



**Department of
Youth & Community
Development**

**NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES**

**OVERSIGHT: Youth Employment Opportunities
and Programming and**

**Intro 1474-2019: A Local Law to amend the NYC
Charter, in relation to establishing a universal
youth employment program**

ANDRE WHITE, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

October 8, 2019

Good morning Chairwoman Rose and members of the Committee on Youth Services. I am Andre White, Deputy Commissioner for Youth Workforce Development. I am joined by Assistant Commissioner Daphne Montanez.

On behalf of Commissioner Chong, thank you for the opportunity to testify today about DYCD's Youth Employment programs, and to discuss Intro 1474.

Thanks to the strong partnership with the Mayor, the Council, our provider community and stakeholders, the 2019 Summer Youth Employment Program was our best ever, due to the new service models implemented this year.

The creation of these models took extensive effort, beginning in 2016 when the Mayor and former Speaker formed the Summer Youth Employment Task Force. As you know, the Task Force was comprised of a broad array of stakeholders including advocates, providers, foundations and nonprofit leaders, and focused on how to bring relevant, innovative workforce experiences to youth through SYEP. The recommendations included:

- Strengthening connections between SYEP providers and public high schools to improve in-school career development for young people;
- Serving younger youth through career exploration and project-based learning experiences; and
- Enhancing support services, including pre-program orientation and counseling, to help meet the unique needs of vulnerable populations.

Based on these recommendations, last October DYCD issued three RFP's that included eight program options. These program options were designed to meet the needs of the next generation of NYC talent, by transforming the way that young people experience and connect to their interests and career options, expanding their options for career exploration, and increasing on-ramps into the program.

By providing both structured project and work-based learning opportunities, New York City youth are better prepared for careers of the future. By including school-based opportunities, SYEP helps young people understand the relevance of their education to future careers. By intentionally reaching out to the most vulnerable of our city's youth, SYEP provides work experience with wraparound support that they need to get the most out of their summer experience. As always, employers can tap into this expanding

pipeline of talent and hire job-ready summer employees to increase workforce diversity and fill critical gaps in their organizations.

To implement these programs, this past spring DYCD offered 195 awards to 67 providers, including 23 new providers, doubling the number of awards from the previous SYEP RFP. To get the programs up and running, DYCD staff from across the agency provided training in a variety of areas such as worksite development, project-based learning and program implementation. DYCD also provided extensive technical assistance as needed to providers.

The results speak for themselves. Despite the application period being later than usual, we received 151,597 applications. Due to baselined and early additional funding added through negotiations between the Council and the Mayor's office, SYEP's budget was a record \$166.5 million. This allowed us to enroll nearly 75,000 young people, despite the increase in the minimum wage to \$15 an hour and higher costs associated with our new program models. We engaged 15,576 youth ages 14–15 in over 800 structured project- and work-based learning opportunities. 57,820 older youth were employed at 13,157 worksites. Of these, 43% were in private businesses. This summer, we saw a record payroll of \$112.3 million.

One of the highlights of our program this summer was our first DYCD Day of Action, held August 13th. The event was designed to celebrate and showcase SYEP's new approach to engaging 14 and 15-year olds, with a focus on career exploration and project-based learning. Nearly a thousand young people ages 14 and 15 explored a range of issues in their communities – from census education to voter registration to environmental justice. At the Day of Action, they performed skits and songs, and shared videos highlighting their accomplishments. The workshops were well attended and gave young people opportunities to learn about each other's accomplishments while hearing special presentations on discrimination laws from the City Commission on Human Rights and international issues from UNICEF. So that you can see what this Day of Action meant to the participants, we have a short video for you to view.

This summer has demonstrated just how vital SYEP is helping young people gain work experience, explore careers, build skills, and prepare for their future. With the Administration and City Council's commitment to SYEP, together we have made incredible progress. DYCD brings our expertise in youth workforce development programming to a number of other initiatives as well, which I will briefly highlight.

Work, Learn & Grow

As you know, the Work, Learn and Grow program allows young people who were enrolled in SYEP and are currently in-school to build off their summer experiences with additional career readiness training and paid employment opportunities during the school year, and we appreciate the Council's continued partnership on this program. This year, we anticipate a total of 4,330 slots, with 300 slots allocated to our MOCJ partners as part of the CUREViolence initiative, and the remaining slots allocated to SYEP providers. All SYEP providers who serve Older Youth participants were given the opportunity to opt-in to WLG this year. 49 out of 61 eligible providers opted in to WLG this year, compared to 33 last year.

Learn & Earn

DYCD also runs the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act-funded Learn & Earn program, formerly known as the In School Youth Program. Learn & Earn is designed to help high school juniors and seniors graduate from high school and prepare them for employment and post-secondary education. Participants receive a combination of academic support, career exploration activities, and assistance with postsecondary education planning, and paid summer work experiences. The program also supports participants with guidance and counseling, stipends, leadership development activities, and follow-up services. Participants receive up to two years of services and a year of follow up, depending on their educational status. WIOA youth programs must meet Federal and State performance standards for placement and degree/certificate attainment. In FY 20 over 1,050 youth will be served with a budget of \$4.9 million.

Advance & Earn

For opportunity youth, DYCD programs work to provide the comprehensive services we know they need. As we speak, DYCD is running orientation for our brand new Advance & Earn program for the six organizations that were awarded contracts. In May 2019, DYCD released the Advance & Earn RFP, which represented a major redesign of the NYC Opportunity-funded Young Adult Literacy (YALP) and Intern & Earn programs.

Through an innovative career pathways approach, this new model aims to accommodate opportunity youth at different stages of skill development and provide them with positive short-term outcomes as well as the skills and tools necessary to achieve long-term career success. Advance & Earn is budgeted at \$13 million annually with services starting in February for 900 participants.

