



# EVALUATION OF THE 2013 COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAM'S YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

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# Evaluation of the 2013 Community Violence Prevention Program's Youth Employment Program

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*Prepared by*

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# Key findings

In 2013, the Community Violence Prevention Program's Youth Employment Program (YEP) offered job readiness training, mentoring, and summer employment to approximately 1,800 youth participants in 24 Chicago-area communities. The evaluation of YEP was designed to guide programmatic enhancements and funding decisions. Researchers used multiple surveys of program staff and participants in order to obtain feedback on trainings for participants, the employment component, mentoring component, and general program operations. The following are key findings from the evaluation of YEP.

## About the trainings

- According to administrative data, 1,924 youth enrolled in job readiness training, 1,686 completed training, and 1,750 created resumes.
- Job readiness training participants agreed or strongly agreed that the training was well designed (72 percent,  $n=537$ ), questions were answered (80 percent,  $n=598$ ), materials were useful (71 percent,  $n=586$ ), trainers were knowledgeable (84 percent,  $n=629$ ), and they gained a better sense of what it takes to obtain and maintain a job (82 percent,  $n=610$ ).
- Mentor training participants agreed or strongly agreed that the training was well designed (88 percent,  $n=120$ ), questions were answered (89 percent,  $n=121$ ); training materials were useful (89 percent,  $n=122$ ), trainers were knowledgeable, and they gained a sense of what it takes to be a mentor (84 percent,  $n=115$ ).
- Many job readiness training participants wanted to spend more time on developing a resume or filling out applications ( $n=48$ ) and building their skills in interviewing ( $n=44$ ).
- Some youth wanted to spend less training time on how to dress for a job ( $n=45$ ) and hygiene ( $n=31$ ).
- A majority of youth participants (73 percent,  $n=633$ ) stated that in the job readiness training, they learned speaking and listening skills for the job and the importance of attendance (73 percent,  $n=632$ ).
- Most youth participants (85 percent,  $n=733$ ) thought the job readiness training helped prepare them for their jobs.
- Some mentor training participants suggested having more interaction between youth and mentors ( $n=13$ ) and discussion on how to deal with problems, crises, or emergencies ( $n=10$ ).
- Mentor training participants recommended the training cover additional mentor skills, such as how to interact with a mentee, build rapport, communicate; including conversation topics, make good first impressions, establish boundaries, and learn their role as mentor ( $n=21$ ).
- Many mentor training participants (30 percent) commented that nothing would improve the training ( $n=41$ ).

## About the participants

- According to administrative data, 4,446 youth applied to the program and 1,929 were accepted. A total of 433 did not complete the program for various reasons and 322 were terminated from the program.
- Researchers were able to match 368 YEP participants' pre- and post-assessments and found the measure of self-esteem had no change in mean scores before and after the program. The measures of attitudes toward employment and attitudes toward violence had a slight reduction in mean scores of less than .10. The measure of conflict resolution had a reduction in mean scores of .12. Two of the four measures were statistically significant—attitudes toward violence and conflict resolution.
- Program participants scored high on measures before and after the program. One half to three-fourths of pre- and post-assessment respondents had a mean score of four or more out of five on measures of employment, violence, conflict resolution, and self-esteem before the program ( $n=183$  to  $n=276$ ), while 43 percent to 63 percent had a mean score of four or more after the program on those measures ( $n=158$  to  $n=233$ ).
- Lower scoring respondents increased their mean scores of attitudes toward violence, self-esteem, and attitudes toward employment, but a higher scoring group did not.
- There were increases in youth participants' mean scores on nine questions—two employment questions, one violence question, and six self-esteem questions.
- There were some increases in youth participants' mean scores in some communities, but not others.
- According to a survey at the end of the program, most (86 percent or more) youth participants rated aspects of the program as good or excellent including job readiness training, job tasks, job supervision, mentor, and the program overall ( $n>741$ ).
- Most youth participants (79 percent) would attend school in fall 2013—42 percent in high school ( $n=357$ ) and 38 percent in college ( $n=328$ ).
- Youth recommended enhancing the program by improving the payroll system ( $n=83$ ), offering more pay or more hours ( $n=56$ ); and improving program organization ( $n=45$ ).

## About the employment component

- Based on administrative data, 1,804 youth placed in jobs, 1,627 completed employment.
- Many Coordinators and Managers responding to a survey rated the aspects of the employment component as good or very good (84 percent,  $n=61$ ).
- Many employers rated aspects of the program high or very high including the program overall (85 percent,  $n=83$ ), communication with staff (80 percent,  $n=78$ ), matching of youth (81 percent,  $n=69$ ), and satisfaction with their experience with the program (84 percent,  $n=82$ ).
- More than one-fourth of employers (28 percent,  $n=28$ ) did not think youth were prepared and needed preparation on following rules, proper conduct, commitment, and work quality.
- Employers recommended more preparation for youth ( $n=15$ ); longer program/more hours for youth ( $n=13$ ); and better communication with program ( $n=12$ ).
- A majority of employers (64 percent,  $n=62$ ) would either hire youth or hire them if able and 98 percent would or might participate in the program again.

- According to a survey of youth participants, their most common type of job was clerical (48 percent,  $n=412$ ) followed by customer service (31 percent,  $n=271$ ).
- Most youth participants thought their job was a good match for their skills and interests (82 percent,  $n=707$ ).
- A majority of youth respondents (77 percent,  $n=667$ ) used the skill of time management in their jobs; dressing appropriately for the job (75 percent,  $n=646$ ); and professional vocabulary and communication (70 percent,  $n=606$ ).
- Most YEP participants thought their work benefitted the agency or company for which they were employed (86 percent,  $n=746$ ).
- Sixty-seven percent of youth participants thought they would use the what they learned in the program to obtain another job ( $n=578$ )

### **About the mentoring component**

- Based on administrative data, 1,920 youth were assigned a mentor.
- Many Coordinators and Managers responding to a survey rated the aspects of the mentoring component as good or very good (68 percent,  $n=50$ ).
- Over one-third of the mentors (34 percent) responded that the quality of their training was average or poor ( $n=38$ ).
- Almost all of respondents (92 percent) were satisfied or very satisfied with the matching of the youth with them as a mentor ( $n=110$ ).
- Most mentors described their relationship with their mentees as close or very close (85 percent,  $n=102$ ).
- A majority of mentors (72 percent) responded that they made a difference in their mentees' lives ( $n=86$ ).
- Most youth program participants (85 percent or more) regarded their mentor positively and said they received guidance and advice ( $n=85$ ); a relationship or someone to talk to and trust ( $n=82$ ); and confidence and self-esteem ( $n=62$ ).

The program met its goals of increasing job readiness skills; building relationships between youth and a caring adult; increasing youth productive time and community engagement; and improving the community through community service. Overall, youth participants were satisfied with their training, job tasks, job supervision, their mentor, and the program. In general, mentors were satisfied with their training, staff support, and the program. Generally, both mentors and participants indicated they had strong, caring, and meaningful relationships with each other. Overall, program staff and employers were satisfied with the program. Over half of employers said they would either hire youth or hire them if able and almost all indicated interest in participating in the program again.

However, the program was not able to show improvement in participant attitudes toward employment, attitudes toward violence, self-esteem, and conflict resolution. There were small decreases in mean scores in those areas on pre- and post-assessments; however, youth participants had high mean scores at the beginning and end of the program and there were increases in mean scores on some questions and in some communities. In order to improve the program, it is recommended that the program recruits more youth that are at-risk and in need of services; enhance the employment component through interactive trainings, job matching, and

improved payroll; enhance the mentoring component through more purposeful interactions between mentors and youth; and enhance the evaluation of the program. While further evaluation, with increased participant data collection is needed, and there are opportunities for further impact, the program as a whole appears promising.

# Introduction

In State Fiscal Year 2013, the Youth Employment Program (YEP) provided about 1,800 young people in 24 Chicago area communities with job readiness training, mentoring, and part-time employment. The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) researchers used administrative data and developed seven surveys to evaluate the YEP program and answer the research questions. These included two training evaluation surveys, one pre- and post-assessment, and four exit surveys. The following research questions guided the evaluation of YEP.

## Research questions on **program operations and client participation**:

- How did youth learn about the program?
- To what extent was there improvement in youths' attitudes and beliefs toward violence?
- To what extent was there improvement in youths' attitudes towards employment?
- To what extent did youth learn conflict resolution skills?
- Was there an increase in self-esteem (youth feeling more valuable to their families, communities, themselves)?
- To what extent were youth prepared for employment?
- To what extent did the program place youth in jobs?

## Research questions on **trainings**:

- To what extent did the trainings meet their goals and objectives?
- How satisfied were participants with aspects of the training and the training overall?
- To what extent did the job readiness training prepare youth for their jobs?
- What did the youth learn from the job readiness training?
- Did youth obtain materials (like resumes) to seek future employment at the job readiness training?
- To what extent did youth put into practice the skills learned at the job readiness training?

## Research questions on the **mentoring component**:

- To what extent did the mentoring component prepare youth for their jobs?
- How did mentors prepare youth for jobs?
- What was the quality of the mentor-youth relationship?

## Research questions on the **employment component**:

- How many youth obtained jobs?
- What kinds of job positions were obtained?
- How did youth assess the quality of the employment experience?
- How many employers would hire youth after the program?
- How many planned to seek another job after the program?
- What did the youth learn on the job?
- What marketable job experience did the youth obtain on the job?

- What employability skills and traits did the youth learn on the job (e.g., timeliness, respect, etc.)?
- To what extent were youth prepared for their job?

# Literature review

About 6.5 million young people in the U.S. aged 16 to 24 are out of work due in part to the limited amount of employment opportunities available to them (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2012). Summer employment rates have fallen to a new low since World War II. In Illinois, the employment rate fell to 28 percent in 2011, which is a 22 percent drop from the early 2000s (Center for Labor Market Studies, 2012). This job deficit restricts young people from gaining meaningful work experience, learning job-readiness skills, gaining practical knowledge, and developing social skills not learned in a school setting. Most importantly, studies have found employment can contribute to preventing youth violence (Dodge, 2001; Fields & McNamara, 2003).

Urban disadvantaged neighborhoods predominantly offer service industry jobs with low wages, no benefits, and minimal career growth. In addition, these positions may lack positive adult role models and information about careers (McClanahan, Sope, & Smith, 2004). Furthermore, the teens who reside in such areas are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior and become involved with the criminal justice system (Gruber, 2010). In urban areas, incarceration rates are often higher for young people and employment more difficult to find (Demos and Young Invincibles, 2011), but recidivism can be reduced through employment programs (Aos, Miller, & Drake, 2006; Bernburg & Krohn, 2003; Mulvey, et al., 2004; Juvenile Justice Educational Enhancement Program, 2006). Therefore, programs such as YEP provide employment to young people, particularly in the summer.

## Employment programs

### Job readiness training

One goal of youth job readiness programs is to introduce and instill in youth employment skills that can help them obtain and maintain employment. Only fourteen percent of high school graduates feel confident that they are generally able to perform what is expected of them in the workforce (Hercik & Techico, 2009). In one study, employers indicated that over half of high-school-level employees are unprepared for the workplace in skills such as oral and written communication, professionalism, critical thinking, and problem-solving (Casner-Lotto, Barrington, & Wright, 2006). These youth may not be able to advance to higher positions within a company, especially when compared to four-year college graduates. Conversely, seventy-five percent of employers thought college graduates are well-prepared (Hart, 2005).

There is increased competition for available jobs and those with more education are significantly more likely to be hired. Therefore, teens and non-college graduates mostly serve in retail and food services and are unable to learn necessary job-readiness skills, such as taking responsibility and problem-solving (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2012).

## **Summer employment**

Employment, even short-term, generates positive labor market outcomes for young people. Studies have found that working early in life can lead to smoother transitions into the labor market, higher beginning wages, and higher future earnings. Employment can promote responsibility, build character, and instill high occupational aspirations (Kablaoui & Pautler, 1991). Although the duration for employment programs may not be long, there is a correlation between dropout rates and participation in work-based learning programs: participation can lead youth to see the connection between school, work, and their career goals. (Sum, Khatiwada, McLaughlin, & Palma, 2008).

With the absence of jobs, young people may not be engaging in other productive tasks during the summer (Bellotti, Rosenberg, Sattar, Esposito, & Ziegler, 2010). The Summer Employment Initiative offered paid work in five high-crime Boston neighborhoods and found increased participant social skills, attitudes, and behaviors that are linked by research to be predictors of youth violence. The program also had a decrease in deviant behaviors associated with criminal pathways, as well as a decrease in risky behaviors associated with future criminality. One Summer Plus offered jobs, mentoring, and therapy to at-risk youth for delinquency and school failure in high violence and low-income neighborhoods in Chicago. Participants experienced a 51 percent drop in arrests for violent crime (Mayor's Press Office, 2013). In general, programs that generate positive long-term outcomes are usually longer in duration and incorporate other services, such as education, counseling, and mentoring.

## **Effective youth employment programs**

Eight principles of effective youth employment programs (Partee, 2003) include:

1. Implementation quality.
2. Caring, knowledgeable adults.
3. High standards and expectations.
4. Importance of community.
5. A holistic approach.
6. Youth as resources/community service and service-learning.
7. Work-based learning.
8. Long-term services/support and follow up.

Implementation quality includes planning time; clear communication of goals; sufficient and sustained resources; strong leadership; professional staff development; and use of data to improve program performance. Caring, knowledgeable adults can be mentors, community members or other trained individuals who care about youth, provide significant time and attention, and demonstrate that they are committed to the success of youth “for the long haul.” These individuals should receive training in working with young people and in age appropriate activities. Effective programs have high standards of performance for young people and offer supports so that they can meet these standards. Community members (parents, guardians, employers) can be resources to plan, advocate, and serve as another caring adult for youth participants (Partee, 2003).

A holistic approach offers many strategies to help youth such as extended hours, individualized attention, hands-on instruction, enrichment activities, culturally-sensitive activities, child care and transportation, life skills training, recognition/rewards, and peer support. Young people can contribute to their communities in positive ways, while also using community work as context for helping develop and apply critical skills that are important in the workplace and in life generally. Work-based learning ensures skills learned are likely to lead to employment. Finally, successful programs offer long-term support and follow up of six months to several years, providing opportunities for young people to continue relationships with caring, knowledgeable adults and receive guidance during the start of employment (Partee, 2003).

## **Mentoring**

Effective youth employment programs feature caring and knowledgeable adults, such as mentors, who provide youth with time, attention, and show a commitment to their success (Partee, 2003). Mentoring youth in their communities is critical as it better prepares the youth to enter the work force and to achieve academic and life goals. Not only can youth benefit from this relationship, but when youth have mentors involved during employment, the agencies may look to the mentor to step in to resolve conflicts. Youth confide in their mentors who encourage the youth to thrive and promote engagement within the community. Most importantly, mentors can impact youth violence prevention (Gellert, 2010; Katz, Heisterkamp & Fleming, 2011). A meta-analysis on mentoring programs indicates that community-based programs are more effective than school-based ones. However, mentoring programs produce modest benefits for participating youth overall (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper, 2002).

Research regarding effective mentoring programs notes the importance of how frequently mentors and youth meet with one another and the length of these sessions. The more contact participants have, the more effective the program. Also, age may play an integral role, as youth are being exposed to many new risks and transitioning into adulthood. This may mean that relationships with family and friends are changing, youth are given more freedom or that some youth are entering the workplace for the first time (Nation et al., 2003). Another key finding in research was that youth of varying demographics and backgrounds gave favorable results when paired with mentors of the same background (DuBois et al., 2002).

# About the Youth Employment Program

The Youth Employment Program (YEP), one of three program components of the Community Violence Prevention Program (CVPP), provided approximately 1,800 young people between the ages of 16-24 in 24 Chicago area communities with job readiness training, mentoring, and part-time employment. Employment was offered through partnering local businesses and organizations for nine weeks in summer 2013. All wages were subsidized by the CVPP state grant program without cost to employers. YEP was designed to reduce risk factors and promote protective factors associated with violence and strengthen social skills.

The other two components of CVPP are the Parent Program and the Reentry Program. CVPP components work to empower and assist youth, as well as strengthen parent leadership within communities. The 2013 Parent Program provided funding for approximately 1,010 parents to receive training on parenting and program orientation and then to act as Parent Leaders for various community projects that promote protective factors for child maltreatment. The 2013 Reentry program funded case managers who linked youth and young adults on parole in 12 Chicago communities to services to help them transition back to their communities and reduce recidivism.

The Illinois General Assembly approved a budget of up to \$15 million in grants for CVPP in State Fiscal Year 2013 (September 1, 2012 to August 31, 2013), \$2.5 million of a \$5 million designation for grants to the Chicago Area Project for CVPP and \$9.2 million disbursed to 23 providers.

ICJIA disbursed grant funds to the following organizations in SFY13 to operate CVPP.

- Albany Park Community Center
- Alliance of Local Service Organizations
- Black United Fund of Illinois
- Chicago Area Project
- Chicago Commons
- Children's Home & Aid Society of Illinois
- Circle Family Healthcare Network
- Community Assistance Programs
- Corazon Community Services
- Fellowship Connection
- Goodcity
- Greater Auburn Gresham Development Corp.
- Healthcare Consortium of Illinois
- Illinois African American Coalition for Prevention
- Organization of the North East Pilsen-Little Village Community Mental Health Center, Inc.
- Proviso-Leyden Council for Community Action
- Sinai Community Institute
- Southland Health Care Forum
- UCAN

CVPP was implemented in 24 Chicago area communities—20 in the City of Chicago and four in Suburban communities—selected based on high poverty and violent crime. Youth living in low income communities have greater need for economic and social opportunities due to lower-quality schools, insufficient education, lack of employment opportunities, and exposure to violence which cause physical and psychological harm and skill deficiencies (Koball et. al,

2011). Five communities were, in actuality, combinations of smaller nearby communities, such as Chicago Lawn, West Chicago, and Gage Park.

CVPP communities included:

- Albany Park
- Auburn Gresham
- Austin
- Brighton Park
- Cicero\*\*
- East Garfield Park
- Englewood
- Grand Boulevard
- Greater Grand Crossing
- Hermosa/Belmont-Cragin
- Humboldt Park
- Logan Square
- Maywood\*\*
- North Lawndale
- Pilsen/Little Village
- Rich Township\*
- Rogers Park
- Roseland
- South Shore
- Thornton Township\*
- West Chicago/Chicago Lawn/Gage Park
- West Garfield Park
- Woodlawn

\*Indicates South Suburban communities

\*\* Indicates West Suburban Community

A previous state violence prevention program, the Neighborhood Recovery Initiative, was implemented by a different agency, the Illinois Violence Prevention Authority, and had operated for two years in communities with high levels of poverty and crime. That program built an infrastructure and collaborations among community organizations among non-profits, faith-based organizations, schools and colleges, police, and others. With some slight changes, those communities were targeted for CVPP and that infrastructure was used to implement the program.

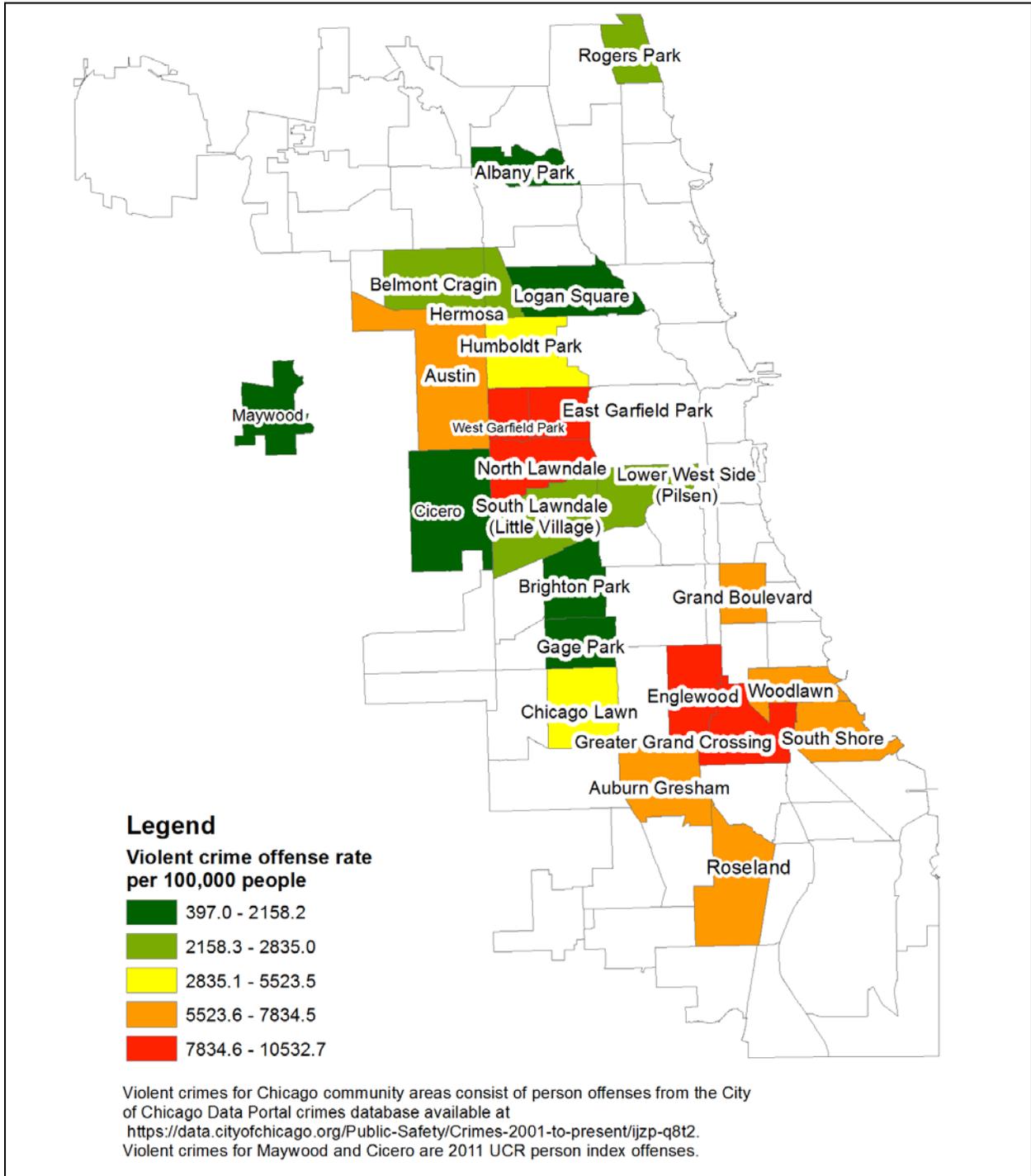
*Table 1* and *Map 1* indicate rates of violent offenses per 100,000 persons reported to police in the CVPP communities for 2012. ICJIA staff analyzed data from the City of Chicago’s data portal at <https://data.cityofchicago.org/Public-Safety/Crimes-2001-to-present/ijzp-q8t2>. Rates were derived by calculating the sum of all violent offenses (homicide, criminal sexual assault, robbery, battery, ritualism, and assault) then dividing by populations calculated using census tract data from the 2010 census. Offense rates were not available for townships. The FBI Uniform Crime Reports for 2011 were available for the cities of Cicero and Maywood, but they may not label the same offenses as “violent” as the city of Chicago data.

**Table 1**  
**Violent offense rate in CVPP communities, 2012**

| <b>Community Name</b>  | <b>Violent offense rate</b> |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Albany Park            | 1,585.1                     |
| Auburn Gresham         | 6,376.3                     |
| Austin                 | 6,715.8                     |
| Belmont Cragin         | 2,237.7                     |
| Brighton Park          | 2,138.1                     |
| Chicago Lawn           | 4,700.9                     |
| Cicero                 | 396.9                       |
| East Garfield Park     | 9,802.1                     |
| Englewood              | 10,367.3                    |
| Gage Park              | 2,158.2                     |
| Grand Boulevard        | 6,603.1                     |
| Greater Grand Crossing | 9,370.6                     |
| Hermosa                | 2,283.1                     |
| Humboldt Park          | 5,523.5                     |
| Logan Square           | 2,125.1                     |
| Lower West Side        | 2,415.5                     |
| Maywood                | 1,000.4                     |
| North Lawndale         | 9,537.2                     |
| Rogers Park            | 2,835.0                     |
| Roseland               | 6,607.1                     |
| South Lawndale         | 2,340.8                     |
| South Shore            | 7,834.5                     |
| West Garfield Park     | 10,532.7                    |
| Woodlawn               | 6,789.1                     |
| <b>City of Chicago</b> | <b>3,539.1</b>              |

Source: ICJIA analysis of Chicago Police Department and U.S. Census Bureau data.

**Map 1**  
**Violent offense rate in CVPP communities, 2012**



## Background

CVPP replaced the Neighborhood Recovery Initiative (NRI), a program of the former Illinois Violence Prevention Authority (IVPA). NRI implemented four program components in 23 neighborhoods in the city of Chicago and the suburbs. The goal of NRI was to reduce risk factors and promote protective factors associated with violence.

The four former program components included:

- *Mentoring Plus Jobs (M+J)* (Replaced by CVPP Youth Employment Program)- Provided part-time jobs for youth as peer leaders and educators, mentoring, and social/emotional skills and support.
- *Parent Leadership Action Network (PLAN)* (Replaced by CVPP Parent Program)- Taught parents leadership, empowerment, and self-care skills to enable them to be community leaders, educators, and mentors for other parents.
- *School-Based Counseling* (Eliminated from CVPP due to budget reductions)- Offered early intervention and trauma-informed counseling services for students.
- *Reentry Programs* (Continued under CVPP)- Provided reentry services for youth and young adults returning to the community from correctional facilities.

For 2013, the Governor and the General Assembly transferred the appropriation from the Illinois Violence Prevention Authority to the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority although at a reduced level. In January 2014, the Illinois Violence Prevention Authority was dissolved by Public Act 97-1151 and all rights, duties, assets and staff of IVPA were transferred to ICJIA.

