Strengthening And Expanding Summer Jobs

A series of learning briefs supported by

JPMorgan Chase & Co.

TOO MANY TEENS TURNED AWAY:

Strengthening And Expanding Summer Jobs
A young person’s first job is a critical step toward achieving long-term employment and economic stability. Yet, in many U.S. cities, demand for summer jobs far exceeds supply, leaving too many teens without the opportunity to earn income or gain work experience. Despite positive trends in employment overall, the youngest members of the workforce are not reaping the benefits in equal measure. Unemployment among 16- to 24-year-olds, currently at 8.7 percent, remains nearly three times the rate for adults 25 and older. As a result, far too many young people, especially low-income youth of color, are missing out on the education, training, and work experiences that would prepare them to compete in the global labor market.

For many young people who face systemic obstacles to employment, Summer Youth Employment Programs (SYEPs) connect them with jobs they could not otherwise access. SYEPs offer paid work experience, often paired with career awareness and training activities. They introduce youth to the world of work and help them build the skills they need to succeed.

The benefits of SYEPs are not limited to youth. Businesses and local economies need a workforce equipped with more education, training, and experience than ever before. The World Economic Forum found that most occupations and specialties that are currently in demand did not even exist 10 years ago. Furthermore, “by 2020, more than a third of the desired core skill sets of most occupations will be comprised of skills that are not yet considered crucial to the job today.” Workers will need technical skills, coupled with strong social skills (e.g., emotional intelligence, collaboration). When SYEPs provide quality work experiences, offer meaningful skills development, and engage employer partners, they can create the pipelines of young talent that growing economies require.

City leaders often recognize the critical roles of SYEPs in engaging youth during the summer, improving economic equity, and meeting employers’ expectations for youth to enter the workforce with the skills that they need. As a result, SYEPs frequently comprise the single largest investment of local youth workforce development dollars. However, current funding levels remain insufficient to meet the demand for jobs.

As part of JPMorgan Chase’s five-year commitment to expanding SYEPs, the firm supported a survey of 21 SYEPs in 19 U.S. cities. Every respondent indicated that they were unable to meet the local need due to lack of funds. They reported turning away an average of 62% of youth who applied for jobs in 2017. One program was able to accept only 23% of applicants.

These survey findings, along with information gathered from practitioners, researchers, advocates, city leaders, and youth, underscore the need for continued investment in SYEPs to strengthen infrastructure, improve workforce system alignment, and increase access to career pathways and other services.
Recognizing that summer jobs can put young people on a path to economic mobility, JPMorgan Chase made a $17 million, five-year commitment to expand SYEPs, beginning in 2017. The investment prioritizes effective skills development and high-quality work experiences during the summer. This nationwide effort is part of the firm’s more than $350 million global investment in skills development. This commitment is helping to meet demand for summer jobs by funding positions for thousands of youth each year and equipping them with the skills and experiences they need to succeed. In addition, this investment fosters learning, collaboration, and innovation across U.S. cities.

This paper is the first in a series of briefs to be released over the next year in support of efforts to scale SYEPs. It includes an overview of findings from SYEP surveys of the 19 U.S. cities supported by JPMorgan Chase in 2017, as well as interviews and information gathered from 16 practitioners, city leaders, researchers, advocates, and youth, focused on the value of SYEPs and the policies, practices, and investments needed to maintain and improve these critical early work experiences.
Inequity of Opportunity

The growing economy and low unemployment rates have not offered equal opportunity for all. Since the Great Recession, which started in 2007 and bottomed out in 2010, the share of teens working during the peak summer month of July has greatly increased. However, youth employment numbers began a precipitous decline as early as 2000 and have yet to return to pre-recession levels. The current employment rates for 16- to 24-year-olds continues to hover around 50 percent, 12 percentage points lower than for adults 25 years and older. Labor market attachment is even more challenging for low-income youth and youth of color, who often face systemic barriers to employment. Employment rates for Black and Hispanic/Latino youth are improving, but they are still far behind their white counterparts (Figure 1). Boosting employment rates for young people of color is a priority for many cities across the U.S. and Summer Youth Employment Programs (SYEPs) can play an important role in achieving this goal.

Summer Youth Employment Programs: An Overview

An abundance of research demonstrates the value of summer jobs and other early work experiences. For many teens and young adults, part-time or summer jobs serve as important rites of passage that introduce them to the world of work. Youth who explore several types of work gain awareness of potential career paths. They learn what employers expect of them, gain mentors and job references, and build social capital that helps them access future opportunities. Young people also practice problem-solving, communication, teamwork, and other 21st-century skills on the job. Employment—and the income it provides—promotes self-confidence, self-sufficiency, and other developmental assets that contribute to success in education, future employment, and life.