Train & Earn (OSY)

DYCD's Train & Earn program, formerly known as the Out of School Youth program, is a federally-funded short-term career pathway program for low-income youth, ages 16–24, who are not working and not in school. Train & Earn provides job training and employment services along with the comprehensive support services needed by participants to obtain employment or enter postsecondary education or training. It is funded at \$ 14.9 million in FY20 to serve nearly 1,300 participants.

Intro 1474

We are proud of the work we have done with the Council, the provider community and other stakeholders to expand our ability to offer young people high-quality work experiences and career preparation activities both in the summer and throughout the school year. We are dedicated in our commitment towards providing NYC youth with meaningful work experience, and we appreciate the intent of Intro 1474 in meeting that goal.

As our experience in developing the most recent SYEP and Advance & Earn RFP's demonstrate, this work takes time to make sure we get it right. We'd like to have further conversations with the Council about the intent of the bill, balanced with an understanding of the capacity of our workforce provider community, as well as employers, to further expand services.

Thank you once again for allowing us this opportunity to testify. We welcome any questions you may have.



**Testimony by Jesse Laymon,
Director of Policy and Advocacy
NYC Employment and Training Coalition (NYCETC)
at the Youth Services Committee Hearing
October 8, 2019**

Good morning and thank you for giving members of the public and the youth service and workforce development communities the chance to testify on the career opportunities available to young people and young adults in New York, and on the need to expand these opportunities with a true universal employment program.

My name is Jesse Laymon, Director of Policy for the New York City Employment and Training Coalition (NYCETC). NYCETC supports the workforce development community to ensure that every New Yorker has access to the skills, training, and education needed to thrive in the local economy, and that every business is able to maintain a highly skilled workforce. With over 150 members, NYCETC works with community-based organizations, educational institutions and labor management organizations engaged in New York City workforce development, to improve policy, practices, and outcomes to achieve economic inclusion for the city's workers, job-seekers and employers.

Today NYCETC is here with some of the youth service providers who are our members and can describe how the Bill proposed by Councilmembers Torres, Tregyer, Kallos, Levine and the Public Advocate will affect them, and how their experience with the existing youth workforce programs can inform the Council. Our role as a coalition of all the organizations in NYC that provide workforce development training programs (including those for youth) is to offer a few key principles that we feel constitute a consensus of the community, and that we hope will guide you as you consider this legislation.

Based on our discussions with several of our youth-serving members, we'd like to offer these top-line observations, which include one specific recommendation for an Amendment to the Bill:

- **First, Intro 1474 is an important and positive step, and we wish to communicate that the workforce community as a whole is supportive of this legislation and hopes to see it move forward.** Crucially, two points of focus in the bill are seen as important victories by our community: the basing of a universal youth workforce system on actual need & application, as opposed to arbitrary numbers of funded 'slots,' and the declaration that all young New Yorkers are eligible to enroll in such a program, regardless of their residency or immigration status. On these points, we heard no equivocation and strong support from our members.
- **Second, we feel it is vital that the bill's definition of "youth" be expanded to include those young people 18 and over who are enrolled in educational programs that are not traditional K-12 schools.** As drafted, Intro 1474 defines eligible youth as those 14-17, or those 18-21 *and enrolled full time in*

high school or middle school. This caveat for the older segment of youth should be re-crafted to ensure that it encompasses young people who are enrolled in, for example, transfer schools, High School Equivalency Programs, programs that include the support of DOE's District 79, or any youth or young-adult educational program supported by any City agency. The principle of universal youth employment must not be limited, or construed by some future Administration to be limited, to those young people enrolled in traditional schools. It is our belief that internships and part-time jobs are a vital part of the pathway to self-sufficiency, especially so for those young people that already need to find a path outside of the normative school-college-career pipeline.

- **Third, in program design, remember to meet young people where they are - wherever they are.** Any major expansion and re-organization of a program like the Summer Youth Employment Program is also going to bring with it changes in the implementation of the program. One area of change that we expect to see in coming years is an expansion of the school-based model of SYEP or whatever the future universal youth employment program is called. We know from those of our members that have engaged in the early examples of these school-based programs that they hold great potential, and we are supportive of a shift in the direction of having youth employment be integrated into the standard high school experience. You've heard about this earlier from one of our member organizations, Here to Here, and Lazar Treschan who was previously one of our trusted research partners at the Community Service Society. While we echo Lazar's call for more implementation of this model, we also want to remind the Council and the Administration that even when every school has an employment program attached to it, there will still be a need for community-based youth employment programs, because not all young people are enrolled full-time in high school, but all young adults need a pathway to a self-sufficient career.

- **Fourth, be ready to face the budgetary implications of doing this right.** In recent years, as SYEP's scale has been expanded because of consistent Council support, we have seen mounting challenges on the shoulders of the SYEP providers to create enough high-quality employment options for the young people enrolled. The expansion of the program further into this future universal model will only increase those challenges. Simply put, the cost of consistently providing good summer and part-time employment is not adequately covered under the existing programs, and each expansion will only move us farther up the metaphorical tree, seeking harder-and-harder-to-reach fruits of employment. The Council must know, as I suspect you do, that rolling out a high quality universal youth employment program will cost significantly more than the existing SYEP program, not only due to the scale increase, but on a cost-per-client basis as well. This bill is not meant to address the specifics of the budgetary needs, nor do we think it needs to, but we want to make note of this need in advance of any future budgetary discussions.

I know that you and your fellow City Council Members support the work of the workforce development community broadly, and of the Employment and Training Coalition, and I want to thank you for your continued commitment to working with us to maximize equity in our local economy and career opportunities for those traditionally disconnected from them.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these matters. We at the Employment and Training Coalition would be happy to answer any questions from the Council to the best of our ability, either today or via follow-up with your staff.