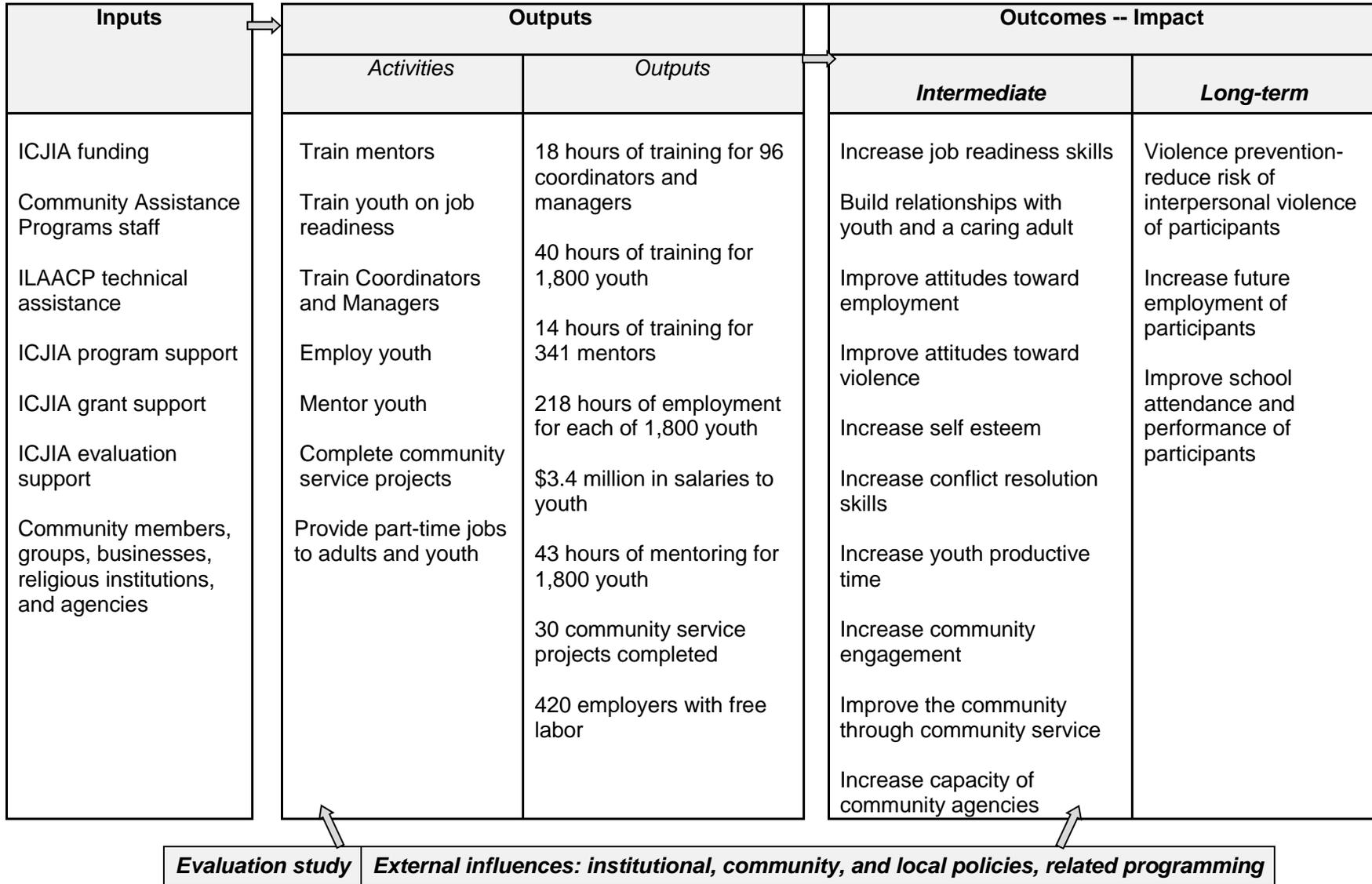
## External evaluation

From 2011 to 2013, the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) Institute of Juvenile Research, Department of Psychiatry provided research support for the first two years of the former NRI and year one of CVPP through an inter-governmental agreement. UIC subcontracted with Social Solutions Inc. to develop and maintain a web-based data collection system to be used by lead agencies and managers to document program processes, activities, baseline measures and assessments, and program outcome measures. This evaluation focuses on year one of the CVPP and uses an evaluation strategy that is different and goes beyond UIC methods.

## Program logic model

*Figure 1* depicts a logic model of the CVPP 2013 Youth Employment Program. A logic model is a tool to provide graphical depictions describing logical linkages among program resources, activities, outputs, and outcomes of a program and indicate a program's desired result (McCawley, 2001).

**Figure 1  
Youth Employment Program logic model**

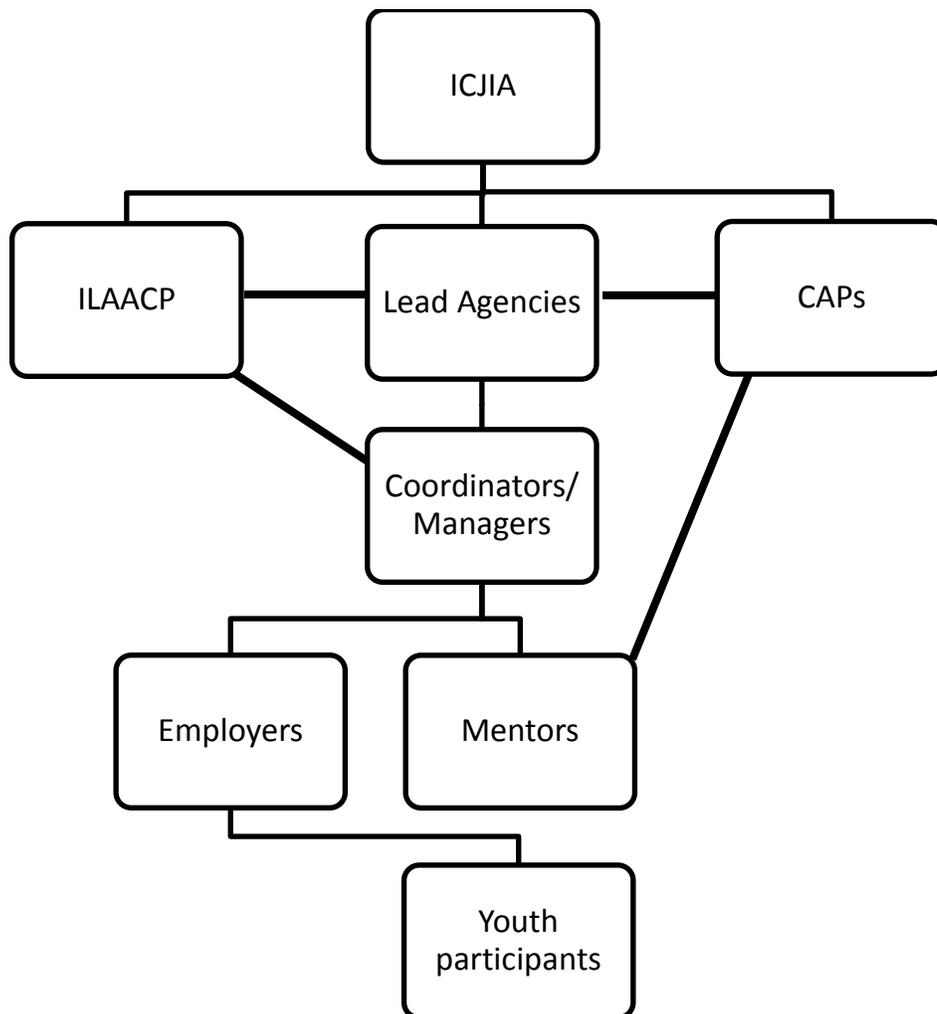


## Staff structure

The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority administered and monitored the grant funds. ICJIA provided both external and internal websites to enhance program administration within the communities. The Illinois African American Coalition for Prevention (ILAACP) coordinated training and provided technical assistance and logistical support to ICJIA and lead agencies and built connected, informed, and engaged communities, enhancing capacity to deliver services. ILAACP is a statewide membership-based charitable organization that strengthens prevention systems, policies and programs in communities through research, training, and advocacy.

Community Assistance Programs (CAPs) is a not-for-profit employment agency that provides employment training and job placement services. CAPs administered the payroll system for employed youth and prepared YEP Instructor-Mentors to deliver job readiness training to youth. *Figure 2* provides the program's structure.

**Figure 2**  
**YEP structure**



In each YEP community, the following positions were hired:

- 1 Manager
- 3 Coordinators
- 16 Mentors or Instructor-Mentors (8 in south suburbs)
- 80 youth participants (40 in south suburbs)

YEP Coordinators and managers were paid for 20 hours per week for 25 weeks and Managers were paid 40 hours per week for 30 weeks.

Lead Agencies were responsible for managing YEP in their communities and subcontracting with community organizations to implement the various program components. Lead Agency roles in the YEP program included:

- Recruit employers to provide subsidized summer jobs for youth.
- Place 80 youth (40 in suburbs) in subsidized summer employment.
- Ensure successful employment by providing youth with 40 hours of job readiness training.
- Provide individual and group mentoring for 80 youth (40 in suburbs) to promote their social and emotional development, as well as to facilitate successful summer employment.

CVPP Lead Agencies, contractors and subcontractors were responsible for recruiting and hiring youth. Youth were paid for participating in 40 hours of job readiness training, along with 160 hours of employment between June and August 2013. They were also paid for 18 hours of community outreach and wrap-up activities in September. Youth were not paid to participate in group and one-on-one mentoring.

Youth were required to purchase their uniforms consisting of a navy polo shirt (costing about \$11 depending on size) with the CVPP logo and khaki pants (costing about \$18). Lead Agencies purchased one additional shirt for each youth, as well as 10 additional shirts to account for attrition and turnover. The uniforms ensured a professional demeanor and consistency in appearance across the city. Youth were asked to pay for the uniform to instill responsibility and pride of ownership.

## **Employment component**

### **Job readiness training**

Community Assistance Programs (CAPs) prepared YEP Instructor-Mentors to deliver 40 hours of job readiness training to youth. In their jobs, they served as both instructors of job readiness training and as mentors to youth; hence the title Instructor-Mentor. In order to optimize learning, job readiness training was limited to 20 youth per trainer. Youth job readiness training was delivered over a period of five weeks. Each community scheduled two, four-hour training sessions per week. In addition, CAPs provided lead agencies with training on their timekeeping and payroll system used to pay youth for their employment. CAPs handled payroll and offered youth payment through Chase Bank cards, rather than checks, as many youth participants did not have bank accounts.

## **Employers**

Each CVPP community was responsible for recruiting employers. ICJIA, CAPs, and ILAACP assisted with marketing and recruitment to create a concerted recruitment effort. An online application/database was created to gather information about employers interested in participating in YEP.

CAPs managed all payroll and bookkeeping functions related to youth employment. CAPs participated in recruitment and screening of the Instructor-Mentors and provided workforce development training prior to employment to make youth valued employees.

## **Mentoring component**

Each CVPP community recruited mentors. An online application/database was created to gather information about mentors interested in participating in YEP. Each community was responsible for reviewing the applications, interviewing, and selecting the mentors for their community. Each mentor was required to pass a background check.

Stephen F. Hamilton, Professor at Cornell University, and Mary Agnes Hamilton, Senior Research Associate at Cornell University, were selected as trainers due to their expertise in mentoring and youth development. Training and continuing support of mentors are critical components of effective mentoring programs (MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, 2005). The Hamiltons conducted “train the trainer” sessions; they trained YEP Coordinators to in turn trained and supported the mentors in their programs.

Trained mentors provided mentoring to youth hired through YEP. Mentors were instructed to sustain relationships with youth for the duration of the program. Youth and Mentors jointly engaged in periodic, culturally relevant community outreach activities during YEP implementation. Mentors were responsible for supervising, mentoring, and monitoring youth assigned to them; providing support to youth during their period of employment; and supervising and monitoring youth during community outreach activities. They were also required to follow all instructions given by the YEP Program Coordinator.

Mentors were paid to do the following:

- Participate in a mentoring certification training.
- Attend the 40 hours of youth job readiness training.
- Plan and coordinate group mentoring activities.
- Provide mentoring to youth as determined by the YEP Manager and Coordinator.
- Serve as a point of contact for mentee/employer relationship.
- Monitor youth employment timesheets.
- Participate in community outreach events with youth.
- Arrive at least 30 minutes prior to scheduled mentoring/community outreach activities.
- Assist with youth orientations and trainings, as needed.

## Community service projects component

Youth participants were required to complete a community service project for which they were not paid. Effective youth employment programs stress the importance of community service (Partee, 2003). YEP community service projects fell into the six categories below. Each category includes project examples, as well as the number of projects in the category.

- *Anti-violence/anti-bullying*: Youth advocated and educated for a stop to violence and bullying in their communities (5).
- *Community clean-up*: Youth cleaned up parks and streets in their communities (5).
- *Civic engagement*: Youth helped implement a citizenship workshop for immigrants, a voter registration drive, and an expo of community services for parolees and probationers (5).
- *Back to school/education*: Youth assisted in hosting orientations for parents of students enrolled for the 2013 school year; rallies were held encouraging youth to stay in school (3).
- *Health*: Youth supported the provision of health services and health education to community members through the provision of events and activities (i.e. a 5k run) to get physically active (5).
- *Block events/fairs*: Youth helped facilitate community activities including a talent showcase, live music, inflatables, giveaways, and games (5).

# Methodology

The evaluation was a process and outcome evaluation. The surveys of staff and participants provided information on the process—*how* the program operated. The YEP evaluation used four validated psychosocial measures of indicators of intermediate outcomes for participants of a violence prevention program targeting youth. According to Center for the Study of Prevention of Violence, “thoughtful evaluation can avoid the pitfalls of the ‘hurdle-mentality’ that attempts to prove the worth of a program, and can instead focus attention on the desire to learn, adjust, and improve” (Jackson, Williams, and Elliot, 1996, p.2).

ICJIA researchers developed seven surveys to evaluate the 2013 YEP program. These included two training evaluation surveys, one pre- and post-assessment, and four exit surveys. In addition, the programs provided basic administrative data. Data was collected between May and August of 2013.

## Administrative data

Each community was instructed to submit administrative data at the program’s end that offered information about the youth participants in the program. The communities completed and submitted an Excel spreadsheet which included the number of youth enrolled, trained, employed, mentored, and terminated from the program. Out of 24 communities, all returned completed forms.

## Training evaluation surveys

### Job readiness training evaluation

A paper survey form was given to all participants who completed the job readiness training to obtain feedback on the training, including quality, satisfaction, and what was learned. It was a one-page form containing 10 questions which took about five minutes to complete. Federal regulations require that human subject participants in some research studies must give informed consent to participate in the study and so verbal consent was obtained through reading a script and the anonymous forms were collected in a single envelope. After collection, program staff returned forms by mail to ICJIA researchers. Out of 1,800 youth participants, 347 youth returned completed surveys (19 percent). All data was entered into an Access database and analyzed in Excel and SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). This report’s section on implications for policy and practice suggests ways to increase the sample size.

### Mentor training evaluation

Program coordinators administered a paper survey form to all mentors who completed the mentor training to obtain feedback on the training, including quality, satisfaction, and what was learned. The form was one-page and contained 10 questions. Verbal consent was obtained through reading a script and the anonymous forms were collected in a single envelope. After collection, program staff returned forms by mail to ICJIA researchers. Out of approximately 341

mentors, 137 completed surveys were submitted (40 percent). All data was entered into an Access database and analyzed in Excel and SPSS.

## **Pre- and post-assessment**

A paper survey form was given to youth in the program as a pre-assessment (before programming began) and a post-assessment (after programming ended). The term “assessment” was used rather than “test” because youth may view a test negatively, associating them with academic tests. The purpose was to measure if there were changes before and after the program on views on employment, attitudes toward violence, attitudes toward conflict, and self-esteem. These four items were selected to be measured because they were YEP program objectives. The pre- and post-assessment asked youth to respond to 36 statements and took approximately 10 minutes to complete. All data was entered into an Access database and then analyzed in SPSS.

The Principal Investigator instructed and reminded the YEP managers on the distribution of the pre- and post-assessments through regularly scheduled online meetings. A script was provided to program staff administering the assessment in order to obtain verbal consent. Completed forms were collected in a single manila envelope and sent by mail to ICJIA. All data was entered into an Access database and analyzed in SPSS.

A unique identification code was used as a way to maintain anonymity of respondents while allowing researchers to match an individual’s pre-assessment with their post-assessment. The instructions asked youth to create a unique ID number using the first letter of their first name and the first letter of their last name followed by their date of birth. For example, John Smith born January 1, 1995 would be ID# JS 01-01-1995. Problems with the returned assessments included no ID code, illegible ID code, too many or too few numbers in ID code, social security numbers provided rather than ID code, name written on form rather than ID code, and completion of only one page of the two page assessment. Any assessment forms with ID code problems or significant amounts of missing data were removed from the sample. This report’s section on implications for policy and practice suggests ways to reduce ID errors.

Out of 1,800 youth participants, 1,446 youth submitted complete pre-assessments (80 percent) and 622 returned post-assessments (35 percent). This report’s section on implications for policy and practice suggests ways to increase sample size and matched cases. Researchers matched the pre- and post-assessments from the same youth participants by unique identification code, community, and agency (Community and agency were derived from the return mail addresses). A total of 403 were matched and then 35 individuals were removed who completed multiple pre- and/or post-assessments. A total of 31 pre-assessments and 15 post-assessments were removed. The total of match cases was 369 or 20 percent of all youth participants.

The pre- and post-assessments incorporated four existing tools to measure attitudes toward employment, conflict resolution, attitudes toward violence, and self-esteem (described in detail below). All were free and in the public domain.

### **Attitudes Toward Employment—Work Opinion Questionnaire**

The *Attitudes Toward Employment—Work Opinion Questionnaire* is designed to measure self-confidence and motivation for work (Dahlberg, Toal, Swahn, & Behrens, 2005; Johnson, Messe, & Crano, 1984). The questionnaire has an internal consistency rating of 0.54 (Harter, 1988). Respondents indicated how much they agree or disagree with eight statements. Each response was given a score and a neutral or “neither” option was added, so the responses were Strongly agree = 1, Agree = 2, Neither = 3, Disagree = 4, and Strongly disagree = 5. Three items were reverse coded or worded in the opposite direction. Point values are summed for each respondent and divided by the number of items and higher scores indicate a more positive attitude toward employment.

### **Attitude Toward Violence Questionnaire**

The *Attitude Toward Violence Questionnaire* measures attitudes toward violence and its acceptability, particularly in relation to fighting (Bosworth & Espelage, 1995; Dahlberg, Toal, Swahn, & Behrens, 2005; Houston Community Demonstration Project, 1993). The tool has an internal consistency of .67. Respondents are asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with a series of statements. Each response is given a score of Strongly agree = 1, Agree = 2, Neither = 3, Disagree = 4, and Strongly disagree = 5. Two items were reverse coded – Questions 2 and 5. Higher scores indicate a more positive attitude toward non-violent strategies and use of nonviolent strategies.

### **Conflict Resolution—Individual Protective Factors Index**

The *Conflict Resolution – Individual Protective Factors Index* measures conflict resolution skills, self-control items, and cooperation items (Dahlberg, Toal, Swahn, & Behrens, 2005; Phillips & Springer, 1992). The index was found to have an internal consistency of .65 (Gabriel, 1994). Respondents indicated how much they agree or disagree with 12 items. These responses were altered from a four point scale ranging from a strong yes (YES!) to a strong no (NO!) to a five point scale of Strongly agree = 1, Agree = 2; Neither = 3, Disagree = 4, and Strongly disagree = 5. Six of the 12 items were reverse coded and scored.

### **Modified Rosenberg’s Self-Esteem Inventory**

The *Modified Rosenberg’s Self-Esteem Inventory* examines self-esteem by measuring perception of self-worth, ability, self-satisfaction, and self-respect (Dahlberg, Toal, Swahn, & Behrens, 2005; Rosenberg, 1965; Schmitt & Allik, 2005). Respondents indicated how much they agree or disagree with ten statements. Each response was given a score of Strongly agree = 1, Agree = 2; Neither = 3, Disagree = 4, and Strongly disagree = 5. Five items were reverse coded and scored.

## **Exit surveys**

### **Youth exit survey**

The survey asked participants to assess the program and reflect on their experience with employment, mentoring, and community service. At the end of the program in September 2013, a pencil-and-paper survey was given to all the youth. The survey form was four pages and asked 22 questions. After collection, program staff returned forms by mail to ICJIA researchers. A total of 864 youth completed a survey form, 48 percent of youth. The Principal Investigator instructed and reminded the YEP managers on the distribution of the survey through regularly scheduled online meetings. Completed forms were collected in a single manila envelope and sent by mail to ICJIA. All data was entered into an Access database and analyzed in Microsoft Excel and SPSS.

### **Mentor exit survey**

At the end of the program in September 2013, researchers sent an online survey via e-mail to 323 of 341 program mentors (95 percent of mentors). The survey asked the mentors to assess the program, their mentoring relationship, and their mentoring experience. Efforts were made to identify an email address of all the employers. Some of the e-mail addresses (14) initially sent were incorrect, but four were corrected or found and resent. There were two unfilled mentor positions at the time of the survey. Two reminder e-mails were sent following the initial e-mail. A total of 120 completed online surveys were received (37 percent of those sent). All data was imported from Survey Gizmo to Excel and analyzed in Excel and SPSS.

### **Employer exit survey**

At the end of the employment period in August 2013, an online survey was sent by e-mail to employers. The survey asked 12 questions to gather feedback on the program participants placed in their agency and on the program in general. Lead Agencies provided correct contact information for 323 employers. Some of the employers were very small independently owned businesses without access to email. Efforts were made to identify an e-mail address for all employers. Many of the e-mail addresses (28) initially sent were incorrect, but 19 were able to be corrected or found. Three supervisors were either no longer employed at the agency or business or were on medical leave. Two reminder emails were sent following the initial email.

Out of approximately 420 employers, 323 exit surveys were sent—310 by email, 12 by postal mail, and one by fax (77 percent of employers). A total of 97 completed surveys were submitted (30 percent of those sent). All data was imported from Survey Gizmo to Excel and analyzed in Excel and SPSS.

### **Coordinators and manager exit survey**

At the end of the program in September 2013, an online survey was sent by e-mail to 92 Coordinators and Managers (70 Coordinators and 26 Managers). Two coordinator and two manager positions were unfilled at that time. The survey asked six questions rating the program, as well as asked for ways to improve the program. A total of 73 were received, so the response

rate was 79 percent; the average online response rate is 30 percent (University of Texas, 2007). Two reminder emails were sent following the initial email. All data was imported from Survey Gizmo to Excel and analyzed in Excel and SPSS.

## **Limitations**

A limitation to this evaluation was missing data. The job readiness training surveys had a response rate of 19 percent and 20 percent of youth pre- and post-assessments could be matched. However, all the surveys were voluntary due to the guidelines set forth by the Institutional Review Board which protects human subjects of research. In future evaluation, the researchers can establish more of a presence with the community sites, offering reminders and instruction to the sites on survey administration. In addition, survey forms can be made easily accessible online and answers to frequently asked questions about the evaluation can be offered. Another limitation was that this study did not have client-level data of all youth in the program, such as demographics, but relied on aggregate administrative program data from the community sites.

# Findings: Administrative program data

Lead Agencies in all 24 communities submitted administrative data at the end of the program on the number of youth recruited, accepted, terminated, trained, employed, and assigned a mentor.

## Participation in YEP

The communities reported recruiting, or receiving applications from 4,446 youth participants to the program, an average of 185 and a range of 80 to 460 per community site. A total of 1,929 youth were accepted into the program, an average of 82 youth and a range of 51-114 per site. The South Suburban communities were required to enroll 40 youth; the other communities 80 youth.

A total of 433 youth did not complete the program for various reasons. *Table 2* shows the reported reasons youth did not complete YEP. The most common reason was due to youth resigning or quitting (37 percent, *n*=158). With adequate time remaining, programs were instructed to replace youth who were accepted but left the program.

**Table 2**  
**Reason youth did not complete the program**

| Reason terminated     | Number of youth | Percent     |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Resigned, quit        | 158             | 36.5%       |
| No show               | 114             | 26.3%       |
| Return to school      | 46              | 10.6%       |
| Poor work performance | 40              | 9.2%        |
| Moved                 | 23              | 5.3%        |
| Criminal activity     | 11              | 2.5%        |
| Other                 | 41              | 9.5%        |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>433</b>      | <b>100%</b> |

A total 322 youth were terminated from YEP or 16 percent of accepted youth. An average of 13 youth and a range of 0-40 youth were terminated per community.

## Employment component

Respondents reported enrolling 1,929 youth participants in job readiness training, an average of 80 and a range of 40-114 youth per community site.

A total of 1,686 youth completed job readiness training, an average of 70 youth, and a range of 33-82 youth per site. A total of 127 youth did not complete the job readiness training—average of five youth and a range of 0-15 youth per site.

Youth created 1,750 resumes; average of 73 resumes per site. Youth practiced filling out 2,536 job applications, an average of 73 applications per site.

Communities stated that 1,804 youth were placed in jobs, an average of 75 youth and a range of 27-95 per site. Conversely, 39 youth were not placed in jobs, an average of two youth and a range of 0-15 youth per site.

According to the Lead Agencies, 1,627 or 90 percent of program participants completed their employment, an average of 68 youth and a range of 25-80 youth per community site.

## **Mentoring component**

Based on the administrative data from communities, a total of 1,920 youth participants were assigned a mentor, an average of 80 and a range of 40-103 youth per community site.

# Findings: Pre- and post-assessments

The pre- and post-assessments used four assessment tools to measure attitudes toward employment, attitudes toward violence, conflict resolution, and self-esteem. The employment questions measured self-confidence and motivation for work; higher average scores indicate a more positive attitude toward employment. The violence questions measured attitudes toward violence and its acceptability; higher average scores indicate a more positive attitude toward non-violent strategies and use of nonviolent strategies. The conflict resolution questions measured conflict resolution skills, self-control, and cooperation; higher scores indicate a higher level of conflict resolution skills. The self-esteem questions measured perception of self-worth, ability, self-satisfaction, and self-respect; higher scores indicate a higher level of self-esteem.

The assessment was administered to program participants at two points in time—(Time 1) the start of program participation, prior to training, and (Time 2) after the program ended or at program disenrollment. The agreement was on a scale of strongly agree =1 and strongly disagree =5. The higher the mean score, the more positive the program participants' responses are toward the four measures.

