



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: YAPWORX

Workforce Development programs are often reluctant to exert the high degree of time, effort, and energy to adequately address issues affecting system-involved youth and young adults. Traditional workforce performance measures are often unrealistic for youth facing substance abuse, mental health, trauma, and gang affiliation issues. The resources to support high-intensity wraparound services, including transportation, 24/7 crisis management and family engagement are often limited. Moreover, building and maintaining relationships with employers that are hesitant to work with high-risk populations has been extremely difficult. Consequently, few complex needs are enrolled in workforce programs and fewer complete. System-involved youth face a lifetime of negative social and economic outcomes if these challenges are not met.

YAPWORX is an individualized, 12/24 unit, strength-based moduled learning system that combines cognitive behavioral therapy, motivational interviewing, and experiential and project-based learning to give system-involved youth a chance at gaining authentic labor market information and connections. Each week, through “Learn-Work” investigations, Advocates help participants test concepts learned in the YAPWORX curriculum by interacting with Opportunity Advisors (OAs). OAs are volunteers from the local labor market committed to sharing relevant industry information with youth. Advocates help youth turn these assets into career sparks and real, measurable gains in one or all of the following Future Economic Opportunity (FEO) areas:

- Increased understanding and acquisition of growth industry-certified credentials
- Increased motivation to complete high school and/or post-secondary education
- Increased understanding of the importance of documented work experience and assistance with obtaining unsubsidized part-time employment
- Improvement in (or development of) industry specific work skills and behaviors
- Increased connections to gainfully employed adults in specific growth industries

There are no criteria for entry into YAPWORX. YAPWORX is for all youth irrespective of employment readiness, client characteristics, case histories, and/or developmental barriers. As part of YAPWORX, all youth are required to share newly gained labor market information with their peers and community. Participants discover that connecting is not only about receiving; it’s also about giving. In this manner, the receiver becomes the giver thereby increasing their value of self and connectedness to the greater world that many studies have demonstrated come with the act of giving.

In YAPWORX, the learning laboratory is not a classroom; it’s the labor market.

THE YAP DIFFERENCE

- ❖ 24/7 crisis support
- ❖ Intensive case management
- ❖ Relationships with multi-systems and community organizations
- ❖ Cultural competence
- ❖ Safety planning
- ❖ Transportation
- ❖ Family engagement
- ❖ Mentoring
- ❖ Ancillary funding (GED testing, tuition assistance, tools, uniforms, licenses)
- ❖ Paid work experience
- ❖ Project-based learning

For more information:

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