

Career Awareness and Academic Support Learning Paper

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Prepared by:

Mika Clark
Verenice Chavoya-Perez
Heather Lewis-Charp
Social Policy Research Associates (SPR)



INTRODUCTION

Preparing young people for a *healthy and productive adulthood* is a central goal of the Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (OFCY). The Career Awareness and Academic Support (CAAS) strategy, which funded 14 programs in the 2016-19 funding cycle, is a central component in how OFCY seeks to achieve this goal for older youth. Serving over 2,700 youth in 2016-2017, these programs provide “case management, physical and behavioral health services, hard-skills training, job placement in high-demand industries, internships, work experience, and leadership development.”¹

In keeping with the overall goals of this strategy, all CAAS programs help youth find their path to college and/or career while providing some work exposure. Across the strategy, adult mentors play an important role in exposing youth to careers, supporting their success in jobs and internships, and helping them access resources and support as they transition to work and college.

Although these programs share a common goal of connecting youth to college and/or careers, they use different approaches and offer different services to meet the diverse needs, interests, and life trajectories of Oakland’s young people. The programs in the CAAS portfolio provide activities and support tailored to a range of participants, including opportunity youth,² youth with special needs, students interested in high-demand career pathways, and first-generation college students.

This brief provides an in-depth description of the three different types of programs or “sub-strategies” that fall under OFCY’s CAAS strategy, to better understand the approaches that support youth served by different types of programs. We categorized the 14 programs into the following three sub-strategies (see Appendix for full list of programs): 1) Career Awareness, 2) Re-Engagement, and 3) College Access and Success.



The brief draws on a variety of data sources:

- Three site visits to OFCY programs during the spring of 2018: two career awareness programs and one academic support program
- One program director interview (spring of 2017)
- Cityspan service data, demographics, and program descriptions (2016-2017)
- Cityspan quarterly report narratives (2017-2018)
- Youth-led evaluation interviews with three participants
- Online sources, such as program websites and news articles

Cover images gathered from Cityspan Quarterly Reports. Clockwise from top left: Alameda Health System’s Oakland Health Careers Collaborative, Civicorps’ Academic and Professional Pathways, Alameda Health System’s Oakland Health Careers Collaborative, Youth Employment Partnership’s Building Green Futures, Center for Media Change, Inc.’s Hack the Hood Bootcamp.

¹ [Oakland Fund for Children and Youth Strategic Investment Plan 2016-2019](#). (2015). Bright Research Group.

² Opportunity youth include youth and young adults aged 16-24 who are not enrolled in school or employed.

CAREER AWARENESS PROGRAMS

OFCY funds nine programs within CAAS that focus primarily on Career Awareness. These programs introduce participants to career paths and provide paid, hands-on work experience to help youth embark on a path to a rewarding career. Their approach to career development varies, with program activities ranging from one-on-one support and placement in unsubsidized job placements to a six-week boot camp that trains youth to build websites for small, local organizations. Some of the programs offer internships and career exploration over several weeks, while others work with participants over the course of the year. Seven of these programs provide sector-specific career exploration,³ while the other two programs provide more general career exploration and work readiness support. For instance, The Unity Council's Oakland Youth Engaged supports career exploration through internships with local businesses and organizations, and Marriott Foundation for People with Disabilities' Bridges from School to Work provides unsubsidized job placement and support.

To learn more about how these programs promote career awareness, we visited Alameda Health System's Oakland Health Careers Collaborative (HEAL) and Better Health East Bay's Youth Bridge in the spring of 2018.⁴ In addition, we drew on our spring 2017 interview with the program director from Marriott Foundation for People with Disabilities' Bridges from School to Work.

"Once they're at work, many teachers are like, "People are doing better in school" because they're **learning by doing at work**, and they're feeling successful as learners, and it helps boost confidence academically, so I think that's kind of cool."

- Bridges from School to Work staff

Youth Characteristics

Career awareness programs target distinct groups of participants. Three programs focus on high school students, four programs serve both in- and out-of-school youth, and two programs target predominantly out-of-school youth.⁵ Staff at Youth Bridge, which focuses on high school students, described their participants as **focused, college-bound and goal-oriented**, demonstrated by how intensely the participants, many of whom will be first-generation college students, compete during the program to earn one of the coveted summer internship positions. As the program director explained, "It's a very self-selecting group. Everyone who is part of the program has decided to be here and has decided to put in the work and put in

³ Two programs focus on health careers (Better Health East Bay's Youth Bridge, Alameda Health System's Oakland Health Careers Collaborative), three programs focus on digital media/tech (Center for Media Change, Inc.'s A-Team, Center for Media Change's Hack the Hood Bootcamp, and Youth Radio's Digital Communications Pathways), and one focuses on culinary arts (Beyond Emancipation's GROW Oakland). Students in Oakland Unified School District's ECCO focus on multiple career pathways tied to Oakland Unified School District's career academies.

⁴ Oakland Health Careers Collaborative is a collaborative grant with three partnering programs: Health Excellence and Academic Leadership Internship Program (HEAL), Mentoring in Medicine and Science (MIMS), and Community Health & Adolescent Mentoring Program for Success (CHAMPS). For the purposes of this report SPR visited the lead grantee—HEAL—one of Alameda Health System's several Career Development programs that focus on diversification of the healthcare workforce.