## Respondents

A total of 2,068 surveys were received—1,446 pre-assessments and 622 post-assessments. All 24 communities returned surveys—23 returned pre-assessments and 13 returned post-assessments. There may be fewer post-assessments due to youth participants leaving the program at different times and that the participants were not gathered together in one location at the end of the program. There were 369 matched surveys with a pre- and post-assessment. *Table 3* depicts the survey respondents by community of the pre- and post-assessments, just pre-assessments, just post-assessments, and those matched by pre- and post-assessment.

**Table 3**  
**Survey respondents by community**

|                        | All surveys  |             | Pre (before) |             | Post (after) |             | Matched    |             |
|------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
|                        | <i>n</i>     | Percent     | <i>n</i>     | Percent     | <i>n</i>     | Percent     | <i>n</i>   | Percent     |
| Albany Park            | 137          | 6.6%        | 76           | 5.3%        | 61           | 9.8%        | 50         | 13.6%       |
| Auburn Gresham         | 79           | 3.8%        | 79           | 5.5%        | 0            | 0.0%        | 0          | 0.0%        |
| Austin                 | 119          | 5.8%        | 75           | 5.2%        | 44           | 7.1%        | 28         | 7.6%        |
| Brighton Park          | 160          | 7.7%        | 79           | 5.5%        | 81           | 13.0%       | 65         | 17.6%       |
| Chicago Lawn/Gage Park | 88           | 4.3%        | 88           | 6.1%        | 0            | 0.0%        | 0          | 0.0%        |
| Cicero                 | 34           | 1.6%        | 34           | 2.4%        | 0            | 0.0%        | 0          | 0.0%        |
| East Garfield Park     | 68           | 3.3%        | 0            | 0.0%        | 68           | 10.9%       | 0          | 0.0%        |
| Englewood              | 120          | 5.8%        | 71           | 4.9%        | 49           | 7.9%        | 29         | 7.9%        |
| Grand Boulevard        | 71           | 3.4%        | 47           | 3.3%        | 24           | 3.9%        | 11         | 3.0%        |
| Greater Grand Crossing | 135          | 6.5%        | 72           | 5.0%        | 63           | 10.1%       | 49         | 13.3%       |
| Hermosa/Belmont-Cragin | 67           | 3.2%        | 67           | 4.6%        | 0            | 0.0%        | 0          | 0.0%        |
| Humboldt Park          | 107          | 5.2%        | 76           | 5.3%        | 31           | 5.0%        | 22         | 6.0%        |
| Logan Square           | 91           | 4.4%        | 91           | 6.3%        | 0            | 0.0%        | 0          | 0.0%        |
| Maywood                | 71           | 3.4%        | 71           | 4.9%        | 0            | 0.0%        | 0          | 0.0%        |
| North Lawndale         | 73           | 3.5%        | 73           | 5.0%        | 0            | 0.0%        | 0          | 0.0%        |
| Pilsen/Little Village  | 121          | 5.9%        | 59           | 4.1%        | 62           | 10.0%       | 28         | 7.6%        |
| Rich Township          | 151          | 7.3%        | 81           | 5.6%        | 70           | 11.3%       | 49         | 13.3%       |
| Rogers Park            | 83           | 4.0%        | 46           | 3.2%        | 37           | 5.9%        | 15         | 4.1%        |
| Roseland               | 40           | 1.9%        | 40           | 2.8%        | 0            | 0.0%        | 0          | 0.0%        |
| South Shore            | 74           | 3.6%        | 74           | 5.1%        | 0            | 0.0%        | 0          | 0.0%        |
| Thornton Township      | 70           | 3.4%        | 38           | 2.6%        | 32           | 5.1%        | 23         | 6.2%        |
| West Garfield Park     | 57           | 2.8%        | 57           | 3.9%        | 0            | 0.0%        | 0          | 0.0%        |
| Woodlawn               | 52           | 2.5%        | 52           | 3.6%        | 0            | 0.0%        | 0          | 0.0%        |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>2,068</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>1,446</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>622</b>   | <b>100%</b> | <b>369</b> | <b>100%</b> |

The age range of the matched sample respondents was 15 to 24 and the average age was 18.7 years old ( $n=369$ ). The most common age or mode was 17 years old. Just over one-third of the matched sample (37 percent,  $n=135$ ) was 18 years old or older and 63 percent of the match sample was under 18 years old ( $n=135$ ). *Table 4* indicates the matched survey respondents by age.

**Table 4**  
**Matched survey respondents by age**

| <b>Age</b> | <b><i>n</i></b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 15         | 2               | 0.5%           |
| 16         | 69              | 18.7%          |
| 17         | 85              | 23.0%          |
| 18         | 78              | 21.1%          |
| 19         | 54              | 14.6%          |
| 20         | 39              | 10.6%          |
| 21         | 19              | 5.1%           |
| 22         | 15              | 4.1%           |
| 23         | 4               | 1.1%           |
| 24         | 4               | 1.1%           |
| Total      | 369             | 100%           |

### **Matched pre- and post-assessments**

Researchers matched the pre- and post-assessments from the same youth participants by unique identification code, community, and agency. The total number of matched cases was 368. *Table 5* indicates the results of the matched pre- and post-assessments by measure. There was a slight decrease in mean scores from the pre-assessment and post-assessment for the attitudes toward employment, attitudes toward violence, and conflict resolution. There was no change in the mean scores of self-esteem. However, the mean scores all started positive (4 out of 5) and stayed high (4 out of 5). Each measure will be described in detail. In the following discussions, a positive change indicates a more beneficial change in attitude or beliefs and a negative change refers to an unbeneficial change. Some of the changes referred to are not statistically significant which indicates a finding that may be the result of chance variation rather than be attributable to participation in the program.

**Table 5**  
**Matched pre- and post-assessments mean scores by measure**

|                             | <b><i>n</i></b> | <b>Mean 1 (pre)</b> | <b>Standard deviation 1</b> | <b>Mean 2 (post)</b> | <b>Standard deviation 2</b> | <b>Change in means</b> | <b>t</b> | <b>Sig</b> | <b>Effect size</b> |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|----------|------------|--------------------|
| Attitudes toward employment | 359             | 4.13                | 0.45                        | 4.11                 | 0.49                        | -.02                   | 1.06     | .290       | 0.06               |
| Attitudes toward violence   | 358             | 3.99                | 0.56                        | 3.92                 | 0.62                        | -.07                   | 2.58     | .010*      | 0.14               |
| Conflict resolution         | 358             | 4.30                | 0.42                        | 4.18                 | 0.52                        | -.12                   | 4.68     | .000*      | 0.25               |
| Self-esteem                 | 356             | 4.26                | 0.55                        | 4.26                 | 0.56                        | 0                      | -0.26    | .793       | -0.01              |
| Combined measures           | 355             | 4.17                | 0.37                        | 4.12                 | 0.43                        | -.05                   | 2.66     | .008*      | 0.14               |

\*Statistically significant

## High score group

Most respondents started with a high score and had a high score at the end of the program. A majority of respondents had a score of 4 or 5 on the pre-assessment (Time 1) and the post-assessment (Time 2). At Time 1 about two-thirds of respondents had a score of 4 or 5 on attitudes toward employment (69 percent) and about the same at Time 2 (66 percent). At Time 1, 56 percent had a score of 4 or 5 on attitudes toward violence and 48 percent at Time 2. Seventy-nine percent had a score of 4 or 5 on conflict resolution at Time 1 and 66 percent did at Time 2. A total of 73 percent had a 4 or 5 score on self-esteem at Time 1 and 71 percent at Time 2. A majority had a 4 or 5 combined measures score at Time 1 and Time 2, 68 percent and 58 percent respectively. *Table 6* depicts the respondents who had mean scores of 4 or 5 at Time 1 and Time 2 by the measures.

**Table 6**  
**Mean scores of 4 or 5 at pre- and post-assessments by measure**

|                             | Mean of 4<br>(pre) |                | Mean of 5<br>(pre) |                | Mean of 4<br>(post) |                | Mean of 5<br>(post) |                |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|
|                             | <i>n</i>           | <i>Percent</i> | <i>n</i>           | <i>Percent</i> | <i>n</i>            | <i>Percent</i> | <i>n</i>            | <i>Percent</i> |
| Attitudes toward employment | 244                | 66.1%          | 10                 | 2.7%           | 233                 | 63.1%          | 9                   | 2.4%           |
| Attitudes toward violence   | 183                | 49.6%          | 23                 | 6.2%           | 158                 | 42.8%          | 20                  | 5.4%           |
| Conflict resolution         | 276                | 74.8%          | 17                 | 4.6%           | 230                 | 62.3%          | 15                  | 4.1%           |
| Self-esteem                 | 228                | 61.8%          | 41                 | 11.1%          | 222                 | 60.2%          | 40                  | 10.8%          |
| Combined measures           | 247                | 66.9%          | 4                  | 1.1%           | 208                 | 56.4%          | 2                   | .5%            |

## Low score group

Lower scoring respondents were examined to see if they had greater changes from the pre- and post-assessment than the higher scoring respondents. The lower scoring group (those with a mean score of less than four) had an improvement in mean scores of attitudes toward violence, self-esteem, and attitudes toward employment, while the higher scoring group did not. There was a decrease of .04 for conflict resolution, which was less than the decrease for the higher scoring group of .16. Statistical significance cannot be reported due to missing data and the establishment of cut off scores. *Table 7* depicts the change in mean scores of the four measures of the low and high scoring groups.

**Table 7**  
**Change in mean scores of low and high scoring groups**

| Measure                     | <i>n</i> | Change in means | Standard deviation |
|-----------------------------|----------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Attitudes toward employment |          |                 |                    |
| Low                         | 114      | .09             | .48                |
| High                        | 245      | -.08            | .51                |
| Attitudes toward violence   |          |                 |                    |
| Low                         | 114      | .03             | .50                |
| High                        | 244      | -.12            | .55                |
| Conflict resolution         |          |                 |                    |
| Low                         | 114      | -.04            | .42                |
| High                        | 244      | -.16            | .52                |
| Self-esteem                 |          |                 |                    |
| Low                         | 112      | .18             | .58                |
| High                        | 244      | -.07            | .53                |

### Attitudes toward employment

A paired sample t-test ( $n=359$ ) conducted to investigate differences in the pre- to post-assessment of attitudes toward employment showed a slight decrease from Time 1 (pre-assessment) ( $M = 4.13$ ,  $SD = 0.45$ ) to Time 2 (post-assessment) ( $M = 4.11$ ,  $SD = 0.49$ ,  $t = 1.06$ ,  $p = .29$ ). The change in means was .02. The difference between the average pre- and post-assessment scores was not statistically significant.

Cohen's  $d$  evaluates the degree (measured in standard deviation units) that the mean of the difference scores is different from zero. If the calculated  $d$  equals 0, the mean of the difference scores is equal to zero. However, as  $d$  deviates from 0, the effect size becomes larger. Effect size provides a measure of the magnitude of the difference expressed in standard deviation units from the first assessment. Therefore, the effect size can indicate how big an effect we can expect from the program. An estimate of the effect size ( $d = .06$ ) suggests a small effect.

There were positive increases in two questions on attitudes toward employment and a decrease in six questions. There was an increase in agreement with the statement *I have enough skills to do a job well*. Time 1 had mean of 4.51 ( $SD = 0.72$ ) to Time 2 had a mean of 4.59 ( $SD = 0.66$ ). There was also an increase in disagreement with the negative statement *I admire people who get by without working*. Table 8 shows differences in questions at Time 1 and Time 2.

**Table 8**  
**Attitudes toward employment questions of matched pre- and post-assessments**

|   | <i>n</i> | Mean 1<br>(pre) | Standard<br>deviation<br>1 | Mean 2<br>(post) | Standard<br>deviation<br>2 | Change<br>in<br>means |
|---|----------|-----------------|----------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| I am not quite ready to handle a part-time job.*    | 357      | 4.47            | 1.05                       | 4.42             | 1.04                       | -.05                  |
| I have enough skills to do a job well.              | 355      | 4.51            | 0.72                       | 4.59             | 0.66                       | .08                   |
| I know I can succeed at work.                       | 357      | 4.69            | 0.66                       | 4.66             | 0.63                       | -.03                  |
| I would take almost any kind of job to get money.*  | 354      | 3.02            | 1.17                       | 3.12             | 1.17                       | .10                   |
| I admire people who get by without working.*        | 355      | 3.96            | 1.06                       | 3.97             | 1.07                       | .01                   |
| The only good job is one that pays a lot of money.* | 333      | 3.90            | 0.98                       | 3.80             | 0.98                       | -.10                  |
| Working hard at a job will pay off in the end.      | 357      | 4.63            | 0.68                       | 4.61             | 0.65                       | -.02                  |
| Most jobs are dull and boring.*                     | 358      | 3.88            | 0.85                       | 3.73             | 0.95                       | -.15                  |

\*Researchers reverse-coded these items, so all score increases are positive, all score decreases are negative.

### Attitudes toward violence

A paired sample t-test ( $n=358$ ) conducted to investigate differences in the pre- to post-assessment of attitudes toward violence showed a slight decrease from Time 1 ( $M = 4.00$ ;  $SD = 0.56$ ) to Time 2 ( $M = 3.90$ ;  $SD = 0.62$ ). The change in means was .07 and was statistically significant ( $t = 2.58$ ,  $p = .01$ ). An estimate of the effect size ( $d = 0.14$ ) suggests a small effect.

There were positive increases in two questions on attitudes toward violence. There was a disagreement with the negative statement; *If I walk away from a fight, I'd be a coward ("chicken")*. Time 1 was mean of 4.21 ( $SD = 0.89$ ) and Time 2 was a mean of 4.24 ( $SD = 0.87$ ). There was also an increase in disagreement with the negative statement; *If I refuse to fight, my friends will think I'm afraid*. Table 9 depicts the differences in the questions from Time 1 and Time 2.

**Table 9**  
**Attitudes toward violence questions of matched pre- and post-assessment**

|   | <i>n</i> | Mean 1<br>(pre) | Standard<br>deviation<br>1 | Mean 2<br>(post) | Standard<br>deviation<br>2 | Change<br>in<br>means |
|---|----------|-----------------|----------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| If I walk away from a fight, I'd be a coward ("chicken").*                      | 358      | 4.21            | .89                        | 4.24             | .87                        | .03                   |
| I don't need to fight because there are other ways to deal with being mad.      | 357      | 4.45            | .76                        | 4.20             | .96                        | -.25                  |
| It's okay to hit someone who hits you first.*                                   | 355      | 3.28            | 1.12                       | 3.22             | 1.17                       | -.06                  |
| If a kid teases me, I usually cannot get him/her to stop unless I hit him/her.* | 349      | 4.28            | .81                        | 4.09             | .90                        | -.19                  |
| If I really want to, I can usually talk someone out of trying to fight with me. | 351      | 3.79            | .98                        | 3.77             | 1.02                       | -.02                  |
| If I refuse to fight, my friends will think I'm afraid.*                        | 355      | 3.97            | 1.02                       | 4.00             | 1.00                       | .03                   |

\*Researchers reverse-coded these items, so all score increases are positive, all score decreases are negative.

### Conflict resolution

The paired sample t-test ( $n=358$ ) conducted to investigate differences in the pre- to post-assessment of conflict resolution showed a slight decrease from Time 1 ( $M = 4.30$ ;  $SD = 0.42$ ) to Time 2 ( $M = 4.18$ ,  $SD = 0.52$ ,  $t = 4.68$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The difference was statistically significant. The change in means was .12. An estimate of the effect size ( $d = 0.25$ ) suggests a medium effect.

There were very slight decreases in all the questions about attitudes toward conflict. *Table 10* shows differences in questions at Time 1 and Time 2.

**Table 10**  
**Attitudes toward conflict questions of matched pre- and assessments**

|   | <i>n</i> | Mean 1<br>(pre) | Standard<br>deviation<br>1 | Mean 2<br>(post) | Standard<br>deviation<br>2 | Change<br>in<br>means |
|---|----------|-----------------|----------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Sometimes you have to physically fight to get what you want.* | 352      | 4.07            | .96                        | 3.69             | 1.04                       | -.38                  |
| Being a part of a team is fun.                                | 355      | 4.33            | .70                        | 4.31             | .76                        | -.02                  |
| Helping others makes me feel good.                            | 354      | 3.92            | .92                        | 3.74             | 1.12                       | -.18                  |
| I get mad easily.   | 356      | 4.57            | .66                        | 4.50             | .64                        | -.07                  |
| I do whatever I feel like doing.*                             | 356      | 3.69            | 1.01                       | 3.52             | 1.10                       | -.17                  |
| When I am mad, I yell at people.*                             | 352      | 4.10            | .86                        | 3.88             | 1.04                       | -.22                  |
| I always like to do my part.                                  | 353      | 4.44            | .69                        | 4.42             | .75                        | -.02                  |
| It is important to do your part in helping at home.           | 355      | 4.60            | .58                        | 4.50             | .65                        | -.10                  |
| Sometimes I break things on purpose.*                         | 355      | 4.42            | .87                        | 4.37             | .83                        | -.05                  |
| If I feel like it, I hit people.*                             | 356      | 4.64            | .69                        | 4.42             | .79                        | -.22                  |
| Helping others is very satisfying.                            | 353      | 4.56            | .63                        | 4.41             | .70                        | -.15                  |
| I like to help around the house.                              | 357      | 4.25            | .72                        | 4.12             | .91                        | -.13                  |

\*Researchers reverse-coded these items, so all score increases are positive, all score decreases are negative.

### Self-esteem

Summer employment programs and mentoring can increase self-esteem (Schwartz, Lowe, & Rhodes, 2012; Hardesty & Hirsh, 1992) and low self-esteem in adolescence has been shown to lead to poor health, criminal behavior, and limited economic prospects in adulthood (Trzesniewski et al., 2006).

A paired sample t-test ( $n=356$ ) conducted to investigate differences in the pre- to post-assessment of self-esteem showed no increase from Time 1 ( $M = 4.26$ ;  $SD = 0.55$ ) to Time 2 ( $M = 4.26$ ;  $SD = 0.56$ ,  $t = -0.26$ ,  $p = .79$ ). Any slight difference was not statistically significant. An estimate of the effect size ( $d = -.01$ ) suggests a small effect.

There were positive increases in six questions on attitudes toward self-esteem and a decrease in four questions. There was an increase in agreement with the statement *I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal par with others*. Time 1 was mean of 4.38 ( $SD = 0.69$ ) to Time 2 was a mean of 4.39 ( $SD = 0.74$ ). There was also an increase in disagreement with the negative statement *At times I think that I am no good at all*. There was also an increase in disagreement with the negative statement, *I certainly feel useless at times*. Table 11 shows differences in questions at Time 1 and Time 2.

**Table 11**  
**Self-esteem questions of matched pre- and post-assessments**

|  | <i>n</i> | Mean 1<br>(pre) | Standard<br>deviation<br>1 | Mean 2<br>(post) | Standard<br>deviation<br>2 | Change<br>in<br>means |
|--|----------|-----------------|----------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal par with others. | 350      | 4.38            | .69                        | 4.39             | .74                        | .01                   |
| I feel that I have a number of good qualities.                           | 355      | 4.54            | .59                        | 4.58             | .61                        | .04                   |
| All in all I am inclined to feel that I'm a failure.*                    | 355      | 4.24            | .83                        | 4.21             | .98                        | -.03                  |
| I am able to do things as well as most other people.                     | 351      | 4.30            | .81                        | 4.27             | .89                        | -.03                  |
| I feel I do not have much to be proud of.*                               | 353      | 4.30            | .94                        | 4.23             | .99                        | -.07                  |
| I take a positive attitude toward myself.                                | 355      | 4.49            | .70                        | 4.48             | .71                        | -.01                  |
| On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.                                | 348      | 4.34            | .80                        | 4.43             | .73                        | .09                   |
| I wish I could have more respect for myself.*                            | 349      | 3.68            | 1.16                       | 3.75             | 1.08                       | .07                   |
| I certainly feel useless at times.*                                      | 352      | 4.00            | 1.03                       | 4.01             | 1.08                       | .01                   |
| At times I think that I am no good at all.*                              | 349      | 4.29            | .94                        | 4.31             | .90                        | .02                   |

\*Researchers reverse-coded these items, so all score increases are positive, all score decreases are negative.

### Combined measures

All four measures—attitudes toward employment, attitudes toward violence, conflict resolution, and self-esteem—were combined and averaged into one measure. A paired sample t-test ( $n=355$ ) conducted to investigate differences in the pre- to post-assessment showed a slight decrease from Time 1 ( $M = 4.17$ ;  $SD = 0.37$ ) to Time 2 ( $M = 4.12$ ;  $SD = 0.43$ ,  $t = 2.66$ ,  $p = .001$ ). The change in means was  $-.05$  and the difference was statistically significant. An estimate of the effect size ( $d = 0.14$ ) suggests a small effect.

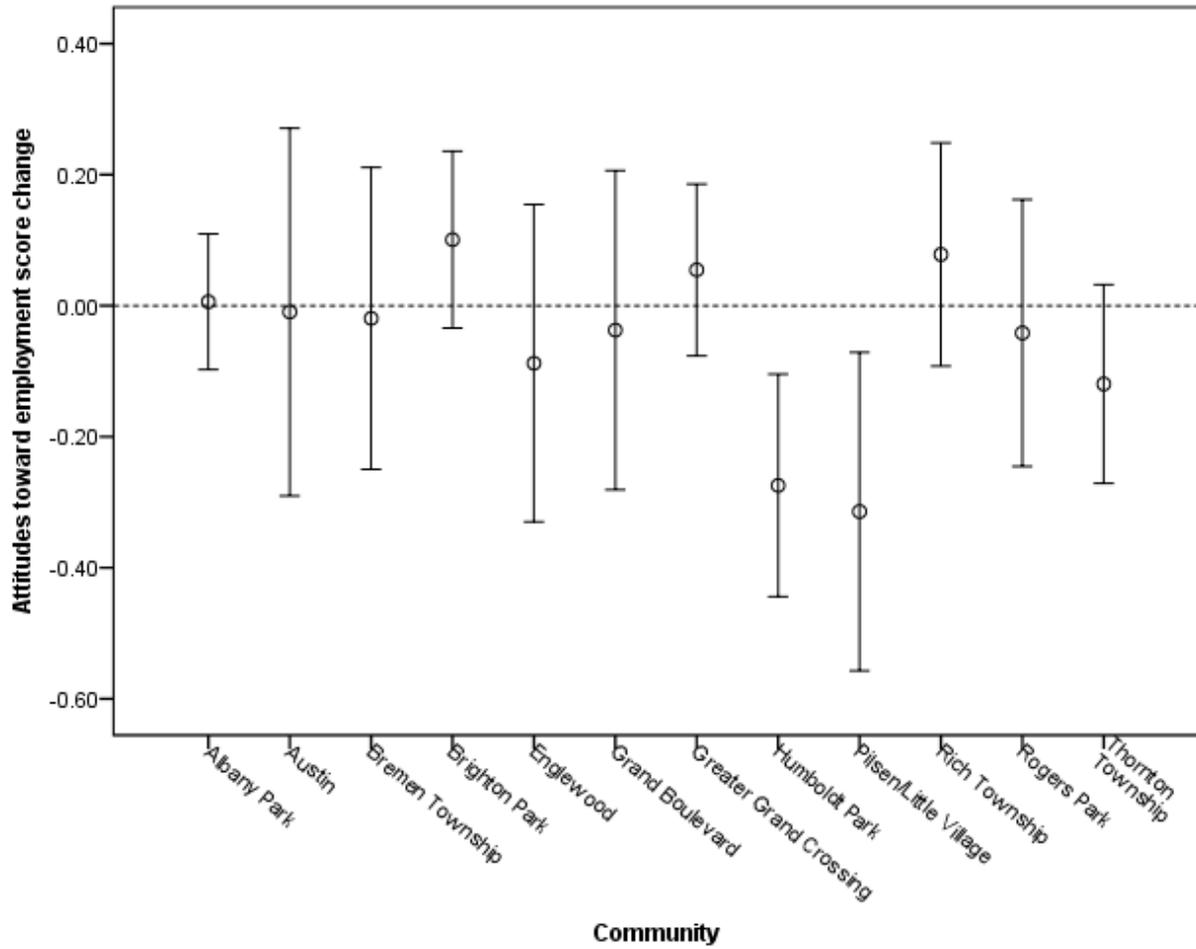
### Mean scores by community

While collectively the program in all the communities did not have increases in attitudes toward employment, attitudes toward violence, conflict resolution, and self-esteem, some communities did show improvement. The differences in mean scores by community were examined.

There were positive increases in mean attitudes toward employment scores in three communities of Brighton Park, Greater Grand Crossing, and Rich Township and no change or decreases in nine communities.

Figure 3 depicts the change of mean attitudes toward employment scores and 95% confidence interval by community.

