Annual Report
2023

EVOLUTION
Dear FRIENDS,

The year 2023 marked the beginning of an evolution for Philadelphia Youth Network. For more than two decades, Philadelphia Youth Network has been a steadfast advocate for the youth of our city, with a foundation firmly rooted in summer youth employment programs. These initiatives have touched the lives of thousands, instilling hope, skills, and pathways to success since our inception in 1999. Today’s youth need even more robust and expansive career opportunities to put them on the path to success. We hope you will join us as we work to build a future that redefines youth empowerment through more robust, holistic, and year-round, career-connected learning opportunities.

To execute this bold plan for expanding work opportunities and bolster support for both employers and youth, we are doubling down on cultivating the partnerships, funding, and programming that will allow Philadelphia Youth Network to be a regional leader in youth workforce development.

Over the next several years, PYN is poised to transform the landscape of youth workforce development in Philadelphia. Through a new strategic framework aimed at addressing systemic challenges and redefining “quality” career development experiences, PYN will provide more comprehensive opportunities, pathways, and resources designed to better equip the next generation of Philadelphia’s workforce. We will focus on working with partners and youth employers to provide more robust pipelines to future employment across industry sectors, offer targeted and tailored prerequisite training, employer readiness support, and opportunities that extend beyond traditional internships.

We could not do this work without the passion and expertise of our board and staff, the steadfast dedication of our providers, and collaborative partners who help us lift up Philadelphia’s young people. We need you now more than ever, and we need to bring new stakeholders to this work. This work is more than providing a young person their first job; it is a collective investment in our youth, our economy, and the future of our city. We are excited for the journey ahead. Thank you for being part of it.

In Service,

Wendy-Anne Roberts-Johnson
President & CEO | Philadelphia Youth Network
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Decades of research have consistently shown that exposure to career opportunities and work experience results in positive economic, physical, and mental benefits for young people. Studies conducted by the U.S. Administration for Children & Families show that career exposure opportunities lead to significant impacts on goal-setting and attainment skills, economic impact and reduced economic hardship.

One of the notable trends is the expansion of programming beyond traditional summer initiatives, with a growing consensus among stakeholders—from funders and elected leaders to the vibrant business community—regarding the importance of year-round engagement. This shift reflects a collective effort to ensure that young people have continuous access to meaningful learning experiences that bridge the gap between education and employment.

There is a clear recognition that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to post-secondary education, and that youth-serving organizations must remain committed to offering a diverse range of opportunities, focused on skill-building and pre-apprenticeship training that goes beyond the conventional college track.

2023 marked a significant milestone with Pennsylvania Act 158 enabling high school students to apply work experience credits toward graduation requirements. This legislative change underscores a broader movement towards integrating career training into academic frameworks, reinforcing the value of career-connected learning as an essential component of education.

Furthermore, youth services organizations like the Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN) are playing a pivotal role as committed partners in this evolving landscape. With a focus on data development, direct service provision, and fostering meaningful partnerships across the city, organizations like PYN are driving innovation and ensuring that young individuals have access to top-tier career-connected learning experiences tailored to their unique aspirations and talents.

As we look toward the future and the needs of our city’s young people, PYN remains a committed partner within Philadelphia’s career-connected learning landscape. Through the development of a new strategic plan and vision for the future, PYN aims to address the need for expanded, more consistent, and high-quality experiences grounded in a framework focused on early exposure, awareness and experience.
In 2023, the Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN) celebrated the 24th year of career-connected learning initiatives led by the summer WorkReady program.

Across school-year and summer programs, PYN provided a total of 9,753 opportunities to youth, indicating a robust commitment to fostering meaningful connections and learning experiences for young individuals. The summer program witnessed substantial growth, with 7,944 slots utilized compared to 7,641 the previous year, demonstrating a 97% utilization rate compared to 80% in the previous year.

Moreover, PYN’s partnerships with employers saw a significant increase in the amount paid to young people, rising from $8.6 million in 2022 to over $10 million in 2023. The impact of the WorkReady program was evident in the survey results, with respondents reporting improved confidence in career development skills, increased financial literacy, and a greater propensity to save money post-program.

