

# OPPORTUNITY WORKS

A national initiative led by JFF shows the power of carefully designed interventions to improve the lives of low-income young people who are not in school or fully employed. Opportunity Works (OW), which scaled JFF's "Back on Track model", had remarkable results over three years, as illustrated below. Learn more about OW on the next page.

## Why We Care



**4.6 million**

**Opportunity youth (OY) are locked out of the labor market**

These young people ages 16 to 24 do not have a path to family-sustaining work. The consequences are dire for them, for our economy, and for our society.



**Back on Track models make a difference**

Through OW, local "anchor" organizations received funding and coaching to implement the Back on Track model for successful transitions to postsecondary education and training.

OY enrolled in any postsecondary program

## Because of Opportunity Works

OY who are young men of color enrolled in any postsecondary program

**2x more**

**OY enrolled in postsecondary education**

The Urban Institute found that Back on Track's postsecondary bridging model made an impressive positive impact. Twice as many opportunity youth from OW enrolled in postsecondary programs as opportunity youth in a comparison group.

**26%** Comparison Group

**53%** OW Group

**6x more**

**OY who are young men of color enrolled in postsecondary education**

OW had an even greater impact on opportunity youth who are young men of color, a population historically underrepresented in higher education. Six times more OW young men of color enrolled in postsecondary programs as young men of color from a comparison group.

**8%** Comparison Group

**52%** OW Group

## What This Means

Opportunity Works has a consistent, large, positive impact on postsecondary enrollment, in particular for young men of color. The magnitude of the impact is unusually large, more than doubling postsecondary enrollment overall and increasing it nearly six times over for young men of color.

[Learn More](#)

Email [lallen@jff.org](mailto:lallen@jff.org) for more information.

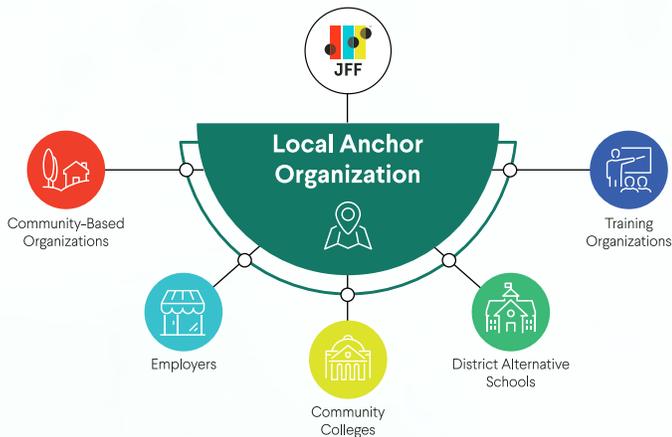
# National Effort Opens Doors for

## 2,000+ OPPORTUNITY YOUTH

Opportunity Works served nearly 2,200 low-income young people ages 16 to 24 who were not in school or fully employed. The national three-year initiative was led by JFF with the Aspen Forum for Community Solutions.

### Structure of Opportunity Works

In each geographic area, JFF contracted with a community-based organization that served as a local "anchor" to spearhead the work. Each anchor assembled local partners—including other CBOs, employers, community colleges, alternative high schools, and training organizations—to provide pathways and supports connecting OY to education and employment success.



### Core Features of Back on Track

The Back on Track model serves several opportunity youth populations, including those with and those without a high school diploma. The Postsecondary/ Career Bridging Phase prepares young people who have a diploma but are not in school or work, with a strong start on college and career success.

#### Postsecondary/Career Bridging

Builds college/career-ready skills and provides informed transition counseling

- A focus on college knowledge and success strategies, and employment readiness
- Personalized guidance on connection to "best bet" programs of study



### Opportunity Works Across the Country

From 2015 to 2018, Opportunity Works operated in seven urban areas.



Research note: The comparison group consisted of underemployed, out-of-school youth drawn from intervention programs that were located in the same regions as the Opportunity Works sites but offered a different set of services.

Sources: Data on front page come from the Urban Institute's *New Insights on Impacts of the Back on Track Model on Opportunity Youth Outcomes: Opportunity Works Final Evaluation Report*, March 2019. Information on back page comes from JFF's *Opportunity Works: Four Ways to Help Young Adults Find Pathways to Success*, January 2019.