⁵ Alameda Health System's Oakland Health Careers Collaborative, Better Health East Bay's Youth Bridge, and Oakland Unified School District's ECCO served high school students. Unity Council's Oakland Youth Engaged, Center for Media Change, Inc.'s A-Team, Center for Media Change, Inc.'s Hack the Hood Bootcamp, and Youth Radio's Digital Communications Pathway served both in- and out-of-school youth. Beyond Emancipation's GROW Oakland and Marriott Foundation's Bridges from School to Work serve predominantly out-of-school youth.

the effort to obtain a goal, of having a summer internship. So, it's a highly motivated, highly functional group.” Staff interviews and focus group conversations revealed that these high expectations, however, can result in high stress and pressure.

The HEAL program, which targets students in middle and high school, similarly attracts students **interested in learning about careers and participating in internships**, but according to program staff, they enter the program with a range of academic preparation, some requiring additional support around literacy and writing. Program staff reported that they are receiving an increasing number of applications from English Language Learners.

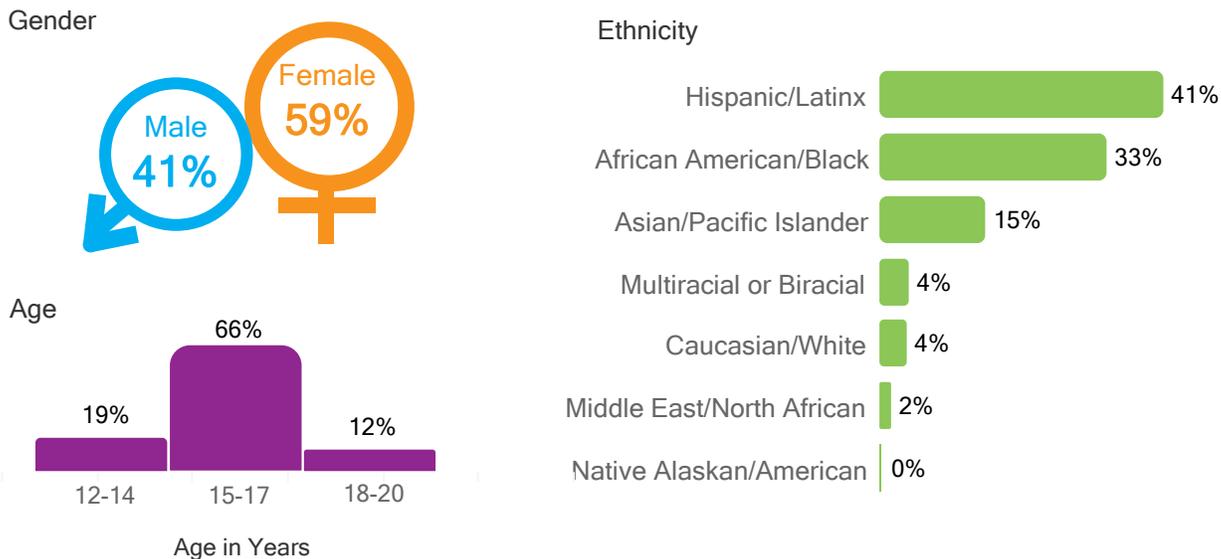
During focus groups, HEAL and Youth Bridge participants reported that they joined the programs to learn more about health careers with the hope that they would be able to receive hands-on experience at a hospital, clinic, or other healthcare setting. Youth felt that the internships offered by these programs provided more in-depth and authentic exposure to healthcare than other internship opportunities in the community. Youth Bridge participants also appreciated the academic rigor of the workshops offered by the program, explaining that it has better prepared them for college than their high school classes. Notably, participants receive college credit for the workshops through Merritt College.

Bridges from School to Work serves a different target population: youth with disabilities and disconnected youth. According to program staff, most of the youth in their program are not on a path to college and are drawn to the program because they **are interested in a real job** as opposed to an internship. Many are motivated by a desire to help support their families financially.

Overall, about two-thirds of participants enrolled in career awareness programs were between 15 and 17 years old and close to 60% were female, due primarily to the disproportionate enrollment of females in the two largest programs.⁶ Tech-focused programs served more males than females, while health-focused programs served more females.

⁶ The two largest programs include Oakland Health Careers Collaborative (64% female) and ECCO (63% female).

Career Awareness Programs: Participant Demographics in FY2016-2017



Practices to build self-confidence and soft skills through hands-on work experience

Programs that support career awareness place a strong focus on connecting youth to internships and work opportunities that introduce youth to the world of work, support the soft skills required for success in the workplace, and perhaps most importantly, build confidence in their ability to participate in the workforce.

Program staff we interviewed described various benefits of hands-on work experience. Staff from Bridges from School to Work, which serves students with disabilities and disconnected youth, emphasized how important finding success at work is for their participants. In the words of the program director, “academics are not the strong suit of our participants, so it is essential that they start recognizing that they are, to put it simply, good at things, and that they have something to offer that they’re going to be paid for like everybody else.” The program director explained that young adults need to have confidence to envision a career path for themselves and to be successful in their job search. Staff from HEAL discussed how soft skills like professionalism seem very abstract to many of their participants when they join the program and how their internship experience provides a meaningful opportunity to practice professionalism.