Notably, the survey revealed that participants valued the learning experiences and support received from adults more than the monetary aspects of the program, emphasizing the importance of mentorship and guidance in shaping their career paths. Overall, PYN’s 2023 summer program underscored its commitment to empowering youth with the skills, knowledge, and support needed for future success in their chosen careers.
3,355 youth were from the top 12 high violence zip codes. Of these 3,355, 1,147 young people were from the top five priority zip codes. PYN’s work providing young people employment has a direct correlation to reducing violence and making communities safer.
PYN ANNUAL REPORT: PARTNER SPOTLIGHT YOACAP

As a WorkReady Summer partner, the Youth Outreach Adolescent Community Awareness Program (YOACAP), hosted a hands-on pre-apprenticeship program that exposed 174 participants to the carpentry trade. The six-week collaboration, in partnership with PYN, YOACAP, and the Philadelphia Carpenters Union, provided young people with baseline experience in the carpentry trade, exposing them to several different disciplines, from framing and finishing to floor laying, cabinetry, milling and more.

This program advanced YOACAP’s mission to enhance the quality of life and health for Philadelphians through community-based and culturally competent interventions. Work readiness training occurred at the same time as the hands-on work experience. Participants gained a deeper knowledge of workplace competencies and career opportunities while learning the importance of academic achievement and its link to career advancement. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows more than 40% of workers in the construction sector are over the age of 45. That means almost half of tradespeople are nearing the age of retirement so there needs to be a pipeline of new skilled workers ready to start in the industry. It’s also important the construction industry diversifies its labor force. According to the U.S. Department of Labor Statistics, white construction workers made up more than 87% of the workforce in 2022. Philadelphia Work’s Apprenticeship Landscape found “apprenticeships offer strong opportunities to earn high wages in occupations that are currently in high demand.” But even with the strong wages, the brief found gaps exist that need to be addressed such as the underrepresentation of non-white people and women in apprenticeships. Programs like YOACAP can help in reducing these disparities and strengthen the pipeline for skilled workers.

The program’s strength was a model which fostered a mentorship-driven environment by connecting participants with experienced carpenters who offered guidance, support, networking and real-world insights. The end result was an experience which supported youth in developing their personal skills as well as advancing their professional development.

“I personally think WorkReady was very helpful and helped a lot of students show who they really are inside and out. It gave us an opportunity to learn responsibility and express our thoughts and creations.”

— A WorkReady Summer participant
2023 CAREER DEVELOPMENT
BY THE NUMBERS

In the past year, PYN provided 9,753 total opportunities.

Research tells us that forming relationships are a huge part of quality youth programming. In PYN’s WorkReady Youth Survey, respondents overwhelming agreed that they formed strong bonds with adults they worked with:

- **95%** either agreed or strongly agreed that the adults they met at their program cared about their success.

- **93%** either agreed or strongly agreed that the adults they met will continue to support them.

- **91%** either agreed or strongly agreed that the adults they met at their program helped them to learn from their mistakes and setbacks.
PYN’s WorkReady Youth Survey results found respondents felt more confident in career development skills after participating in WorkReady. They reported improvement in skills to help them succeed in any career, an increased knowledge about different careers that interest them, what next steps to take to find a suitable career, and in where to look for information on career options.

PYN’s WorkReady Youth Survey results found respondents increased their financial literacy skills. WorkReady youth were more likely to plan to save money after completing the program. Before the start of the program: only 54% said they often or always set aside some money for savings. But after the program, 63% of respondents say they often or always set aside some money for savings.

When surveyed about what they valued most about their WorkReady experience, compared to what they said they were most looking forward to, respondents shared that they valued the money earned less than they thought they would. Instead most respondents said they valued relationship building and learning more about careers.
CLOSING THE CHAPTER ON E³ PROGRAM

After nearly 20 years, PYN’s E³ (Education Employment, and Empowerment) program completed its last cohort in 2023. In partnership with the City of Philadelphia’s Office of Children and Families, Philadelphia Works, and dozens of provider organizations across the city, this initiative provided customized support services to more than 8,000 youth between the ages of 16-24 who were otherwise out of school or work and disconnected from post-secondary opportunities. Since 2005, E³ service providers have provided critical academic skills and employment readiness training, resource connection services, remedial academic support, and secondary and post-secondary credential support, playing a major role in the city’s push to raise the high school graduation rate from 52% to 71% from 2006-2022. Over the course of nearly two decades, E³ and its provider partners enabled more than 2,200 youth to obtain high school graduation credentials and contributed to thousands more obtaining professional skills training, post-secondary opportunities, and paid jobs.

