

Hartford
OPPORTUNITY YOUTH
Collaborative

Effective Pathways Committee Meeting
June 1, 2016 / 8:30 am to 10:30 am
United Way (30 Laurel Street, Knox Board Room, 1st floor)

Agenda

- 8:30 am Introduction
- Welcome and introductions
 - Information sharing
 - Goals for the meeting
- 8:45 am Recommendations for Strengthening Pathways
- Review and general feedback on draft recommendations
 - Areas for additional discussion
 - Addressing obstacles to participation
 - Strengthen exit and re-attachment process
 - Strengthen connection to employers
 - Scale up pathways
 - Clarify ownership and accountability
 - Policy recommendations
 - Priorities
- 11:00 am Navigation Tools
- Feedback on drafts (inventory, directory, navigation tool)
- 11:20 am Summary and Next Steps
- Finalizing the recommendations
 - Revising the navigation tools
- 11:30 am Adjourn

Handouts

- Committee Meeting Notes, 3/30/16
- Recommendations for Strengthening Career Pathways (draft)
- Career Pathways Navigation Tools (rough drafts)

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Effective Pathways Committee Meeting Notes

March 30, 2016 / 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm

Participants

William Clark (Workforce Solutions), Ricardo Henriquez (United Way), Courtenay Jackson (Urban League), Kim Oliver (CWP), Alice Turner (URISE), and Dave Bechtel (Cross Sector)

Introduction

Participants introduced themselves and gave brief updates on events and programs:

- Urban League. The Urban League is holding a Career Expo on May 5th at The First Cathedral in Bloomfield focused on entry-level and mid-level positions. The Expo will feature a range of employers (e.g., municipal governments, banks, Foxwoods), include breakout sessions on job search topics (getting your resume to the top of the pile), and have opportunities for vendors to share information.

Building for Success is recruiting minority men ages 18 to 24. This WIOA Youth program focuses on careers in ceiling tile installation and solar panel installation.

- CWP. CWP is continuing to prepare for Summer Youth Employment and is reviewing WIOA Youth programs in advance of the next round of funding.

Strengthening Pathways: Debrief and Discussion

March 16 Briefing for Mayor Bronin. Kim updated the committee on the briefing:

- Six youth attended the briefing, representing programs at the Center for Latino Progress, OPP, Blue Hills and Hartford Communities That Care (the HOYC Youth Leadership group). The 45-minute briefing mostly featured young people telling their stories and discussing the impact of supports / pathway programs on their lives. Youth discussed the importance of a caring, supportive adult and how important it was for them to know that there are programs/opportunities that can help them achieve their goals.
- The Mayor brought up the fiscal challenges facing the City, and youth were forthright in asking the Mayor about their impact on youth. The young people noted that outside of OY programs, there was “nothing to do in Hartford for youth.” Young people might go out of town or hang out on the streets instead.
- The Mayor wanted to continue meeting with young people, and the group discussed forming a larger youth committee and scheduling regular meetings with the Mayor. These youth meetings might serve as the way to connect with the Mayor on HOYC.
- Kim also gave the Mayor a packet that included information on how the Youth Service Corps aligned with the career pathways system (i.e., as an onramp to existing pathway programs).

March 28 HOYC Meeting. Kim noted that the Mayor had planned to chair the March 28 HOYC meeting, but had to testify at LOB (Legislative Office Building) that morning on his proposed fiscal legislation. The Mayor did send an email to the Collaborative re-affirming his commitment to HOYC. The next HOYC meeting has not been scheduled yet, but will likely be in the next quarter.

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Youth Service Corps. Ricardo noted that the Youth Service Corps is moving forward. What are the chances to build in supports and connect with career pathway programs? Kim stated that OPP is the implementation partner for the Corps, and plans to hire 10 youth coaches to work with 250-300 youth starting in June. The program would be approximately 680 hours, with a second cohort starting sometime in the fall or early winter. OPP is developing a specific profile for the youth, so as not to compete directly with WIOA Youth and Summer Youth programs for the same young people.

Ricardo expressed concerns about the next step after the Youth Service Corps. If young people are just cleaning parks for 6 months, they may be in the same place (in terms of their job prospects and career path) as they were before the program. Kim agreed that it was important to see the Corps as an on-ramp to career pathways. OPP is well positioned to support this, and the youth coaches could proactively connect youth to the next step in their career development. Courtenay suggested that we set up multiple entry points for Youth Service Corps 'graduates', so youth coaches know which organization to send youth to after the Corps ends. Dave agreed that a first step could be to develop a **tool for youth coaches and participants that shows pathway programs** (i.e., as a supplement to the digital map).

