with Economic Development. The SYEI represented an opportunity to demonstrate that the workforce development system is, as one administrator noted, “agile and responsive enough to produce what policymakers consider tangible outcomes worthy of continued investments.” It also demonstrated that workforce development systems could be more fully integrated into city and county economic growth and development efforts.

IV. SUMMARY OF COMMON CHALLENGES

All of the communities struggled at least to some extent with certifying large numbers of young people as eligible and enrolled; to ensure that funds were available to pay them; to match youth to appropriate jobs; to assess and report on their experiences; and to create new opportunities in “green” industries. The challenges were magnified by the issues of timing and time.

A. ELIGIBILITY

Three of the four communities faced serious struggles with the need to document WIA eligibility for thousands of young people in a short time frame. (The fourth community (Indianapolis and Marion County) had fewer documentation problems – possibly due in part to a state rule allowing self-attestation of income.) The process was made more challenging by the fact that eligibility for some common programs aimed at low-income families (e.g., National Free/Reduced Price Lunch program) could not serve as proxies for WIA eligibility. Eligibility issues often meant delays for youth ready to start summer jobs (and for their employers) as well as less staff time devoted to program monitoring and technical assistance. These issues may have served as barriers to enrollment, since the youth most in need may have been least able to provide the required documentation. All four communities made significant efforts to target vulnerable youth populations – low-income youth, out-of-school youth, youth offenders, homeless youth, veterans, and youth with disabilities. Still, most found that the eligibility certification process may have unintentionally made it harder for the most vulnerable to become part of the program.

B. FUNDING/CASH FLOW

Nonprofit organizations in every community had to work quickly to raise funds and create new, or extend existing, lines of credit in order to meet the up-front costs of staffing and payroll for large numbers of summer workers while waiting for reimbursement. While some communities (notably Detroit) were able to create funding pools and provide short-term loans, and Chicago’s Commissioner of DFSS committed funds to cover payroll for youth who were expected to be eligible but for whom paperwork was not yet complete, the summer programs’ financial demands limited the participation of smaller community-based organizations.

C. JOB MATCHING

In all four communities, the short time frame and the challenges of documenting eligibility limited the opportunities for local programs to provide a careful match between participant interests and jobs. There were some successes (e.g., through Chicago's central application database), but in many cases eligible youth were simply placed in available jobs.

D. ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

The rapid start-up also meant that work assessment, data management, and reporting systems were often unable to handle the volume of data to be entered, the numbers of young people to be assessed, or the need to utilize data from management information systems for summer reporting. In some cases, this was exacerbated by outdated and/or inadequate software (e.g., in Phoenix and Maricopa County).

E. GREEN JOBS

While all of the communities were able to establish some "green" jobs, numbers were limited and the jobs often represented work in traditional green industries (agriculture and forestry vs. solar panel production, for example). Detroit offers the best example of developing green jobs through a private sector partnership devoted to the "Greening of Detroit."

V. THE MAIN INGREDIENTS

While the study yields many insights about the SYEI, five main ingredients for success stand out:

A. **Leaderships trumps all.**

One underlying lesson stands out: to successfully innovate under pressure, leadership trumps all. As discussed earlier, leaders in these four communities were strong, resilient risk takers who shared three core management qualities: mission focus, results orientation, and a commitment to monitoring for continuous improvement.

B. **Cross-sector partnerships are necessary.**

Adaptive capacity helped the four communities to make the most of this opportunity. The Federal government might consider providing assistance to increase the community capacity to build the local leadership and partnerships needed to respond effectively to new and demanding circumstances as they arise.

C. **Incorporation of youth development principles adds quality and skills.**

With so many youth involved in SYEIs across the country, an opportunity exists to educate youth on issues besides employment (e.g., financial literacy, health). This aligns well with broader youth development goals.

D. Alternate pools of money and flexible lines of credit are helpful.

Communities with such resources (particularly Chicago and Detroit) had a “fail-safe” and important flexibility with respect to moving quickly, paying youth, and cash flow.

E. Think big: Consider the role of work and learning in preparing youth for post-secondary education, work, and life.

The summer of 2009 re-opens the door to broader links between employment and training and education. As referenced earlier, the concept of “year-round summer” with creative project-based and work-based learning for academic credit has proven to be a valuable pathway for young people struggling in traditional classrooms. The 2009 SYEI also suggests that investing in the transition to post-secondary education and credentials can lead to valuable outcomes for older youth.

As already noted, all of the communities in the Brandeis study struggled at least to some extent to get large numbers of young people certified as eligible and enrolled; to ensure that funds were available to pay them; to match youth to their job interest; to assess and report on their experiences and to create new opportunities in “green” industries. These challenges were magnified by the issues of *timing and time*.

However, despite the challenges, thousands of young people and their communities used the 2009 SYEI as a springboard for the healthy development of youth and communities. Many youth directly benefited from the investment, and communities established credible cross-sector partnerships that hold the promise of continued investment. The four communities featured in this report accomplished most of their goals and learned valuable lessons to apply to future SYEIs.

PART 2

VI. Case Studies

Chicago, IL

Detroit, MI

Indianapolis and Marion County, IN

Phoenix and Maricopa County, AZ



CASE STUDY



INNOVATING UNDER PRESSURE: THE AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT 2009 Summer Youth Employment Initiative

Chicago



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INNOVATING UNDER PRESSURE: THE AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT 2009 Summer Youth Employment Initiative

Chicago

INTRODUCTION

Mayor Daley's Youth Ready Chicago program connects young people, ages 14-24, with internships, apprenticeships, and jobs within Chicago's public and private business sectors. Each opportunity offers youth hands-on experience and an opportunity to gain marketable skills, supporting a successful transition from school into the workforce.

---Youth Ready Chicago website (2009)

Our goal was to get kids employed. We did it.

--Community affairs director at a DFSS Hub agency (2009)

For Chicago, with youth and adult unemployment rates at historically high levels, the 2009 summer youth employment initiative (SYEI) represented a major influx of funds (over \$17 million) and a significant challenge: how to design and roll out a summer jobs program in less than four months that could provide quality work and learning experiences for nearly 8,000 young people. While Chicago, like several other large cities, had maintained summer jobs programs using city/local and private funding over the years, the 2009 funding represented the first major infusion of Federal funding for summer jobs in over a decade. For the leaders of the city's youth and workforce development community – city agencies, private nonprofits, major cultural and educational organizations – the 2009 SYEI called for an “all hands on deck effort” to set up the systems and programs needed to provide effective summer work experiences for youth.

Chicago's 2009 SYEI was characterized by a strong nucleus, the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS), and several strong partners with recent experience working together on after-school and summer opportunities for youth, including large-scale, locally-funded summer youth employment programs (SYEPs). Operationally, the SYEI developed a network of Hubs and Spokes. The Hubs were organizations that recruited and managed the Spokes, which were SYEI worksites. (This case study generally uses the term “worksites.”)

The following case study is based on interviews and site visits conducted by staff from the Center for Youth and Communities at Brandeis University's Heller School for Social Policy and Management, primarily during a two-week site visit in July 2009, as well as on supplementary materials collected during and after the visit. Interviews were conducted with staff and leaders at key agencies (DFSS, the Chicago Workforce Investment Council, Chicago Metropolis 2020, etc.) as well as Hub agency and worksite staff.

PART I

RECESSIONARY CONDITIONS: CHALLENGES AND ASSETS

The need for an expanded initiative to provide summer youth employment was abundantly clear in 2009, with high levels of both youth and adult unemployment in the Chicago area. For the first half of 2009, Chicago's unemployment rate hovered around 10%, rising to 12.1% by June 2009. The challenges of finding employment were particularly great for youth. According to the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University, the seasonally adjusted employment rate for 16 to 19 year olds nationally had dropped to 26.2% in 2009, the lowest level in over 60 years. In Illinois, the reported 2009 employment rate for 16 to 19 year olds statewide was 27.9%, more than 20 points lower than in 2000. During the same period, the employment rate for 16 to 19 year olds in Chicago dropped to 16.5% from 30%. While estimating summer unemployment rates is difficult since so many young people enter the labor market only for the summer, Census data suggests that well over 100,000 youth aged 16 to 19 in Chicago were likely looking for a summer job. By the end of summer 2009, over 75,000 young people had applied for summer jobs on the Youth Ready Chicago website.

Asset: Historical Context of Collaboration

The city's response to this challenge built on prior efforts to develop a comprehensive approach to youth employment and youth development. Through these efforts, major youth-serving agencies and nonprofit and cultural organizations had already established city- and privately-funded summer jobs programs and had begun considering how to link summer and after-school jobs to the city's growing after-school program infrastructure. While they had little experience with a Federally-funded summer jobs program (i.e., WIA eligibility requirements), the city could draw on strong relationships and a large network of organizations with experience working with disadvantaged youth. As a result, the city was quickly able to set up a system of program Hubs to arrange worksites, recruit and place summer workers, and offer a creative array of work experiences for nearly 8,000 youth. The success and rapid ramp-up of the 2009 SYEI rested in large part on these established relationships and programs.

The story of Chicago's 2009 SYEI is an institutional story. It took place in the context of a number of collaborative initiatives aimed at building a more comprehensive approach to youth programs. Since the early 1990s, the city had been expanding the availability of after-school programs for school-aged youth. From 1993 to 1999, it had been a site for the Wallace Foundation's MOST (Making the Most of Out-of-School Time) initiative, intended to strengthen after-school programs. Those efforts led to the establishment of the nonprofit After School Matters (ASM), a summer and after-school arts initiative. ASM had expanded by 2009 to providing after-school and summer opportunities in arts, science, technology, sports, and writing to over 25,000 young people in school and community-based sites. ASM's program model was a "ladder" of youth development experiences, from informal club experiences through pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, and paid internships that incorporate hands-on and work-based learning experiences.

Chicago Out-of-School Time Project: Key Strategies

- Increase coordination, access, and reach of quality programming by creating a citywide program and participant database that can be shared across agencies and providers.
- Increase teen participation through a citywide communications initiative ... featuring the After School Matters apprenticeship model.
- Establish citywide common definitions of after-school program quality and increase supports for continuous improvement by offering professional development opportunities and creating common tools and technical assistance resources for program providers.
- Build support and readiness for achieving sustainable, coordinated, and dedicated funding, in order to provide after-school program opportunities for all of Chicago's youth who want them.

In 2008, with expanded Wallace Foundation support, the city established the Out-of-School Time (OST) Partnership as a multi-agency effort to coordinate OST programs, including programs for older youth. Housed in the city's Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS – formerly the Department of Children and Youth Services), the OST project brought together DFSS youth services programs, the Chicago Public Schools, the Chicago Park District, the Chicago Public Library, and ASM to coordinate programs, develop common application and data management systems, and implement common standards and definitions for quality programs. The OST initiative had important implications for the 2009 SYEI. First, it made youth employment, including summer jobs, a part of key agencies' discussions about OST, so that the youth employment system (DFSS) was part of the multi-agency partnerships. Second, the creation of the Youth Ready Chicago website (www.youthreadychicago.org) provided a common portal and single point of entry for young people to apply for summer (including summer jobs) and after-school programs. Youth Ready Chicago also provided a single point of entry for nonprofits and employers looking for summer job applicants. In short, it was an electronic infrastructure that could be used in organizing the summer jobs program.

At the same time, the city was reorganizing its youth employment systems. In 2004, the Department of Children and Youth Services (CYS) was created, bringing together all of the city's youth-related services in one agency; in 2006, Workforce Investment Act (WIA) youth programs were brought into the agency as well. In 2009, CYS combined with adult social service programs to create the DFSS, which integrated youth, adult, and senior services into a single family-support agency. This brought all of Chicago's publicly-funded youth employment programs – the Kidstart summer jobs program, WIA-funded youth employment programs, and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)-funded after-school and youth employment programs – together under one administrative entity. Resources for youth included regional youth development centers providing skill training and job placement assistance, a network of Regional Consortium Coordinators who helped coordinate city and nonprofit programs in each of the public school regions, and citywide and regional Youth Councils. This consolidation paved the way for a coordinated planning process within the Youth Division that began in 2008 and laid the foundation for planning for the 2009 SYEI.

These efforts were complemented by the formation of the Youth Employment Committee, co-chaired by DFSS Commissioner Mary Ellen Caron and a senior executive from Chicago Metropolis 2020, a business-sponsored regional economic planning organization. The committee presented an opportunity for the youth-serving agencies to better understand one another's capacity and establish a more comprehensive approach to youth employment and youth development.

Asset: Existing Community Networks and Leadership

Two other key elements set the context for the 2009 SYEI. The first was a substantial network of nonprofit organizations and community programs that had experience with youth development and summer jobs programs. By 2009, as noted earlier, ASM served roughly 25,000 teens annually. According to their 2008 annual report, they provided more than 700 programs in over 60 school and community-based sites, providing summer jobs to approximately 6,000 students through the city's private-sector summer jobs and after-school programs. Similarly, the Chicago Public Schools, the Parks Department, and DFSS had substantial experience running summer jobs and youth development programs. Through its CDBG-funded youth programs, DFSS worked with nearly 200 agencies that provided after-school programs, counseling, mentoring, recreation and other youth services. In short, while the addition of 7,800 ARRA-funded summer jobs in 2009 represented a substantial increase and presented new challenges (such as those related to determining WIA eligibility), the fact is that over 17,000 young people had participated in summer jobs programs in 2008 through hundreds of worksites. Chicago's experience and infrastructure made it more prepared than many other communities for the 2009 effort.

The other key influence on the 2009 SYEI, according to many of those interviewed, was DFSS Commissioner Mary Ellen Caron. Interviewees said that Commissioner Caron insisted on providing quality summer work experiences and broadening the network of organizations involved in providing work experiences for youth. A partner organization representative noted that she was emphatic that young people needed jobs for themselves and to help their families, and focused on the skills needed and how to help kids to get them. Caron described her commitment to quality:

I was very clear, we wanted meaningful jobs. We want kids to have specific tasks, not just be in a group dumped somewhere. Everyone learned this wasn't supposed to be a make-work program! What I want is for kids to learn what they are interested in, or what they are NOT interested in [through summer work opportunities].

That commitment translated, for example, into early decisions to open the RFP process to organizations with no prior WIA experience. While this meant that many Hubs struggled with the eligibility requirements, it broadened the base of organizations and employers to include nonprofits serving new neighborhoods and cultural institutions.

As the summer progressed, Commissioner Caron also insisted that eligibility documentation challenges should not hinder youth participation. At a critical June DFSS staff meeting, the Commissioner authorized staff to streamline the eligibility review process, and, where necessary, to allow participants to begin working while eligibility determination was still underway (with completion of necessary paperwork to follow). While staff were justifiably concerned about ensuring that participant files would pass audit, Caron kept the focus on getting young people jobs and made it clear that she would cover disallowed costs with other funds. The decision, backed by a careful analysis of the city's options for covering disallowed costs if a participant was found to be ineligible, brought new momentum to the effort. A senior DFSS staff person noted, "It was a turning point – it got things moving." While each partner organization had active leaders, DFSS stood at the center of the 2009 SYEI, and Caron's leadership provided a critical sense of direction for the agency and the SYEI as a whole.

In sum, four vital building blocks – a history of collaboration among youth-serving agencies, an established network of programs and services with SYEP experience, a strong interest in a comprehensive OST, and strong leadership – contributed to Chicago’s approach to the 2009 SYEI and its ability to innovate under pressure.

PART II

REINVESTMENT AND RECOVERY ACTIONS AND INNOVATIONS: LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP

Although the 2009 SYEI was built on a foundation of programs and relationships, the design took place in a relatively short time. Between the mid-February passage of the legislation and program start-up at the end of May, the DFSS Policy Unit and Youth Division, with the partner organizations, crafted a strategy, released an RFP, selected providers, and issued the contracts through a Hub and Spoke model. The major element was funding a network of Hubs – organizations that would recruit and manage the Spokes (program worksites that directly supervised youth and provided summer jobs). DFSS funded 34 Hubs that developed and managed approximately 880 worksites around the city.

Evolution of the Hub and Spoke Model

Initially, when Federal funding began to seem likely, the OST Partnership and the Youth Employment Committee saw it as an opportunity to restructure the delivery of summer programs through establishing a new, comprehensive, nonprofit youth intermediary to coordinate the city’s youth initiatives. The partner agencies would contract with the new intermediary, which would have the capacity to raise money, issue contracts, and pay youth directly, with greater flexibility than under the current programs. The city would spend roughly a third of the expected funds in 2009, using the balance for year-round activities and a substantial expansion of the program in summer 2010.

Once the bill passed, however, it was clear that the funding was to focus on employing youth in summer 2009. Without the ability to use the funds over a longer term, and with the regulations involved in meeting WIA requirements, the decision was made to manage the SYEI through DFSS, which already operated the WIA-funded youth programs.

The next question was how to organize a program designed to serve over 7,000 youth and promote high quality summer jobs. Part of the challenge was that, as in most cities this year, few DFSS staff had experience with WIA and/or Federally-funded summer jobs programs. DFSS managed a small portfolio of year-round WIA-funded youth programs through regional youth development centers and contracts with community-based agencies, and some WIA program staff at DFSS had been involved in the earlier, JTPA-funded summer jobs programs. However, the WIA staff was small, there were questions about the existing WIA-funded CBOs’ capacity to manage the scale of the new SYEI, and DFSS’ management staff had little or no experience with WIA or the earlier Federally-funded SYEP.

DFSS was also hampered by a citywide hiring freeze, instituted in response to recession-related budget shortfalls. Under the JTPA summer jobs program model, the agency running the program hired job developers, youth recruiters, site monitors, and eligibility-verification and data entry workers. When the SYEP was a regular feature of Federal workforce

development, many of those staff returned year after year, bringing their knowledge and experience. In 2009, DFSS had to look at other ways to manage the summer operation.

In that context, a debate within DFSS took place. A number of staff argued that the SYEI should be either in-house (staffing up with temporary staff) or through contracts with the existing network of WIA youth service providers. They reasoned that these providers knew WIA, were best prepared to deal with eligibility determination issues, and were familiar with the reporting and financial systems; new, “non-WIA” providers would require substantial DFSS training and support.

While acknowledging the advantages of this approach, others, including the Commissioner, argued for casting a broader net. They were skeptical that the limited number of existing WIA providers would have the capacity to manage the large number of worksites and provide payroll support for the large numbers of youth participants under the expanded 2009 program.

At the same time, DFSS leaders saw the summer program as a way to bring new agencies and employers into the youth program network while providing new opportunities for young people. They wanted to provide summer jobs across a broad range of neighborhoods and to a variety of target populations. They were concerned that focusing only on existing providers would leave many neighborhoods and populations with limited opportunities. To accomplish their goals, they argued, the city needed to open up the process to a broader group of organizations through an open, competitive RFP process.

Setting Criteria for the Hubs

After the decision was made to go with the Hub model and broaden the RFP process to include both new and existing WIA providers, additional design decisions were needed.

One major concern was ensuring that Hub agencies had the financial stability to manage a summer payroll and could secure resources to pay youth in advance of the city's reimbursement. While the city's comptroller had promised a five-day turnaround on SYEI invoices, Hubs serving substantial numbers of youth would need to be able to cover a sizable payroll every week. Thus, Hub eligibility was restricted to organizations with an annual operating budget of \$500,000 or more. This eliminated some small organizations from the pool, but ensuring financial accountability and stability was considered paramount. Smaller organizations, it was reasoned, could become involved as Spokes through a link to a larger Hub.

Similarly, while the city wanted to reach out to new organizations, there was also concern that if DFSS had to manage too many Hub contracts, it would be the equivalent of directly managing the worksites. Thus, each Hub had to be willing to serve at least 100 young people under their contract. Again, while this eliminated some smaller organizations, it helped to ensure program manageability. At the same time, it put even more of a premium on financial stability, since program providers would need to be able to carry a payroll of at least 100 summer workers.

Staff recognized that decisions involved trade-offs that could affect program goals and quality. One characterized the trade-offs as follows:

From a contracting perspective, our choices came down to time, money, and quality – and you can usually only get two of the three. ... In this case, for example, the need for a budget minimum excluded some providers – that had quality implications. Financial security also meant some neighborhoods might not be served. But we also had to consider time: Can you afford to hold hands, walk through the process with small organizations that don't know what a single audit or A133 is? We chose one kind of quality, but you exclude people who may not have the capacity to jump through the bureaucratic hoops.

A Special Emphasis on Serving Out-of-School Youth

In addition to the Hub eligibility criteria, the RFP also laid out guidelines that reflected the commitment to providing quality work experiences to a broad array of disadvantaged youth. Following WIA requirements, programs were encouraged to place “special emphasis” on recruiting out-of-school youth and youth with barriers to employment (youth lacking basic literacy skills, pregnant or parenting teens, gang-affiliated youth, youth in TANF families, etc.). Chicago achieved a high level of success in serving out-of-school youth - more than 40% of participants were in this category (see Exhibit 1). This may be a reflection of the Hub approach, where there was a deliberate effort to select Hubs that served high-need populations and were located in high-need neighborhoods. Programs were also expected to assess participants’ basic skills and work readiness and to participate in the statewide, online work readiness assessments that the state of Illinois was conducting for the SYEI. Reflecting youth development principles, the RFP also required Hubs to hire WIA-eligible young people, aged 21 to 24, as worksite supervisors in any worksite with more than ten youth workers. Finally, the RFP emphasized the goals of developing green jobs and providing access to summer employment across all neighborhoods.

Youth Ready Chicago Website

In another connection to the city’s broader youth development efforts, youth interested in a summer job were required to apply through the new Youth Ready Chicago website. The Hubs were expected to use the website database for recruitment. The website allowed young people to indicate the types of jobs or programs they were interested in as well as their location preferences. The website was also seen as a vehicle to recruit employers, and it was assumed that DFSS would provide Hubs with lists of interested employers. Since the website included the summer programs operated by the OST partners, it provided a single point of entry for young people to most of the city’s major summer youth programs.

Building a Team: Working Groups

As DFSS developed the RFP, it organized working groups to focus on issues such as eligibility, work readiness, worksite requirements, and data. The process involved virtually all DFSS youth division staff – an early step in the “all hands on deck” strategy that characterized the agency’s approach to the SYEI. As one DFSS staffer noted, “There just wasn’t enough time for a lot of hierarchy.” The resulting team-building and cross-training process for the agency’s youth programs was regularly cited as one of the unexpected benefits of the SYEI’s experience of innovating under pressure.

Implementing the Hub and Spoke Design

Once the RFP was released, the focus shifted to implementation. The first step was to select the Hubs. Of the 56 organizations that applied, 35 were selected (one later dropped out, leaving 34 Hubs). As with program design, selecting program providers involved choices. Initially, DFSS administrators were tempted to fund all of the proposals, in line with the goal

of bringing in new organizations. However, with \$40 million in proposed programs and \$16 million in available funds, choices had to be made. Some were straightforward. Some applicants did not meet the \$500,000 operating budget minimum or planned to serve fewer than the required 100 youth. Reviewers also looked at capacity to ramp up and deliver a quality program. "We didn't fund a lot of start-ups," one noted. "We didn't see those as working." The agency also looked at target populations (homeless youth, foster care, gang-affiliated), neighborhoods, and types of institutions served. The goal was to provide access to programs across the city and ensure that some of the most disadvantaged youth would be served.

The result was a mix of organizations, from traditional community-based youth programs to major cultural centers, each serving from 100 to over 2,000 youth. Of the 34 Hubs, several (among the largest) were "sister" agencies involved in the OST Partnership and the Youth Employment Committee, including the Chicago Public Schools, the Park District, and Chicago Public Housing. ASM was also one of the largest Hubs. Others included existing WIA program providers, nonprofit community development organizations, community-based agencies, faith-based organizations, and for-profit workforce development firms.

