Connecticut Youth Employment Programs
Outline

• Overview of Connecticut’s Workforce Structure
• Connecticut youth program overview
• Current services
• Youth Voice, Youth Survey
• COVID adaptations
• State Partnerships...Mental health innovations
• Successes
Connecticut’s Workforce Structure

We develop a competitive workforce to meet the needs of our partners in Connecticut businesses by creating opportunities through education, training and job readiness. Workforce Boards Keep Connecticut Competitive.
Youth Employment Funding

~ $5M state general fund
~ $500-700K DCF-DOL Youth Employment & Training, using Chafee and state funds

+funds from DADs, CARES, ARPA for subsidized wages, career awareness and exploration, training, job readiness and supports like bus passes

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act – federal youth program funds: $7.5M
Youth Employment Program
Background in a typical year...
2019

2,000 - 3,000 WORKERS
thousands of youth participate in work activities each year

1,500+ DEMAND
young people are on wait lists, would like to work, or didn’t have all documents needed to work

460+ BUSINESSES
receive subsidized workers -- at no cost to them. This stimulus also offers work experience and resume-building for young people
WIOA Youth

• Serves about 1200 youth per year

• 14 youth program elements:
  - Tutoring, Study Skills Training, and Dropout Prevention; Alternative Secondary School, Paid and Unpaid Work Experience; Occupational Skills Training; Leadership Development; Supportive Services; Adult Mentoring; Follow-up; Guidance and Counseling; Financial Literacy; Entrepreneurial Skills Training; Labor Market Information; Postsecondary Preparation and Transition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Youth</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>$ 1,291,598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central</td>
<td>$ 2,069,889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>$ 1,111,788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Central</td>
<td>$ 1,412,075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest</td>
<td>$ 1,633,881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 7,519,231</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Context: Opportunity Youth

- Prior to pandemic, \( \approx 45,000 \) youth aged 16-24 were not in school or work in Connecticut.
- Since COVID-19, nearly \( \frac{1}{4} \) of those aged 20-24 in labor force filed for unemployment benefits.
• During Great Recession, national unemployment rate for 16-24 year old's was 18.5%
• July 2020, the unemployment rate spiked to 50% for BIPOC youth in the same age group
• Youth most often not eligible for UC & most in this age group also not eligible for COVID stimulus
Current Services and Performance
CT Youth Employment Programs
July 2020 – January 2021

• 2,259 youth participants
• 8% of youth are DCF* involved
• 80% are in high school
• ~80% are new to the program

Youth Participant Earnings

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$1,848,530</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>$818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>$9,378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>$19</td>
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</tbody>
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*Department of Children and Families
July 2020 – January 2021 (WIOA not included)
### Top Jobs for Youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Role</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Virtual Career Awareness/Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Camp, Teaching Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Custodial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Admin, Clerical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>COVID Testing Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Digital, Social Media; Graphic Design, IT Intern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Stock Clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Community Outreach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Food Prep and Service Workers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

May illustrate some value added for COVID childcare capacity crisis
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Sectors for Youth Jobs</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Care/Ed/Camp</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human/Social Serv</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agric/Landscp/Farm</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade/Sales</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
~80% of youth said that *learning itself* – not the paycheck – was what they liked most.

~90% reported being extremely or somewhat satisfied.
What would you like to do when you finish high school, college or current program?

- Go to university: 57%
- Get a good job: 53%
- Graduate from high school: 39%
- Travel: 27%
- Community or technical college: 21%
- Trade/apprenticeship: 11%
What I learned...

- how to apply to scholarships and how to apply for student loans
- how to code programs and games
- a lot about the US 2020 Census and I never knew about that
- a lot about photography and how it connects to food and poverty
- a great deal in regard to entrepreneurship and how to both create and manage my own business
- about some history and how it connects to food and poverty
- how to build a resume in a way that is attractive to companies I might apply to and how to increase my chances of receiving a job
- That whenever comes that time for the job interview, I know what to say and write a thank you letter afterwards, and I'll go far with my strengths
- a lot of new ways to protect myself from COVID-19
Career awareness, exploration & occupational training were **PAID** activities due to COVID. More than 1/2 of participants did remote/ virtual work/training...During COVID
Food assistance was ranked as the #1 type of support needed for youth employment participants, after cash/wages.

Every provider cited concern about mental health of youth participants.
Expanding Partnerships

- Direct referrals to/from DMHAS Young Adult Services/youth providers. YASBIZ is helps young people develop businesses
- CT DOL direct marketing to employers & youth via social media
- Collaborations w/ DADs & CSSD to increase the numbers of justice-involved youth & w/ disabilities
- “ w/ DEEP to recruit seasonal workers
- Enhanced partnerships, supports, trauma-informed trainings for providers build in more equity for marginalized youth
Training: Building in Equity

• Youth Mental Health First Aid for providers and WDBs designed to teach parents, family members, school staff, peers, and others how to help adolescents experiencing mental health/addiction challenges
• This year: mobile crisis services, suicide prevention, Turning Point.Org, racialized trauma + for providers
• Direct training support for YOUTH on mental health, self-care and racialized trauma
Success Stories, Innovations

- EWIB partnerships with AHEC and DEEP
- COVID responsive
- Career pathway oriented; links to WIOA Youth programs
- CWP partnerships with local youth agencies such as Our Piece of the Pie, Ebony Horsewomen, local arts organizations and community mental health agencies
Career Pathway Example: Health Care
What’s Next...

• Collaborations with other state agencies
• Career pathways
• Continued research on best practices across US
• More emphasis and funding for in-demand sector training, mentorship, employer engagement, support for food security

Questions

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