Kim suggested that the Mayor may view the Youth Service Corps as the way to realize his youth employment vision. HOYC and continuing youth meetings with the Mayor can help in developing a youth employment agenda that includes the Corps and career pathways.

Recommendations for Strengthening Career Pathways. Participants then discussed how to strengthen the career pathway system. Key themes include:

- Expanding the number of slots. There are 6,000 opportunity youth (OY) in Hartford but only a few hundred slots in pathway programs (if we focus on programs designed for OY). With the Youth Service Corps, there are not enough slots for the 500+ youth who would complete the Corps over the next year. Capacity is a major issue.

Participants discussed if career pathway programs for adults (ages 18+) could be an option for OY. Kim suggested that programs need to include personalized guidance and support to be successful with OY. Most of the WIOA Adult programs do not include this component. Ricardo stated that the United Way's new strategic plan prioritizes case management for its next round of financial stability grantees. The United Way is currently considering five proposals, and these grantees could be good fits for OY. Courtenay stated that the Urban League is becoming more intentional about including case management and supports in its programs. In his experience, case management is essential to success in pathway programs. William noted that Workforce Solutions does not directly fund case management, but may connect participants with a community-based organization for these services.

Participants briefly discussed the nature of case management and personalized guidance / support. It might include teaching coping skills, but goes well beyond this in providing supports for individuals facing crises (housing, transportation) and support in navigating complex public systems.

- OY Pathways Tool for Staff. Participants agreed that it would be helpful for staff and HOYC to create a tool that showed both OY pathway programs and "adult" pathway programs that include guidance and support. This could also help organizations identify gaps in the system and what services they could provide to fill these gaps.

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- Improving Youth Engagement at the AJC. The New Britain American Jobs Center (AJC) now has a youth area and a Career Agent dedicated to working with youth. HOYC could embed a new OY Pathways Tool at the Hartford AJC to help staff connect youth to career pathways. The AJC has the potential to support a large number of youth, but has not been well utilized (approximately 300 youth out of 15,000 people served).
- Common Framework for Career Pathways. William suggested developing a consensus on the career pathways framework across initiatives. The new Hartford Generation Work (Gen Work) initiative is discussing career pathways. It would be helpful to create a common framework across HOYC and Gen Work.
- Identifying and Supporting Best Practices. Dave noted that 2015 OY inventory identified pathway programs, but did not go deeper to look at how programs are delivering services. William agreed that it was important to understand the core competencies of different organizations and programs. Ricardo expressed concerns about judging programs based on limited information. The United Way has focused more on identifying programs that align with the United Way's model for workforce development. Another option is to focus on capacity building and cross-organization learning (i.e., improvement vs. evaluation) – for example, through a community of practice model.

Dave will draft a document that summarizes Committee discussions over the past year on how to strengthen career pathways. The Committee can review, discuss and revise the document at its next meeting.

Update on Career Pathways Digital Map

Dave gave a brief update on developing the digital map:

- Updating Pathway Information via 211. 211 has a point person for Hartford services who could be connected to HOYC (e.g., invite to HOYC meetings, share HOYC Member contact information). 211 may also be able to add a specific search term for OY pathway programs to make it easier to pull accurate information on programs from the 211 database.
- Hartford Family Resources Directory. The City is updating its printed and [online Directory](#) this month, and wanted to include HOYC Pathway Program information in the Workforce Development section. Dave shared descriptions of OY pathway programs from the Spring 2015 inventory, and asked Committee members to edit their program descriptions and/or send information on new programs (e.g., Building for Success).

Summary and Next Steps

Assignments

1. Dave will:
 - a. Email Kim links to Pathways Committee resources to include on the [Pathways Committee](#) section of the HOYC website.
 - b. Circulate the descriptions of OY pathway programs to the relevant organizations for edits and inclusion in the Hartford Family Resources Directory.
 - c. Draft a HOYC Career Pathways Tool that includes programs specifically for OY and other programs that include case management / personalized guidance.

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- d. Draft a summary of recommendations for strengthening career pathways that incorporates Pathway Committee discussion over the last year.
2. Kim will:
 - a. Post Committee resources to the HOYC website.
 - b. Email Dave a description of HOYC for inclusion in the Hartford Family Resources Directory.
 - c. Reach out to other community-based organizations that are delivering career pathway programs for OY.
 3. Committee members will edit their program descriptions (as needed) for inclusion in the Hartford Family Resources Directory.

Next Meeting

Kim stated that Gen Work has created a workgroup on Pathways and Mapping, which is meeting for the first time on March 31. Kim suggested exploring how to align the HOYC Pathways Committee's efforts with this new workgroup, before scheduling the next HOYC Pathways meeting.

