Building Systems and Pathways for Disconnected Youth

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# Introduction

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**Discussion: Building Systems & Leveraging Federal Policy**
Defining Opportunity Youth and ‘What Works’

Venessa Marks
Senior Manager, ICF
Who are opportunity youth?

20% of 16–24 year olds are out of school and out of work

(Approx 6.7 million youth)

Bryant, Harris, & Byrd, 2013
Opportunity youth are a heterogeneous group

3.4 million chronically disconnected youth

3.3 million under-attached youth

6.7 million Opportunity Youth

Belfeld et al., 2012
Bryant, Harris, & Byrd, 2013
Wimer, 2014
Under-attached Youth

Employment of 20-24 year olds stands at its lowest levels in over 60 years.

The Great Recession disproportionately hit young men, particularly young men of color.

Belfeld et al., 2012
Wimer, 2014
Chronically-disconnected youth often have a confluence of risk factors.
How do youth become disconnected?

Developmental factors

Sociological factors

Early childhood | Childhood | Adolescence | Young adulthood
Birth | 5 | 12 | 18 | 24

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1 in 10 children are polyvictims of abuse and violence

Trauma and other adverse childhood experiences can elicit a toxic stress response

Listenbee et al, 2012
Toxic stress can impair the development of executive functioning skills...

- Process verbal information
- Calm down
- Follow directions
- Remember what is being said

...which can directly impact school behavior & employment success
Racial disparities further compound challenges for youth of color

Policing and justice involvement

ACLUs, 2013
Racial disparities further compound challenges for youth of color

The probability of getting a callback from an employer fell by nearly \( \frac{2}{3} \) if a young black man had a criminal record.

Young white men with criminal records received a higher rate of callbacks than young black men with no records.

Hiring discrimination

Pager et al., 2010
What works to reconnect opportunity youth?

- Relationship Focus
- Trauma-informed Care
- Aligned Systems & Services
- Assessment
- Multiple Pathways

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Trauma-informed Care

Understanding & Sensitivity

Empowerment

Assessment

Individualized & Comprehensive Case Management

all youth ready for college work and life
Relationship Focus

“Programs don’t change people; relationships do.”
-Bill Milliken, Founder Communities in Schools

- Staff training & support
- Family engagement
- Parenting, co-parenting, healthy relationships
- Mentoring & social capital
Each individual is a unique constellation of risk and resilience factors.
Providing Multiple Pathways

- Multiple reentry points to education & training
- Earn & learn opportunities
- Incentivizing progression along a career pathway
Aligned Systems & Services

- Complex Systems
- Interdependent Needs
- Executive Functioning Impairment

Need for comprehensive, streamlined services
Building Systems and Pathways for Disconnected Youth

Andrea Amaechi
Policy Analyst, CLASP
CCRY Network
Communities Collaborating to Reconnect Youth

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all youth ready for college work and life
Components of a Comprehensive Youth Employment Delivery System

- Convening Entity
- Administrative Agent
- Case Management
- Partnerships Across Systems
- Work Experience & Exposure
Strong Convening Entity

Vision

Collective Accountability

Agreed Performance Measures

Quality Improvement

Leverage and Maximize Resources
Interventions for OSY:
High Quality Work Experiences

- Transitional jobs
- Summer Jobs
- Occupational Training
- Internships
- Pre-apprenticeships
- Career Exploration
Interventions for OSY: Dropout Recovery

- Credit recovery
- Reengagement centers
- Integrated education and training
- Dual enrollment
Interventions for OSY

- Child Care
- Health Services
- Transportation
- Mental Health
- Housing

Social-Emotional & Work Supports
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014

- Passed with wide bipartisan majority in Congress
  - Senate voted 93-5; House voted 415-6
- WIOA was signed into law by President Obama on July 22, 2014
  - Many provisions take effect July 1, 2015; others July 1, 2016
- First reauthorization of national workforce programs in 16 years
  - Updates the law for changes in the economy
  - Emphasizes newer, proven strategies in workforce development
WIOA Scope