“Every aspect of what Bridges is attempting to teach is to increase confidence... I've seen self-esteem of youth transform as they go through the process, and they're getting a sense of their own competency and starting to talk about what they can do well. And then once they are hired, watching the success at work is remarkable.”

- Bridges from School to Work staff

To support hands-on experience in the workforce, seven of the nine programs in this sub-strategy placed at least some participants into internships, or in the case of Marriot Foundation-Bridges from School to Work, unsubsidized employment. The two programs that did not place youth in internships or jobs (Center for Media Change’s A-Team and Hack the Hood Bootcamp) provide exposure to the tech industry: They train youth to build websites for real businesses and help them to build their own portfolios. Programs

generally rely on feedback during regular check-ins with youth and supervisors to assess the quality of job placements and internships.

Providing activities that prepare youth for their placement.

Staff from the three programs we interviewed emphasized the importance of preparing youth to be successful in their jobs or internships. As preparation for unsubsidized employment, job seekers at Bridges from School to Work attend a four-part workshop series that covers interview skills, career exploration, customer service, and other soft skills before beginning their job search. They also work one-on-one with the program's employment representatives to prepare for and go through the job search process and understand what is expected of them on the job. During these meetings, they fill out their employment guide, a series of activities and questionnaires that assesses their skills and interests and helps them set goals. In the words of the program director, meeting with the employment representatives "helps youth figure out how they fit into the world of work." Bridges from School to Work staff also act as cheerleaders for participants during the job search, reminding them of their value when they are passed over for a job and celebrating their successes when they enter the workforce.

"This program is well recognized among other hospitals and internships. So even if you don't get an internship here you can go and apply to another place. They'll be like, 'Oh you were in Youth Bridge' and they'll know (what that means)."

"We will be more respected because a resume is just what you've done, but with this program there's proof that you took a full class to prepare you for the internship."

- Youth Bridge participants

As interns prepare for their placement, Youth Bridge and HEAL hold discussions about the professionalism that will be required of them on site and provide opportunities for participants to practice skills such as public speaking, communicating in a professional setting, and collaborating with their peers. According to program staff and participants, these activities help youth feel more confident on site, better positioning them to fully take advantage of their internship experience, and help them gain skills practiced by healthcare professionals.

Supporting youth during placements. All three program directors we interviewed emphasized the importance of checking in with participants during internships, or for the first six months of employment in the case of Bridges from School to Work, to help youth acclimate to a professional setting, which can be an intimidating environment for them. The programs that provide internship opportunities also emphasized the importance of making sure youth are engaged in meaningful work and supporting them in advocating for themselves if they are not.

"It's important that we be the caring supportive adults in the youth's lives especially because we are asking them to make such a huge shift from child-based behaviors to adult behaviors. It's important to me and to everybody else who works here that we do it in a supportive, caring way because it can be kind of a cold shower when you go out into the world of work."

- Bridges from School to Work staff

To support youth during their placements, staff from Youth Bridge and Bridges from School to Work meet individually with participants to make sure that youth have the resources they need to be successful, that they continue to engage in their experience, and that they are not overwhelmed. This also entails checking with supervisors to verify that youth are demonstrating strong job readiness skills and that they receive constructive coaching and feedback as necessary.

Using a cohort-based model to provide support, HEAL integrates its internship experience with ongoing workshops. The curriculum is rooted in youth development principles that promote self-advocacy to help students seek out the experiences they want during their internship rotations, as well as team work and collaboration, which program staff identified as critical skills in a healthcare setting. The time in the classroom also allows participants to share their experiences, reflect, and learn from one another.

Preparing worksite supervisors to mentor interns. According to program staff we interviewed, worksite supervisors play an important role in the internship experience by enhancing the intern’s exposure to the workplace and supporting skill-building. Considering this important role, both HEAL and Youth Bridge are very intentional about how they prepare on-site supervisors to support the growth of interns. Supervisors are the primary source of feedback for students on their job site; as such, they should have appropriate expectations of youth and understand how the program expects them to provide feedback to youth. To do this, HEAL distributes a manual they created to participating hospital departments, provides in-person training to describe the logistics of hosting an intern, and offers tips for engaging adolescent learners and supporting diverse populations. Youth Bridge staff hold one-on-one conversations with potential mentors. In addition to describing the goals of the internship and their role as a mentor, staff provide a detailed, individualized profile of the intern they would be working with, including their interests, career goals, and what they are looking to gain from the internship. Before agreeing to the placement, staff ask mentors if they can provide the level of support this intern would need.

Practices to build pathways to in-demand careers

Six programs in this sub-strategy seek to launch participants on a path to a rewarding career in a targeted industry, including healthcare, technology/media, and culinary arts.⁷ Another program, Oakland Unified School District’s ECCO, tries to match career academy students with internships in the various career pathways offered by the OUSD Linked Learning programs. These sector-specific programs complement OUSD’s commitment to “relevant and rigorous personalized educational experiences that inspire students and prepare them for college, career, and community.”⁸ During interviews, staff from Youth Bridge and HEAL, which both focus on healthcare, described how they use work-based experiences to refine a young person’s career goals and provide a better understanding of how they can pursue those goals.