Link to Resources

- **HOYC Partners.** <http://youthreconnect.org/partners/>
- **Career Pathway Committee and Framework.** <http://youthreconnect.org/pathways/>
- **Hartford Family Resources Map.** <http://hartfordgis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/OnePane/basicviewer/index.html?appid=c8194f375bbe4b619bee58276747c0b2>
- **Hartford Family Resources Directory.** http://dfcyr.hartford.gov/images/dir/HFRD_ENG.pdf

Recommendations for Strengthening Career Pathways *DRAFT as of 4/22/16*

Introduction:

Over the past year the Effective Pathways Committee has inventoried pathway programs for opportunity youth (OY), discussed existing resources and gaps in the system, and identified ways to strengthen career pathways. This document summarizes Committee discussions to date.

Recommendations are organized as follows:

- Programmatic changes to improve recruitment, referrals, program quality, and the consistency of services and supports over time.
- System-level changes that engage youth in system development, scale up programs, strengthen data and accountability, and connect youth and adult systems.
- Policy recommendations that address obstacles to youth participation in pathway programs.

Programmatic Recommendations:

1. ***Expand and improve referrals to pathway programs.*** The Committee discussed a range of ways to educate organizations about the existence of pathway programs for OY and to expand the number of appropriate referrals to pathway programs.
 - a. Engage key agencies and organizations working with OY through the [Hartford System of Care](#). The System of Care includes DCF, Probation, mental health agencies and social service providers. These organizations are looking for resources for their clients. HOYC can present the career pathway framework and programs to the System of Care as first step in educating them on resources for OY. For example, DCF might send young people to community college with no supports, leading many to drop out. These youth could instead be connected to college bridge programs at OPP and Blue Hills.
 - b. Educate OY-serving agencies on pathway programs and options. Identify and meet with key agencies that may not be part of the System of Care who are working with large numbers of opportunity youth (e.g., American Job Center, OY recruitment and engagement hubs).
 - c. Establish **feedback loops** for referrals. Create a process where referring agencies receive feedback on the appropriateness of referrals (i.e., meet program eligibility requirements).
2. ***Address obstacles to participation in pathway programs.*** The Committee discussed the challenges for recruitment and engagement sites to address obstacles to participation in pathway programs – what HOYC has called the need for “on-ramps to on-ramps.” Obstacles might include involvement with the justice system, housing instability or homelessness, parenting / child care challenges, transportation, physical / behavioral health barriers, alcohol or substance use, or basic needs.
 - a. Connect Youth Service Corps ‘graduates’ to career pathway programs. Youth coaches can help connect graduates to pathway programs and next steps in their career development, using pathway navigation tools (see #6 below). **[Pull this out as a separate recommendation?]**

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- b. **Discuss other recommendations.**
3. **Strengthen direct recruitment of OY to programs.**
 - a. Hold an annual **Hartford Opportunity Fair** featuring OY pathway programs to help recruit youth, promote the career pathways framework, 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 central location like the Hartford Public Library, and include employers as well as programs.
 - b. Identify and expand “**just-in-time**” program options. Many programs have specific start dates, but youth may not follow up if they have to wait 2-3 months for the next program cycle. HOYC can highlight pathway programs that can be started right away, so youth can be engaged at the moment they are motivated to take action. Pathway programs can explore ways to offer a level of services/supports between program start dates and/or align program start dates with major feeder programs like the Youth Service Corps.
 - c. Explore **texting** options for youth to learn about programs. Youth may be more comfortable texting program staff to learn about programs. It may be helpful to use texting to access information about services (send link to website), contact program staff, and/or receive text updates on upcoming programs (subscribe).
 4. **Support ongoing quality improvement and use of best practices.** Research and identify best practices by topic, including best practices for delivering professional development. Bring youth organizations together to learn about and share best practices; develop communities of practice by topic area. Enlist technical assistance resources from initiatives and grants (e.g., SIF coach) to support capacity building efforts.
 5. **Sustain personalized guidance and support beyond specific programs.** The Committee discussed the challenges in sustaining guidance across the multiple entry and exit points in the pathway system. Ideas included:
 - a. Develop a **team approach** to engaging and guiding OY. For example, the [Thread](#) program in Baltimore uses a team of up to five volunteer mentors for each youth. Alternatively, staff at OY organizations could form a team to support youth as they enter and exit different programs.
 - b. Cultivate a **family or community member** to provide continuity and long-term support to a young person.
 6. **Develop tools to help staff and young people navigate the system.** The Committee has discussed a number of options to support navigation:
 - a. Create a Career Pathways directory and navigation tool primarily for staff to help youth explore options for future education / training and career development. Appendix A shows initial ideas for the navigation tool.
 - b. Work with the City of Hartford to add an OY Career Pathways “layer” to the Hartford Family Resources Directory map. HOYC and the City are exploring this option.