**Testimony of Chinese-American Planning Council (CPC) at the New York City Council
Committee on Youth Services
Delivered Brian Chen, CPC Education & Career Services
Honorable Deborah Rose, Chair**

October 8, 2019

Good morning Chair Rose and members of the Youth Services Committee. My name is Brian Chen and I am the Director of Education and Career Services at the Chinese-American Planning Council (CPC).

Founded in 1965, CPC is a social services agency that creates positive social change. We empower Asian American, immigrant, and low-income communities in New York City by ensuring they have equitable access to the resources and opportunities needed to thrive. We are the trusted partner to more than 60,000 individuals and families each year.

CPC proudly operates several City-funded youth employment initiatives including the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP). Last summer, CPC placed over 2,300 youth at 390 worksites spanning the public, private, and non-profit sectors. Collectively, they earned over \$4.4 million in wages and stipends.

Last summer, CPC also partnered with two NYC Public High Schools on the new school-based, SYEP model. Both schools wanted to incorporate summer employment experiences to complement their year-round internship programs. Although CPC was able to provide continuity for many of these students, an unintended consequence of our collaboration involved having to turn away a number of interested young people from applying because they were undocumented and did not have the requisite employment authorization.

As one of the city's largest youth employment providers, we appreciate the Council's continuous investment in our youth. However, for those who are not selected through lottery-based programs like SYEP or cannot apply due to their immigration status, the skills and experiences gap between them and their peers continues to widen. Thus, CPC is supportive of both Int. No. 1474 and Int. No. 1670 – introduced by Public Advocate Williams- to make employment opportunities more inclusive, equitable and accessible to all of the city's youth.

At CPC, we've seen firsthand the positive impact employment and internship programs have in the lives of youth and young adults. Participants are able to explore their career interests; gain core employability skills; and become more active members of their community. They are overwhelmingly more engaged, motivated, and prepared to achieve their education, career, and life goals.

Being the fairest big city in the nation means ensuring all of our young people have an opportunity to participate in the best youth employment and education programs in the country. No barrier should ever define an individual's potential to succeed and thrive, whether in school or in the workplace. This is why over fifty CPC youth participants joined Public Advocate Williams and Chair Rose on the steps of City Hall last August to rally for new legislation that would create inclusive youth employment education opportunities for all school-age New York City residents.



CPC thanks Chair Rose and members of the Youth Services Committee for your leadership and for the opportunity to testify today. We look forward to further engaging with you.

For additional questions, comments, or details, please contact Brian Chen at bchen@cpc-nyc.org or CPC's Policy & Public Affairs Department at policy@cpc-nyc.org.



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NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

RE: Oversight - Youth Employment Opportunities and Programming.
Int 1474 - In relation to establishing a universal youth employment program.

2019 Public Hearing Police Athletic League, Inc. Testimony

The Police Athletic League together with the NYPD and the law enforcement community supports and inspires thousands of New York City youth to become productive members of society. For over 100 years, PAL has provided vital services to New York City's children and teens from ages 2 to 21. Specifically, PAL has extensive experience working with teens that would benefit from this amendment.

Our work readiness programs deliver intensive afterschool services that empower teenagers to overcome barriers and develop academic and social skills. In addition, PAL supports at risk and vulnerable teenagers with our college and career readiness programs. In 2018, 97% of teens in PAL's work readiness programs were accepted into college, 3% entered full-time employment or military service and 91% of teens in PAL work readiness programs graduated high school on time.

Over the years, PAL's work with teens has reduced their interaction with the criminal justice system and mitigated anti-social behaviors by providing opportunities to participate in workforce development. As an added benefit, our programs and activities are designed to foster productive social development and encourage positive engagement with law enforcement. PAL's work readiness programs offer teens in the most challenged neighborhoods the opportunities and guidance they need to successfully transition into college, the workforce and adulthood.

The Police Athletic League and similar agencies have made significant and long-term commitments to build the managerial capacity and internal culture to support quality youth employment programs. It has taken decades for PAL to build a youth employment program that improves college and job readiness outcomes. Our youth employment programs focus on college preparation, application assistance, career skills training and job placement. Presently PAL provides intensive support over the course of two years, so students gain the skills and confidence to earn high school diplomas and pursue post-secondary education and employment.



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The Police Athletic League supports the concept of a universal youth employment program and we urge the city council to plan for the implications of implementing an initiative of this scope. We recommend the development of a detailed program implementation blueprint to accompany the amendment. Any plan to support the amendment must include an assessment of the current system capacity, provisions for vulnerable youth and adequate levels of financial support for host agencies.

It is widely accepted in the youth development community that working with high school age youth requires a distinct set of personnel and program design separate from that required for school aged youth. In a city as populated as New York, the ability to service the number of youth that could potentially apply is staggering. In the summer of 2018 and 2019, the effort to provide guaranteed summer youth employment to all eligible youth, through the Mayor's Action Plan program, required participating agencies to leverage significant additional resources to support the marketing, administration and supervision of the program.

The plan to support the amendment must include provisions for reaching and supporting vulnerable youth to navigate employment successfully. Many vulnerable youth contend with conditions that significantly impede their ability to have a normal work experience, such as homelessness or emotional trauma. Compounding this issue is that many vulnerable youth do not interact with the traditional support systems for youth, such as schools and libraries. These youth, arguably need employment opportunities more than their peers and can be equally successful with the appropriate levels of outreach and support.

A success youth employment expansion is only possible by providing adequate levels of financial support to host agencies. To implement a quality program, calculate the cost per youth to include the additional cost agencies incur to market, administer and supervise the program. In addition, the council must provide the funding so the salary or stipend parameters can be set at a competitive rate.

The Police Athletic League is committed to inspiring and supporting New York City youth. As an organization, we place a high value on providing opportunities for youth and we are proud to be an active provider within the New York City youth employment system. We support the City Council proposal to establish a universal youth employment program and encourage the council to consider the recommendations herein as part of the implementation.