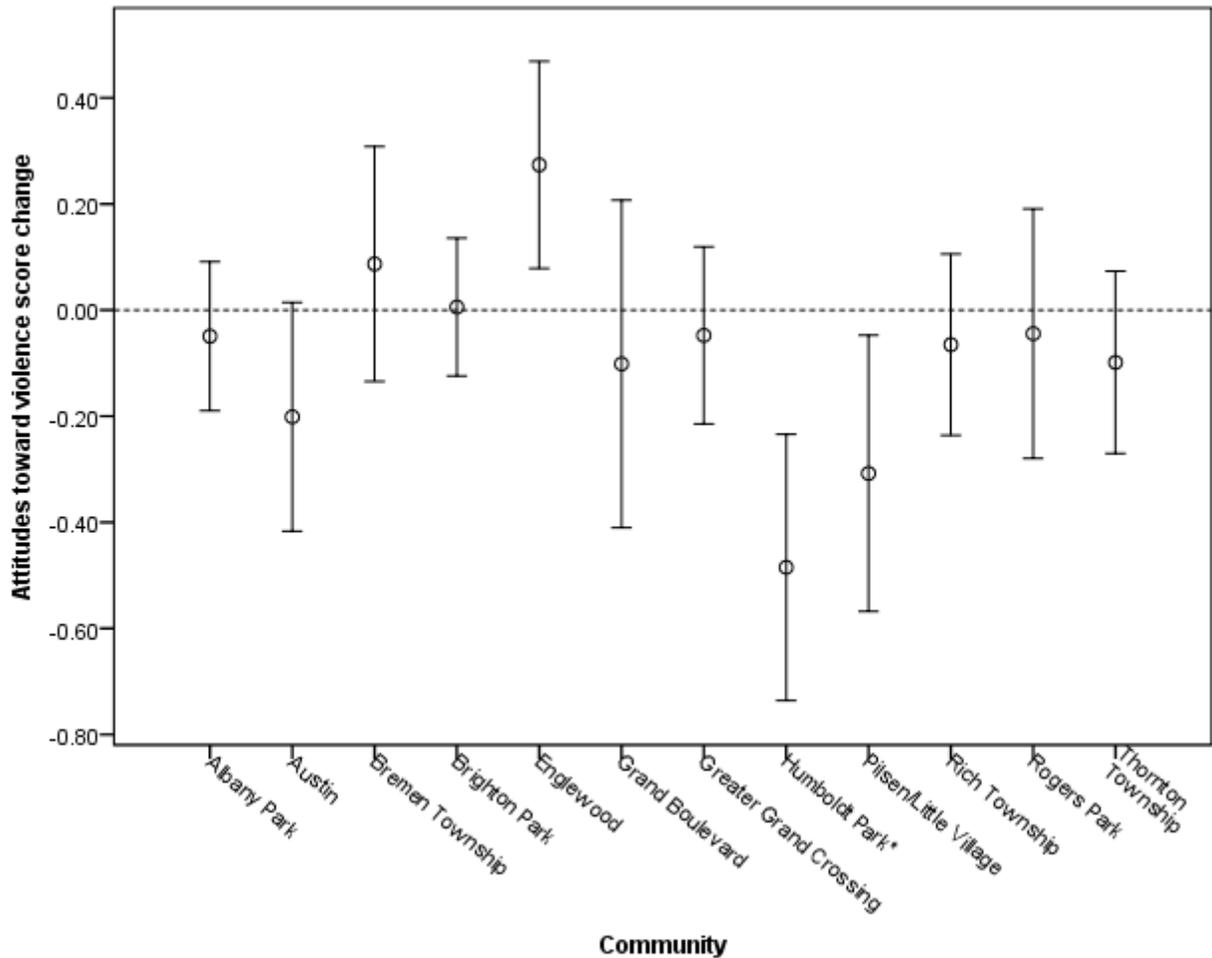
**Figure 3**  
**Change of mean attitudes toward employment scores by community**



Note: None statistically significant at  $\alpha < .005$ .

There was a slight positive increase in mean **attitudes toward violence** scores in two communities of Thornton/Bremen Township and Englewood and no change or decreases in 10 communities. *Figure 4* depicts the change of mean attitudes toward violence scores and 95% confidence interval by community.

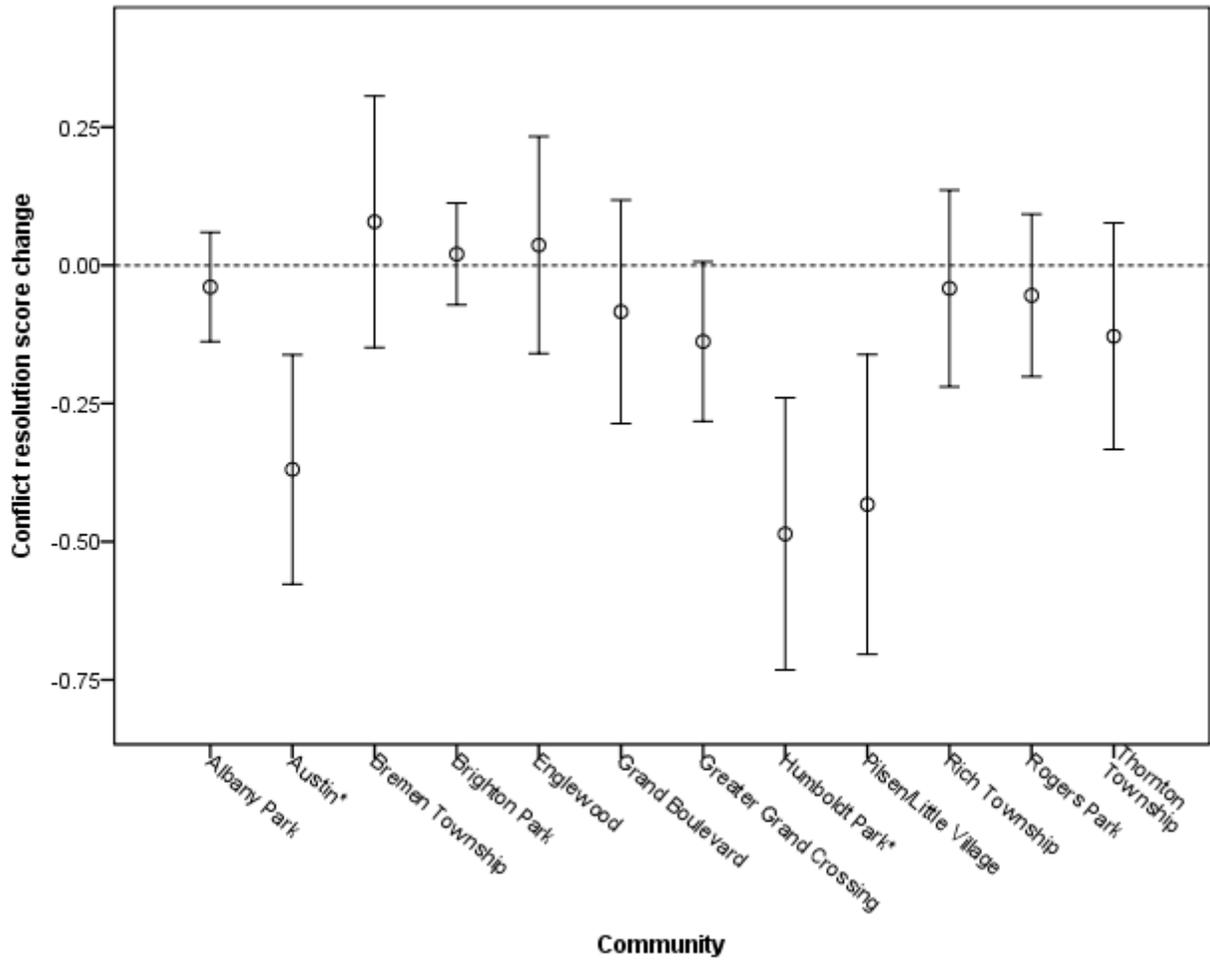
**Figure 4**  
**Change of mean attitudes toward violence scores by community**



\*Statistically significant at  $\alpha < .005$ .

There were slight positive increases in mean **conflict resolution** scores in three communities—Bremen/Thornton Township, Brighton Park, and Englewood and decreases in nine communities. *Figure 5* depicts the change of mean conflict resolution scores and 95% confidence interval by community.

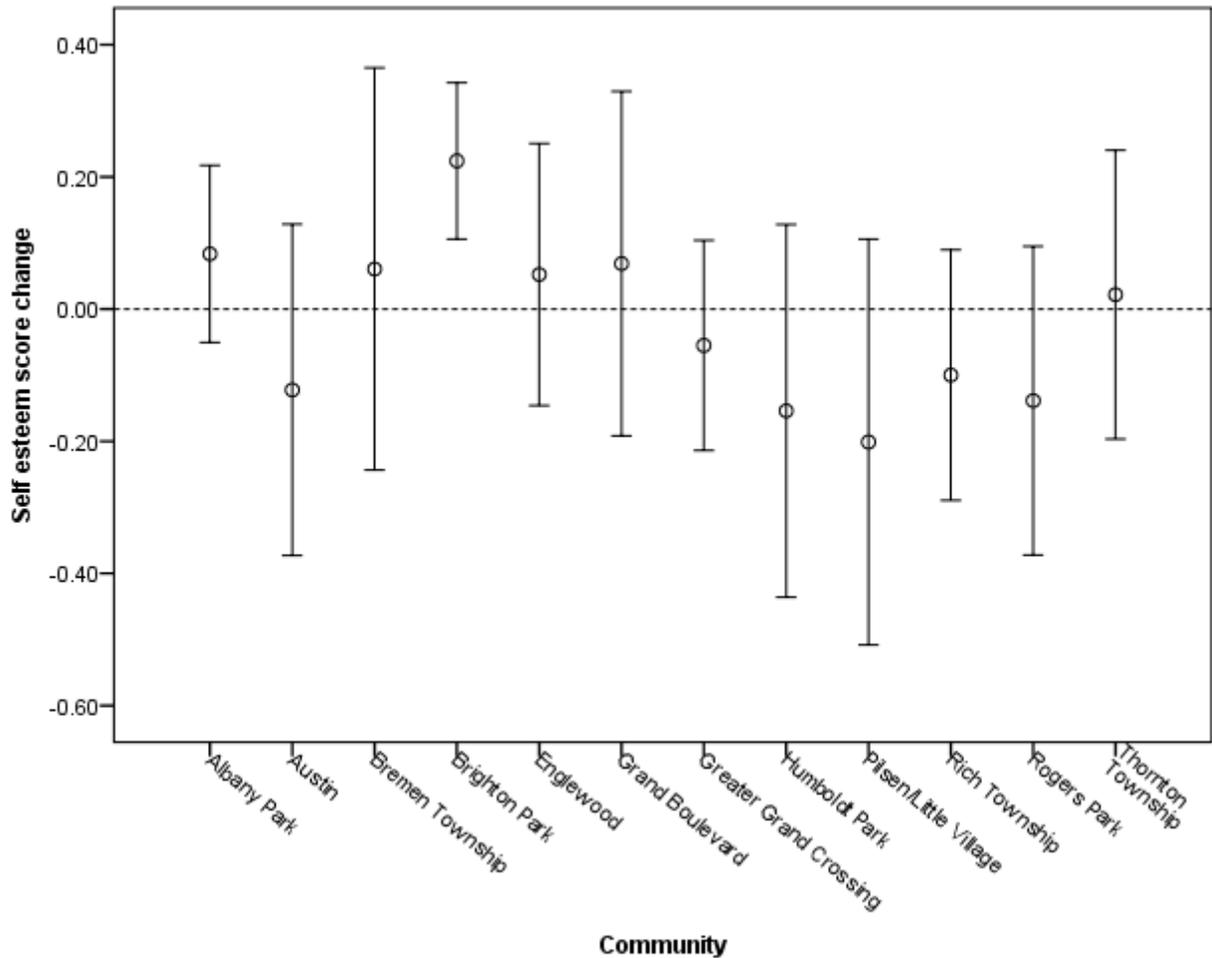
**Figure 5**  
**Change of mean conflict resolution scores by community**



\*Statistically significant at  $\alpha < .005$ .

There were positive increases in mean **self-esteem** scores for six communities: Albany Park, Bremen Township, Brighton Park, Englewood, Grand Boulevard, and Thornton Township and no change or decreases in six communities. *Figure 6* depicts the change of mean self-esteem resolution scores and 95% confidence interval by community.

**Figure 6**  
**Change of mean self-esteem scores by community**



Note: None statistically significant at  $\alpha < .005$ .

### Mean scores by age

Since YEP started in June 2013 and ended in September 2013, the age of participants for the pre- and post-assessments was calculated on July 31, 2013, which was approximately the mid-point of the program. (Birthdates were derived from the identification code—a combination of first and last name initials and birthdate). No significant differences were found in changes in mean scores between those under age 18 and those 18 years old and older. *Table 12* depicts the results

of matched pre- and post-assessment mean scores by age category—under 18 years old and 18 years old or older.

**Table 12**  
**Results of matched pre- and post-assessments mean scores by age category**

|                                    | <i>n</i> | Mean 1<br>(pre) | <i>n</i> | Mean 2<br>(post) | Change<br>in<br>means |
|------------------------------------|----------|-----------------|----------|------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Attitudes toward employment</i> |          |                 |          |                  |                       |
| Under 18 years old                 | 234      | 4.11            | 229      | 4.10             | -.01                  |
| 18 years old or older              | 135      | 4.16            | 130      | 4.11             | -.05                  |
| <i>Attitudes toward violence</i>   |          |                 |          |                  |                       |
| Under 18 years old                 | 234      | 3.94            | 229      | 3.86             | -.08                  |
| 18 years old or older              | 135      | 4.08            | 129      | 4.03             | -.05                  |
| <i>Conflict resolution</i>         |          |                 |          |                  |                       |
| Under 18 years old                 | 234      | 4.27            | 229      | 4.14             | -.13                  |
| 18 years old or older              | 135      | 4.35            | 129      | 4.24             | -.11                  |
| <i>Self-esteem</i>                 |          |                 |          |                  |                       |
| Under 18 years old                 | 233      | 4.21            | 228      | 4.22             | .01                   |
| 18 years old or older              | 135      | 4.33            | 129      | 4.33             | .00                   |
| <i>Combined measures</i>           |          |                 |          |                  |                       |
| Under 18 years old                 | 233      | 4.14            | 228      | 4.08             | -.16                  |
| 18 years old or older              | 135      | 4.23            | 129      | 4.18             | -.14                  |

### All pre- and post-assessments

The results of the pre- and post-assessments including those that were unmatched indicated a small reduction in the average scores of all four measures—attitudes toward employment, attitudes toward violence, conflict resolution, and self-esteem—including a combination of all four measures (*Table 13*). However, these are not matched samples of the same youth participants’ pre- and post-assessment.

**Table 13**  
**Results of all pre- and post-assessments by measure (including un-matched)**

|                             | <i>n</i> | Mean 1<br>(pre) | Standard<br>deviation<br>1 | <i>n</i> | Mean 2<br>(post) | Change<br>in<br>means | Standard<br>deviation<br>2 |
|-----------------------------|----------|-----------------|----------------------------|----------|------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Attitudes toward employment | 1,446    | 4.08            | .45                        | 622      | 4.08             | .00                   | .54                        |
| Attitudes toward violence   | 1,444    | 3.95            | .58                        | 621      | 3.92             | -.03                  | .61                        |
| Conflict resolution         | 1,442    | 4.28            | .46                        | 620      | 4.17             | -.11                  | .54                        |
| Self-esteem                 | 1,440    | 4.28            | .54                        | 619      | 4.27             | -.01                  | .56                        |
| Combined measures           | 1,437    | 4.15            | .39                        | 619      | 4.11             | -.04                  | .45                        |

There were many more pre-assessments ( $n=1,446$ ) than post-assessments ( $n=622$ ), so the two groups were compared. The mean pre-assessment scores were compared by those with a post-assessment with those with no post-assessment. The means were similar between the two groups as their standard deviations had a difference less than 0.1 (Table 14).

**Table 14**  
**Comparison of mean pre-assessment scores of those with and without post-assessments**

|                                    | <i>n</i> | Mean (pre) | Standard deviation | SD difference |
|------------------------------------|----------|------------|--------------------|---------------|
| <i>Attitudes toward employment</i> |          |            |                    |               |
| With post-assessment               | 376      | 4.13       | .46                |               |
| No post-assessment                 | 1070     | 4.06       | .44                | .02           |
| <i>Attitudes toward violence</i>   |          |            |                    |               |
| With post-assessment               | 376      | 3.99       | .57                |               |
| No post-assessment                 | 1068     | 3.94       | .59                | .02           |
| <i>Conflict resolution</i>         |          |            |                    |               |
| With post-assessment               | 376      | 4.30       | .42                |               |
| No post-assessment                 | 1066     | 4.27       | .47                | .05           |
| <i>Self-esteem</i>                 |          |            |                    |               |
| With post-assessment               | 375      | 4.26       | .54                |               |
| No post-assessment                 | 1065     | 4.29       | .54                | .00           |
| <i>Combined measures</i>           |          |            |                    |               |
| With post-assessment               | 375      | 4.17       | .38                |               |
| No post-assessment                 | 1062     | 4.14       | .39                | .01           |

### Conclusions from pre- and post-assessments

A majority of respondents to the pre- and post-assessments started with high mean scores and had high mean scores at the end of the program. Although there were decreases in mean scores on all the measures, the change in mean scores from Time 1 to Time 2 were very small. Two of the four measures had changes in mean scores of less than .10. The largest change in mean scores was a reduction of .12 for conflict resolution. There was no change in the mean scores on self-esteem. However, two of the four measures—attitudes toward violence and conflict resolution—had statistically significant reductions in the mean scores.

There were increases in mean scores on nine questions—two employment questions, one violence question, and six self-esteem questions. In addition, there were some increases in mean scores in certain communities, but it is uncertain why they had more positive outcomes. This could be attributed to characteristics of the youth in the program, how the program operated such as staff involved, or some attribute(s) of the communities themselves. More investigation can be done to try to ascertain what specific aspects of these programs contributed to their increases in mean scores.

There may be several reasons for the lack of improvement on some measures before and after the program. The program was not able to necessarily match youth with specific interests to a particular job. For example, a youth with an interest in construction may have been paired with a

retail job. In a survey of youth participants at the end of the program, many indicated that their job was not a good match for their skills and interests ( $n=75$ ). Jobs depended on the employers who signed up for the program and the desires of individual youth. While programs may have attempted to match youth with certain jobs based on their expressed interest, they may have had limited opportunity to do so. There were not increases in mean scores of attitudes toward violence, conflict resolution, and self-esteem; but mentors were not coached to concentrate on those issues in particular.

Youth participants scored high in the measures before and after the program. While YEP did not target at-risk youth specifically in the application process, any youth in those communities was invited to apply. In addition, these youth took the initiative to sign up for a summer jobs program, so may be already high scorers on measures of attitudes toward employment, attitudes toward violence, conflict resolution, and self-esteem. Lower scoring respondents had an improvement in mean scores of attitudes toward violence, self-esteem, and attitudes toward employment, while the higher scoring group did not.

One limitation in the analysis is that there were many participants who did not have post-assessment scores. The analysis found that the distributions on the pre-assessment scores were very similar for those with and without post-assessment scores. However, those with negative attitudes in general or towards the program may be apt to skip the post-assessment.

This report's section on implications for policy and practice offers suggestions to strengthen the program's impact in subsequent years.

# Findings: Exit surveys

Exit surveys administered at the end of the program were used to learn how the program operated and to obtain feedback on the program from mentors, employers, youth program participants, and program coordinators and managers. Information from the surveys would offer suggestions for programmatic enhancement and help inform future funding decisions. The surveys included questions on participant experiences, satisfaction with the program in general, and the components of employment, mentoring, and community service.

## Employer exit survey

One representative of each agency employing program youth were asked to complete an exit survey at the end of the program to provide feedback on the youth participants and on the program in general. Youth participants completed 40 hours of job readiness training, 160 hours of employment, and 18 hours of community outreach between June and August 2013.

A total of 97 respondents employing 577 youth completed the online form. A majority (64 percent) of respondents were from non-profit agencies ( $n=62$ ). Another 22 percent of employers were businesses ( $n=21$ ), and 6 percent were government agencies ( $n=6$ ) [8 percent ( $n=8$ ) indicated “other”]. The average number of youth employed at each agency or business was six youth and the most common number of youth employed, or the mode, was two youth. The range of youth employed at each placement was one to 19 youth.

## Program ratings by employers

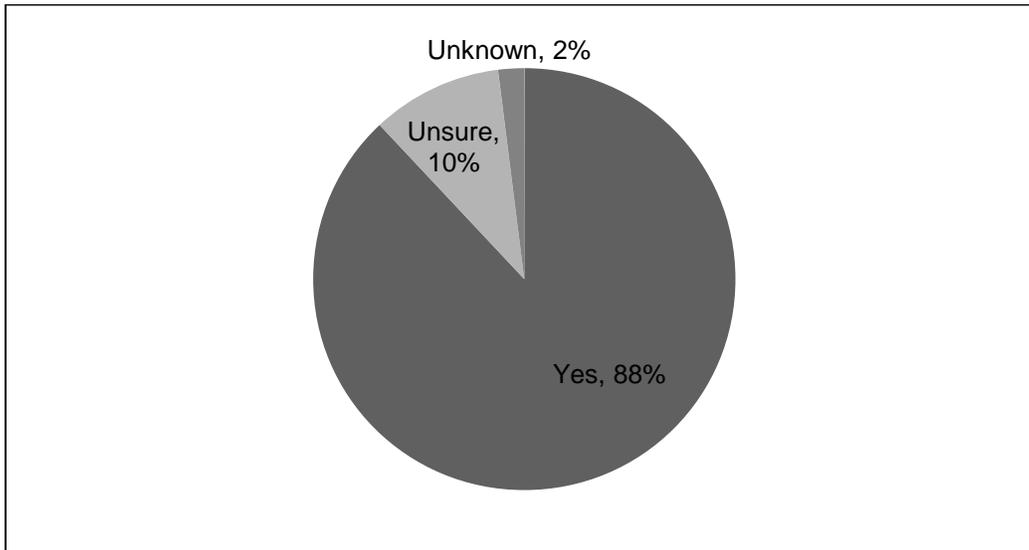
Employers were asked, *In your opinion, how successful do you think YEP was?* Most (85 percent) responded that YEP was successful or very successful. If assigning number values to the responses on the successfulness of YEP (Very successful=5, Very unsuccessful=1), the average rating was 4.23. Employers were asked to rate their communication with the YEP staff and 80 percent indicated good or very good (average rating 4.19). The survey asked employers how satisfied they were with the matching of the YEP youth employees with their agency; a majority (81 percent) responded satisfied or very satisfied. The average rating of satisfaction with matching of youth was 4.22. When asked, *How prepared were YEP youth for employment at your agency?*, 71 percent chose prepared or very prepared (average rating 3.94). Most (84 percent) indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with their experience as a YEP employer. The average rating of satisfaction with their experience was 4.27. *Table 15* indicates employer exit survey responses.

**Table 15**  
**Employer ratings**

| <b>How successful was YEP?</b>                            | <b>n</b>  | <b>Percent</b> |
|---|-----------|----------------|
| Very successful   | 37        | 38.1%          |
| Successful  | 46        | 47.4%          |
| Neutral   | 13        | 13.4%          |
| Unsuccessful  | 1         | 1.0%           |
| Very unsuccessful   | 0         | 0.0%           |
| <b>Communication with YEP staff</b>                       |           |                |
| Very good   | 43        | 44.3%          |
| Good  | 35        | 36.1%          |
| Neutral   | 13        | 13.4%          |
| Poor  | 6         | 6.2%           |
| Very poor   | 0         | 0.0%           |
| <b>Satisfaction with matching of YEP youth and agency</b> |           |                |
| Very satisfied  | 45        | 46.4%          |
| Satisfied   | 34        | 35.1%          |
| Neutral   | 10        | 10.3%          |
| Dissatisfied  | 4         | 4.1%           |
| Very dissatisfied   | 2         | 2.1%           |
| Unanswered  | 2         | 2.1%           |
| <b>Preparation of YEP youth for employment</b>            |           |                |
| Very prepared   | 30        | 30.9%          |
| Prepared  | 39        | 40.2%          |
| Neutral   | 16        | 16.5%          |
| Unprepared  | 10        | 10.3%          |
| Very unprepared   | 1         | 1.0%           |
| Unanswered  | 1         | 1.0%           |
| <b>Satisfaction with experience as YEP employer</b>       |           |                |
| Very satisfied  | 44        | 45.4%          |
| Satisfied   | 38        | 39.2%          |
| Neutral   | 9         | 9.3%           |
| Dissatisfied  | 3         | 3.1%           |
| Very dissatisfied   | 1         | 1.0%           |
| Unanswered  | 2         | 2.1%           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>97</b> | <b>100%</b>    |

A majority (88 percent) indicated that they would be interested in serving as an employer for the YEP program again ( $n=85$ ) and 10 percent were unsure ( $n=10$ ) (2 percent,  $n=2$ , unknown). None of the employers responded that they would not be interested in participating in the program again (Figure 7).

**Figure 7**  
**Interest in serving as employer for YEP again**

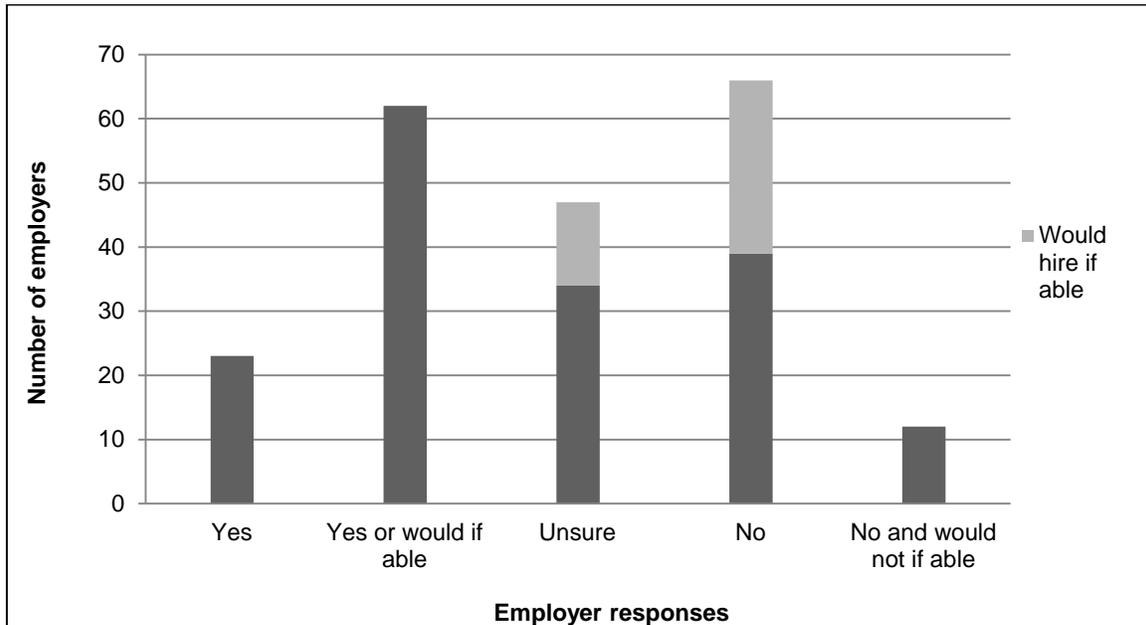


### **Hiring YEP youth post-program**

Almost a quarter of YEP employers (23 percent) indicated plans to hire YEP youth placed in their agencies ( $n=22$ ) and 34 percent were unsure ( $n=33$ ). Some said that they would not be hiring any YEP participants (41 percent,  $n=40$ ) (two unknown). However, many of the employers stated that they would hire YEP participants if they were able ( $n=40$ ). Therefore, 64 percent of the sample ( $n=62$ ) would hire youth or hire them if able.