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- c. Work with 211 / Infoline to keep program information current. HOYC has been discussing ways to support the updating of programs in 211 and improving access to updated program information via 211 (e.g., HOYC search term).
 - d. Create a Career Pathways website and app for youth to explore career pathways and connect with programs. Youth could help develop the app, to ensure that it is youth-friendly and to offer a technology career pathway for youth. The Committee discussed the high expense in creating and marketing an app. If the Committee decides to pursue this option, it will require additional fundraising.
7. **Strengthen the exit and re-attachment process.** One of the challenges in the system is that there are a large number of potential entry and exit points. Youth may need to work for a period of time before taking a next step in their careers. The Committee suggested the following:
- a. Hold program **exit conferences** with youth completing programs to explore and develop career advancement plans, including returning to pathway programs at future dates.
 - b. 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. **Discuss how to do this.**
8. **Strengthen connections to employers.** Develop future pathway programs to meet employer needs for well-qualified workers. See the [Grads of Life](#) for an example of employer-focused pathways. **[This was from the Bank of America webinar; discuss with Committee.]**

System-Level Recommendations:

1. **Engage youth in developing the career pathway system.** The Committee has discussed a number of roles youth can play:
 - a. Establish a Youth Committee to continue meetings with the Mayor and participation and feedback in HOYC meetings and activities. Six youth attended the March 16, 2016 meeting with Mayor Bronin, telling their stories and discussing the impact of pathway programs on their lives. The Mayor wanted to continue meeting with young people, and the group discussed forming a larger youth committee and scheduling regular meetings with the Mayor.
 - b. Offer opportunities for youth who have successfully navigated pathways to recruit peers to participate in pathway programs and serve as mentors.
2. **Scale up Career Pathway programs.** The Committee discussed the need to scale up pathway programs to meet the need and to provide “next steps” for youth completing the Youth Service Corps (potentially 500 youth in the next year). **[Discuss how to do this.]**
 - a. Expand existing pathway programs and establish pathway programs in other middle-skill sectors (e.g., technology).
 - b. Engage adult programs and systems (AJC) to make them more youth-friendly.

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- c. Expand inventory of pathway programs to include adult programs with personalized guidance and support.
3. **Develop an integrated youth-adult career pathway system.**
 - a. Agree on a common career pathway framework across initiatives. The HOYC Effective Pathways Committee can work with Hartford Generation Work to develop a common framework.
 - b. Connect career pathway efforts across funders and initiatives. In addition to Generation Work, the United Way and Hartford Foundation for Public Giving are also funding career pathway initiatives and programs, and the American Jobs Center (AJC) has the potential to serve large numbers of OY. HOYC and these partners can identify ways to connect these systems. For example, the Move Up Pathways Navigator can visit OY organizations to better understand programs and pathways. HOYC partners can make presentations at the AJC on youth programs.
 - c. Identify pathway programs for adults that can also serve OY. Programs that include personalized guidance and support may be good options for OY. For example, the United Way's new strategic plan prioritizes case management for its next round of financial stability grantees, and the Urban League is becoming more intentional about including case management and supports in its programs.
 4. **Clarify ownership and accountability.** Who is the lead agency in implementing different components of the career pathway system? What components will different agencies "own" and be accountable for? **Discuss details.**
 5. **Improve data at the OY and systems levels.** Investigate options for sharing data in collaboration with Move Up and other initiatives, including "digital badges" for OY (e.g., credentials, competencies, education / work experience). Develop measures to track system functioning (e.g., successful referrals).
 6. **Reduce the number of youth who drop out of college (and become OY).** Strengthen preparation for college at the high school level to decrease the number of opportunity youth. Engage public schools and post-secondary institutions to address youth barriers to higher education (e.g., financial, career planning, academic).

Policy Recommendations:

1. **Address barriers to joint WIOA and JFES participation.** Enrolling young parents in WIOA can put their TANF benefits at risk. Even college classes may not qualify under JFES criteria.
2. **Discuss other policy recommendations.**

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Next Steps:

The Effective Pathways Committee will present its recommendations to the full Hartford Opportunity Youth Collaborative (HOYC) for feedback and approval, and continue to identify specific actions HOYC can take to implement the recommendations.

HOYC Effective Pathways Committee Members:

- Include the list of participants at committee meetings this past year