

Effective Pathways Committee Meeting
February 24, 2016 / 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm
United Way (30 Laurel Street, Knox Board Room, 1st floor)

Agenda

- 1:00 pm Introduction
- Welcome and introductions
 - Information sharing
 - Goals for the meeting
- 1:10 pm Brief Update on Career Pathways Digital Map
- Resources
 - Proposed next steps
- 1:30 pm Strengthening Pathways: Messages for the Mayor
- Top three recommendations for strengthening career pathways
- 2:20 pm Summary and Next Steps
- Future meetings / participation
 - Assignments / tasks
- 2:30 pm Adjourn

Handouts

- Committee Meeting Notes, 1/27/16
- Effective Pathways Committee Profile
- Excerpts from Committee Meetings / Reports (potential recommendations)

Effective Pathways Committee Meeting Notes

February 24, 2016 / 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm

Participants

Tony Cherolis (Center for Latino Progress), Ricardo Henriquez (United Way), Lee Hunt (Blue Hills Civic Association), Courtenay Jackson (Urban League), Kim Oliver (CWP), Hector Rivera (OPP), Alice Turner (URISE), and Dave Bechtel (Cross Sector)

Introduction

Participants introduced themselves and gave brief updates on their programs:

- Center for Latino Progress. The Earn-a-Bike program starts this Thursday for youth ages 13 to 19. The program runs 2 nights/week for 8 weeks. Futuros College Prep starts next week. The Center and Blue Hills are proposing a Bike Life program over spring break to reach a larger group of youth who less engaged in programs and connect them to the Summer Youth Employment and Learning Program (SYELP). They are searching for funding for Bike Life.
- Urban League. Youth have organized an event for Black History Month on Thursday, February 25 from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. It features an exhibit, "A Legacy Revealed," with a theme of hallowed ground in Black history at different locations in Hartford.
- Blue Hills. Blue Hills is working with Hartford Public Schools on the renovation of Weaver High School, to build a high-quality high school in North Hartford. This includes consolidation of the feeder schools for the high school, and engaging the community and stakeholders in the process. The goal is to not just re-build the school, but develop a different approach that focuses on careers and engagement of corporations and businesses.
- URISE. The TechPreneurs program engages students from the Journalism and Media Academy in learning about entrepreneurship and starting a technology business.
- OPP. OPP is actively recruiting for the DCF / CSSD Work to Learn program that combines youth development, workforce development, leadership training and financial literacy with Individual Development Accounts with a 1:1 match up to \$1,000 per year. Opportunity Academy is recruiting now for overage, under-credited students for next year's class. There will be 40 students graduating in June. Pathways to Careers (PCI) is recruiting participants for allied health, insurance and finance, and manufacturing. On May 1, OPP is launching a College for America program for seniors at Opportunity High School to be dually enrolled in college, with a goal of earning their high school diploma and associate's degree in 18 months.
- CWP. The SYELP pre-application is online, but it's a slightly different process this year. The priority towns will be determined by census data, and may change based on the data. There is also a difference in the process for Hartford vs. non-Hartford towns. Hartford still has the centralized pre-application process. But in towns outside Hartford, the SYELP providers will recruit their own participants. Kim noted that if non-Hartford youth complete the pre-application, CWP will send this information to the appropriate provider. If organizations are unsure whether to have the youth complete the pre-application (e.g., attends school in Hartford but live outside the city), go ahead and complete the pre-application. Organizations can contact Kelly Fitzgerald (CWP) if they have questions.

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March is a big month for WIOA programs for out-of-school youth. The committee will review program performance data at the end of the month.

Kim was part of the working group for the Mayor's proposed Youth Service Corps. (See below for details on the service corps.)

There is federal funding available for Career Pathways for Youth. CWP is applying for this grant, to enhance summer and school-year employment for in- and out-of-school youth, working with the City and the North Hartford Promise Zone.

Update on Career Pathways Digital Map

Kim Oliver gave a brief update on the resources available and proposed next steps for developing the Career Pathways map. Originally, funding from Aspen supported system improvements (including the development of the career pathways system). However, the Social Investment Fund (SIF) grant required a 1:1 match for programming. Aspen allowed Hartford to use its funds as match, but this means they are no longer available for systems work.

The original purpose of the digital map was as a tool for navigators to help with navigation through the various programs for opportunity youth and to help strengthen connections among pathway programs. If the committee decides to pursue a youth digital map and app, we will need to develop a plan for raising additional resources.