Of those 39 employers who responded “no,” they would not hire YEP youth after the program ended, 27, or 69 percent, said they would hire the youth if they could. Of those 34 employers that indicated they were “unsure” they would hire YEP youth, 13 of them or 38 percent said they would if they could. *Figure 8* depicts employer responses on hiring youth.

**Figure 8  
Employers on hiring YEP youth**



### Why employers unable to hire

Of those 73 employers who indicated they would not hire YEP youth or were unsure if they would hire YEP youth, 40 said they would hire if they were able and 12 indicated that they would not hire even if they were able (five were unsure). Those employers unable to hire youth cited agency capacity and funding issues as primary explanations. Some employers offered more than one reason they were unable to hire.

A total of 19 employers said they would hire youth but their agency was unable to hire new employees. One employer explained, *“Our company isn’t quite ready to hire anyone in the next couple of years unless business increases dramatically.”* Another shared, *“We are a small, non-profit community organization, and thus do not have the capacity to do so.”* Related to not being able to hire, 15 individuals indicated funding reasons prevented them from hiring. One employer noted, *“As of now, there is no money in the budget, but would consider hiring one of the youth.”*

Six employers said that youth were returning to high school or college which prohibited them from continued employment. One employer stated, *“Some went away to college and others are still in high school.”* A few had other reasons such as “agency changes” and not being in a position to make hiring decisions.

## Why employers would not hire

A total of 17 employers (12 who checked “no” and five who said “*unsure*” about hiring youth) indicated the reason they would not hire them.

Seven employers indicated the reason they would not hire was poor performance of the youth. The following quotes from employers illustrate poor performance:

*“Youth were high maintenance and unskilled in the areas of responsibility. They were more concerned with their own distractions than focusing on a learning opportunity.”*

*“To be honest the youth did not accomplish any tasks they were given without being walked through the process step-by-step.”*

Five employers explained that their agency could not hire the youth because they lacked a requirement of the job such as college education or degree, a certification, or did not meet an age requirement. As one employer shared,

*“Per DCFS standards, employees must be at least 19 years of age. Unfortunately, all the youth workers were under 18. There were two that we really liked as prospective employees some day.”*

Three employers indicated youth was not a good fit because he/she was not outgoing or not interested in the job as a long-term job or career. One employer stated:

*“I wished I could have interviewed a candidate that had more personal skills. Youth was extremely shy.”*

Two employers mentioned issues with the YEP program as the reason to not hire youth. One employer made the following complaint.

*“The over reporting and over training of youth was the problem. The method for reporting hours daily was a massive undertaking as our [organization] has no phones and the paperwork (for the amount paid) was too much. The youth received poor training for the level they are at and the communication to the youth and myself was not good at all.”*

## Recommended changes to the program

Employers were asked on the online survey to indicate what, if anything, they would change about the program. Their changes were put into the following categories:

- More preparation for youth (n=15)
- Longer program/ more hours for youth (n=13)
- Better communication with program (n=12)
- Pre-screening youth (n=7)
- More program organization (n= 5)

- Improve mentor process (n=4)
- Improve pay roll (n=4)

Fifteen employers said “*nothing.*” One employer only wanted to expand the program and wrote, “*Put even more youth to work!*”

A total of 15 employers felt the program could be improved by further preparing the youth. According to employers, the youth needed to better understand rules, know how to conduct themselves on the job, and be committed to working and the job. Issues with youth included tardiness, absenteeism, cell phone use, lack of uniform/appropriate dress, sleeping on the job, lack of use of time clock, and poor quality work.

The following quotes illustrate how employers thought the program could make changes. Some of the suggestions from employers included further training on how to act on a job, letters of commitment from youth, rewards for good performance, and consequences for poor performance.

*“I would lengthen training for YEP youth. For a lot of them, this was their first job ever, and they were very unsure of themselves, and how to conduct themselves on a job. I think it would be extremely helpful if they received training on how to dress for work, and the protocols for calling off from work.”*

*“Make sure YEP youth are ready for learning, on time and responsible to accomplish the tasks assigned.*

*“Some of the youth stopped coming after a few days. Some letter of commitment [from youth] would help make the program more successful.”*

*“I would have a more in-depth process of matching the youth with employers that would ideally involve face-to-face interviews.*

*“I believe the youth could use higher standards for work ethic modeled, explained and learned prior to coming to the site. They should know not to be late or leave early and bring their own lunch. I would like to know how I should be handling low quality work. Awards for service might be considered as well.”*

Twelve employers wanted better communication with YEP staff. Employers were not informed or were confused about certain aspects of the program, such as dress code, prior training of youth, contact information, mentor roles, program procedures, and paperwork. For example, one employer stated he/she would like, “*a little more orientation for the employer. I did not have a copy of the calendar at first or understand the dress code.*”

Another employer said:

*“[We would’ve liked] more contact between YEP program staff and our organization. There was little to no understanding about what the youth employed with us were*

*subjected to through your program outside of our employment. I would allow for more youth voice incorporated into how you run programming.*

Another stated:

*“I would like a clearer understanding of the role of the YEP mentors and the program director. Some youth were put out without us knowing until they did not show up the next day. I would suggest a meeting with the YEP staff, the youth, and the site directors so there is agreement on the expectations of each group.”*

Ten employers expressed that they wanted the program to be longer in duration and three said youth should be paid for more hours. Seven employers thought the program should have a pre-screening process before youth start on the job.

Five employers recommended that the program be more organized. Employers complained about the lack of information, timeliness, and professionalism. The following are two quotes from employers regarding the community organizations that coordinated CVPP.

*“The agency we worked with was a bit unorganized and information about the program was given to us in an untimely manner.*

*“YEP staff and program needs to be more professional.”*

Four employers, such as the one below, mentioned improving the mentoring aspect of the program. Employers recommended mentors not come to the job site unannounced or to interrupt the job, mentors schedule time with youth, and have an orientation with the mentor and job supervisor.

*“Each youth had an independent mentor working with them. This caused a tad bit of confusion when it came to paperwork and payroll. Additionally, because each YEP Youth had a mentor, I had 10 mentors interrupting programming to visit the Youth on a weekly basis.*

Finally, four employers mentioned issues with payroll. During the program, there were issues with paying youth on time for their employment. One employer shared the following:

*“The process for payroll was the biggest issue. It made it very difficult to keep the workers motivated when they were not getting paid. I also think the time frame for their actual work days needs to be revisited. Once they go back to school they cannot work. Their work schedule needs to make more sense based on their long term availability.”*

## **Conclusions from employer surveys**

Overall, employer experiences varied; however, most rated aspects of the program high or very high including the program overall, communication with staff, matching of youth, and satisfaction with their experience with the program. There is some room for improvement with

the preparation of youth; over one-fourth of employers (28 percent) did not think youth were prepared. This was also reflected in some of the comments provided about improving youth preparation on rules, conduct, commitment, and work quality. However, some youth may not be ready or committed to working regardless of their training or preparation. Some suggested pre-screening youth or offering incentives or consequences based on performance. Program recommendations included improved communication and organization. However, it is promising that 64 percent of the sample ( $n=62$ ) would either hire youth or hire them if able and 98 percent would or might participate in the program again.

## Coordinators and managers exit survey

A total of 73 completed online surveys—70 percent were Coordinators ( $n=51$ ) and 30 percent were Managers ( $n=22$ ). The survey asked the Coordinators and Managers to assess the program, rate their preparedness for the program, and suggest changes to the program.

### Assessment of the program

Coordinators and Managers were asked to rate the quality of the mentor component; 68 percent responded good or very good. Scoring the responses on a scale from very good=5 and very poor=1, the average rating of the mentor component was 3.92. Eighty four percent rated the employment component as good or very good (average rating of 4.32). Three-fourths of respondents (75 percent) indicated support from ICJIA was good or very good; the average rating score was 3.75. Respondents were asked to rate the quality of support from their Lead Agency and 75 percent indicated good or very good (average rating of 4.13). The survey asked about the quality of services and support from CAPs; half (50 percent) reported poor or very poor, while just over one-fourth (27 percent) responded good or very good. The average rating of CAPs services and support was 2.72 out of five. Respondents were asked to rate the quality of their training for their roles; 50 percent chose good or very good (average rating 3.53). *Table 16* indicates exit survey responses.

**Table 16**  
**Coordinators and managers ratings of aspects of YEP**

|  | <i>n</i> | Percent |
|--|----------|---------|
| <b>Quality of the mentor component</b> |          |         |
| Very good                              | 25       | 34.2%   |
| Good                                   | 25       | 34.2%   |
| Average                                | 16       | 21.9%   |
| Poor                                   | 6        | 8.2%    |
| Very poor                              | 1        | 1.4%    |
| <b>Quality of employment component</b> |          |         |
| Very good                              | 35       | 47.9%   |
| Good                                   | 26       | 35.6%   |
| Average                                | 10       | 13.7%   |
| Poor                                   | 1        | 1.4%    |
| Very poor                              | 1        | 1.4%    |

| <b>Quality of support from ICJIA</b>                          |           |             |
|---|-----------|-------------|
| Very good   | 20        | 27.4%       |
| Good  | 25        | 34.2%       |
| Average   | 16        | 21.9%       |
| Poor  | 9         | 12.3%       |
| Very poor   | 2         | 2.7%        |
| Unknown   | 1         | 1.4%        |
| <b>Quality of support from Lead Agency</b>                    |           |             |
| Very good   | 35        | 47.9%       |
| Good  | 20        | 27.4%       |
| Average   | 10        | 13.7%       |
| Poor  | 5         | 6.8%        |
| Very poor   | 2         | 2.7%        |
| Unknown   | 1         | 1.4%        |
| <b>Quality of support and services from CAPs</b>              |           |             |
| Very good   | 9         | 12.3%       |
| Good  | 11        | 15.1%       |
| Average   | 15        | 20.5%       |
| Poor  | 25        | 34.2%       |
| Very poor   | 12        | 16.4%       |
| Unknown   | 1         | 1.4%        |
| <b>Quality of training for role of Coordinator or Manager</b> |           |             |
| Very good   | 20        | 27.4%       |
| Good  | 17        | 23.3%       |
| Average   | 21        | 28.8%       |
| Poor  | 11        | 15.1%       |
| Very poor   | 3         | 4.1%        |
| Unknown   | 1         | 1.4%        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>73</b> | <b>100%</b> |

The program Managers rated the employment component slightly higher than Coordinators, 4.59 compared to 4.20 (5=very good and 1=very poor). Managers and Coordinators rated the mentoring component about the same, 3.91 and 3.92 respectively.

### **Preparedness for the program**

Instructor-Mentors received training from CAPs to conduct job readiness training with youth and received training from their program Managers to be mentors. In their jobs, they served as both instructors of job readiness training and as mentors to youth; hence the title “Instructor-Mentor.” Others solely served as mentors, not job readiness instructors.

Coordinators and Managers were asked on the online survey to rate the preparedness of individuals in the program. Most (82 percent) respondents reported Instructor-Mentors were prepared or very prepared for their role as job-readiness trainers. More than half (60 percent) thought Instructor-Mentors and Mentors were prepared or very prepared for their role as mentors. A majority (71 percent) shared that youth were prepared or very prepared for their jobs. *Table 17* indicates survey responses.

**Table 17**  
**Coordinators and managers ratings of preparedness for YEP**

| <b>Preparedness of Instructor-Mentors for role as job-readiness trainers</b>        |                 |                |
|---|-----------------|----------------|
|   | <b><i>n</i></b> | <b>Percent</b> |
| Very prepared   | 25              | 34.2%          |
| Prepared  | 35              | 47.9%          |
| Neutral   | 7               | 9.6%           |
| Unprepared  | 2               | 2.7%           |
| Very unprepared   | 4               | 5.5%           |
| <b>Preparedness of Instructor-Mentors and Mentors for role as mentors for youth</b> |                 |                |
| Very prepared   | 12              | 16.4%          |
| Prepared  | 32              | 43.8%          |
| Neutral   | 19              | 26.0%          |
| Unprepared  | 5               | 6.8%           |
| Very unprepared   | 5               | 6.8%           |
| <b>Preparedness of youth for their jobs</b>   |                 |                |
| Very prepared   | 13              | 17.8%          |
| Prepared  | 39              | 53.4%          |
| Neutral   | 15              | 20.5%          |
| Unprepared  | 3               | 4.1%           |
| Very unprepared   | 3               | 4.1%           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>73</b>       | <b>100%</b>    |

### **Changes to the program**

The most common change to the program suggested by Coordinators and Managers was to improve the payroll system ( $n=24$ ). One individual indicated, “*Delays in the pay and confusion about how they were getting paid was a huge drain on our time and energy.*” More specifically, some did not like the use of Chase Bank cards, rather than a payroll check, as the mechanism for payment as there were fees attached. In addition, youth participants were not paid on time. One person shared, “*We lost a few at-risk youth that were just starting to believe in all that we were teaching by the second pay delay.*” Many suggested that each Lead Agency handle payroll rather than CAPs.

Sixteen people suggested increasing the pay and/or hours for youth participants, Mentors, Coordinators, and Managers. Nine respondents suggested changing the trainings in some way. For example, one person said that the job readiness training should offer a “*variety of training topics to address youth at different levels of their employment.*” Another person suggested more training for employers and youth to be prepared, “*The employers could use a training prior to the program so they can be aware of what the YEP expectations are for the youth.*” Five Coordinators and Managers suggested increasing organization of the program and five mentioned improving communication.

## **Additional training needs**

Fourteen of the program Coordinators and Managers suggested that they needed more clarity on the overall organization of the program. The lack of information led to confusion in running the program. The following is a quote that illustrates the problems.

*“There were several times that I found we were given information to disseminate, only to find out hours or sometimes days later that information was incorrect. If we were given the correct tools at the outset, we could have avoided those instances.”*

Seven respondents complained that they needed more information about payroll. One stated, “Payroll was a nightmare,” and another stated the “services [CAPs] provided as a ‘paymaster’ were very poor.” One person said that they needed more training on CAPs’ payroll system and processing of payroll from start to finish.

Seven respondents wanted more training on job readiness. Said one, “I think that we needed more information on CAPs’ clock-in system, and more training for the youth, to stress to them how important having a bank account is and how to manage money more properly by sacrificing what you want for what you need.”

Another seven respondents felt that Coordinators should attend the same job readiness training as the youth participants. Six individuals mentioned adding more training on the mentoring aspect of the program. “As a Mentor we could have used more training on building mentoring relationships and documenting paperwork.”

## **Additional resources**

Coordinators and managers were asked, *Were there any additional resources that would help improve the YEP program? If so, what resources?* Nine respondents indicated none. Six wanted to increase or enhance job readiness training for youth participants as illustrated in quote below.

*“Curriculum written for the training was very basic. It would not make sense to teach a student in high school about hygiene or how to turn on a computer. As requested, many employers are looking for trained youth with computer skills who know how to use Microsoft Word, Excel, or Publisher.”*

Five respondents indicated more funding was needed for things like making the program year round, increasing salaries and providing bus passes for youth. Four individuals mentioned improving payroll and four mentioned offering speakers. For example, one individual suggested the following.

*“The youth could benefit from speakers coming in to talk with them about being ‘successful’ in the work place. Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs should be invited to be guest speakers/motivators. Maybe they should even have the opportunity to shadow an employee in for a day.”*

A few mentioned wanting an improved mentor component, expanding the length of the program, and offering social services to youth participants. One person stated, *“Social work support for some of the more at-risk youth would be of great use.”*

### **Additional comments**

Twenty-four of the Coordinators and Managers offered positive comments regarding the program. As one person stated, *“I really appreciated the fact that it kept a lot of kids off the street this summer and gave them a chance, not only to do something positive, but earn money.”* Another said, *“I think that the YEP program was very successful and a much needed program. Youth expressed that they learned a lot this year and that it kept them off the streets.”*

The following are additional quotes from respondents that were favorable to the program.

*“ICJIA and ILAACP staff were incredibly supportive and influential in this process. There were more resolutions given by both organizations than what Lead Agencies could provide and for managers to have established relations with staff is crucial for successful implementation.”*

*“It is apparent from the changes made that ICJIA is working very hard to transform YEP into a program that by its very structure is promoting solid employable skills, increased community equity in the welfare of its youth and solid employment retention among the young community members. This is by far one of the most beneficial strategies to decreasing crime in our communities. ICJIA has done an outstanding job of incorporating the intangibility of mentorship with the tangibility of practical employment skills to create a program that provides youth with a well-rounded support system to locate, procure and sustain employment.”*

*“The YEP Program gave the youth motivation to do something constructive besides standing out on various corners or neighborhood blocks doing or participating in illegal activities, also encouraging our youth to know and have good work ethics, i.e., how to be at work on time. Moreover it gave them opportunities to experience working for employers with the hopes of one day securing a part/full time job in the near future, and learning how to network when it comes to talking with potential employers.”*

Eighteen participants indicated that the program needed some improvement such as with coordination, organization, and payroll. Again, several individuals indicated that the Lead Agency should be in charge of payroll instead of another agency. Below are a couple comments about improvements or changes in the program.

*“I think overall it was an excellent idea of having the youth work in a real world setting. However, the structure should have been a bit more conducive to the mentoring aspect of the program. To recruit the exceptional staff that I feel should be working with our youth, it is necessary we have more consistent hours to attract the caliber of mentor we need!”*

*“Overall the program was great, but there was a large disconnect in communication. There were many times where things had to be rearranged or changed at a moment’s notice; this made the coordinators and in some cases the manager seem very unorganized in some cases.”*

### **Conclusions from coordinator and manager survey**

Overall, components of the program were rated favorably; however, there is room for improvement on the support and services from CAPs. Many Coordinators and Managers mentioned significant issues with payroll ( $n=24$ ) and many suggested not having an external agency do payroll, but have the Lead Agencies each handle their own youth’s payroll. In addition, some disliked the use of Chase Bank cards as the form of payment due to fees attached to their use. In general, several respondents expressed the need for the program to increase the pay, hours, and length of the program. Many wanted more organization and more specifics on how to operate the program. Despite the need for some improvements, 24 of the 73 respondents to the survey provided positive overall comments about the program and how it made a difference and helped youth in their communities.

### **Mentor exit survey**

A total of 120 mentors completed online surveys. The survey asked the mentors to assess the program, their mentoring relationship, and their mentoring experience.

### **Assessment of the program**

Mentors rated the quality of the mentor component; 86 percent responded good or very good. Scoring the responses on a scale from very good=5 and very poor=1, the average rating of the mentor component was 4.33. Eighty four percent rated the employment component as good or very good (average rating of 4.26). Three-fourths of respondents (74 percent) indicated support from the Managers and Coordinators was good or very good; the average rating score was 4.05. Respondents were asked to rate the quality of their training for their roles; 68 percent chose good or very good (average rating 3.93). *Table 18* indicates exit survey responses.

**Table 18**  
**Mentor ratings of aspects of YEP**

|  | <i>n</i> | Percent |
|--|----------|---------|
| <b>Quality of the mentor component</b> |          |         |
| Very good                              | 60       | 50.0%   |
| Good                                   | 43       | 35.8%   |
| Average                                | 10       | 8.3%    |
| Poor                                   | 4        | 3.3%    |
| Very poor                              | 1        | 0.8%    |
| Unknown                                | 2        | 1.7%    |

| <b>Quality of employment component</b>                   |            |             |
|--|------------|-------------|
| Very good  | 52         | 43.3%       |
| Good   | 49         | 40.8%       |
| Average  | 13         | 10.8%       |
| Poor   | 1          | 0.8%        |
| Very poor  | 2          | 1.7%        |
| Unknown  | 3          | 2.5%        |
| <b>Quality of support from Managers and Coordinators</b> |            |             |
| Very good  | 58         | 48.3%       |
| Good   | 31         | 25.8%       |
| Average  | 16         | 13.3%       |
| Poor   | 6          | 5.0%        |
| Very poor  | 8          | 6.7%        |
| Unknown  | 1          | 0.8%        |
| <b>Training for role as Mentor</b>                       |            |             |
| Very good  | 52         | 43.3%       |
| Good   | 30         | 25.0%       |
| Average  | 16         | 13.3%       |
| Poor   | 16         | 13.3%       |
| Very poor  | 4          | 3.3%        |
| Unknown  | 2          | 1.7%        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>120</b> | <b>100%</b> |

### **Mentor relationship**

Almost all (92 percent) were satisfied or very satisfied with the matching of the youth with them as a mentor ( $n=110$ ). *Table 19* depicts the breakdown of responses.

**Table 19**  
**Satisfaction with matching of mentee to mentor**

|                   | <b><i>n</i></b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Very satisfied    | 69              | 57.5%          |
| Satisfied         | 41              | 34.2%          |
| Neutral           | 8               | 6.7%           |
| Dissatisfied      | 0               | 0.0%           |
| Very dissatisfied | 2               | 1.7%           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>      | <b>120</b>      | <b>100%</b>    |

A total of 58 percent of mentors met with their mentees by phone ( $n=69$ ) and 76 percent stated that they met their mentee at their community agency ( $n=91$ ). Almost half (48 percent) of respondents indicated they met with their mentee at another location ( $n=58$ ). Of those who met their mentees in other locations, 40 percent met in the community at parks, restaurants, libraries, and churches ( $n=23$ ). One-third of respondents (34 percent) met the youth at their job sites ( $n=20$ ) and 7 percent met at another community agency ( $n=4$ ).

Mentors were asked on average how often they met with their mentee in a group. About half (49 percent) met once a week and 36 percent met more than once per week. Mentors were asked on average how often they met their mentee one-on-one. A majority (68 percent) met with their mentee once a week. Mentors indicated on average the length of their meetings or talks with mentees—most (84 percent) met with their mentees one hour or more. *Table 20* indicates the frequency and length of meetings between mentors and mentees.

**Table 20**  
**Frequency of meetings with mentees**

| <b>Met as a group</b>    | <b><i>n</i></b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| More than once per week  | 43              | 35.8%          |
| Once per week            | 59              | 49.2%          |
| Less than once per week  | 15              | 12.5%          |
| Unknown                  | 3               | 2.5%           |
| <b>Met one-on-one</b>    |                 |                |
| More than once per week  | 33              | 27.5%          |
| Once per week            | 82              | 68.3%          |
| Less than once per week  | 4               | 3.3%           |
| Unknown                  | 1               | 0.8%           |
| <b>Length of meeting</b> |                 |                |
| One hour or more         | 101             | 84.2%          |
| Less than one hour       | 17              | 14.2%          |
| Unknown                  | 2               | 1.7%           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>             | <b>120</b>      | <b>100%</b>    |

Mentors were asked to describe their relationship with their mentees and most (85 percent) stated in general that the relationship was close or very close. A majority (72 percent) indicated that they felt they made a difference in their mentees' lives. None of the respondents thought that they did not make a difference in their mentees' lives. *Table 21* depicts the responses about their relationship.

**Table 21**  
**Responses on relationship with mentees**

| <b>Closeness of relationship</b>           | <b><i>n</i></b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|--|-----------------|----------------|
| Very close                                 | 39              | 32.5%          |
| Close                                      | 63              | 52.5%          |
| Not very close                             | 8               | 6.7%           |
| Unsure                                     | 9               | 7.5%           |
| Unknown                                    | 1               | 0.8%           |
| <b>Made a difference in mentees' lives</b> |                 |                |
| Yes  | 86              | 71.7%          |
| No   | 0               | 0.0%           |
| Some yes, some no                          | 31              | 25.8%          |
| Unsure                                     | 2               | 1.7%           |
| Unknown                                    | 1               | 0.8%           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                               | <b>120</b>      | <b>100%</b>    |

Mentors were asked to share what they thought their mentees gained or learned from their relationship. Of the respondents, 25 indicated they thought their mentees learned job skills. Mentors stated that the youth “*learned about job readiness skills, effective communication and listening, individual responsibility, proactiveness, scheduling, goal setting, team building*” as well as “*how to prepare themselves for the work place and handle various situations in a positive manner.*” Further, 19 mentors thought mentees learned about setting and achieving goals. Stated one mentor:

*“They learned to have a positive work experience, as they overcame any obstacles they encountered. They learned to set short-term and long-term goals for themselves. Some of the youth had some heavy life issues and were able to benefit from just having someone to listen to them while they try to figure out what they needed to do.”*

Another 11 respondents stated their mentees learned about responsibility. Mentors also noted that mentees learned to develop their communication skills ( $n=5$ ), time management abilities ( $n=5$ ), and money management skills ( $n=3$ ).

Additionally, 33 mentors noted that they felt their mentees gained a caring relationship and support from their mentor as well as learning about the importance of education. One respondent stated:

*“I told my the youths assigned to me that if they need any help or wanted anything they should let me know, even when the program ended. One of the youth just graduated from high school and does not want to go to college; I had a discussion with him with all the information needed to apply for college and he went through with it.”*

Others noted that mentees learned “*that there are others who genuinely care about them without any strings attached to the relationship,*” and “*that there are people other than their family that care what happens to them.*” Finally, eight respondents felt their mentees gained confidence and maturity through their relationships with mentors.

## **Mentoring experience**

Mentors were asked to indicate how satisfied they were with their experience as a mentor. Most mentors (87 percent) were satisfied or very satisfied. More than half (58 percent) said they learned new things about themselves. None of the respondents indicated they didn’t learn anything through the experience. A majority (63 percent) noted they found it easy to be a mentor. Most mentors (83 percent) indicated they believed they made a positive connection with their mentees, with no mentors believing they made no connection with youth. Finally, 82 percent of respondents also expressed interest in serving as a mentor for the program again. *Table 22* depicts the responses about mentors’ experience.