Some Hubs essentially served as large-scale funding agencies for a subsidiary network of programs. The Chicago Public Schools, for example, issued an RFP to all district schools to serve as worksites and then funded programs at over 50 schools. Placements ranged from school office jobs to programs providing complex work-based learning experiences. The Chicago Public Housing Authority contracted with over 30 programs and worksites, including Head Start centers, Boys and Girls Clubs, real estate offices, and catering firms. The Chicago Park District operated over 100 sites, with jobs ranging from park maintenance to day camp counselors. The Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC) worked with over 100 sites, including nonprofit organizations, schools, small businesses, and law offices.

Other Hubs operated smaller programs, sometimes solely within their own organization. The Museum of Science and Industry trained about 75 students and employed them as guides and peer science educators at the Museum and in the community. La Casa Norte, a nonprofit serving homeless youth, placed 100 youth in 25 businesses and programs; Phalanx Community Services, a community-based organization, served approximately 150 youth at 18 sites, including the University of Chicago Medical Center, Boys and Girls Club camp programs, and a landscaping firm.

Altogether, the 34 Hubs brought with them or recruited over 880 worksites, including 300 nonprofit organizations, 285 government agency sites, 205 private businesses, and 90 faith-based organizations (generally operating summer camps and/or childcare programs). Overall, DFSS staff were pleased with the mix of organizations and opportunities.

Chicago Summer Worksites

- Private businesses: 50 food establishments, 35 retail businesses, 20 financial/insurance firms, ten law firms, five hotels.
- Nonprofit and public institutions: 170 community development and social service organizations, 117 Chicago Park District sites, 100 programs for children and youth, 92 public and private schools, and offices of 62 elected officials.
- Other specialized fields: 20 health-care-related organizations, 20 arts/media organizations, 17 colleges and universities, ten landscaping/agricultural organizations, nine science/technology institutions, and seven museums.

From "Program Summary: Youth Ready Chicago Summer Jobs (ARRA)" (Updated: December 2009)

There were surprises in terms of recruiting both worksites and youth. DFSS had assumed that most Hubs would need assistance to recruit worksites and would use employer lists generated through the Youth Ready Chicago website. In fact, most Hubs had already identified worksites – often businesses and nonprofits that had been involved in other programs. Thus the challenge of recruiting employers was less serious than anticipated; but some employers who had signed on to the website hoping to hire youth were disappointed. DFSS worked to link those employers with Hubs that might have young people still looking for jobs. Similarly, while all youth were required to register through the Youth Ready Chicago website, some Hubs or worksites had already identified eligible youth for their summer slots (such as those who were already participating in their organizations' programs). In other cases, the registration process worked as expected: Museum of Science staff, for example, said that DFSS had sent a list of 5,600 applicants interested in museum work from the database. One result was that the recruitment of eligible youth went relatively smoothly, at least at the Hubs and worksites visited for this study. At the same time, the fact that Hubs and worksites drew on existing relationships suggests that young people with pre-existing relationships with Hubs or worksites appeared to have had an advantage in securing a slot. That may have been helpful in 2009, given the short time frame, but efforts may be needed to level the playing field (and to reach the most disconnected youth) in future years.

Between mid-April and the end of May, DFSS staff made the initial Hub selections and presented them for Workforce Board approval. They met with each Hub in May to orient them to the program, negotiated contract terms, and shifted some program slots around, in part to ensure that sufficient slots were available to the community-based partners. DFSS also set up staff teams to work with the Hubs, assigning a staff liaison for each. According to DFSS staff, the procurement office moved the contracting process along quickly, so that by the end of June, most contracts were in place.

Due to the rapid start-up, DFSS had limited opportunity to work with Hubs on program design, encourage innovation, or offer training. One DFSS staff member noted, "If there are creative models, it is because of what the Hubs brought with them."

The Eligibility Challenge

The most significant challenge was documenting applicants' WIA eligibility, according to DFSS, Hub, and worksite staff interviewees. The challenge was not in finding eligible youth, but in collecting the documentation required,¹⁸ reviewing the file, and entering the information into the Illinois Workforce Development System (IWDS), the state's online database, in time for young people to start their summer placements.

In the year-round WIA program, eligibility determination was manageable, with smaller participant numbers and time to gather records. The quick start-up for the SYEI, the larger numbers of youth involved, and the limited time to move youth on to six-week jobs made for a very different situation. In addition, the SYEI and WIA were new to most of those involved in 2009: as noted above, the JTPA summer programs had staff (usually teachers on summer break) who came back year after year and knew the eligibility rules.

¹⁸ Required documentation included proof of age (driver's license, birth certificate, school records); residence; household size and family income (tax returns, pay stubs); welfare or food stamp eligibility; selective service and work status; and barriers to employment.

The 2009 plan was for the Hubs to assemble documentation and for DFSS to review files and, in most cases, enter the data into IWDS. The state's Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity provided three days of WIA training for DFSS staff and the Hubs; the small WIA staff within DFSS provided additional training for DFSS youth division staff. DFSS then organized staff into teams, with each team responsible for assisting a group of Hubs.

Hubs struggled to collect documentation and ensure that applicants met eligibility guidelines. Some parents were reluctant to provide pay stubs or social security numbers; documents were not readily available; and the rules governing who was included in household income were often perceived as unclear. Moreover, young people who were eligible for other kinds of Federal aid (notably, the Free and Reduced Cost Lunch program in the public schools) were not necessarily eligible under WIA. Even when a family was clearly eligible (for example, the mother received food stamps), young people often had to get a letter from their parents confirming that the family was still supporting them. Some were not sure that a six-week temporary job was worth the effort of collecting the documentation.

DFSS staff tried to assist, but many noted that "the devil was in the details – every youth has a different life story." Because many Hubs were new to WIA, DFSS staff had to review each record before approving an applicant and entering data. And, because most DFSS teams had limited WIA experience, they were not able to operate and provide assistance independently as had been hoped; instead, the small WIA staff became the "go-to" contacts.

There were additional data entry problems. Not only was DFSS short-handed, but the IWDS is old and regularly crashed. It took up to 30 minutes to enter a record which, if incomplete, had to be redone. In the end, DFSS hired temps, used interns, and arranged for WIA-experienced Hubs to enter their own participants into the IWDS (DFSS managed the process for newer Hubs).

Responding to the Eligibility Challenge

Cross-Training Youth Division Staff

Responding to these challenges required innovating under pressure. On the positive side, DFSS staff saw the process as an important team-building experience. Senior staff noted that the SYEI provided an opportunity to cross-train the youth division staff and share skills among programs. As one said, the experience "built our capacity to train people and connect the pieces" and helped them move towards a more comprehensive approach. Staff members also expressed pride in working their way through a challenge.

Eligibility Fairs

DFSS and the Hubs tried various ways to streamline the process. The Chicago Public Schools' strategy, in cooperation with DFSS, was to target students whose families were already enrolled in the food stamp program (and hence eligible under WIA rules). Another strategy was "eligibility fairs" with some Hubs, with the goal of completing much of the eligibility process in one setting. DFSS staff, for example, took part in the Chicago Housing Authority fair. Applicants were asked to bring as much of their paperwork as possible, and staff could review documentation and help collect needed paperwork (though they could not make final determinations). The fairs were only moderately successful: too many applicants

still lacked needed documents. One suggestion was to set up future events so that staff could access public records (welfare agency records, vital records, etc.) online.

Flexible Start

Meanwhile, worksites were waiting for workers and young people were anxious to begin jobs. By late June, as noted earlier, the Commissioner directed the staff to allow young people to begin working before their paperwork was completed, if it was reasonably likely that they were eligible. That decision allowed Hubs, applicants, and DFSS to move forward.

Team Approach

Hard work, overtime, and the “all hands on deck” approach resolved the eligibility challenges.¹⁹ DFSS and Hub staff put in unpaid overtime, including during weekends and evenings when the IWDS system was less overloaded. They considered this a good investment. One noted, “It’s all definitely worth it! These kids are all working who wouldn’t be [otherwise].” Clearly, a major element in the success of the 2009 SYEI was this “beyond the call of duty” commitment.

The Impact of the Eligibility Challenge

The eligibility challenge took time away from program design, training, and monitoring, with a likely impact on program quality. For DFSS, time that could have been spent ensuring that Hubs and worksites were implementing programs successfully and meeting requirements was spent addressing eligibility issues. Similarly, several Hubs noted that the time spent on documentation meant that they could not begin worksite monitoring until mid-July.

The eligibility challenge affected the Hubs in other ways. At one Hub visited for this study, staff had planned substantial orientation programs, with up to a week of interviews, meetings with parents, and workplace skills training. Because of the certification and enrollment delays, this training had to be reduced to a single day. Some Hub interviewees also noted that the rush to find eligible youth and move them into jobs meant that there was less time than agencies wanted for careful matching of youth to jobs that fit their interests and skills.

Finally, several DFSS and Hub staff noted that the lines between eligible and ineligible young people often seemed arbitrary: “Someone might miss the cut by \$200 or \$400. There’s a cutoff and there’s no room to breathe around it.” Given that income eligibility levels varied, and were often determined by who happened to be living in the home at the time, there was a strong sense that eligibility rules needed to be simplified, to make the SYEI easier to administer and, perhaps, fairer.

Managing through Cash Flow Issues at the Hubs

The Hubs’ other major implementation challenge was financial management, particularly the need to advance funds to pay young people while waiting for reimbursement from the city. While none of the Hubs considered this insurmountable, most – particularly smaller community-based organizations – saw the lack of advance financing as a challenge.

The timing of the RFP and contracting process meant that Hubs could not use summer funds to hire staff to plan and implement the program unless they had other sources of funding.

¹⁹Working through eligibility was often easier for larger agencies that operated multiple programs – youth who were ineligible under WIA guidelines could be moved into a slot in one of the non-ARRA-funded programs.

Several interviewees said that they had decided not to apply as Hubs because of the need for upfront funding. For smaller agencies, the addition of 100 or more summer employees had other financial impacts as well, including significant increases in payroll processing, workers' compensation insurance, and unemployment insurance costs. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, agencies were expected to have funds to pay young people weekly or bi-weekly while waiting for reimbursement. The largest agencies were less likely to be affected by adding a few hundred short-term employees and were generally able to "front" the funds for payroll. The smaller Hubs tended to call on (or expand) existing lines of credit to cover payroll. Some adopted a phased intake process in which small groups of youth entered the program at a time to minimize financial impact. At Central States SER, for example, youth entered in successive cohorts, rather than all at once.

The Summer Experience: Work and Learning

The worksites provided a range of experiences, from relatively traditional summer placements with minimal enrichment to work that engaged young people in challenging tasks and in learning. The sites visited – a dozen worksites under the supervision of seven different Hubs – made consistent efforts to ensure that the work addressed a real need; included interactions with caring, competent adults (supervisors and/or program staff); supported the development of practical, work-related skills; and showed young people how their job was connected to long-term careers. Appendix 1 summarizes the worksites visited; this section offers examples of meaningful work and learning-rich work experiences.

Meaningful Work. The Hubs' SYEI goal might be summarized as "providing a quality work experience in a meaningful job." The Hubs and worksites visited reflected that value. Some Hubs took a direct role in training and preparing participants as a way to contribute to meaningful work; others left much of the training and design responsibilities to their worksite partners.

Workplace Skills

Phalanx Family Services, a community-based organization serving the south side, placed approximately 180 youth in jobs in 18 sites, from a landscaping firm to the University of Chicago Medical Center. Participants took part in a day of training at Phalanx (reduced from a planned five days) where they learned about workplace expectations and money management (e.g., how to cash a paycheck).²⁰

Private Sector Employment

Central States SER, a community-based organization serving Chicago's Hispanic community, placed greater emphasis on training. SER focused its placements on private businesses – including a florist, a funeral home, and law and insurance firms – in hopes that some jobs might lead to ongoing employment. SER's participants spent their first five days in an orientation and work skills training program. Youth then worked 16 hours a week at their placement, with an additional four hours a week of enrichment activities.

Serving Homeless Youth

La Casa Norte, a community-based program focusing on homeless youth, provided training and services for summer participants, combined with 20-27 hours per week at worksites. The training program provided 30 hours of instruction over the summer in life skills (including financial literacy), communications skills, job search, and workplace skills/job

²⁰ Most Phalanx worksites participated in initial half-day training sessions, where Phalanx staff talked about labor laws, payroll, and reporting as well as about the program's expectations of a positive experience for participants.

retention. In one activity, homeless youth participants prepared a play on the challenges of being homeless and produced it for neighborhood residents. This helped the youth reflect on the issues that they were facing and built bridges between them and the communities in which they lived. Two poems written as part of this project appear in Appendix 2.

Community College Integration

After School Matters (ASM), the Chicago Public Schools, and the Chicago Housing Authority delegated participant training and support largely to their worksites. ASM, as noted earlier, trained worksite providers on effective youth development practices, and the Chicago Housing Authority arranged for approximately 250 participants to take community college classes as part of its program. In most cases, however, the worksites recruited participants and integrated training or educational activities at the worksites.

Career Development for the Visually Impaired

The Chicago Lighthouse is a 100 year old agency serving individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Funded through ASM, the Lighthouse provided jobs for 13 visually impaired young people: one was a worksite supervisor and the others worked four days a week in various departments. One youth updated the agency's database of adaptive technology resources, researching products and downloading images from manufacturers' websites for the database. Two guided visitors to the agency and gave presentations at the agency's summer camp. Others worked as child development program aides with visually impaired children. In addition, all the youth spent one day a week on an intergenerational enrichment project which engaged youth and seniors in interviews with one another and discussions about intergenerational stereotyping. (The interviews and discussions were being compiled as an educational resource.) Youth also participated in four days of orientation and regularly met with the coordinator to assess progress towards goals. "Success," the coordinator said, "is when our summer youth make progress towards their goals. We want them to see how their job fits the big picture, and we want them to leave with some skills and work experience. It is hard for visually impaired youth to get work experience – so this is very important."

Gaining Research Skills

The Survey Lab at the University of Chicago's Social Science Division collects data for social science research projects. Funded through Phalanx Family Services, the Survey Lab employed five youth in a study of community resources in University-area neighborhoods. After 12 hours of training, the youth, working alongside University students, documented the businesses and organizations at each address, checked them against the project database, and used a cell phone-based application to send updated information to the project database. (Training topics included an orientation to the Lab, confidentiality issues, work expectations, and the project's purpose and goals; a major emphasis was on communication and interpersonal skills. Staff emphasized that participants represented the University). Working in two shifts each day, the youth selected streets to walk. They learned about the neighborhoods, explained the project to residents, and learned about building a community resource database. Participants said that they learned planning and communication skills and improved their understanding of the neighborhoods. One said that the project had helped him "learn different ways to approach people" – a vital 21st Century workforce skill – and become "more open-minded" toward people from other neighborhoods.

Learning-Rich Work Experiences. While some worksites focused on providing employment with an opportunity for learning, others developed learning-rich work

experiences. A number of these sites defined themselves as youth development programs as much as summer work experiences.

Engaging Youth in Science

At the Museum of Science and Industry, which was both Hub and worksite, 75 ARRA-supported youth joined 25 others in the Science Achievers Youth Peer Educators program. The Museum, one of the country's oldest and best-known interactive science museums, has a history of science-based programming. The 2009 funding allowed the Museum to quadruple the size of its summer internship program, a long-standing program that integrates work and learning in preparing youth to serve as peer science educators at the Museum and present science programs at Head Start, parks, libraries, camps, and other community sites. Participants began the program with three days of orientation and workplace skills training. Through the summer they received an hour of work readiness, an hour of college readiness, and two hours of leadership development training each week, along with training on the topics that they would be teaching. Training sessions were active and engaging, and included activities such as ice-breakers, group exercises, and journaling. At work, young people hosted exhibits at the Museum, conducted science demonstrations for touring youth groups, and made presentations at community sites. Through the program, the Museum furthered its mission of engaging youth in science while interns expanded their work-related skills. A staff member said, "It's very satisfying to see many of the kids come out of their shells and learn to make presentations, something they have never done."

Engaging Youth in Health

The Student Health Force program was one of the larger and more sophisticated work and learning programs visited. Funded through the Chicago Public Schools, Student Health Force brought together 100 young people from four high schools for a six-week program that prepared them to serve as community health educators. The goal was to educate youth about health issues affecting their communities – such as poor nutrition, obesity, diabetes, and asthma – and provide leadership and communications skills so that they could help educate their families and peers. Participants learned about health, nutrition, and fitness through classroom and computer-based lessons, supplemented by leadership training, financial literacy instruction, CPR training, visits to hospitals and Northwestern University Medical School, and presentations by speakers, including a neurosurgeon, an American Medical Association representative, and the Assistant US Surgeon General. Learning was livened up through Health Trivia contests, dance performances (to demonstrate alternative forms of exercise), and weekly skits by each of the four schools on what they had learned. Students prepared a presentation on a health/fitness topic as a final project, with the goal of developing materials to use after the summer in presentations with their families, in area middle schools, and in community settings. Participants also had opportunities to learn about health careers and build relationships with students from other parts of the city. They said the program helped them understand their own health and gave them needed skills: "I got a better sense of how my own body works," one noted. "And, I want to work with kids – this gives me something to bring to the table."

Learning and Doing

On a smaller scale, the I Am You Boutique provided both work experience and learning, teaching about a dozen young women at a time the ins and outs of running a retail store as well as basic skills in clothing and jewelry design. Funded through the Chicago Housing Authority and one of its sub-Hubs (Employment and Employer Services), the program operates the store as a training ground for low-income women. Youth worked in the store and participated in workplace skills training. During the site visit, the youth conducted role

playing exercises on how to greet customers, ask what they are interested in, show the merchandise, and make a sale. A discussion followed about what was done well and what needed to be improved. One observer called it an example of learning and doing in a positive, supportive, team-building atmosphere.

An Overall Success

By summer's end, over 7,800 youth had been placed in ARRA-funded summer jobs (nearly 20,000 participated in the city's combined summer jobs program with funding from ARRA, the city, and private sources). The large majority of ARRA-funded participants (91%) were ages 14 to 21; over 40% were out-of-school youth. Placements lasted an average of 6.4 weeks, at an average of 23 hours per week, with an average wage of \$8.70 per hour. The city estimated that it had paid over \$10 million in participant wages.

Based on DFSS surveys of participants and employers²¹, the SYEI provided a quality experience for those involved. See Exhibit 1 for the profile of participants. Among youth respondents:

- **Over 90% rated their overall program experience as good or excellent;** a similar percentage rated supervision as good or excellent.
- **Over 90% said that the program helped prepare them for jobs or careers,** and nearly 75% said that the program had helped them academically.
- **Over 80% said that the program helped them develop teamwork skills;** two-thirds (66%) said that it had taught them how to conduct themselves in the workplace. Substantial percentages also mentioned gains in public speaking (50%), problem-solving (41%), personal finance (38%), and computer skills (35%).
- **Over half reported contributing earnings towards household expenses and savings;** three quarters said they would have been unemployed over the summer without the program.

Exhibit 1 Participant Profile²²	
Youth Participants	Percent
Gender	
Male	42%
Female	58%
Age	
14-18	64%
19-21	27%
22-24	9%
Race	
White	11%
Black	74%
Hispanic	18%
Asian	2%
School Status	
In-School	57%
Out-of-School	43%

Employers were similarly positive and saw themselves as partners in the city's youth development efforts. Nearly 90% of those responding to the survey were satisfied with

²¹ Surveys were completed by 919 youth participants and 196 employers.

²² From Denes and Raden, Youth Ready Chicago Participant Survey, p. 1

their youth workers, and 92% would participate again. Over 85% rated their summer employees' skills as average, good, or excellent in nine workplace-related skills areas: satisfactory task completion, timely task completion, ability to learn new skills, interpersonal and teamwork skills, positive behavior and attitude, creative thinking and problem-solving, communications skills, initiative, and punctuality and attendance.

When the study team asked DFSS and Hub staff to assess Chicago's 2009 SYEI, almost everyone expressed pride and satisfaction with their accomplishments and those of their coworkers. One DFSS staffer commented, "I've been surprised at peoples' stick-to-it-ness. I'm so impressed with [the Hubs]." Others praised their colleagues, with one commenting, "When we looked really exhausted, someone would come and help. We uplifted each other." Most had recommendations for improvement, with a particularly strong focus on reform of the WIA eligibility rules and the need for sufficient time for planning and start-up, but everyone pointed to their success in placing thousands of young people in summer jobs, providing them with work, learning experiences, and wages in a tough economy. The ultimate pride was in successfully serving their community. One person summed it up:

President Obama said we each needed to dig deeper – well, Chicago did it!

CHICAGO APPENDIX 1

Hub Organization	Program Strategy	Sample Worksite Experiences	Highlights
After School Matters	Selected worksites/ program providers through RFP process. Trained providers on youth development/ program design.	<i>Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind</i> Visually impaired youth worked at 100 year old agency serving visually impaired children and adults. Jobs included assisting in IT (updating an assistive devices inventory); children's programs (classroom aide), and public relations (guiding tours). All youth participated in a project with senior citizens served by the agency aimed at overcoming stereotypes.	Workplace skills/expectations, communications skills ("I learned to speak up"), interpersonal skills ("patience") and intergenerational knowledge/understanding. <i>"This job is teaching me how to be more patient, dealing with different kinds of kids, speaking up more. Now I can say I have the patience to work with kids."</i>
		<i>St. Agatha Family Empowerment</i> Youth served as counselors in a summer camp program that many of them had attended when they were younger.	Leadership and mentorship. <i>"I learned to be patient and a leader. When younger kids look up to you, you have to become a leader."</i>
La Casa Norte	Provided initial training and 10-12 hours of additional training over 6-8 weeks, including financial literacy and up to six Illinois Work Readiness Training modules (based on needs)	<i>La Casa Norte</i> Youth developed a play in which they explained their experiences as homeless youth and presented it to the community.	Youth development and financial literacy. <i>"This has helped me think about who I am and what I can be."</i>
Central States SER	Provided five-day orientation and training four hours/week enrichment. Taught youth to conduct "Green Audits" and expected them to audit their worksites.	<i>Local Funeral Home</i> Placement as assistants in a local funeral home, greeting families, assisting with services, and doing routine filing and paperwork.	Workplace and communications skills.
Chicago Housing Authority	Selected sub-Hubs that identified worksites, operated programs, and provided training and support. Some youth attend community college classes one day per week.	<i>Charles Haynes Family Information Center</i> Youth in technology training program (operated by TEC Services and Best Buy's Geek Squad) learned workplace skills and expectations and computer software in 15-minute modules that were tailored to youth needs.	Workplace skills and expectations; broad concepts and specifics about using software.