Integrating group workshops and hands-on experience. The six programs that focus on sector-specific internships provide a combination of workshop-based career exploration and hands-on experience. For example, the ongoing classroom instruction that HEAL provides in conjunction with its hands-on internship experience covers several different health careers and requires that students complete their own research to learn more about the educational requirements of different health pathways. The staff also increases students’ awareness of allied health programs at local community colleges.

“When I came in here it just felt so unreal at the beginning. Just being able to **explore what’s in the hospital** instead of watching movies about it. It just felt better.”

- HEAL participant

Although providing hands-on experience is important to programs, limited capacity to support youth during internships and limited internship slots available in the community

⁷ Two programs focus on health careers (Better Health East Bay’s Youth Bridge, Alameda Health System’s Oakland Health Careers Collaborative), three programs focus on digital media/tech (Center for Media Change, Inc.’s A-Team, Center for Media Change, Inc.’s Hack the Hood Bootcamp, and Youth Radio’s Digital Communications Pathways), and one focuses on culinary arts (Beyond Emancipation’s GROW Oakland).

⁸ <https://www.ousd.org/domain/4013>

makes providing internships to a large number of youth difficult. Moreover, youth come to programs with varying levels of readiness and interest in participating in an internship. Due to these challenges, programs such as Youth Bridge offer career exposure programming to a broad population of youth and more intensive placements to a subset of participants. For example, Youth Bridge provides twelve-weeks of intensive training in its afterschool program, where youth learn about different health professions; health care topics that are relevant to their lives, such as anxiety and depression among adolescents; and issues important in healthcare settings, such as protecting patient confidentiality. In addition to providing opportunities for participants to learn about the healthcare field, the training is an extended interview to select the most qualified youth to earn an internship position, ultimately offering internships to about one-third of participants. This strategy helps staff prioritize students who are the best fit for the program. The program refers students who are not selected for an internship to other health-care related internship programs.

Working with supervisors and interns to ensure access to meaningful opportunities. HEAL and Youth Bridge staff agreed that both interns and supervisors play an important role in creating a meaningful internship. Both programs check in frequently with interns to verify that they are engaged in meaningful activities that expose them to a wide range of healthcare jobs. They also encourage participants to ask about the educational and career path of their supervisors and others they work with, which can be more meaningful than learning about career requirements from advisors or workshops. Most importantly, programs empower participants to advocate for themselves if there are opportunities they want to take advantage of, such as shadowing another employee. Prior to placing an intern at a job site, both programs clearly communicate the expectations of the placement—it is an opportunity to learn, it is not a job. Youth Bridge staff reported that they intervene and speak with supervisors if they hear that a participant, despite their own efforts to advocate for themselves, are solely engaged in administrative tasks.

“The students who had the most powerful experiences were the ones who were **able to do that self-advocacy** and who were able to say, “I just heard that a trauma just came through the ER, can I go and see it?”

- HEAL staff

Forming partnerships with employers, educators, and other sector-specific partners. Providing sector-specific career exposure requires extensive contacts in the community, beginning with industry representatives. Program staff described their need for a deep bench of worksite supervisors, mentors, and guest speakers who represent a wide range of health-related sectors, jobs, and career paths. Housed in hospital systems themselves, both HEAL and Youth Bridge are well positioned to form partnerships with healthcare providers. As a program under Alameda Health System, HEAL places all interns at Highland Hospital, which it operates. Youth Bridge, on the other hand, places interns in its host agency (Sutter Health) as well as other sites, including local Veteran’s Affairs clinics. The program also employs one of its onsite supervisors to co-lead its health career classes, providing a bridge between the afterschool program and the summer internship.

In addition to existing within a healthcare employer and building relationships with the departments and speciality clinics who host interns, HEAL is connected to industry partnerships. HealthPATH, Alameda Health System’s Career Development Initiative, which includes HEAL, is a member of both the Alameda County Health Pipeline Partnership and the East Bay Health Workforce Partnership, a group focused on shared workforce needs.

Both programs also value relationships they have built with OUSD leadership, school administrators, teachers, and other district staff. Notably, the Youth Bridge director described how his personal

relationships with teachers and other school staff are “gold” and critical for recruitment. For example, in the past, HEAL staff worked closely with the health work-based learning liaison, who used to help coordinate recruitment and communicate with health career academy teachers.⁹ In addition, the program has recently formed a partnership with OUSD’s Behavioral Health Program Manager, who manages behavioral health supports at OUSD high schools, to enhance the program’s capacity to serve youth with barriers who need extra support. Both programs also draw on personal relationships they have with teachers.

With the aim to build a pipeline for its participants, both HEAL and Youth Bridge are trying to capitalize on their position within an employer in the healthcare industry. The Youth Bridge director is in discussion with Sutter Health’s Human Resources department about intentionally recruiting former Youth Bridge participants. Similarly, HEAL staff is asking Alameda Health System to prioritize former participants for entry level jobs within the agency and, ideally, create a program where students can attend a healthcare program and work at the same time.