Thank you for consideration of these issues and your partnership with the Police Athletic League, Inc.



HERE TO HERE

Lazar Treschan
Vice President, Policy and Impact
HERE to HERE

Testimony to the New York City Council
Deborah Rose Chair
October 8, 2019

INT 1474: *This bill would require the Department of Youth and Community Services to establish a universal employment program for youth aged 14 to 17 and for youth aged 18 to 21 who attend a middle school or high school. The program would provide a summertime or part-time school year job to all eligible youth who seek employment through the program.*

Recommendation: *Continue to reform the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) to become a universal paid summer internship program available to all New York City public high school students.*

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Lazar Treschan, and I am the Vice President for Policy and Impact at [HERE to HERE](#), a new Bronx-based intermediary dedicated to changing our systems of education to make them more student-centered and employer driven. HERE to HERE believes that the greatest equity gap facing young adults in New York City is that young people from higher income families graduate high school with a sense of who they are, what they want to be, and some understanding of how their next step, be it college and/or a job, will get them there. Students from low income families graduate high school with a diploma. And that's it.

We see the results of that disparity in the markedly different rates of success for high school graduates in terms of college completion and career success. Yes, more young people are graduating high school and enrolling in college than ever, but we are not seeing these positive trends result in the outcomes that. We are facing staggering rates of college non-completion, particularly among black and Latinx young people.

HERE to HERE believes that this is a direct result of an equity gap faced by low income young people that leads to them having a lack of knowledge about a) who they are, their skills and interests, and b) a deep knowledge of how the world of college and careers can help them

become that person. And the reason for this disparity is that higher income young people are given the chance, through extracurricular activities, or those offered by their better resourced schools, to apply their education in real world environment, be they through internships, community service projects, travel, or other experiences. Low income young people get far fewer of these opportunities to connect what they are learning in high school to either their personal passions, or to structured activities in the outside world.

We conducted research this past summer with the student group Teens Take Charge, in which we interviewed high school students from higher and lower income schools. What we found was that students at higher income schools feel that their schools have three goals: helping them graduate, learn who they are, and build a resume. And that students at lower income schools felt their high schools were just about graduation. That is what happens when we segregate our students.

We believe the path to real equity in our high schools starts by turning them into a 12-month program, where every student who wants one get paid summer internships that is designed by them and their teachers, after each year of high school. And the best way to do that is to continue to expand SYEP and connect it to the school year. CBOs should still operate the program, but they should be tied to high schools which will have the added benefit of empowering schools with these great local organizations.

According to a study of SYEP, the youth that participate will see better grades and exam scores when they return to school in the fall, along with decreased chances of getting arrested or into trouble. To put it simply, work works, when it comes to better outcomes for our kids.

The problem is that tens of thousands of young people apply for the program and are denied slots due to funding limits. Unless they are able to find a job on their own – something that data shows is harder than ever for younger workers – they see diminished school and life outcomes after the summer. The phenomenon known as “summer melt” reduces hard-earned gains made during the school year for idle students.

We spend nearly \$20,000 per year on public funds for each high school student, yet see a good percentage of our schools' hard work melted away over the summer months. But summer jobs can counter this, not only maintaining students' skill levels but increasing them. In addition, summer work offers room to explore careers and develop interests, connections, and a sense of a pathway for what might come after high school.

Given their overwhelming return, we can no longer afford not to invest in summer jobs for every young person who seeks the opportunity. Turning away young people from a program that solidifies their school-year learning, offers them a chance to contribute to our economy and local institutions, and gets them career-ready is too sensible an investment to pass up. It's time to make summer jobs universal, an option available to every young person who wants to work.

Such an expansion is also an opportunity to improve the program. Right now, most of SYEP--aside from the new, but growing school-based option-- is too disconnected from a student's experience the other 10 months of the year. Instead of just being a job, the program should be an internship, which builds off the skills and interests developed during the previous school year, leading into the next one; in essence, an extension of the school year. New York City could become the first city in the nation to offer a 12-month high school program: 10 months of school, followed by an optional two-month summer employment experience.

Unlike the current SYEP, a universal Summer Internship Program that is more school-connected can offer distinct, sequenced job experiences for young people at different stages. After 9th grade, the youngest participants would be in a program oriented around community service, rather than a formal job, in which they would learn about working in teams, showing up on time, and dealing with supervisors, in a relatively low-stakes setting, such as a public service project. After 10th grade, participants would "graduate" into entry-level work positions in nonprofit organizations, summer camps, and museums. After 11th and 12th grade, they would be "promoted" into more formal private, public and nonprofit jobs, which would be connected to the skills and experiences they have demonstrated during the school year, both in the classroom and in interviews with potential summer employers.

The promise of a paid summer experience should provide an additional strong incentive for students not to drop out from high school. But youth who have already done so should also be able to participate. But unlike now, where a 15 year-old high school sophomore might work alongside a 22 year-old young adult, the service to "disconnected youth" would be distinct, with a set-aside of jobs that were targeted more toward their specific needs, and more likely to help them get back into the workforce.

For those who believe college should be a greater focus than work for young people, we have good news. Research shows that employment during the high school years, can increase the likelihood of college, as students become more familiar with why they should attend college, and are likely to make better choices about the types of degree programs that will help them start good careers.

In 2016, when I was at the Community Service Society of New York, I published a proposal calling for such a program, which would expand and reform SYEP, in which 85 percent of participants are high school students. Yet students in schools that focused on computer science ended up with SYEP jobs in summer camps, and students that wanted to be teachers ended up selling computers at Staples. That had to change. And to their credit, City Hall, DYCD, and the DOE have worked together to both expand SYEP -- with a big push from the City Council - and to create a new School Based SYEP option that began this year with 6,000 students and is due to grow to over 20,000. The first year of any new program is difficult, but this is the direction in which our city needs to go, to where all students have an opportunity to learn experiential during the summer and earn money. They will return to school engaged in their own learning, with a clearer path to the options that await them in the future.