Hub Organization	Program Strategy	Sample Worksite Experiences	Highlights
		<p><i>I Am You Boutique</i> Work experience in a retail store, plus entrepreneurship, customer service, and clothing and jewelry design training.</p>	<p>Business skills and youth development.</p> <p><i>"I was expecting to just work in a store but I am learning a lot."</i></p>
<p>Chicago Public Schools</p>	<p>Selected school-based sites through a district-wide RFP process. Sites ran programs, provided orientation/ training.</p>	<p><i>Student Health Force Program</i> 100 students from four high schools trained as community health educators, focusing on fitness, obesity, and management of chronic disease (diabetes, asthma, etc.). They had classroom instruction on health topics; participated in fitness training (dance, sports); made weekly presentations; and developed 15 minute presentations/teaching modules which they were expected to present in the fall at middle schools and community settings. Program included instruction on workplace skills, leadership and communications, financial literacy, and CPR.</p>	<p>Workplace, leadership, communications skills; knowledge of positive health and nutrition practices. Exposure to students from other neighborhoods.</p> <p><i>"I'm learning new ways to eat, how to better exercise, how to teach other people. I'm also learning CPR – I can help someone someday."</i></p> <p><i>"I got a better sense of how my own body works. And I want to work with kids – this gives me something to bring to the table."</i></p>
		<p><i>Chicago Agricultural High School</i> Students from the year-round Agricultural High School program worked on summer tasks across the school's career pathways, including animal husbandry, commercial agriculture, aquaculture, and beekeeping. They also staffed the school market which sells produce and other school products to the public.</p>	<p>Basic work skills (sense of responsibility). Opportunity to learn content and skills outside of the students' own pathway/major.</p>

Hub Organization	Program Strategy	Sample Worksite Experiences	Highlights
Museum of Science and Industry	In-house worksite. Provided orientation and training for participants.	<i>MSI Youth Peer Educator Program</i> 75 youth trained and worked as peer educators at the Museum and in the community. Youth received training in science topics as well as team-building, other workplace skills, and college readiness. Youth served as guides and instructors for children's groups at the museum and provided similar science education to groups of young children in community settings.	Science education, college preparation, youth development. <i>"You learn every day here. I learned that Pluto is not a planet. More importantly, I learned that I really like science. I didn't like science in school."</i> <i>"I am learning about chemistry and polymers, but also about kids' attention spans and how to teach them."</i> <i>"I've learned about myself, college readiness, and character-building."</i>
Phalanx Family Services	Provided one day orientation/training for participants, half- day training for worksites.	<i>Phalanx Family Services</i> Youth served as office assistants at Phalanx, providing support for the finance and payroll operations.	Basic work skills and office skills (Excel, PowerPoint). <i>"I'm learning about reliability, being prompt, and doing quality work in a short amount of time – the need to double or triple check to make sure it's right, but still meet deadlines. I'm also learning patience from the case managers – they are so patient and supportive. I'm thinking about becoming a case manager – seeing the rewards of helping people."</i>
		<i>University of Chicago Medical Center</i> Youth worked in the Human Resources and Occupational Medicine Departments as office assistants, file clerks, and receptionists. Received an orientation to hospital policies, confidentiality, and work expectations, and toured the facility. Several youth are in nursing assistant programs during the school year.	Basic work skills and hospital routines – filing, communications skills, etc. Supervisor took youth on a tour of the hospital as part of orientation. <i>"I'm learning about occupational medicine."</i>

Hub Organization	Program Strategy	Sample Worksite Experiences	Highlights
<i>(Phalanx continued)</i>		<p><i>University of Chicago Survey Lab</i></p> <p>Youth collected data on a project to build a database of community resources in six south side Chicago neighborhoods. They walked the neighborhoods, working from a map/grid system, to document resources (businesses, organizations, etc.) at each address.</p>	<p>Basic work skills, especially in communications– youth workers are viewed as representatives of the University to the community.</p> <p><i>“This helps me with social skills, communications skills. I’m learning different ways to approach people. I’m learning to be more open-minded, more accepting.”</i></p> <p><i>“In the beginning it was just a job. Now it’s more a development opportunity, providing useful information to my community.”</i></p>

CHICAGO APPENDIX 2

POEMS WRITTEN AS PART OF A CHICAGO PROGRAM FOR HOMELESS YOUTH WHO ARE DOCUMENTING THEIR LIFE STORIES AND PUTTING THEM INTO A PLAY THAT THEY WILL SHARE WITH THE COMMUNITY

I am

I am from days of watching Arthur
From playing with my easy-bake-oven and dressing up my Barbie dolls.
I am from the smell of Puerto Rican food.
From the Blossoms in the park where I use to play as a kid.
I am from no traditions and long brown hair, from Maria and Servando and being a Salazar the rest of my life.
I am from Public Elementary Schools and having to walk miles to get there.
From being out of school more then I was in it.
From don't do this and don't do that.
I am from a religion I don't understand.
A Mexican family I never met, tacos and refried beans.
From the time I traveled from state to state...The loneliness of traveling by myself.
I come from the fear of being alone and the fear of staying there.
I was a lonely little girl.
I am now a happy mother.

That's life....or is it?

I am from the struggle
From the power of poverty
I am from the gang signs that stand on the side of my building
And the dirt from the empty lot
I am from evil and good
From Lucifer and Jesus and the planet earth
I am from the eviction of 99 and the come up of 2009
From keep your head up and never say never
I am from the hood
I am from Chicago
From sour limes and sweet watermelon
From losing my sister because of a custody battle to the pain that will never stop hurting until she is found
I am from the fear of poverty and dying as a poor man to the richness of knowing that I made it this far
I was a dumb kid
I am a smart and wise MAN.



CASE STUDY

INNOVATING UNDER PRESSURE: THE AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT 2009 Summer Youth Employment Initiative

Detroit



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- **Young Detroiter Magazine** (operated at Communities in Schools of Detroit): Rosetta Lamar, *President of Young Detroiter Magazine*
- **New Detroit:** Bobbie Smith, *Human Resources Associate*
- **J.P. Morgan Chase Bank, N.A.:** Christine J. Kageff, *Vice President, Philanthropy and Community Relations*
- **John S. and James L. Knight Foundation:** Brenda Price, *Program Director*

INNOVATING UNDER PRESSURE: THE AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT 2009 Summer Youth Employment Initiative

Detroit

INTRODUCTION

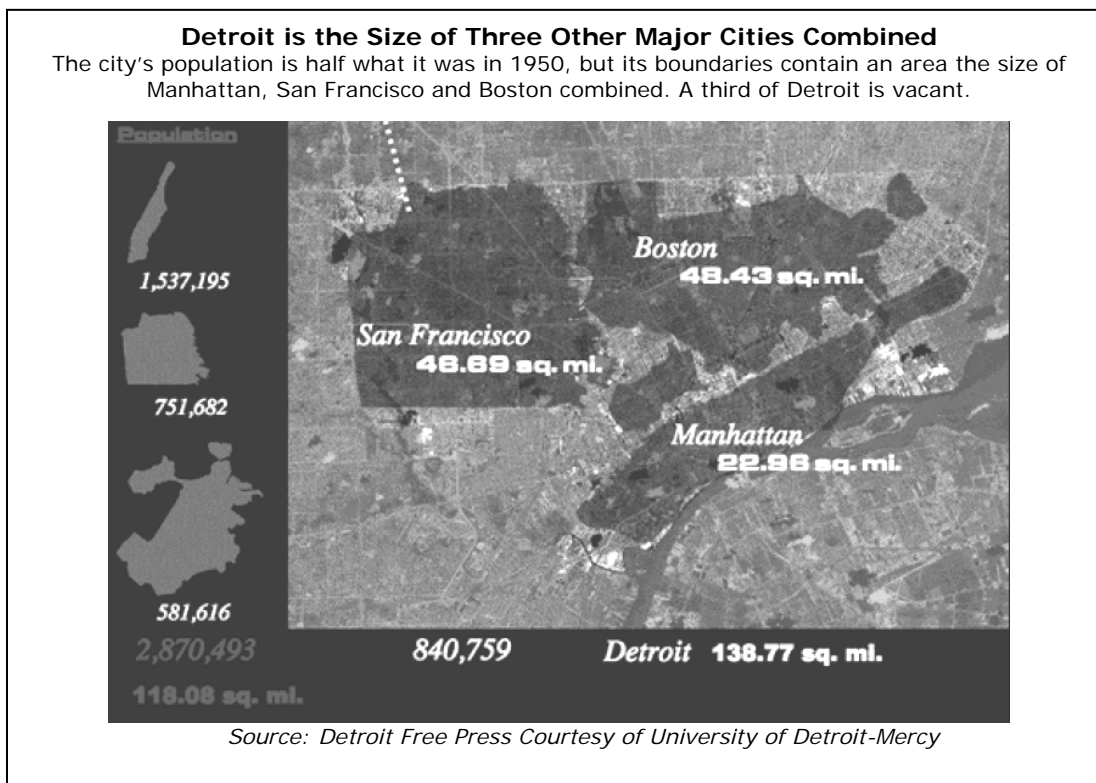
For Detroit, the ARRA SYEI represented a major influx of funds (over \$11 million) and a significant challenge: how to design and roll out a program in less than four months that could provide quality, meaningful summer work and learning experiences for 7,000 young people. While Detroit had maintained a modest public and privately funded summer jobs program serving about 2,500 young people over the years, the ARRA funding represented the first major infusion of Federal funding for summer jobs in over a decade. For the city's youth and workforce development leaders (i.e., the Detroit Workforce Development Department, Detroit Youth Employment Consortium, nonprofits, business, and philanthropy), summer 2009 called for a new way of doing business and ARRA provided the spark and grease to set up the infrastructure, partnerships, systems, and programs needed to deliver effective summer work experiences for the city's youth.

This case study is based on interviews and site visits conducted by staff from the Center for Youth and Communities at Brandeis University's Heller School for Social Policy and Management, primarily during two weeks in July 2009, as well as supplemental materials collected during and after the interview process. The case is organized in two parts: Part 1 provides an overview of the recessionary conditions in Detroit, both challenges and assets; Part 2 describes the Reinvestment and Recovery actions and innovations observed and explored by Brandeis researchers during two weeks in Detroit in summer 2009.

The Detroit SYEI was characterized by its use of ARRA funding as an instrument of change aligned with the broader youth and community development mission of a group of game changers in the city. Its approach built on and strengthened existing collaborations, and included a strong city-intermediary structure with philanthropic leadership and investment.

PART I

RECESSIONARY CONDITIONS: CHALLENGES AND ASSETS



Recessionary Challenges

Detroit's economic, political, social, and environmental conditions are grim. *Time* magazine's special report, "The Tragedy of Detroit" (October 2009), called it "a city on life support." Journalists chronicled the slide from "Motown to Notown" of what had been the "Arsenal of Democracy" and a "city of homeowners." Once the nation's 4th largest city, Detroit is now only 11th largest: the population has slipped from two million to 800,000. Reporters called the once "muscular" neighborhoods the "urban equivalent of a boxer's mouth – more gaps than teeth."²³

There is the feel of a manmade ghost town across many of Detroit's 138 square miles. Metropolitan Detroit had the nation's highest foreclosure rate in 2007, up 68% from 2006. The number of vacant housing units has doubled to 200,000 during the decade.²⁴

The recent population loss, due largely to corporate failures and domestic automakers' financial decline, is second only to New Orleans in Hurricane Katrina's aftermath. By nearly all measures, Detroit is a city under siege. It has the highest poverty rate (33.8%) of any large American city; nearly half of its children are poor.²⁵ Michigan has had the nation's highest state unemployment rate since 2006. In February 2009, Detroit had the highest

²³ *Time Magazine*, October 5, 2009.

²⁴ Ben Rooney, *Rust and Sun Belt Cities Lead '07 Foreclosure*, CNN Money, Feb. 13, 2008.

²⁵ US Census Bureau, *American Community Survey*, 2007

unemployment rate (13.6%) of any large metro area; by June, it had risen to 15.3%.²⁶ In fall 2009, unemployment stood at 28.99% according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics; but at the White House Jobs Summit, Detroit's Mayor Bing suggested that the truth was even more disturbing: closer to 50% and in some spots up to 80%.

Recessionary Challenges

- High poverty
- Collapse of the automobile industry
- Highest foreclosure rate
- Highest unemployment rate
- Shrinking population
- Brain drain
- Racial disparities and divides
- Schools in receivership with many closing
- High violence
- Food insecurity and hunger
- Alarming increases in diet-related diseases
- Government in turmoil - three mayors in one year
- Indictments on City Council
- Budget deficits
- Vast geographic landscape

The "One D Scorecard," released during the Detroit Regional Chamber's²⁷ 2009 Annual Mackinac Policy Conference, offers another analysis of metropolitan Detroit conditions. Per capita income for a region once among the nation's richest has fallen to 29th among 54 metro areas. Young people are leaving Detroit: just 12% of the population is aged 25-34 (43rd in the nation). Less than 70% of residents have high school diplomas, leaving one-third of the population virtually unemployable given 21st century skills and knowledge demands. Finally, Detroit ranks second among metro areas in black/white segregation, and the gap in income and education attainment between blacks and whites is wide.²⁸

With these challenges – despite the efforts of devoted teachers and administrators – a quality education is hard to come by. The Detroit Public Schools are in receivership. In summer 2009, officials initiated a massive downsizing to address a \$306 million deficit, and the plan called for closing 29 schools by fall 2009.

Six out of ten Detroit students were behind in reading before entering high school.²⁹ With only 37.5% of high school students graduating (compared to 75% nationally), Detroit has one of the lowest graduation rates in any large city.³⁰ The National Youth Risk Behavior Survey³¹ results underscore the urgent need to transform the schools. For example:

- 11.4% of Detroit high school students did not attend school at least once in the 30 days prior to the survey due to safety concerns – more than double the national rate of 5.5%.
- 10.4% of high school students attempted suicide during the previous 12 months, compared to 6.8% nationwide.

In addition, the pull out of all major grocery stores from Detroit has exacerbated food insecurity and hunger. Many neighborhoods have been designated "food deserts" – areas

²⁶ Bureau of Labor Statistics, Unemployment Rates in Metropolitan Areas, 2010.

²⁷ The highly regarded Regional Chamber, chaired by Edsel B. Ford, was formed to foster collaboration among nonprofit organizations committed to Detroit's recovery.

²⁸ One D Scorecard, www.onedscorecard.org (2009).

²⁹ Lee, J., Grigg, W., and Donahue, P. (2007). *The Nation's Report Card: Reading 2007* (NCES 2007-496). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC.

³⁰ Laird, J., DeBell, M., Kienzl, G., and Chapman, C. (2007). *Dropout Rates in the United States: 2005* (NCES 2007-059). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

³¹ Center for Disease Control, National Youth Risk Survey (2007).

with no or distant food stores and limited access to fresh, nutritious food. Diet-related diseases such as obesity and diabetes are rising at alarming rates. In a 2007 report on the subject,³² the author found that “the vast majority of places to purchase groceries in Detroit are fringe locations, such as convenience stores, liquor stores and gas stations. Unless access to healthy food greatly improves, Detroit residents will continue to have greater rates of premature illness and death from diet-related diseases, after controlling for other key factors.”

Further, Detroit has one of the nation’s highest murder rates, and seven out of ten murders go unsolved: “there have been more killings so far this year in Detroit than in New York City, and New York City has nearly ten times as many people.”³³

Finally, the local government has been in turmoil – three mayors in one year and fraud and indictments on the City Council. As one leader said, “It’s not just the Mayor who changed; it’s also the staff up and down the city’s systems. This has made it hard to work together on the summer stimulus and a lot of projects.”

In short, the recessionary conditions in Detroit were, and are, daunting. Yet there are many innovative, talented, and skilled leaders who are passionate about “bringing Detroit back,” concentrating on schools, city government, and land use. Many of these leaders and managers told the Brandeis team, “These are the best of times and the worst of times” and “a crisis is a terrible thing to waste!”

Recessionary Assets

How does Detroit address these seemingly intractable social and economic problems - especially under the lens of a skeptical public and intensive government monitoring? It starts and ends with Detroit’s great asset – its people.

The Brandeis team found a vibrant hidden infrastructure of vision, hope, pride – and a discipline of innovation – among a core group of game changers in Detroit. These leaders are on a mission - stimulated by the Skillman Foundation’s ten-year investment in Good Neighborhoods and Good Schools known as “Detroit Works for Kids” (see www.skillman.org) – to transform Detroit’s neighborhoods and “create conditions where all children are safe, healthy, well-educated and prepared for adulthood.” This is the story of how Detroiters used the ARRA as an instrument of change toward that broader mission. Ensuring and creating high quality summer jobs is part of the answer, but as many leaders said, “it’s also about big systems change and strategically re-engineering for a new economy and new opportunities in green jobs, healthcare and the creative arts.”

Recessionary Assets: Hope, Pride, Discipline, and Resilience

Hidden infrastructure including:

- Mission-driven and results-oriented leadership, systems thinking, and entrepreneurial spirit
- Established and expanding partnerships between philanthropy, city and state government, business, and nonprofits
- Commitment to research-based best practice in programs and management
- Institutional memory regarding large scale summer programs
- Culture of learning and continuous quality improvement

³² Mari Gallagher Research & Consulting Group (2007). Examining the Impact of Food Deserts on Public Health in Detroit. Chicago, IL.

³³ Hargreaves, S. Stopping Detroit’s Brain Drain, www.cnnmoney.com September 21, 2009

PART II

REINVESTMENT AND RECOVERY ACTIONS AND INNOVATIONS: LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP

It was clear that for the SYEI to succeed, Detroit would need to capitalize on its existing strengths, including:

- The ability to draw upon an array of positive partnerships with individuals, businesses, and nonprofits.
- Strong working relationships with the Detroit Workforce Development Department and the State of Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth.
- Public and nonprofit professionals who not only have hope, pride, and discipline but also possess institutional memory of the large USDOL SYEPs of a decade ago.
- A history of strategizing and planning effective youth development programs.
- A cadre of passionate Detroiters who come to the table when asked. Indeed, there is a culture of “coming to the table.” (Yet, as numerous people pointed out, “The trick is to keep people at the table.”)

The ARRA was a catalyst for a turnabout in Detroit’s approach to workforce development. Not only did it make Federal money available for youth employment; it also presented opportunities for new ways of doing workforce development in the city.

Laying the groundwork: the Detroit Youth Employment Consortium

In the spring and summer of 2009, the Detroit Youth Employment Consortium (YEC) members served as chief strategists and guides for the implementation of the ARRA SYEI. In support of SYEI, the Skillman Foundation granted up to \$500,000 toward implementation. YEC arose in 2008, when the Skillman Foundation funded a summer jobs pilot, largely in response to consistent messages from youth that they wanted to work and were frustrated by the prospect of reaching adulthood without ever having a regular job. The pilot programs, under the auspices of the Youth Development Commission (YDC) working with local nonprofits, provided 300 jobs. The Foundation convened the partners to share experiences and best practices. The group formed a learning community, persuaded the City of Detroit and Michigan’s Department of Labor and Economic Growth to participate and commit resources, crafted the mission, generated recommendations, and established itself as the YEC.

Detroit Youth Employment Consortium (YEC)

- Initiated by The Skillman Foundation in 2008, YEC is a cross-sector partnership committed to expanding summer and year-round employment opportunities for Detroit youth ages 14-18.
- Mission: “To develop a public-private partnership that expands sustainable high-quality youth employment opportunities in the city of Detroit that promote positive youth development (i.e., connect youth to employment exploration, encourage and support persistence and secondary education attainment).”
- Members include City Connect Detroit, Brightmoor Alliance, Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation, Greening of Detroit, Latino Family Services, Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion, Prevailing Community Development Corporation, Student Conservation Association, Youth Development Commission, Detroit Community Initiative, Mt. Vernon Missionary Baptist Church, National Community Development Institute, The Skillman Foundation, University of Michigan School of Social Work Good Neighborhood Technical Assistance Center, Youth Development Commission, JPMorgan Chase, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Knight Foundation, Mott Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, Department of Labor and Economic Growth, State of Michigan, Workforce Development Department, City of Detroit, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Michigan, Compuware, Johnson Controls Inc., Lear Corporation, Bank of America, DTE Energy.

Detroit Youth Development Commission (YDC)

The Skillman Foundation formed Detroit's Youth Development Commission (YDC) in 1995 to address recreational activities for youth during out-of-school hours. Over time, its role expanded to include youth development initiatives such as youth employment and summer work. Skillman funded YDC's *Work Opportunities for Youth* program for nine years, during which it served 1,000 to 2,000 youth each summer, offering classroom-based employability skills training through numerous community-based organizations.

The YDC did not operate summer jobs programs for three years; then, in 2008, the Skillman Foundation granted \$300,000 to the YDC as fiduciary to pilot youth employment programs in six neighborhoods. YDC subcontracted with local organizations to provide public and private sector jobs at about 60 sites for about 300 youth.

For the 2009 SYEI, the YDC became the operational subcontractor/partner (City Connect Detroit was the lead intermediary/coordinator). YDC was responsible for the day-to-day operation of youth certification, assessment, and orientation; identifying, contracting with, monitoring, and providing technical assistance to many worksites; providing youth development training and education; collecting timesheets, processing payroll, and distributing paychecks; managing program data; providing support and follow-up; and conducting some aspects of program evaluation and continuous quality improvement.

This groundwork ultimately led to a new way of doing business: strong city-intermediary collaboration with philanthropic leadership and investment. The Detroit Workforce Development Department (DWDD) selected City Connect Detroit to serve as SYEI Coordinator. According to one city leader, "They have a reputation for getting things done." City Connect proposed working in partnership with the YDC and the YEC, which provided strategic vision and resources. The state had to approve the Consortium approach and there was a readiness among state leadership to try this new way of doing business for summer youth employment. This collaborative structure was created in a matter of weeks, demonstrating an adaptive capacity³⁴ rarely seen among government, philanthropy, and nonprofits. A philosophy that "partnerships are a must" drives the complex but functional management structure.

As Exhibit 1 illustrates, City Connect submitted a proposal in response to an April 2009 DWDD RFP for a program

administrator to manage all aspects of a summer work program. (After nearly 20 years of contracting with the private, for-profit *Career Works* to carry out employment-related programs, DWDD briefly ran the youth employment program before issuing the RFP.) City Connect, an intermediary organization dedicated to partnership and collaboration, emerged as the most appropriate lead agency/program administrator. Its senior staff are steeped in partnership development and their work culture reflects that. For example, "relationship management" within and across organizations is a formal function and competency in job descriptions and performance reviews. Meantime, the number of youth to be served had risen to 7,000 as more funds had become available but the turnaround time for the RFP was only 11 days! City Connect marshaled the forces of numerous organizations and groups, and responded with a winning proposal.

Detroit's SYEI management and leadership structure was distinctive (compared to that of many other cities) in that it was overseen and managed by a nonprofit intermediary organization that brokered strategic partnerships to accomplish the goals. Further, they did so with a regional economic focus in three areas: green jobs, healthcare, and creative arts.

³⁴ Adaptive capacity is an organization's ability to ask, listen, reflect, and adapt in a changing environment. C. W. Letts, W. P. Ryan, and A. Grossman (1999). *High Performance Nonprofit Organizations* (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York).

Even with this high level of collaboration, Detroit’s operational capacity was “pushed and challenged,” as one stakeholder noted. However, City Connect’s expressed philosophy was, “Keep your eyes on the prize, and know that mistakes are learning opportunities.” This sense of mission, drive, and commitment to excellence and continuous improvement were expressed during interviews with Detroit people at all levels.

Exhibit 1
Creating a New Way of Doing Business:
Strong City-Intermediary Collaboration with Philanthropic Leadership and Investment

“City Connect Detroit, in partnership with the Detroit Youth Employment Consortium, the Skillman Foundation and Youth Development Commission, presented a successful proposal to the Detroit Workforce Development Department to become Coordinator of the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP).”-Board Report 10/20/09, City Connect Detroit

Roles and Responsibilities of Partners

Organization	Role/Responsibility
Detroit Youth Employment Consortium (Co-created and supported by The Skillman Foundation; endorsed by city and state workforce leaders)	Convene cross-sector consortium focused on strategic development of year-round youth employment opportunities.
Detroit Workforce Development Department	Overall program monitoring to ensure city, state, and Federal compliance, accountability, and transparency.
City Connect Detroit	Provide SYEP leadership/direction. Monitor program performance/quality. Develop private sector worksites (#50+). Manage innovative partnerships (#13+).
Youth Development Commission	Implement WIA/SYEP 10 Key Elements* for Youth Programs and provide quality training and guidance for youth development approach.
University of Michigan – School of Social Work , Good Neighborhoods Technical Assistance Center	Conduct program evaluation with youth and employers

*As established by the Department of Labor (DOL) Training and Employment Guidance letter (TEGL) 14-08. Key elements include incorporating age appropriate activities and establishing work readiness goals, conducting meaningful work experiences, establishing positive worksites, integrating work and classroom-based learning activities, connecting to registered apprenticeships, linking academic and occupational learning, supporting older/out-of-school youth during non-summer months, focusing on youth most in need, conducting twelve-month follow-up, and incorporating green work experiences. ETA provided flexibility through ARRA on, for example, follow-up services, assessment, and academic learning linked to summer employment.