Participation in Internships and Subsidized Employment

Six of the nine career awareness programs offer paid internships and other subsidized employment. Overall, about half of participants participate in these opportunities, which include positions at local non-profits and businesses, city agencies, and health care providers. Within programs, females and Asian youth were generally the most likely to participate in internships or subsidized employment, while African American youth were the least likely to participate in these opportunities.¹⁰ The only program that connects participants to unsubsidized employment, Bridges from School to Work, provides gift cards to participants for completing their four-part job readiness training prior to employment. The two programs that do not offer work placements, A-Team and Hack the Hood Boot Camp, provide stipends to participants.

Unique Challenges

While Bridges from School to Work has intensive one-on-one support built into its model that allows the program to support youth with significant obstacles, HEAL and Youth Bridge staff expressed a desire to further strengthen their capacity to provide youth facing significant barriers with the skills and resources to successfully complete their internship. As discussed above, HEAL’s new partnership with OUSD’s Behavioral Health Program Manager has been an important resource to help the program serve all students.

In addition, in response to the recent influx of English Language Learners in their program, HEAL staff members are working to be responsive to changing needs and making accommodations for students on a case-by-case basis to support those who struggle with basic literacy. In the 2018-19 school year the program has a dedicated cohort that includes newcomer students from Rudsdale Newcomer School. HEAL is working with the school to intentionally and thoughtfully make healthcare internships accessible to this student population through practices such as pre-teaching some of the material, so that when students hear it in the classroom they will have some familiarity with the content.

⁹ Unfortunately, this position no longer exists in the 2018-2019 school year. The program reports that it must now coordinate individually with numerous classroom teachers at the seven different high schools with health pathways to build relationships with schools for recruitment.

¹⁰ Statistically significant at $p < .01$ when controlling for program.

Finally, HEAL staff expressed concern that OUSD no longer has a staff person who can centrally coordinate the administrative and operational details of work-based learning partnerships with school sites. As school site staff are being asked to do more with less resources, HEAL staff reported that CAAS grantees are filling in the gaps and expending more of their own resources to do basic outreach to students.

RE-ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Two CAAS programs (Civicorps' Academic and Professional Pathway and Youth Employment Partnership's Building Green Futures) focus primarily on providing integrated academic support, wraparound services, and employment activities to engage opportunity youth—young people who disconnected from school and work.¹¹ The programs are located at charter schools, where participants attend programming for up to 35 hours per week, participating in high school/GED classes, working in internships, and receiving wraparound services through a single program. To learn more about re-engagement programming, we visited Civicorps in the spring of 2018.

“At Civicorps we believe that every young person deserves a **high-quality education** in a supported and positive environment as well as a **career that is rewarding, challenging, and personally fulfilling.**”

- Civicorps website

Youth Characteristics

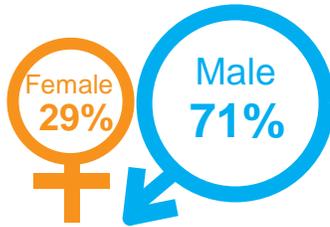
The youth and young adults served in these programs face barriers to employment that may stem from involvement in the foster or criminal justice systems, being young parents, experiencing homelessness, or dropping out of high school. Civicorps staff explain that their programs are voluntary, so they are working with young adults who are **interested in changing their lives**. During focus groups, the participants reported that they appreciate the program because of the support from staff and having refuge where you can “concentrate on getting done what you need to get done.”

Young men comprised over 70% of all re-engagement participants in 2016-2017, possibly because programs intentionally target young men of color or because young people associate the programs with stereotypically male-dominated industries, such as construction and public works. Most participants were young adults between the ages of 18 and 20; close to half were African American.

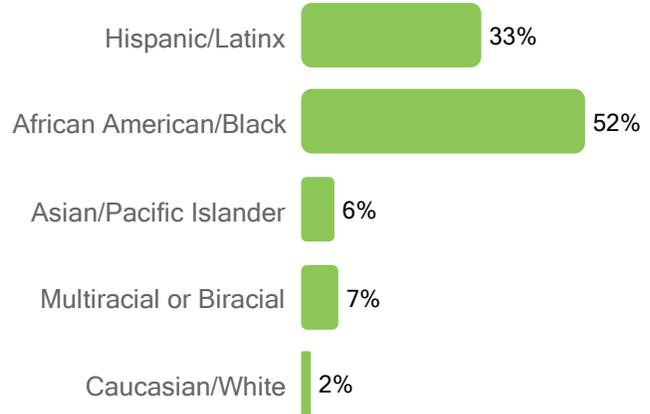
¹¹ Beginning in 2018-2019, Juma's Pathways to Advancement will also focus on opportunity youth, combining employment at sports venues, financial capability training, academic support, job coaching, and case management to help young people find permanent employment and re-engage in education.

Re-engagement Programs: Participant Demographics in FY2016-2017

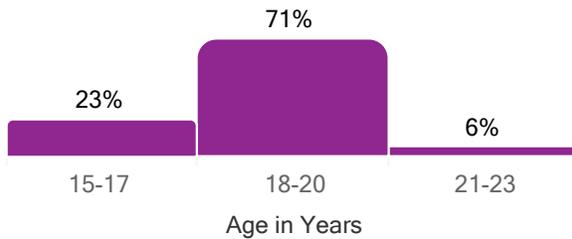
Gender



Ethnicity



Age



Practices to connect opportunity youth to sustainable careers

According to their stated philosophies, the agencies that operate these programs strive for youth and young adults to be self-sufficient, to be financially capable, and to have family sustaining careers.¹² To support opportunity youth in overcoming obstacles to a rigorous education and rewarding career, these programs support the whole person, providing high school/GED classes, paid job training, and wrap-around services through a seamless program.