• 6 Core Programs
  • Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker & Youth
  • Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy
  • Title III Employment Service (Wagner-Peyser)
  • Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation
• Service Delivery Partners at One-Stops
  • TANF, Second Chance Act
• Other Potential Partners
  • CTE, SNAP E&T, Community Colleges
Expanded and Improved Services for Youth

• **75%** of Youth funds required to be spent on out-of-school youth

• New **16-24** age range for out-of-school youth eligibility

• Requires at least **20 percent** of Youth Formula Funds be spent on paid and unpaid work experiences (including Summer Jobs programs)

• Adds youth “living in a high-poverty area” to the low-income criterion for youth activities

• In-school youth eligibility includes low-income individuals ages 14 to 21 who are English language learners and those who have a disability
Leveraging WIOA

Title II- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act

- High overlap of OSY with participants served in Title II
- WIOA proposed regs make clear that youth 18-24 served in Title II programs are OSY for the purpose of eligibility
- Many adult education programs in states and local areas are funded by state and local programs
WIOA Resources

CLASP’s comments to the Departments:

• Unified and Combined State Plans, Performance Accountability, and the One-Stop System Joint Provisions (Joint DOL/ED)
• Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act provisions administered by DOL
• Title II Adult Education and Literacy administered by ED

WIOA Game Plan for Low-Income People -
http://www.clasp.org/issues/postsecondary/wioa-game-plan

USDOL “Enough is Known for Action” Youth TA Webinars: last Wednesday of each month, 2-3:30p Eastern. Access past material and sign up for future via www.workforceone.org (go to calendar of webinars, click on last Weds of each month; began in Feb. 2015)
Paid Work & Learn Opportunities and Career Support

Garrett Warfield
Director of Evaluation, Year Up
Paid Work & Learn Model

1. We identify urban young adults who are highly motivated but lack opportunities to enter the mainstream economy.

2. We talk with companies to understand the skills they need but struggle to find in new hires.

3. Young adults spend six months in the classroom learning the skills employers are looking for, including soft skills.

4. Young adults intern for six months with one of our partner companies, applying their skills and gaining critical work experience.

5. Young adults graduate ready to launch a meaningful career and contribute to our economy and community.
By the Numbers

16 sites nationwide
3,000 students/year
100% of students who complete 6 months of classroom training are placed into internships
75% of students graduate (retention)
85% of graduates are employed or pursuing full-time post-secondary education within four months of graduation
$18 average hourly wage of employed graduates
250 corporate partners
90% satisfaction of corporate partners and students
How We Meet Employer Needs

- **Surface**: Employer business challenges: hiring needs, internship opportunities, job descriptions, and expectations for specific roles
  - Surfaced job opportunities to ensure they add value for students and partners, and are feasible for training and career potential
  - All needs and training requirements and formalize a working partnership with the employer
  - Training to meet business needs via: onsite job shadowing, defining learning outcomes and curricula, integrating new training and content into program
  - New classroom training with regular review with employer partner, followed by monitoring & evaluation during and after internship
  - Pilot performance with the employer partner, evaluate growth potential, strengthen approach, and re-implement

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Embedding the Model with Employers

- Program support to managers
- Monthly meetings

Year Up Program Management

- Manage intern queries
- Answer manager ?s
- Provides feedback

On-site Coordinator

- Connects YU interns
- Mentor pairing
- Corporate culture advising

Firm-wide Alumni Network

- ID gaps/trends
- Refine program
- Cross-site coordination

Senior Management Escalation

- Partners with YU
- Manages HR
- Status updates

Program Implementation & Strategy

- Custom manager training
- Functional peer support
- Weekly 1:1s btw. mgr/intern

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Ongoing Career Support

For-profit B-Corp for Year Up grads and partners
Dedicated career services for entire alumni network

National Alumni Network

13,000+ students served to date
Back on Track to College and Careers: An Evidence-Based Framework for Off-Track and Out-of-School Youth