**Table 22**  
**Responses on mentoring experience**

| <b>Satisfied with experience as a mentor</b> | <b>n</b>   | <b>Percent</b> |
|--|------------|----------------|
| Very satisfied                               | 58         | 48.3%          |
| Satisfied                                    | 46         | 38.3%          |
| Neutral                                      | 9          | 7.5%           |
| Dissatisfied                                 | 2          | 1.7%           |
| Very Dissatisfied                            | 2          | 1.7%           |
| <b>Learned new things about myself</b>       |            |                |
| To a great extent                            | 69         | 57.5%          |
| Somewhat                                     | 47         | 39.2%          |
| Not at all                                   | 0          | 0.0%           |
| <b>Found it easy to be a mentor</b>          |            |                |
| To a great extent                            | 75         | 62.5%          |
| Somewhat                                     | 34         | 28.3%          |
| Not at all                                   | 5          | 4.2%           |
| <b>Made a positive connection with youth</b> |            |                |
| To a great extent                            | 99         | 82.5%          |
| Somewhat                                     | 18         | 15.0%          |
| Not at all                                   | 0          | 0.0%           |
| <b>Interested in serving as mentor again</b> |            |                |
| Yes  | 98         | 81.7%          |
| No   | 4          | 3.3%           |
| Unsure                                       | 16         | 13.3%          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                 | <b>120</b> | <b>100%</b>    |

Mentors were asked what, if anything, they would change about the program. Wages and payroll were concerns for 23 respondents, as one mentor reported: *“The payroll system was very poorly run. I spent too much time reassuring my youth that they were getting paid. This did not make sense at all. The payroll system for the youth needs to be changed.”* Another mentor stated:

*“I would change the fact that the mentees do not get compensated for one on one's and Group Mentoring. Most youth use public transportation and others have to pay for gas to travel to sites for these meetings. Meeting them twice a week for group mentoring and one on one mentoring can become an expensive process for them. They barely made any money this summer and I understand making money wasn't the core piece of this program but we are also supposed to be empowering our youth and that doesn't just mean through education and mentoring. It makes no sense for them not to get paid for that time considering it is training and mentoring which are key components to the program. This needs to be reconsidered for next year.”*

Five mentors thought the program should be longer, and another 15 indicated they felt that everyone in the program (youth, mentors, and coordinators) should work more hours. Five mentors were concerned about the jobs youth were placed in. One mentor explained: *“I would change the employment options for the youth. Try to find employers that are more interested in*

*longevity of employment instead of just summer interns.”* Further, 10 respondents stated they felt communication between mentors and coordinators could be improved. One respondent stated:

*“The program was rather disorganized and the coordinators and supervisors had a great lack of communication with the service agencies. The youth were not fond of the group mentoring component and many of them felt that it should have happened at their service agency and not elsewhere. Overall the program should have better trained mentors and the coordinators should have had more communication with mentors throughout the full program.”*

An additional 20 mentors expressed a desire for more training while 10 respondents indicated the program needed to be better organized. One mentor noted, *“I would have an organized agenda of what the program entails. I would also provide mentors with an outline of tasks for each week. I would also suggest having ‘Fun Fridays’ as an incentive for the youth to participate in mentoring sessions and to provide the youth with a positive experience.”* Finally, 10 mentors commented they wouldn’t change anything about the program.

## **Conclusions from mentor surveys**

Mentors rated the quality of the mentor component, employment component support from the Managers and Coordinators, and the quality of their training for their roles as good or very good. However about one-third of mentors thought the quality of training for their roles was less than good. Almost all of the respondents (92 percent) were satisfied or very satisfied with the matching of the youth with them as a mentor. Mentors felt they were close to their mentees and made a difference in their lives. Payroll was mentioned as the main change mentors would make to the program.

## **Youth participants exit survey**

At the end of the program, a total of 864 youth participants completed exit surveys. The survey asked the youth to assess the program and reflect on their experience with employment, mentoring, and community service.

Youth participants were asked how they learned about YEP. Most participants heard about the program from a friend (44 percent), followed by a community agency (15 percent), and the Internet (12 percent). For *Other* responses, a couple wrote a “mentor” and six wrote a person’s name. *Table 23* depicts how participants learned about YEP.

**Table 23**  
**How participants learned about YEP**

|                                | <b><i>n</i></b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Friend                         | 376             | 43.5%          |
| Community agency               | 132             | 15.3%          |
| Online, website                | 104             | 12.0%          |
| Family member                  | 66              | 7.6%           |
| Flyer                          | 48              | 5.6%           |
| Worked with program previously | 22              | 2.5%           |
| Church                         | 17              | 2.0%           |
| School                         | 14              | 1.6%           |
| Previous employer              | 14              | 1.6%           |
| Radio                          | 3               | 1.3%           |
| Unknown                        | 7               | 0.8%           |
| Other                          | 61              | 7.1%           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                   | <b>864</b>      | <b>100%</b>    |

**Assessment of the program**

Respondents were asked to rate parts of the program from Poor (1) to Excellent (4). Most respondents rated the job readiness training as good or excellent (88 percent); an average rating of 3.38 out of 4.0. Most respondents rated their job tasks as good or excellent (89 percent) or an average rating of 3.34. A majority of the sample of youth participants (86 percent) rated their supervision on the job as good or excellent (average of 3.36). Almost all of the respondents (91 percent) rated their mentor as good or excellent; an average of 3.53 out of 4.0. Many of the youth rated the program as good or excellent (87 percent) (average of 3.36). *Table 24* shares the ratings of the program and parts of the program.

**Table 24**  
**Ratings of aspects of the program**

| <b>Job readiness training</b> | <b><i>n</i></b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Excellent                     | 424             | 49.1%          |
| Good                          | 339             | 39.2%          |
| Fair                          | 83              | 9.6%           |
| Poor                          | 9               | 1.0%           |
| Unknown                       | 9               | 1.0%           |
| <b>Your job tasks</b>         |                 |                |
| Excellent                     | 381             | 44.1%          |
| Good                          | 389             | 45.0%          |
| Fair                          | 75              | 8.7%           |
| Poor                          | 9               | 1.0%           |
| Unknown                       | 10              | 1.2%           |

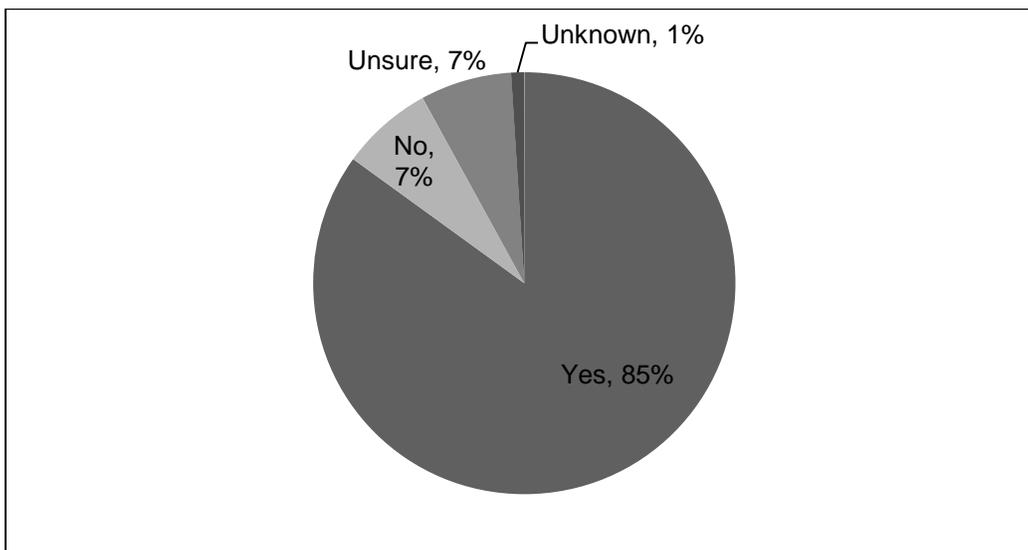
**Table 24 continued**

|   |            |             |
|---|------------|-------------|
| <b>Supervision on job</b>               |            |             |
| Excellent                               | 435        | 50.3%       |
| Good                                    | 306        | 35.4%       |
| Fair                                    | 96         | 11.1%       |
| Poor                                    | 16         | 1.9%        |
| Unknown                                 | 11         | 1.3%        |
| <b>Your mentor</b>                      |            |             |
| Excellent                               | 543        | 62.8%       |
| Good                                    | 242        | 28.0%       |
| Fair                                    | 55         | 6.4%        |
| Poor                                    | 16         | 1.9%        |
| Unknown                                 | 8          | 0.9%        |
| <b>Overall youth employment program</b> |            |             |
| Excellent                               | 418        | 48.4%       |
| Good                                    | 337        | 39.0%       |
| Fair                                    | 91         | 10.5%       |
| Poor                                    | 9          | 1.0%        |
| Unknown                                 | 9          | 1.0%        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                            | <b>864</b> | <b>100%</b> |

### Employment experience

YEP participants were asked, *Do you think the job readiness training helped prepare you for your job?* Most respondents indicated “yes” (85 percent,  $n=733$ ) and 7 percent responded “no” ( $n=63$ ). *Figure 9* offers a pie chart of responses.

**Figure 9**  
**Did job readiness training help prepare for job?**



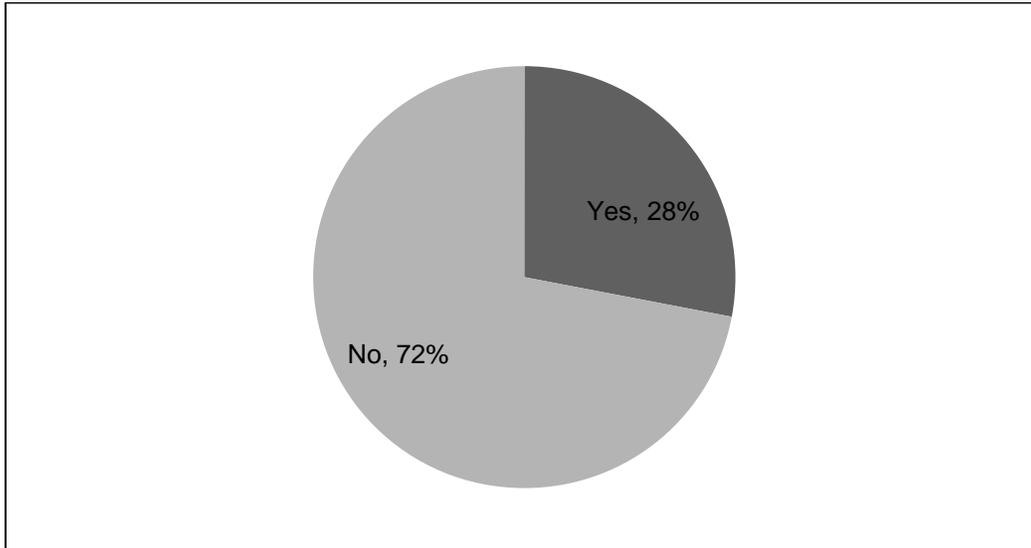
Respondents were asked if they used certain skills taught during the job readiness training. On the survey, respondents could check all that applied to them. A majority (77 percent) used the skill of time management; dressing appropriately for the job (75 percent); and professional vocabulary and communication (70 percent). Just over half used money management (59 percent) and conflict resolution (54 percent). Less than half of respondents used interviewing techniques, creating resumes/applications; and computer literacy (like using email, the Internet, etc.). *Table 25* depicts the responses on the use of skills.

**Table 25**  
**Use of skills taught in training**

| <b>Skill</b>                      | <b><i>n</i></b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| <i>Computer literacy</i>          |                 |                |
| Yes                               | 386             | 44.7%          |
| No                                | 478             | 55.3%          |
| <i>Conflict resolution</i>        |                 |                |
| Yes                               | 469             | 54.3%          |
| No                                | 395             | 45.7%          |
| <i>Creating resumes</i>           |                 |                |
| Yes                               | 387             | 44.8%          |
| No                                | 477             | 55.2%          |
| <i>Dressing appropriately</i>     |                 |                |
| Yes                               | 646             | 74.8%          |
| No                                | 217             | 25.2%          |
| <i>Interviewing techniques</i>    |                 |                |
| Yes                               | 390             | 45.1%          |
| No                                | 474             | 54.9%          |
| <i>Professional communication</i> |                 |                |
| Yes                               | 606             | 70.1%          |
| No                                | 258             | 29.9%          |
| <i>Time management</i>            |                 |                |
| Yes                               | 667             | 77.2%          |
| No                                | 197             | 22.8%          |
| <i>Money management</i>           |                 |                |
| Yes                               | 509             | 58.9%          |
| No                                | 355             | 41.1%          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                      | <b>864</b>      | <b>100%</b>    |

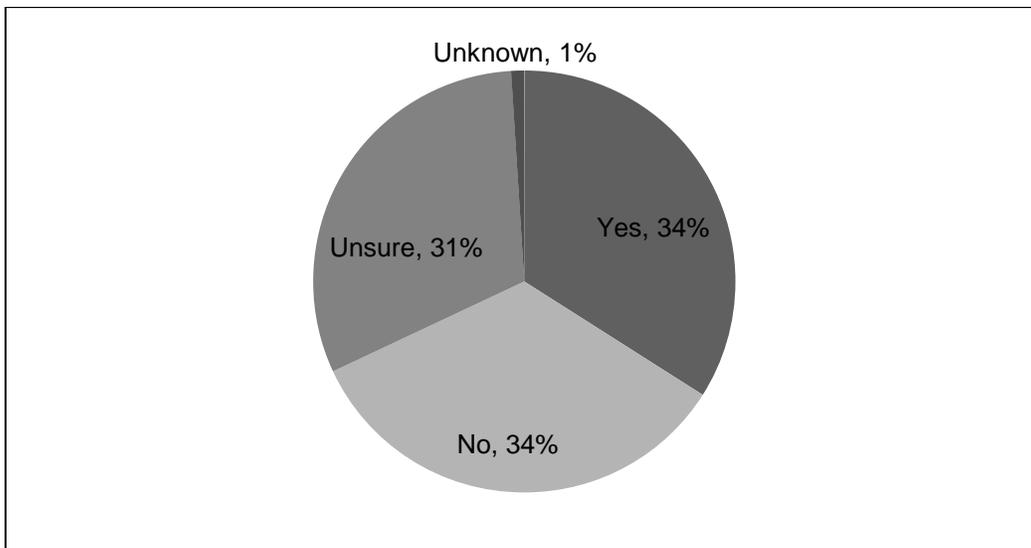
Youth participants were asked if this was their first paid job and 72 percent responded “no” ( $n=620$ ) and 28 percent responded “yes” ( $n=240$ ). *Figure 10* shows responses in a pie chart.

**Figure 10**  
**Was this your first paid job?**



Respondents were asked if they thought that they would have been employed in the summer of 2013 without the YEP program. About one-third of respondents (34 percent) indicated “no” and one-third responded “yes” ( $n=296$  and  $n=293$ , respectively). *Figure 11* shows a pie chart of responses.

**Figure 11**  
**If not enrolled in YEP program, would have been employed this summer?**



YEP participants were asked what types of duties or tasks were required of them by their summer employer. On the survey, respondents could check all that applied to them. The most common type of job appears to be clerical (48 percent) and the least common job type was landscaping (10 percent). *Table 26* shows the duties and tasks performed by the youth at their job.

**Table 26**  
**Duties or tasks on job**

| <b>Duty/Task</b>         | <b>N</b>   | <b>Percent</b> |
|--------------------------|------------|----------------|
| <i>Landscaping</i>       |            |                |
| Yes                      | 89         | 10.3%          |
| No                       | 766        | 89.7%          |
| <i>Janitorial</i>        |            |                |
| Yes                      | 186        | 21.5%          |
| No                       | 669        | 77.4%          |
| <i>Clerical</i>          |            |                |
| Yes                      | 412        | 47.7%          |
| No                       | 443        | 51.3%          |
| <i>Customer services</i> |            |                |
| Yes                      | 271        | 31.4%          |
| No                       | 584        | 67.6%          |
| <i>Sales</i>             |            |                |
| Yes                      | 96         | 11.1%          |
| No                       | 759        | 87.8%          |
| <i>Child Care</i>        |            |                |
| Yes                      | 143        | 16.6%          |
| No                       | 712        | 82.4%          |
| <i>Other</i>             |            |                |
| Yes                      | 148        | 17.1%          |
| No                       | 707        | 81.8%          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>             | <b>864</b> | <b>100%</b>    |

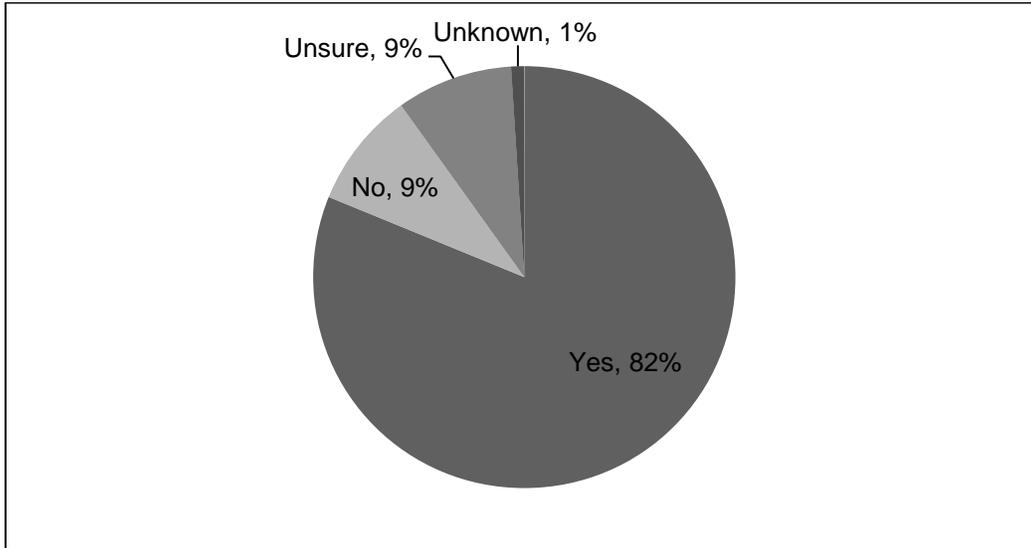
Respondents indicated what types of employment skills they learned on the job. On the survey, respondents could check all that applied to them. For every skill, more than half of the participants indicated it was among the skills they acquired while employed. A majority of youth participants (73 percent) learned speaking and listening skills on the job followed by attendance (73 percent). *Table 27* presents the responses on employment skills learned on the job.

**Table 27**  
**Employment skills learned on the job**

| <b>Employment Skill</b>       | <b><i>n</i></b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| <i>Attendance</i>             |                 |                |
| Yes                           | 632             | 73.1%          |
| No                            | 221             | 25.6%          |
| <i>Punctuality</i>            |                 |                |
| Yes                           | 478             | 55.3%          |
| No                            | 375             | 43.4%          |
| <i>Time management</i>        |                 |                |
| Yes                           | 618             | 71.5%          |
| No                            | 235             | 27.2%          |
| <i>Speaking and listening</i> |                 |                |
| Yes                           | 633             | 73.3%          |
| No                            | 220             | 25.5%          |
| <i>Respect</i>                |                 |                |
| Yes                           | 624             | 72.2%          |
| No                            | 229             | 26.5%          |
| <i>Accepting direction</i>    |                 |                |
| Yes                           | 548             | 63.4%          |
| No                            | 305             | 35.3%          |
| <i>Accepting criticism</i>    |                 |                |
| Yes                           | 443             | 51.3%          |
| No                            | 410             | 47.5%          |
| <i>Solving problems</i>       |                 |                |
| Yes                           | 504             | 58.3%          |
| No                            | 349             | 40.4%          |
| <i>Leadership skills</i>      |                 |                |
| Yes                           | 570             | 66.0%          |
| No                            | 283             | 32.8%          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                  | <b>864</b>      | <b>100%</b>    |

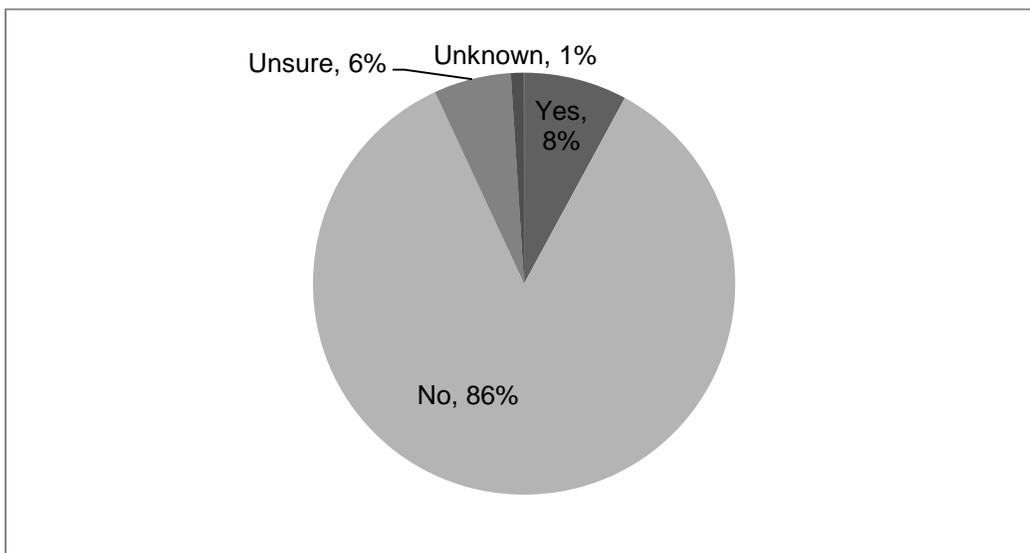
When youth participants were asked if their job was a good match for their skills and interests, 82 percent replied “yes” ( $n=707$ ). Of the 9 percent that answered “no” ( $n=75$ ), 45 respondents answered “*If no, why not?*” Of those, 15 explained that the placement didn’t fit with their future employment or academic plans, 12 did not feel their assignment fit their personality or interests, nine felt their job was too simple, three thought their job was boring, and three wanted a more active placement. *Figure 12* shows a pie chart of the responses.

**Figure 12**  
**Do you feel like the job was a good match for your skills and interests?**



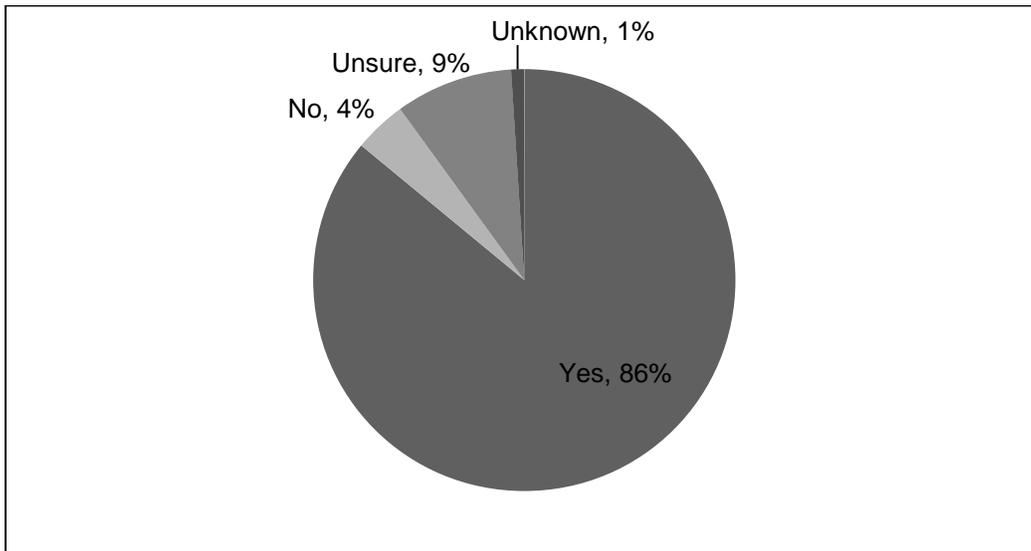
Respondents were asked if they felt unprepared for their work assignment. Of 865 respondents, most (86 percent) responded “no”, they did not feel unprepared ( $n=741$ ). Of the 8 percent that replied “yes”, that they did feel unprepared, 28 explained why they did not feel prepared. Of those participants, seven answered that their feeling of unpreparedness came from a lack of leadership, five felt they were unprepared for a job in child care, four did not feel they were prepared enough socially (such as “*speaking to others*”), four youth replied that they felt unprepared for the technical skills required for their placement, and four responded that they felt unprepared for “*everything*.” *Figure 13* illustrates the responses.

**Figure 13**  
**Once employed, did you feel unprepared for anything?**



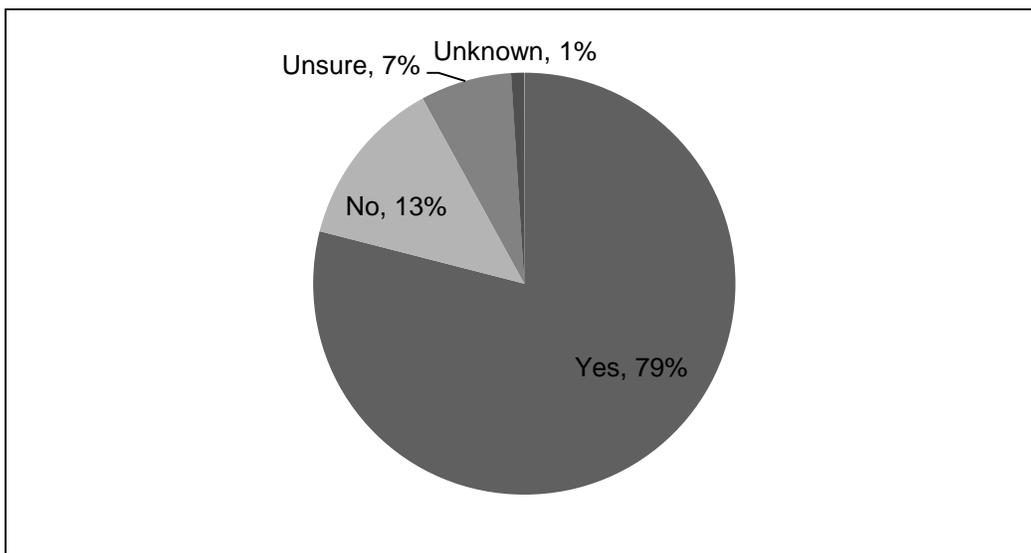
YEP participants were asked if they thought their work benefitted the agency or company for which they were employed and (86 percent) responded “yes” ( $n=746$ ). Only 4 percent indicated “no” ( $n=36$ ) and 9 percent were “unsure” ( $n=76$ ) if their work benefitted the company. *Figure 14* displays a pie chart of the responses.