Given these resource constraints, Kim suggested leveraging resources that already exist, specifically the Hartford Family Resources map

(see <http://hartfordgis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/OnePane/basicviewer/index.html?appid=c8194f375bbe4b619bee58276747c0b2>). This map includes layers for different types of services. We could explore the option of adding a layer focused on career pathways for opportunity youth. Kim noted 211 / Infoline as another option, although these types of directories are typically better for basic needs services than for training / pathways programs. 211 might be able to help keep the map up-to-date, since maintenance can be a major challenge.

Hector Rivera stated that OPP also reached out to the United Way of Connecticut (UWCT) to list OPP programs in the 2-1-1 system. He asked if OPP and the HOYC should approach UWCT as a consortium or should OPP pursue this separately? Kim suggested working together, and asked to attend OPP's next meeting with UWCT.

Recommendations for Strengthening Pathways

Dave Bechtel noted that the Mayor Bronin has agreed to chair the Hartford Opportunity Youth Collaborative (HOYC), and Kim will be briefing the Mayor in advance of the **March 28th Collaborative meeting** (noon to 1:30 pm at the Lyceum). What key messages regarding pathways should we deliver in the briefing?

Participants discussed a range of messages to consider. Key themes are as follows:

- **Youth employment – via a Youth Service Corps – is a priority for the Mayor.** HOYC's messages need to align with this priority. The Mayor has focused on the Youth Service Corps for youth employment. Kim provided background on plans for the service corps. The Mayor is looking to private funders (e.g., corporate foundations) to fund the corps, not a sole dependence on federal

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AmeriCorps dollars. Hector noted that AmeriCorps -funded programs offer money for college as a major incentive; a privately-funded service corps may not include this. For example, OPP recruits youth for KNOX's Green Crew. The Green Crew is funded by AmeriCorps and youth earn \$5,600 for college.

The Mayor's goal is to reach 500 young people, focused on youth who may not be ready for other programs. The Mayor sees the service corps focusing primarily on employment (vs. developing career competencies or significant skill building). Kim suggested that the corps might be on on-ramp to the HOYC Career Pathways – with youth completing the service corps as a pipeline to the career pathway programs. Tony Cherolis noted that summer youth employment has a very high attendance rate, compared with other programs that offer modest incentives (e.g., gift cards). Young people have dropped out of the Center's college prep program because they got a minimum-wage job. If service corps members are paid, they will show up. But it may be difficult to subsequently engage youth in other pathway programs that do not include paid work. Tony also suggested considering populations not being served already for this model – younger youth (ages 14 to 16) and older adults (ages 25+), which can impact two generations.

- **The need for support in youth employment programs.** Participants noted challenges in effectively implementing the service corps. Youth employment by itself may not help opportunity youth advance to middle-skill jobs and self-sufficiency. There needs to be a great deal of support, relationship-building, and preparation so youth successfully participate in the employment program and are motivated and able to take the next step after completing the program. Youth may complete a program, but there is often nothing after that. Youth still need assistance after the program ends. When this happens, youth can become disheartened. It's important to help youth reach the ultimate goal ("carrot") of supporting themselves. Kim noted that the workgroup did not focus extensively on how to implement the corps. This is a key issue to address.
- **Building on the collaborative efforts to date.** The Mayor received information from a very wide range of people during the campaign, and may have been led to believe that there is not much collaboration in Hartford. It is important to highlight the collaborative efforts of HOYC, and the systemic approach that we have developed. We need to build on this, rather than starting over. How can the Youth Service Corps fit within the Career Pathways framework? How can it build transferrable skills that lead to next steps along the pathway (e.g., careers in Parks and Rec, connections to other pathway programs, certificates)? We need to show the crosswalk between the service corps and the HOYC career pathway.
- **Featuring the realities of young people's lives.** Ricardo Henriquez suggested sharing the realities of opportunity youth with the Mayor and his staff, by inviting youth to share their stories and struggles. This can help show the need for more intensive supports. Participants agreed that this could be valuable, and Kim will check with the HOYC youth leaders about sharing their stories (and help prepare them for a meeting). This could happen at the briefing or at the March HOYC meeting. Kim also asked participants to let her know if any youth from their programs would be interested in sharing their stories – particularly young people who have faced key challenges the Collaborative has identified (e.g., juvenile justice involvement, teen parenthood, homelessness). Tony suggested a young person who spoke up at one of the Mayor's forums.
- **Scaling career pathways.** The current system for opportunity youth is not ready for 500 youth. There are approximately 150 seats via WIOA funding, with other programs focused on parts of the pathway (e.g., recruitment and engagement, enriched preparation, career bridging). Hector

suggested that this may be the opportunity to scale the pathways for opportunity youth. Tony suggested using any new funds to increase summer youth employment while focusing on older youth and adults for the service corps.