City Connect Detroit

"They have a reputation for getting things done."

Mission: To help metropolitan Detroit nonprofits and governments obtain increased national funding and to facilitate collaborations among nonprofits, governments, businesses, grantmakers, and others.

Embedded amidst an array of partnerships, City Connect was the summer 2009 SYEI coordinator and responsible for program management. City Connect manager-leaders demonstrated a mission-focused, results-oriented approach and a commitment to research-based best practices and continuous improvement as they provided leadership direction, monitored program performance, developed private-sector worksites, and managed innovative partnerships.

History: In 1998, the Skillman Foundation and other public and nonprofit leaders formed a planning group to address chronic under-funding of Detroit area human service programs by the Federal government. Among the major reasons for this problem are the following:

- A need for greater understanding and trust among local nonprofit organizations, foundations, and city departments.
- A comparative lack of cross-sector collaborations.
- A need for available, timely information about Federal and national foundation funding opportunities.
- A perception that southeast Michigan's nonprofit organizations lack organizational capacity to successfully compete for funding at the national level.

(See www.cityconnectdetroit.org)

City Connect Detroit was created in 2001 to address those challenges. Its purpose is to help groups advance important community issues by using data, connecting with others, and advancing collective strategic approaches. A board was formed to oversee the organization; a highly experienced CEO and small staff were hired. City Connect received a start-up grant with a five-year goal of raising \$25 million. It brought in more than twice that much in half the time expected. City Connect has helped form more than thirty collaborative partnerships that focus on many issues, including youth development and youth employment.

Using established relationships and a skilled staff, City Connect led Detroit's capacity to develop the collaborative relationships to move the Detroit SYEP forward rapidly.

Technical challenges, however, were around every corner. Like others in 2009, Detroit confronted dilemmas with eligibility and certification requirements, financial management systems/ payroll, cash flow, and job matching. Examples of these challenges, and Detroit's responses, follow.

"Ramping up to serve 7,000 kids is not without incident."

Certification and Eligibility: From Confusion to Innovation

Outreach to young people started in winter 2009. The Detroit Workforce Development Department (DWDD) organized "Super Saturdays" and used its One Stop Centers, schools, churches, and other locations to recruit and distribute pre-applications. The City Council issued announcements. Pre-applications were to be turned in at One Stop Centers. "Everyone was knocking on the door, hoping for a chance to work."

Pre-applications were intended as a statement of interest in participating in the SYEI. DWDD's receipt of a pre-application was to trigger a letter telling the applicant to attend a

certification appointment and be tested using TABE³⁵ reading/math assessments. More than 25,000 youth completed pre-applications; however, some youth and families misinterpreted the pre-application as the whole application process. As a result, the SYEI staff needed to reach out to many applicants and their families to explain the full process.

In June 2009, City Connect and the YDC began handling certification, with DWDD in an oversight role. This transition, while challenging, was largely successful. City Connect organized a rapid response team to accelerate the certification process, instituting an “all hands on deck” approach (and hiring additional hands). By the end of the SYEI, City Connect reported 7,047 certified placements.

Top Technical Challenges

- Eligibility/certification
- Financial management systems/payroll
- Cash flow
- Job matching

Detroit’s Payroll Management Response:

“Mistakes Represent Learning Opportunities”

A problem arose during Detroit’s first payroll: 534 out of 2,614 youth who were expecting paychecks were not paid on time. Some checks were not issued because timesheets were submitted after deadline. Others were not issued because some agencies were working with kids who had “always been eligible before,” and who they “knew” would

be eligible again in 2009; these agencies put young people to work without completing the certification process and submitted timesheets for them. Thus, timesheets were submitted for uncertified youth; but due to the checks and balances, no paychecks were issued.

A team of manager-leaders from City Connect and the YDC began troubleshooting immediately, working through the weekend to tackle the problem. They received 331 complaints on payday, and had resolved 221 of them by the end of that day. They analyzed how and why problems occurred and came up with solutions. They implemented a rapid certification process, provided additional training to site monitors and field reps regarding certification and payroll procedures, and improved information flow. They informed agencies that if agency-created problems occurred on the second round of paychecks, the agencies would be responsible for paying the youth from their own funds. They created an ad hoc payroll team to conduct quality assurance to reduce the chances that problems would recur. It worked! By the end of the program, they had issued more than 23,000 checks totaling \$7,569,748.

Cash Flow Innovation

When the authorization for the summer program came in May, City Connect and other organizations had to move forward based upon verbal commitments – without contracts signed or money flowing. Meanwhile, staff, supervisors, and administrators, had to be hired, trained, and paid.

“Money helps, but people solve problems...but money helps!”

The cash flow dilemma was largely addressed through the availability of a flexible fund from the Skillman Foundation and a line of credit with a financial institution. The Skillman Foundation established what became known as “a vault” with several hundred thousand dollars to address cash flow dilemmas and support potentially ineligible youth. Manager-leaders also called this the “safety/penalty box fund.” Interviewees remarked time and time

³⁵ The Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) is a series of assessments used by a range of employers and educators to help identify test takers’ levels of competency, educational goals, learning styles, etc.

again that “we could not have done this without Skillman.” As one said, “Their support allowed us to be nimble and take some necessary risks.” This proved to be an essential factor of success, given the complexity and timing of the contracts and certification process and the need to be audit-proof. With multiple funding streams, multiple entities were monitoring the SYEI (Federal, state, city, et al.), paperwork was time-consuming. From a management and leadership perspective the problems were ultimately worked out, but the funding lag left some damaged feelings in neighborhood programs that will need to be repaired. The leadership team will develop a financial management model to prevent this in future programs.

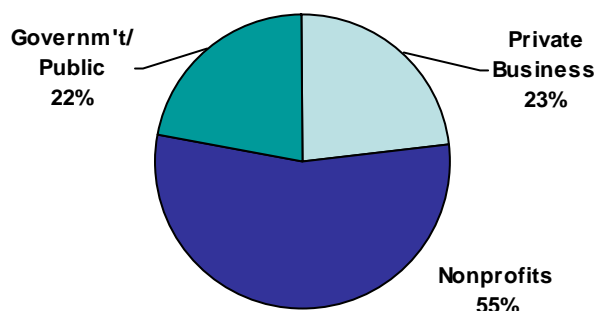
Job Matching/Worksite Development

Developing more than 7,000 meaningful jobs that are connected to youths’ interests, respond to regional industries, and are within acceptable travel distances posed a challenge.

During the certification process, youth wrote job preferences on their applications. Early in the summer, YDC did its best to match youth with jobs that had some connection to their stated preferences. As the summer progressed and the number of youth enrolled grew, interest-driven job matching became more challenging.

Because Detroit’s public transportation is underdeveloped, geography played a governing role in deciding where to place youth.

Figure 1. Job Matching Percentages



MIS Demographics (As of 1/19/10)	
Older Youth	1,303
Younger Youth	4,670
Out-of-School	1,113
In-School	4,840
5% Ineligible	119
Male	2,810
Female	3,163
White American	74
African American	5,893
American Indian/Alaskan	24
Asian	4
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	4
Hispanic/Latino	89
Disabled	129

YDC attempted to place young people in jobs within their home zip codes; when this was not possible, the goal was at least to provide a job on each youth’s side of the city/downtown.

There were also instances in which employers wanted only older youth or youth with specific skills; in other cases, agencies wanted “only their own kids.” To the extent possible, YDC attempted to fulfill these requests.

Though the majority of youth were younger, in-school youth, more than 1,300 were older youth who needed jobs. Some were desperate and “just want any job.” Others had more specific interests.

In the end, City Connect Detroit and YDC developed 242 worksites, 57 of them in the private sector (which exceeded their internal goal of 50). See Figure 1 for a breakdown of types of worksites.

Youth Work Readiness Orientation and Training

All youth enrolled in Detroit's SYEI participated in what the SYEI dubbed the "COOL" program – a series of four-hour training, learning enrichment, and occasionally tutorial sessions led by YDC teachers that covered work readiness topics such as:

- Getting and keeping a job
- Getting ready for the world of work
- Life skills
- Understanding finances
- Green careers
- Leadership skills

This training, held at six sites, typically served 25 youth per session. Youth who enrolled at the beginning of the summer attended weekly *COOL Fridays* sessions, and worked Mondays through Thursdays. As the summer advanced, this schedule became unmanageable given the large number of youth involved. YDC adjusted by front-loading the program: newly enrolled youth attended the entire set of *COOL* sessions in their first week (five days), then moved into their jobs five days per week.

Meaningful Work Experience

Despite the SYEI's rapid implementation, Detroit managed to offer many young people an array of meaningful experiences (see Appendix 1). The Brandeis team asked worksite and program supervisors to define meaningful work experience. A sampling of their responses follows:

Exhibit 2 Youth Programs Best Practice Criteria

- Meaningful work
- Relationship with competent, caring adults (high quality staff and worksite supervisors)
- Youth development principles in place for positive developmental settings
- Opportunity to combine work and learning and acquire marketable skills
- Age and stage appropriate placements and tasks
- Evidence of partnerships / coordination for "system of supports and opportunities"

- "Not just a paycheck"
- "Broadens and deepens thinking about self and others"
- "Creates a growing confidence and belief and pride in self"
- "Motivates you to succeed in schooling, gives a sense of possibility"
- "Infuses all aspects of an industry into the experience"
- "Combines work and learning with projects and active academics"
- "Exposes kids to new career options and the skills they need to make a living"
- "Inspires kids to do something with their lives"

Both youth development and integrated work and learning strategies had traction in Detroit and were observed in programs and placements that included junior police cadets, environmental stewardship, urban gardening, journalism, participatory action research, pharmacology and the Arts. Based on research conducted on summer and year-round youth programs, the Brandeis team created a short list of best practice criteria (see Exhibit 2).

At the worksites visited – which employed approximately one-third of the total youth served in summer 2009 – most of the sites met these criteria. For example, worksite supervisors were top-rate. Supervisors saw youth's value and potential, recognized the role of work in youth development and transition to adulthood, and endeavored to make young people's summer experiences meaningful.

Highlights from Summer Evaluation Findings

Results of employer and youth employee exit surveys³⁶ support the Brandeis researchers' perception that Detroit youth and employers had a positive experience. Among employers, 110 responded to the survey (a 64.7% completion rate); 1,416 youth responded (a 20% completion rate).

Employers who responded to the survey were very positive about the program:

- 99% would participate in the program again; 98% would encourage other organizations to participate.
- 70% said the Detroit SYEI can be improved next year by "starting the program earlier in the summer" while 53% said by "making a year-round employment program."

Employers also said that their worksites helped prepare youth for future employment by building and providing experience with employment skills and by offering exposure to possible career choices. They also said that their worksites help prepare youth academically by reinforcing the importance of an education, and by connecting youth to higher education and educational resources.

"Look at the kids – this is where the diamonds are."

Among youth respondents:

- 84% felt safe and respected by adults.
- 74% said that there was an adult they felt comfortable talking to; staff challenged them to do their best; and they had a chance to help people in the community.
- 72% said that they felt like their opinion mattered.
- 73% reported that the program changed their ideas about the future, most frequently reporting that they now have more confidence about whatever they do (37%) and think they can get a better job (34%).
- 70% learned to work with others as a team.
- 47% learned how to act at work.
- 46% said that the program helped them decide what kind of job they liked.
- 35% said it helped them understand the qualifications needed for their dream job and prepare for a job interview.
- 40% said it raised their expectations of themselves.
- 30% said it helped them decide to stay in school.
- 88% said that they made new friends.
- 76% would recommend the program to others.
- 35% reported that they gave the money they earned to their family.

When asked what job they wanted in ten years, the youth³⁷ listed the following:

Nurse: Pediatric nurse, psychiatric nurse, neonatal nurse, and certified nurse midwife

Doctor: Pediatrician, OB-GYN, eye doctor, urologist, cardiologist, army doctor, surgeon, anesthesiologist, neurosurgeon, pediatric surgeon, neonatal surgeon, medical examiner, holistic doctor, sports medicine physician, and radiologist

³⁶Shanks, T. and McGee, K. (2010). *Detroit Summer Youth Employment Program: Results of Employer and Youth Employee Exit Surveys*. University of Michigan – School of Social Work, Good Neighborhoods Technical Assistance Center.

³⁷1,141 out of 1,416 respondents completed this item for a response rate of 80.6%.

Lawyer: Business law, corporate attorney, defense attorney, district attorney, prosecution attorney, and criminal justice lawyer for juvenile delinquencies

Entrepreneur or shop owner: Catering, chef owning my own restaurant, massage, spa, production company, salon, barbershop, daycare, and adult care

Engineer: Electrical, computer, mechanical, automotive, civil, and chemical

Sports: Basketball (NBA, WNBA), baseball (MLB), boxing, football, UFC and mixed martial arts, and bowling

Corporate: Business manager, business man/woman, business administration, CEO, Financial advisor, business consulting, marketing, banking, and marketing

Arts: Design art, cartoonist, graphic novelists, computer animation, choreographer, dancer, dancing with Alvin Alley, teaching dance, music producer, Mariachi with a Master's degree, rapper, R&B and rap artist, singer, and music/sound engineer

Law enforcement: SWAT team, homicide detective, and K-9 officer

Teacher: Pre-school teacher, high school teacher, music teacher, English teacher, and special education teacher

The findings suggest that summer work and learning opportunities can play an important role in youth development and future work and career aspirations.

The program worksites defined in Appendix 1 represent placements for about one third of youth workers. All seven represent promising and best practice worthy of future investment and replication. Appendix 2 illustrates the strategic alignment between Detroit's recessionary conditions and the recovery and reinvestment actions taken by the leadership team.

Final Words

"Hope is the difference between success and failure in Detroit."

During summer 2009, Detroit innovated under pressure and combated obstacles with social and intellectual capital, material assets, and the political will, skills, and strategy to seize this opportunity to make Detroit work for kids. The leaders who were interviewed said, "We are not done" and "we need year-round youth work and learning opportunities and we are planning for that now." Many noted with hope, "We have a strong Mayor now." Mayor Bing – a businessman and former Detroit Pistons star - took over in May 2009 before winning a full term election in November 2009. According to *Time* (October 2009, "The Chief Executive"), the new Mayor will "impose his own financial discipline and entrepreneurial sense on city government." Newly invigorated political leadership coupled with an aggressive school reform movement and determined leaders in philanthropy, nonprofits, business, and state government may keep this fast-moving train on track.

"Detroit is an example of resiliency tied to hope."

One Foundation leader said, *"In spite of the many challenges – City Council problems, mayoral turnover, people hesitant to invest in Detroit, the unraveling of the corporate sector, the feeling of being under siege – we pulled this off!"*

DETROIT APPENDIX 1

Organization	Program Strategy	Sample Worksite Experiences	Highlights
Management and Leadership			
<p>Detroit Youth Employment Consortium/ Detroit Workforce Development Department/ City Connect Detroit/ Youth Development Coalition/ University of Michigan – School of Social Work, Good Neighborhoods Technical Assistance Center</p>	<p>Creating a new way of doing business: Strong city-intermediary collaboration with philanthropic leadership and investment</p> <p><i>“City Connect Detroit, in partnership with the Detroit Youth Employment Consortium, the Skillman Foundation and Youth Development Commission, presented a successful proposal to the Detroit Workforce Development Department to become Coordinator of the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP).” – Board Report 10/20/09, City Connect Detroit</i></p>	<p>Convene cross-sector consortium focused on strategic development of year-round youth employment opportunities.</p> <p>Overall program monitoring to ensure city, state, and Federal compliance, accountability, and transparency.</p> <p>Provide SYEP leadership/direction. Monitor program performance/quality. Develop private sector worksites (#50+). Manage innovative partnerships (#13+).</p> <p>Implement WIA/SYEP 10 Key Elements for Youth Programs and provide quality training and guidance for youth development approach.</p> <p>Conduct program evaluation with youth and employers.</p>	<p>The innovative collaboration approach (a brand new way of doing business) was created in a matter of months and grew out of the mission of the newly formed Youth Employment Consortium: <i>“To develop a public-private partnership that expands sustainable, high quality youth employment opportunities in the city of Detroit that promote positive youth development.”</i></p>
Education Partners and Worksites			
<p>CVS Caremark Workforce Initiative/ CVS Corporation</p>	<p>CVS Caremark provided young people with summer pharmacy internships that exposed them to careers in pharmacy and other healthcare professions. 90 youth were placed in 39 stores in the Detroit metro area. Prior to their internships, young people received a week of training at a CVS Regional Learning</p>	<p>CVS Pharmacy Assistants at 39 “Pharmacies of Promise.”</p>	<p>This innovative public-private collaboration combined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meaningful work. ▪ Relationships with competent, caring adults. ▪ Opportunities to combine work and learning and acquire marketable skills. ▪ Significant use of a broad array of SCANS skills and competencies.

Center for Youth and Communities, The Heller School for Social Policy and Management

Organization	Program Strategy	Sample Worksite Experiences	Highlights
	Center. Following the summer, interns attended a week-long educational session at the Wayne State University College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Significant exposure to the rigors of a private-sector workplace. <p>One supervisory pharmacist said, <i>“Look carefully. This is where the diamonds are – the young people working here.”</i></p>
Youth Engaged In Community Research/ University of Michigan	Using community asset surveys and focus groups, 60 young people collected data in their neighborhoods to explore how safe, healthy, educated, and prepared for adulthood local youth were. Prior to data gathering, youth participated in role plays to help them get people to respond to their surveys. Youth generated the questions they would ask during focus groups. They compiled what they heard/learned during focus groups, and conducted basic asset mapping. As a culminating event, youth gave a presentation to the Michigan Governor’s Council.	University of Michigan participatory action research (PAR) in six Detroit neighborhoods.	This university-sponsored initiative engaged young people in participatory community research that incorporated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Youth development and youth research principles. ▪ A superb vehicle for youth voices to be heard. ▪ Opportunities for youth to give back to their communities -- <i>“You live in your neighborhood; you keep hearing others talk about your neighborhood; this is your chance to get reliable data and help shape your neighborhood.”</i>
Detroit Junior Police Cadet Program/ Detroit Police Department	Detroit’s Junior Cadet Program provided 1500+ youth with opportunities to give back to their communities, and helped improve relationships among youth and police officers.	<p><i>The Senior Citizen Escort Program</i> After training in working with elders, Cadets provided companionship, played games, and exercised with seniors; helped with eating and letter writing; helped with travel to appointments or shopping; ran errands for seniors; and patrolled senior-oriented buildings and grounds.</p> <p><i>The School/Community Patrols</i> Cadets patrolled parks to enhance safety; served as escorts and companions in parks and at bus stops;</p>	This 34-year-old program combined: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meaningful work and community service. ▪ Relationships with competent, caring adults. ▪ Youth development principles. ▪ Youth participation in creating safe places for themselves and others. <p>A broad array of subjects in which youth were trained: maturity at work, dress habits, goal setting, life skills, social skills, time management, HIV/ AIDS education, drug/tobacco education, human</p>

Organization	Program Strategy	Sample Worksite Experiences	Highlights
		provided additional supervision for community groups and nursery schools using park facilities; and assisted stranded motorists. In school buildings, Cadets patrolled hallways, grounds, and perimeters to assure safety; helped with summer program activities; and performed clerical work.	relations, conflict resolution, leadership skills, budgeting and bank accounts, and first aid/CPR.
Communities in Schools	<i>Young Detroit Magazine</i> is a youth-run monthly publication with a mission to "broaden the education of metro area teens through journalism and special programs that create unique opportunities through media." Organized to mimic a real publishing business, over 20 youth were grouped into working departments: management, public relations, marketing, journalism, and internet. The resulting magazine is of professional quality: photographs and graphics mix with articles designed to appeal to youth and at times to convey important messages.	<i>Community in Schools Home to Young Detroit Magazine.</i>	This excellent example of high quality project-based learning combined: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Youth involvement in many aspects of the publishing business. ▪ Meaningful work. ▪ Relationships with competent, caring adults. ▪ Opportunity to combine work and learning and acquire marketable skills for "green jobs." ▪ Youth development principles. ▪ Significant use of SCANS skills and competencies, and other important academic, employability, and life skills.
Conservation Leadership Corps/ Johnson Controls, the Student Conservation Association and The Greening of Detroit	110 youth were engaged in a variety of hands-on environmental stewardship/conservation experiences. They also received assistance with job readiness and interview skill development; resume writing, and personal financial management.	<i>Johnson Controls, the Student Conservation Association and The Greening of Detroit</i> Student supervised "green" activities such as tree planting, landscaping, native planting, new trail development and maintenance, native timber bench construction, removing invasive species, repairing damaged and eroded areas, and constructing a greenhouse for an elementary school outdoor classroom.	This innovative, public-private, "green jobs" program combined: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meaningful work. ▪ Relationships with competent, caring adults. ▪ Opportunities to combine work and learning and acquire marketable skills for "green jobs." ▪ Evidence of partnerships/coordination for "systems of supports and opportunities."

Organization	Program Strategy	Sample Worksite Experiences	Highlights
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Youth development principles. ▪ Opportunities for youth to give back to their communities.
DFarm/ Detroit Black Food Security Network	DFarm is a 2-acre model urban farm responding to the lack of supermarkets in Detroit. It grows green produce for sale at farmers' markets, and addresses in its small way the lack of access to fresh produce in many communities.	<i>DFarm/ Detroit Black Food Security Network</i> Ten youth cultivated and raised fresh produce, pulled/cut/ weighed/trimmed produce for sale, sold produce at market, and learned where fresh produce comes from, conditions to grow it, and what it takes to create it. This project addresses the "food desert" epidemic in Detroit.	For the city youth involved, this "green jobs" program proved to be an extraordinarily enlightening experience that combined: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exposure to and participation in sustainable urban farming and healthy nutrition. ▪ Meaningful work. ▪ Relationships with competent, caring adults. ▪ Opportunities to combine work and learning and acquire marketable skills. ▪ Opportunities for youth to give back to their communities.
The Arts Place	100 young people developed their talents by interacting with and learning from successful artists across a number of disciplines.	<i>Community Center</i> Each youth participated in 120 hours of skill-building and employability training in one or two of the following: vocal music, instrumental music, dance, drama, set design, costume design, photography, theater management, and/or visual arts. Youth developed portfolios, demonstrated skills through a production, performance or gallery showcase, and applied realistic strategies to locate employment opportunities and develop career paths.	The entire work experience and training culminates in a public performance that utilizes the new skills of all arts teams. This exciting culture and arts program represents a powerful example of experiential learning through work with competent, caring practicing artists and opportunities to develop creatively with peers and enhance self-expression.

