

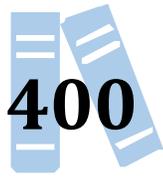


U.S. Department of Labor Summer Jobs and Beyond: Career Pathways for Youth

Grow Detroit's Young Talent (GDYT)

<https://www.descmiworks.com/>

Period of Performance: March 2016 – June 2018



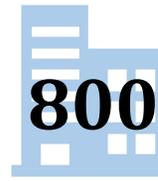
in-school youth served



out-of-school youth served



participants attained a Measurable Skill Gain



participants received work experience



participants placed in unsubsidized employment



participants placed in post-secondary education/training

Overview of the Program: Through grant funds, Detroit Employment Solutions (DESC) was able to implement its Grow Detroit's Young Talent (GDYT) Career Pathways Initiative Program. A key component of the program was the founding of the Youth Career Center (YCC), a physical space designed specifically for Detroit opportunity youth which served 400 out-of-school participants, both recruits and walk-ins. The YCC was used to host an online alternative high school, job training programs, clothing closet, weekly work readiness workshops, and mental health and an array of supportive services.

Over the duration of the grant program, participants received:

- Career pathway and workforce training guidance
- High school completion/GED training
- Connections to college and university opportunities, including ways to pay for school
- Connections to vocational training opportunities and paid employment opportunities
- Life and career coaching using trained counselors, restorative practices, and trauma-informed care models
- Leadership development opportunities, including participation on a Youth Council

Eight hundred in-school and out-of-school GDYT participants entered a paid work experience, all of which incorporated an academic and/or occupational education component. Some of these work experiences were for summer employment and others utilized cooperative education, pre-apprenticeship, internship, and job shadow models.

The grant afforded an opportunity for GDYT staff to work more intently with youth to address individual barriers to employment while remaining engaged with the needs of local employers, creating a supportive environment, and optimizing participants' preparation and qualifications for the jobs that are available in the community.

While GDYT staff typically focus their efforts on youth services, the grant supported staff working more deliberately with employers to understand their needs and requirements and then designed programming to meet those needs. Staff also attended several job fairs that helped leverage relationships in the community and assisted in the acquisition of referrals for various job opportunities. Lastly, the Youth Career Center offered free space for employers to host weekly hiring events, which encouraged participant recruitment as well.

Local businesses, entrepreneurs and other stakeholders helped to design work readiness curricula that was adapted to a digital format for ease of training GDYT youth. A digital badge is a validated indicator of accomplishment, skill, quality, or interest that can be earned in many learning environments. Open digital badging makes it easy for anyone to issue, earn, and display badges across the web. The purpose was to increase participants' skills and develop new ones that can translate to a higher caliber of workplace performance, ultimately leading to permanent employment opportunities. Over 500 youth used the digital badging platform to demonstrate retention of work readiness content that was delivered via online modules regarding professionalism, team work, financial literacy, dependability and behavioral health. Participants earned over 1,000 digital badges as validation of their display of knowledge in these content areas.

Program Highlights:

- ***Recruitment Strategies:*** DESC partnered with a local coding and Information Technology company to construct a web-based platform which youth and young adults can access via a smartphone, computer, or tablet. The site can be easily converted into an application for ease of use and affords users the opportunity to search for basic services, as well as health-related and legal services. All content is geared specifically towards Detroit youth and lists educational, cultural, and financial events that target this population.

The company utilized the expertise of GDYT participants to help design, build, and deploy the site. These youth were employed during the 2018 summer employment program, Grow Detroit's Young Talent. As a result, GDYT participants gained income, hands-on work experience, and an increased knowledge of programs and services in and around the city that support them.

- ***Partnership Strategies:*** DESC contracted with City Connect Detroit (CCD) to serve as the 2018 Summer Youth Employment Coordinator. CCD sub-contracted 87 youth service agencies to serve as Summer Employment Program Providers, managing 50-250 youth each. Partnerships also included the United Way for Southeastern Michigan, which played an integral role in connecting their Linked Learning high school students to both subsidized and unsubsidized employment opportunities. Linked Learning students were placed in experiences that correlated with their academic instruction plan and/or career track. Additional partnerships with a variety of Michigan colleges, universities, and community colleges enabled DESC to hire college-level participants to serve as team leaders and mentors during the summer youth employment program.

- **Work Experience Activities:** Throughout the duration of the grant, a total of 265 GDYT participants, including 65 out-of-school youth and 200 in-school youth, received training and/or educational instruction leading to permanent employment. Partner employers included: Walgreens, DTE Energy, Great Lakes Water Authority, The Detroit News, Morrey's Contracting, Detroit Public Schools, Jefferson Chevrolet, Detroit Manufacturing Systems, Detroit Police Department, Applebee's, Guardian Alarm, The Detroit Tigers, Block by Block, Quicken Loans, and local food service businesses.
- **Leveraging Support (outside of WIOA resources, monetary/in-kind):** DESC has partnered with some integral players in the Opportunity Youth space. Some of which include the University of Michigan leaning expertise in the area of data collection and analysis. Data Driven Detroit has assisted in conducting a landscape analysis to document the existing ecosystem of organizations serving Opportunity Youth in Detroit, with a focus on identifying ideal potential candidates for ongoing engagement in this project.
- **Community Impact:** There have been several positive impacts to the community as a result of this grant. The first has been the development of a comprehensive data collection plan to identify and better serve Opportunity Youth throughout Detroit. In addition, the project has spurred a growth of digital badging to recognize job skill attainment throughout Detroit and has helped employers to understand the importance of endorsing badges. Also, the Youth Advisory Council continues to become stronger, luring some of Detroit's most vibrant and passionate youth who are eager to co-lead this work. Steps taken to incorporate out-of-school youth into the program have resulted in more comprehensive wrap-around services being embedded into the program moving forward. Those services include: Mobile Dentist - providing free dental services to participants and their families that included teeth cleaning and x-rays; Mobile Vision - providing free eye exams to students along with free eyeglasses; Talent Tours - Providing opportunities to tour Detroit Manufacturing, Quicken Loans, Little Caesars Arena; College Tours - Providing opportunities to tour Wayne State University, Henry Ford Community College, WCCCD, Schoolcraft College; Counseling Services - Best Solutions Counseling Agency partnering with the program to provide trauma-informed care counseling to youth. This includes individual and group counseling. Counselors have helped youth identify goals, barriers, and potential opportunities for growth.

DESC leveraged public, private and philanthropic funds to support summer youth wages and programming costs. Substantial program services were leveraged via an existing WIOA Youth contractor, SER Metro Detroit, including staff time, program space and work experiences. Several employer partners provided paid work experiences for participants. DESC also leveraged \$25,000 in funding from an Annie E. Casey initiative to support recruitment and retention efforts for our Opportunity Youth population. Most importantly, DESC leveraged our role on the Mayor's Workforce Development Board (MWDB) to advocate for the inclusion of the Opportunity Youth voice, which ultimately influenced the creation of a Youth Sub-Committee. As part of a city-wide workforce strategy, the sub-committee has encouraged the MWDB to mark services geared to this population a priority.