I urge the City Council to continue their push for universal summer jobs, but not as ways to keep kids off the street, or just to put money in their pockets. Rather, let's give all young people what higher income kids already get--real internships that look good on a resume, and which can provide access to a new network of adults, and information about the real world that can engage, energize, and actualize all high school students.

We have made great strides in advancing access to early education through universal pre-kindergarten education. It's time for the same type of effort for older youth making the tricky transition to adulthood, in a labor market that is harder than ever for young people. A universal summer internship program will not be cheap, but it would cost less than our recent pre-K expansion, so we know that it's possible. All it takes is the will to do it.



**NYC City Council Youth Services Committee
October 8th, 2019 at 10:00 am**

Testimony of Caroline Iosso, Director of Community and Government Affairs
Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow (OBT)

Good morning. My name is Caroline Iosso and I am the Director of Community and Government Affairs at Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow (OBT). Thank you to the members of the Council for the opportunity to speak today. I am here to express support for Intro 1474, in favor of universal youth employment, provided that the bill expands its definition of youth covered to include those 18 to 21 years of age who are enrolled in a High School Equivalency program.

Founded in 1983, OBT is one of New York City's largest providers of workforce development and education services for opportunity youth, ages 17-24, and adults who are disconnected from education and/or employment. OBT serves over 4,000 youth and adults annually across sites in Brooklyn and Queens. We exist to break the cycle of poverty and inequity through education, job training, and employment. OBT's programs serve as a bridge to economic opportunity for youth, individuals, and families in underserved communities. We emphasize the principles of accountability, confidence, and professionalism to prepare participants for the workforce while developing personal and professional skills.

OBT's programs meet an individual where they are in their career trajectory, work with them to discern what their next step is, and provide them with the tools, training, and education to get them there. Our programs have an 87% completion rate. 72% of participants earn employer-recognized credentials during their time with us and 70% are placed in jobs after graduating from our programs.

Support for Intro 1474

- **Work experience builds essential skills.**

Linking our participants with employment after program completion is a core component of our work at OBT. As such, we have relationships with myriad employers and businesses in many sectors. Each and every employer partner stresses the importance of essential or soft skills, such as communication, organization, and professional writing. Many skills can be learned on the job, but coming in the door without basic skills in managing a workload, communicating with a supervisor, critical thinking, and collaborating with colleagues makes it difficult to retain that job.

Recent research by the American Enterprise Institute underscores this point. Their paper, "Teaching Soft Skills in Workforce Programs: Findings from WorkAdvance Partners" (September 2019) found that graduates of these programs were more likely to lose their jobs due to issues around soft skills than technical expertise. Additional research from 2014 by The Economist Intelligence Unit found that the top three skill categories that employers valued in new employees were: (1) critical thinking and problem solving; (2) collaboration/teamwork; and (3) communication.

While workforce training providers like OBT integrate this type of learning into our program model, internships and work experience provide a way to test these skills in the real world. By working part-time during the year and full-time over the summer, youth can hone their essential skills, getting invaluable feedback from supervisors and managers. Expanding city dollars to ensure that any youth who is interested in employment can get it would begin to level the playing field around who has access to building essential skills and who does not.

- **Opportunities to earn money while in school or programs helps youth commit to program completion.**

Many of our participants come to OBT after having left a traditional high school due to financial pressures. For these young people, taking the time to work towards a high school diploma was not a calculus that made sense -- that time must be spent earning money to pay rent, purchase groceries, and/or care for family members.

Our program completion rates at OBT are very high -- 87% -- but the reason that a young person stops our program is often financial.

By creating the opportunity for our students to earn money in part-time jobs during the school year, we are incentivizing them to stay in our program. We also can redirect the time and energy they would have spent searching for a job on their own into their studies.

- **Work experience creates a professional network that helps youth access employment in the future.**

Both anecdotally and evidenced in recent research, we know that networking often paves the pathway towards securing employment. OBT participants who have had internships share that both previous managers and coworkers have helped them find jobs after they graduate from our programs. Intro 1474's insurance that all youth are able to begin building that network of individuals who know their skills, accountability, and professionalism in the workplace will make New York City a more equitable place.

Intro 1474 must include 18-21 year olds in HSE Programs to promote equity for all NYC youth.

While eliminating caps on the number of youth who can participate in the Summer Youth Employment Program and expanding employment opportunities through the entire year would prompt a boon to youth advancement, a significant population of youth would be left out. Intro

1474 as written now would exclude a population who stands to benefit enormously from the points outlined above -- 18-21 year olds who are enrolled in High School Equivalency programs. OBT's Youth Education and Job Training program serves youth ages 17-24 who are disconnected from work and school. More than 50% of those in our program in FY20 fell between 18-21. While there is some funding to support work based learning through District 79, the need is greater than what current funding can support.

In summary, Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow is in support of universal youth employment, provided that students in High School Equivalency programs are able to participate as well. We appreciate the Council's continued efforts to address structural barriers to equity for New York City youth.

Thank you very much for your attention and consideration. With any questions, I can be reached at 718-369-0303 or ciosso@obtjobs.org.



**Testimony of United Neighborhood Houses
Before the New York City Council
Committee on Youth Services
Council Member Deborah L. Rose, Chair**

Oversight – Youth Employment Opportunities and Programming

**Presented by J.T. Falcone, Policy Analyst
October 8, 2019**

Chair Rose and members of the New York City Council Committee on Youth Services, thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is J.T. Falcone, and I am a Policy Analyst at United Neighborhood Houses (UNH). UNH is a policy and social change organization representing 42 neighborhood settlement houses that reach 765,000 New Yorkers from all walks of life.