Combining high school/GED classes and paid job training under one program. Getting started in a career requires a high school diploma, soft skills, and work experience. As explained on Youth Employment Partnership’s website, “effective employment training must support young people’s educational success.” However, gaining those qualifications can seem out of reach for many low-income, disconnected youth. In fact, participants from Clvcorps described the challenges of working, attending school, and juggling their other responsibilities, such as raising children. Combining school and work in one organization makes it more feasible to pay bills, earn meaningful work experience, and complete a high school degree seamlessly, without worrying about conflicting schedules and managing different systems. The duration of participation varies and is tailored to the academic and workforce development needs of the youth. On average, Clvcorps participants spend 18 months engaged in the program.

¹² <https://www.cvcorps.org/who-we-are/our-philosophy/> ; <http://www.yep.org/who-we-are/our-philosophy/> ;

Offering wrap-around services and social-emotional support to keep opportunity youth engaged. As described above, re-engagement programs engage youth who face significant barriers to employment. To mitigate these barriers, which may also affect their ability to stay engaged in programming, these programs help youth identify their challenges, connect students to resources in the community, and support social-emotional learning to promote healthy decision-making. For example, Civicorps participants meet with counselors about twice every week to discuss how the program can help the student meet their basic needs and to provide support around personal challenges faced by students. To help youth identify assets and challenges, the program utilizes Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to identify basic needs and challenges that the program can help youth address and the Multiple Intelligences assessment to identify strengths and learning styles.

During our interview, program staff described how both connecting youth to resources and discussing social-emotional health with youth require strong personal connections between staff and participants. Moreover, staff use a trauma-informed approach during counseling as these sessions can be triggering for youth.

"I particularly like their support. Some days when I don't feel like coming in or something like that, I still come here because I know I could talk to somebody or I can just go sit somewhere and I'll get my work done and just be okay. Also, resources (are important) because there was a time where it was hard getting to work. So, the bus pass was a help."

- Civicorps participant

Participation in Internships and Subsidized Employment

Close to three-quarters of participants in re-engagement programs participate in subsidized employment, including internships within the host agency and with local businesses. Participants who did not participate in these opportunities spent fewer hours in the programs. Notably, even when excluding the hours spent in their internships, youth who participated in internships attended, on average, twice as many hours in *other types of programming*, such as academic support and supportive services, likely because youth who are more engaged are more likely to be offered internships and work experience.¹³

Unique challenges

During our site visit, Civicorps staff discussed the challenge of providing a supportive environment that helps youth overcome obstacles to success in education and employment while also preparing them for the realities of unsubsidized employment. They strive to provide flexibility to help youth obtain their high school diplomas in the face of various challenges, including navigating the foster and/or justice systems, parenting young children, experiencing homelessness, and lacking access to transportation, while also maintaining high expectations to prepare youth for unsubsidized careers. They reported worrying about their alumni's readiness to meet the expectations of other employers, who do not provide the same level of flexibility and support, once they leave the program.

¹³ The difference was not as pronounced among participants of Building Green Futures, where youth who had an internship participated in 30% more hours of programming than youth who did not.

COLLEGE ACCESS AND SUCCESS PROGRAMS

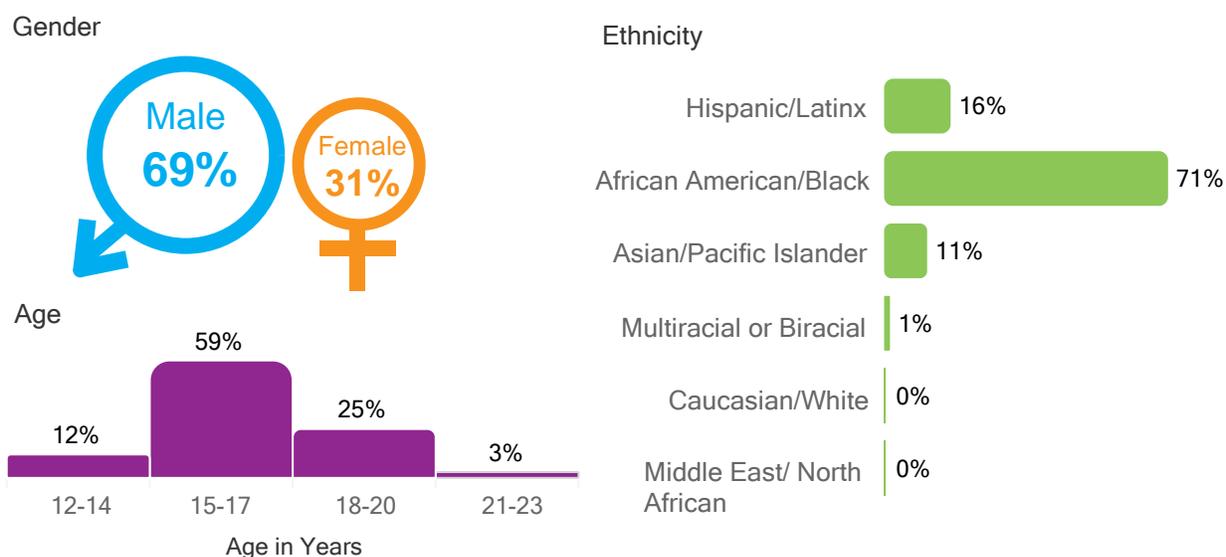
Three CAAS programs (Juma’s Pathways to Advancement, Centro Legal de la Raza’s Youth Law Academy and East Bay College Fund’s Oakland Promise-College and Career Access and Success Program) focus primarily on providing resources that help youth access and succeed in college.¹⁴ These programs work with high school students to help them successfully apply to college and for financial aid and provide support to first-generation and low-income college students to promote college persistence. To learn more about these programs, we drew on transcripts from the FY2017-2018 youth-led evaluation and a 2015 site visit with Pathways to Advancement, program websites and quarterly reports, and news articles.