DETROIT APPENDIX 2

Summary of Key Challenges and Innovations, Summer 2009, Detroit

Challenge – Recessionary Conditions	Recovery and Reinvestment Actions and Innovation Examples
<p>Need for new way of doing business/effective and efficient infrastructure</p> <p>Limited youth employment opportunities</p>	<p>Anticipated need for increased youth employment as part of broader youth and community development mission (i.e., neighborhoods where kids are safe, healthy, well-educated, and prepared for adulthood). Created Youth Employment Consortium.</p> <p>Built on existing and new partnerships and created collaborative approach committed to results, best practice, and continuous quality improvement. Addressed common technical challenges with rapid response teams, creative “COOL” days program, and focus on enduring partnerships.</p>
<p>Address shifting demographics and extreme recessionary conditions:</p> <p>e.g.: Food insecurity + hunger + diet related diseases and vacant land →</p> <p>e.g.: Rising need for healthcare professionals →</p> <p>e.g.: Increasing crime/violence→</p> <p>Build on youth interest and tax credit for creative industry→</p> <p>Reconnect and empower youth with positive, useful education experience →</p>	<p>Align summer job focus with youth development principles and new regional economies: green jobs, healthcare, creative arts.</p> <p>The “Greening of Detroit,” Conservation Leadership Corps; D-Farm Urban Gardens and Detroit Black Food Security Network.</p> <p>CVS Caremark Work Force Initiative.</p> <p>Detroit Junior Police Cadet Program.</p> <p>The Arts Place, training for young artists and performers.</p> <p>Youth Engaged in Community Research (University of Michigan); Young Detroiter Magazine.</p>
<p>Employ 7,000 youth in meaningful work experience and do so “quickly and wisely” with “transparency and accountability.”</p>	<p>“WE DID IT!”</p>



CASE STUDY



INNOVATING UNDER PRESSURE: THE AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT 2009 Summer Youth Employment Initiative

Indianapolis and Marion County



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INNOVATING UNDER PRESSURE: THE AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT 2009 Summer Youth Employment Initiative

Indianapolis and Marion County

INTRODUCTION

For Indianapolis and Marion County, the summer youth employment initiative (SYEI) represented a major influx of funds (over \$3.2 million) and a challenge: how to design and roll out a program that could provide quality, meaningful work and learning experiences for several hundred youth in less than four months. While Indianapolis and Marion County had maintained a modest, privately funded summer jobs program over the years, the 2009 ARRA funding was the first major infusion of Federal support available for summer youth employment in over a decade. For local youth and workforce development leaders – private nonprofits, businesses, and philanthropy – the 2009 SYEI called for a new way of doing business to set up the partnerships, systems, and programs needed to provide effective summer work experiences for the 645 youth served.

The Indianapolis and Marion County SYEI was characterized by strong leadership through the Indianapolis Private Industry Council and the Mayor's office; a deep partnership base with public, nonprofit, and for-profit partners; highly dedicated, hardworking staff; a serious commitment to linking work and learning through a network of contractors, including several schools; and intentional efforts to design programs that met employer and local labor market needs. Because of the SYEI, young people were engaged; received needed earnings, academic credits, credentials, job skills, and connections to the job market; and took an important step toward adulthood. Moreover, the local network of partners with a commitment to workforce development, youth, and education expanded.

During the last weeks of the program, IPIC and its partners welcomed the researchers from the Center for Youth and Communities at Brandeis University's Heller School for Social Policy and Management to SYEI work and education sites to speak with youth, teachers, school principals, administrators, employers, and city planners. This case study is based on those interviews and supplemental materials reviewed before, during, and after the visits.

PART I

RECESSIONARY CONDITIONS: CHALLENGES AND ASSETS

Marion County Workforce Investment Act programs are administered by the Indianapolis Private Industry Council (IPIC)³⁸ and overseen by the Marion County Workforce Investment Board. Although it had been more than 15 years since the city had run a similar summer youth employment program (SYEP), IPIC and the Mayor's office, the 2009 SYEI's central planners, embraced the challenge.

The city desperately needed this influx of funds to employ and educate its young people. Of youth aged 16 to 19 in Indiana, 67% were unemployed or not in the labor force.³⁹ In the down economy of 2009, it was particularly difficult for youth to find employment. Few had work experience or marketable skills, and they found themselves competing with adults for a decreasing number of entry-level and/or temporary jobs. The planners made the six-week SYEI – YouthWorks Indy – a top priority. The program quickly enrolled 645 low-income youth, age 16 to 24, in Indianapolis and Marion County.

While the SYEI in the Balance of State⁴⁰ workforce investment area (WIA) employed youth exclusively within the state park system, Indianapolis and Marion County leaders wanted to create a program that responded to local needs. In particular, they agreed that education would be a central feature of the SYEI. IPIC and the Mayor's office knew that Indianapolis youth unemployment and high school dropout rates were both on the rise. The planners were influenced by the report *Cities in Crisis 2009: Closing the Graduation Gap*,⁴¹ which not only described the positive impacts of a high school degree on later employment and earnings, but also ranked Indianapolis, with a 30.5% graduation rate, lowest among the nation's 50 largest cities. The planners also knew that only 21% of 10th grade Indianapolis Public School⁴² (IPS) students passed the Graduation Qualifying Exam (GQE), required for graduation in the state, and that student learning tends to decline in summer. Research shows that students who earn more credits within each academic year are more likely to graduate on time.⁴³ Thus the SYEI planners created academic pathways to support all youth.

With a population of about 839,000, Marion County is home to 14% of the state's population, while Indianapolis, the state's largest city and the 14th largest city in the United States,⁴⁴ comprises 91% of Marion County's population. The city's diverse economic base includes retail, manufacturing, transportation, professional and business services, health care, higher education, and government. Since 1984, the city has used professional and amateur sports to quadruple tourism and double hotel space – tourism and conventions are major economic factors. Additionally, several insurance companies have located their

³⁸IPIC is the Workforce Investment Board for Indianapolis.

³⁹Source: KIDS Count.

⁴⁰Indiana has two WIAs: one comprising the city of Indianapolis and Marion County, the other comprising the other 91 counties in the Balance of State WIA.

⁴¹*Cities in Crisis 2009: Closing the Graduation Gap* (2009), Editorial Projects in Education, Bethesda, MD, conducted for the America's Promise Alliance. Graduation rate is calculated from following a base of entering ninth graders through successive grades to achieving a diploma.

⁴²IPS, the state's largest district, has an enrollment of about 38,000 (8,100 in high school). The school population is predominantly minority and low-income. Additionally 10% are English Language Learners and 20% are enrolled in special education. IPS has five traditional public, four public community, and 15 alternative high schools. (The city also has nine public charter high schools and 41 private and religious high schools.)

⁴³Hampden-Thompson, G., Warkentien, S. and Daniel, B. (2009). Course credit accrual and dropping out of high school, by student characteristics. *Statistics in Brief*, National Center for Education Statistics. February.

⁴⁴<http://www.census.gov/popest/cities/tables/SUB-EST2008-01.csv>

headquarters and regional offices in the city. And notably, with the largest stockyards east of Chicago, Indianapolis is also an important meatpacking center.

PART II REINVESTMENT AND RECOVERY ACTIONS AND INNOVATIONS: LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP

IPIC has established itself as Central Indiana's source of workforce development and has worked closely with the Mayor's office to advance city residents' job skills and employment options. The Mayor's office and IPIC made YouthWorks Indy a top priority, drawing from what they knew to craft the kind of SYEP that they had not run in more than a decade. They designed a six-week program to provide a combination of employment and educational opportunities that would enhance future earning power. Each day was split; youth had either morning classes and afternoon work or morning work and afternoon classes. The first week of the SYEI was to be an intensive work readiness program. YouthWorks Indy participants were paid \$8.50 an hour at job sites (up to \$170/week) and a stipend of \$50 per day (up to \$250/week) for the school component. The latter higher fee underscored a high value on the educational component, and offset barriers such as transportation, childcare costs, and the opportunity costs of going to school and not working.

IPIC placed day to day program oversight largely in the hands of two highly dedicated staff. The first, responsible for coordinating activities and responding to questions, problems, and issues that might arise, was the linchpin of the SYEI. She carried two cell phones every day, poised to respond to concerns. The second, an experienced school teacher, was hired temporarily as the IPIC summer educational coordinator. She became the liaison to schools, as both monitor and supporter. She conducted daily visits to schools and met with teachers and students to help respond to issues.

YouthWorks Indy was brought to scale so quickly because IPIC relied on its deep partnership base to contract out for virtually all services. (See Table 1 for a list of key operational partners.) The planners looked for partner agencies that had a sense of community responsibility, a history of following through, experience serving WIA participants, and a reputation as reliable players. Partner roles were as follows:

- IPIC received DOL waivers to contract with two existing WIA partner agencies – one to recruit youth and determine eligibility (Job Works), and the other to monitor worksites and manage payroll (River Valley Resources (RVR)). RVR was the employer of record for all youth. Staff set up no-fee direct deposit accounts with debit cards for all youth; educational stipends and earnings were deposited electronically in these accounts.⁴⁵
- The planners used an RFP to select education providers. IPIC contracted with the successful applicants: IPS, three charter schools, Ivy Tech Community College of Central Indiana,⁴⁶ and the Metropolitan Indianapolis-Central Indiana Area Health Education Center⁴⁷ of St. Vincent's Hospital.

⁴⁵ For many youth, this was their first bank account and their first challenge in managing money.

⁴⁶ Ivy Tech is the largest community college system in the nation, with a large workforce training program and a number of certificate programs.

⁴⁷ MICI-AHEC provides a variety of activities to introduce youth in grades K-12 to health care career possibilities and encourage them to consider health care careers.

- The planners depended on their partners to help them seek for-profit, nonprofit, and public sector worksites. The mayor encouraged city agencies to hire youth and appealed to other city employers. The education services RFP set a goal for the schools to provide 90% of the job opportunities for their students.

Two other early partners were Goodwill Industries and the Greater Educational Opportunities (GEO) Foundation.

- Goodwill, a large Indianapolis employer and IPIC board member, has a corporate office and 46 retail stores in Indianapolis. It also owns and operates Indianapolis Metropolitan High School (MET), a 325-student charter school. While Goodwill had not planned to hire youth this summer, they did so readily because the grant was in line with their mission to help their community. Goodwill was already dedicated to employing individuals with barriers to employment, including those who lacked a high school diploma or had been incarcerated. Through YouthWorks Indy, Goodwill could gain summer labor for its many stores while providing summer learning for their MET students to fight the summer academic decline and employing their charter school teachers.
- The GEO Foundation develops and manages charter schools. It operates three charter schools in Indiana and one in Colorado. Its Charter School Service Center supports charter schools in Indiana, conducts public information campaigns about charter schools, and produces publications for charter school officials, parents, and students. Seeing the SYEI as an opportunity to expose youth to a charter school environment and get visibility for the schools, the Foundation encouraged two of its Indianapolis schools to respond to the RFP. Both were selected to offer educational services to in-school youth: Fall Creek Academy (K-12, 352 students) and Fountain Creek Academy (grades 5-12, 206 students).

Organization	Type/Affiliation	Focus
Job Works	Current WIA contractor	Eligibility determination, enrollment, work readiness
River Valley Resources	Current WIA contractor	Employer of record, worksite monitoring, payroll
Fountain Square Academy	Charter School	In-school youth
Indianapolis Metropolitan High School	Charter School	In-school youth
George Washington Community High School	IPS	In-school youth
Arsenal Technical High School	IPS	In-school youth
Ivy Tech Community College	Community College	Out-of-school youth GED, occupational skills certification
Metropolitan Indianapolis Central Indiana Area Health Education Center	St. Vincent Health	Medical youth program

⁴⁸ See Appendix 1 for more details regarding youth outcomes and experiences.

Planning the Educational Component

IPIC and the Mayor's office convened representatives of three charter schools⁴⁹ prior to the RFP process to help plan the SYEI's educational component. While charter schools educate just four percent of school-age youth in the state, they are considered innovative, entrepreneurial, and unencumbered by bureaucracy, with influential business members on their boards. It was also hoped that they would see participating as SYEI educational sites as an opportunity to recruit students for the upcoming academic year.⁵⁰

In these early meetings it was agreed that YouthWorks Indy should meet the educational needs of all eligible youth, including those who had failed a high school class and needed to recover credits, needed to take additional classes to graduate on time, needed test preparation after having failed the Graduation Qualifying Exam (GQE), or had dropped out of school and needed tutoring to pass the GED. If youth were interested in health careers or in specific trades, they could enroll in the medical youth program or take occupational certificate courses.

Key educational program decisions were made during these early planning meetings:

- Youth would be paid a significant educational stipend to emphasize the importance of academics, defray expenses such as childcare, and provide motivation to come to school.
- To avoid conflicts over stipends, YouthWorks Indy participants were to be separated from regular summer school students who were not being paid stipends.
- To offer both education and work, but avoid requiring a long summer day in the classroom, youth would attend classes for half of each day and work for the other half.⁵¹
- Knowing that some GED students would have too much ground to cover in just six weeks, and to reward progress, the program would fund an additional six weeks of GED preparation (12 weeks total),

Due to the timeline and the recognition that schools often make the most informed policy decisions for themselves, some decisions were left to principals and teachers. For example, each school would decide which classes to teach and establish its own attendance and behavioral policy.

IPIC issued three RFPs⁵² to create the following three educational tracks:

1. *In-School Youth Program: Youth who are still enrolled in high school but need to make up credits for courses they had not passed, or need assistance to pass the GQE.* The first RFP was issued to all public schools (including public charter schools) to teach credit courses such as science, speech, English language arts, and math, and to provide remedial work to prepare students to pass the GQE. IPIC asked schools to teach at least 50 students for the session and to offer a small class environment, and wanted schools that were spread out geographically. All four

⁴⁹The three schools were chosen to represent different educational approaches. One of those involved in the planning responded to the RFP; the other two did not.

⁵⁰In 2001, the state allowed charter schools for the first time, giving school districts, state colleges and universities, and the Indianapolis Mayor (a strong charter school advocate) the authority to sponsor charter schools. There are currently 31 charter schools in the city, 17 authorized by the Mayor.

⁵¹The exception was the medical youth program, which operated on a different schedule: full-day classes were taught Monday and Friday; students worked full day shifts from Tuesday through Thursday.

⁵²IPIC gave schools 7-10 days to respond, forgoing oral interviews. Despite the tight time frame, IPIC was pleased by the school response.

institutions that responded were funded (three public charter schools and the IPS (with two schools participating)).

2. *Out-of-School Youth Program: Youth who want to earn a GED or occupational certificate.* The second RFP was for GED and certificate courses for out-of-school youth. Two proposals were submitted; one contract was awarded to Ivy Tech Community College, which offered college credit, credentialed programs, and established relationships with employers. Ivy Tech subsequently contracted with the Washington Township Adult Education Program to run an accelerated six-week GED preparation program.
3. *Medical Youth Program: Youth who are high academic achievers and interested in instruction and work experience in medical and health care careers (a growing demand occupation in the area).* The third RFP was for a health care careers program for in-school youth. Four proposals were submitted; one contract was awarded to the Metropolitan Indianapolis Central Indiana Area Health Education Center (MICI-AHEC) – St. Vincent's Hospital.

Planning the Work Component

The planners had multiple employment-related goals for the SYEI: to provide work experience and earnings, encourage employers in all sectors of the economy to take action for youth, and begin to build a culture of summer youth employment. One employer commented that without the SYEI, "We wouldn't have been able to hire kids. Older people are coming back in the job market for jobs that normally go to teenagers. [YouthWorks Indy was] the only way these kids got summer employment." With so many adults out of work, the planners also saw the SYEI as a way to bring youth into daily contact with working adults.

Because all youth were enrolled in educational activities, youth could work only half-days. The planners decided to use job sharing to take full advantage of work opportunities. Two youth could share one job, one working in the morning and going to school in the afternoon, the other going to school in the morning and working in the afternoon.

Although ensuring that jobs included learning opportunities and youth development principles was challenging due to the timeline, IPIC did seek jobs that provided meaningful work experience in diverse settings. At minimum, work would give youth an opportunity to learn problem-solving skills (e.g., how to deal with supervisors, resolve conflicts with coworkers, and manage time and tasks) as well as basic financial management skills (for many youth, these were the first paychecks they ever earned).

IPIC compensated for a lack of history of summer job placement for youth⁵³ by turning to their education contractors and to the mayor. In its RFP for education providers, IPIC set a goal for schools to provide 90% of the jobs needed by youth. The education contractors were prepared to hire youth; in addition, the charter schools reached out through their boards and other business contacts. The Mayor encouraged city agencies to hire youth and also appealed to other employers.

⁵³IPIC runs the Youth Employment Services (YES) Initiative, which serves at-risk, out-of-school, hard-to-employ Indianapolis youth and young adults aged 15 to 25. It contracts with community-based organizations that assist these youth in reaching their employment potential. IPIC's YES experience helped the organization plan and implement the 2009 SYEI, but there are substantial differences between the year-round YES initiative and the summer program.

One planning group member said the process was “an organic growth of job opportunities. We reached out to the IPIC board, the charter school boards, the school system, and private companies that have demonstrated their commitment to the community.” The planners also saw employer recruitment as a way to connect the corporate community to workforce development and raise IPIC’s profile.

Table 2 YouthWorks Indy Primary Employers			
Employer	Type of Employer	Number of Youth Hired By Employer	Percentage of all Youth Hired by Employers
Education Providers			
Indianapolis Public Schools	Public	86	14%
MICI-AHEC	Private, nonprofit	54	9%
Charter Schools	Private, nonprofit	24	4%
Ivy Tech	Private, nonprofit	19	3%
Other Primary Employers			
Indy Parks	Public	83	13%
Goodwill Industries	Private, nonprofit	67	11%
Keys To Work	Private, for profit	34	5%
YMCA	Private, nonprofit	34	5%
United Northwest Area Development Foundation	Private, nonprofit	33	5%
Clarian Hospital (non MICI-AHEC jobs)	Private, nonprofit	33	5%
GEO Foundation	Private, nonprofit	11	2%

As shown in Table 2, YouthWorks Indy recruited 48 employers who provided more than 200 worksites. The education partners provided jobs for 30% of the youth; and five other employers hired an additional 46%. Most employers were private nonprofits: 34 employers provided 60% of placements. Three public sector employers provided 27% of placements, and 11 private, for-profit employers provided 13% of placements. With more time to develop work opportunities with private for-profit employers, these numbers probably would have increased; even so, they represent almost one-quarter of all employers.

Recruiting and Training Youth

IPIC recruited youth through WorkOne one-stop centers, television and radio, community based organizations, existing government programs, and churches. IPIC also contacted Indianapolis and Marion County youth who had applied for the Balance of State WIA⁵⁴ summer employment program but were ineligible because of residence. An initial plan to do pre-application screening by phone proved too time-consuming, so all interested youth were invited to come to WorkOne centers to complete their applications. While it would have been ideal to match eligible youth with job opportunities at the end of the application process, this was not possible because worksites were still being developed.

IPIC calculated its enrollment capacity at 690. Over 1,800 applications streamed in during the one-week application period. As noted earlier, Job Works was responsible for determining whether applicants met eligibility requirements for age (14-24), low-income status, citizenship, selective service registration, and residence in Indianapolis or Marion County. Eligibility determination sessions were held for five days in late afternoon and early evening for the convenience of youth and their parents. Each school site later conducted additional recruitment and eligibility determination. About 800 youth completed the process and were determined eligible.⁵⁵

While the plan was to give priority to veterans and current and former participants in Indianapolis and Marion County WIA programs (such as Jobs for America's Graduates and Youth Employment Services), only about 13% of applicants came from these groups. As it turned out, an IPIC staff member said, "We didn't have to turn anyone away that was eligible." Ultimately, the program enrolled everyone found eligible, a total of 645 youth (14 dropped out during the week of work readiness classes).

WIA regulations authorize states and local governments to establish policies and guidelines to determine acceptable WIA eligibility documentation, as long as they are consistent with Federal law.⁵⁶ IPIC tried to reduce the burden of documenting eligibility, and Job Works staff reported that youth had no serious difficulties providing the required documentation.

To prepare youth to succeed at work, Job Works staff taught five half-day intensive work readiness classes during the first week of the program. Combining lecture, discussion, video presentations, and writing activities, the curriculum covered four main topics:

1. Developing a resume that effectively presents skills, education, experience, and references (included goal setting exercises, skill inventories, resume formats, and model cover letters).
2. Presenting oneself in an employment interview (included employer expectations, how to answer problem questions, and practice interviews).
3. Conducting oneself in the workplace (included the importance of being on time, appropriate dress, dealing with conflict, and taking responsibility for one's work).

⁵⁴As noted earlier, Indiana has two WIAs: one comprising the city of Indianapolis and Marion County, the other comprising the other 91 counties in the Balance of State WIA.

⁵⁵Of the 800 eligible applicants, 200 failed to show up for the first day of work readiness classes. While there was a short wait-list, partners had to renew their mobilization efforts to fill these 200 spots quickly. The program needed youth to participate for the full six weeks, since five percent of funds to schools hinged on a 90% youth completion rate.

⁵⁶DOL TEGL 12-01 Attachment C. Also, Indiana allows self-attestation for parental income, which may have been a factor in their relatively smooth certification experience.

4. Managing one's earnings (included understanding payroll deductions and creating and managing a budget).

To assess participants' understanding of the work environment, a pre- and post-test was given at the beginning and end of the week. Youth also completed a job interest questionnaire and began going on job interviews with potential employers. By the end of the work readiness week, all youth were given their worksite assignments.

Implementing the Educational Component

As described earlier, the educational component provided multiple pathways for youth to meet educational goals: high school course credit recovery, GQE or GED preparation, occupational certificates, and health care career training. Except for the medical youth program,⁵⁷ classes were small, often 15 or fewer students per class. Credits earned at a charter school would transfer to any public school.

The educational component left decision-making ability in the hands of schools. Schools devised schedules, decided which classes to offer, and tapped their own teachers or hired teachers from other schools. School partners stepped up to the challenge of developing policies quickly. Directors were proud of their ability to handle issues that arose, such as student behavior. In a two-hour focus group reflecting on program successes and challenges, one director said, "real-life problem-solving in this program was phenomenal."

IPIC's Summer Educational Coordinator strongly supported the schools' problem-solving. Teachers and administrators appreciated having her as a sounding board and looked to her skill in negotiating conflicts. As a public school teacher in the district, she was familiar with the Indianapolis public education system and helped teachers build classroom management techniques within the SYEI context. She visited all schools over the summer, and responded as needed when student behavior concerns arose. Teachers and administrators saw the educational coordinator as an essential position.

School	Course Credit or Credential	Schedule	Youth enrolled
Metropolitan High School	3 classes: English-Debate, Pre-algebra, or Earth Science	Students were enrolled in one of the three classes for four hours each day.	92
George Washington Community High School	3 classes: GQE English/Language, GQE Math, and Virtual Learning Credit Recovery	Each class was one hour and 15 minutes. If students needed to take both the math and English sections of the GQE, they rotated among all three classes. Those who needed to retake only one section attended the relevant class, then spent 2½ hours in the credit recovery lab.	92
Arsenal Technical High School	3 classes: GQE English/Language, GQE Math, and Virtual Learning Credit Recovery	Each class was one hour and 15 minutes. Students rotated among the three courses each day.	102

⁵⁷ Students in each cohort of the health care careers program attended classes in a group.

School	Course Credit or Credential	Schedule	Youth enrolled
Fall Creek Academy	2 classes: Speech and Business Math	Each class was two hours. Students attended both classes each day.	45
Fountain Square Academy	2 classes: Speech and Business Math	Each class was two hours. Students attended both classes each day.	43
Ivy Tech Community College	GED and five certificate courses listed below	Each course was four hours, either in the morning or the afternoon.	
	GED		116
	Patient Access Specialist (certification: CHAA)		31
	Apartment Maintenance Technician (certification: CAMT)		15
	IT/Computer Fundamentals (certification: A+ and N+)		20
	HVAC and Weatherization (certification: EPA Section 608 technician)		15
	Call Center Support (certification: CSS and IC3)		20
Metropolitan Indianapolis Central Indiana Area Health Education Center - St. Vincent's Healthcare Center	Classes focused on work readiness, but also included certification in HIPAA, CPR, and first aid	Classes met from 8:30-5:00 on Monday and Friday. Work experience was scheduled for full days Tuesday through Thursday.	54 (in two cohorts)

Recovering high school credit and preparing for the Graduate Qualifying Exam (GQE). For some youth, the opportunity to earn high school credits or take GQE preparation courses was crucial. Academic courses were offered at the two IPS schools and the three charter schools. Schools could choose which subjects to offer, but because each site taught only two or three classes, they had to teach subjects that most students would likely need. Course options were thus necessarily limited. In all but one school students rotated among classes. For those who did not need a specific class, schools tried to adapt the class or the schedule. For example, if a student already had a credit for a speech class, the teacher could construct additional assignments for the student to create an advanced speech class.