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Summer Youth Employment Programs function under a variety of models. Some operate citywide and may be managed by government entities or in collaboration with multiple nonprofit partners. Public school districts’ Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs and nonprofit organizations also offer SYEPs, usually at a smaller scale. Although program models vary, they share several common goals:

Positive youth development: Many SYEPs are grounded in the principles of positive youth development, emphasizing personal and social skills that reach beyond the workplace. They focus on identifying youth interests and talents and help to build social capital through connections to professional role models and mentors.

Income: SYEP participants tend to come from high-poverty neighborhoods where job opportunities are few and far between. Summer jobs provide much-needed income for youth and their families. Youth report using earnings to purchase school supplies, help their families buy food, pay for incidentals during the school year, or contribute to college costs.

Figure 1. July 2017 Employment Population Rates by Race and Gender for Teens Ages 16 to 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Hispanic or Latina Women</th>
<th>Black Women</th>
<th>White Women</th>
<th>Hispanic or Latino Men</th>
<th>Black Men</th>
<th>White Men</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


“Our youth are quite literally the future of St. Louis, and as corporate citizens we have some clear choices. We can either stand on the sidelines while they attempt to succeed in challenging times, or we can contribute to their growth.”

Employer Partner, STL Youth Jobs (St. Louis)
**Academic aspirations:** SYEPs encourage youth to think long-term. Exposure to career pathways and postsecondary options help young people chart their educational and career paths.

**Career readiness and skills development:** Most SYEPs include career-focused workshops, training, or coaching. An increasing number of SYEPs are connecting youth to opportunities in high-growth sectors and providing the chance to learn technical skills and earn certificates or academic credits.

**Workforce pipelines:** SYEPs play a role in integrated talent development strategies by engaging business and industry partners, city leaders, youth employment intermediaries, and schools.

The Youth Policy Lab at the University of Michigan conducted a study of participants in Grow Detroit’s Young Talent (GDYT) Summer Jobs Program, a collaboration managed in part by Connect Detroit. The study shows improvement in educational outcomes two years after participation. According to researchers, the participants are less likely to be chronically absent and more likely to stay in school, graduate, and take the SAT. In the two years following summer employment:

- 95 percent of participants remained enrolled in high school.
- 73 percent of rising 10th- and 11th-graders took the SAT.
- Participants were over 5 percentage points more likely to graduate high school.

*Detroit*
Snapshots

Voices from the Field

This spring, JPMorgan Chase supported an in-depth survey of SYEPs. The third such survey in the past five years, it was designed to capture a picture of these particular programs and to identify opportunities to advance the field.

Unmet Need

100% of programs reported that demand for jobs continues to exceed available positions.

9% Overall, placements increased by 9 percent over 2016. The 21 SYEPs supported by JPMorgan Chase in 2017 placed almost 40,000 youth from 19 U.S. cities into summer jobs.

38% On average, SYEPs were able to place about 38 percent of applicants into summer jobs.

more than half of youth surveyed by SYEPs in Newark and New York reported that they would not have found jobs without the programs.

Serving Low-Income Youth of Color

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Youth of color: 87%

Opportunity Youth: 7%
SYEPs are developing diverse work experiences for youth across sectors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Site Type</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public sector</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonprofit sector</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private sector</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

100% provide pre-placement job training.

81% expose youth to career pathways in sectors such as information technology, life sciences, engineering, health care, financial services, architecture, and hospitality and tourism.

65% partner with industry organizations to provide sector-specific work experiences.

43% provide opportunities for youth to earn credentials, frequently in health and technology.

*Statistics are specific to JPMC grantees*
Program leaders emphasized the following priorities for the future:

- **Serving more youth** (more than half)
- **Identifying new funding** (62% of programs)
- **Expanding career awareness and training activities** (2/3 of programs)
- **Increasing private sector engagement** (1/3 of programs)

**Learning Experiences**

- Programs offer an average of **15 hours** training.
- **62%** provide career coaches or mentors.
- **43%** provide connections to year-round training or employment.
- **76%** offer supplemental training during the summer, often including computer skills, college access, and financial literacy.