**Figure 14**  
**Do you think your work benefitted your employer?**



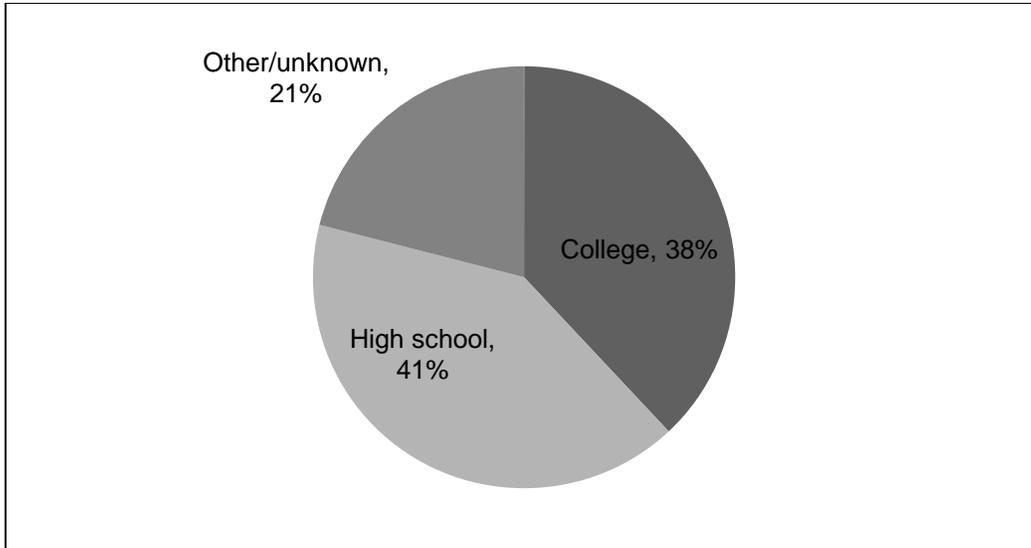
The survey asked participants about their future academic plans. Most youth participants (79 percent) expressed that they would be attending school in fall 2013. *Figure 15* shows a pie chart of the responses.

**Figure 15**  
**Will you be attending school in the fall?**

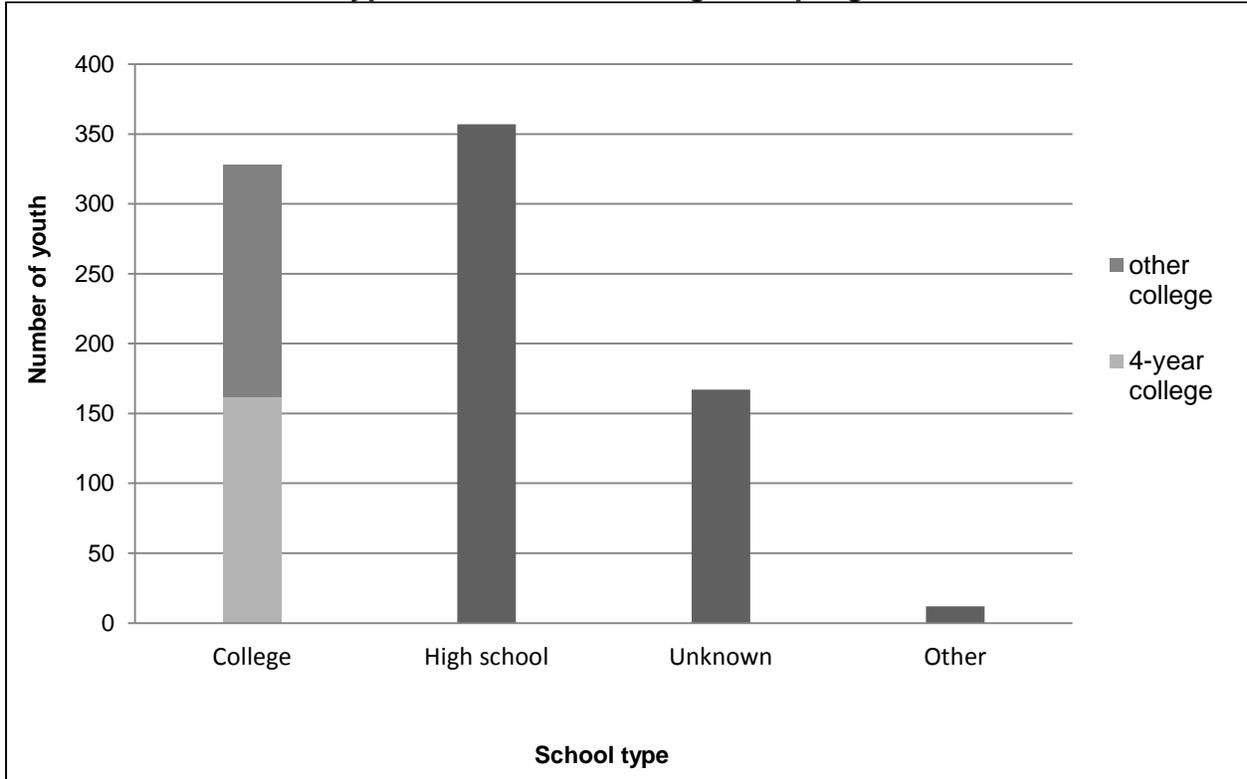


When asked what type of school they would be attending, 42 percent said they would be enrolled in high school ( $n=357$ ). Over one-third of survey respondents indicated they would be attending college (38 percent,  $n=328$ ); of those, 19 percent answered junior college/community college/trade school/vocational school ( $n=166$ ) and 19 percent of respondents plan on attending a four year college ( $n=162$ ). A total of 19 percent did not respond ( $n=167$ ) and 1 percent chose “other” ( $n=12$ ). *Figure 16 and Figure 17 depict the type of school.*

**Figure 16**  
**Type of school attending after program**

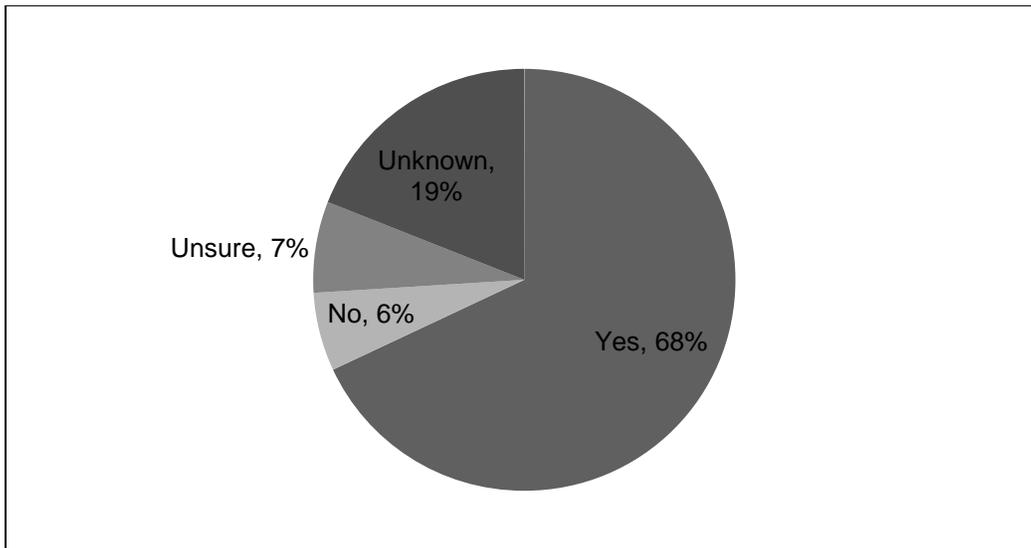


**Figure 17**  
**Type of school attending after program**



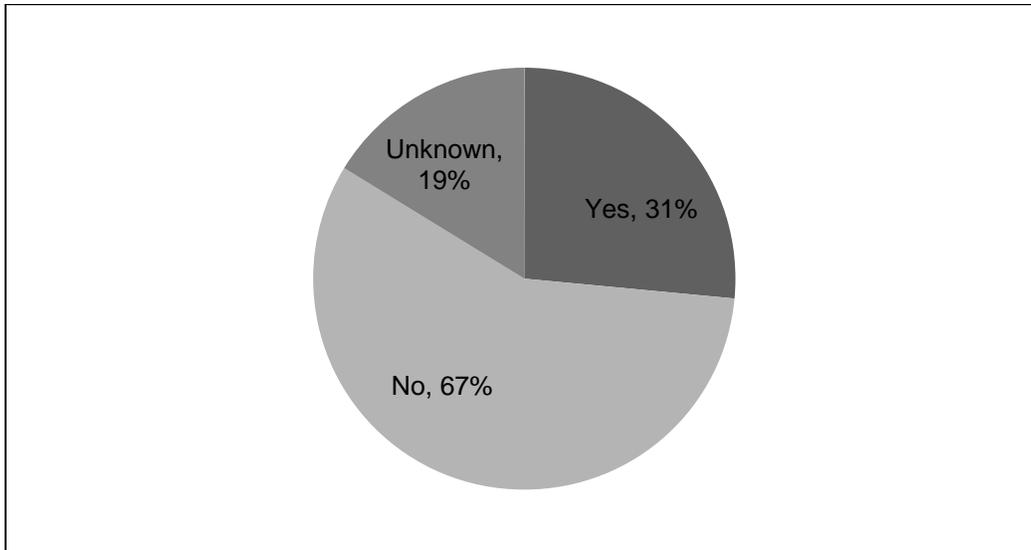
Respondents were asked if they thought they would use any of the YEP skills in their future education. The majority (68 percent,  $n=584$ ) replied “yes” and 6 percent responded “no” ( $n=50$ ) *Figure 18* illustrates whether the youth participants will use the learned skills in school.

**Figure 18**  
**Use any skills learned in the YEP program at school?**



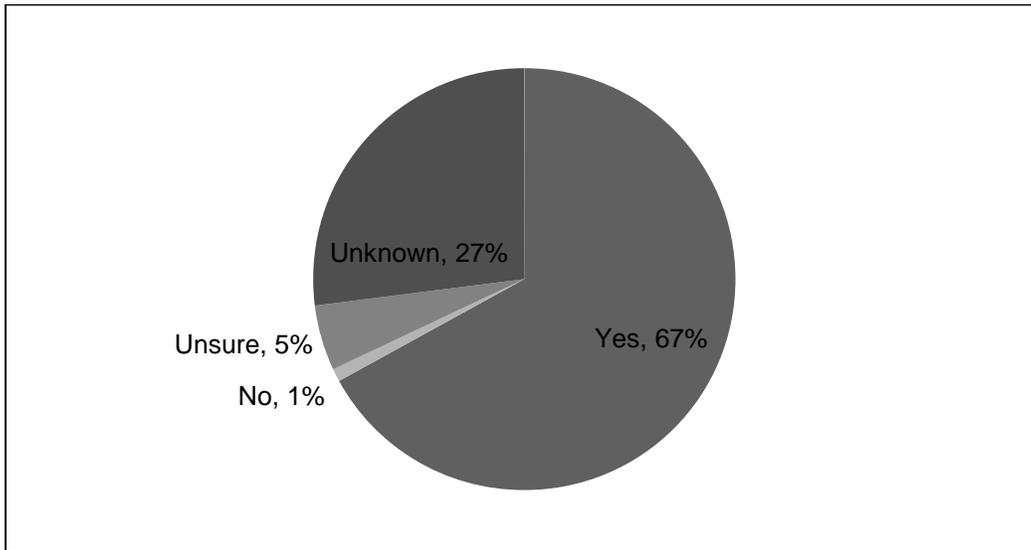
Some of the youth were asked if they would like to stay at their summer job past the YEP participation. Of 864 responses, 31 percent answered “yes” they were asked to continue in the job ( $n=269$ ), and 67 percent replied “no” ( $n=576$ ). Some survey respondents noted that they responded “no” due to college plans out of the area. *Figure 19* offers a chart on youth asked to remain at their job after the YEP program.

**Figure 19**  
**Offered to continue in job after YEP program?**



For those who were not continuing in the job, they were asked if they would use what they learned in the program to look for another job. Sixty-seven percent of the youth replied “yes,” they would be using these skills ( $n=578$ ) and 1 percent said “no” ( $n= 10$ ). *Figure 20* depicts responses on using what they learned to find another job.

**Figure 20**  
**Plan to use what you learned to look for another job?**



Participants were asked how they would spend the money they earned. A majority of respondents (71 percent) replied they used, or will use, their income on clothing. Over half (64 percent) planned to save the money and 62 percent would use money for school. *Table 28* displays the responses about how the youth participants spent/would spend their earnings.

**Table 28**  
**How spend money earned**

| Spending category                | <i>n</i> | Percent |
|----------------------------------|----------|---------|
| <i>School</i>                    |          |         |
| Yes                              | 532      | 61.6%   |
| No                               | 327      | 37.8%   |
| <i>Household expenses, bills</i> |          |         |
| Yes                              | 417      | 48.3%   |
| No                               | 442      | 51.2%   |
| <i>Clothes</i>                   |          |         |
| Yes                              | 614      | 71.1%   |
| No                               | 245      | 28.4%   |
| <i>Food</i>                      |          |         |
| Yes                              | 514      | 59.5%   |
| No                               | 345      | 39.9%   |
| <i>Savings</i>                   |          |         |
| Yes                              | 549      | 63.5%   |
| No                               | 310      | 35.9%   |
| <i>Entertainment</i>             |          |         |
| Yes                              | 355      | 41.1%   |
| No                               | 504      | 58.3%   |

|              |            |             |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| <i>Other</i> |            |             |
| Yes          | 166        | 19.2%       |
| No           | 693        | 80.2%       |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>864</b> | <b>100%</b> |

## Mentoring experience

YEP respondents were asked about their meetings with their mentor, including where they met and length of the meetings. As presented in *Table 29*, the majority of meetings (68 percent) happened at the community agency and most (65 percent) mentors did have meetings with their mentees over the phone.

**Table 29**  
**Mentoring meeting locations**

| <b>Method of meeting</b> | <b><i>n</i></b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| <i>Phone</i>             |                 |                |
| Yes                      | 289             | 33.4%          |
| No                       | 564             | 65.3%          |
| <i>Community agency</i>  |                 |                |
| Yes                      | 583             | 67.5%          |
| No                       | 270             | 31.3%          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>             | <b>864</b>      | <b>100%</b>    |

According to program participants, a majority saw their mentor once a week in a group (65 percent), once a week one-on-one (72 percent), and for one hour or more (68 percent). However, some participants provided comments on the survey that they did not meet with their mentor at all. *Table 30* shares the time spent with mentors.

**Table 30**  
**Time spent with mentor**

| <b>Time spent</b>        | <b><i>n</i></b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| <i>In group</i>          |                 |                |
| Less than once a week    | 117             | 13.5%          |
| Once a week              | 562             | 65.0%          |
| More than once a week    | 179             | 20.7%          |
| Unknown                  | 6               | 0.7%           |
| <i>One-on-one</i>        |                 |                |
| Less than once a week    | 123             | 14.2%          |
| Once a week              | 622             | 72.0%          |
| More than once a week    | 112             | 13.0%          |
| Unknown                  | 7               | 0.8%           |
| <i>Length of meeting</i> |                 |                |
| Less than one hour       | 215             | 24.9%          |
| One hour or more         | 590             | 68.3%          |
| Unknown                  | 59              | 6.8%           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>             | <b>864</b>      | <b>100%</b>    |

Youth program participants were asked several questions about their mentor. A majority of the respondents (85 percent or more) chose “*strongly agree*” or “*agree*” to eleven of the twelve positive statements about their mentor. *Table 31* indicates the responses to the statements about mentors. Average scores on agreement are provided on a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

**Table 31**  
**Responses to statements about mentors**

|   | <i>n</i> | Percent |
|---|----------|---------|
| <b>My mentor helped me challenge myself to succeed.</b>                     |          |         |
| Strongly agree  | 367      | 42.5%   |
| Agree   | 423      | 49.0%   |
| Disagree  | 46       | 5.3%    |
| Strongly disagree   | 20       | 2.3%    |
| Mean response (1 to 5)  | 3.3      |         |
| <b>I am able to look to my mentor for guidance.</b>                         |          |         |
| Strongly agree  | 399      | 46.2%   |
| Agree   | 392      | 45.4%   |
| Disagree  | 43       | 5.0%    |
| Strongly disagree   | 22       | 2.5%    |
| Mean response   | 3.3      |         |
| <b>My mentor praised me and encouraged me to do well.</b>                   |          |         |
| Strongly agree  | 426      | 49.3%   |
| Agree   | 379      | 43.9%   |
| Disagree  | 33       | 3.8%    |
| Strongly disagree   | 18       | 2.1%    |
| Mean response   | 3.4      |         |
| <b>I am able to discuss problems with my mentor.</b>                        |          |         |
| Strongly agree  | 387      | 44.8%   |
| Agree   | 377      | 43.6%   |
| Disagree  | 58       | 6.7%    |
| Strongly disagree   | 29       | 3.4%    |
| Mean response   | 3.3      |         |
| <b>I feel I can do more things on my own because of my mentor.</b>          |          |         |
| Strongly agree  | 326      | 37.7%   |
| Agree   | 411      | 47.6%   |
| Disagree  | 89       | 10.3%   |
| Strongly disagree   | 28       | 3.2%    |
| Mean response   | 3.2      |         |
| <b>I am proud to tell my mentor when I have done well at some activity.</b> |          |         |
| Strongly agree  | 417      | 48.3%   |
| Agree   | 371      | 42.9%   |
| Disagree  | 49       | 5.7%    |
| Strongly disagree   | 20       | 2.3%    |
| Mean response   | 3.4      |         |

**Table 31 continued**

|   |            |             |
|---|------------|-------------|
| <b>My mentor helps me to see different ways I can solve my problems.</b>        |            |             |
| Strongly agree  | 373        | 43.2%       |
| Agree   | 395        | 45.7%       |
| Disagree  | 62         | 7.2%        |
| Strongly disagree   | 24         | 2.8%        |
| Mean response   | 3.3        |             |
| <b>My mentor asks about things that matter to me.</b>                           |            |             |
| Strongly agree  | 409        | 47.3%       |
| Agree   | 376        | 43.5%       |
| Disagree  | 51         | 5.9%        |
| Strongly disagree   | 20         | 2.3%        |
| Mean response   | 3.3        |             |
| <b>I like talking things over with my mentor.</b>                               |            |             |
| Strongly agree  | 382        | 44.2%       |
| Agree   | 380        | 44.0%       |
| Disagree  | 67         | 7.8%        |
| Strongly disagree   | 25         | 2.9%        |
| Mean response   | 3.3        |             |
| <b>I discuss with my mentor what I would like to do in the future.</b>          |            |             |
| Strongly agree  | 423        | 49.0%       |
| Agree   | 344        | 39.8%       |
| Disagree  | 63         | 7.3%        |
| Strongly disagree   | 22         | 2.5%        |
| Mean response   | 3.3        |             |
| <b>When I do something that makes me feel bad, I discuss it with my mentor.</b> |            |             |
| Strongly agree  | 251        | 29.0%       |
| Agree   | 328        | 38.0%       |
| Disagree  | 230        | 26.6%       |
| Strongly disagree   | 45         | 5.2%        |
| Mean response   | 2.9        |             |
| <b>My mentor helps me to feel good about myself.</b>                            |            |             |
| Strongly agree  | 380        | 44.0%       |
| Agree   | 384        | 44.4%       |
| Disagree  | 58         | 6.7%        |
| Strongly disagree   | 29         | 3.4%        |
| Mean response   | 3.3        |             |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>864</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Survey respondents were asked “*What, if anything, did you gain from the mentoring experience?*” The 582 replies from the youth were varied and are categorized below:

- Guidance/general advice (n=85)
- A relationship/Someone I can talk to and trust (n=82)
- Confidence/self-esteem (n=62)
- Communication skills (n=52)
- Work ethic (n=43)
- Conflict resolution (n=36)
- Time management (n=26)

- Social Skills (n=25)
- General workplace advice (n=22)
- “A lot”/“everything” (n=20)
- Respect (n=19)
- Work experience (n=19)
- Help setting goals/ making plans (n=17)
- Responsibility (n=12)
- Interview skills (n=11)
- Academic advice (n=10)
- Money management skills (n=8)
- Leadership skills (n=8)
- Encouragement (n=7)
- Other (n=7)
- Did not meet (n=6)
- Spiritual guidance (n=5)

On their relationship, one youth wrote, *“I was able to gain a trustworthy and friendly relationship. I also gained more confidence and learned to speak up for myself more.”*

On academic advice, one youth commented, *“My mentor helped me realize how important school is. She didn't make me feel awkward.”*

On skills, one survey respondent shared, *“[I gained] good customer service skills and learned how to talk on the phone with a boss or anyone for that matter.”* Another explained he or she learned *“how to communicate better with others and have more confidence in myself.”* One youth stated, *“I gained better communication skills, interviewing skills, time and money management skills.”*

## **Community service**

All youth participants in the program were expected to perform community service. Of all survey respondents, 67 percent (n=579) reported completing a community service project, while (31 percent, n=271) reported that they did not complete a project.

Youth participants were asked to identify the community service project with which they participated. The most common was back to school fairs, clean-up day, and block parties. The most common responses were:

- Back to school fair (n=57)
- Clean-up day (n=48)
- Block party (n=46)
- Community garden project (n=38)
- Renaissance fair (n=26)
- Health fair (n=26)
- Peace march (n=26)
- Health fair (n=24)
- Peace march (n=23)
- Community fairs (n=20)
- Summit of hope (n=18)
- Church events (n=16)
- Help with marathon (n=13)
- Community festival (n=13)
- Mentoring (n=11)
- Helping you to help yourself (n=10)

## Change about program

Participants were asked to share what they would change about the program. Of the 604 youth who responded, 39 percent indicated “*nothing*” ( $n=236$ ). For example, one youth wrote, “*I would change nothing, it was an excellent program and I am grateful for it.*”

Other responses about how to change the program varied but are categorized below:

- Pay system ( $n=83$ )
- More pay or more hours ( $n=56$ )
- Organization ( $n=45$ )
- Training ( $n=34$ )
- Extend the program ( $n=31$ )
- Job sites ( $n=25$ )
- Mentors ( $n=23$ )
- Job matching ( $n=16$ )
- Meetings ( $n=9$ )
- Uniforms ( $n=8$ )
- Communication ( $n=7$ )
- Assistance with transportation ( $n=4$ )
- Community service projects ( $n=3$ )

On the payroll system, youth mentioned they disliked debit cards and that they did not get paid on time.

## Conclusions to youth exit surveys

Most youth participants rated aspects of the program as good or excellent including job readiness training, job tasks, job supervision, mentor, and the program overall. Most YEP participants (85 percent) thought the job readiness training prepared them for their jobs. Most youth participants (82 percent) thought their job was a good match for their skills and interests. A majority of youth participants (73 percent) learned speaking and listening skills on the job and attendance. The most common type of job was clerical (48 percent) and the least common job type was landscaping (10 percent). A majority (77 percent) used the skill of time management; dressing appropriately for the job (75 percent); and professional vocabulary and communication (70 percent). Most YEP participants (86 percent) thought their work benefitted the agency or company for which they were employed. Most youth participants (79 percent) would attend school in the fall of 2013—42 percent in high school and 38 percent in college. Youth program participants expressed that they developed good relationships with their mentors and gained guidance, advice, relationship, trust, confidence, and self-esteem. Participants recommended improvements to the payroll system, more pay, more hours, and more organization to the program.

# Findings: Training evaluation surveys

## Job readiness training

Youth participants were asked to rate their agreement with five statements on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Overall, participants agreed with the positive statements provided about the job readiness training. A total of 72 percent agreed or strongly agreed that the training was well designed, including pacing and adequate time for questions and answers. The average rating of the training was 3.93 out of 5. Most training participants (80 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that they received information that answered questions about employment (average of 4.10). About 79 percent agreed that the materials and handouts were useful both in the session and for future reference (average rating of 4.06 out of 5). Most (84 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that their trainer was knowledgeable and helpful (average rating of 4.27). A majority of participants (82 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that they had a better sense of what it takes to obtain and maintain a job (average rating of 4.22). *Table 32* depicts the ratings of their agreement about statements on the training.

