



**NYC Center for Economic Opportunity**

**Independent Evaluation: Understanding  
Subsidized Jobs Programs for Young Adults -  
Characteristics of Good Experiences and  
Identification of Non-Employment Outcomes**

**2013**

**Prepared for:**  
New York City  
Center for Economic  
Opportunity

**Prepared by:**  
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Rockville, MD 20850  
and  
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New York, NY 10005

**Westat®**

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## Foreword

The Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) is committed to evaluating its programs and policies and has contracted with Westat and Metis Associates in order to inform decision-making within CEO and the sponsoring city agencies. Westat and Metis have developed a collaborative team approach in the planning, design, and implementation of various types of evaluations including impact, outcome, and implementation studies. This study was conducted jointly by Westat and Metis staff.

The principal authors for this report are Cynthia S. Robins at Westat and Kathleen Agaton and Katie Rollins from Metis. The study interviews were conducted by Kathleen Agaton and Katie Rollins. Additional contributions were made by Liz Quinn and Jennifer Hamilton of Westat and Stan Schneider, Donna Tapper, and Susanne Harnett of Metis.

We would like to acknowledge the cooperation of the study respondents, especially the program sites who coordinated scheduling of interviews and allowed interviews in their sites. All of the individuals who were contacted for the study agreed to be interviewed and generously offered their time and their ideas. We also appreciate the help provided by staff of CEO, especially Carson Hicks, who assisted with gaining entrée to the program sites included in this study.



## **CEO RESPONSE TO WESTAT AND METIS EVALUATION ON SUBSIDIZED JOBS PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG ADULTS**

Early work experience, education, and social supports are key ingredients for ensuring that young people have what it takes to succeed in the long run. With approximately 200,000 young people out of work and out of school in New York City there is a strong need for programming targeting this population. Additionally, we know that young adults are not a homogenous group; some have few barriers while others need substantial support. To meet the needs of this population, the Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) in partnership with other City agencies developed a range of programs from basic literacy to higher education; innovative approaches to pregnancy prevention such as community service opportunities for students; and employment programs for disconnected and court-involved youth.

CEO offers a number of subsidized jobs programs intended to support both educational and career development goals. These programs aim to provide young adults ages 16-24 with work experience which could subsequently lead to the attainment of permanent employment or further education. Beyond resulting in potential placements in jobs or school, however, CEO recognizes that these programs may also have other benefits, including providing youth with the opportunity for career exploration, and to gain important skills and experiences.

With this in mind and as part of its ongoing effort to determine effectiveness and document lessons for the field by evaluating and monitoring programs, CEO contracted Westat and Metis to conduct a qualitative study over the summer and fall of 2011 aimed at understanding what makes a subsidized job experience successful, focusing specifically on non-employment outcomes. Westat and Metis looked across eight CEO initiatives that offered subsidized jobs to young adults as part of their programming at the time of the study:

- CUNY Preparatory Transitional High School;
- CUNY Works – At Home, In College;
- CUNY Works – Language and Literacy Programs;
- NYC Justice Corps;
- MillionTrees Training Program;
- Scholars at Work (SAW);
- Young Adult Internship Program (YAIP);
- Young Adult Literacy (YAL).

The evaluators conducted a series of interviews with 24 program participants (three from each of the eight programs listed above), eight program staff (one from each program), and four employers. Program participants were selected by program staff to participate in the evaluation, and thus were generally made up of youth who were still in contact with program staff and had generally positive program experiences.

## Understanding Subsidized Jobs Programs for Young Adults

The report documents evidence of the kinds of non-employment outcomes that result from subsidized jobs programs, including the development of skills supporting future employment from job-specific technical skills to more generally applicable skills like professional communication. Other outcomes for participants in CEO's subsidized jobs programs were related to self-efficacy and self-esteem, connectedness to individuals and community, and experiences leading to more opportunities for the youth in the future. Westat and Metis identified the key qualities of a good subsidized job, pointing specifically to experiences that matched participant expectations and provided both skill instruction and emotional support. The evaluators also emphasized the importance of offering paid opportunities to help support youth and their families, promote attendance and retention, and give young adults the opportunity to develop important financial skills.

Informed by these findings, the evaluators recommend continuing to offer young adults subsidized jobs, ensuring work is meaningful for participants, selecting employers who are committed to the holistic development of youth, providing work readiness trainings or workshops, and balancing the long-term goals of employment and education with the near-term expectations of participants.

This evaluation has already informed CEO's strategic planning and program operations. The Center continues to emphasize the importance of subsidized jobs in its existing youth programming and to improve upon existing subsidized jobs models. A forthcoming report summarizes the key best practices that have been implemented across CEO's portfolio of subsidized jobs programs. This continued emphasis is underscored by the replication of Project Rise in Newark and Kansas City, which includes subsidized jobs that are conditioned on maintaining satisfactory attendance in the program's education component. Project Rise was launched with a federal Social Innovation Fund (SIF) grant that supports replication of CEO's most promising anti-poverty programs in New York City and seven other urban areas around the country.

While some of the programs described in this report have since ended, CEO has added new programming to support more subsidized jobs opportunities for young adults. In partnership with the Young Men's Initiative and the Human Resources Administration, CEO has expanded such opportunities specifically through the Work Progress Program (WPP). This year, WPP has supported 28 community-based organizations throughout the city that provide young adults with support services, reimbursing them for the wages of low-income youth ages 16 to 24 in subsidized employment opportunities.

CEO will continue to evaluate the subsidized jobs models supported by our office, to learn more about optimal subsidized job structures and cost effectiveness for the strategy. Further research will broaden understanding in the field of the best ways to leverage subsidized job opportunities to meet the needs of disconnected young adults.

Carson C. Hicks  
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## Executive Summary

The Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) focuses on young adults as a key target population, and offers a number of programs intended to either reinforce their educational goals and/or provide them with some work experience in order to increase their chances of obtaining permanent employment. CEO recognizes, however, that young people do not always find jobs immediately after participating in these programs, but that the programs may provide youth with other important skills and experiences, including having a positive work experience, gaining exposure to a positive adult role model, and avoiding negative behaviors such as crime and delinquency.

In spring 2011, CEO contracted its external evaluators, Westat and Metis, to undertake a qualitative study aimed at understanding what makes a subsidized job experience successful, wherein “success” may include educational, youth development and other non-employment outcomes. The study looks across eight of CEO’s programs that offer subsidized jobs to participating young adults:

- CUNY Preparatory Transitional High School
- CUNY Works – At Home, In College
- CUNY Works – Language and Literacy Programs
- NYC Justice Corps
- MillionTrees Training Program
- Scholars at Work (SAW)
- Young Adult Internship Program (YAIP)
- Young Adult Literacy (YAL) program

In doing so the study also attempts to understand what may contribute to a less than positive subsidized job experience, and ways in which subsidized jobs offered through CEO could be improved. In order to address these questions, the evaluators reviewed qualitative data previously collected by Westat and/or Metis on the eight programs. They also conducted a series of interviews in summer/fall 2011. A total of 36 respondents were interviewed, including 24 program participants (three from each program), eight program staff (one from each program), and four employers.

The interviews were transcribed and analyzed for recurring themes; findings are described below. It is important to note that all interview respondents were selected by program staff



(it was thought that study recruitment, especially of young people, would be more effective and expedient if program staff introduced the study and personally invited them to participate). The result of this selection process is that the study included participants who generally had positive experiences with their subsidized job programs and were still in close contact with program staff.

## **Findings**

### **Characteristics of a good subsidized job experience**

- **Matching participants' expectations with their experiences.** One factor contributing to a successful subsidized job experience is when the program activities correspond to the youths' expectations. When asked to comment on their perceptions of participants' expectations when they started a program and the degree to which these expectations ultimately matched their experiences, staff generally said participants had two sets of expectations: they expected to be paid, and they anticipated gaining skills that would help them get jobs in the future. While many youth said their initial goal in signing up for a program was simply to make money, once the program began, they realized how much more they would gain from participation. Many participants described experiences that were consonant with what they had hoped to get out of the subsidized job program, such as the type of work they performed, the chance to explore career options, and opportunities for networking with others.
- **Ensuring work experiences are paid.** Staff members noted that many participating youth are in economically challenged circumstances and have a real and pressing need to create a better life for themselves and their families. When asked how they used the money they earned during the program, many young people reported using the funds for very basic needs, such as rent, food, transportation, and child care. Staff and participants alike said that the money *allowed the youth to stay in the subsidized job*. So pressing were their financial needs that many of these young adults would have had to find some other paying job; better, staff said, that the youth earn money while gaining work skills or staying in college than working dead-end jobs in fast-food restaurants.
- **Providing both skill instruction and emotional support.** Positively received or good programs offered participants positive experiences in two domains: 1) the provision of instruction for skills development, i.e., teaching the interns how to do specific things, and 2) ensuring that the broader youth development framework of the experience was also in place, specifically, those aspects of the experience that created a positive emotional environment for these young people.
  - **Skills development instruction.** These programs gave youth, many of whom had very little formal work experience or very little understanding of holding down a job, a basic introduction into the world of legitimate work, as well as the

soft and hard skills they would need to be both job-ready and successful in the work place. Soft skills included basics of how to apply for and get a job (e.g., developing a resume), and skills necessary for everyday life in the workplace, the most important of which was workplace communication skills. Hard skills included job-specific skills that were as varied as the placements (e.g., answering the phone, plant identification, organizational networking).

- **Youth development framework.** Many participants commented on how important it was to their overall experience that the subsidized job was offered within a youth development framework. Chief among these processes were being treated “just like a regular employee” and the informal mentoring relationships that were formed. Because many young people initially doubted their abilities or came from environments where they were rarely encouraged to succeed, having a supportive work environment and at least one caring adult to encourage their success are important components of a positive subsidized job experience.

## Program outcomes

While many young people were successful in finding employment after their participation in these programs, others were completing their subsidized jobs, were enrolled in school (or were about to enroll), or were searching for jobs. Regardless of their employment status, most young adults highlighted a number of positive non-employment outcomes that they experienced as a result of their participation in one of the programs. Findings from staff and employers validated these results. Outcomes most commonly noted include increased self-efficacy and self-esteem, an increased sense of connectedness to their community or nature, and feeling part of a “family” or “home”. Many respondents also elaborated on the various ways in which the program was a catalytic experience for young people.

- **Self-efficacy.** Interview data reveal that for the majority of the young people, their subsidized job experiences contributed to a sense of self-efficacy. Respondents described how the knowledge and skills that they gained bolstered not only their self-confidence and the belief that they can be successful, but ultimately their employability.
- **Connectedness**
  - **Caring for others – doing something for other people.** Some programs or subsidized job placements gave young people opportunities to “make a difference” in their communities, such as through a community project, helping immigrants, or improving the natural environment. The result was that these young people gained a deeper sense of connectedness to their communities or to the natural world, which appeared to contribute greatly to their satisfaction with their program experience.

- **Feeling like part of a “family” or “home”.** Several young people reported on feeling like part of a “family” or “home” because of the nurturing, supportive environment created by program staff, supervisors, and co-workers, and opportunities for bonding through teamwork with peers.
- **Catalyst/gateway experience.** For many participants, the subsidized job was a catalytic and “eye opening” experience. Knowing that they can learn new skills and successfully apply them, form positive relationships with others, be exposed to caring adults, and work in an environment they once may have thought to be out of reach seemed to spur many of the interviewees forward. Some gained a clearer sense of their career goals, which helped them solidify their education plans; others found new interests and shifted their job searches towards those areas; still others realized the gaps they needed to fill in order to be successful in the workplace.

## **Barriers to employment**

Youth who want jobs may not obtain employment post-subsidized job for a number of reasons related to job-readiness – some that are due to limiting characteristics of participants and others that are structural factors. With respect to characteristics of participants, employers reported that some youth did not hone certain soft skills (e.g., language, dress, social interactions) and were not ready to enter the workplace. Other youth may not find employment because they lack a high school diploma or GED, are too young (i.e., not yet 18 years of age), lack certification, have a criminal history, or have an undocumented status. In addition, some subsidized job programs were not intended to lead directly to employment, but rather provide participants with financial support while enrolled in school, or to introduce them to a world of work that they had not previously experienced. Providing long-term employment to interns was not a formal goal of some subsidized job sites. The weak economy and slow rate of job creation were also cited.

## **Youth with less than positive experiences**

While the majority of the young adults that were interviewed for this study had very positive subsidized job experiences, which may be due to a selection bias, a couple of young people said they wished their subsidized job responsibilities had been more challenging or more in line with their academic interests. These less than positive experiences were not explicitly negative, but lacked some of the positive features noted by others.

## **Summary and Recommendations**

This study provides evidence of the kinds of non-employment outcomes that resulted from participation in the various subsidized job programs sponsored by CEO. The findings indicate two broad categories of such outcomes: first, youth graduate from these programs with a set of skills that will help them obtain a job in the future and, as importantly, retain that job over time. Secondly, programs created opportunities for the young people to establish positive relationships with others, including other program participants, program beneficiaries, and caring adults.

Drawn from features that emerged repeatedly in the interviews and that respondents identified as critical aspects of their experience, the following are recommendations for how to provide positive subsidized job experiences for young adults.

