



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

EmployIndy: YouthWorks Indy

www.projectindy.net

Period of Performance: May 2016 – September 2018



239

in-school youth served



283

out-of-school youth served



502

participants received work experience



33

participants placed in unsubsidized employment



49

participants placed in post-secondary education/training

Location: Indianapolis, Indiana

Overview of the Program: EmployIndy's YouthWorks Indy project is the City's first unified summer jobs program which provides meaningful opportunities for youth workers with limited work experiences, plus entry to a career pathway through placement in unsubsidized employment or post-secondary education or training. YouthWorks Indy's goal is to enhance existing summer employment programs and expand work readiness/employability skills training and work experiences throughout the year in high-poverty, high-crime Indianapolis neighborhoods. YouthWorks Indy's model is a six week program, which includes one week of job preparation and career assessment, followed by five weeks of work experience. EmployIndy and the YouthWorks Indy partners collectively brought over fifty employers to the table to provide employment opportunities to the Marion County youth and young adults.

At the conclusion of the grant, the project had enrolled 522 youth between the summer program and the year-round program, with 239 in-school youth (summer program) and 283 out-of-school youth (year-round). Despite the grant ending, the project continues to strengthen its outreach efforts. Companies like FedEx, Crew Carwash, McDonalds, YMCA, Indy Parks, the Indianapolis Zoo, Starbucks, Sheraton, and the Westin continue to pledge to hire youth and young adults through the YouthWorks Indy portal, which connects employers with young adult job seekers. Over 5,300 participants signed up through the YouthWorks Indy portal which gave them access to 126 employers offering 3,042 unsubsidized jobs. Of the 5,384 registered participants, 4,126 were interested in hearing more about EmployIndy's employability skills curriculum, Job Ready Indy.

Program Highlights:

- ***Recruitment Strategies***

Through the support of the Mayor of Indianapolis, EmployIndy and WorkHere, YouthWorks Indy was able to create an employment resource portal, www.projectindy.net, to make it easier for youth and young adults to connect to jobs in their local community, minimizing the transportation barriers that some youth face in connecting with employment opportunities.

- ***Partnership Strategies***

Leadership at the top has allowed the program to grow and strengthen each year. The partnership with Mayor Joe Hogsett has been key to the success of the program. In addition to engaging government officials, including the Mayor and a U.S. Congressman, the program has used local news media to increase awareness. They have also leveraged connections with regional employers through the local Chamber of Commerce and a bipartisan committee made up of public-private partners helped create strong partnership strategies.

- ***Work Experience Activities***

One of the biggest successes for YouthWorks Indy was the overwhelming response they received from employers and community-based organizations to provide employment opportunities to youth and young adults. The YouthWorks Indy jobs portal provided a way to reach a broad spectrum of employers interested in supporting youth workforce development through work experience.

- ***Leveraging Support (outside of WIOA resources, monetary/in-kind)***

The overall program approach is designed to leverage the strong community of partners with the city. The program is located in the heart of the IndyEast Promise Zone and offers a full assortment of wrap-around services including child care, housing assistance, clothing assistance, and educational opportunities. Career coaches assigned to youth provide weekly updates to all community partners on participant progress to ensure wrap-around services are provided in a timely manner. In addition, community listening sessions were conducted with community- and faith-based organizations, service providers, employers, and educators to develop strategic priorities to help reduce barriers for individuals living in poverty and to increase opportunities for employers to meet their demand for low- to mid-skilled workers.

- ***Community Impact***

Disconnected youth and young adults in the IndyEast Promise Zone, Martin Luther King, Butler-Tarkington, Martindale-Brightwood, and Far Eastside neighborhoods, include youth who are homeless, in foster care, involved in the criminal justice system, and/or neither employed nor enrolled in post-secondary training or education. The YouthWorks Indy project is part of the long-term goal for the City of Indianapolis to enhance local programming and scale capacity in a unified program, providing employment for 4,000 youth and young adults by 2019.