GET BANKED

With a goal of fostering foundations in financial literacy for WorkReady youth, PYN partnered with Getschooled.org, Cities for Financial Empowerment, and local Philadelphia banks on the first-of-its-kind, “Get Banked” initiative, aimed at empowering young individuals to navigate the realm of banking.

Taking a multifaceted approach, PYN worked with its partners to engage youth via direct text messages and the generation of engaging digital content, guiding them through the process of opening a bank account and providing a $25 incentive to any youth who opened a bank account through a participating partner bank location.

Aiming to demystify the banking process, the initiative’s impact was hugely successful, connecting more than 670 youth directly to bank accounts. The initiative also led to more than 6,500 views on the Philly Banks page and a remarkable average view time, indicating a genuine interest among the youth. Notably, the initiative’s weekly emails boasted significantly higher open and click-to-open rates compared to industry standards, underlining the relevance and resonance of the campaign’s message.
GET BANKED - BY THE NUMBERS

674 BANKED YOUTH
2.8MM CONTENT IMPRESSIONS
5K CONTENT ENGAGEMENTS
6,157 TOTAL YOUTH REACHED
34,284 EMAILS SENT
31.79% AVERAGE OPEN RATE
8.76% AVERAGE CLICK-TO-OPEN RATE
4.2K PHILLY BANKS PAGEVIEWS
49,745 TEXTS SENT
3,825 TOTAL YOUTH ENGAGED

GET READY to WorkReady
THOUSANDS of Philly Youth Jobs
GET STARTED by setting up your bank account

Still Considering Getting Banked?
Check out these top resources to help you get started:
- Why Teens Should Open a Bank Account
- How to Set up a Bank Account as a Teen
- Money Moves: Teens & Young Adults Should Make
- Have a First Job? Make Your Money Work for You

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RESEARCH & INNOVATION

PARTNERSHIPS

Expanding on the successes of its historic summer youth employment programs, PYN implemented a new year-round Out of School Time (OST) career-connected learning program in spring 2024 with a focus on violence prevention strategies and providing support services. Support for the program is provided by the Pennsylvania Commission for Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP) grant program.

The program, called WorkReady VIP, launched in February of 2024 with a cohort of 4 partner providers who will engage more than 400 youth in meaningful career-connected learning opportunities. The program is focused on serving youth from areas with high concentrations of gun violence. The highest-risk youth in WorkReady VIP will receive additional holistic support and wraparound services to address the multifaceted nature of violence.

Building upon PYN’s successful implementation of WorkReady summer program and the recently piloted WorkReady School Year, WorkReady VIP will allow young people to delve more deeply into work experiences and job skills training by extending the training throughout the year. In addition to opportunities for paid work, program providers will offer violence intervention and prevention services, access to trauma-informed support services, health and intervention strategies, employment support, and community development services. WorkReady VIP is designed to have a more comprehensive focus on skill-building for specific jobs, as well as crucial soft skills like communications, problem solving and teamwork.

The longer timeline allows WorkReady VIP to keep participants connected to mentors, provide guidance for long-term career goals, and give participants access to additional job rotations. A continuing priority of WorkReady VIP is to engage the broader community and maintain robust partnerships with law enforcement, community organizations and other stakeholders, focusing on building trust within the community and creating stronger community ties to aid in the reduction of violence. Through WorkReady VIP, young people can gain experience in the workspace, make connections to employer networks and build relationships with supportive adults—all factors that offer positive alternatives to violence and criminal behavior. WorkReady VIP aims to open the door to future opportunities for its participants.
Throughout this period of evolution, PYN is moving to offer deeper, more comprehensive programming in the year to come.

In addition to WorkReady VIP, we will continue WorkReady BOOST with its second cohort this spring and third cohort this summer. Funded by Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development to help impoverished communities, WorkReady BOOST puts youth participants through PYN’s career development framework and professional skills building curriculum to get them ready to work before being placed in a work experience. The goal is to enhance financial literacy and increase knowledge of economic mobility.