**SYEP Priorities**

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*Statistics are specific to JPMC grantees*
Challenges and Solutions

Surveys, interviews, and additional research highlight several challenges that many SYEPs face. This section explores key areas where public and private support can help communities advance equity and build local economies by connecting all youth to a continuum of meaningful work experiences that prepare them for a competitive job market.

Among the challenges most frequently cited by programs and advocates, funding rises to the top. Programs face vast gaps between available funding and the cost of employing all the youth who apply for summer jobs. Interviews this spring indicate that unpredictability of funding also undermines efficient use of the resources that programs do receive.

In many cities, funding levels fluctuate wildly from year to year, and leaders may not receive their funding levels until as late as June. Programs need stable funding to prepare realistic budgets, create staffing plans, sustain employer partnerships, and invest in evaluation and program improvement. Instead, many SYEPs effectively close at the end of summer and start over in January. When funding levels increase, they scramble to hire and train temporary staff, secure placements, and match youth with jobs. When funding decreases, they have to cut supportive services and leave more youth without a source of income for the summer.

Predictable funding streams can strengthen everything from program planning, quality, and evaluation to employer partnerships – not to mention the ability to provide timely information to youth about the availability of job placements and supportive services. For example, New York City committed to providing baseline funding for summer jobs. Previously, funding levels were not known until June, but workforce leaders now can expect to have capacity for approximately 70,000 slots each summer. With this knowledge, they can contract with providers earlier in the year, approach employers with solid plans for placement, use lead time to hire and fully train staff, and plan ahead for program improvements and new strategies. This kind of sustained commitment has the potential to increase efficiency, facilitate public-private partnerships, provide stability and access for youth, and improve program outcomes.

“For most, it’s not just about career exploration; they need an income to contribute to their household.”

Alysia Ordway, Boston PIC

Questions to explore:

- What revenue streams, such as governors’ WIOA set-asides, state and local CTE dollars, or funding available through state Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) programs, might help improve and scale programs to meet youth and employer demand?
- How might voter referenda, youth work experience legislation, or creative tax strategies help stabilize funding for SYEPs?

Advancing Equity through Investments in Evaluation and Targeted Supports

Young people of color and those with other marginalized identities often face immense systemic barriers to economic opportunity. These obstacles contribute to long-term disparities in employment, income, family wealth, and a range of social determinants of health. Overall, current policy and practice neglect to address these disparities sufficiently.

SYEPs tend to enroll large numbers of low-income youth and youth of color. Programs surveyed by JPMorgan Chase indicate that close to 90% of 2017 participants were youth of color, including 62% African-American/Black, 12% Hispanic/Latino, and 10% Asian. In Newark and New York City, more than 50% of participants reported that they would have been unable to find work without SYEPs. This data demonstrates the critical role that SYEPs can play in advancing racial equity and closing persistent gaps in economic opportunity.

However, few programs provide comprehensive supports for youth facing some of the most intractable systemic barriers to employment. In addition to limited funding, lack of useful data presents one of the greatest challenges to addressing the needs of all youth. Programs typically capture the data points required by funders – outputs, such as numbers of applications received, youth placed in jobs, youth completing the programs, and employers participating. But in interview after interview, leaders expressed frustration with having only
anecdotal information about common barriers faced by participants, engagement or success of targeted populations, the quality of work experiences, program outcomes, or employer insights. Even those who administered pre- and post-surveys of youth and/or employers frequently stated that they were technologically unable to draw useful information from the data.

Young people are experts on their summer jobs experiences. SYEPs would benefit from expanding opportunities for youth leadership and implementing data collection strategies that help them learn about youth needs and experiences in the programs. Several programs are starting to collect information from youth through the use of short surveys in which youth rate aspects of their experience on a numeric scale. These tools provide an overview of youth satisfaction but cannot capture the specifics necessary to understand the factors that contribute to or impede success. In addition, informal feedback collected by program staff is lost when programs are forced to close in the fall.

A few cities have made the commitment to large evaluation projects. Boston has undertaken an extensive longitudinal study to identify short- and long-term outcomes and test the cumulative impact of summer jobs experiences. Results are promising, particularly in crime reduction: in the 17 months following the program, SYEP participants faced 35% fewer arraignments for violent crimes and a stunning 57% fewer for property crimes than the randomized control group. The study also shows improvements in job-readiness, social skills, community engagement, and academic aspirations. Gains were highest among Black and Hispanic males, pointing to the role of SYEPs in expanding equity in economic opportunity.

