In January 2022, Research for Action (RFA) released their report “Costs and Quality in Virtual/Hybrid Summer Youth Employment Programming” in partnership with Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN).

Since 2003, PYN has provided young people summer employment opportunities through the WorkReady program. In Spring 2020, because of the impact of COVID-19, PYN pivoted WorkReady programming to include virtual & hybrid experiences to continue offering Philadelphia's young people summer career readiness opportunities.

In June 2021, PYN engaged RFA to conduct a six-month study of the virtual and hybrid WorkReady Summer experience. Through this partnership, RFA, in collaboration with PYN and its providers and employers, has aimed to:

- document cost structures of virtual and hybrid WorkReady Summer programming in 2021;
- examine perceived differences in these cost structures compared to in-person programming;
- define high-quality virtual and hybrid summer youth employment programming; and
- identify resources needed to implement virtual and hybrid programming.

Key Findings

- Virtual and hybrid programming share many—but not all—of the same categories of costs.
- Providers indicated that personnel time was the largest category of cost for virtual/hybrid WorkReady Summer programming, and that staffing costs for virtual components should not be underestimated.
- While some may assume virtual programming has fewer costs, we found that when compared to in-person programming, virtual programming may be similarly costly.
- Employers and providers echoed literature on promising practices when they reported on elements that could facilitate high-quality virtual and hybrid youth employment programming. They shared that programming should cater to young people's interests and focus on “real world” content; leverage multiple modes of interaction to engage young people; assess and address technology needs; focus on relationship-building; and provide one-on-one supports for young people.

To learn more about RFA's findings on the cost and quality in virtual/hybrid summer youth employment programming, read the full report here.

To learn more about the WorkReady program, visit PYN’s website.