- ***Ensure that subsidized work is meaningful to the participants.*** Both placing youth in subsidized jobs related to their goals and interests and providing subsidized job options from which to choose, will allow young people to help select their subsidized jobs and help to ensure that subsidized work is meaningful to participants. Even for participants who lack career direction, the work can be meaningful if it provides challenges and new learning opportunities, enabling them to experience personal growth, demonstrate mastery of skills, and gain confidence.
- ***Select employers who are committed to the holistic development of young adults.*** Given how important it was for participants, many of whom had little or no previous work experience, to feel valued at their subsidized job and to be treated “just like another employee”, program staff may wish to consider screening and selecting employers that view these young adults as assets to the organization or company (not merely as “free labor”) and that have the patience and compassion to reach out to and connect with their interns. Partnering with employers that are dedicated to improving employment outcomes for these young adults may also help to ensure that interns have meaningful, hands-on-work experiences. Lessons may also be learned from employers who successfully support and train interns as well as from these employers’ interns.
- ***Provide work readiness training or workshops.*** One of the most important features of a good subsidized job experience is that the program provides the young participants with trainings or classes in workplace fundamentals (i.e., workplace etiquette, dress, and expectations) *prior* to the subsidized job placement. This is helpful because many of the young people have very little formal work experience, and also because employers said they are more willing to work with programs if they know the young adults have a basic understanding of workplace fundamentals.
- ***Ensure that work experiences are paid opportunities.*** It may seem obvious, but young people need to be remunerated for their efforts. Many of the youth that were interviewed need the income to support themselves and their families. Getting paid also

provides young people with an opportunity to practice budgeting, saving, and even managing a bank account—all critical skills to have when entering into the workforce.

- ***Balance long-term program goals with near-term expectations of the youth.***  
Efforts to encourage young people to participate in subsidized job programs should promote the long-term employment objectives, but also fully acknowledge that money is the driver for many potential participants.

# Overview of the Study

# 1

## 1.1 Background and Introduction

In New York City, nearly a quarter of a million young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 live in poor households; an estimated 120,000 young adults are neither in school nor in the labor force. Of these, approximately half have high school degrees, while others struggle with basic literacy skills and face many other hurdles<sup>1</sup>. The Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) targets young adults and offers a number of programs intended to either reinforce their educational goals and/or provide them with some work experience in order to increase their chances of obtaining permanent employment. However, results from studies that have evaluated the success of youth subsidized job programs have been mixed. As Currie, et al. (2001)<sup>2</sup> have noted, quantitative evaluations of both the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and Job Corps suggested that these relatively high-cost programs resulted in very small, if any, positive changes in participants' earnings over the follow-up period (in one case, 30 months post-placement). CEO believes that subsidized jobs and subsidized jobs are a promising strategy for engaging young people who are out of school and out of work. In addition, they provide valuable and much needed early work experience. This viewpoint is supported by research by Andrew Sum which suggests that early work experience is essential to long term economic opportunity.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> These data are drawn from CEO's website, at [www.nyc.gov/ceo](http://www.nyc.gov/ceo).

<sup>2</sup> Currie, S., K. Foley, S. Schwartz, M. Taylor-Lewis (2001) BladeRunners and Picasso Café: A Case Study Evaluation of Two Work-Based Training Programs for Disadvantaged Youth. Social Research and Demonstration Corporation. Accessed 11.12.11 at: <http://srdc.org/uploads/eyouth.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> See Sum, A., I. Khatiwada, R. Taggart (2009) "Path Dependency in Teen Employment and Its Implications for Youth Workforce Development Policy." Paper Presented to U.S. Conference of Mayors, Washington, D.C.

CEO is committed to assessing the impact of its programs through rigorous evaluation and close program monitoring. They contracted with Westat and Metis Associates, the external evaluators of a number of CEO programs, to conduct a qualitative study aimed at understanding what makes a successful subsidized job experience, wherein “success” may also include educational, youth development and other non-employment outcomes.

The study focuses on eight programs that offer subsidized jobs to participating young adults<sup>4</sup>:

- CUNY Preparatory Transitional High School
- CUNY Works – At Home, In College
- CUNY Works – Language and Literacy Programs
- NYC Justice Corps
- MillionTrees Training Program
- Scholars at Work (SAW)
- Young Adult Internship Program (YAIP)
- Young Adult Literacy (YAL) program

We provide a description of each of these eight programs, including their respective objectives<sup>5</sup>, in Table 1 on the following pages. Technically, the subsidized job placement is separate from the program activities that ultimately lead to the placement; practically, however, interviewees described a continuous experience. For example, work skills learned in a program setting translated into a successful interview for a subsidized job; experiences while on the subsidized job were then taken back to the weekly meeting of program participants for discussion and the teaching of additional skills; and those new skills were, in turn, used at the placement site. In addition, most interviewees described having regular

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<sup>4</sup> CEO has a working classification of internship programs based on whether the program is education-focused and has added an internship component, or, conversely, is work-focused and has added an education piece. There is also a category for programs that endeavor to engage disconnected youth, such as NYC Justice Corps and YAIP. We have not maintained these classifications in this study, however, because interviewees tended to focus on the same critical processes, regardless of the program. The ways in which the programs are similar, we believe, serve as the hallmarks of positive internship experiences for the youth.

<sup>5</sup> Some of this information is publicly available on the CEO website, and some was learned through the interviews conducted for this study.

contact with program staff even while in the subsidized job component. Thus, throughout this report we use terms such as “the program,” “subsidized job,” or “subsidized job program” largely interchangeably because, with these eight programs, one does not exist without the other.

**Table 1. Subsidized Job Programs and Their Expected Outcomes**

Program	Program Description	Expected Outcomes
<p><i>CUNY Preparatory Transitional High School (CUNY Prep): Student Workforce Corps (SWC)<sup>6</sup></i></p>	<p>CUNY Prep is a model program that offers out-of-school youth ages 18-24 an opportunity for full-time study in order to qualify for admission to college by obtaining a General Equivalency Diploma (GED). Most students attend the program for 6-12 months. Instruction emphasizes college preparation in humanities, math, and science. The program also teaches college survival skills and provides social supports such as counseling, career advising, and referrals to health care centers. In addition, the program offers the Student Workforce Corps (SWC) to CUNY Prep graduates attending college or GED recipients who are transitioning into college. The goal of SWC is to help students gain valuable work experience and skills in an employment setting that will support their college success.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students achieve 90% attendance</li> <li>• 75% of students pass the GED</li> <li>• At least 50% of students remain in college for at least two semesters</li> </ul>

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<sup>6</sup> This program was discontinued by CEO in FY2015.



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Program	Program Description	Expected Outcomes
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>CUNY Works – At Home, In College<sup>7</sup></i></p>	<p>CUNY Works is a pilot that allows young adults enrolled in select CUNY programs to participate in subsidized jobs that reinforce their educational achievement. In addition, students participate in workshops that provide them with practical and professional skills, such as opening a bank account, creating a strong resume, and interviewing for a variety of jobs. At Home, In College (AHC) is a college transition program that works with students from New York City public high schools and CUNY GED programs who are on-track to graduate but who have not met traditional benchmarks of college readiness (via Regents or SAT scores). The objective of AHC is to prepare students not only for college access, but college success. The program offers participating high school and GED students transition classes designed to prepare them for the CUNY entrance exam and success in college; a fee waiver for the CUNY application; and college access activities such as college visits and assistance with college applications. Participants that enroll at a CUNY Community College receive a range of supportive services during their first year, including advising, job search and resume-writing seminars, a subsidized job on campus, and a <i>Public Speaking</i> course that incorporates subsidized work with public speaking curriculum. The immediate goal of the project is to increase the college enrollment and third semester retention rates of these student populations, with the long-term goal of increased college graduation rates.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase college enrollment and third semester retention rates of targeted student population</li> <li>• Increase college graduation rates</li> </ul>

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<sup>7</sup> This program was a one-time investment for CEO, and is no longer in operation.

Understanding Subsidized Job Programs for Young Adults

Program	Program Description	Expected Outcomes
<i>CUNY Works – CUNY Language and Literacy Programs</i>	<p>The CUNY Language and Literacy Programs serve out-of-school youth and adults with English language or literacy/GED preparation needs, and College Transition studies and academic English for those with a high school diploma or GED. These programs include CUNY Adult Literacy (which provides classes in Adult Literacy, English for Speakers of Other Languages, and GED preparation) and the CUNY Language Immersion Program (CLIP) (an intensive English as a Second Language program to help CUNY students improve their English language skills, while building the academic and computer skills they need for college).</p> <p>In CLIP, students are placed in subsidized jobs<sup>8</sup> in the Office of Adult Literacy under the direct supervision of the Director of the We Are New York (WANY) Community Project. The WANY Community Project organizes free conversation groups across the City, using the Emmy Award-winning WANY television show to help immigrants practice their English and learn about helpful City services. Through their subsidized jobs, CLIP students are trained in the WANY curriculum and ultimately lead WANY conversation groups throughout the City, supporting the development of their own English language skills and teaching them important information about community services in NYC. Additionally, most interns perform administrative work in the WANY offices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn information about city services, especially those relevant to the immigrant community</li> <li>• Gain basic office skills and experience</li> <li>• Gain teaching skills and become comfortable leading groups of adults in conversation</li> </ul>

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<sup>8</sup> Initially these positions were unpaid opportunities.

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Program	Program Description	Expected Outcomes
MillionTrees Training Program (MTTP)	<p>MTTP is an apprenticeship program designed to provide disconnected youth with marketable employment skills in “green-collar” jobs, including tracks on arboriculture, ecological restoration, and landscape design and installation.<sup>9</sup> This program is part of MillionTreesNYC, a ten-year initiative to plant and care for one million new trees throughout the City’s five boroughs. The first phase of this eight-month paid training program includes a one-month joint orientation session, which includes skills assessment and a customized personal skills training curriculum; an introduction to the three program tracks and the Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks) and New York Restoration Project (NYRP) programs; a rotation through the varied work assignments, and an application process for participants to select a training track. The second phase is a three-month certification training within the career tracks, and the third phase includes four months of field work and tree planting, outreach and stewardship of MillionTreesNYC. Trainees are also paired with a mentor.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24 disconnected youth complete program and are placed in “green” jobs</li> <li>• 24 participants receive certification in Composting, Horticulture or a Pesticide Apprentice Training</li> <li>• Placement and retention in an approved position<sup>10</sup> six months following the completion of the training, or in a higher education program</li> </ul>

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<sup>9</sup> For the 2011-2012 cohort the program will no longer be offering landscape design and installation.

<sup>10</sup> Positions include arboriculture and forestry positions at Parks and NYRP, design and installation positions at NYRP, and positions with established private partners such as landscape firms and plant nurseries in NYC.

## Understanding Subsidized Job Programs for Young Adults

Program	Program Description	Expected Outcomes
<i>NYC Justice Corps<sup>11</sup></i>	<p>NYC Justice Corps prepares young adults ages 18 to 24 who have been involved in the criminal justice system to succeed in the labor market and address educational needs while giving back to their communities in meaningful, restorative, visible, and lasting ways. The program provides services to young adults in their home neighborhoods; in turn, these communities develop the capacity to successfully reintegrate their young adults. The first month of this six-month program includes Corps member orientation and individual assessments, skill-building and team-building activities, community project scoping, selection, and/or matching. In Months Two to Four, Corps members engage as a team in executing projects that repair and improve the community (known as the Community Benefit Service Project). In months five and six, Corps members are placed in a subsidized job with job coaching and support. At the end of the subsidized job, Corps members graduate from the NYC Justice Corps but receive continued support (<i>minimum</i> of six months) in pursuing employment and educational goals.</p>	<p>Short-Term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide tangible job skills and increase employability and educational level of Corps members</li> <li>• Expand positive social networks for Corps members</li> <li>• Provide tangible developments to the community through project service</li> </ul> <p>Long-Term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain Corps members in permanent, unsubsidized employment or educational activities</li> <li>• Reduce recidivism rate among Corps members</li> <li>• Develop the communities' capacity to provide direct services to formerly incarcerated individuals</li> <li>• Repair relationships between formerly incarcerated young adults and their communities</li> </ul>
<i>Scholars at Work (SAW)<sup>12</sup></i>	<p>SAW brings together the city's publicly-supported education and workforce systems to provide a fuller range of options for young New Yorkers graduating from the city's career and technical education high schools, whose post-graduation plans might include work instead of, or in addition to, college. Following a three-week unpaid orientation that covers career planning and work readiness, students complete a 14-week subsidized job with public and private employers in the transportation industry. During the subsidized job, students participate in monthly engagement meetings and complete a weekly online journal where they reflect on their subsidized job experiences. Students also prepare and conduct a presentation on a job field or career path of interest. In addition, full-time job placement services are available to students upon graduation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students from career and technical education high schools gain work experience with public and private employers in the transportation industry</li> </ul>

<sup>11</sup> This program has been expanded under the Young Men's Initiative (YMI), a comprehensive effort launched by the Mayor's Office in 2011 to address disparities that hinder the advancement of young men of color in New York City.

<sup>12</sup> This program has also been expanded under YMI.

