

CREATING POLICY AND SYSTEMS ALIGNMENT

Question	Progress to Date
<p>What key policies have you identified that serve as either challenges or opportunities for improved outcomes for Opportunity Youth?</p>	<p>We initially identified the following policy and system changes during the planning process for Opportunity Youth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State waiver for TANF recipients to allow participation in education in lieu of work requirements • WIA Performance Measure waiver that acknowledges performance targets for Opportunity Youth should differ from those for youth with fewer challenges • College transition and success policy proposals that scale up successful models • Raise the Grade pilot project to improve academic achievement and reduce truancy/adverse disciplinary actions for youth in state care • Short-term options for Opportunity Youth that can open the door to employment with options for transitions to longer-term education/training programs • State policies for over-age, under-credited students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Release from time-based regulations, focusing on proficiency ○ Education finance reform where per pupil funding follows students and funding supports over-age, under-credited students ○ Supporting “anytime, anyplace” learning options ○ Funding a competency-based pathway pilot to develop new models ○ Raising the compulsory school attendance age <p>Additionally, we decided to utilize labor market trends and emerging lessons from our foundation programs to prioritize policy issues. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key structural change components and drivers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The “substitution effect of capital for labor” ○ Slow lost jobs recovery and new jobs generation compared to the nation as a whole ○ Greater use of “temporary workers” ○ Increased use of a “flexible/just-in-time” workforce ○ Increasing skills mismatch between employer need and employee skills ○ Demographic trends including aging and quality of the future labor force • Emerging lessons from foundation programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Most, if not all, Opportunity Youth are eligible for programs supported by public funds, but many cannot provide the necessary documentation in order to be certified ○ Opportunity Youth need access to programs that provide youth strong social supports and prepare them

	<p>for onramp programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The new GED requires increased digital literacy skills and may prove difficult to pass ○ Opportunity Youth can be involved in multiple programs and systems, but eligibility, performance, and funding may vary between programs and systems
<p>What strategies have you put into place to address any of the identified barriers, if any?</p>	<p>In order to more effectively promote system change and collaboration, HOYC leverages several existing efforts to identify opportunities and promote policy, practice, and legislative change to resolve system barriers and increase the adoption, replication, and scaling up of effective practices.</p> <p>These existing groups include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WIB Future Workforce Committee ● WIB Consortium of Elected Officials ● Career Advancement Committee of the CT Employment & Training Commission (State WIB) ● Move Up! – a regional partnership that identifies and implements opportunities to strengthen Greater Hartford’s adult literacy system to ensure that adults of all ages are ready for success in college or employment ● Campaign for a Working CT – a statewide coalition promoting economic competitiveness through building worker skills and advancing self-sufficiency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Building the future workforce through work-based learning ○ Improving the skills of youth through career pathway programs <p>In addition to the groups listed above, the Collaborative has done the following to build awareness of and promoting changes to disrupt barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participated on a panel for a visit from Dr. Brenda Dann-Messier, Assistant Secretary for Career, Technical, and Adult Education (U.S. Department of Education) ● Provided support to Raised Bill 366: “An Act Concerning the Erasure of Records in Delinquency and Family with Service Needs Matters.” ● Attended “Raising the Grade: Improving Educational Opportunities for Youth in State Care”, a youth-led discussion on the educational challenges facing young people in the care of the Department of Children and Families (Foster Care) or residing in Court Support Services facilities ● Partnering with key stakeholders to assess the fit and viability of a Performance Partnership Pilot (P3) in Hartford which may include waivers for participant eligibility so that more Opportunity Youth could participate in training and services
<p>What policy strategies, if any, have you considered and/or pursued for leveraging funding streams for pathways?</p>	<p>In an effort to increase funding for Opportunity Youth, HOYC leverages several existing efforts as mentioned above. Also, the Collaborative has done the following to align and leverage resources for pathways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Partnered with the WIB Future Workforce Committee to

	<p>allocate \$721,684 in WIA funds to assist Hartford Opportunity Youth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked in partnership with the Mayor and his staff; the City of Hartford has pledged \$100,000 to implement the collaborative’s plan (pending approval by the City Council). • Partnered with Workforce Solutions Collaborative of Metro Hartford, a regional collaborative of National Fund for Workforce Solutions, to leverage the comprehensive youth development system already in place and provide additional resources to scale up programs that connect under-attached and disconnected youth to education, training, and career opportunities. • Participated in the “Youth Employment Symposium” hosted by State Representative Toni Walker to share the impact of the State’s Youth Employment Program supported by both public and private funds. • Partnering with key stakeholders to assess the fit and viability of a Performance Partnership Pilot (P3) in Hartford to identify and demonstrate cost-effective strategies to provide services to Opportunity Youth. • Identified a potential new venture with Department of Corrections to use education as prevention and add career readiness training and resources to incarcerated youth, many of whom do not have a high school diploma and have reading levels at or below second grade.
<p>If you have identified system-involved youth as a priority, what steps have you taken, if any, to secure institutional/systems changes needed for improved outcomes for this population of Opportunity Youth?</p>	<p>As mentioned previously, we are targeting (1) youth in and transition from foster care and (2) justice-involve youth. To date, we have heavily relied on existing relationships our foundation program leads have with Department of Children and Families (Foster Care) and Department of Corrections/Court Support Services Division. In partnership with the program leads, we are currently reviewing how the collaborative can add value and play a role in promoting system-level changes for improved outcomes for these key subpopulations.</p>

Three-Year Goals for Creating Policy and Systems Alignment

Goals include:

- Advocate for coordinated approach to serving Opportunity Youth involved in multiple systems
- Advocate for career-based, contextualized learning
- Encourage the State to adopt a career pathway system modeled on HOYC’s efforts and design
- Promote the management of Title I and II funds for basic education be moved from the K-12 system and given to regional councils that prioritize high school attainment for those over 18 years old

Benchmarks for Creating Policy and Systems Alignment

By the end of year one...

- Plan in place for a Performance Partnership Pilot for Opportunity Youth in Hartford
- Systems partner meeting(s) on Opportunity Youth on how to best serve targeted subpopulations
- Public report on contextualized learning strategies for Opportunity Youth in partnership with Move Up!, the region’s partnership that identifies and implements opportunities to strengthen Greater Hartford’s adult literacy system to ensure that adults of all ages are ready for success in college or employment

By the end of year two...

- Systems partner meeting on Opportunity Youth on education including partners from Hartford Public Schools, Adult Education, and CT State Colleges & Universities
- Career pathway system report targeting local and state agencies and policy makers

By the end of year three...

- Plan in partnership with the school system that re-engages 16 and 17 year olds and connects them to high school
- Evaluation by independent, third-party to systems building efforts and impact of the Collaborative

Specific Next Steps for Creating Policy and Systems Alignment

Next steps include:

- Host meeting with community stakeholders on Performance Partnership Pilots for Opportunity Youth
- Convene Collaborative members to formalize recommendations on system change/reform
- Partner with Move Up! to host a meeting on contextualized learning strategies and outcomes