Now in our 100th year, UNH is stewarding a new era for New York's settlement house movement. We mobilize our members and their communities to advocate for good public policies and promote strong organizations and practices that keep neighborhoods resilient and thriving for all New Yorkers. UNH leads advocacy and partners with our members on a broad range of issues including civic and community engagement, neighborhood affordability, healthy aging, early childhood education, adult literacy, and youth development. We also provide customized professional development and peer learning to build the skills and leadership capabilities of settlement house staff at all levels.

UNH is committed to high quality summer employment experiences for young New Yorkers. Through our leadership role on the Campaign for Summer Jobs (CSJ), UNH worked closely with the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) and the Council throughout the rollout of the new Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) models launched in 2019. UNH members run nearly every model type of SYEP, with 15 settlement houses running 43 separate programs. UNH also convenes the SYEP Peer Group, through which we engage an additional 11 SYEP providers. The peer group was established in late 2018 to give providers an opportunity to think collectively about the program redesign process and continued to meet throughout the summer as the new program models were implemented.

UNH, on behalf of our SYEP provider members and partners, must first and foremost thank the Council for your commitment to SYEP. Your advocacy has been essential and has ushered in many improvements to the program over the last several years. We truly appreciate your work alongside advocates to get the funds for SYEP baselined in the City's budget, to increase the

number of youth served, and to encourage the successful rollout of a redesign with many moving parts. Similarly, UNH recognizes the efforts of DYCD to redesign the program in a way that engages various populations of young people, and emphasizes the development of a “career mindset” while integrating feedback from providers, advocates, employers, and youth.

UNH is philosophically supportive of Intro 1474, a Local Law to amend the New York city charter in relation to establishing a universal youth employment program. We agree that universality is something to which we should aspire, given the many positive outcomes that young people and their communities experience when they are engaged in work opportunities. Additionally, major elements of SYEP were changed in 2019, and there are several elements of the program that we encourage the City to address before scaling the program to achieve universality.

Challenges and Recommendations

As with any major overhaul, providers faced challenges in the lead up to and execution of the pilot year of the new models. I am here today to share some of the feedback we have heard from our members and partners, and to lay out a few preliminary recommendations.

- **The City should increase funding for SYEP such that programs are able to furnish *all* Younger Youth (YY) participants with Metrocards and lunch, in order to eliminate any associated stigma with receiving this assistance.**

The redesigned SYEP included a project-based learning (PBL) opportunity for the younger youth (YY), defined as youth ages 14 and 15, which—unlike traditional SYEP—does not include a work site placement but rather brings the YY together in a cohort to work on a project that they flesh out in collaboration with the provider. For example, this summer, UNH member Center for Family Life ran a PBL contract for YY that included several branches of different project themes including Environmental Justice, STEAM, and Civic Participation/Community Advocacy. Center for Family Life served approximately 320 YY participants, who were able to contribute to the design and implementation of each group project, honing their leadership and civic engagement skills, as well as continuing to develop their career readiness and interpersonal skills.

YY are paid via a stipend that is slightly lower than the hourly payment earned by the Older Youth (OY) in worksite placements. As a result of this lower payment, some of the youth ended up struggling to afford the transportation and food costs associated with participating. Many YY reported that transportation and food costs ended up eating almost their entire stipend payment, meaning they are barely breaking even. For some this meant that participation simply was not worth the effort and costs, which negatively impacted the retention rates for YY.

While providers have the resources to provide limited transportation support to a few participants who ask for it, many youth do not know they can ask and even some who do chose not to for fear of the stigma of receiving a Metrocard in front of peers who do not.

Universal access to food and Metrocards—much like universal access to free lunch has in schools—could eliminate this stigma and allow YY to participate with the program fully.

- **DYCD must reduce the paperwork providers are expected to collect for each young person by creating efficiencies where possible and by removing documentation required by income-restricted funding streams from the requirements for all participants.**

SYEP providers are forced to collect reams of paperwork during enrollment, which is an administrative burden that is difficult to bear. One UNH member prepared an “Intake Procedure” booklet that was 76 pages long listing all the documents that providers are expected to collect, which include:

- Proof of identity (e.g. a Driver’s License, Non-Driver’s ID, Permanent Resident Card, ID NYC, or EBT Benefit Card);
- Proof of Employment Authorization (e.g. a report card from the Department of Education (DOE), an official school transcript, a Voter’s registration card, or Military Card);
- Proof of Age (e.g. original birth certificate or valid U.S. Passport);
- Proof of Social Security (e.g. must be a social security card);
- Proof of Working Papers which must be filled out by the participant and completed by her or his school;
- Proof of Citizenship/Alien Status (e.g. valid U.S. passport, original U.S. birth certificate, alien registration card or certificate of naturalization or employment registration card);
- Proof of Address (e.g. a home utility bill, current lease, current cable bill that include phone service, or official mail from a federal, state, or City agency); and
- Proof of Family Income (e.g. an EBT card with a recent store receipt, current SNAP letter, or official letter from Social Services for those supported by Public Assistance, or two consecutive pay stubs, a W2, current pension or SSA award letter, or Unemployment Benefit Document)

With all the documents providers are required to collect from each young person who participates, onboarding takes two hours per participant on average. There is a tremendous opportunity cost to asking SYEP providers to spend so much time collecting paper when the program is only in full swing 12 weeks a year. At two hours per enrollee, for all 75,000 SYEP participants, that means 150,000 hours are spent on orientation. That’s 150,000 hours not spent improving PBL for YY or tweaking the orientation; it is 150,000 hours that cannot be spent providing additional support to young people who need assistance drafting a resume or customizing the job to better match the career aspirations of the young person. Streamlining paperwork can allow providers the chance to do what they do well—supporting the career, social, and emotional growth of the young people they’re serving.