Detroit and New York City have conducted research with similar results. However, studies like these rely on significant and sustained investment of funds that few cities are willing or able to commit. When communities can secure support for evaluation, due to limited resources, studies tend to be time-limited and narrowly focused. Further, localized results are not easily generalizable to other cities, each of which operates in its own demographic, economic, political, and industry context. Program models can offer adaptable best practices, but the difference in scale between SYEPs in large and small cities precludes direct comparison.

Meaningful evaluations can equip SYEPs with deeper understanding of the challenges that young people face. This knowledge should inform large-scale strategies to ensure that SYEPs target resources and shape programs to serve youth equitably.

Lack of detailed local data should not inhibit investment in supports that improve access to work. For example, because of systemic disinvestment in the economies of low-income neighborhoods and communities of color, youth from these areas often face long commutes to jobs. Transportation expenses quickly consume earnings. Long bus rides also take time that young people need for rest, socializing, and responsibilities like child care or summer school. Strategies that cities use to address transportation challenges range from subsidizing public transit costs to coordinating car pools, shuttle services, or ride-sharing partnerships. A few even subsidize driver’s license fees or offer driver’s education. Workforce Investment Boards can target request for proposals to organizations embedded in neighborhoods that are farthest from their cities’ economic hubs. City investments in improved public transportation can impact not just young workers but entire neighborhoods.

St. Louis

Dr. Alice Prince, Executive Director of the St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment says that her staff indicate programs are exceeding expectations, but when it comes to program quality, she asks her staff, “How do you know? When have you asked [the youth]? Maybe I have a resilient young person who was able to overcome programs that were really not quality. How do we know that?”

With support, programs can develop youth leadership in both policy and practice. For example, the Baltimore Mayor’s Office of Economic Development hires youth to survey their peers and formulate recommendations. Staff at the St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment conduct focus groups and surveys to solicit this information from youth. With time and creative thinking, the adults responsible for program planning and improvement can begin to systematize learning from youth experience.
Advancing equity also requires renewed focus on young people who have already disconnected from education and the workforce. 4.6 million 16- to 24-year-olds are both out of school and out of work, leaving them separated from pathways to productive adulthood. These young people are often referred to as Opportunity Youth, because they are seeking opportunities to reconnect to the workforce and because they represent the opportunity of untapped talent. Nationally, 11.7 percent of young people in this age group can be considered Opportunity Youth. That number increases to 17.2 percent for Black youth.

For reasons ranging from lack of resources to program design, Opportunity Youth represent only 7 percent of youth placed in jobs by surveyed SYEPs in 2017. Thirty-three percent of these SYEPs reported that they have developed programs or strategies that specifically target the employment or education needs of Opportunity Youth. Common examples of strategies to serve Opportunity Youth include year-round services and collaboration with systems like child welfare, human services, and juvenile justice. Standalone SYEPs may not be the best fit for Opportunity Youth, for whom summer is not a break from school. However, SYEPs are often the only available job options for Opportunity Youth. SYEPs that provide targeted supportive services integrated into sustained strategies can help youth re-connect to career pathways.

Cities can make a difference by explicitly including outcomes for Opportunity Youth among their goals. For example, Philadelphia’s overall workforce strategy now features an Opportunity Youth employment metric that holds agencies across the city accountable to meeting their needs. Nurturing industry partnerships can also encourage employers to provide extra supports as they give Opportunity Youth the chance they need to prove themselves. In Newark, Shoprite made a commitment not only to hire Opportunity Youth but also to provide mentors, training, support, and the prospect of permanent employment for those who succeed.
Differentiating Programs to Support Career Development

Across the country, education and workforce professionals are integrating SYEPs into a continuum of experiences that prepare youth for career pathways, postsecondary opportunities, and a competitive labor market long after the summer ends.

Summer jobs programs serve age ranges that vary based on local priorities and funding streams. Most serve ages 16-21 at minimum, with some enrolling youth as young as 14 and as old as 24. Young teens come with distinctly different skills and needs than young adults do. Almost every program leader interviewed felt confident in their programs for youth at one end of the age spectrum but struggled at the other. They want to build a continuum of programs that are appropriate for youth at various stages of development and skills mastery, helping them to move along career pathways from year to year.

“You have to be able to work in any environment. You will be in college with many different students and in the work place with many different co-workers.”

SYEP participant, Washington, DC

Youth entering the workforce will need access to education and training opportunities throughout their careers. In one survey, over half of youth participants reported wanting a job to learn new skills that would make them more employable.19 Young people transitioning to adulthood frequently cite navigating education and career options as a challenge.

