



A PYJ Approach to Workforce Development

The transition to independent adulthood is a developmental challenge most youth overcome. However, there are 3.4 million youth between the ages of 16-24 disconnected to education and employment: that is 1 in 6 young people. Often, these youth face additional challenges, such as involvement in the justice system, foster care, illness and disability, poverty and other issues. Disconnected youth face a lifetime of negative outcomes that result in significant costs to society as well.

Based on a Positive Youth Justice (PYJ) framework, our model incorporates both experiential activities and labor market connections to help youthful offenders and/or other high risk youth enhance their potential for long-term, gainful workforce participation. Youth are matched with a culturally competent Advocate hired from their community and provided weekly intensive, community-based support. Youth participate in individualized, paid, project-based work learning in addition to case management that helps address the barriers to gainful, sustained employment. Advocates use YAP's innovative workforce development curriculum YAPWORX to guide our work. Individually tailored to the needs and interests of each youth, YAPWORX targets measurable labor market gains in one or all areas of Future Economic Opportunity (FEO):

- Increased understanding and acquisition of growth industry-certified credentials
- Motivation [Higher completion of] to complete high school and/or post-secondary education
- Achieved documented work experience that turns into unsubsidized p/t - f/t employment
- Improvement in (or development of) industry specific work skills and behaviors
- Increased connections to gainfully employed adults in specific growth industries.

A critical component of the program is the connection to Opportunity Advisors (OAs). OAs are industry affiliated "career advisors" who specifically commit to assisting youth with the development of the five (FEO) areas listed above.

Through a series of individual, group and supported work activities, youth develop the real world of work skills for entry level jobs and/or future education. Most importantly, through YAPWORX youth have the opportunity to share new information with peers and family members, furthering their sense of importance, resiliency and connectedness.

In YAPWORX, the learning laboratory is not a classroom; it's the labor market.

THE YAP DIFFERENCE

- ❖ 24/7 crisis support
- ❖ Intensive case management
- ❖ Relationships with multi-systems and community organizations
- ❖ Cultural competence
- ❖ Safety planning
- ❖ Transportation
- ❖ Family engagement
- ❖ Mentoring
- ❖ Ancillary funding (GED testing, tuition assistance, tools, uniforms, licenses)
- ❖ Paid work experience
- ❖ Project-based learning

For more information:

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