Further expanding its year-round direct service portfolio, PYN’s new Career-Connected Learning 21st Century Program answers the call for affordable, safe and high-quality out-of-school time (OST) programming that is both academically and personally enriching. This new program provides 225 middle school students from four Title One schools in Upper North and Northeast Philadelphia an opportunity to engage in a dynamic career-connected, academic and social-emotional OST experience designed to facilitate early exposure to career readiness and awareness. Through guest speakers, facility tours and other work exposure opportunities, the 21st Century Program will advance STEAM competencies and inspire student engagement among economically disadvantaged youth. The funding is provided by a multi-year 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Education. With students allowed to be in the program from 5th to 8th grades, PYN will be able to collect valuable and substantial insights, allowing us to make more data-driven decisions around youth development programs.

Evidence of PYN’s commitment to a new strategic model can be seen in PYN’s new Unlock Potential program, launched in 2023 through a partnership with the Responsible Business Initiative for Justice and funded by the Walmart.org Center for Racial Equity. This initiative brings major employers together to help break the poverty-to-prison pipeline affecting many so-called Opportunity Youth—those between the ages of 16 and 24 who are disconnected from school and work and at risk of incarceration. Eligible high school youth participate in a ten-week internship at select Sam’s Club locations, then transition into longer term employment. Youth 18 and older will be considered for full-time positions with competitive benefits packages. The program provides valuable career opportunities, comprehensive training, mentoring, and direct pipelines to future careers within Walmart and Sam’s Club.

The next few years promise exciting developments as we continue to lead the charge in creating a brighter future for Philadelphia’s youth. Join us to support the next generation of workers and transform the workforce development landscape in Philadelphia.
POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS
2023 INVESTORS AND EMPLOYEES
2023 PROGRAM PARTNERS

Allegeny West Foundation
Asian Americans United
Asociación Puertorriqueños en Marcha, Inc.
ASPIRA, Inc. of Pennsylvania
Bartram’s Garden
Beyond the Bars
BOOST Community Development Corp.
Boys & Girls Clubs of Philadelphia Building 21
Caring People Alliance
Catholic Social Services
Center for Black Educator Development
Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia
Coded by Kids
Congreso de Latinos Unidos, Inc.
Cora Services
Council of Spanish Speaking Organizations (Concilio)
District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund
Eckerd Youth Alternatives, Inc.
EDSI
Educators 4 Education
Equity Solutions Svcs
Federation of Neighborhood Centers Foundations, Inc.
Free Library of Philadelphia
Girls Inc. of Greater Philadelphia & Southern New Jersey
Gold Medal Karate Inc.
Greater Philadelphia Community Alliance
Guiding Stars An Anthony C. Richardson Lee Foundation
Harcum College Upward Bound
Harlem Lacrosse and Leadership Corporation
Heights Philadelphia
Kensington Soccer Club
Ligouri Academy
LNESC
Management and Environment Technologies, Inc.
Math Corps
Mural Arts Philadelphia
Niche Clinic
Norris Square Neighborhood Project
One Bright Ray
Opportunities Industrialization Centers
Penn Rising Scholars Success Academy
Pennsylvania School for the Deaf
People for People, Inc.
Philadelphia Academies Inc.
Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation
Philadelphia Energy Authority
Philadelphia Gas Works
Philadelphia Hospital & Health Care District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund
Philadelphia Parks & Recreation
Project Based Learning Inc./Workshop School
Project HOME
Public Health Management Corporation
Public Health Management Corporation - Project LYFT
Rock to the Future
Sankofa Freedom Academy Charter School
School District of Philadelphia
School District of Philadelphia (StartUp Edu)
Somerset Academy Early Learning Center
Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Coalition
Sunrise of Philadelphia, Inc.
Temple University - Lenfest Center for Community Workforce Partnerships
Temple University - The University Community Collaborative
Temple University of the Commonwealth System of Higher Education
Temple University, University Community Collaborative of Philadelphia (UCCP)
The Attic Youth Center
The Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania - Sayer HS
The Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania - West Phila HS
The Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania, Netter Center for Community Partnerships, UACS
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The Village of Arts and Humanities
To Our Children’s Future With Health, Inc.
Urban Affairs Coalition
Valley Youth House Committee, Inc.
VestedIn
VietLead
We Love Philly
YOACAP
YouthBuild Philly

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