Youth Characteristics

College Access and Success programs target low-income students of color who know they are interested in attending college, many of whom will be first generation college students. These programs served 681 youth in 2016-2017, including both high school students and young adults enrolled in college.

The gender and ethnicity of participants varied across programs. East Bay College Fund, which served about 90% of participants in this sub-strategy, works closely with OUSD’s Office of African American Male Achievement to provide college preparation workshops in three OUSD high schools and predominantly served African American males.¹⁵ In comparison, Pathways to Advancement and Youth Law Academy served slightly more young women than young men. While close to half of Pathways to Advancement participants were African American, Youth Law Academy participants were overwhelmingly Hispanic/Latinx.

College Access and Success Programs: Participant Demographics in FY2016-2017



¹⁴ Beginning in 2018-2019, Juma’s Pathways to Advancement program will shift its focus to serve opportunity youth who have been out of school and out of work for the last 6 months and youth who have been involved in the foster care system.

¹⁵ In 2016-2017, 70% of East Bay College Fund participants were African American males.

Practices to help young adults persist and succeed in college

As explained by staff from Pathways to Advancement, “that first initial **challenge of navigating the whole new world of college** is real one. And particularly for our first-generation college students to go to college, their parents don’t know what it’s like for them, so the college coaches provide that mentorship in that process.” In recognition of these challenges faced by low-income youth and first-generation college students, these programs utilize the following best practices:

Providing mentorship to help young adults navigate the unfamiliar challenges of college. All three programs provide ongoing mentorship to first and second year college students. For example, East Bay College Fund hires a near-peer mentor from colleges where their participants, known as scholars, are enrolled. The mentors meet with scholars individually and in groups, give advice, answer questions, and provide emotional support. Additionally, the program engages a community of college-educated professionals that provide mentorship to scholars throughout their four to six years of college enrollment. Youth Law Academy staff continue the relationship they built with youth during high school and provide virtual, ongoing support to former participants during their first years in college.

Building an on-campus community for first generation college students. East Bay College Fund scholars meet with in groups, known as CREWs, at each community college the program partners with. During these meetings, scholars meet with their peers to share knowledge about campus resources, give advice around transitioning into college, and provide emotional support.

“The ability to talk to more people, utilize the resources that are around me and ask for help, these (activities offered by the East Bay College Fund) will all **help me in the future** because they are all needed.”

- East Bay College Fund scholar

Offering multiple years of support that span high school and the transition into college. Pathways to Advancement and Youth Law Academy begin supporting youth in high school, during junior year and sophomore year respectively, to help them prepare for college. During these years, the programs provide academic counseling, SAT tutoring, financial literacy training, and information about financial aid, as well as interesting programming that helps engage youth, such as paid job placements at sports venues (Pathways to Advancement) and exploration of legal careers (Youth Law Academy). When youth embark on their college journey, staff members maintain contact with them, providing case management, emotional support, and advice in the face of the stress and uncertainty that many first-generation college students experience. Because they built relationships with youth over multiple years prior to their college enrollment, staff already have the trust and connection required to best support the youth.

Encouraging young adults to explore career options. In partnership with Merritt College’s Adelante (First Year Experience) program, East Bay College Fund scholars participate in career panels and office visits. They also have opportunities to network in with professionals and participate in career-specific panels at East Bay College Fund’s half-day college success and career conference. With the goal of inspiring youth to seek a career in the law for the betterment of their community, Youth Law Academy provides opportunities to

learn about the legal system, participate in a mock trial, and gain awareness of critical issues and injustices in the legal system.

Supporting financial stability. To ease the stress of paying for college, East Bay College Fund provides up to \$16,000 in scholarships over four years to its participants. With the same goal, Pathways to Advancement opens a college savings account for each student and matches every dollar a student saves from their salary one-to-one. Pathways to Advancement also provides ongoing financial literacy training to its high school participants. In addition, all three programs provided subsidized work experience for at least a portion of their participants. In 2016-2017, Pathways to Advancement offers paid positions as vendors at Oakland Coliseum to all participants; Youth Law Academy and East Bay College Fund have provided stipends to a select number of participants (seven and eight respectively).

