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**MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES EFFORTS TO HELP YOUNG ADULTS  
OVERCOME CHALLENGES OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

*New initiatives to serve over 13,000 young New Yorkers with employment, training, and education support in the face of economic downturn*

*Newly released Disconnected Youth Task Force report provides a long-term strategy to keep them on a path towards economic and career success*

**NEW YORK**—Mayor Bill de Blasio today announced a series of steps his Administration is taking to support New York City youth and young adults – both current students and those who are out of school and unemployed – as they weather the effects of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Measures include a campaign with CUNY to engage 5,000 young adults to enroll in college this spring, as well as an initiative to connect more than 2,000 high school students with paid internships and opportunities to earn college credit.

Accompanying these announcements is a new report by the citywide Disconnected Youth Task Force, entitled [Connecting Our Future](#), which focuses attention on New York City’s population of out-of-school/out-of-work (OSOW) 16 to 24-year-olds. Originally convened in 2019, the Task Force updated its original analysis to account for an expected spike in OSOW as a result of job losses and educational disruptions in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. This report will serve as the City’s strategic plan to serve this population.

“The measures we’re announcing today represent just a first set of actions demonstrating our commitment to center their wellbeing as we begin the long road to recovery from the pandemic,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “We look forward to working with the new Biden-Harris administration and Congressional leadership to build back NYC better than ever.”

The first set of initiatives announced today focuses on re-engaging young adult New Yorkers who are neither enrolled in school nor working:

- CUNY has launched a new Winter Bridge program to enroll 5,000 students from the NYC DOE Class of 2020 who had accepted an offer to CUNY but had yet to matriculate as of the Fall semester. Current CUNY students will work as College Coaches, sharing their own experiences as college students, and providing support to help new students complete CUNY enrollment and financial aid processes. Students in the Winter Bridge Program can enroll for spring 2021 in CUNY Start/Math Start and Accelerated Studies in Associate Programs (ASAP).

- In partnership with the Mayor's Fund to Advance NYC and the NYC Center for Youth Employment (CYE), CUNY will launch a Welcome Back campaign to re-engage at least 600 students, including 100 former CUNY ASAP students majoring in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) fields whose enrollments lapsed in 2020, as well as 500 prospective students who were recently admitted into CUNY community college programs but never enrolled. Participants will receive intensive supports through admissions and re-enrollment processes, including financial aid, ongoing academic and career advisement, and STEM intensive programming with peers.
- The Young Men's Initiative (YMI) will launch License to Careers (L2C), a new pre-apprenticeship initiative to train and place 50 recent high school graduates into career track positions within the transportation sector. This is a new model that will be studied for potential scaling and replication in other sectors of the New York City economy.
- In partnership with DYCD, the Mayor's Office will launch a new fellowship for OSOW young adults from Advance & Earn, a new training, education, and employment program launched in 2020 for youth between the ages of 16-24. The fellowship will recruit 15 Fellows for a four-month work experience where they will hone policy, research, and advocacy skills. Fellows will survey and interview young adults in their communities to learn about the issues they are facing in their everyday lives.

The second set of programs announced today focus on keeping students engaged and on track by expanding career readiness and exploration opportunities to high-need youth:

- The de Blasio Administration has completely restructured the Work Learn & Grow program to focus on college and career readiness. This past fall, the new model, administered by the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) in partnership with DOE and CUNY, provided 2,155 high school students with the opportunity to take a for-credit CUNY course through Kingsborough Community College. After completing the course, participants began a paid internship experience that will run through the spring, through which they can earn up to \$3,000.
- In partnership with CYE, CUNY Explorers, a program that employs CUNY students as College Coaches and mentors for DOE middle school students, will expand and serve an additional 5,000 DOE students. The program will now provide college exploration through after-school activities and expand to work with high school students in 9th and 10th grade.
- CYE, in partnership with Expanded Schools, will train up to 25 nonprofit service providers to serve up to 500 youth with entrepreneurship activities and STEM career exploration as part of DYCD's Learning Labs and after-school programs.
- YMI and the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Office to Prevent Gun Violence will expand eligibility in Anti-Gun Violence Employment Program (AGVEP) to serve up to 50 youth within secure detention. Youth will be engaged in an 18-week stipend-based program that starts under ACS care and continues upon discharge with After Care services. Young people released from Rikers with connections to select service providers

will also have the opportunity to be engaged with this program. Services will include job training, therapeutic services and educational and employment opportunities.