Participants generally agreed that the key messages should include a focus on the collaboration and career pathway system development to date, infusing youth voices and stories to provide more context on the challenges facing opportunity youth, and making the connection between the youth service corps and the career pathway system. Hector suggested deferring the final decision on how to organize the messages to Kim.

Next Steps

Assignments:

1. Committee members should contact Kim if they have opportunity youth who'd be interested in telling their stories either at the briefing with the Mayor (March 16) or the HOYC meeting (March 28).
2. Hector will invite Kim to the next meeting with the UWCT to discuss enhancing their program data.
3. Committee members can forward Dave descriptions of any new programs for Opportunity Youth that have been launched since the spring 2015 survey (e.g., Urban League program).

Future Meetings:

HOYC: Monday, March 28, 2016, Noon to 1:30 pm, Lyceum

Pathways Committee: Wednesday, **March 30, 2016**, 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm, United Way

Link to Resources:

- **HOYC Partners.** <http://youthreconnect.org/partners/>
- **Career Pathway Framework.** <http://youthreconnect.org/pathways/>
- **Hartford Family Resources Directory.** <http://hartfordgis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/OnePane/basicviewer/index.html?appid=c8194f375bbe4b619bee58276747c0b2>

Strengthening Pathways: Excerpts from Committee Meetings

June 2015:

- **Building Connections.** Connect HOYC and Workforce Solutions collaboratives – go beyond referrals. Leverage new Pathways Navigator at Move Up – visit OY organizations to better understand programs and pathways. Present to American Job Center on youth programs.
- **On Ramps.** Engage public schools to address youth barriers to higher education (e.g., financial, career planning, academic).
- **Sustained Support.** Develop team approach to engaging and guiding OY. Cultivate family or community members to provide continuity and long-term support to youth (caring, trusted adult).
- **Quality.** Research and identify best practices by topic, including for professional development. Bring youth organizations together to learn about and share best practices. Enlist SIF coach to support capacity building efforts.
- **Data.** Create an ad hoc committee to investigate options for sharing data, including “digital badges”, ETO, and Kid Trax (Boys and Girls Club database) – in collaboration with Move Up.

October 2015:

- **Policy / regulatory barriers.** Through a focus on cross-over youth, the committee can identify policy issues that limit effective pathways. For example, enrolling young parents in WIOA can put their TANF benefits at risk. Even college classes may not qualify under JFES criteria.
- **Referrals to programs.** OPP met with DCF about increasing the number of referrals to OPP’s pathway programs. Currently OPP has to conduct outreach to identify youth, while DCF may send a young person to Asnuntuck Community College without any supports (leading many to drop out).
- **Ownership and coordination across partners.** The United Way has completed the first phase of its strategic directions for the next three years. How can the Opportunity Youth and career pathway work inform the United Way’s partnerships and efforts? How can key funders and initiatives align their agendas? Who is the lead agency in implementing different components of the career pathway system? What components will different agencies “own” and be accountable for?
- **Multiple exit points.** Consider where organizations can add value at the different exit points, and make it easy for youth to re-attach when they are ready for further education/career advancement. Youth may need to work for a period of time before taking a next step in their careers.

December 2015:

- **Engaging Systems and Organizations for Referrals.** Deb suggested connecting with Regional Action Council (RAC) the [Hartford System of Care](#). The System of Care includes many of the key agencies and organizations working with opportunity youth (e.g., DCF, Probation, mental health agencies, social service providers). These organizations are looking for resources for their clients. HOYC can present the career pathway programs (and map) to the collaborative as first step in educating them on resources for Opportunity Youth.
- **Hartford Opportunity Fair.** Hold an annual fair with all of the programs to help recruit youth, promote the map, and connect staff across organizations and programs. The fair could be held after a Hartford System of Care meeting (at the Village for Children and Families) or at a more central location like the Hartford Public Library, and include employers as well as programs.