## Understanding Subsidized Job Programs for Young Adults

Program	Program Description	Expected Outcomes
<i>Young Adult Internship Program (YAIP)<sup>13</sup></i>	<p>YAIP provides short-term subsidized jobs, placements into jobs, education, or advanced training, and follow-up services to disconnected youth ages 16 to 24 years. YAIP providers serve young people with a range of educational abilities, but tend to work with those who are more job-ready given the short duration of the intervention. During orientation, participants are assessed for employability skills and social support needs, develop an Individual Service Strategy, complete pre-subsidized job work-readiness training, and receive supportive counseling. They then participate in a 10-12 week subsidized job and educational workshops on topics such as financial literacy, the world of work, career exploration, and educational opportunities. Following the subsidized job, participants receive an additional nine months of follow up placement assistance in jobs or educational programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subsidized job placement for all participants who complete orientation</li> <li>• Completion of subsidized job by 75% of enrollees</li> <li>• Placement of at least 70% of enrollees in post-subsidized employment or enrollment in education, skills training, or GED program</li> <li>• Retention of at least 60% of enrollees in an approved placement during the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter after program completion</li> </ul>
<i>Young Adult Literacy (YAL) program<sup>14</sup></i>	<p>YAL is a program for young adults based on best practices. The program includes targeted instruction, work readiness, and support services. It also provides curriculum and instructional approaches targeted to the needs and interests of young adults who read at a pre-GED level (4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade level). The program offers a work readiness or job placement component, modest participant incentives, and case management services to support sustained participation. YAL serves cohorts of approximately 20 students and engage them for extended periods, as most students need to advance several grade levels to enter GED programs or realistically compete in the job market.<sup>15</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved young adult program attendance and persistence</li> <li>• Literacy and numeracy gains</li> <li>• Successful transition of participants into GED programs, employment or employment training</li> </ul>

Overall, young people were able to provide rich descriptions of what makes a successful subsidized job experience and illuminated several outcomes that were just as important to them, if not more important, than finding immediate employment.

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<sup>13</sup> This program has also been expanded under YMI.

<sup>14</sup> This program has also been expanded under YMI.

<sup>15</sup> YAL pre-GED programs take place in the three public library systems—New York Public Library (NYPL), Queens Public Library, and Brooklyn Public Library—as well as community based organizations (CBOs) partnering with the Department of Youth and Community Development (DCYD). CEO provided Metis with contact information for key program staff for all three NYPL pre-GED programs and DCYD. YAL interviewees comprised one program staff person and two participants affiliated with two of the NYPL pre-GED programs, and one participant affiliated with a CBO.

## 2.1 Research Questions

The external evaluators worked collaboratively with CEO staff to design the study and data collection instruments. Through in-depth analysis of previously conducted interviews and focus groups, and interviews with current and former program participants, program staff, and employers, the study attempts to answer the following research questions:

- Looking across several of CEO's youth programs, what are the characteristics of a good subsidized job experience? Specifically, what processes and/or outcomes constitute a positive subsidized job experience for the participants?
- What is the value of a subsidized job? Specifically, what non-employment outcomes did participants experience?
- Conversely, what processes and/or outcomes contribute to a less than positive experience?
- What recommendations do participants, service providers, and employers have for ways to improve subsidized jobs offered through CEO?

The study team developed two interview guides—one for current and former participants and another for program staff and employers (subsidized jobs providers). Following review by CEO, the guides and consent forms (see appendices) were submitted to and approved by Metis's and Westat's Institutional Review Boards.

## 2.2 Methods

### 2.2.1 Review of extant qualitative data

Evaluations had been conducted for most of the programs, either by Westat, Metis, or the two companies working in collaboration with each other. In February 2011, Metis staff reviewed work plans from previous program evaluations and created an inventory of the data collection activities that contributed to these evaluations, as well as which data and

reports were available from those activities. In most instances, focus groups had been conducted with participants to learn about their subsidized job experiences. We had also interviewed program staff about their views on program implementation and what was (or was not) working for the youth involved. To assess the quality and value of the information obtained from previous efforts, and with an eye toward reducing potential burden on both the programs and their staff and participants, in May 2011, the study team reviewed focus group transcripts and discussion summaries, listened to audio recordings from those activities, and reviewed previous Westat/Metis evaluation reports for these programs. The focus of the review was threefold:

- To assess the key attributes/strengths of each subsidized job program;
- To gain a stronger understanding, where possible, of the work- and non-work-related benefits young participants believed they obtained from these programs. In short, beyond obtaining paid employment, what makes a subsidized job successful from the perspective of the participants?
- To refine the questions that would be incorporated into the interview guides for the program participants, program staff, and employers.

## **2.2.2 Interviews**

Interview respondents included participants, program staff, and employers. From August to October, 2011, Metis conducted 36 one-on-one, in-person interviews—24 with participants (three from each program), eight interviews with program staff (one from each program), and four employers. Each interview lasted up to one hour and was conducted at a time and location convenient to the respondent. The consent notice and interview protocol were shared with each respondent at the time of scheduling and at the interview.<sup>16</sup>

## **2.2.3 Sample selection**

As requested by CEO, all respondents were selected by program staff. With the young adults, in particular, it was thought that their recruitment into the study would be more effective and expedient if program staff introduced the study, personally invited them to participate, and also offered their office as a location for the interview. The result of this selection process is that the study included participants who generally had positive experiences with their subsidized job programs and were still in close contact with program

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<sup>16</sup> Only one respondent was a minor. Parental consent was obtained.

staff. It is important to note this selection bias in understanding the findings from interviews with young adults.

Prior to conducting the interviews, CEO staff reached out to a lead staff member from each program to explain the study and how Metis would be working with them to determine how best to recruit interview respondents and schedule interviews. All respondents were asked by program staff to participate in the study. In some cases, program staff communicated directly with respondents and scheduled the interviews. In other cases, after initially notifying participants, program staff provided names to Metis, who then contacted respondents directly to schedule interviews. Interviews that were scheduled by program staff tended to happen in a timelier manner. When Metis had to contact respondents— young people, specifically—to schedule interviews, there were a couple instances when the young people did not show or did not respond in spite of repeated attempts to contact them. In all these cases, alternate respondents were contacted. In only one case of program staff interviews did a staff person who was designated by the program manager decline to participate; the program manager was interviewed instead.

### ***Recruiting participants***

With respect to participants, it was important to gain the perspective of young adults currently participating in the subsidized job programs as well as those who had completed the program and had some time to reflect on their experiences. Therefore, Metis asked program staff to identify, to the extent possible, one current participant and two participants who had completed the program (one in the past six months and another in the past six months to two years). Young adults were compensated with a \$50 Bank of America gift card and a seven-day unlimited Metro card for participating.

### ***Recruiting program staff and employers***

Given that the study seeks to understand characteristics of a positive or less than positive subsidized job experience, it was recommended that staff and employers have a fair understanding of the program components and the experiences of participants in the program and subsidized job. The study design included 12 interviews with staff and employers: one staff person from each of the eight programs and one employer for four of the programs (NYC Justice Corps, SAW, YAIP, and YAL). Based on joint discussions of findings that emerged from interviews with participants and program staff, the design team



selected employers from four programs that might yield helpful information on non-employment outcomes and real barriers to employment. Criteria for selection included: the program's focus on obtaining permanent employment after participation in the program (e.g., NYC Justice Corps, SAW, and YAIP), and the program's effort to help youth overcome some fundamental barriers to employment, such as basic educational skills (e.g., YAL), age of participants (e.g., YAIP), or the participants' criminal backgrounds (e.g., NYC Justice Corps).<sup>17</sup> The NYC Justice Corps was also chosen for the uniqueness of one of its program components, the Community Benefit Service Project. Reasons for not selecting certain programs included the fact that the employer was part of the program itself (e.g., MillionTrees Training Program) or education was the primary focus (e.g., CUNY Prep).

## **2.3 Analysis**

The interviews were recorded and transcribed with permission of respondents. The study director and each of the two interviewers reviewed and summarized transcriptions for analysis. Responses were content analyzed both manually and using N-Vivo (qualitative data analysis software) for themes that emerged from the data. The study team held joint meetings to discuss emerging themes and synthesize findings.

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<sup>17</sup> Based on early program experience, the focus of SAW has since shifted to also include educational outcomes.

## Findings

# 3

Qualitative analysis is an iterative endeavor, as analysts review early transcripts and identify key themes, and either build on or amend those findings as subsequent interview materials are reviewed. Although it required multiple iterations for our team to determine the most parsimonious way to present our findings, how respondents described the value of these programs was remarkably consistent across all 36 interviews. Certainly there were some differences in focus between the education- and employment-oriented programs, which we will discuss in the “Outcomes” section below, but interviewees’ descriptions of key program processes and critical youth outcomes tended to converge regardless of program focus.

In the following pages we describe our interviewees’ perspectives on the characteristics of a positive subsidized job experience. We first examine two features of program participation that we anticipated would be important to the quality of the youths’ experience, namely, the degree to which participants’ expectations matched their actual experiences, and the perceived value of participating in a paid subsidized job program. We then describe specific processes that interviewees consistently identified as important to the experience, including the teaching of both hard and soft skills in the program, as well as the creation of a caring, emotionally enriching environment.

We next turn our attention to program outcomes. While employment is certainly a desired outcome of subsidized job programs, education and youth development are equally appropriate outcomes for young adults. We discuss the importance of the subsidized job experience to the youths’ sense of self, as well as to their ability to create connections with other people. We also describe how these introductory work experiences may not result in near-term employment, but, by all accounts, provide these participants with an excellent platform for future success. And because work is a valued outcome, we then explore some of the barriers young people face to obtaining a job after the subsidized job program. Finally, we offer interviewees’ recommendations for ways to create a positive subsidized job experience for these youth.

## **3.1 What are the Characteristics of a Good Subsidized Job Experience?**

### **3.1.1 Matching participants' expectations with their experiences**

We asked staff members what they thought their participants' expectations for the program were when they started and the degree to which they ultimately matched their experiences. Staff generally said<sup>18</sup> participants had two sets of expectations – they expected to be paid, and they anticipated gaining skills that would help them get jobs in the future:

- “A lot of people want stability in their life, they want to create a more stable life for themselves and their families – that’s something that I hear a lot, they would like to not have to constantly be wanting or in need, and not worry about whether they can make the rent and pay the bills each month...Most people want to enroll in the program in hopes of a more stable life in the future for themselves and their family.” [13]
- “Money. That’s their number one priority for themselves. They want the experiences but they might be in a situation where their parents aren’t making any money. Job experience is number two. ...[They] want to be open and learn.” [28]
- “[They expect] a lot of money (laughs). ...That’s really what their big expectation is, is that they’re going to get paid. And they’re going to get paid cash or by a check... [32]
- “Overall the information we provided to them I think is what they used to create their expectation, which was job readiness training and a subsidized job that would provide them opportunities to gain some skills and obtain some earnings. And then be able to get a job after graduation. ...When they’re informed about the program they have an idea about college, but it’s not very concrete. ...‘Ok, I want to try this out in case I do want to work full time.’ There are some that are pretty set on not being able to go to college right after. And then there are some that are like, ‘I really think I should work for a year to get some experience and then go to college.’” [19]
- “We sold it as a job, really, not so much a subsidized job because we were paying them. And we were paying them \$10 an hour, which is mostly better than what they would get in the job market (\$8.50 or \$9 an hour). And they would’ve been working

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<sup>18</sup> In order to maintain the anonymity of our interviewees, we assigned each individual a number from 1 to 36. Each speaker who is quoted is indicated by the bracketed number after each quotation.

retail, instead they got office experience. ...Basically, they were looking for jobs, so we gave them jobs.” [2]

Many youth said their initial goal in signing up for the program was to work, not to gain job-related skills, but simply to make money. Once the program began, however, these same individuals realized how much more they would gain from participation. One young woman, who admitted she got into the subsidized job program solely because she wanted to make money, described to the interviewer all of the skills she gained from the subsidized job, including hard skills (such as typing and job-specific information) as well as interpersonal skills that she realized she had been lacking, such as “being professional and respectable,” and being “more interactive with customers.”

Another respondent offered a similar narrative:

- “I didn’t know anything about it, I just knew from what [my counselor] told me, he said, ‘Listen, it’s six months and they pay you while they train you,’ so I said, ‘That’s all I have to know.’ [I was] full-time in school at the time. He emailed me the application, I filled it out – I didn’t even bother looking at what it was. So they called me, I did the interview, I was accepted, and then they did the orientation. I was like, ‘Oh, wow!’” [11]

Others described experiences that were consonant with what they had hoped to get out of the subsidized job program:

- “[Before the subsidized job] I was working, but I was not getting enough hours so I came here. ... And I liked it. It worked out. I actually did everything I wanted to do.” [19]
- “For me ...there is nothing better than working in an office. I love the office environment. And I knew that I was going to take phone calls and paperwork...I expected to learn. ...This is my first time working in this environment. And I knew that I was going to learn a lot, and this job was going to open doors for me in the future.” [23]
- “So I was really going just for the job, but I also needed my resume built and a little bit of networking.” [25]
- “... I just wanted to learn about new career options, my goal was to explore a career path and learn some new skills and possibly go back to school and further my education. So I thought this was a great hands-on way to learn something new. And it seemed like this program offered everything I was looking for.” [16]

- “The internship part [caught my attention], where he said that I would get three months of experience. And that’s better than nothing, especially someone my age starting in the workforce.” [17]

Clearly interviewees were offering us retrospective views on their expectations, which likely reflected some *post hoc* appreciation for what the subsidized job could offer them.

Nevertheless, it appears that one factor contributing to a successful subsidized job experience is when the program activities correspond to the youths’ immediate expectations. In particular, programs must meet these young people’s immediate expectations that they will receive some financial compensation for participating. In the following section, we look more closely at why the monetary aspects of the programs are so important to many of the youth.