- In partnership with ACS, The Kite, and Petey Greene, and with support from YMI, the Center for Community Alternatives (CCA) will provide 12 weeks of tutoring to a total of 80 youth at both Horizon and Crossroads Juvenile Centers in support of remote learning. Participants will receive tutoring individually and in small groups. As youth return to the community, CCA will work with ACS, DOE and other stakeholders to ensure they have ongoing access to academic support services.

Finally, to support unemployed and under-employed young adult job seekers searching for employment and training opportunities, the City has created two new tools, WorkingNYC and Career Discovery NYC:

- Developed by the Mayor’s Office of Workforce Development and Mayor’s Office for Economic Opportunity, WorkingNYC ([working.nyc.gov](http://working.nyc.gov)) centralizes City programs and resources that help New Yorkers access employment, job training, and adult education, career exploration and skill building programs.
- NYC Small Business Services has launched Career Discovery NYC ([careerdiscovery.cityofnewyork.us](http://careerdiscovery.cityofnewyork.us)), a centralized resource to assist New Yorkers with career discovery and training, features online, no-cost trainings that prepare New Yorkers with the necessary skills to pursue a pathway for an in-demand career path in the industrial, tech, and media sectors.

“As New York City navigates beyond the COVID-19 crisis, our highest aspirations for economic democracy and social justice depend upon how effectively we can prepare all our young people for their futures,” said **J. Phillip Thompson, Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives and Chair of the Disconnected Youth Task Force**. “The report of the Disconnected Youth Task Force provides policymakers the clearest picture yet of who our OSOW young adults are, where we are delivering them effective services and where we must do better, and a comprehensive strategy to help every young New Yorker toward career success.”

“We applaud these initiatives that will enable the City University of New York to continue supporting young adults as they weather the economic fallout from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic,” said **CUNY Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez**. “Whether it’s our new Winter Bridge partnership with the Department of Education to get public school students enrolled in college, our coordinated efforts with the NYC Center for Youth Employment to reengage with more than 1,100 students, or new efforts that focus on long-range priorities such as internships and other career engagement opportunities, CUNY is more than willing to play a vital role in the civic life of the city we are so proud to call home.”

“Our youth and young adults who support their families and communities while attending school have been hit hardest by this crisis and they deserve the spotlight this taskforce is putting on their recovery,” said **Schools Chancellor Richard A. Carranza**. “Our educators and schools will continue to serve these young people by providing a high-quality education that meets their unique needs, while enthusiastically supporting the recommendations of this report.”

"Kingsborough Community College (KCC) is pleased to represent CUNY and partner with DYCD and DOE for the Work, Learn & Grow program, and provide high school students with college and career readiness. Now more than ever, young people need exposure to opportunities that can prepare them academically, socially and emotionally for their future as college students and as members of the workforce. With more than 50 academic programs of study, a Center for Career Development & Experiential Learning, and personalized counseling support for students, KCC is uniquely positioned to participate in this important program and help students succeed," said **Kingsborough President Dr. Claudia V. Schrader**.

The Disconnected Youth Task Force report, [Connecting Our Future](#), includes demographic analysis of the OSOW population, a look at the portfolio of programs both to prevent disconnection and to re-engage those already OSOW, and recommendations to provide short-term assistance for current OSOW young adults and long-term, system-level improvements to reduce their number over time. The Task Force includes City officials, nonprofit leaders, advocates, and employers.

Its report is especially timely in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, which has hit hardest within communities of color both in health outcomes and economic impacts. Following a decade of steady reduction in the number of OSOW young adults, the report estimates that between job losses and educational disruptions, the pandemic has likely at least doubled the number.

"Despite the challenges of the pandemic, programs like Summer Bridge, Advance & Earn, Train & Earn, the WIOA-funded Learn & Earn, and Work Learn & Grow are still able to connect young people with employment, paid internships, job training, credentials and other vital opportunities for career and life success. I am proud to serve with my esteemed colleagues on the Disconnected Youth Task Force, and we look forward to the continued implementation of these programs and the new initiatives being announced today to support our young emerging leaders," said **Department of Youth and Community Development Commissioner Bill Chong**.