MET was the only school that asked youth to choose a single class to attend for four hours. This decision was consistent with MET's academic year teaching strategy, where students have a homeroom teacher who stays with them throughout high school. In one class, two youth said the time went by quickly, with engaging activities and entertaining games to illuminate the material. In another class, some youth said the four-hour session felt too long. One explained, "It can get boring in the classroom for four hours. They should have thought it out. Are we really going to put teenagers in one class for four hours?"

Students at Fall Creek Charter School took two classes: two hours of speech/debate and two hours of business math. During the Brandeis team's visit, students were debating a legislative proposal to ban texting among teenagers while driving. Others were doing

math exercises on the computer. One, a Fall Creek student during the academic year, was highly motivated, college bound, and truly interested in being in school over the summer. She found both classes a welcome challenge.

Students' classroom experience was not associated with whether they were in a charter school or an IPS school. Within each school, there were youth who enjoyed their summer classes. The educational stipend was not their only motivation: they valued the credit or preparatory coursework, intended to graduate from high school, and had a positive connection with at least one of their summer teachers.

Earning a GED. The GED program was taught on the Downtown and Lawrence campuses of Ivy Tech Community College. Teachers from the Washington Township Adult Education Program, which had developed the accelerated curriculum, taught the classes. In all, 116 enrolled in, and 81 completed, the course over six weeks. To ensure material was fresh in students' minds, the state agreed to test those in the GED program at the end of the course, rather than make them wait until the test was next offered during the school year. Immediately after the six-week course, 13 earned a GED and 73 demonstrated progress toward that goal. As noted earlier, the Mayor's office realized that not all students taking a six-week course would be prepared to take the test, and offered to pay the educational stipend for up to six additional weeks if needed.

We spoke with a single mother of three on the last day of class. The summer funding allowed her to be self-sufficient and pay childcare and rent while studying. Recently out of jail, she felt indebted for the chance to change her life course. Her goal – to sign up for Ivy Tech's patient access program and work in a medical setting – requires a GED. "I have to further my life. This is the most positive thing I've done in years. It was a steppingstone. The money is awesome, but the learning is better. In the end the money is gone, but the GED is here to stay... I know I'm going to pass. If I didn't do anything else every day, I came to class." The respectful and patient teacher, small class size, and one-on-one support created the learning environment she needed; before the class moved to the next assignment, the teacher and aide made sure students understood key concepts.

Earning an advanced certificate. As the state's largest workforce training provider, Ivy Tech knew the local job market and offered occupational training certificates in five fields that would likely need new hires:

- Patient access: preparation to work in health care.
- Apartment maintenance: basic electrical, plumbing, and other skills needed to work in an apartment complex.
- Computer fundamentals: this course merged two advanced computer courses into one.
- HVAC: repair and maintenance skills for work with heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems.
- Call center technician: preparation to work in customer service.

One student in the HVAC course said that if he was not in YouthWorks, he would likely be working at a fast food chain. This opportunity was "leaps and bounds better. You get to go to school. If you study hard you get a certification you can fall back on for the rest of your life." Majoring in hospitality in college, he found that this course provided an understanding of issues that arise in managing a large hotel or even maintaining a home.

However, he would have appreciated a job experience that would have allowed him to apply the skills he was learning in class.

Experience on the job. IPIC's objective was to provide youth with meaningful work – “not just throwaway jobs” – where output is valued and job performance matters. Youth performed more than 50 types of jobs. Positions included office staff, maintenance workers, camp counselors, and medical assistants. Some jobs combined varied experiences. For example, Indy Parks youth workers did landscaping, trail monitoring, and office work.

The learning component in the jobs varied. The medical youth program work experience intentionally included a learning component (e.g., job shadowing and hands-on instruction), linked classes and work, and conveyed the expectation that supervisors would be mentors. For other jobs, at minimum, youth workers learned some job skills, and learned to be punctual, call if they were going to be late or absent, work well with coworkers and with supervisors, and deal with conflict. They learned transferable skills in time management, self-management, and problem-solving in a real-life setting. The supervisor's commitment seemed to be the key to additional learning. Many supervisors were committed to making the work experience a learning opportunity: jobs with enhanced learning opportunities were those in which supervisors gave youth responsibility, a measure of autonomy, and regular feedback on performance. Other supervisors saw their responsibility as making sure that youth arrived at work on time, completed their tasks competently, and got along with coworkers. Some youth said they felt fully engaged and were learning how to be successful at work; others said they did their jobs, but saw few learning opportunities. Still, while there were some attendance issues, misbehavior was not a problem at worksites.

Job matching. The YouthWorks Indy application asked youth about job interests and preferred location, and IPIC tried to match youth to worksites that reflected their interests, fit their education schedules, and were located near their homes. However, this was difficult to do because youth and worksites were being recruited simultaneously and independently. Even youth who were taking classes to earn a certificate were not always placed in positions where they could apply their developing skills. There were exceptions. All medical youth program participants were placed in hospital settings, and many youth in occupational training at Ivy Tech were placed in related fields, often at the school itself. Matching was complicated further because some employers had requirements such as minimum age or criminal background checks; only youth who met these requirements were referred to those employers.

Long commutes were an unfortunate consequence of both the challenge in matching by location and the city's limited public transportation system. IPIC was partially successful in minimizing commuting time on one end by placing youth in jobs that were close to their homes. Still, many commutes were long. In one striking case, a young man traveled 7½ hours each day, from home to work, work to school, and school to home. When asked why he endured the long commute, he said, “Can't beat the money.”

Youths' satisfaction with their work experience varied. Most said that the program provided a needed job, even if the work required the repetitive tasks of any entry level position. Many were grateful for the opportunity to learn new skills. Others expressed dissatisfaction with their worksite location and/or responsibilities. Some disappointments seemed to have arisen because the application's job interest assessment raised

expectations about being placed in positions that matched their expressed interests. While IPIC staff knew that the match was important, their experience confirmed that the match was central to youths' satisfaction.

Combining Work and Learning

Medical youth program. The goal of the YouthWorks Indy medical youth program – operated by the Metropolitan Indianapolis-Central Indiana Area Health Education Center (MICI-AHEC)⁵⁸ at St. Vincent Healthcare Center – was to expose youth to health care career opportunities.

AHEC goals are to increase access to health care, improve health care outcomes, and address the health workforce needs of medically underserved communities by establishing partnerships between the institutions that train health professionals and the communities that need them most. MICI-AHEC provides activities to introduce youth in grades K-12 to health care careers and encourages them to consider these careers. The SYEI was a natural expansion of these activities. The program was actively engaged with multiple departments at local hospitals, had a highly qualified, experienced staff, and a tested career-development, work readiness curriculum.

The medical youth program was YouthWorks Indy's most popular educational offering by far. Enrollment was limited by available classroom space and work slots, and all available slots were filled by the third day of applications (to increase capacity, the program was offered to two four-week cohorts). Preference was given to youth enrolled in the city's Health Professions Magnet School or with demonstrated interest in the field. Because it included its own work readiness classes, youth in the program did not participate in those offered by the SYEI.

Work experience was in the form of job shadowing. Youth were assigned individually or in pairs to different departments at two hospitals, St. Vincent's and Clarian. They worked in one department and shadowed the same professional for all four weeks. They reported learning a lot from the one-on-one instruction, watching the professionals, and gaining practical experience.

Classes offered certification in CPR and HIPAA rules. The curriculum focused on work readiness, preparing for their summer jobs, and thinking ahead to careers. Topics included exploring health careers, financial planning, college planning, resume preparation, and interviewing skills. The director explained, "We want to show them all the different types of jobs in the health care field ... not just nursing, jobs like respiratory therapy, x-ray technician, or even dietician."

The few behavior problems that emerged during class hours were resolved with direct intervention. As the director put it, "I run a tight ship. I took them aside and talked to them."

⁵⁸ An AHEC is a network of regional centers coordinated through a central office (in this case, the Indiana School of Medicine in Indianapolis). Each regional center is designed to assess and meet the needs of the region's citizens. AHEC has been in Indiana since 2001; MICI-AHEC, established in 2006, is one of six AHECs in the state.

Indianapolis Parks System. Indy Parks maintains a system of 206 regional, community, and neighborhood parks throughout Marion County, as well as recreation facilities, 39 miles of trails, and conservation corridors. Youth worked in more than two dozen Indy Parks locations. In the Greenways division, they worked as trail monitors. Their assignment was to walk the trails in pairs (with pick up and delivery by park staff at different trail points), and report on trail conditions. They were given vests with the Greenways logo and pockets for maps and basic first-aid supplies. Each pair had a cell phone in case of emergency and to report problems that needed immediate attention. The youth also did basic trail maintenance, such as clearing brush and helping plant and transplant shrubs. On rainy days, they had office assignments, such as organizing maps or doing internet research.

The supervisors delivered a clear message that “this is work, not play. If they finish early, we give them reading or office assignments.” The supervisors focused on work quality and frequent feedback. During biweekly, in-person performance reviews, “We tell them what they need to do to improve, but we’re always looking for signs of progress and we congratulate them on good work.” There were only minor attendance and behavior problems. “I had to learn to give them a break. They’re kids in their first job. I try to remember what it was like to be 16.”

The supervisors developed learning opportunities such as:

- Creating a trail monitoring checklist to carry with them and use to report maintenance needs.
- Doing research on the internet and in books on site to select pictures and create a catalog of local trees, shrubs, and plants, then identify what they see on the trails.
- Using trail statistics and contour maps to talk about why some sections of trail are used more than others.
- Writing lessons learned on the job each week. Supervisors read what they wrote and talked about it during performance reviews.

The summer experience was more work for supervisors, but they found it personally rewarding as well as good for the system, especially in terms of increased user satisfaction: “We’ve been able to catch up on maintenance because they identify problems. We get fewer complaints about the condition of the trails.”

Youths’ experience was more mixed. All enjoyed the interaction with people using the trails, and gained confidence when they could answer questions or offer assistance. Some enjoyed the outdoor work and the variety of tasks: “It keeps us active and it teaches us a lot. And it looks good on a resume when you show all the things you’ve done.” All would have preferred more choice in work assignments: “Maybe they could put up a list of jobs and we could sign up for what we wanted.” Some simply did not like working in the parks.

Creating a professional presence at the GEO Foundation. The GEO (Greater Educational Opportunities) Foundation develops and manages charter schools, including two of the SYEI charter schools. GEO initially employed 13 youth; ten finished the SYEI (the program dropped three because of problems at school). Youth worked mostly in preparing and distributing marketing materials, but the jobs were intended to teach broader workplace and life skills.

Four offices were set aside for the youth, who were called interns. Youth spent the first week getting acquainted (through questionnaires and interactive games) and getting situated. Each got a notebook, a calendar, a mailbox, a password to access the GEO server, and an e-mail account. The Foundation also used this time to teach workplace skills – building on the topics covered in work readiness training, but focusing more on responsibility and presentation. The youth were asked to introduce themselves individually and conduct a five-minute interview with each staff member, learning about them and their role in the organization. The supervisor also used this time to get to know the young people’s “talents, goals, interests, and skills.”

In the second week, youth started to develop marketing materials for the Foundation and its schools. They were given models to consider, but had to develop layouts and additional products on their own. Each was given individual projects as well. The supervisor said, “I wanted them all to have long-term and short-term projects, to teach them to balance competing priorities. [The short-term projects also] gave them something they would be interested in, succeed at, and get positive feedback on.”

Attendance was an issue at first, and some youth had to be reminded to call if they were going to be absent or late, but the youth responded well: “If you put young people in an organized, disciplined environment, they’ll surprise you.” Youth were given one-to-one critiques as needed and formal reviews at the middle and end of the summer.

Over the course of the summer, there were other learning opportunities, including:

- A short-term project asking businesses to put posters in the windows for a charter school event. Youth were taught how to present themselves effectively and given logo polo shirts to wear.
- Job shadowing to match youths’ interests, e.g., with a local photographer, a journalist, and an attorney.
- Opportunities to develop professional Facebook pages and resumes to post on their pages. Youth were also introduced to the benefits and perils of social networking sites.

The supervisor found the first three weeks time-consuming because each youth got so much individual attention, but found the overall experience very positive: “We got a lot of work done and I think we made a strong, positive impact on the students. They all have something they can take away and use.” The youth too were very positive: “They’re real serious about the work, but you still have fun. I’ve got a Facebook resume, I did a bunch of projects, and I learned how to speak up, how to ask questions. And I made money.”

Impact of YouthWorks Indy

Before YouthWorks Indy, the summer employment outlook had been bleak for youth. Young people widely recognized that few other summer job opportunities were available. One said, “What would I do if I didn’t have this job? Lay around the house, get in trouble.” Another said, “This is a good program. If the kids weren’t here they’d be out doing other things. There weren’t a lot of options.” YouthWorks Indy kept youth engaged and provided needed earnings, academic support, job skills and connections to the job market, and an important step toward adulthood.

Youth wages during an economic recession. YouthWorks Indy provided money desperately needed by youth and their families. Participants’ wages were substantial from their perspective – some earned more than the aides who were tutoring them and more

than their parents were earning. The long commutes were often worth it, because the salary was higher than they could earn anywhere else. Many youth gave paychecks to their families for necessities – food, rent, and utility bills. Others looked to their own future. One young person said, “This is going toward getting my own place. If it weren’t for this program I would have difficulty making the money.” Another, whose mother was in technical school, was proud to say, “I’m the breadwinner this summer.”

Academic support. Many of the youth interviewed were deeply grateful for the chance to make up credits, graduate on time, prepare to succeed at the GQE, or earn a GED or certificate that would launch them toward new career pathways and strengthen their chances of employment in this tight market.

Job skills and connections to the job market. For most of the youth interviewed by the Brandeis team, the SYEI was their first sustained exposure to the workplace. They learned by observation, by instruction, and by experience what it was like to go to work every day. They worked in a variety of settings and with a variety of people, and they learned how to get along at work. One youth, working at a nonprofit, explained, “You meet all kinds of people, see all kinds of problems. I learned how to talk to people, how to listen.”

Perhaps the most common work lesson that youth mentioned was the importance of responsibility. One, working as a janitor, said that, to him, responsibility meant “coming in every day, working hard, doing my job right. Now that I know what I can do, if I run out of work, I always find something that needs to be done. And I do it.”

Others talked about supervisors helping with writing resumes and preparing for job interviews after the summer. For some, the summer position brought the possibility of longer-term employment at their current site or important connections to other job possibilities.

Steps toward adulthood. Many youth said that the SYEI gave them the sense of entering into adulthood. This was especially true for high school students at MET. One said, “I have to get myself to learn, and have to be at work at 7:30 a.m. Then I have to get here [at MET] by 1 p.m. I’m going into adulthood. I have to be more independent.” Another said, “It’s a more professional experience, getting me ready for careers. It made me feel older, more mature, giving you the experience of being on your own, paying your own bills.... It gives me the feeling of how my parents feel when they come home from work: tired.”

Students at Washington High School echoed the same theme: “It made me grow up ... made me realize what the real world is about ... taking care of everything.” A student who was pregnant was saving her money toward the future: “[The program] made me more mature, ready for a real job, learning how to budget.... They made us have a finance plan.”

Challenges and Lessons Learned

IPIC managed through and learned from challenges in developing and implementing the SYEI. IPIC staff were open and frank with the Brandeis team in talking about challenges as well as about innovations, adaptations, and lessons they learned in creating a complex SYEI within a tight timeline.

Early payroll challenge. The SYEI faced some unexpected payroll-related concerns, mainly during the first week, before individual bank accounts had been established for each youth so that direct deposit and debit cards could be set up. Many of the youth had never had bank accounts, and mistrusted banks and direct deposit. Also, it was disruptive to have the stipends arrive midday at school. Once participants received their check, some left for the day, forgoing class work. Some parents were waiting to take their child's paycheck: "We had lots of students with parents taking money. We encouraged participants to open two [bank] accounts so they didn't have to give parents everything." Payroll in the early weeks was also sometimes slow, and some young people weren't sure who they should turn to sort out paperwork issues.

Decentralization. IPIC had to contract with two separate firms, Job Works and River Valley Resources, to enroll and set up payroll because neither had the staff to complete the work on its own. With limited time, IPIC, Job Works, RVR, and individual schools each relied on existing infrastructure. IPIC had its own WIA reporting system, Job Works had its own system to record application and eligibility determination data, RVR had its own system to track hours and workplace issues, and schools kept their own attendance records. These separate systems could not communicate with each other. As a result there was no single database with information on all participants and activities. Data had to be entered manually in the IPIC system and reports from the two contractor systems had to be manually reconciled. Among other challenges, it was hard to track whether youth were showing up at both work and school, for the data existed on different systems. A school site director said he had to call two places just to make sure he knew where the kids were.

As noted earlier, IPIC had only two full-time staff members coordinating activities and responding to questions and problems. They rose to the challenge and showed enormous dedication and flexibility. However, with the volume of questions and requests, IPIC might have benefited from at least one additional full-time staff member assisting with coordination. Schools could also have benefited from an onsite liaison with IPIC in addition to the educational coordinator. The schools served as students' home base – as one principal said, it was where the youth looked for information and assistance. An onsite liaison could have helped youth navigate transportation and payroll issues and schools respond to attendance and behavior concerns more quickly.

Overseeing worksites. Although YouthWorks Indy was much smaller than the Chicago and Detroit SYEIs, monitoring over 600 participants at more than 200 scattered worksites was still challenging. IPIC had urged employers to work with youth if problems arose, not simply fire them, and to call their RVR worksite monitor. The plan was to address attendance or behavior issues within a day. But they had planned for about 50 worksites (assuming more group placements), while the actual number was more than four times larger. In addition, job sharing doubled the number of youth per worksite. Thus RVR did not have the resources to monitor worksites closely and respond to issues promptly, and had to rely on worksites to report issues; this, however, did not happen consistently. Without timely reports, youth could easily fall through the cracks. The program needed a user-friendly system to allow supervisors to report attendance and behavior issues as they occurred, and to allow RVR real-time access to this information. One solution would be a web-based tracking system: each employer would have access to its own youth, while RVR would have access to the entire database.

Day-to-day problem-solving at worksites became the program coordinator's de facto responsibility. She was the person to whom supervisors turned. She was always available, by voice, text, and e-mail, to answer questions, respond to problems, and follow up on youth issues. She visited most of the worksites and got to know youth and their supervisors. Although these efforts were not part of her job description, interviews and observations revealed the critical importance of having a capable, energetic staff person to respond to immediate issues.

School attendance, performance, and behavior. With little institutional memory and limited infrastructure for running a SYEP, IPIC had to make many decisions based on their experience administering other (mostly adult) programs. Their assumptions about youth attendance, follow-through, and behavior were in retrospect overly optimistic. Specifically, the planners did not anticipate the attendance and behavior problems the school program would encounter. Some youth taking afternoon classes were simply tired after a morning of work and a long commute, and found it hard to concentrate for four hours in the afternoon. Others appeared to have little interest in completing assignments or earning credits. One teacher felt that just one-fifth of her students actually wanted to attend. Moreover, up to half of the students were not rooted in their home schools. One teacher explained, "Students have no ownership of the school."

Fall Creek Charter School seemed to have fewer behavioral issues than other YouthWorks Indy educational sites. The principal suggested possible reasons for this. First, the principal was a strong presence in the building throughout the day, addressing student attendance and behavior issues on the spot. Second, nearly half of the summer students also attend during the school year. Year-round Fall Creek students take college level coursework at an Ivy Tech campus, with the expectation that they will all transition into college upon graduation. These students reinforced the school culture in summer. The principal explained, "We [give] the message that's how we do things at the school."

The IPIC Summer Educational Coordinator, teachers, and administrators offered lessons learned.

- Teachers and administrators believe that the ability to use the \$50 stipend as a lever to encourage positive behavior (e.g., attendance and performance) would help them help the youth.
- Drawing a high proportion of summer students from the site's year-round student body helps create a positive culture. Schools with a higher proportion of students who also attended during the school year seemed to have an easier time managing student behavior. Teachers knew more students, and since a critical mass of students knew their host school's behavioral expectations, they could reinforce these expectations among their peers.
- The principal's presence is essential. Teachers struggling with student behavior felt that stronger support from their principal would have made a difference.
- Allowing administrators and teachers to know more about students' academic and behavioral history might help them plan and manage.
- A central tracking system for attendance and behavior would support individual school as well as program-wide solutions.
- An Ivy Tech administrator suggested hiring high school teachers to teach the Ivy Tech SYEI courses, since their experience might help them deal more positively with the students.

It should be noted that the target population is disconnected youth who are not typically successful in school. For staff to experience classroom issues should not necessarily be seen as a surprise or an extraordinary challenge. The level of behavioral and performance issues suggest that in a future SYEI the design should be altered, and the target group's needs considered more extensively. For example, YouthWorks Indy might consider offering youth a choice between the education and work combination or simply working full time. (Unlike school settings, worksites did not report behavior problems.) IPIC might also benefit from a consultant or staff member with relevant experience to challenge assumptions, discuss likely problems, and suggest constructive solutions.

Lessons Learned. IPIC and the Mayor's office set benchmarks to measure SYEI performance (see Table 4). They set ambitious targets and used the data to critically examine why the program met or failed to meet them. They looked at assumptions underlying the design, the commitment of resources, the timely availability of information, and each program component. They also surveyed employers after the program ended. IPIC staff met internally and with their partners to share observations, insights, and suggestions for change. The most obvious concerns pertain to out-of-school youth: the dropout rate was higher than expected, while success rates in obtaining a GED or an occupational credit, or returning to education or employment, were lower than expected.

Table 4			
YouthWorks Indy Internal Performance Measures			
Key Indicator	Target	Performance	
Enrollment	575	645	118%
◆ in-school youth	349	374	107%
◆ in-school youth health care	25	54	216%
◆ out-of-school youth GED	88	116	132%
◆ out-of-school youth occupational certification	88	101	115%
Completed full program and work ready certification			
◆ in-school youth	99%	85%	
◆ in-school youth health care	99%	100%	
◆ out-of-school youth GED	99%	80%	
Outcomes			
◆ in-school youth pass or obtain needed credit	70%	74%	
◆ in-school health care students earn HIPAA and CPR certification	70%	100%	
◆ out-of-school youth increase one grade level or more in 6 weeks	70%	90%	
◆ out-of-school youth earn GED within 12 weeks	63%	21%	
◆ out-of-school youth earn an occupational credential	63%	10%	
◆ in-school youth return to school or enter employment	71%	100%	
◆ out-of-school youth return to school or enter employment	72%	52%	

IPIC is producing a compilation of lessons learned, but for the Brandeis team, three lessons stood out:

1. *Develop seamless information management systems.*
 - It would have been easier to have youth complete an application, be screened, and be matched to a worksite in a one-step, on-site application process.
 - To monitor youth dispersed in schools and worksites across the city, a single user-friendly internet-based tracking system is needed.
2. *Orient and support schools and worksites.*
 - While the IPIC staff was extraordinary in responding to questions and requests, onsite school liaisons could have assisted IPIC in responding to immediate concerns over transportation, scheduling, behavior, and payroll. Additional staff to monitor youth at worksites could help report and address issues that arise and support employers.
 - A more thorough orientation for schools and worksites would clarify expectations and processes.
3. *Create schedules and incentives that maximize youth potential.*
 - The decision to split the day between work and school recognized that youth would find an eight-hour day in summer school difficult. YouthWorks Indy teachers and administrators also found that academic classes are best taught during the morning. Many teachers and administrators recommended being able to use summer wages as an incentive for attendance, behavior, and performance at school, rather than as a fixed stipend. However, it may also be that some youth need the option of full-time work.