### **3.1.2 Offering subsidized jobs**

As suggested above, many youth said they decided to participate in one of the subsidized job programs because it offered them paid employment. Although in subsequent pages we describe the numerous *intangible* benefits they gained from the programs, this is **not** to suggest that youth would fare just as well in unpaid programs. As staff members noted, above, many of these youth are in economically challenged circumstances and have a real and pressing need to create a better life for themselves and their families. Numerous young respondents reinforced this perspective. When we asked them how they used the money they earned during the program, we were struck by just how many of them used the funds for very basic needs:

- “It helped me pay for a lot of stuff like daycare, buy Pampers, a whole bunch of stuff. Yep. It helped me with everything. Transportation, everything, everything.” [9]
- “I live by myself so that go to rent, that’s it. Rent and my kids. I have children so that go straight to them.” [10]
- “To be honest, I didn’t have no money at the time so there was no way to pay the bills, pay the rent. So who knows what would’ve happened had I not got into [the program], where I would’ve tried to get this money from. Because when you’re hungry... It just helped me get by. I didn’t really get paid a lot of money, but I got paid enough to pay the phone bill, my Metro card bill and put some food in my mouth, which is real important. Without a Metro card I can’t get to school. [And]

- you have to eat, you know ....” [11]
- “I used money to pay the cable bill, paying the cell phone bill, paying my rent, doing food shopping. Things you have to do to survive.” [14]
  - “I used the money to dress properly, so I could dress properly for the worksite.” [29]
  - “When I received the money that’s the week I learned my wife was pregnant, so it was money for the crib. And we were moving into a new apartment so it went to security deposit. And the rest I saved.” [22]
  - “I pay for daycare weekly and by the time I finish paying for daycare for two weeks, it’s my whole check. So that’s all I can afford, is daycare.” [7]
  - “Well, most of the money I spent helping my sister with bills, my bills, and my phone bill, whenever we needed food in the house I helped her with that.” [25]

Staff said that the money *allowed the youth to stay in their program*. So pressing were their financial needs that without a subsidized job component many of these young adults would have had to find some other paying job; better, staff said, that the youth earn money while gaining work skills or staying in college than working dead-end jobs in fast-food restaurants:

- “I think as a rule if it were possible, if there were funding for it, it would be good to have the internship last the duration of the school year because the money is really important and necessary because people are being paid to learn things, use their minds, and be engaged and it reinforces what they’re learning in school. If [they were] not doing that, they would have to find another job that might be less supportive of their educational goals.” [24]

Participants echoed this point:

- “The best thing about [this program] ... compared to any other program that I know about, and what actually keeps the people here is the fact that they pay. I think that’s real important, because if it was just a program, a six-month program where you stay here and you don’t get paid for anything, I don’t think a lot of people would accomplish this program or take advantage of it. The fact that I’m getting paid, not only am I getting paid, but I’m learning stuff as I go. Not only am I learning stuff, I might be able to get a job after this! So I’m going to stay. A lot of people have a bad day and are like, ‘I’m out of here. I’m doing this for free, I’m out of here.’ ... Not saying that people won’t stay because they’re not getting paid, because you have some people that will stick it out. But out of 20 people you might get five that’s going to stick it out if you don’t get paid. If you do get paid, it’s 19.” [11]
- “The way I see it, the reason why I got into the internship, I really don’t think I

would have taken it if they weren't paying me. The reason, out of ignorance, I didn't know the help I was getting from the internship. But I probably would not have taken it because I really did need the money. I was also helping my family... with their financial problems. If the entire 11 weeks weren't paid, I wouldn't have taken it because I needed the money." [27]

The findings from this and the previous section indicate strategies that can be used not only to attract youth into the program, but also to keep them engaged throughout the program's duration. First and foremost, staff can appeal to these young people's near-term financial needs. As we have illustrated above, many of the youth we interviewed described significant – and immediate – financial challenges; youths' interest might be piqued knowing that participation in the program could give them a little monetary breathing room. Secondly, and importantly, staff can emphasize to the young people that their continued participation holds the promise of long-term financial stability, *not* because the subsidized job placement will morph into a job, but because youth will acquire the skills necessary to obtain and retain employment. Young people may not initially see beyond their immediate need for money, but these findings suggest that staff can help to ensure that the participant exits the program with an eye towards the future.

### **3.1.3 Providing both skill instruction and emotional support**

In addition to meeting participants' expectations and ensuring that they are paid for their efforts, good programs offered participants positive experiences in two domains. First was the provision of instruction for skills development, i.e., teaching the interns how to do specific things. Second was ensuring that the broader youth development framework of the experience was also in place, specifically, those aspects of the experience that created a positive emotional environment for these young people.

#### ***Skills development instruction***

These programs provided youth with learning opportunities around numerous facets of employment, not least of which was giving them a basic introduction into the world of legitimate work. Staff noted that many of these youth had very little formal work experience: Some were simply very young, while others came from families where no one worked. Regardless of their personal histories, however, few had either experience with or understanding of what is involved in holding down a regular job:

- "...They just think that they're going to work and, you know, working is easy – you go, get hired, you go to work, and you do what you have to do. But there's so much more to it. The job skills that they don't have that they think they may already have." [32]
- "This is a culture change ... and that's hard. ...You'd be surprised, but a lot of these young adults have not been out of their immediate neighborhoods and have not seen people actually work within their own household, so they don't know how to work, and their cultural thinking in terms of 'you should be working now' as opposed to not working... It's just amazing just seeing that whole transition in terms of them not knowing that you should be working, or how do I go to work every day? Or what do I do on the job? So it's a whole host of training skill sets from work readiness to communication to how to interact with other people." [12]
- "A lot of these kids are coming from inner cities and you know a lot of them really haven't been taught how to perform in an office setting or how to perform on an interview and things of that sort. Because I've interviewed ... youths from other employment agencies, and a lot of times they come in and they're not dressed properly, they don't have the right language when they speak with you, they don't address you properly. But everyone that's come from [this] program, I mean their presence, their communication skills, and their presentation is so much different. And it's on a different level, which I certainly believe the program contributes to that." [34]

When asked what skills her participants need to learn from her program, one staff member summed it up nicely:

- "Work values. Their appearance. Accountability. Communication skills. Knowing how to navigate different issues in the work place. Overall work values." [19]

Participants were aware of this too:

- "It's like you have to look a part to get a job. You have to be a certain person to get a job, you can't just dress anyway, talk anyway, just fill out things and expect to get a job. I think that was the most important to me." [3]

All interviewees – staff, participants, and employers alike – described programs as providing youth with both the soft and hard skills they would need to be successful in the workplace as well as a variety of other settings. The soft skills were consistent across the range of programs examined for this study and included basics on how to apply for and get a job, as well as a variety of skills necessary for everyday life.



### ***Job readiness***

Basic skills taught under this category include developing a resume, writing a cover letter, and learning how to go on a job interview. As participants explained:

- “I think it was mostly about how to present yourself, how to really market yourself and brand yourself.” [21]
- “That’s another thing that I wasn’t really sure of doing, was my resume. They helped me do a resume and write it out on a computer. And a cover letter, what to bring with my resume.” [26]
- “I perfected my resume. I learned a lot about resumes and cover letters and how to conduct yourself in an interview.” [22]
- “The most important skill to me was actually the interviewing skills. That’s what led me to get the job or not.” [20]

### ***Fundamental workplace expectations***

Programs taught participants about basic workplace expectations, including the importance of being on time or calling in advance if they were running late. As one staff member put it:

- “In most of these cases, these kids have never had a job. When you show up to a job where you have to be on time, and have to do certain things, the whole concept of going to work...that’s the biggest thing they got out of it.” [19]

And the youth agreed:

- “What I learned was of course attendance. They’re really strict about attendance because that’s one of the things you’ll get fired for. That’s the most important thing.” [20]
- “I learned how to be responsible, because...I’m usually late, or I used to be. I’m young and young people don’t take a lot of things serious. But this showed me to take things serious because it wasn’t only my supervisor it was everybody in the office that would look out for me, give me advice. ...It was little things but it was stuff that I know will help me. ‘Oh, you’re going to be late, make sure you call.’ I never, I used to be like I’ll call when I get there, why call? But it shows you’re responsible. And I didn’t really understand that.” [31]

- “As I’m growing up, becoming a young adult, [I’m learning that] being responsible is something big to be successful. Being able to get a task and being able to fulfill it and not just leave it under the rug or procrastinating on it, because the job might not get done correctly or efficiently and that might be a big problem when I get to a bigger, full-time job. Little things like coming on time, being there on time, stuff like that. Those are important.” [6]

Youth also learned some of the rules of being “professional,” which included how to dress for work and proper workplace etiquette. As program staff said:

- “Some of the students, particularly the young men, hadn’t been in an office environment previously. [They] came in without certain behaviors and we made it very clear they had to measure up to some standards. Not wearing hats in the office, for example, or taking off their iPods and interacting with others.” [24]
- “I think there’s a big social factor that comes into play. I think that relationships at work and work etiquette and what kind of clothes do you wear and phone etiquette...stuff that I think a lot of kids take for granted. Everyone has social media on their phone and it’s so easy to click away when someone is talking to you.” [35]
- “They come with very limited skill sets to begin with... They don’t know how to act in a workplace in some cases. We do scenarios, what would you do if you’re running late to get to work? ... I don’t think you can get enough of that because they never had that experience, the trainings, the do’s and don’ts while you’re working.” [12]

And participants were also aware of a new set of expectations:

- “On the job they taught me more about how to present myself ... about decorum, what’s appropriate in the office, what’s acceptable, what’s not, how to approach people, and things like that.” [21]
- “They taught us professional skills, too, not just work or school – how to dress, how to work, how to prepare yourself.” [14]
- “They didn’t really have a dress code, but you go with what everybody else is wearing. So that’s what I did; everybody was more sophisticated and elegant, so I did the same thing. And it helps, because when you apply for a job they look at how you dress, at your attitude, your manners, things like that.” [3]

Perhaps most importantly, the youth learned important workplace communication skills:

- “[One] skill would be just being able to communicate with corporate people – I never thought I would be able to communicate with them because it’s nothing I ever really thought about given where I’m from.” [27]

- “Like, for example, it’s not the same in my job at McDonald’s, the type of communication that I use as customer service, it’s not the same. Here you have to, living with people like...how can I say this?...I learned how to express myself much better, that’s what I can say.” [23]
- “...How to communicate with people. Even though it was over the phone. I’d call sometimes and somebody would be in a bad mood, I’d have to like, learn how to talk to people that were not that respectful, but learn how to put things aside and get the information I need.” [31]
- “[My program] is strict, to the point where it helps me learn how to talk better. Because I’m the type of person where every other word was curse. And they would call me out on that because they don’t allow that in the program.” [26]

As program staff pointed out:

- “They learn the expectations of co-existing with co-workers and how to communicate well, how to get along well with co-workers, this is one of the things that I do when they come on hand. In the beginning I sit down and I have a discussion with them and I talk to them about communicating, how to properly communicate with people, how to resolve differences or misunderstandings.” [34]
- “I think their social skills improve drastically. And social skills are so important for so many aspects of life. So I think that is the major thing that I’m looking forward to seeing, that maturity and being able to communicate with others.” [32]

### ***Hard skills –job-specific tasks***

Youth described having gained a variety of job-specific skills through their subsidized jobs, with the skills as varied as the placements. Youth who worked in an office setting, for example, said they learned some combination of the following: how to answer the phone; how to handle questions at a reception desk; filing; data entry; use of computer software, such as Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Excel; photocopying; and mail responsibilities, including handling incoming and outgoing items. The MillionTrees Training Program taught participants an array of skills specific to arboriculture, including: plant identification (both the Latin and the common names); identification of invasive plants; specific techniques to restore a local ecosystem; techniques for trimming trees, including climbing; how to prune, and when to prune; maintenance of trails; landscape design and maintenance; and techniques for establishing healthy new plantings. NYC Justice Corps interns worked at a variety of locations for their subsidized jobs, but all participants are required to go through a

Community Benefit Service Project prior to the subsidized job placement. All three of the participants we interviewed had participated in community projects that restored a building for community use. As a result, they gained experience with various home building/repair skills, including putting up drywall, painting, plastering, and refinishing floors, including stripping, sanding, and waxing. Interns in the CUNY Language Immersion Program (CLIP) were all placed at We Are New York (WANY), an organization that runs English language classes for immigrants. Interns described learning a variety of skills, including organizational networking, conducting outreach to the immigrant community, and even leading language classes.

### ***Youth development framework***

Throughout the participants' narratives, we find numerous references to how important a broader youth development framework around the subsidized job was to their overall experience. Although we discuss some aspects of the emotional facet of the experience when we discuss non-employment outcomes, here we present two processes that participants frequently cited.