"The jobs crisis, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, has hit young New Yorkers and the sectors they work in particularly hard," said **NYC Small Business Services Commissioner Jonnel Doris**. "The Disconnected Youth Task Force's work helps us minimize the long-term impact on our young people. We are excited to be adding new resources to Career Discovery NYC to support young New Yorkers in their career exploration and employment opportunities."

"Young people with aspirations, tremendous potential, and talent will be facing even greater challenges in realizing their dreams in the wake of the pandemic," said **Department of Probation Commissioner Ana M. Bermúdez**. "DOP is proud of our continuing efforts to bring resources and opportunities into communities that have been disproportionately impacted by the justice system, and now disproportionately impacted by COVID-19."

"Ensuring youth have the resources and supports that they need to successfully transition to adulthood is a top priority for ACS," said **Administration for Children's Services Commissioner David A. Hansell**. "I am so pleased that Mayor de Blasio is taking critical steps to open more doors of opportunity for the youth and young adults hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic, including youth in our foster care and juvenile justice system."

"Today's report underscores the urgent need for action across all levels of government to support and uplift tomorrow's leaders of New York City," said **NYC Human Resources Administration Administrator Gary Jenkins**. "As our City continues its recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic with a focus on equity first and foremost, the Department of Social Services-Human Resources Administration is committed to doing its part to provide young adults across the five boroughs with the tools they need to achieve long-term career growth and success."

The Task Force calls for City government to:

- Prioritize re-engagement of OSOW New Yorkers through education, employment, and training as a core component of COVID-19 recovery efforts
- Help prevent disconnection by integrating career readiness into K-12 education and CUNY systems through [CareerReady NYC](#), an initiative launched in 2019
- Elevate visibility and clarify accountability by identifying where primary responsibility for OSOW services sits within City government.

In addition to its recommendations, "Connecting Our Future" presents unprecedented detail on the city's OSOW population—including demographics and causal factors. Among its findings:

- Over the decade prior to the pandemic, the city's OSOW population declined by nearly 40 percent, largely due to sustained improvements in the high school graduation rate and consistent job growth—but even before COVID-19, one in eight 16 to 24-year-old New Yorkers were OSOW
- Those that remained OSOW as of 2018 were older and better educated than the population a decade earlier—nearly three in four have at least completed high school and about one in eight have a bachelor's degree
- The population remains overwhelmingly Black and Latino, and are found in every neighborhood but concentrated in a number of economically distressed communities
- Contributors to disconnection from school and work include challenges in K-12 schooling, struggles with college completion and job retention, and absence of strong networks and support systems; given the demographics of the population, institutional bias is a factor as well

"For generations, too many youth and young adults have been left behind by our education system and our job market, a crisis that has been acutely exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is imperative that we engage these young people and proactively connect them with education and employment resources. The initiatives and partnerships announced today do just that, making significant investments in the futures of these young people and in the future of our city. This administration's leadership on this issue will pay dividends to New York City for years to come," said **Council Member Debi Rose**.

"I want to thank Mayor Bill de Blasio and the Department of Youth and Community Development for their support of the Disconnected Youth Task Force, an initiative made possible through legislation I sponsored in 2017 as Chair of the Committee on Youth Services. As a parent, former teacher, and the former head of a not-for-profit organization for youth, I have firsthand experience with mentoring our young people and putting them on a positive path towards success," said **Council Member Mathieu Eugene**. "I believe that our city's youth have



tremendous potential, but it is our moral obligation as community leaders to empower them with the tools for success, especially those who are not in school and are not working. This situation has been made more dire due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in order to bring our city's economy back, there must be a renewed focus on how resources can be used to support our underserved young people. I am most appreciative that New York City is taking the next steps in this process, and I am confident that this collaborative effort will be a model for future youth-based initiatives."

"The coronavirus pandemic has caused severe disruptions in education as well as the labor market, with New York City's young people bearing some of the heaviest costs," said **David Fischer, Executive Director of the NYC Center for Youth Employment**. "The Task Force report sets out the importance of making sure our youth and young adults remain engaged in school or work, while offering smart and actionable recommendations for both immediate help and long-term reforms to the full system of career readiness."