Conclusion

YouthWorks Indy was intended not only to put young people to work during a recession, but also to improve students' academic chances. The alarmingly low Indianapolis high school graduation rate was last among the nation's 50 largest cities. Yet without a diploma or GED, young people face long-term barriers to employment. Thus, the SYEI merged education with work experience for both in-school and out-of-school youth. Youth worked in a variety of settings in all sectors of the community – public schools and charter schools, nonprofit and for-profit employers. Youth earned desperately needed wages, acquired valuable academic credits and credentials, gained lasting job skills, and took steps toward self-sufficiency and adulthood.

When the funds came through, YouthWorks Indy became a top priority for staff from the Mayor's office and IPIC who planned and oversaw the program. IPIC could create YouthWorks Indy so quickly because it leaned on its existing partners, and through them drew in additional partners from all sectors of the economy. Without the Federal funds, Indianapolis and Marion County would likely not have developed an SYEI. Now, however, IPIC staff said that summer youth employment is "reborn."

INDIANAPOLIS AND MARION COUNTY APPENDIX 1

Organization	Program Strategy	Sample Worksite Experiences	Highlights
Management and Leadership			
<p>Indianapolis Private Industry Council (IPIC) & Mayor's Office</p>	<p>IPIC established itself as Central Indiana's source of workforce development and worked closely with the Mayor's office to advance city residents' job skills and employment options. Together, they designed a six-week program – <i>YouthWorks Indy</i> – to enhance the future earning power of 645 youth.</p> <p>Educational Component: Provided multiple pathways for youth to meet educational goals: high school course credit recovery, GQE or GED preparation, occupational certificates, and health care career training.</p> <p>Work Component: Multiple goals: to provide work experience and earnings, encourage employers in all sectors of the economy to take action for youth, and begin to build a culture of summer youth employment.</p>	<p>Each day was split for youth with morning classes and afternoon work or morning work and afternoon classes. The first week of the SYEI was to be an intensive work readiness program. YouthWorks Indy participants were paid \$8.50 an hour at job sites (up to \$170/week) and a stipend of \$50 per day (up to \$250/week) for the school component. The high value placed on the educational component offset potential barriers such as transportation and childcare costs.</p>	<p>Capitalized on existing partnership to create systems of support and opportunity; combined work and learning to enhance marketable skills; created positive developmental settings and age & stage appropriate tasks.</p> <p>Before YouthWorks Indy, the summer employment outlook was bleak for youth. One youth said, "What would I do if I didn't have this job?"</p>
<p>JobWorks</p>	<p>Determined eligibility, enrollment, work readiness and provided initial training.</p>	<p>Staff taught five half-day intensive work readiness classes to 645 youth. Classes combined lecture, discussion, and presentations to cover aspects of resume</p>	<p>Leadership, mentorship, combined work and learning to enhance marketable skills, and utilized existing partnerships.</p>

Organization	Program Strategy	Sample Worksite Experiences	Highlights
		building, soft skills (such as interview and workplace etiquette), and financial planning.	
Education Partners and Worksites			
<p>Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George Washington Community High School • Arsenal Technical High School 	<p>IPS provided supplemental education classes, or course recovery, so that students could meet HS graduation requirements and graduate on time.</p>	<p><i>George Washington Community High School</i> offered three classes: GQE English/Language, GQE Math, and Virtual Learning Credit Recovery for 92 youth.</p> <p><i>Arsenal Technical High School</i> offered 3 classes: GQE English/Language, GQE Math, & Virtual Learning Credit Recovery for 102 youth.</p>	<p>Positive development setting; academic enrichment. Helped youth stay on track to graduate, key to lifelong employment.</p>
<p>Charter Schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indianapolis Metropolitan High School (MET) • Fall Creek Academy • Fountain Square Academy 	<p>Charter schools also provided supplemental education classes, or course recovery, so that students could graduate on time. Credits earned at a charter school would transfer to any public school.</p>	<p><i>MET</i>, operated by Goodwill, enrolled 92 students in one of three classes: English-Debate, Pre-algebra, or Earth Science.</p> <p><i>Fall Creek Academy</i>, enrolled 45 students in 2 classes: Speech & Business Math.</p> <p><i>Fountain Creek Academy</i>, enrolled 43 students in two classes: Speech & Business Math.</p>	<p>Positive development setting; academic enrichment. Helped youth stay on track to graduate, key to lifelong employment.</p>

Organization	Program Strategy	Sample Worksite Experiences	Highlights
<p>Ivy Tech Community College</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Washington Township Adult Education Program 	<p>Ivy Tech enrolled out-of-school youth in a GED or occupational certificate program. Ivy Tech subsequently contracted with the Washington Township Adult Education Program to run an accelerated six-week GED preparation program.</p>	<p><i>Ivy Tech Community College:</i> Enrolled 116 in GED courses and enrolled 101 in one of five occupational training certificates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patient Access Specialist Apartment Maintenance Technician IT/Computer Fundamentals HVAC & Weatherization Call Center Support 	<p>Academic goal-setting. Helped launch youth toward new career pathways and strengthen chances of employment.</p> <p><i>"This is the most positive thing I've done in years. It was a steppingstone. The money is awesome, but the learning is better. In the end, the money is gone, but the GED is here to stay."</i></p>
<p>Metropolitan Indianapolis-Central Indiana Area Health Education Center</p>	<p>MICI-AHEC enrolled in-school youth who were high academic achievers and interested in instruction and work experience in medical and health care careers (a growing demand occupation in the area). MICI-AHEC provides activities to introduce youth in grades K-12 to health care careers and encourages them to consider these careers.</p>	<p>Hired and trained 54 youth. Classes met all day Monday and Friday, work experience was scheduled for full days Tuesday through Thursday. The program intentionally linked classes and work, had hands-on learning opportunities (e.g. job shadowing), and conveyed the expectation that supervisors would be mentors.</p>	<p>Academic goal-setting. Helped launch youth toward new career pathways and strengthen chances of employment.</p> <p>The director explained, <i>"We want to show them all the different types of jobs in the health care field ... not just nursing, jobs like respiratory therapy, x-ray technician, or even dietician."</i></p>
<p>Goodwill Industries</p>	<p>Non-profit firm, with corporate office and 46 retail stores in Indianapolis. IPIC board member. Owns and operates Indianapolis Metropolitan High School (MET). Through YouthWorks Indy, Goodwill gained a summer workforce for its many stores while addressing the summer learning gap for MET students.</p>	<p>Employed 67 youth to work in local Goodwill stores.</p>	<p>Relationship to caring adult, introduction to workplace discipline.</p>

Organization	Program Strategy	Sample Worksite Experiences	Highlights
Greater Educational Opportunities (GEO) Foundation	Non-profit firm, develops and manages charter schools, including Fall Creek Academy and Fountain Square Academy. Conducts public information campaigns about charter schools, and produces publications for charter school officials, parents, and students.	Hired 13 youth, prepared and distributed marketing materials in addition to teaching workplace and life skills.	Relationship to caring adult, high quality staff and worksite supervisors, combined work and learning, age & stage appropriate tasks. <i>"They're real serious about the work, but you still have fun. I've got a Facebook resume, I did a bunch of projects, and I learned how to speak up, how to ask questions. And I made money."</i>
Indy Parks	Maintains a system of 206 regional, community, and neighborhood parks throughout Marion County, as well as recreation facilities, 39 miles of trails, and conservation corridors.	Hired 83 youth to work as trail monitors at two dozen Indy Parks locations. Youth also did research and wrote essays on lessons learned each week. Bi-weekly, in-person performance reviews.	Mentoring, leadership, opportunity to combine work and learning, age appropriate tasks. <i>"It keeps us active and it teaches us a lot. And it looks good on a resume when you show all the things you've done."</i>
Keys To Work	Private, for profit staffing and workplace development firm. Provides pre-screened applicants (full and part-time, permanent and temporary) for area employers. Also provides transitional employment and intensive support for high-risk populations.	Hired 34 youth in a variety of administrative positions.	Mentoring, workplace discipline, work readiness lessons. <i>"This was more demanding than I expected. You've really got to know what you're doing. I'm prepared to work in a business setting now."</i>



CASE STUDY



INNOVATING UNDER PRESSURE: THE AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT 2009 Summer Youth Employment Initiative

Phoenix and Maricopa County



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INNOVATING UNDER PRESSURE: THE AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT 2009 Summer Youth Employment Initiative

Phoenix and Maricopa County

INTRODUCTION

For Phoenix and Maricopa County, the summer youth employment initiative (SYEI) represented a major influx of funds (\$5.8 million) and a significant challenge: how to design and roll out a summer jobs program in less than four months that could provide quality, meaningful work and learning experiences for 1,140 young people. While Phoenix and Maricopa County had maintained a modest privately funded summer jobs program over the years, the ARRA funding represented the first major infusion of Federal funding for summer jobs in over a decade. For the leaders of the city's and county's youth and workforce development community – Phoenix Workforce Connection (PWC), Maricopa Workforce Connection (MWC), private nonprofits, and businesses – the 2009 SYEI called for a new way of doing business to set up the partnerships, systems and programs needed to provide effective summer work experiences for Phoenix and Maricopa County youth.

The Phoenix-Maricopa County SYEI was characterized by strong leadership and a coordinated regional strategy that provided consistency across urban, suburban, and rural areas; a deep partnership base with public, nonprofit, and for-profit partners; and highly dedicated, hardworking staff. The local network of partners with a commitment to workforce development, youth, and education expanded significantly. Young people credited the SYEI with giving them an increased knowledge of career pathways, motivation to succeed and a sense of possibility, growing pride and belief in themselves, broader and deeper thinking about themselves and others, and the power of a relationship with a caring adult.

The case study that follows is based on interviews and site visits conducted by staff from the Center for Youth and Communities at Brandeis University's Heller School for Social Policy and Management, primarily during a two-week site visit in June-July 2009, as well as supplemental materials collected during and after the interview process.

PART I RECESSIONARY CONDITIONS: CHALLENGES AND ASSETS

In recent years, the state of Arizona has experienced high levels of unemployment among all workers, and especially among young people. From the onset of the current economic recession in January 2008 to July 2009, the unemployment rate among all workers in Arizona rose from 4.9% to 9.2%. More than 50% of its population is between 18 and 54 years of age, which is younger than the national average, and the state is becoming younger each year, which presents additional workforce and youth development challenges.

Phoenix is part of Maricopa County, which covers an area as large as the state of Massachusetts, including urban, suburban, and extremely rural locations. With a population of approximately 1.5 million, Phoenix is the fifth most populous city in the United States and its metro area is the country's 12th largest. The recession has hit both Phoenix and Maricopa County hard, with Phoenix entering the recession before many other metropolitan areas and likely coming out of it later. Greater Phoenix had the fifth largest year-over-year employment loss among large metropolitan areas in April 2009 (behind Los Angeles, New York City, Chicago, and Detroit).

Furthermore, home foreclosure and bankruptcy rates in Phoenix and Maricopa County are among the nation's highest. Construction is suffering, as are other industries such as manufacturing and financial services. Commercial vacancy rates are increasing and retail sales are falling. Population growth, which had earlier been key to construction and increases in income and sales, has slowed. In addition, state and local government revenues have dropped dramatically since the spring of 2008, leading to major budget cuts at all levels of government.

In response to the challenging economic times, the Greater Phoenix Economic Council implemented a regional economic growth strategy focusing on fields such as health care and sustainable/solar technologies. In addition, there is job growth in education and government positions. Yet the situation for many residents, in particular the area's youth, remains tenuous. Among other challenges, in any given year, about 5% of the county's youth population (estimated at 513,585 between the ages of eight and seventeen in 2007) is referred at least once to Juvenile Court. In addition, school graduation rates for the city and county, as in other major US cities, are unacceptably low.

Thus, while the need for the SYEI was clear in Phoenix and Maricopa County. At the same time, there were local assets on which to build.

PART II REINVESTMENT AND RECOVERY ACTIONS AND INNOVATIONS: LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP

It was a tall order for the Phoenix Workforce Connection (PWC) and Maricopa Workforce Connection (MWC) to mobilize and coordinate their two, previously separate, workforce development systems to engage 537 youth in Phoenix (PWC) and 602 in other parts of Maricopa County (MWC) in meaningful work experiences during the 2009 SYEI. PWC and MWC had begun to create more seamless processes among the county, city, and service

providers; however, the 2009 SYEI required an extraordinary degree of collaboration – very fast – at every level of leadership and program implementation. As one administrator explained, “We were two huge entities and we needed to coordinate in more intensive ways. It was challenging But we did it!”

City and county workforce development leaders came together in February 2009 in cross-system meetings to initiate planning for the SYEI. Joining with other community leaders, they recognized that waiting for all to be signed, sealed, and delivered would have jeopardized their ability to get the SYEI off the ground, so they moved ahead quickly. In the end, it was the commitment, diligence, and hard work of staff and key stakeholders at every level within Phoenix’s and Maricopa County’s workforce development systems that made the 2009 SYEI a success.

Harnessing History and Continuity

In Phoenix and Maricopa County there was little local institutional memory of the large summer youth employment programs (SYEPs) of the past. However, they had two invaluable sources of information and experience to draw upon during the implementation of the 2009 SYEI.

First, the City of Phoenix had contracted with community-based programs to operate small SYEPs after WIA funding had been significantly reduced and Federal SYEP funding virtually eliminated. These smaller programs began in 2000. Typically funded by Community Development Block Grants and the city’s general purpose funds, these programs served 500+ youth every summer. They included a program coordinator from one of the community-based organizations (CBOs) that understood the systems and steps needed to make SYEPs possible. As a result, the CBOs had relationships with numerous businesses and worksites – an advantage in getting worksites ready for the broader 2009 SYEI. As one administrator noted, “We were not coming out of the chute with this. We had some experience to draw on.”

The second key source of information was the leadership at Arizona Call-A-Teen Youth Resources (ACYR), a private, nonprofit, CBO that has offered education and training for Phoenix-area teens and young adults since 1976. Under Executive Director Pam Smith, ACYR had been part of two demonstration projects aimed at SYEP innovation: Summer Beginnings (funded by USDOL in 1993-94) and Summer Transitions (funded by the Wallace-Readers’ Digest Funds in 1998-2000). The city and county drew upon Ms. Smith’s knowledge about vision, quality programming, and anticipating the challenges that are an inevitable part of the process. One administrator explained, “We didn’t have the in-house expertise to launch this. [ACYR was] our mentor... Pam gave us guidance and helped us see where the problems might come up.”

Creating a Vision

A workforce development administrator said: “We were trying to do something extraordinary within ordinary rules. The level of effort to pull it off was the most extraordinary thing I’ve seen in an awfully long time.”

All stakeholders – the county’s and city’s workforce development administrators, the directors of community service provider organizations, staff leaders, case managers and career advisors working directly with the youth – were committed to a shared vision of the 2009 SYEI. They saw the SYEI as a way to bring together positive youth development concepts and economic development to promote community growth with youth as key

players. They thought that the SYEI could benefit not only youth, but also employers who were hurting from the economic downturn. They perceived that the initiative could create and leverage opportunities for service providers to provide additional program elements – more work experience hours, increased supportive services, greater connections to year-round programming, and deepened relationships with employers, including in the private sector. Finally, stakeholders saw the SYEI as an opportunity to demonstrate that workforce development systems and city and county economic development efforts could be more fully integrated and were, as one administrator said, “agile and responsive enough to produce what policymakers consider tangible outcomes worthy of continued investments.”

Aspects of the SYEI drew upon research-based principles of positive community youth development – young people and adults working together as partners and viewing each other as competent resources to build and sustain just, safe, and healthy communities. These principles call upon communities to embrace their roles in youth development, including youth who are marginalized. In that vein, Phoenix and Maricopa County targeted youth most affected by current economic and social circumstances, such as youth offenders, homeless youth, teen parents, youth with disabilities, and out-of-school youth. And significant numbers of young people were involved in learning-rich jobs and in projects that provided value to their neighborhoods.

A Phoenix workforce development administrator summarized the vision this way: “We see this summer as a way for all funders and stakeholders to see summer youth programming as viable and to keep investing in youth, to help them build those job skills and work experience. ... The workforce coming up is not large enough and does not have the necessary skills. We need to invest in the quality of the workforce coming up and demonstrate that these types of programs have value.”

Staffing for the Summer

To prepare for the SYEI, PWC and MWC service providers hired well-qualified, summer line staff (called “career advisors” or “case managers”) to perform functions such as:

- Providing a standardized work readiness orientation to youth.
- Monitoring youths’ attendance, punctuality, job performance, and other “job-keeping” skills.
- Monitoring the quality of youths’ work experiences.
- Handling administrative tasks such as timesheets and paycheck delivery.
- Serving as problem solvers, mediators, and liaisons among youth, their employers/supervisors, and the SYEI.
- Providing youth with human service supports, such as counseling and case management, and making necessary referrals.
- Functioning as conduits to make sure that all communications were streamlined.

Service providers particularly sought line staff with the following characteristics:

- A pre-existing understanding of youth workforce development. Many were drawn from the WIA year-round program; some had worked in other SYEPs.
- Applicable experience with young people. Some had worked for other youth-focused human service programs, including Child Protective Services; others were teachers who were unemployed or seeking summer employment.

One service provider developed a helpful interview rating matrix to assess candidates. Matrix elements were as follows:

- Direct WIA or JTPA experience
- Experience with a similar population
- Case management experience
- Training/facilitation skills
- Job development skills
- Paperwork/documentation abilities
- Showing initiative/self-starting
- Mentoring skills
- Customer service capacity/orientation
- Community service history
- Language skills
- Diversity needs
- Knowledge of what it takes to do quality work with youth
- Passion for working with youth
- Ability to transcend the difficult or frustrating aspects of youth work
- Skills to engage youth
- Grasp of the vision for youth and the SYEI
- Flexibility with fast pace and regular changes

A Brandeis-facilitated focus group of service provider program directors and managers generally agreed that the line staff selection process had been excellent, and that the quality of those hired was outstanding. Line staff were clearly devoted to “their kids” and put in many more hours supervising and supporting young people than they were paid for.

For the most part, Phoenix and Maricopa County service providers were easily able to recruit high quality and qualified summer career advisors and case managers. The ease of attracting qualified people was in no small part due to the faltering economy. Methods used to attract line staff included postings at One-Stop Centers, on jobing.com⁵⁹ (from which there was an overwhelming response), and on service providers’ websites. In addition, recommendations were sought through formal and informal networking and contacts with city and county service and funding providers.

Although the SYEI’s short timeline left little time for staff training, the quality of the people hired enabled most to do an effective job even with limited training.

Training the Trainers

Career advisors/case managers did receive training on delivering a pre-program work readiness skills orientation to the youth participants. However, although both Maricopa County and Phoenix worked from standardized content that fulfilled Arizona WIA requirements, their experiences in delivering the training were significantly different.

- Maricopa County developed a partnership among South Mountain Community College, Valley of the Sun United Way, Friendly House, Maricopa Workforce Connection, and others to create an innovative work readiness training curriculum. This approach produced a five-day, two-credit, college-level course that covered content areas such as values, ethics, career exploration, resume writing, and

⁵⁹ Jobing.com is an online job board for employers and job seekers. It provides this service in several cities and states, including Phoenix.

interviewing skills. A job readiness workbook was created, and pre- and post-tests of work readiness were developed and administered. Adjunct community college instructors taught the courses, which were targeted to young people ages 14-24. One hundred out of 109 registered students completed the first round of the course; 50 out of 50 completed the second round. Maricopa's approach to work readiness preparation proved to be efficient and of high quality; engaged the young people; resulted in minimal stress among the service providers that utilized this model; added the benefit of developing a partnership with the community college system; and provided youth with exposure to the community college that the youth valued.

- Phoenix contracted with Junior Achievement (JA) to develop a 20-hour summer version of a longer, more ambitious curriculum that JA used in its programs. The JA curriculum focused on Career with a Purpose, Success Skills, and the National Endowment for Financial Education's Financial Literacy Program. Two days before youth entered the Phoenix SYEI, JA provided a "train-the-trainer" orientation for career advisors who would deliver this abridged curriculum to youth. Many Phoenix staff interviewed by Brandeis said that the JA training was essentially an overview of JA material, rather than a train-the-trainer session, and that the curriculum did not work well. They said that in the future they would prefer to draw upon work readiness lessons (with which they were already familiar) from several Phoenix youth agencies.

Creating Financial Management Systems

PWC and MWC agreed that part of their vision for the SYEI was to operate openly and transparently, with good systems in place that could anticipate and deal with challenges. For the most part, both entities succeeded with the former. However, challenges were still plentiful, especially in the areas of financial management and data systems. Still, it was a point of pride that young people were rarely affected by systemic difficulties.

Key players in Phoenix and Maricopa County saw the SYEI as a chance to do great things that would benefit young people, families, communities, and employers. Yet, while the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided significant financial resources, it presented difficulties of funding accessibility. In this short time period, it was a challenge to set up across two large entities and numerous organizations the financial management systems to underpin payroll and support payments (e.g., transportation and clothing vouchers) for 1,200 young people, handle staff, and deal with other institutional financial issues.

Timing was especially problematic. Federal, state, and city/county government decisions, processes, and reactions did not always flow at a rate commensurate with the realities of local program design and implementation. Contracts were signed at the last minute or late, resulting in local frustration and anxiety; for example, the state's requirement for new (rather than revised or modified) inter-governmental agreements for aspects of the SYEI delayed finalization of contracts.

For locals, risk-taking was often the watchword. Many people and organizations had to do significant work prior to authorizations for funds to flow. Systems had to be developed and staff had to be hired before contracts were signed. In particular, partner CBOs faced cash-flow issues with the SYEI. Cost reimbursement was a big issue for program providers who could not get advances. Youth needed up-front vouchers for transportation, clothing, and other crucial needs. Funds were needed to float payroll

demands created by the SYEI. Phoenix, Maricopa County, CBOs, agencies, and their payroll companies and banks had to be – and were – fast and creative in order to assure that everyone was paid on time.

The institutional memory present at ACYR (described earlier) made these issues less daunting. In the early days of SYEI planning, ACYR took strong stands on several financial fronts – especially pushing for common rates of youth pay across the city and county and for strategies to deal with payroll cash flow.

Cash Flow Strategy

As a result, Phoenix and Maricopa County crafted agreements that standardized the rates of pay for young people and developed a process through which agencies sent projected expenditures to the city and county in advance of payrolls so that checks could be processed based upon those projections. The projected figures provided cash in the bank to eventually cover the real payroll. Differences between real and projected payroll figures could be adjusted in subsequent pay periods. Yet even with this cash flow strategy, struggles occurred. For example, ACYR, the CBO serving the largest number of SYEI youth for Phoenix and Maricopa County, saw its payroll increased by \$225,000 in one period. Unknown to ACYR, its payroll company policy required cash on hand in advance of payrolls larger than \$100,000, and would not process the payroll without a wire transfer. Its bank required special steps to obtain that cash and provide it to the payroll company. This situation arose the day before the first payday. It was handled only through adept steps by ACYR. (In addition, ACYR's internal financial management system became much more complex, jumping from 19 cost-centers to 30, and it had to cope with SYEI funds coming through the city, the county, and the public schools.)

Managing Data

Another major challenge was efficient data collection and data entry into multiple electronic systems. Despite considerable efforts to facilitate information flow, the paperwork for each young person did not always flow at an ideal rate across the many institutions involved. Data collection was generally handled well; however, timely information sharing often proved a struggle.