### ***Being treated “just like a regular employee”***

Some youth described their initial discomfort at their placements – not only was “work” an entirely new experience for many of the youth, but, as we have seen, the jobs frequently entailed learning a new skill set. In addition, the youth were often walking into a setting where they knew no one:

- “It was pretty scary at first I’m not going to lie. When none of the staff really knew me, and none of the students, I was like, ‘Oh, man.’ There was no one there to really conversate with. ... At the start of it was a little scary, but as I transitioned into it, it wasn’t a problem anymore.” [6]

For many young adults, that transitioning process was facilitated by a work environment in which the employees quickly embraced the interns as one of their own:

- “They treated me, instead of being just like I was an intern; they treated me like I was a [co-] worker. If there was a spill, they wouldn’t be like, ‘Oh, don’t let the intern do that.’ Instead, ‘There’s a spill, can you clean that?’ They made me feel at home. It was pretty cool. The workers were really cool.” [25]

- “I just like the way that they treated me, and they took me in as soon as I got there. And they treated me no different from any other staff that had been there.” [29]
- “Everybody treated me great. Because it was three of us that went into the program together – they treated us great, they didn’t look down on us, they didn’t belittle us. That’s something I enjoyed a lot.” [27]

The findings here underscore the importance of treating interns with respect, or as valued employees, especially because many of these youth (as described throughout this report) initially doubted their abilities or came from environments where they were rarely encouraged to succeed. Undoubtedly, this view of the intern *qua* employee is an important contributor to some of the positive youth development outcomes discussed later in the report.

### **Mentoring/supervision**

During interviews, we also asked youth about any informal mentoring relationships<sup>19</sup> they formed either in the program itself or during their actual subsidized job experience. Did they have someone whom they could point to as a mentor? If so, in what capacity did the youth know the individual (e.g., direct supervisor, co-worker, counselor)? And as importantly, what was it about that relationship that led the youth to identify that particular individual as a mentor? Interviewees invariably described powerful affective components to those relationships. In line with the principle that a caring adult relationship is a key factor in positive youth development, young people expressed the importance of being “cared for” or remembered, the mentor being a constant source of encouragement to succeed, and the value of having this person believe in them:

- “[Program staff] texted me, no, she Facebooked me this morning, ‘Hey, you have your interview with Kathy – my phone just reminded me. I’m sure you know, but I just want to remind you.’ She’s so busy and has a million things to do, but she remembered that I was supposed to come here and do this.” [16]
- “There was a lot of coaching...they would talk to us straight to heart. It wasn’t something like they were being fake, or anything, they cared for you. ...When we

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<sup>19</sup> Mentoring was a theme that emerged during our review of extant evaluation data. We highlighted the topic in the interview guides for this study so we might learn more about the important features of these relationships. Although we did not provide youth with an operational definition of “mentoring,” none of the interviewees expressed uncertainty about the term. Moreover, and as will be shown in this section, youth often described the mentoring relationship using similar themes.

were working during our internship, with the trainer, he's actually a great friend of mine now, I consider him my mentor, because he taught me a lot." [27]

- "[Staff member] was, because she was who tell me everything what to do, I was under her command. But all of them were nice. They're really nice people. [Why [this staff person]?] She was always there every time I had a question, if I didn't understand something she would explain to me again. She was patient, she was really patient." [23]
- "I was treated very well. The staff was very, they were just welcoming. Even now I can still see the lady I worked under and she be like, 'Oh, how you been? I miss you so much!' They're still concerned. She was interested in high school students, but she was also interested in how I was doing with my college life, too. Anything I needed they would help me out with it." [6]
- "[My supervisor] used to tell me being on time is important, make sure you call. There was this one time I was slacking, and he was like, 'We know you have the potential to do what you need to do.' He actually sat down with me on his own time and spoke to me. 'We know you can do it, we know you can be responsible and that's what we want from you.' So that pretty much opened my eyes after that." [31]
- "My counselor.... She would call me in the morning, are you coming? Are you coming? I'm going to make sure you're here, you can't miss today! Is there anything bothering you want to speak about? Are you hungry? She's the one that nominated me for the award. She's the one that... She's the one that moved me, she pushed me, everywhere I'm at right now she pushed me towards." [9]
- "I think it was that I didn't always see them as supervisors, I also saw them as friends and resources, people who really cared about helping me. We actually would spend time outside of the office and they would help me with things, like if it was an application, school stuff..." [21]

Youths' descriptions of their mentors point to several characteristics of these individuals that helped make the subsidized job experience a positive one. First, mentors set forth their expectations for the young people and held them accountable for their actions. A failure to meet expectations did not result in admonishment of the youth, however, but in a new learning opportunity. In addition, interviewees described their mentors as seeing them not just as "a participant" or "an intern," but as a whole person. Mentors asked about a wide array of needs the young person might have, from nutrition to his/her emotional well-being. Finally, mentors paid attention to the details – they remembered such things as the young

person's schedule and appointments, and made the extra effort to ensure that the young person would be successful.

We believe that a strong relationship with a caring adult is an important component of a good subsidized job. Programs should endeavor to partner with employers who take an interest in the holistic development of young people, and to look for subsidized job placements with employers who are similarly focused. Yet we also acknowledge that these informal mentors may not be “made”, but rather are “found.” That is, each young person may look for different characteristics in a positive adult role model – a reminder about a pending appointment is a sign of caring for one youth, but another youth may interpret it as a lack of confidence. It is critical for these young people to be surrounded by caring adults; ultimately, they will be drawn to that adult who is the best “fit.”

## **3.2 Program Outcomes**

All subsidized job programs aim to increase skills of participants, whether they focused on job readiness or supported educational goals that will eventually lead young people towards employment. While many interviewed young people said they had found jobs after their subsidized jobs, others were completing their subsidized jobs, were enrolled in school (or about to enroll), or were searching for jobs. Regardless of their employment status, most young adults highlighted a number of positive non-employment outcomes that they experienced as a result of their participation in one of the programs. Staff and employers also reported on the important things they thought young people gained from their participation and the non-employment outcomes they had witnessed. Outcomes most commonly noted include increased self-efficacy and self-esteem, an increased sense of connectedness to their community or nature, and feeling part of a “family” or “home”. Lastly, many respondents elaborated on the various ways in which the program was a catalytic experience for young people, one that provided an important gateway to their futures that might have otherwise remained obscured. Evidence of these outcomes is provided below.

### **3.2.1 Self-efficacy**

One of the most significant non-employment outcomes that appear to have resulted from these subsidized jobs was an increased sense of self-efficacy among the youth participants.

In his initial formulation of this framework, Bandura (1977)<sup>20</sup> argued that self-efficacy results from the successful enactment of a new set of skills or behaviors (“personal effectiveness”), and a recognition that the performance directly results in positive outcomes: For example, an individual who successfully completes a challenging task at work knows that s/he contributed to the work unit receiving special recognition by the company gains in self-efficacy. On the other hand, an individual who sees no positive results from his/her enactment or who attributes positive outcomes to external factors (e.g., s/he believes the unit received recognition because of *other people’s* efforts) will not gain in self-efficacy.

Our data reveal that for the majority of the young people we interviewed their subsidized job experiences did indeed contribute to a sense of self-efficacy. The following quotations are just a few of the many examples we found:

- “... the first few weeks I was shy, and [my supervisor] told me I had to talk to [the students]. What she did, she actually came up and was working with me so I could talk to the students, and passing out [flyers to] the students, and trying to talk to them...she said, ‘Just don’t be scared, just act yourself, and be bubbly and be happy.’ And from looking from the way she did it, I picked up some skills. I was using the phrases that she would say, and it worked!” [1]
- “...learning all the different plants and things like that, because no matter where I [went]... I went on a job interview [and] I expressed to them all the knowledge that I’ve learned...different plants...so they was kind of impressed by that, and I guess that helped me get those job offerings, I would say.” [15]
- “They gave me a chance and they believe in me. I was always the person someone always told me I wouldn’t be this, I can’t do this because I wouldn’t know it, but with them knowing my situation, they never gave up on me. So I respect [the program] for that.... They made me successful!! For me to sit here and be a young independent woman.” [26]

Importantly, self-efficacy can have a positive effect with respect to long-term outcomes:

*“People fear and tend to avoid threatening situations they believe exceed their coping skills, whereas they get involved in activities and behave assuredly when*

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<sup>20</sup> Albert Bandura (1977) Self-Efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioral Change. *Psychological Review*, 84:191-215.



*they judge themselves capable of handling situations that would otherwise be intimidating.”<sup>21</sup>*

Indeed, our interviewees frequently spoke about the long-range benefits of their newly acquired soft and hard skills:

- “...it’s less scary, but now it’s like, ‘Oh, I did something like that before, it’s not that bad.’ So it’ll help me not chicken out.” [6]
- “I learned so much, but I think besides the hard skills and soft skills that I gained, I think I gained more confidence in myself. ...I think it was more like personal growth. At the end of the day, while everything else I learned was super valuable and made me much more employable than I was before, I think that was the most important thing.” [16]
- “... I was a shy guy, I couldn’t talk to people and stuff like that, and yet I went through the program, I got the feel for being a leader, and I’m like, ‘Maybe I could do this as a career. I could teach, I think!’ And now that I’m actually doing it I feel like I’m getting a lot better...” [15]

And program staff agree:

- “[The program] makes them believe in themselves. It helps them to understand that they do have the ability to be successful and to contribute positively to society and have something to contribute to their selves and their family. It shows them that despite all the doubts or the difficulties or the environment that they’ve come from, that it’s still possible for them to be successful....So I think one of the most positive things they get out of the program is self-belief, it is possible for them, and that motivates them to try and make a difference.” [34]

### **3.2.2 Connectedness**

#### ***Caring for others - doing something for other people***

Some programs or subsidized job placements gave young people opportunities to “make a difference” in their communities. This took the form of giving back to their communities through community benefit service projects (e.g., renovating a local church), helping others

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid. pp.194-5.

(e.g., WANY participants improving immigrants' conversational skills), and improving the natural environment. The result was that these young people gained a deeper sense of connectedness to their communities or to the natural world, which appeared to contribute greatly to their satisfaction with their program experience.

- "... I think basically interacting with people and answering their questions... made me feel like I was helping someone. And on top of that I had to translate, because some of them didn't speak very good English, so I'd just translate and just help them out." [29]
- I felt really good; I know that I was doing something good for other people. People from my community, people from where I come from that have English communication limits." [23]
- "My housing assistant was telling me, 'This is big! They're trying to plant a million trees by 2017!' And I was like, 'Ok, I want to be a part of that!' It was a movement, you know, and at the time I had just left the group home. I was in the group home for about nine years...I had to depend on society to help me to get where I am right now, to be independent, to help me with housing, to help me with education, to help me with anything that I needed. So I knew in my mind somewhere along the road, before I left, I needed to give back to society because they helped me when I was in real need of support. And you did. That was amazing for me, this is a perfect thing for me to give back to nature!" [14]
- "Working with the immigrant community. I felt like I could make a change in the community, I could affect so many lives – a lot of people work three jobs and they still made time to go to one session to learn a little bit, at least two or three words. And they were very satisfied with that." [22]
- "We did the church right there, Baptist church, yeah, it was a mess. Some people that they were really like lower income people that they were living, didn't have enough money, they were nice, they would cook for us and everything, it was really nice. We painted their walls, we buffed the floors... I loved doing that piece. People don't have it, like she came from a poor family and she didn't want the church to go to waste, and she felt like she was blessed to have us come and do it." [9]

Program staff also noticed the satisfaction participants got from helping others:

- "I would say that most people walk away with a deeper connection to the natural world, which I think is really, really neat. I think it's one of the strengths of our program ... it helps people understand their place in the world, how you fit into the

rest of the world, the greater natural world. It's soothing and it's powerful and it makes you feel comfortable in your place ... in the world." [13]

- "I think that the most important things probably that they have value and a connection to a bigger world within the city and within the city government." [24]

### ***Feeling like part of a "family," "home"***

Several young people reported feeling like they were part of a "family" or "home" because of the nurturing, supportive environment created by program staff, supervisors, and co-workers, and opportunities for bonding through teamwork with peers. These kinds of positive influences have been shown to help youth succeed, especially in cases where young adults otherwise lack consistent and positive role models.

- "Everyone gets this bond, there's no issues between no one – like I said we spent so much time together it's like we become a family in a way.... It showed us sometimes you have to take these people who aren't going to agree on certain things and it kind of helps you resolve, figure out ways to resolve issues." [15]
- "I was valued, I think. It was very, very special. It felt pretty good, it felt like home. I felt I was treated like everybody else." [22]
- "Team bonding, for some groups it just, I don't know, it's hard to put into words. It's almost like I guess how you could possibly relate to a camp experience? ...you just feel like so bonded with these people, you feel like you went through something with." [13]
- "To be honest, the thing I liked the most is that it got everybody to work together, you know, 'cause usually everybody's trying to take everybody's stuff. I would sit there and paint and see everybody working and this is nice! Everybody's actually working together. Because if you see it in the beginning it wasn't like that. But towards the end, 'Oh, let me help you with this! Let me help you with that!' It's good." [11]
- "The best thing? I'd say it would be the community benefit project 'cause you know you learn a lot of different things there. And you learn definitely how to work as a team, and if you can't do that you can't really succeed in life because you can't, you're not going to work by yourself your whole life." [10]
- "The thing I like about [the program], I've been gone from here for a little over two years now, and they still remember me, they still work with me with open arms.