Mamadou Ndiaye
Associate Director, JFF
Back on Track: A Brief History

• **Why** a Back on Track Framework?
  – Off-track, out-of-school youth not reaping benefits from major federal initiatives (e.g. School to Work Act, WIA)
  – Provide guidance for schools/community-based programs serving these young people
Framework focuses on two populations:
• Those without a high school credential, and
• Those with a high school credential who are out-of-school/out-of-work
(Emphasis on postsecondary options and blending work and learning)
Phase one: enriched preparation

- College- and Career-Ready Culture
- Intentional Use of Time, Technology, and Assessment to Customize Instruction and Accelerate Learning
- Personalized Guidance and Support
- Supported Dual Enrollment/First Technical Course
Phase two: postsecondary bridging

- Supported Dual Enrollment/First Technical Courses
- A Focus on College Knowledge and Success Strategies, and Employment Readiness
- Personalized Guidance on Connection to “Best Bet” Credentials
Phase three: first year support

- Support for Students to Earn Credits Predictive of Completion
- Just-in-Time Support to Ensure Persistence
- Building Attachment to Postsecondary Education and Careers
Spread of the back on track model

• Adopted by national networks in the Gates Foundation’s Postsecondary Success Initiative: YouthBuild USA, National Youth Employment Coalition, The Corps Network
• Incorporated into school district expectations for alternative schools: Philadelphia, Chicago, Denver with focus on differentiating designs based on segmenting BOT populations
• Informed practices in schools/programs in NYC, South Texas, Mesa, AZ, Portland, OR, and other sites
• Adopted by Aspen Institute Opportunity Youth Incentive Fund as model for pathways to postsecondary in 23 communities
• Framework for Opportunity Works, the JFF/Aspen Social Innovation Fund Initiative in 7 communities
• Framework for LEAP (Learn and Earn to Achieve Potential) a SIF initiative by the Annie E. Casey Foundation in 5 communities
A Best Bet is a postsecondary credential that has value in the local labor market.

- Counseling to Careers
- Best Bet Research Process
- MyBestBets

**MyBestBets:** A human-centered tech solution that works for:

**Students**
- Identifies interests and talents
- Guides students through a data & inquiry-based edu & career exploration process
- Develops skills & social capital

**Counselor/Support staff**
- Manage case loads more efficiently and effectively
- Customize exploration process and resources
- Connect face-to-face, via platform or SMS

*MyBestBets is a joint venture of JFF and YouthBuild USA*
Back on Track Self-Assessment Tool:  
http://application.jff.org/botassessment/

Back on Track Model:  
jff.org/initiatives/back-track-designs/our-model
Discussion

Building Systems & Leveraging Federal Policy
Braided Funding

• Incentivizing coordination
  – Cross-departmental federal discretionary grants
  – Local foundations

• Increasing sustainability
  – Matching grants
WIOA Opportunities To Consider

• Developing partnerships with local and state workforce agencies.
• Ensuring strategic vision and innovation for youth with barriers to employment in state and local WIOA plans; Encourage a youth council or committee.
• Identifying and recruiting youth with barriers to employment into workforce programs.
• Support services to help with retention of youth in workforce programs.
• Think about entry points for youth and young adults to be included in broader Career Pathways efforts in your state and community.
Systems Building & Employer Engagement

GRADS of LIFE .org

- Public awareness and digital/print media campaign
- Connects employers, funders, advocates, and programs
- Provides conferences, training, and toolkits

Back on track: SYSTEMS and Federal policy opportunities

- WIOA: Philadelphia and Hartford both used Back on Track as a framework for pathway design under current round of WIOA funding;
- Maine Opportunity Youth Collaborative advocated for a bill that places postsecondary navigators through Jobs for Maine Graduates at five college/university campuses, including two in Southern Maine in order to provide stronger bridging and retention support for youth who have faced barriers to graduating high school, foster care youth, and youth who have attained GEDs.
Questions?

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