A significant barrier to data collection, compilation, sharing, and ultimate use was the State of Arizona's decision to use an old and very basic version of an electronic management information system known as the Virtual One Stop (VOS) System. Arizona programs were required to document/record all youth data (from application through completion) using the old version of VOS. More advanced VOS systems might have been more helpful. To counteract the old VOS dysfunctions, many SYEI providers developed dual information systems. Because of the system's limitations and the decentralized nature of the data collected by providers, it is unlikely that Phoenix and Maricopa County data will accurately reflect program performance.

Recruiting, Screening, and Training Youth

Large numbers of young people applied for the SYEI and were efficiently screened for eligibility. Phoenix and Maricopa County's outreach and recruitment efforts (starting in April) were successful. Youth unemployment was very high in Phoenix and Maricopa County before 2009; because of the economy, often because of parental job loss, the number of eligible youth had increased significantly. Even with the infusion of funds, many more eligible youth applied than there were slots available in the 2009 SYEI.

PWC and MWC, recognizing that they shared many youth program providers and that geographic boundaries between city and county were vague, collaborated to reduce confusion among youth and their families. As collaborators, PWC and MWC:

- Centralized outreach and recruitment.
- Worked together to clarify and explain new eligibility criteria.
- Organized common outreach presentations and created common application forms and practices.
- Provided common pick-up and drop-off locations for paperwork.

Furthermore, to create a fair process for choosing among applicants, Phoenix and Maricopa County randomly selected the participants from among eligible youth.

Eligibility Events

Drawn from previous experience, Maricopa County's "eligibility events" were a further example of innovative practice. These events were preceded by outreach and recruitment, advertising, and follow-up calls that helped applicants arrive prepared and with necessary documents. Events were scheduled at a variety of times (including on Saturdays) and in accessible locations. At the events, SYEI staff processed applications and other paperwork and confirmed or denied eligibility in one streamlined process. The events were set up with stations that addressed different aspects of the application process and were staffed by teams who were adept with each particular aspect. For example, the eligibility station had experts who knew the requirements thoroughly and could deal with eligibility issues quickly and efficiently. Young people walked their applications from station to station.

Once officially on board, young people participated in work readiness skills training sessions (described earlier) during which they:

- Were oriented to program expectations, employer expectations, job keeping skills, and other issues.
- Completed the TABE Reading Level D Test to identify reading ability and promote appropriate job placements.
- Met with their career advisors/case managers to consider jobs that might interest them.

Job Development and Matching

Phoenix and Maricopa County found nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and private employers to be responsive to the SYEI, and succeeded at developing a wide array of jobs for young people. ACYR was able to draw upon its ongoing relationships with many Phoenix employers as a starting point; the Maricopa County One-Stop System reached out effectively to employers across the rest of the county. In many areas, more SYEI job slots were available than there were youth to fill them. This created an opportunity for true youth/job matching.

Attempts were made to pair young people with nearby jobs (using zip codes) that were connected to their interests, while at the same time meeting employers' needs. Sometimes, especially in rural areas, fewer opportunities were available. Young people whose jobs were not within easy travel distance received travel vouchers. Programs developed lengthy, regularly updated listings of available jobs organized geographically. To the extent possible, young people were shown these listings and encouraged to choose jobs that interested them. As jobs were chosen and removed from the listings, new sites and positions were added.

In Phoenix, many young people had an array of job choices available. This process facilitated youth ownership and motivation. Furthermore, several interviewees noted that the SYEI brought a large number of new worksites into the network. This was especially true among private-sector employers. (However, a few worksites had to pull out of the SYEI due to difficulties caused by the economic downturn.)

Some job options were simply were not possible to develop due to time constraints. Neither Phoenix nor Maricopa County made significant attempts to develop green jobs despite a desire to do so. Also, they said that there was inadequate time to thoroughly integrate work and academic learning across the SYEI; hence, most programs did not mix work experience and classroom activities.

Preparing and Supporting Worksites

Since each worksite typically provided supervision, it was important for their staff to understand all aspects of the SYEI. After employers agreed to be worksites, the SYEI contacted each one to:

- Define expectations among employers, supervisors, youth, and the SYEI.
- Determine what employers needed to hire young people (e.g., TB inoculations, work clothing, or security screenings).
- Clarify roles of worksites and supervisors.
- Explain timesheet, payroll, and other administrative tasks.

A worksite supervisor's handbook detailed applicable child labor laws and introduced or reinforced the above.

Once it was clear that one or more youth would be assigned to a worksite, most worksites and supervisors received an orientation. However, on occasion, this did not happen, and "kids just showed up."

Career advisors and case managers regularly contacted and/or visited worksites, monitored youth and site performance, and provided counseling and problem-solving assistance. Worksites not chosen by young people had to be contacted and encouraged to consider placements in the future.

Meaningful Work Experiences

Phoenix and Maricopa County strove to give youth a meaningful summer work experience. The consistent message conveyed to worksites was that the SYEI was about jobs, meaningful work, and training – i.e., that the goal was to make sure that youth have the best possible work/training experience, not just an income transfer. Employers and supervisors, with career advisors' and case managers' support, were expected to reinforce the work readiness skills (such as good attendance, punctuality, following supervisor's instructions, and working cooperatively) that young people had been oriented to at the beginning of the program. Therefore, at the very least, nearly all jobs were meaningful in that youth learned what it takes to successfully hold a job and made connections with positive adults.⁶⁰ Many jobs offered additional levels of meaning, including through supervisors who made a difference, employers who helped youth see the bigger

⁶⁰Attempts were made to address low-quality youth jobs. For example, during the Brandeis team visit, a career advisor took a side trip to see a young person who had earlier reported that she was "bored to tears." The career advisor arranged for her transfer to another, higher-quality worksite.

occupational picture, projects that gave youth responsibility and empowered them, and the three internship programs.

Some jobs that required somewhat repetitive work were nonetheless valuable to the employer, provided youth with a paycheck, and led to personal growth for the youth, often through a supervisor's attention. For example, a career advisor said that during work readiness training, one young man would not look up from the floor and was alternately silent or belligerent. His job mostly involved physical, outdoor work. However, because he had a caring supervisor who took an interest in his development, when the Brandeis researchers saw this young man, who was working on a crew preparing for the town's July 4th party, he smiled, made eye contact, approached the team, greeted them warmly, and offered to shake hands. His worksite supervisor said that this young man was homeless and living in a motel, bartering to keep his room, and had experienced few successes, having been fired from most of his fast food jobs. Yet, working with his supervisor and other staff, he had come out of his shell. All at the site agreed that it was his worksite supervisor – with a quiet but firm, “tell it like it is” style – who had made the difference. The supervisor had what this young man needed to reconnect with the world.

Another supervisor who made a difference was an unexpected match with a young woman working at a childcare center. The teen was interested in nursing, but since no nursing positions were available, she was assigned to her second choice at the childcare center. She proved adept at working with the children. Her supportive supervisor described her as “having a knack” and talked about her wonderful work ethic. The teen enjoyed her experience, saying, “I’m like family here. I really like it.” By the end of the summer she was seriously considering the field of early childhood development as a career. Furthermore, the childcare center was interested in hiring her as a permanent employee on a schedule that might work for her.⁶¹

Several youth and staff reported career exploration opportunities (often informal) at a number of worksites, typically through the efforts of supervisors, coworkers, or career advisors/case managers. For example, in addition to doing her regular, somewhat repetitive duties, one young woman working for a city government department was periodically sent into the field with department professionals to observe and assist them. She learned first-hand the importance of the department's work; what each person did, as well as why and how; and how her job supported the department. She found this experience meaningful and enlightening.

Two examples of projects that were meaningful because of the amount of responsibility given to youth participants were at a rural elementary school and at ACYR's Phoenix campus. At the school, two young women were assigned to help prepare for fall. Because of budget cuts, the school had minimal summer custodial and administrative support. Two school administrators who were already swamped with other work would have had to deal with all aspects of preparation. They gave the two teens a broad array of responsibilities. One administrator said, “Without these two girls, we'd have been dead in the water! We couldn't have handled this crucial work without them. They were willing to do most anything, and they were amazingly fast learners!” At ACYR's Phoenix campus, a group of youth was put in charge of converting an underutilized space in an ACYR building into a teen room. Supported by a group facilitator, the young people conceived, planned,

⁶¹ Many employers said that they would hire SYEI youth after the summer if money were available to do so.

and implemented the conversion and took over management of the project. Teams researched teen rooms at other youth organizations, interviewed other teenagers to learn what might attract them to a teen room, and raised money for the conversion. To cap off the project, the group conducted a formal presentation and question-and-answer session about what they had done with an audience of adults.

Three internship programs developed by the City in collaboration with Gateway Community College represented an innovative partnership with resource leveraging (five sources of funding including ARRA funds) and a strong emphasis on meaningful work and learning. These internships were offered to a limited number of youth who had serious interests in entrepreneurship, advanced manufacturing/robotics, or healthcare. The programs served SYEI eligible youth as well as other youth (depending on funding stipulations). Gateway Community College classroom activities were integrated with related work experiences, field trips, and in some cases project-based learning. Youth enrolled in the robotics internship program participated in a “Robotics Tour” during which they visited three companies that used robotics and advanced manufacturing approaches in very different ways. In the entrepreneurship internship program, 26 youth were placed in internships at small businesses so that they could experience the realities of day-to-day operations and relate these experiences to their classes and business plans. They attended Gateway Community College classes three days per week (for which they received five college credits), and worked two days a week at worksites throughout Phoenix. Classes focused on developing a small business. In small group, project-based learning experiences, young people developed real-life plans for businesses of their choice. All 26 completed the program with business plans for the ventures of their choosing.⁶²

⁶² See Appendix 1 for more details regarding youth outcomes and experiences.

Entrepreneurship Internship at Lotus Wei and Wei of Chocolate:

Four youth served as interns at Lotus Wei and Wei of Chocolate, two companies acting as one worksite for Phoenix's entrepreneurship internship program. Their mission is to "create organic products promoting joy and awareness." Their small building in an under-resourced residential neighborhood is full of flower essence products and boxes of colorfully wrapped chocolates.

The employers, who had benefited from having a business mentor through a Phoenix program, wanted to give back and "make a difference, not just for the youth, but also for their family and community." It helped to know that the City and ACYR would find and prepare the youth.

Although not trained in youth development or teaching, the employers successfully embedded academic and life-skills learning in the interns' activities. The youth were involved not only in production activities (e.g., labeling, filling bottles, and packaging), but also creative projects (e.g., creating their own mists and planting a garden). They learned how to talk to people about the products at the local farmers' market. They learned that products are not always made with chemicals and in industrial settings. One attended a meeting with the employers' mentor, to learn about the relationship and see how important it is "to find people who are smart in different ways than you are." The youth learned about company practices, including taking shoes off inside, participating in meditation and breathing moments, and reflecting on what they had learned and experienced.

Used to operating independently, the supervisors saw that they needed to act on "teachable moments." For example, when they noticed "negative talk and energy" during the interns' work as a team, the employers interceded to bring out the positive, then redirected the youth into more one-on-one projects with closer supervision. They helped one youth learn that if something goes wrong, he could talk it through, work collaboratively to solve the problem, and do things differently next time.

One of the employers said, "Two of the young people told us this summer was life-changing. I think it is that they felt genuinely cared about. They appreciate having people interact with them and not broadcast down to them."

Support Services/Other Connections

The SYEI enabled programs to provide resources such as transportation and clothing vouchers. Transportation (especially in rural areas) and clothing appropriate for work were particularly common needs. Many young people mentioned how important these supports were and that access to a summer job only would have proved inadequate.

In one innovative approach, Jobs for Arizona Graduates (JAG) organized a shopping day before work readiness training started. Case managers helped with budgets, lists of clothes, and clothing vouchers, and took young people shopping in groups.

Benefits of the SYEI

Workforce development systems, service providers, employers, worksite supervisors, and the participating youth all benefited from the SYEI. Stakeholders and institutions pulled together as never before to accomplish their goals. The intensity of the timetable moved people and organizations toward a more open, collaborative model. New opportunities arose for cooperation and partnership development, including an expanding network of public and private sector employer partners and steps toward better integration of workforce development efforts with other economic development efforts.

Employers and worksite supervisors described the value of having youth perform critical functions that otherwise would not have been accomplished or would have been assigned to already overworked and overloaded staff. Employers clearly stated that without the SYEP, they would not have had the resources to hire additional staff people given the economic times and budget constraints. Many also talked about the benefit of giving back and helping the next generation.

Youth experienced important benefits that will influence their futures. For example, as a worksite supervisor explained, “I see how far they’ve come in terms of how they present themselves and their career goals. I see as feedback to me that I helped them to take steps to growth and their future.” Another said, “You see some kids blossom in a short time. It’s very exciting to see the kids growing.”

The young people interviewed specified the following benefits of their summer experiences:

- Increased knowledge of career pathways and options.
- Motivation to succeed and a sense of possibility.
- Growing belief and pride in self.
- Broader and deeper thinking about self and others.
- The power of a relationship with a caring adult.

Increased knowledge of career pathways and options. At some worksites, career education and exploration was a key design element (such as the internship program with Gateway Community College). For example, one youth in the healthcare internship program explained, “I didn’t know there was so much to the medical field. The staff will give you advice. If it’s a field that’s growing [they’ll tell you] what steps you have to take. All you have to do is ask. It opened up more options.”

Even worksites without an explicit emphasis on career pathways often provided informal opportunities, typically through exposure to various jobs and through contact and conversations with supervisors and other adults at the worksite. Many of the youth interviewed described how they were learning about career options and pathways. One young woman in a small rural town with limited opportunities explained, “If not for this program, I’d still only be volunteering and not getting anywhere. Now I see that maybe I can get the skills to get a job, and get my son and me the things we need.” She was able to take advantage of a training program in Phoenix that she would not likely have been eligible for as a volunteer.

Motivation to succeed and a sense of possibility. Many of the youth interviewed talked about how their experiences motivated them to want to succeed and gave them a sense of possibility. A young woman participating in the entrepreneurial internship program said, “I learned that having positive energy with who you are working with is important. With positive energy flowing ... slowly but for sure you will achieve.” Another teen explained how his experience motivated him despite an earlier lack of confidence: “It has made me want to work harder at school. I’m a dropout so it’s psychological – I think that I can’t do it, but then I remember I am smart and working here has given me that extra push.” Sometimes this sense of possibility turned into reality in the form of permanent employment (see box: Success in a Small Town).

Growing belief and pride in self. Several of the young people interviewed described how the SYEI helped them believe in what they could accomplish and made them feel proud. For one teen, this newfound positive self-image was particularly important because of personal difficulties she was experiencing in her home life. She explained, "My family didn't believe in me. And so I'm proud I am doing this and not sitting home doing nothing. I am showing my grandmother that I can make it and she is proud of me. It changed things for me."

A young single mother described how her summer experience affected her thinking: "I think it's made me a stronger person. I respect people more. Life is precious. We only have one life and we have to take it as it is."

For another teen, the process of believing in herself came from overcoming her fears of the unknown and of the elderly veterans at the Veteran's Home. She explained, "At first, I was scared. I wasn't used to seeing all that happens here. It was hard and I didn't know how to be friends with them. But then I got used to it. Now I know them. I love them. They are so sweet and I love talking to them. They have lots of stories to tell."

Success in a Small Town

The SYEP provided a new opportunity for a 20-year-old high school dropout, with no formal work history, who is a single mother living in a very rural area of Maricopa County. During the week-long work SYEP readiness skills training, she created her first resume and was placed at a local Community Action Program as a Community Service Assistant. The program director reported that this young woman is well-respected, has grown in maturity, and has developed her office and interpersonal skills. Further, she functioned as the central point of contact for the collection of timesheets for all of the town's SYEP participants. After a month of strong work performance, the supervisor said she was an asset to the agency, and recommended her for an opportunity to receive data entry training. The young woman is also slated to become a regular employee. To assist with her transition, the service provider extended her hours of SYEP participation. Since she had not completed her high school education, a condition of her ongoing employment will be to obtain her GED. She has started her studies and the Community Action Program will pay for her GED testing. Her supervisor expects her to do well.

Broader and deeper thinking about self and others. Some youth spoke powerfully about the opportunity to rethink how they view the world and reflect on their own behaviors. One young woman in a hospital setting said, "I used to see [elderly people] as sick, disabled. But now it makes me love them more and treat them with more respect. See all they've done in life. And so many of them here have no one. One man hadn't seen his daughter in ten years. How can they just be left like that? It breaks my heart." Her coworker explained what she has learned about prejudice and her responsibilities to the patients, regardless of their views, and to herself: "I think it makes us stronger. Some people we have to take care of don't like us cause of how we look or how we talk but everyone needs our help We have to keep an open mind and can't be prejudiced to people we are helping. I have grown in that area."

The power of a relationship with a caring adult. Young people described making strides in learning, motivation, and maturity when they worked closely with adults who like them, have confidence in them, and are genuinely interested in their progress. Caring non-parental adults facilitated the youths' progress towards meeting the world's expectations, challenges, and requirements. The key element was mutual engagement of the youth and adult as they worked together to solve problems and achieve results. The relationship

developed naturally as competent, interested adults worked closely with the youth in joint pursuit of achievable goals.

Many of the young people interviewed talked about how they felt encouraged and supported by adults as part of their summer experience, and that this had an impact on their confidence and expectations. One young woman participating in a healthcare internship explained, "I didn't really think I could do anything, and then they gave me responsibility here. Just knowing they trusted me for that makes me feel good... more confident."

A compelling example of the power of a relationship with a caring adult was the young man, described earlier, whose Parks and Recreation supervisor made such a difference.

Conclusion and Recommendations

- Maximize and sustain the power of the Maricopa County – Phoenix collaboration. The efforts to collaborate on a vision and implementation added impressive power to the area's summer experience. This work paves the way for future collaboration, inter-institutional cooperation, and creative extensions of youth employment programming.
- Leverage and build upon the 2009 experience. The 2009 SYEI started with limited institutional memory guiding it, but now city and county leaders have more knowledge and capacity to build upon. New systems are in place, and their limitations are known. Learning has been significant and in many cases needed improvements are clear. A future SYEI could be much improved based upon the 2009 experience.
- Use newfound collaborative mindsets among service providers to create a broad-based vision and action plan for health care, green jobs, and summer opportunities. Take advantage of, and partner with, the Greater Phoenix Economic Council's regional growth strategy focused on health care and sustainable and solar technologies. Work further with organizations and companies on these high growth job opportunities.
- Improve worksites' abilities to make connections between work and learning.
- Make more explicit connections for youth between the job skills and social development concepts they are learning and their futures (reflection component).
- Enhance connections between summer and year-round programming especially for targeted populations such as out-of-school youth.
- Improve connections to green jobs.

PHOENIX AND MARICOPA COUNTY APPENDIX 1

Organization	Program Strategy	Sample Worksite Experiences	Highlights
Management and Leadership			
<p>Phoenix Workforce Connection (PWC)</p> <p>Maricopa Workforce Connections (MWC)</p>	<p>New coordinated regional strategy that provided consistency across urban, suburban and, for the first time, very rural areas.</p> <p>Deep partnership base and highly dedicated staff.</p> <p>Hired high quality career advisors or case managers to provide work readiness orientation, monitoring, timesheets and check delivery.</p>	<p>Sponsored innovation "eligibility events".</p> <p>Contracted with a broad array of worksite providers including CBOs, college, school, business.</p> <p>PWC contracted with Junior Achievement to develop a progressive work readiness orientation and train-the-trainers.</p> <p>MWC developed partnership with South Mt. Community College, United Way and others to create innovative work readiness training for career advisors and case managers (college credit-bearing).</p>	<p><i>"We were two huge entities and we needed to coordinate in more intensive ways. It was challenging – but we did it!"</i></p> <p><i>"We were trying to do something extraordinary with ordinary rules. The level of effort to pull this off was the most extraordinary thing I've seen in an awfully long time."</i></p>
Education Partners and Worksites			
Gateway Community College	<p>Offered small business internships to 26 youth interested in entrepreneurship, robotics and health care. Exposed youth to experiences by infusing "all aspects of an industry" with meaningful work experiences.</p> <p>Entrepreneurship program coupled Gateway Community College classes three days/week with experiential learning two days/week.</p> <p>All 26 youth completed the program with business plans for ventures of their own choosing.</p>	<p>Entrepreneurship: <i>Lotus Wei & Wei of Chocolate</i> are two combined companies acting as one worksite for the entrepreneurship interns. Their mission is to "create organic products creating joy and awareness."</p> <p>Four young people participated in production activities & sales of creative products made with flower essences and chocolate created for "the mind, body and soul."</p> <p><i>Children's Learning Center</i> Exposed youth to health related careers, included early childhood development. One student for example acted as an assistant to the Head teacher in a classroom setting.</p>	<p>Increased knowledge of career pathways and options. Motivation to succeed and a sense of possibility. Growing belief and pride in self. Broader and deeper thinking about self and others. The power of a relationship with a caring adult.</p> <p><i>"Young people have told us this summer has been life changing."</i></p> <p><i>"I learned that having positive energy with who you are working with is important with positive energy flowing"</i></p>

Organization	Program Strategy	Sample Worksite Experiences	Highlights
Gateway Community College (continued)		<p>Robotics: Some youth in Phoenix's Entrepreneurship Program focusing on robotics participated in a field trip that showed them multiple corporations using robotics in different ways and contexts.</p>	<p>– <i>slowly but for sure you will achieve.</i>"</p> <p><i>"Learning new ways of being is exciting and empowering."</i></p> <p>One supervisor remembered, <i>"the other things I was going to do with my time could wait"</i> upon realizing how valuable this experience was to the young people.</p> <p><i>"I didn't know there was so much to the medical field!"</i></p> <p><i>"I'm like family here. I really like it."</i></p> <p><i>"If it were not for the program, I would still be volunteering and not getting anywhere."</i></p>
Arizona Call-A-Teen Youth Resources (ACYR)	In-house worksite and provided training and innovation work-based and project-based learning opportunities.	<p><i>ACYR's Phoenix Campus</i> A group of youth was put in charge of converting an underutilized space in an ACYR building into an attractive "Teen Room." Supported by a group facilitator, young people conceived, planned, implemented, and eventually managed the project. Researched other teen rooms, interviewed teens, raised money to support the conversion, and built their own Teen Room. The project culminated with a one-hour formal presentation to adults, with Q & A, about what the youth had accomplished.</p>	<p>Meaningful work, caring adults, safe places, embedded academic relationship with quality staff and supervisors, project based learning with marketable skills, age & stage appropriate placement and tasks.</p> <p><i>"It has made me want to work harder at school. I'm a dropout so it's psychological – I think that I can't do it, but then I remember I am smart and working here has given me that extra push."</i> (ACYR)</p>

Organization	Program Strategy	Sample Worksite Experiences	Highlights
Paloma Elementary School	In-house worksite. Provided exposure to all aspects of elementary administration tasks.	Students were assigned to support efforts of the administrators. They learned what it took to open and run an elementary school.	Leadership, mentorship, meaningful work, combined work and learning. <i>"Without these girls, we'd have been dead in the water. We couldn't have handled this crucial work without them"</i> reported one supervisor.
Gila Bend Town Hall, Gila Bend, AZ	Created a community service assistanceship/ internship and professional development opportunity for a single mom – a high school dropout – with no formal work history in rural Arizona for the first time.	Community Action Agency	Meaningful work, high quality relationships, youth development principals in place, combined work and learning to acquire marketable skills, partnerships and coordination to create systems of supports and opportunity. <i>"If not for this program, I'd still only be volunteering and not getting anywhere. Now I see that maybe I can get the skills to get a job, and get my son and me the things we need."</i>
Jobs for AZ Graduates (JAG)	Offered support services.	Organized support services such as "shopping day" before work readiness training. Case managed help with budgets, lists of clothes, clothing vouchers and took youth on shopping trip.	After a month on the job, the supervisor said she was "an asset to the agency" and recommended her for an opportunity to receive further data entry training. She is also slated to become a regular employee when the summer WIA program ends.