That's the kind of family experience, the love you get from [the program]. That's one of the main things I enjoy about it. " [6]

- "I felt valued and loved. I've been in a group home so I never really got that love from my family. That's why I have to give back." [14]
- "I was treated as family. Well, like family and an employee. If I did something wrong, [the supervisor] would pull me to the side and say like, 'You can't do this.' When it was time to be real, she knows when to be serious." [1]

And program staff stress the ongoing nature of the relationships:

- "It's the support – in previous high school or home, they didn't have that. Here it's like a family. When they come here it's like a small family – support from students, staff, everybody. In schools, people talk about others – here issues are resolved inside. Support is ongoing – student's who've been here five years are still in contact....Students come in crying, we're not going to leave you alone. We'll call home and find out what's going on." [5]

### **3.2.3 Catalyst/gateway experience**

It appears to us that one of the important hallmarks of a successful subsidized job experience is its ability to serve as a catalyst for the participating youth. Many of the participants described the subsidized job as an "eye-opening" experience that opened numerous possibilities for them in the future. For example, some were exposed to a work environment that they may have once thought out of reach, as the following participant describes:

"For me working in the office - there is nothing better than working in an office, I love the office environment. And I knew that I was going to take phone calls and paperwork...I expected to learn. ...This is my first time working in this environment. And I knew that I was going to learn a lot, and this job was going to open doors for me in the future." [23]

Knowing that they can learn new skills and successfully apply them, form positive relationships with others, be exposed to caring adults, and work in an environment that they once may have thought to be out of reach seemed to spur many of the interviewees forward. Some gained a clearer sense of their career goals, which helped them solidify their plans for college or their course of study, or they changed their majors accordingly; others found new interests and shifted their job searches towards those areas; still others realized the gaps they

needed to fill in order to be successful in the workplace and thus were working to obtain a GED, a commercial driver's license, or certifications for specific types of employment. In short, we believe that for many participants, the subsidized job was a catalyst for their futures.

- "...It makes me want to learn more because [my supervisor] knows a lot of things. Random stuff. It made me drive for what I want to do, because I want to be an electrician, and I also want to get into electrical engineering. And I also want to own my own business. ... For you to be successful you have to have the knowledge of whatever field you're getting into." [30]
- "But it opened my eyes, you know, I could actually do what my boss is doing now. She's a property manager. I can do it. I just gotta get the certifications and a little bit more knowledge and I'll be fine. And they make good money." [11]

And these thoughts are echoed by program staff as well:

- "I think a lot of people – for some people it's a total life-changer. That happens sometimes which is really cool, you know, people come from a bad place who don't understand what they need to do to make their life worth, caring better for themselves, and the program just shows them how to do that. And then we can facilitate the process along the way as well. How to succeed, very generally. How to do what you need to do to get by. And if you want to do like a legal style job. And a lot of people do want that." [13]

Several youth that we interviewed reported that they found unsubsidized jobs after going through their subsidized job experience. A couple of individuals obtained full-time employment in areas related either to their education and training or their subsidized job experience; many found part-time positions that helped to support their financial and educational goals while in college. When assessing what makes subsidized job programs successful, it is important to recognize that "success" includes employment, educational, and youth development outcomes. For example, some of these programs (e.g., CUNY Works and CUNY Prep) sought to give young people part-time work experiences that also would provide them with financial support while in college, and that might help them obtain other part-time positions in the future.

### **3.3 Barriers to Employment**

#### **3.3.1 Characteristics of the youth**

Youth may not obtain employment after completing a subsidized job for a number of reasons, including the fact that employment post-subsidized job is not a goal of some programs. Program staff noted that while most subsidized job experiences offer youth opportunities to hone soft skills (e.g., language, dress, social interactions), in some cases the youths do not gain proficiency in these areas; as a result, they are not ready to enter the workplace. Participants also noted that some of their peers simply were not interested in learning what they could from the program and thus were unlikely to succeed. The following is one participant's observation:

“[Other participants] don't care. I was here for the money, but once I seen what else they were offering, I was like, 'Ok.' But the guy next to me, he was only here for the money. After six months, he didn't care – if he got to start a fight today, he didn't care. If he got you to start a fight today, he didn't care.” [11]

Yet interviews also revealed numerous barriers to near-term employment that should be taken into consideration when evaluating the success of these subsidized job programs. Barriers included the following:

#### ***Not having a High School diploma or GED***

In light of the critical importance of educational attainment in today's economy, where completing high school is increasingly essential to securing stable employment and increasing one's earning power,<sup>22</sup> it is unsurprising that respondents reported that participants without a high school diploma or GED are at a serious disadvantage with respect to securing and retaining unsubsidized employment. This barrier is particularly relevant for programs serving younger participants, such as CUNY Prep and YAL. Respondents emphasized not only that many jobs require a high school diploma or GED, but also that young people who lack these educational credentials tend to lack basic skills necessary to be successful in the workforce.

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<sup>22</sup> Sum, A., I. Khatiwada, J. McLaughlin (2009) "The Consequences of Dropping Out of High School : Joblessness and Jailing for High School Dropouts and the High Cost for Taxpayers." *Center for Labor Market Studies Publications*. Paper 23.

- “Have a GED – that’s the issue. Because we have a GED program already, go to your internship and in the evening, come to your GED here. By the time internship is done, you’ll have your GED, too. It would help them get to a better situation in the future.” [28]
- “Me not having my GED has stopped me from getting jobs, basic jobs.” [30]

### **Age**

Because many jobs require employees to be at least 18 years old, age was a barrier to gaining employment for many 16- and 17-year old participants. Age was most frequently cited as a barrier for participants in the two programs specifically serving younger participants, CUNY Prep, YAL, and SAW. For participants in these programs, program staff reported that the barrier of age was often compounded by lack of a high school diploma or GED, as described above.

- “Many jobs don’t hire until they’re 18 and we have many 16- and 17-year-old interns. That and the fact that they don’t have a diploma or a GED yet. See this is pre-GED, so we still get them in very young or very low skills. So think age has a lot to do with it.” [32]

### **Other characteristics**

There were numerous other barriers to employment mentioned by participants, including lack of certification to perform a specific job, not having a driver’s license that might allow them to work in a particular field (e.g., interns with MillionTrees Training Program), having an undocumented status, or the youth having a criminal history (in particular, a felony conviction). Some staff also said that not all participants had the appropriate level of maturity to move into employment.

Additionally, in several cases, participants were offered employment or were provided an opportunity to apply for employment, but they chose not to in favor of pursuing a different opportunity or goal. For example, some participants chose instead to go to college, join the military, or seek more highly-skilled and high-paying jobs.

- “Some of the interns did not want to follow-through.... Some of them were mechanics and they wanted to do something [other than mechanical work]. They were like 18, so they wanted to do something else. ‘I could take this, but could you get me a job in aviation?’” [19]

- “College is a positive outcome. Every cycle there’s one person who wants to go into the military.” [28]

### **3.3.2 Structural barriers**

In addition to these limiting characteristics of the participants, there were some structural factors that reduced the number of youth who obtained employment following their subsidized job. As noted above, some subsidized job programs were not intended to lead directly to employment, but rather to provide participants with financial support while enrolled in school, or to introduce them to a world of work that they had not previously experienced. Accordingly, some subsidized job sites simply did not have the capacity to offer long-term employment to interns, regardless of their performance and potential as employees. According to some respondents, the weak economy and slow rate of job creation in 2010 and 2011 further detracted from organizations’ ability to hire new employees during those years.

- “I don’t think it was an option, but I really wished it was. But they said it was seasonal from the beginning, so you take what you can get.” [3]
- “They tried to keep me but all the positions were filled.” [18]
- “They said they’ll keep me posted to see if they get another internship or if they want something permanent. Nothing yet.” [29]
- “The biggest challenge right now, to tell you the truth, it’s the industry. The industry is not doing well. Aircraft mechanics ...it’ll be hard to find a job...just because aviation’s not doing very well.” [35]

## **3.4 Youth with Less Than Positive Experiences**

As we suggested early in this report, the majority of young adults we interviewed for this study had very positive subsidized job experiences. While some said “more money” or “the ability to work more hours” would have been helpful to them, all appreciated the fact that these were paid learning experiences; they consistently reported how much they learned about the world of paid work through work readiness trainings or workshops, or through the guidance of a supportive mentor; and the degree to which the subsidized jobs provided them with skills development within a youth development framework emerged repeatedly in these interviews. As we have stated, there was a clear selection effect in how respondents



were chosen by program staff to participate in these interviews, so these positive results should not be surprising.

One exception to this pattern was a young man who responded to an email “blast” from his program supervisor inviting any interested individuals to participate in an interview for this study. Like his peers, this participant said he appreciated the financial support that the subsidized job provided him: “I wasn’t getting paid a lot, but it just covered the basics, which I needed: lunch, Metro card, transportation.” What lessons had he learned from this position? “I knew I needed a job that paid more.” He added that he was “bored” with his subsidized job placement (stuffing envelopes and shredding papers), but when asked if he would have liked more input into his placement he said he would have chosen “the job with the least responsibilities.” Finally, and unlike all of our other participant interviewees, he had little to say about mentoring, any life skills he learned during the subsidized job, or any positive facets to the work that he had done.

Although this was the only young person we interviewed who seemed to have gained little from his subsidized job experience, we did have a couple of youth who said they wished their subsidized job responsibilities had been more challenging. One person said he wished the job had been more in line with his academic interests:

“I thought I was going to get more experience in what I was going to major in (criminal justice). I thought I would do some kind of work that had to do with criminal justice.” Furthermore, when asked about what relevant job experience he gained from his internship, the participant replied, “Not that much, other than filing.”

In this respect, the less than positive experiences we heard about were not explicitly negative, but they lacked some of the positive features noted by others: the placements were not engaging, the participant did not learn much, there was no real mentor, and the like. From these findings, we believe it important to recognize that although these youth lack work experience and are coming into the workplace at the bottom-most levels of employment, they are not necessarily going to benefit from being given just any work experience. The position needs to have at least some of the positive features we noted previously in this report.

## Summary and Recommendations

# 4

The objective of this study was to learn what kinds of educational, youth development, and other non-employment outcomes result from participation in the various subsidized job programs sponsored by CEO, and to understand the findings within the context of CEO's prior research on employment related outcomes. Our findings indicate two broad categories of outcomes: First, youth graduate from these programs with a set of skills that will help them obtain a job in the future and, as importantly, retain that job over time. Many of these youth came into the programs with very little exposure to the world of work and thus were unfamiliar with basic workplace etiquette, such as how to communicate with others, how to dress, how to behave in the workplace, and what responsibilities an employee has to his/her co-workers and the company. By participating in workshops designed to teach these skills, young people completed these programs with a toolkit that will serve them over their lifetimes.

Secondly, and as importantly, programs created opportunities for the young people to establish positive relationships with others, including other program participants, program beneficiaries (e.g., WANY language classes, the NYC Justice Corps Community Benefit Service Project), and caring adults. Some of the program participants were "disconnected" youth by virtue of specific behaviors (e.g., criminal activity, high-school dropouts). Our interviewees described various ways in which their participation left them feeling more "connected" to the people and world around them. Connectedness is a powerful program outcome for it engenders a sense of accountability to others and, with that, motivation to stay connected to others. Both the skills development and youth development outcomes of these programs, we believe, are the hallmarks of a positive subsidized job experience.

Below we offer our recommendations for how to provide positive subsidized job experiences for young adults. Our recommendations are drawn from those features that emerged repeatedly in our interviews and that respondents identified as critical aspects of their experience.

## 4.1 Ensure That the Subsidized Work Is Meaningful to the Participants

Participants cited a variety of ways in which the tasks they performed at their subsidized jobs were meaningful or engaging to them. Some indicated that because the work was related to their career goals it helped them better understand their field of interest and prepared them for that career. Such participants often reported that having the opportunity to choose their subsidized job allowed them to select a field of work that related to their goals and interests. Other participants reported picking their subsidized job because it allowed them to “make a meaningful difference” by improving the lives of others or connecting with nature. When they did not have a choice of placements, participants appreciated being placed in subsidized jobs that aligned with interests that they had expressed to program staff.

- “I was like, I either have to be in a dentists’ office working around people...No. Then it was like fashion, picking up fabric... No. There was something in Coney Island, but something about it was a little too far away. But when she said [employer] I said, ‘What is that about?’” [30]
- “Since I wanted to be a teacher and they had a partnership, and they knew [employer] was a trainer and basically teaches leadership traits, they thought it would be a good person to be around and get some experience.” [27]
- “Everybody was put in a certain place, but I think my advisor did it according to how he thinks people’s personalities was, in my opinion.... [Did the subsidized job align with your goals and interests?] Yeah, it really did! It really did. I’m very photogenic and I like technology a lot; and I like computers, which I’m glad I got in with computers. Because I’m a camera person, I like recording, I like digital stuff and surprisingly I got placed there, so it was a win-win situation.” [3]

Even for participants who lacked such career direction, their work was sometimes meaningful because it provided challenges that had to be overcome and tasks that had to be learned, enabling them to experience personal growth, demonstrate mastery, and gain confidence.

- “I think it’s the self-confidence element—that they are able to succeed in this very unique environment gives them a sense that they can do new things. And that’s a real hold-up for a lot of youth, particularly kids who have not had a rich environment to experience.” [33]

Participants agree:

- “I was young, 20 years old, and I be doing an internship in the office. It was a beautiful thing, [my supervisor] let me do everything, ‘Here you can do this, you can do this, I want you to do this so you can learn how.’ She wouldn’t do it for me. I felt that was great, like I never would think in a million years – it was like my own office, but she was watching me do everything. I never thought in a million years I would be running an office by myself with someone just watching me. I like [the program] for that.” [9]

Conversely, participants who did not choose their placement, or whose work lacked any such challenging or engaging qualities, seemed to gain the least from their subsidized job experiences. Examples of less engaging work included making copies and stuffing envelopes. While these young people’s experiences were not explicitly negative, they tended to yield relatively few of the positive employment and non-employment outcomes frequently seen in the experiences of other participants.