As of the 2018 SYEP Annual Summary, City Tax Levy represent 81.75% of the SYEP funding at \$122.3M. New York State contributes an additional 13.77%, or \$20.6M, and the rest is a combination of federal and private monies.¹ Despite the fact that City Tax Levy comprises a vast majority of the funding, the documentation requirements for all participants is actually determined by the relatively minuscule percentage of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) dollars that are mixed into some of the funds allocated by the State. This means that 100% of SYEP participants are asked for household income verification for a program that is *not* means tested and which is funded almost entirely by non-income-restricted dollars. DYCD should carefully reevaluate how, or if, TANF dollars are incorporated into the program while exploring ways to reduce the paperwork collected during intake.

- **DYCD should begin work on an electronic record- and time-keeping system in order to address the two primary bottlenecks that are preventing further scaling of SYEP: intake and time-keeping.**

Another way to reduce the time spent enrolling young people would be to build a system that allows them to securely upload the required documents online before they even arrive at their designated provider. While not every young person would have access to the necessary technology to take advantage of an electronic system, many would, and for every one that does providers would have that much more time spend with those young people who need the extra help during onboarding. As an added bonus, allowing youth to upload documents from home would not only save time, but it would also alleviate the security concerns parents have raised with sending original Social Security cards and passports in with their children, which is currently required.

In addition to the two hours spent enrolling each participant, providers spend countless hours travelling to and fro across the City visiting work sites to have supervisors fill out time sheets on paper in person once the OY are working at placement sites. The current system requires providers to visit each worksite weekly to collect hard copies of signed timesheets. Not only does this waste SYEP program staff time, it means many providers are forced to prioritize worksites that can accommodate tens of interns to make timesheet collection more efficient.

New York City has a thriving and robust network of small businesses that could offer young people unique opportunities to work directly with managers and owners. Of the more than 200,000 business in New York City, 98% have fewer than 100 employees, and 89% fewer than 20.² SYEP providers have barely been able to scratch the surface of these businesses given the current bureaucratic hurdles of the program, but an electronic timesheet system would help to change this dynamic.

¹ https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dycd/downloads/pdf/2018NYC_SYEP_Annual%20Summary.pdf

² <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/smallbizfirst/downloads/pdf/small-business-first-report.pdf>

I would also like to take a moment to reiterate UNH's support for Public Advocate Williams' Intro 1670. Though Intro 1670 is not on the Committee's agenda today, this bill would help to bring the City closer to our stated aim of universality by removing the barriers to accessing summer employment for certain youth who are unable to produce all of the long list of documents that are required for participation in SYEP. Intro 1670 would help clear a major obstacle to true universality, setting us up for a summer youth employment system that is much more equitable.

Finally, I would like to note that UNH plans to convene a series of model-based debrief sessions over the coming months. In these sessions, we will bring together the 26 providers with whom we have engaged thus far as well as others who are interested to review each of the new model types in depth and compile feedback. We will hold sessions focused on Community-based and NYCHA-based older youth (OY); community-based and NYCHA-based younger youth (YY); vulnerable youth, youth with disabilities, and cure violence; school-based; year-round sector focus and Ladders for Leaders; and Work Learn Grow (WLG). We look forward to sharing the results of those sessions with the Council and the Administration as we work to improve upon the early successes.

Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any questions, and will remain available at (917) 484-9332 or jfalcone@unhny.org.



Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC
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**Written Testimony Submitted to the New York City Council
Committee on Youth Services**

**Public Oversight Hearing:
*Youth Employment Opportunities and Programming***

**Alicia Guevara
Chief Executive Officer
Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC**





Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC
40 Rector Street, 11th Floor
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Thank you Council Members Torres, Kallos, Treyger, and Levine, as well as to Public Advocate, Mr. Williams for holding this important hearing on expanding youth employment programs in our City. My name is Alicia Guevara and I am the Chief Executive Officer for Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City - the first and oldest youth mentoring organization in the nation. I am here today to express our support for the establishment of a universal youth employment program. With over 1 million people aged 14 – 24 in our City, we must focus our energies on building the next generation of leaders. Youth employment opportunities have a proven, positive impact on participants, and we know that there is still more to be done to set our City's youth up to become positive, contributing members of our communities and of our economy who are earning livable wage salaries.

The mission of Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City is to build and support mentoring relationships that ignite the biggest possible futures for our youth. We accomplish this by matching kids, our Littles, with caring, positive and reliable adult role models, our Bigs. Each mentoring relationship is supported by a trained team of staff who offer coaching and guidance to the match. Over the last 115 years since our inception we have seen thousands of matches form lifelong transformative bonds. One on one mentoring relationships will always be a cornerstone of our work and I believe that we have an imperative to meet the unique needs of City's youth as they age, grow and plan for the future.

In the early 1990s, Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City launched our Workplace Mentoring Program, a model that brings high school students to now over 65 corporate offices, anchoring our NYC



business community, for coaching and mentorship focused on building and instilling in our youth the skills that support their success as they navigate their next steps after high school graduation. But the youth that we serve come from communities where the barriers to college and career success are high. Therefore, establishing a universal youth employment program is a key step in preparing our City's young people, in our case the Littles, with professional and technical skills to help them build career awareness and encourage them to explore the full breadth of opportunities available in the NYC market.

I am proud to share that Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City has made a commitment to expand not only our Workplace Mentoring Program, but to also invest more resources in our College and Career Success Program which supports our Littles as they transition from High School into post-secondary opportunities. 98% of our Littles are graduating from High School; 92% are enrolling in college. This year, we have seen a 130% percent increase in enrollment in our College and Career Success program. We believe this growth is correlated with the critical role that mentorship plays in promoting career success. With 90% of our Littles identifying as People of Color, we are focused on offering culturally competent, informed mentorship that assists them in navigating the complexities that come from being "the only" or "one of the few". People of Color report experiencing feelings of imposter syndrome at a higher rate than their white counterparts and mentorship has been identified as a key reinforcement in processing this experience and driving career success. But if we succeed in supporting the formative professional journey of our Littles and do not also provide them with opportunities to gain workplace experience and employment, we have not done enough.