"Many young New Yorkers have been at great risk of being left behind as the effects of COVID-19 continue to disrupt their lives," said **Matthew Klein, Executive Director of the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity**. "We are proud to be part of connecting youth to opportunities through our programs and digital tools like WorkingNYC, and to work closely with our City colleagues and members of this task force to inform the important work going forward."

"Connecting all New York City youth to opportunities has never been more important –helping youth learn about careers, access education and apprenticeship opportunities, and find a fulfilling job. The partners in this task force have shown how we can do it. Now we must prioritize programs and services that connect young New Yorkers to education, employment, and training as part of our City's recovery." said **Amy Peterson, Director of the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development**.

"YMI is proud to support several of the initiatives announced as a result of the Disconnected Youth Taskforce, including tutoring for students in detention, reentry supports for young people and pre-apprenticeship programming. These initiatives align with YMI's mission to empower young people to reach their full potential. We look forward to continuing this important work with the taskforce," said **Jordan Stockdale, Executive Director of the Young Men's Initiative**.

"Every young person deserves the opportunity to grow and thrive," said **Jessica Mofield, Executive Director of the Office to Prevent Gun Violence, Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice**. "Justice-impacted youth are worthy of success, and this expansion of the Anti-Gun Violence Employment Program helps remind them that they are not alone on their paths to more brilliant futures."

"Helping young people recover from the economic set-backs wrought by the pandemic means putting them on the path to attend college." said **Jorge Luis Paniagua Valle, Co-Executive Director of the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City**. "We are grateful for the partnership with the NYC Center for Youth Employment and the City University of New York, which will help many young New Yorkers receive the financial resources, academic counseling, and career guidance they need to achieve their goals of higher education."

“At a time when the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the racial and economic fault-lines of our society, United Neighborhood Houses applauds this expansion of support for out-of-school, out-of-work young adults. Settlement houses work closely with young people who have been overlooked by New York City’s systems, many of whom are experiencing greater challenges due to COVID-19. In Connecting Our Future, we see a roadmap for how New York City can modify and invest in those systems so that young people have the wide array of opportunities they deserve,” said **Susan Stamler, Executive Director of the United Neighborhood Houses.**

**Stanley Richards, Executive Vice President of The Fortune Society,** said, “There is no wiser an investment than investing in the future of our young people. At The Fortune Society we have seen, firsthand, the positive impact that education, job training and work can have on those disenfranchised from society. Connecting Our Future and the initiatives announced today provide the foundation for a strategic response to engage youth and young adults who are out of school and out of work. The City has, once again, demonstrated its commitment to address the challenges experienced by this fragile population. Fortune is proud to stand with the Mayor, City leaders and my fellow Task Force Members as we take on this enormous task. This is just the beginning. We all need to lean in harder and support our disconnected youth as they navigate a future made even more uncertain by COVID-19 pandemic.”

"NYC's young people are its greatest asset. Their strength has been on full display this past year as they have navigated this pandemic that has upended many of their lives. In this challenging year, our young people have served their communities and bravely called for justice. They have worked in essential jobs and continued towards their academic dreams. We applaud the City's cross-agency initiatives to provide 13,000 young people with the support and opportunity they need and deserve,” said **Jess Dannhauser, President & CEO of Graham Windham.** “We are certain it will be a most worthwhile investment. As we begin to turn the corner on the pandemic, we encourage the City to continue to scale holistic academic, career and service opportunities for hundreds of thousands of young people. Let's put them at the center of our City's revitalization. Their future and the future of our City as an equitable and prosperous place for all New Yorkers depend on it.”

“With the pandemic and associated economic recession wiping out significant gains made in reducing the out of school, out of work population, we must center young adults in any recovery plan. The Connecting Our Future report provides a foundation upon which to build a strategy by mapping programs and services, demographic data on the OSOW population served by City agencies, and recommendations about how to prioritize young adults,” said **Marjorie Parker, President & CEO of JobsFirstNYC.**

By statute, the Task Force will remain active until early 2022. It will reconvene over the winter to determine next steps and begin oversight of implementation from the report recommendations.

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