Subsidized job programs can increase the meaningfulness of the work participants perform by partnering with a variety of employers and providing young people with the opportunity to select or be placed in subsidized jobs that match their goals and interests. Just as importantly, regardless of whether subsidized job placements are aligned with participants’ individual goals and interests, employers should engage participants in tasks that offer some challenge and an opportunity to grow through their accomplishments.

## **4.2 Select Employers Who Are Committed to the Holistic Development of Young Adults**

For many young adults, the subsidized job not only served as their first exposure to a real job, but it also presented the challenges of learning new skills—both hard and soft skills—and of being in a completely new environment. Given how important it was for participants to feel valued at their subsidized job and to be treated “just like another employee”, program staff may wish to consider, if they haven’t already, screening and selecting employers that view these young adults as assets to the organization or company (not merely as “free labor”) and that have the patience and compassion to teach and train their interns. Most interviewed employers were clearly committed to developing their interns and saw themselves as mentors:

- “People in the industry know that I do it [hire interns], and I do a good job of it. I take it seriously, which not everybody does. Some people look at it as getting free labor, and that’s not enough. You’ve got to give to the kids, too.” [36]
- “I try to be a mentor for them because what I realize is that many of them may not be hired by us maybe because we just don’t have a position at the time, or whatever. But that they’re going to be going out into the work field and have other opportunities and so I just want them to do well in other opportunities that are presented to them. And also I want them to recognize the value of what they have in this program. And so right from the beginning, when they first walk through the door here and we decide we’re going to hire, I sit them down and I have that kind of conversation with them, helping them to understand what’s expected here and also encouraging them on what they can do to be successful not only here, but if they venture out into other opportunities.” [34]
- “I think the biggest mentor to him...I would like to say it was me because I explained to him and gave him a little bit of background of how I got to where I am today and some of the things that I did. And I think that he felt that we have a common, a little bit of a rapport. I like to think that I was a good mentor to him. I don’t know if he developed another relationship with anybody else, but he’s called me a few times on my cell phone. And actually he, we offered him a job to work around...’cause he’s in college now – but we did offer him a job around his college schedule...” [35]

Partnering with employers that are dedicated to improving employment outcomes for these young adults may also help to ensure that interns have meaningful, hands-on work experiences (not just working in the “back office”), which would further contribute to a positive subsidized job experience for young people. Lessons may also be learned from employers who have long demonstrated a value for supporting and training interns—employers who may be partnering with other subsidized job programs—as well as from their interns.

### **4.3 Provide Work Readiness Training or Workshops**

We believe that one of the most important features of a good subsidized job experience is that the program provides the young participants with trainings or classes in workplace fundamentals, such as workplace etiquette, dress, and expectations *prior* to the subsidized job

placement. There are two reasons for this assertion: First, these are very young adults, many of whom have had little – if any – experience in the workplace when they enter the subsidized job programs. As our interview data demonstrate, they simply have no idea what is expected of them when they come to work, and they expressed a profound appreciation for having been given instruction in these on-the-job fundamentals. Secondly, employers are much more willing to work with these programs if they know that the young adults understand the basics of what is expected of them, i.e., what to wear, how to communicate effectively, and how to be on time.

“I’ve interviewed some of [the program participants] and for the most part, whenever you interview them ... they’re very presentable, they dress professional, you know, you can see that they have proper etiquette when it comes down to the way that they talk and the way they communicate. And also, for the most part, as far as attendance, punctuality, and things of that sort, they pretty much been on point with that.” [34]

Another employer reinforced the importance of learning these fundamentals:

“First of all, they’re on a schedule. They’re in an atmosphere already so that they know that there is an expectation of getting up at a particular time and finishing at a particular time. That’s important. There are a lot of little things that are basic to an employer-employee relationship that someone who has never worked doesn’t get. This particular type of group very often is absent in understanding what it takes to work. It’s a much different reality.” [36]

Certainly we learned of numerous instances in which an employer or supervisor took some extra time to counsel the young person, and we are not suggesting that work readiness classes eliminate that need entirely. Rather, as the comment above suggests, employers may be more likely to take on an intern who already has some of these basic lessons under his/her belt.

## **4.4 Ensure That Jobs Are Paid Opportunities**

Despite the fact that these young adults were able to identify so many positive intangible aspects of their subsidized jobs, we reiterate the importance of these positions providing youth with some remuneration for their efforts. Some youth indicated that the promise of a gift card or a paycheck was what motivated them to stick with the job through its duration:

“The fact that we had to come to school the whole week to actually get paid on Thursday, I think that was a catch. Because, like, I want to go to school because I want to get paid. And then you actually put your mind to it, and you’re not late because if you’re late that’s like time you’re missing. At the end of the day you have to make up that time. So you want to be on time, you want to be in class every day, the whole day – there’s nothing else but get focused, like you’re there.” [31]

Mostly, however, we note that many of these youth need the income to support themselves and their families. If the jobs were unpaid, they would have to look for paid employment elsewhere, and thus would not benefit from the work readiness classes, counseling, and mentoring provided by these CEO-supported programs. In addition, getting paid provides the young person with an opportunity to practice budgeting, saving, and even managing a bank account. All of these will be critical skills to have when s/he enters fully into the workforce. Last, paid positions can be an effective recruitment tool for bringing disconnected youth into the program.

#### **4.5 Balance Long-term Program Goals with Near-term Expectations of the Youth**

While some of the young people we interviewed said they were looking for a subsidized job program to give them job skills that would serve them in the future, many acknowledged that earning some money was foremost in their minds. For some, the money was needed for basic things, such as food or rent; for others, the desire was just like that of any other young person who wants to participate in the capitalist economy. Regardless of their motivation, however, these young people participated in their respective programs because of the subsidized job component. Program staff may be more invested in ensuring their participants learn a set of skills that will serve them in the long-term, but they also need to acknowledge the value of the immediate monetary reward. In point of fact, a couple of interviewees acknowledged that they entered the subsidized job program with the money foremost in their minds, but came to recognize the value of the work readiness training along the way. Efforts to encourage young people to participate in these programs should promote the long-term employment objectives, but also fully acknowledge that money is the driver for many potential participants.

## **Appendix A: Participant Interview Protocol**



## **PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

### **CEO INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS**

#### **BACKGROUND and INFORMED CONSENT**

Hi. Thanks for joining me today. My name is [NAME], and I work for a research company called Metis Associates, which is located here in New York City. At Metis, we conduct studies that focus on education, job training, and youth development. The reason I'm here today is because the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity (NYC CEO) – the agency that funds these programs - is interested in learning more about internship participants' view on various internship programs. I'll be talking to you and a couple of other people who participated in [RESPONDENT'S INTERNSHIP PROGRAM], as well as other programs such as [NAME TWO OR THREE OTHERS THAT ARE NOT RESPONDENT'S PROGRAM].

What we'll do over the next hour is that I'll ask you some questions about your experiences with [PROGRAM] – what interested you in the program, what you liked most about it, and what suggestions you might have for ways it could be even better. My role is to write a report for NYC CEO that summarizes the ideas that participants from all the different internship programs shared so that they can understand what works best about these programs, and what they might want to change in the future.

#### **INFORMED CONSENT**

Before we get started, there are a few things I'd like to mention:

- First, this is a research project, so you need to know that you do not have to be here – this is voluntary on your part. If you decide you don't want to participate in the interview or if I ask any questions that you would prefer not to answer, that's really ok – your participation in any CEO programs now or in the future won't be affected in any way. I want you to share your experiences and ideas with me because you *want* to do so, not because you feel you have to.
- If it's okay with you, I would like to audio-record our conversation today solely for my use – I want to make sure that I accurately represent your viewpoints and the views of others to CEO staff. I will take these files back to my office where I will store them in a folder on the computer that no one has access to but me and one other interviewer. Once I am done with my report, I will destroy all of the files – at that point, even I won't have access to them.

## Appendix A

- When I write my report, I won't use any names at all. CEO is trying to learn from everyone I'll be interviewing, so the ideas that you share are what will be most important in the end. We are most interested in learning how to improve the program.
- At the end of our conversation, I will give you a \$50 Bank of America gift card and a 7-day unlimited MetroCard. This is to thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts with me.

Before we start the discussion, I'd like you to read this form – it should say everything that I just explained (voluntary, audio, no names, that I'll be writing a report, an incentive will be provided). If you see something in the form that I forgot to talk about, or if you have any questions at all, please ask me before you sign. Once you've signed, please hand me one copy, and then you can keep one for yourself.

If you're ready, I'm going to turn on the audio recorder now. [INTERVIEWER: Once audio is on, obtain participant's verbal consent to record.]

- 1. I'd like to start off by asking you: [IF NEEDED: When did you participate in the program? [IF SAY DROPPED OUT AT ANY POINT: Ask them why they dropped out, what brought them back?]] How did you learn about the program? What was it about [PROGRAM] that sparked your interest, i.e., Why did you want to participate in it?**
  - What were you doing before the program, for example, were you in school? Were you working?
  - Expectations – what did you hope to get out of it?
  - How easy or difficult was it to get into the program?
  - OTHER SPECIFIC PROBES BASED ON PROGRAM TYPE? (e.g., GED vs. paid internship, permanent job placement, etc.)
- 2. What skills or strategies did you learn as a result of the program?**
  - PROBE on work, job search skills; social skills; life skills; educational achievements.
  - Of those you mentioned [CITE], which did you find most helpful? Why?
  - What are some other skills you wish you could have gained in [PROGRAM]?
    - Were there specific lessons or workshops in that area?
      - IF YES – Why do you think you weren't able to pick up that particular skill? [PROBE on instructional style (book vs. hands-on), amount of time allotted to learning that lesson, other]
- 3. Now let's talk about your internship. First, where were you placed?**
  - What process did you go through to get this placement? For example, did you have a choice in where you had internship?
    - Were you happy with this placement?

## Appendix A

- Did the internship align with your goals and interests? [IF R had a choice, ask about process of alignment with goals and interests.]
- What were your tasks when you were assigned to the internship?
- How were you treated at the worksite? Were you valued? Treated like another employee?

### 4. Supervision

- What supervision did you receive on the worksite, that is, who offered you guidance and feedback?
  - [IF NEEDED] Were you assigned to someone?
- To what extent was that person there to answer questions when you needed him/her? Explain.
- What kinds of things did s/he teach you?

### 5. Participating in a program like [PROGRAM NAME] involves interacting on a regular basis with lots of people.

- ***Let's talk first about the other participants in your internship.***
  - Was there another participant at the worksite with you? IF NO:
    - How was it going through the internship by yourself?
  - What was good about having them go through the program with you? [PROBE SPECIFICALLY IN CONTRAST TO OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMS/SCHOOL]
  - What were some of the challenges, if any, the other participants presented for you? How did you handle those challenges? [LEARN TO ADDRESS/MANAGE?]
- ***There were also several adults working with the program [AS APPROPRIATE] – we talked a little about the supervision you received (or not) earlier.***
  - Aside from your supervisor [IF APPROPRIATE], was there anyone else who mentored you during the internship? Explain.
  - If you could pick ONE of the adults who was MOST IMPORTANT to you, who would that be? And why? In what ways did that person support you and your participation in the program?
  - Were there any adults with whom you had difficulties? IF YES – Explain why you think that relationship was challenging. How did you handle this?
- At this point in time, who, if anyone – either among the adults or the other participants in the program – are you still in contact with? Tell me a little about the kinds of relationships you have with them now (PROBES – How often in

## Appendix A

contact? What medium (phone, text, in-person)? What's the nature of the contact? (mentoring, friendship, studying)

### 6. How long did you participate in the program?

- Overall, what did you think about the length of the program?
  - PROBE – If too long or too short, explain.
  - IF PERFECT – What made it seem to be the right length?
- What, if any, aspects of the program do you think could have been timed differently? Why? [NOTE: Probes will change depending upon the program, e.g., Justice Corps has several distinct components that are enacted longitudinally, while CUNY Works seems to have both education and internship happening at the same time.]

### 7. In what ways, if at all, did the internship affect your career/educational goals?

- [IF NEEDED] What are your plans for the future?
- [IF NEEDED] What are you doing now?

### 8. In what ways did the internship affect your financial goals?

- How much did you earn during the internship?
- For what kinds of things did you use the money?
- Did you open a bank account?

### 9. If you could change one thing about the program, what would it be and why?

### 10. If you had to select the best thing about the program, what would it be and why?

### 11. Is there anything else about [PROGRAM] that you would like to share with me today that you think is important for me to understand?

Thank you so much for taking the time to share your thoughts with me today.

**[TURN OFF AUDIO]**

## **Appendix B: Staff Interview Protocol**

## STAFF INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

### CEO INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS

#### BACKGROUND and INFORMED CONSENT

Hi. Thanks for joining me today. My name is [NAME], and I work for a research company called Metis Associates, which is located here in New York City. At Metis, we conduct studies that focus on education, job training, and youth development. The reason I'm here today is because the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity (NYC CEO) – the agency that funds these programs - is interested in learning about the different kinds of outcomes – not just employment – that may result from youth internship programs. Over the next few weeks, I'll be interviewing other case managers, teachers, and job coaches/developers from a variety of different CEO internship programs or programs that include a substantial internship component.