Citywide employment strategies can facilitate this continuum by linking SYEPs and other elements of local workforce systems. Many communities struggle to coordinate a patchwork of summer jobs programs run by cities, counties, workforce boards, private nonprofits, and even housing or human services agencies. Some have begun coordinating youth employment efforts city- or county-wide. City leaders working together to coordinate strategies can help engage employers and industry, build relationships between city agencies, and lead to more efficient use of limited resources.

SYEPs are finding creative ways to provide continuity for young people as they grow. Many have deepened partnerships with public school systems to provide continuity for in-school youth. Some embed staff in middle and high schools to provide classroom workshops, career counseling, and career awareness activities. 81% of SYEPs surveyed work closely with public schools’ CTE programs, reinforcing early workforce skills year-round. Data-sharing agreements can help staff target recruitment, link job placement with educational goals, and ensure follow-up to keep young people connected after their summer experience is over.

Strong industry engagement can also facilitate work experiences that deepen as young people move along career pathways. In 2017, the private sector provided 27% of job slots for grantee programs – a 13% increase over 2015. 57% of grantee programs have hired at least one year-round staff person to focus on recruiting private-sector employers. The private sector offers a wider range of opportunities that can appeal to youth with varied interests and skills – and sometimes lead directly to permanent employment.
The most recent reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which provides the bulk of federal workforce funding, requires at least 20% of youth dollars to be spent on work experiences. This update made it easier for youth to participate in SYEPs while maintaining enrollment in year-round WIOA programs. Although federal funding represents a small portion of SYEP revenues, some cities are using legislative changes to create more cohesive systems by removing silos between federally funded programs.

Expanded technical training also helps young people build skills over time. Almost half of surveyed programs provide instruction in computer skills. Some have added industry credentials. Dual-enrollment arrangements with community colleges add incentives and continuity for older youth as they progress from career exploration and early work experiences to professional development.

Looking Ahead

The surveys, interviews, and research represented in this brief highlight challenges and best practices from communities across the country. They raise themes and strategies for all stakeholders – mayors and workforce boards, funders and agency heads, youth and families, educators and SYEP providers, employers and industry groups – to consider as SYEPs chart their futures. The questions below are designed to prompt reflection on current systems and provide a starting place for exploring ways to expand and strengthen SYEPs.

**How does your community support sustainable SYEPs?**
- What financial models or local commitments ensure that funding is both stable and sufficient to meet demand for summer jobs?
- How are disparate funding streams used to facilitate cross-sector collaboration?
- How do city agencies build industry and employer capacity to offer summer jobs?

**How is your community advancing equity?**
- What outcomes measures address equity for youth facing systemic barriers to employment, such as youth of color, foster youth, LGBTQ and gender non-conforming youth, low-income youth, Opportunity Youth, young parents, and those involved in the justice system or needing assistance with literacy and numeracy?
- How do citywide strategies hold agencies accountable for equitable access to opportunity?
- How are agencies and employers challenged to address implicit bias, discriminatory hiring, and institutional racism so youth of color can gain access to positive work experiences?
- How are resources directed to neighborhoods with the highest demonstrated need?

**How is your community serving youth throughout their developmental years?**
- What frameworks or curricula guide career development strategies from awareness through advancement?
- How are SYEPs offered flexibility and resources to design, adapt, or pilot promising approaches to differentiate programming for various age groups?
- How does your community support alignment with public school systems and post-secondary institutions?
- How do leaders use federal and state policy levers to support links between SYEPs and career pathways?

Over the next year, JPMorgan Chase and CLASP will collaborate with youth employment leaders to explore these issues and share other insights from the field through a series of learning briefs.
Summer Youth Employment Programs fill a gap in access to early work experiences for many youth, particularly youth of color and young people from low-income families. SYEPs are making great progress toward innovating approaches to improve skills development opportunities, aligning work experience with career pathways, building strong employer partnerships, and coordinating with year-round workforce development efforts. With sufficient and consistent funding, coupled with better data, infrastructure, and opportunities for learning promising approaches across cities, they can do even more to ensure that youth, businesses, and local economies can thrive.

Notes


3. 2017 JPMC SYEP Survey


8. See data on Opportunity Youth on Q 2A in the 2017 JPMorgan Chase Youth Employment Survey; calculations (and percentages) for Opportunity Youth based on enrollment only from SYEPs that track this specific demographic data. See Q 2A chart for more information

9. See information on Opportunity Youth on Q 30, 31 in the 2017 JPMorgan Chase Youth Employment Survey

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