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We know that close to 70% of people secure their jobs through connection in their network. Big Brothers Big Sisters' Workplace Mentoring and College and Career Success Programs support our Littles in building their social capital, creating meaningful professional connections and expanding the network of people who can guide, coach and refer them to opportunities after completing high school, whether they chose to pursue employment or higher education. With 97% of our Littles graduating from high school, expanded access to Summer Employment Opportunities gives our City's youth more exposure to help them define for themselves what they want their next formative step to be and build professional experience that ignites their potential.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City firmly believes that equitable access to employment opportunities for our youth is not only a moral imperative but an economic investment. In partnership with the New York City Council, we would willing offer our expertise around mentorship and its role in career readiness and success to support the successful enactment of this law.

Thank you for your leadership and efforts in support of this law. Big Brothers Big Sisters looks forward to serving as an ally in the critical effort to expand employment opportunities for all of New York City's youth.





ABOUT CORE SERVICES GROUP

Founded in 2005, CORE is a community-based human services organization providing a culturally sensitive and holistic approach to address the needs of its clients including families with children, youth & adults.

CORE's mission is to empower individuals, families and communities to access and maintain employment, gain independence, and live satisfying and productive lives in communities in which they become contributing and productive citizens.

CORE achieves its mission by connecting clients to living wage jobs, real world skills training, aftercare treatment services, and safe, affordable housing.

CORE has successfully implemented programs funded by the Department of Homeless Services (DHS), NYC Housing Preservation & Development (HPD), NYC HIV/AIDS Services Administration (HASA), NYC Department of Youth & Community Development (DYCD) and the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP).

CORE's services are grounded in treating clients with dignity and respect to help guide them to independence and self-sufficiency. CORE currently operates transitional, emergency, and shelter facilities in Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens and Manhattan.

TESTIMONY OF SUZETTE BODDIE BEFORE THE NYC COUNCIL ON YOUTH EMPLOYMENT —2019 on behalf of CORE SERVICES GROUP, INC.

New York City—October 8, 2019

Mr. Chairman, Invited Guests and Other Attendees,

My name is Suzette Boddie, and I come before you today to talk about my observations concerning employment access for young people, on behalf of CORE Services Group, Inc. ("CORE"), where I am the Program Director of Light House IV Transitional Living Program serving 19 young girls.

"The Light Houses" are CORE's residential Transitional Independent Living Programs which provides safe and secure housing for youth ages 16-21 years old. The Light House offers the youth we serve the opportunity to develop skills toward self-sufficiency while they continue their education, find employment, restore family ties and build and expand upon their network support system. The Light House is the bridge that connects our youth to agencies and resources that serve to help prepare them for their journey beyond the safety and support of The Light House program.



Part of our responsibility to our youth is to prepare and encourage them for employment. The overwhelming majority of our youth have a strong desire to find and maintain a job. They want to work. They know they need a job to make money to survive. They also know it is difficult for them to find a job even a part-time, entry level minimum wage paying job in NYC, where jobs are plentiful and increasing. Our youth are aware that they are last in line and least desirable to the hiring manager. They know if they haven't had a job before and they are still attending school they are unlikely to be hired for the job. Knowing this affects their confidence and discourages them from job seeking.

Furthermore, some of our youth are dealing with additional barriers, some are English Language Learners or members of the LGBTQ community, which unfortunately subjects them to even greater difficulty getting a job. In our work at The Light House we have watched our most vulnerable youth gain valuable experience and the confidence they needed to search for, interview and secure employment after their work with SYEP ended.

I am testifying today that opportunities like Summer Youth Employment Program and Universal Youth Employment Program bring hope and solutions to our youth and most vulnerable youth who are in dire situations and in need of the income and motivation these programs provide. Our youth are grateful to SYEP without which they would not have gained work experience, the opportunity to build savings, learn budgeting and to be able to buy for themselves simple things they need and enjoy.

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Name: Kim McLaughlin

Address: UACU - 1000 Richmond Terrace, 51 NY

I represent: United Activities Building P, 3rd floor
unlimited

Address: _____

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Name: Suzette Boachie

Address: _____

I represent: CORE SERVICES GROUP

Address: 45 Main St, Brooklyn, NY

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Name: Andre White

Address: Deputy Commissioner, Workforce Council

I represent: DYCD

Address: _____

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Name: Daphne Martinez

Address: Ass. Street Commissioner

I represent: DYCD

Address: _____

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Address: 34 1/2 EAST 12TH STREET

I represent: THE POLICE ATHLETIC LEAGUE

Address: _____

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Name: ALICIA GUEVARA

Address: Big Brothers Big Sisters

I represent: _____

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Name: Lazar Treschan

Address: 630 Washington Ave Brooklyn NY

I represent: HERE to HERE

Address: 492 E 149th St Bronx NY

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Name: Brian Chen

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I represent: Chinese-American Planning Council

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Name: Lindsey Dixon

Address: _____

I represent: Urban Assembly

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Name: CAROLINE TOSSO (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 882 3rd Ave Brooklyn

I represent: Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow

Address: 882 3rd Ave Brooklyn

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Name: Jesse Layman (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Employment + Training Coalition

Address: _____

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Name: J.T. FALCONE (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: UNH

Address: 45 BROADWAY

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Name: David Calvert (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 206 E 118 St NYC 10035

I represent: YouthBuild NYC Collaborative

Address: 206 E 118 St NYC 10035

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