What we'll do over the next hour is that I'll ask you some questions about your experiences with the youth in [PROGRAM] – what you think they expected from the program, the kinds of skills and strategies they learned while in the program, and what you think were some positive outcomes for these young people, whether or not they got a job after the internship was over. My role is to combine all of the interviews I conduct into a report to give to CEO so they can understand what works best about these programs, and what they might want to change in the future. These reports are sometimes posted on their website for public reading; but no one will ever be identifiable in our reports.

#### INFORMED CONSENT

Before we get started, there are a few things I'd like to mention:

- First, this is a research project, so you need to know that you do not have to be here – this is voluntary on your part. If you decide you don't want to participate in the interview, that's fine. Also, you don't have to answer any questions that you don't want to answer.
- With your permission, I would like to audio-record our conversation today solely for my use – I want to make sure that I accurately represent your viewpoints and the views of others to CEO staff. I will take these files back to my office where I will store them in a folder on the computer that no one has access to but me and a couple of other researchers. Once I am done with my report, I will destroy all of the files – at that point, even I won't have access to them.

## Appendix B

- When I write my report, I won't use any names nor will I identify anyone by his/her role (such as, "The job developer at SCAN said..."). We're simply interested in how these programs can be improved.

Before we start the discussion, I'd like you to read this form – it should say everything that I just explained (voluntary, audio, no names, that I'll be writing a report). If you see something in the form that I forgot to talk about, or if you have any questions at all, please ask me before you sign. Once you've signed, please hand me one copy, and then you can keep one for yourself.

If you're ready, I'm going to turn on the audio recorder now. [INTERVIEWER: ONCE AUDIO RECORDER IS ON, ASK RESPONDENT TO STATE THAT S/HE GIVES YOU PERMISSION TO RECORD THE INTERVIEW.]

### **12. I'd like to start off by asking you about your role and primary responsibilities.**

### **13. I know your program involved the following activities:**

[PROGRAM A INCLUDED...]

[PROGRAM B INCLUDED...]

[PROGRAM C INCLUDED...]

**What do you believe were the participants' expectations for the program (or the internship specifically)? [DEPENDS UPON RESPONDENT]**

- Did their expectations seem in line with program/intern position goals and objectives?

### **14. A. [PROGRAM STAFF] What were the skills, knowledge, or strategies that participating youth needed when they started the program?**

- PROBE on work skills; job search skills; social skills; life skills; educational achievements.
- Of those you mentioned [CITE], which do you think were the most important to teach them? Why?
- Briefly, describe how you taught those skills/knowledge/strategies.
  - Did you take different approaches for different youth? Explain.
- What was the process by which youth were placed into a particular internship?

### **3. B. [JOB STAFF] To what extent do you think the youth were prepared (had the skills when they started internship)?**

- What skills are most important for youth when they start the job?
- What skills did they learn on the job?

**15. Young people in these programs have to interact with lots of different people on a regular basis.**

- ***Let's talk first about the participants in the program.***
  - To what extent did the young people interact with other participants in the program?
  - What were some of the positive experiences, if any, participants had from going through the program as part of a group?
  - What were some of the challenges, if any, these young people faced in dealing with each other?
    - [IF APPROPRIATE] Over the course of the program, to what extent were they able to overcome these challenges? Explain/give an example.
  
- ***There were also several adults, including you, working in the program.***
  - How have those relationships supported young people's participation in the program? [PROBE: What strategies do you use to keep the youth engaged and motivated?]
  - To what extent do you find the young people forming mentoring relationships with you and/or other adults? [PROBE: Are all youth able to do this?] Please describe an example.
  - What, if any, challenges did these young people face when they interacted with the adults? Over the course of the program, how well were they able to deal with these challenges?
  
- At this point in time, are there any young people who used to participate in the program with whom you are still in contact? Tell me a little about the kinds of relationships you have with them now [PROBES – How often in contact? What medium (phone, text, in-person)?]

**16. If I understand correctly, your program lasts for [PERIOD OF TIME]?**

- Overall, what do you think about the length of the program?
  - PROBE – If too long or too short, explain.
  - IF PERFECT – What made it seem to be the right length?
- What, if any, aspects of the program do you think could have been timed differently? Why? [NOTE: Probes will change depending upon the program, e.g., Justice Corps has several distinct components that are enacted longitudinally, while CUNY Works seems to have both education and internship happening at the same time.]



## Appendix B

17. For any given group of participants, what factors do you think make the difference in whether or not a program participant is able to find a job? [PROBE: Something about characteristics of participants? Economy? Training they receive? Other services that may have been available to youth?]
18. Aside from employment, what are some other positive outcomes you've seen for young people participating in [PROGRAM]? Explain. [PROBE specifically about educational outcomes and activities.]
19. If you had to select the most important thing that [PROGRAM] does for the young adults who participate in it, what would it be? Why?
20. What would you suggest to improve the program?
21. Is there anything else about [PROGRAM] that you would like to share with me today that you think is important for me to understand?

Thank you so much for taking the time to share your thoughts with me today.

**[TURN OFF AUDIO]**

## **Appendix C: Assent Form for Minors-Program Participants**



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## **Study of CEO-Sponsored Internships Programs, May 2011** **Young Adult's Permission to Participate in Interview**

The New York City Center for Economic Opportunity (NYC CEO) has hired Metis Associates in New York City to interview young adults who are participating (or have participated) in one of several CEO-sponsored internship programs. You were one of several participants suggested by your program to share your experiences being in [PROGRAM NAME]. You are also one of 24 young adults we are interviewing for this research project.

NYC CEO hopes to learn several things from your interview and the interviews we conduct with other young adults:

- What expectations did you have for the program?
- What parts of the program have you found to be most helpful? Why?
- What suggestions do you have for making the program experience better?

What you share with me will be kept private and will not be shared with you or program staff. Information from our interview will be combined with what I learn from other interviews, and then it will be presented to NYC CEO in a written report. The report may be posted on the NYC CEO website so that the public can learn about these programs, but no one will ever be identified in the report. NYC CEO does not know to whom we spoke, and no one's name will be used in anything we write.

One of your parents/guardians has already given us permission to interview you. But even if your parents said "yes" to this study, you can still decide to not take part in the study, and that will be fine.

If you agree to participate, with your permission, I would like to audio record our discussion. This is so that I don't forget any important ideas that you share with me. No one will have access to this recording except for me and two other people who are helping me write the report.

Taking part in the interview is voluntary – that means you can stop the interview at any time or not answer any questions you do not want to answer. Stopping the interview or not answering certain questions will have no impact on your ability to participate in any other programs offered by NYC CEO –remember, they do not know which participants I am interviewing.



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Our interview will last about one hour. At the end of the hour, I will give you a \$50 Bank of America gift card and a 7-day unlimited MetroCard at the end of the interview. This is to thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts with me.

If you have questions about the study, you may contact Kathy Agaton at [kagaton@metisassoc.com](mailto:kagaton@metisassoc.com) or 212-425-8833. If you have questions about the rights of human subjects related to this study, please contact Dr. Manuel Gutiérrez at [mgutierrez@metisassociates.com](mailto:mgutierrez@metisassociates.com) or 212-425-8833.

---

**Study of CEO-Sponsored Internships Programs, May 2011**  
**Young Adult's Permission to Participate in Interview**

Please print and sign your name below if you agree to participate in this interview.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Sign name) (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

Please print and sign your name below if you agree to audio record this interview.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

## **Appendix D: Assent Form for Program Participants**



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## **Study of CEO-Sponsored Internships Programs, May 2011** **Consent Form for Participants**

The New York City Center for Economic Opportunity (NYC CEO) has hired Metis Associates in New York City to interview young adults who are participating (or have participated) in one of several CEO-sponsored internship programs. You were one of several participants suggested by your program to share your experiences being in [PROGRAM NAME]. You are also one of 24 young adults we are interviewing for this research project.

NYC CEO hopes to learn several things from your interview and the interviews we conduct with other young adults:

- What expectations did you have for the program?
- What parts of the program have you found to be most helpful? Why?
- What suggestions do you have for making the program experience better?

What you share with me today will be kept private and will not be shared with program staff. Information from our interview will be combined with what I learn from other interviews, and then it will be presented to NYC CEO in a written report. The report may be posted on the NYC CEO website so that the public can learn about these programs, but no one will ever be identified in the report. NYC CEO does not know to whom we spoke, and no one's name will be used in anything we write.

With your permission, I would like to audio record our discussion today. This is so that I don't forget any important ideas that you share with me. No one will have access to this recording except for me and two other people who are helping me write the report.

Taking part in today's interview is voluntary – that means you can stop the interview at any time or not answer any questions you do not want to answer. Stopping the interview or not answering certain questions will have no impact on your ability to participate in any other programs offered by NYC CEO –remember, they do not know which participants I am interviewing.

Our interview will last about one hour. At the end of the hour, I will give you a \$50 Bank of America gift card and a 7-day unlimited MetroCard. This is to thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts with me.

If you have questions about the study, you may contact Kathy Agaton at [kagaton@metisassoc.com](mailto:kagaton@metisassoc.com) or 212-425-8833. If you have questions about the rights of human subjects related to this study, please contact Dr. Manuel Gutiérrez at [mgutierrez@metisassociates.com](mailto:mgutierrez@metisassociates.com) or 212-425-8833.



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**Study of CEO-Sponsored Internships Programs, May 2011**  
**Consent Form for Participants**

Please print and sign your name below if you agree to participate in this interview.

\_\_\_\_\_

(Print name)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

(Sign name)

(Date)

Please print and sign your name below if you agree to audio record this interview.

\_\_\_\_\_

(Print name)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Signature)

**Appendix E: Consent Form for Program Staff and Employers**





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## **Study of CEO-Sponsored Internships Programs, May 2011** **Consent Form for Program Staff/Employers**

The New York City Center for Economic Opportunity (NYC CEO) has hired Metis Associates in New York City to conduct a qualitative study of CEO-sponsored internship programs. As part of this study, we are interviewing internship participants and program staff and employers. You were suggested by [PROGRAM NAME] to share your experiences working with internship participants.

NYC CEO hopes to learn several things from your interview and the interviews we conduct with other program staff and employers:

- What are the characteristics of a positive internship experience?
- What parts of the program were most helpful to participants? Why?
- What suggestions do you have for making the program experience better?

What you share with me today is confidential. Information from our interview will be combined with what I learn from other interviews, and then it will be presented to NYC CEO in a written report. The report may be posted on the NYC CEO website so that the public can learn about these programs, but no one will ever be identified in the report. NYC CEO does not know to whom we spoke, and no one's name will be used in anything we write.

We appreciate your willingness to participate in an interview for this study. Taking part in today's interview is voluntary – that means you can stop the interview at any time or not answer any questions you do not want to answer. The interview will last about one hour. To assist us with our notes, we would like permission to audio record; the audio file will not be shared outside of Metis staff.

If you have questions about this study, you may contact Kathy Agaton at [kagaton@metisassoc.com](mailto:kagaton@metisassoc.com) or 212-425-8833. If you have questions about the rights of human subjects related to this evaluation, please contact Dr. Manuel Gutiérrez at [mgutierrez@metisassociates.com](mailto:mgutierrez@metisassociates.com) or 212-425-8833.



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**Study of CEO-Sponsored Internships Programs, May 2011**  
**Consent Form for Program Staff/Employers**

Please print and sign your name below if you agree to participate in this interview.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Sign name) (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

Please print and sign your name below if you agree to audio record this interview.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

## **Appendix F: Parent Active Consent Letter**



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DATE

Dear Parent or Guardian,

As a participant (or former participant) of [PROGRAM NAME], your son/daughter has been selected to take part in a study to understand the value of youth internship programs sponsored by the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO). Metis Associates in New York City was hired to conduct this study to find out about what program features help young people the most.

With your permission, we will interview your son/daughter. The interview would last about one hour and your child will be given a \$50 Bank of America gift card and a 7-day unlimited MetroCard at the end of the interview. All information about your child will be kept private and his/her responses will not be shared with you or program staff. Information from the interview will be combined with information learned from other interviews, and will be presented in a written report to CEO. The report may be posted on the NYC CEO website so that the public can learn about these programs, but your son/daughter will not be identified in the report.

Your son/daughter is not required to participate in this study. However, if s/he participates, s/he will be given the opportunity to end the interview at any time. We hope that you will allow your son/daughter to participate so that the youth internship programs can improve and better serve participants in the future.

If you wish additional information about the study, please contact me at 212-425-8833. If you have questions about the rights of human subjects related to this evaluation, please contact Dr. Manuel Gutiérrez at [mgutierrez@metisassociates.com](mailto:mgutierrez@metisassociates.com) or 212-425-8833. Thank you very much for your participation and assistance.

***Please complete the form on the next page to indicate whether or not you are willing to have your son/daughter participate in this study.***

Sincerely,

Kathleen Agaton, S.M.  
Senior Research Associate



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**NYC CEO Internship Program Interviews, May 2011  
PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW PARENT CONSENT FORM**

**Child's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Program:** \_\_\_\_\_

*[Check one of these boxes and sign/date the space below the box that you checked.]*

YES, I GIVE PERMISSION FOR MY SON/DAUGHTER TO PARTICIPATE.

I have read the above information and I give permission for my son/daughter to participate in this study of youth internship programs.

Parent's/Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

NO, I DO NOT WANT MY SON/DAUGHTER TO PARTICIPATE.

I have read the above information and I DO NOT give permission for my son/daughter to participate in this study of youth internship programs.

Parent's/Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_