**Table 32**  
**Ratings of the job readiness training**

| <b>The training was well-designed</b>                                     | <b><i>n</i></b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|---|-----------------|----------------|
| Strongly agree  | 229             | 30.7%          |
| Agree   | 308             | 41.3%          |
| Neutral   | 154             | 20.7%          |
| Disagree  | 31              | 4.2%           |
| Strongly disagree   | 21              | 2.8%           |
| Unanswered  | 2               | 0.3%           |
| <b>I received information that answered my questions about employment</b> |                 |                |
| Strongly agree  | 269             | 36.1%          |
| Agree   | 329             | 44.2%          |
| Neutral   | 111             | 14.9%          |
| Disagree  | 11              | 1.5%           |
| Strongly disagree   | 21              | 2.8%           |
| Unanswered  | 4               | 0.5%           |
| <b>Materials provided useful content</b>                                  |                 |                |
| Strongly agree  | 263             | 35.3%          |
| Agree   | 323             | 43.4%          |
| Neutral   | 121             | 16.2%          |
| Disagree  | 20              | 2.7%           |
| Strongly disagree   | 18              | 2.4%           |
| <b>Trainer(s) were knowledgeable and helpful</b>                          |                 |                |
| Strongly agree  | 362             | 48.6%          |
| Agree   | 267             | 35.8%          |
| Neutral   | 90              | 12.1%          |
| Disagree  | 9               | 1.2%           |
| Strongly disagree   | 17              | 2.3%           |

**Table 32 continued**

| <b>I have a better sense of what it takes to obtain, maintain a job</b> |            |             |
|---|------------|-------------|
| Strongly agree  | 349        | 46.8%       |
| Agree   | 261        | 35.0%       |
| Neutral   | 108        | 14.5%       |
| Disagree  | 7          | 0.9%        |
| Strongly disagree   | 20         | 2.7%        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>745</b> | <b>100%</b> |

### **Training items to spend more time on**

Participants were asked to provide feedback on what they thought trainers should have spent more time on ( $n=745$ ). About 22 percent of respondents indicated more time should be spent working on resumes, applications, and cover letters ( $n=48$ ). Another 20 percent of respondents wanted more time to be spent practicing interviewing techniques ( $n=44$ ). Participants said, *“I feel that working on developing a résumé would be very useful because a resume is a must have,”* and *“I would’ve liked to get more feedback on my résumé.”* Regarding interviews, one respondent said *“I felt that I needed more practice when it comes to how to behave when I am in a job interview.”* Another noted, *“We could have spent a little more time on interview techniques because interviews are nerve-wracking.”*

Multiple training participants indicated that more time should be spent on the following topics:

- Resumes, applications ( $n=48$ )
- Interview techniques ( $n=44$ )
- Money management ( $n=29$ )
- Learning “on the job” skills ( $n=18$ )
- Time management ( $n=16$ )
- YEP debit cards ( $n=11$ )
- Communication ( $n=9$ )
- Conflict resolution ( $n=7$ )
- Games and activities ( $n=6$ )
- Career planning ( $n=6$ )
- Job searching ( $n=5$ )
- Getting to know other participants ( $n=3$ )
- Learning about specific placements ( $n=3$ )
- Dressing appropriately for a job ( $n=3$ )
- Working with children ( $n=3$ )
- Computer skills ( $n=3$ )
- Self-esteem ( $n=2$ )

### **Training items to spend less time on**

The participants were asked to provide feedback on the things the training should have spent less time on ( $n=745$ ). Multiple training participants indicated that less time should be spent on the following topics:

- Dressing appropriately for a job ( $n=45$ )
- Hygiene ( $n=31$ )
- Modules and trainings ( $n=23$ )
- Computer skills ( $n=19$ )
- Resumes and applications ( $n=11$ )
- Book work ( $n=10$ )
- Discussion ( $n=9$ )
- “Common sense” things ( $n=8$ )
- Joking around/getting off-topic ( $n=8$ )

- Workplace behavior (n=8)
- Self-marketing (n=8)
- Money management (n=7)
- Communication (n=5)
- Career planning (n=5)
- Power points (n=4)
- Icebreakers (n=3)
- Time management (n=3)
- Conflict resolution (n=3)
- Games and activities (n=2)
- Interview techniques (n=2)

### Like best about the training

Youth participants were asked to indicate what they liked best about the training (n=745). About half of the participants (51 percent) mentioned interacting with peers, trainers, and mentors as what they liked best (n=348). Specifically, 95 respondents highlighted the activities and role plays as their favorite part of the training. Participants said, *“I really liked the mock session when we had to interview each other,” “I liked the different activities we did to understand certain situations,”* and, *“The thing I liked the most was the role playing we did.”* Another 81 participants specifically indicated they most enjoyed the teamwork and group discussions, with one youth commenting, *“What I like is the respect we had for one another’s answers.”* Other participants stated they liked *“working as a team and getting to know new people and see different points of view”* and *“we could speak on different topics in a personal and professional manner.”*

Many respondents (about 40 percent) noted that they most liked learning job readiness and life skills (n=269). One respondent noted, *“They taught us different things about how to get a job and how to make a career,”* while another appreciated *“that they explained how to get employed.”* Another youth shared, *“I learned how to properly be prepared in the workforce.”*

Many youth participants enjoyed working with and learning from the adults leading the sessions: 99 youth indicated that mentors and trainers were what they liked best about the training. Participants noted that the mentors and trainers *“were very understanding and willing to help,” “had great knowledge about the subject,”* and that they *“take the time to help us understand/discuss anything we don’t understand and genuinely want to help make each one of us better.”* One youth further explained, *“The mentors also gave examples of what goes on in their lives and work environment.”* Another shared, *“The instructors kept the sessions professional and fun at the same time.”* And another youth noted, *“The information and knowledge mentors offered wasn’t the same stuff people [had] been saying, it was real.”*

Multiple training participants indicated they liked the following aspects of the training the best (n=745):

- Learning job readiness/ life skills (n=152)
- Activities/ role plays/ games (n=95)
- Teamwork/ group discussion (n=81)
- Meeting new people/ making friends (n=73)
- Working with mentors (n=57)
- Learning interview techniques (n=43)
- The trainers (n=42)
- Learning how to do resumes (n=33)
- Organization of training (n=20)

- Food (n=14)
- Learning about money management (n=13)
- Learning communication techniques (n=13)
- Having fun (n=11)
- Getting to work and make money (n=10)
- The workbook (n=8)
- Learning time management (n=8)
- Learning about dressing professionally (n=8)
- Conflict resolution module (n=7)

## Suggestions to improve the training

Participants in YEP job readiness training were asked to offer suggestions to improve the training (n=745). Many youth (35 percent) said there was nothing that could improve the training and used positive words to describe the training such as “good,” “fine,” “wonderful,” “helpful,” and “great.” One participant shared, *“Everything turned out great. The info given was a big help especially now that I am job hunting.”* Another mentioned, *“I liked that they were fun, and not only about the information. They made it interesting.”* And another participant stated, *“There is nothing to improve because it was a great training.”*

A total of 131 participants suggested that the trainings should include more interactive activities. One participant explained, *“a little less stationery, being more active, group work,”* and another mentioned, *“Less lecture time, more interactive.”* Other participants suggested *“more team building activities”* and *“to do more hands-on activities.”* Of the 131 who wanted more activities, 24 wanted them to specifically focus on “on the job” skills. For example, one youth shared, *“I would suggest to improve training by spending less time on the book and do more activities on how to act in a job.”*

About 11 percent of participants (n=69) suggested that the trainings *“be more organized.”* One youth suggested, *“let us know things in advance or maybe have a schedule ready.”*

About 9 percent of youth (n=56) wanted to spend more time on the training in general or on certain aspects of the training (usually resumes and cover letters), while another 9 percent of respondents (n=57) wanted the training to be shorter or to spend less time on certain aspects (usually lectures and bookwork).

A number of youth expressed concern that the trainings were not managed properly (n=25). Explained one participant, *“If my coworkers would talk less, they would get something out of the program.”* Others indicated their desire for *“less side conversations”* and *“more control over lingering conversations.”*

A few youth (n=6) suggested separating participants by age group: *“Separate high school from college to focus more on needs such as internships rather than résumés, etc.”*

Multiple training participants suggested the following to improve the training:

- Nothing ( $n=228$ )
- More interactive activities ( $n=131$ )
- More organized/ prepared ( $n=69$ )
- Less time in general or on certain aspects ( $n=57$ )
- More time in general or on certain aspects ( $n=56$ )
- Fewer distractions/ more classroom management ( $n=25$ )
- Improve trainer/mentors ( $n=25$ )
- Fix pay/debit card issues ( $n=13$ )
- More fun ( $n=11$ )
- Change information presented ( $n=11$ )
- Provide refreshments ( $n=11$ )
- Different trainings for different age groups ( $n=6$ )
- More flexible scheduling ( $n=5$ )
- Change locations ( $n=3$ )

### **Conclusions on job readiness training**

Overall, the series of youth job readiness trainings were well received. All participants who completed an evaluation form ( $n=745$ ) agreed with the positive statements on the training, trainers, and what they learned. Many youth ( $n=174$ ) wanted to spend more time on building their skills in interviewing, developing a resume, time and money management, communication techniques, and conflict resolution. Some youth wanted to spend less time on dressing appropriately for a job ( $n=45$ ) and hygiene ( $n=31$ ). Most of the youth ( $n=633$ ) expressed that their favorite parts of the training were learning job readiness skills and interacting with peers, trainers, and mentors. Their suggestions for how to improve the trainings reflect an appreciation for learning skills through interactive activities and lessons.

### **Mentor training**

A total of 137 mentors completed training evaluation forms following their mentoring training. Mentors were asked to rate their agreement with five statements on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Overall, participants agreed with the positive statements provided about the training seminar. A total of 88 percent agreed or strongly agreed that the training was well designed which included pacing and adequate time for questions and answers. The average rating of the training was 4.26 out of 5. Most training participants (89 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that they received information that answered questions about mentoring (average of 4.31). Eighty-nine percent agreed that the materials and handouts provided useful content both in the session and for future reference (average rating of 4.36 out of 5). Almost all (91 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that their trainer was knowledgeable and helpful and had the highest average agreement rating of 4.5. A majority of participants of the training (84 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that they had a better sense of what it takes to be a mentor (average rating of 4.35). *Table 33* depicts the ratings of their agreement about statements on the training seminar.

**Table 33**  
**Ratings of mentor training**

| <b>The training was well-designed</b>                                    | <b><i>n</i></b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|--|-----------------|----------------|
| Strongly agree   | 57              | 41.6%          |
| Agree  | 63              | 46.0%          |
| Neutral  | 11              | 8.0%           |
| Disagree   | 1               | 0.7%           |
| Strongly disagree  | 3               | 2.2%           |
| Unknown  | 2               | 1.5%           |
| <b>I received information that answered my questions about mentoring</b> |                 |                |
| Strongly agree   | 64              | 46.7%          |
| Agree  | 57              | 41.6%          |
| Neutral  | 7               | 5.1%           |
| Disagree   | 3               | 2.2%           |
| Strongly disagree  | 3               | 2.2%           |
| Unknown  | 3               | 2.2%           |
| <b>Materials provided useful content</b>                                 |                 |                |
| Strongly agree   | 71              | 51.8%          |
| Agree  | 51              | 37.2%          |
| Neutral  | 7               | 5.1%           |
| Disagree   | 2               | 1.5%           |
| Strongly disagree  | 4               | 2.9%           |
| Unknown  | 2               | 1.5%           |
| <b>Trainer was knowledgeable and helpful</b>                             |                 |                |
| Strongly agree   | 86              | 62.8%          |
| Agree  | 39              | 28.5%          |
| Neutral  | 5               | 3.6%           |
| Disagree   | 1               | 0.7%           |
| Strongly disagree  | 4               | 2.9%           |
| Unknown  | 2               | 1.5%           |
| <b>I have a better sense of what it takes to be a mentor</b>             |                 |                |
| Strongly agree   | 75              | 54.7%          |
| Agree  | 40              | 29.2%          |
| Neutral  | 13              | 9.5%           |
| Disagree   | 3               | 2.2%           |
| Strongly disagree  | 3               | 2.2%           |
| Unknown  | 3               | 2.2%           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>137</b>      | <b>100%</b>    |

**Training items to spend more, less time on**

Training participants were asked to share if there was anything that they would like to spend more time on (*n*=137). Responses were put in the following categories:

- More time with youth (*n*=13)
- Dealing with problems, crises, emergencies (*n*=10)
- More mentor training (*n*=8)
- Policies and procedures (*n*=6)
- Communication with and understanding youth (*n*=4)
- Resumes (*n*=3)
- Time management (*n*=3)

Many (22 percent) indicated there was “*nothing*” ( $n=31$ ). Thirteen respondents wanted to spend more time with their mentees during training and before mentoring began. Some said they wanted to get to know their mentee better prior to employment, learn their needs, and make them feel more comfortable.

Ten respondents wanted to spend more time on how to handle problems, crises, or emergencies. They expressed the need to learn proper protocols for addressing accidents, reports of child abuse, or if a youth is disruptive or disrespectful. One person explained they wanted more time on, “*how to handle conflict within workplace; proper grievance procedures.*”

Similarly, six individuals responded that they would like more time on policies and procedures. One reported to spend more time on, “*the paperwork and everything that has to be worked on and signed. It could all be a bit much.*”

Eight mentors wanted more mentor training; as one person commented, “*I believe the mentors should have went through more training as a group before engaging with the youth.*”

Four people mentioned more time on communicating with, and understanding, youth. They wanted more on ways to get youth to open up and talk. Three expressed that youth needed more time on résumé building and a few shared that the mentors needed help with their own time management.

Some respondents (23 percent) indicated that there was nothing that they should spend less time on ( $n=31$ ). One training participant said, “*No, everything discussed is important.*” Another said, “*No, we spent the right amount of time on all the topics.*” Two people mentioned each of the following to spend less time on: dress code for youth; problems, conflicts, and crises; and role plays or scenarios.

### **Like best about the mentor training**

Training participants shared what they liked best about the mentor training and their comments were categorized ( $n=137$ ):

- Everything ( $n=31$ )
- Building relationship, interactions ( $n=28$ )
- Trainer ( $n=19$ )
- Role play ( $n=9$ )
- Interacting with youth ( $n=5$ )
- Learning about how to interact with youth ( $n=5$ )
- Boundaries ( $n=4$ )
- Location ( $n=3$ )
- Job readiness ( $n=3$ )

Some respondents (23 percent) shared that they liked everything about the training ( $n=31$ ). One person shared that “*everything was well explained*” and another person noted “*everything we learned was very interesting.*” One respondent wrote, “*The training was well designed, understandable, organized, and the trainer was very knowledgeable.*”

Twenty eight individuals liked the interactions or relationship building at the training the best. One respondent stated, *“I liked sharing experiences with other mentors, working together by sharing techniques and opinions.”* Nineteen training participants liked their trainer the best. One person shared, *“I liked that the trainer was personable. He was very helpful and knowledgeable about the program.”* Another nine liked the role plays, seven liked interacting with youth, and five liked learning about how to interact with youth. Four respondents mentioned liking learning about how to have boundaries with youth.

### **Suggestions to improve the mentor training**

Mentor training participants were asked to share suggestions for improving the training ( $n=137$ ). The following were suggestions to improve the training:

- Longer ( $n=11$ )
- Role play ( $n=8$ )
- Organization ( $n=7$ )
- More engaging ( $n=5$ )
- More interaction ( $n=5$ )
- Shorter ( $n=4$ )
- Improve timing ( $n=3$ )
- More time training youth ( $n=3$ )

Many (30 percent) said *nothing* was needed to improve the training. Eleven people thought the training itself should be longer. Eight individuals wanted to have more role plays in the training. As one respondent shared he or she wanted, *“More situations that require the mentors to effectively think about the best way to handle youth and unique situations.”* Another wanted to *“practice with more negative situations with youth.”* Seven people thought the training could have been more organized; five thought the training could have been more engaging. Five participants wanted to have more interaction. One wrote, *“Make more interactions so it's not just lecturing/receiving information, more participation.”*

### **Additional mentor training topics**

Mentor training participants indicated the following topics for training ( $n=137$ ):

- Mentor skills ( $n=21$ )
- Job readiness ( $n=11$ )
- No additional topics ( $n=11$ )
- Dealing with youth at risk or with special needs ( $n=5$ )
- Understanding youth challenges ( $n=5$ )

Twenty-one of those who attended the mentoring training said that they would like to have additional mentor skills. Skills included how to interact with a mentee, build rapport, communicate including conversation topics, make good first impressions, establish boundaries, and learn their role as mentor. One person indicated wanting more on, *“being prepared; boundaries; dealing with inactive parents (who aid in making inactive youth).”* Another wanted more training on, *“how to enforce the mentee/mentor sessions, how to use incentives to convince mentees to attend these sessions.”* Finally, one wanted, *“Interviewing skills, communication with youth, how to become firm with the youth.”*

Eleven participants did not identify any additional topics. One person stated, “*Nothing, I think everything was well-explained.*” Another 11 participants wanted more on job readiness for youth including dressing for work, time management, money management, resume, and job applications. Five people wanted to know about dealing with youth who are at-risk or have special resource needs. Five expressed having a training topic of youth challenges such as gangs, drugs, and technology. For example, one person stated, “*Cultural studies of modern day youth problems, music, pop culture, triggers, etc.*” Another wrote, “*What the youth should know about drugs and how to stay clean. Also, more about staying safe on the Internet.*”

### **Conclusions on mentor training**

Overall, the mentor training was highly rated and participants felt the training was well-designed, answered their questions, provided useful content, had good trainers, and gave them a better sense of what it was to be a mentor. It was recommended that the training allow for more interaction between youth and mentors. In addition, training participants wanted to learn how to interact with youth, to understand their problems and issues, and know how to deal with problems, emergencies, and crises. They expressed the need to learn proper protocols for addressing accidents, reports of child abuse, or if a youth is disruptive or disrespectful. Effective mentoring programs outline whom a mentor or a mentee should contact when problems arise; how to handle complaints; and how to resolve problems in relationships or bring relationships to a close (MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, 2005). Some thought the training should be longer, more organized, engaging, and interactive; however, many did not think the training needed improvement.

# Implications for policy and practice

## Focus on youth in-need, at-risk

The pre- and post-assessments revealed that youth who generally scored lower on the pre-assessment had improvements in mean scores on the post-assessment on attitudes toward violence, self-esteem, and attitudes toward employment, as well as a smaller decrease in conflict resolution than the higher scoring youth. This indicates that those at-risk, presumably in the low score group, would benefit more from the program than those less at-risk, presumably in the high score group.

The program did not target at-risk youth, but any youth in those communities were able to apply. Therefore, a more targeted approach toward those more at-risk may be warranted. According to Koball et.al, “There is no official definition of at-risk youth. We use the term to refer to young people for whom the probability of successfully transitioning to adulthood and achieving economic self-sufficiency is low” (2011, p.3). Youth at-risk who are living in low income communities, exposed to family and community violence, and living in unstable homes, have greater need due to inadequate education, lower-quality schools, lack of employment opportunities, and exposure to violence which can cause physical and psychological harm and skill deficiencies (Koball et. al, 2011). Giving priority to those who are more at-risk would concentrate limited funding to make the biggest impact on those most in need.

Although all youth living in communities with high violence and poverty may be considered at-risk, the program may want to prioritize youth who are not accepted into, or enrolled in, college. It could be argued that they are less at-risk and less in need of the program. In addition, many college-bound participants did not finish the program. According to administrative data, 46 youth or an average of four youth per community were terminated from the program due to returning to school. According to the exit survey, many program participants were planning on attending college in the fall following YEP participation in the summer ( $n=328$ ). Also, in the surveys, both youth and employers indicated that jobs offers were extended after the program, but many college students were unable to take advantage of the opportunity. The number of youth who participated in previous years might also be limited as a means of exposing more youth to YEP.

In addition, the selection process may have attributed to high mean scores before and after the program. These youth took the initiative to sign up for a summer jobs program, so they may be already high scorers on measures of attitudes toward employment, attitudes toward violence, conflict resolution, and self-esteem. Lead agencies should be instructed to prioritize the section of youth in need or at-risk for participation in the program.

Applications for employment can ask the following questions in order to prioritize selection:

- Are you enrolled in high school or admitted/enrolled in college?
- Do you have any prior criminal arrest history? (Note: this will not bar you from the program)
- Do you have other opportunities for summer employment?
- Are you able to commit to X hours through X date?

- Have you held a job before?
- Have you ever participated in the YEP program before?

## **Enhance employment component**

The YEP program adhered to several of the principles of effective youth employment programs (Partee, 2003) including providing caring, knowledgeable adults; stressing importance of community and community service; and encouraging youth as resources in community services. However, there is room for improvement in some areas such as implementation quality and work-based learning. On implementation quality, the program should enhance its training, improve payroll system, and use data, such as those contained in this report, to improve program performance.

The job readiness training could be enhanced through more interactive activities and lessons. According to many youth participants ( $n=174$ ), trainers should spend more time on building concrete job skills such as interviewing, developing a resume, time and money management, communication techniques, and conflict resolution.

According to the pre- and post-assessment, there was a reduction in positive attitudes toward employment. After having a job (likely a first job) youth participants may not have a favorable view on employment, especially if the jobs did not match with their interests. On the exit survey, a number of youth participants ( $n=75$ ) indicated that their job was not a good match for their skills and interests. The youth explained that it did not fit with their future employment plans, academic plans, personality, or interests; or the job was too simple or boring. When and if possible, matching youth with jobs they are interested in would help engage them, make the experience more meaningful, and likely improve attitudes toward employment. In addition, mentors and staff should focus on encouraging education as a way to be able to work in jobs they are interested in or at a higher level with a higher salary.

Another reason for a less favorable view on employment was that CAPs' payroll system did not pay them on time, which should be fixed. Program Coordinators and Managers suggested not having an external agency administer payroll, but have the Lead Agencies each handle their own youth's payroll. In addition, some disliked the use of Chase Bank cards as the form of payment due to fees attached to their use. The program should not use debit cards with fees attached and ensure youth participants are paid on time.

## **Enhance mentoring component**

According to the pre- and post-assessment, there was a reduction in attitudes toward violence, conflict resolution, and self-esteem. If the program is to make a difference in those areas, all mentors should be trained on discussing issues of conflict, self-esteem, and violence, and make a concerted effort to talk about those issues with their mentees. Mentors can have an impact on youth violence prevention (Katz, Heisterkamp & Fleming, 2011). Mentors can teach young people skills to manage and prevent escalation of disagreements to violence (conflict resolution) and develop the self-esteem to choose to engage in nonviolence methods to handle conflicts (Gellert, 2010).

## **Enhance program evaluation**

To the extent possible, survey administration should be improved. Program staff should administer surveys to youth at a time free from distractions, administer them the same way each time, and ensure there is enough time allotted. In order to improve administration, researchers should introduce themselves early on in the program, as well as offer repeated instruction to staff who administer surveys. To increase the completion of surveys and pre- and post-assessments, researchers can encourage distribution and explain how results will be used and shared with others. To improve the matching of the pre- and post-assessments, the forms can have boxes instead of blank spaces to further point out the number of characters that need to be provided and the directions can be highlighted. All forms can be posted on the internal program website along with answers to frequently asked questions about the evaluation.

In order to learn who fared better in the program, the surveys should ask the community name and the age of youth participants when applicable. Lead Agencies can be notified as to which communities have provided completed surveys and which have not in order to hold them accountable. It would be good to know how employers heard about the program in order to learn what recruiting methods worked best. Finally, questions on pre- and post-program police involvement and questions on perceptions of neighborhood safety and violence can be added.

# Conclusion

According to administrative data submitted by the Lead Agencies, a total of 4,446 youth applied to the program, 1,929 were accepted, and 1,920 were assigned a mentor. A total of 1,686 completed job readiness training and 1,804 were placed in jobs.

The youth participants of the program were very satisfied with the job readiness trainings. Youth enjoyed learning job readiness skills, as well as interacting with peers, trainers, and mentors. However, youth suggested spending more time on building interviewing skills, developing a resume, time and money management, communication techniques, and conflict resolution.

Youth participant scores on attitudes toward employment, attitudes toward violence, conflict resolution and self-esteem were measured before and after the program. There were small decreases in mean scores; however, youth participants had high mean scores at the beginning and end of the program. There were increases in mean scores on some questions and in some communities.

Most youth participants were satisfied with their job tasks, job supervision, their mentor, and the program overall. Most thought their job was a good match for them and there they learned skills like speaking and listening skills and attendance. Most youth were placed in either clerical or customer service jobs. A majority used the skills of time management; dressing appropriately for the job; and professional communication. Most YEP participants thought their work benefitted the agency or company for which they were employed. Most youth participants would attend school in the fall of 2013—42 percent in high school and 38 percent in college. Youth program participants developed meaningful relationships with their mentors. Participants recommended improvements to the payroll system, more pay, more hours, and more organization to the program.

Mentors in the program were very satisfied with the mentor training. However, they recommended more interaction between youth and mentors, learning how to interact and understand the problems of youth, and learning protocols for handling problems arising during the course of the program. Some thought the training could be better organized and interactive, but most did not think it needed improvement. Mentors surveyed at the end of the program thought the program including mentoring, employment, and staff support was good. In the exit survey, mentors recommended that there be improvements with training and payroll. Mentors responded that they had a good and meaningful relationship with their mentees.

Overall, Coordinators and Managers surveyed at the end of the program were pleased with the program, but some mentioned significant issues with payroll. Some recommended increasing the pay, hours, and length of the program, as well as creating more organization and direction.

A survey of employers revealed varied experiences with the program; however, most were satisfied with the program. Some thought the youth could be better prepared for work, such as in the areas of rules, conduct, commitment, and work quality. Some employers suggested pre-screening youth or offering incentives or disincentives/consequences for poor performance. Over

half of employers said they would either hire youth or hire them if able and almost all indicated interest in participating in the program again.

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# Appendix A Pre- and post-assessment

## YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM Pre- and Post-Assessment

Before program start       After program disenrollment

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Please create a unique ID number using the first letter of your first name and the first letter of your last name followed by your date of birth. For example, John Smith born January 1, 1995 would be  
**ID# JS 01-01-1995.**

1. Your ID #: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

**Please circle the response that best matches how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.**

### About employment ...

|    |  | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|----|--|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 1. | I am not quite ready to handle a part-time job.    | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 2. | I have enough skills to do a job well.             | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 3. | I know I can succeed at work.                      | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 4. | I would take almost any kind of job to get money.  | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 5. | I admire people who get by without working.        | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 6. | The only good job is one that pays a lot of money. | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 7. | Working hard at a job will pay off in the end.     | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 8. | Most jobs are dull and boring.                     | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |

### About violence ...

|    |   | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|----|---|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 1. | If I walk away from a fight, I'd be a coward ("chicken").                       | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 2. | I don't need to fight because there are other ways to deal with being mad.      | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 3. | It's okay to hit someone who hits you first.                                    | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 4. | If a kid teases me, I usually cannot get him/her to stop unless I hit him/her.  | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 5. | If I really want to, I can usually talk someone out of trying to fight with me. | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 6. | If I refuse to fight, my friends will think I'm afraid.                         | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |

**About conflict ...**

|     |  | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|-----|--|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 1.  | Sometimes you have to physically fight to get what you want. | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 2.  | Being a part of a team is fun.                               | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 3.  | Helping others makes me feel good.                           | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 4.  | I get mad easily.  | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 5.  | I do whatever I feel like doing.                             | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 6.  | When I am mad, I yell at people.                             | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 7.  | I always like to do my part.                                 | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 8.  | It is important to do your part in helping at home.          | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 9.  | Sometimes I break things on purpose.                         | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 10. | If I feel like it, I hit people.                             | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 11. | Helping others is very satisfying.                           | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 12. | I like to help around the house.                             | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |

**About self-esteem ...**

|     |  | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|-----|--|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 1.  | I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal par with others. | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 2.  | I feel that I have a number of good qualities.                           | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 3.  | All in all I am inclined to feel that I'm a failure.                     | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 4.  | I am able to do things as well as most other people.                     | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 5.  | I feel I do not have much to be proud of.                                | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 6.  | I take a positive attitude toward myself.                                | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 7.  | On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.                                | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 8.  | I wish I could have more respect for myself.                             | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 9.  | I certainly feel useless at times.                                       | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |
| 10. | At times I think that I am no good at all.                               | 1              | 2     | 3       | 4        | 5                 |



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