“Because of my scholarship, I was able to go to UC Davis and not have to pay much. Which is a great help because I do not want to be a financial burden on my parents. Thankfully that is not the case.”

- East Bay College Fund scholar

Participation in Internships and Subsidized Employment

Despite their emphasis on college access, the college access and success programs also placed some participants for in internships and subsidized employment. Specifically, Youth Law Academy connected about ten percent of its participants to summer legal internships, Pathways to Advancement hired about one-third of its participants to serve as vendors at sports venues through its social enterprise, and East Bay College Fund hired eight participants to lead its peer support groups. Overall, females were slightly more likely to participate in internships or subsidized employment, while African American participants were less likely than other participants to participate in those opportunities.¹⁶

LESSONS LEARNED AND IMPLICATIONS FOR OFCY

Through its CAAS strategy, OFCY funds a wide array of services tailored to meet the diverse needs of Oakland’s youth as they transition to adulthood. Our detailed analysis into the nuances of these different program types has surfaced some lessons learned and implications for OFCY to consider, particularly as it shapes its Request for Proposals (RFP) for the 2019-2022 funding cycle:

- **This strategy provides appropriate services tailored to a range of young people.** By offering this menu of programs, OFCY programs provide the services needed by opportunity youth, high school students with a range of academic achievement, and first-generation college students.
- **Career Awareness programs may benefit from additional resources to increase their capacity to support the participation of all students, including English Language Learners and youth with behavioral health needs, in internships and work experience opportunities.** Programs reported that they had limited capacity to provide basic literacy support and case management that some participants need to be successful in an internship placement.
- **African American participants in Career Awareness and College Access and Success programs are less likely than their peers to participate in work experience opportunities.** More research is needed to better understand why African American youth are less likely to participate in workforce opportunities to surface strategic responses from programs and OFCY. Responses may include providing culturally-specific programming, being more intentional about recruiting and placing

¹⁶ Statistically significant at $p < .01$ when controlling for program.

African American participants in internships, or exploring how to better address structural barriers to employment faced by African American participants.

- **Young adults in the re-engagement programs may benefit from additional support as they transition out of the program into unsubsidized employment.** Just as College Access and Success programs continue to provide support during the transition to college, re-engagement programs may consider providing case management services for alumni or referrals to a program such as Bridges from School to Work.
- **OFCY can help programs identify areas for collaboration.** For example, as a best practice, many career awareness programs prepare job sites and mentors to supervise youth at the workplace. HEAL has created a manual and an e-learning module that may be a useful model for other programs seeking to better prepare worksites. Additionally, while some CAAS programs already use cross-referrals, such as Youth Bridge and HEAL, others could benefit from this practice, especially given limited resources and capacity to support youth in work experience opportunities.

APPENDIX: PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

Career Awareness Programs

Agency and Program	Sector focus	Total Number Served	% Placed in Subsidized Employment	Average Hours Served	Phone Interview (2016-17)	Site Visit (2017-18)	Focus Group (2017-18)	Site Visit (2014-15)	City Span (2016-18) & online sources
Alameda Health System—Oakland Health Careers Collaborative	Health	515	55%	57		✓	✓		✓
Better Health East Bay Foundation—Youth Bridge Workforce Development Program	Health	195	38%	127		✓	✓	✓	✓
Beyond Emancipation—GROW Oakland	Culinary	66	9%	69					✓
Center for Media Change, Inc.—A-Team	Media/Tech	139	-	23					✓
Center for Media Change, Inc.—Hack the Hood Bootcamp	Media/Tech	47	-	126					✓
Marriott Foundation for People with Disabilities—Bridges from School to Work	-	59	-	26	✓				✓
Oakland Unified School District—Exploring College and Career Options	Tied to OUSD career pathways	480	100%	65					✓
Spanish Speaking Unity Council of Alameda County, Inc.—Oakland Youth Engaged (OYE)	-	79	54%	70					✓
Youth Radio—Digital Communications Pathways	Media/Tech	201	37%	88					✓
Career Awareness Sub-Strategy Total		1,780	53%	69					

Re-engagement

Agency and Program	Sector focus	Total Number Served	% Placed in Subsidized Employment	Average Hours Served	Phone Interview (2016-17)	Site Visit (2017-18)	Focus Group (2017-18)	Site Visit (2015-2016)	City Span (2016-18) & online sources
Civicorps—Academic and Professional Pathway	-	76	63%	723		✓	✓		✓
Youth Employment Partnership—Building Green Futures	Green Construction	39	85%	382					✓
Re-Engagement Sub-Strategy Total		115	70%	608					

College Access and Success

Agency and Program	Sector focus	Total Number Served	% Placed in Subsidized Employment	Average Hours Served	Phone Interview (2016-17)	Site Visit (2017-18)	Focus Group (2017-18)	Site Visit (2015-2016)	City Span (2016-18) & online sources
Centro Legal de la Raza—Youth Law Academy	Law	59	12%	69					✓
East Bay College Fund—Oakland Promise College and Career Access and Success Program	-	513	2%	16					✓
Juma Ventures—Pathways to Advancement	-	109	38%	55				✓	✓
College Access and Success Sub-Strategy Total		681	8%	27					