

# THE ABC'S OF CREATING SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance

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## WELCOME

**James Butler:** Hello, everyone and welcome to our Webinar, “*The ABC’s of Creating Summer Youth Programs and Partnerships*,” the first in a series of webinars on Summer Youth Employment sponsored by our office, the Office of Family Assistance and the Administration for Children and Families. We issued an information memorandum earlier this year, sometime around March, noting that subsidized employment can provide valuable skills and work experience for young people and serve as a stepping stone on the path to unsubsidized employment. By allocating TANF resources to Summer Youth Employment Programs, TANF jurisdictions have the potential to bring additional subsidized job opportunities to low income youth across the nation. Today’s webinar was created in order to provide TANF programs and stakeholders with some peer-based strategies for implementing Summer Youth Employment Programs. We have brought together for you presenters from various locations and partnered with Mathematica Policy Research and Corporate Voices for Working Families to develop an agenda uniquely aligned with the needs of TANF stakeholders seeking to gain a better understanding of ways to develop, implement and/or sustain Summer Youth Employment Programs. We also thought that we would focus a little on the importance of integrating career pathways development into Summer Youth Programs. So we encourage each of you, when you get the opportunity, to go back and visit the registration website to access a host of other resources related to creating and sustaining the Summer Youth Employment Programs. Resources have been gathered from our partners in OPRE, which is the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, and from the Welfare Peer TA Network and range from studies on the experiences of locations during the Recovery Act period to how locations can generally utilize TANF funds to support Summer Youth Employment for youth. As already mentioned, at the end of the presentations, you will have an opportunity to ask questions through the WebEx system. You can also submit your questions to be answered following the last presentation throughout the webinar using the Q&A panel on your WebEx screen. We invite you to submit questions for our speakers through the WebEx technology. If your question is for a specific speaker or program, please be sure to specify that in your question. Following the presentations, we will ask you to respond to a short evaluation poll that will pop up in the webinar. What I’m going to do now is provide everyone with a very brief description of each of our speakers for today and then we will have Damon Waters take us to the next phase from there.

## INTRODUCTIONS

**James Butler:** Jeanne Bellotti is a Senior Researcher and Associate Director of Human Services Research at Mathematica Policy Research. She has over 16 years of experience designing and carrying out evaluations of programs to help a wide range of disadvantaged populations prepare for, find, and retain employment. From 2010 to 2011, she directed an evaluation of the Summer Youth Employment Program for DOL funded under the ARRA, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

**James Butler:** John Wilcox is the Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer of Corporate Voices of Working Families. As the Executive Director and COO, John steers the development of Corporate Voices and manages programs and projects, staff, technology and other aspects of Corporate Voices. He concentrates on family economic security within Corporate Voices and works to educate the business sector on issues that affect low-wage working families. Some of his recent outreach includes workplace flexibility for low-wage, hourly workers, and an annual lactation toolkit to improve infant health and nutrition.

**James Butler:** James Chapman. James is a Workforce Development professional responsible for process development, program development and policy implementation for the Southeast Tennessee Development District, SETDD. I'm not sure if you say a particular acronym for that one. He has been with SETDD since 2009, starting as a participant in their Summer Youth Program that was funded by the American Recovery Reinvestment Act. Following the ARRA summer program, he was hired full-time with SETDD as a Career Services Counselor responsible for providing and referring direct services to the agency's Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Youth Program. In November of 2010, he was promoted to his current position overseeing all of the programmatic activities of the WIA Youth Program in a nine-county region. He holds his Global Career Development Facilitator Certification from the National Career Development Association and he was named a member of the inaugural class of Protégé Chattanooga, a mentoring program sponsored by the Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce to advance the leadership skills of young professionals.

**James Butler:** Gerren Price currently serves as the Associate Director of Youth Programs at the District of Columbia Department of Employment Services, and he is responsible for the administration of the city's Summer Youth Employment Program. In 2011-2012, he served more than 14,000 youth and all of its year-round youth employment programs and services, including its Workforce Investment Act programs funded by the Mayor's Youth Leadership, Pathways for Young Adult Programs, and the One City High School Internship Program, which provides year-round opportunities to more than 1,200 youth annually. Now I will turn it over to Damon who will take us to the next phase of the webinar.

**Damon Waters:** Thank you, James. The employment rates for youth under age 25 have been declining since the Great Recession and among certain subpopulations, especially those with disabilities, high school dropouts, current and former foster youth, youth of color and other at-risk populations, their rates have declined at higher levels and, as a result, these groups face growing challenges to re-entering and completing school and entering the workforce. Since the Great Depression era, various federal initiatives have funded and promoted increased job training and employment programs that had at once connected many at-risk youth to employment opportunities, on-the-job training, education and personal development skills that seek to improve longer term career pathways for America's youth. Early initiatives focused on employing young men in public works projects and efforts to encourage youth to obtain their high school diplomas. Over time, the federal government started funding programs for low income youth and out of school youth that address multiple needs, including job training, educational support, housing assistance and provided wraparound supportive services. The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 extended earlier programs and created new ones and, since then, several studies have shown that summer employment for youth can have lasting impacts on the skill building and educational outcomes for youth. In fact, the Department of Labor found that over 65% of youth who had participated in Summer Youth Employment Programs showed an increase of more than one grade level in reading and more than one grade level in math. Today, most federal funding and programming for Summer Youth Employment fall under the Workforce Investment Act and they provide targeted opportunities like the Youth Activities Formula Grant Program, the Job Corps Program, the Youth Build Program, the Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program, which includes a youth component, and the Youth Opportunities Grant Program. Several of these focus on developing career pathways and strengthening skill building in connections to specific trades. Like James mentioned, our partners in OCS and the work they do around the Community Services Block Grant and those resources have been accessed in order to improve the employment opportunities and employment outcomes of youth by receiving things like occupational skills training, financial planning, mentorship and linkages to other supportive services. Additionally, Community Development Block Grant funds or the CDBG funds, have been accessed in cities like Binghamton, Fresno, Wichita, Boston, Indianapolis and Pittsburgh just to name a few, to provide needed summer employment opportunities for youth in those areas. Foundations and private funders like the Steans Family Foundation, the Wal-Mart Foundation, the Pohlada Family Foundation, the DTE Energy Foundation, Goodwill and others have played pivotal roles in the funding and supporting of Summer Youth Employment and Training activities throughout the nation. OFA will be sponsoring additional technical assistance in the coming months to highlight some of the other ways that TANF and other stakeholders can partner to maximize TANF and MOE funds and various other private and public funding streams and programs to improve the employment opportunities for youth, and to increase local initiatives developed to strengthen their longer term career prospects. I would like to now

turn things over to Jeanne Bellotti of Mathematica Policy Research to further discuss some of the history of Summer Youth Employment Programs, the Legacy of the Summer Youth Employment Activities under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and the results of two major ACF funded and DOL funded studies. Jeanne?

## **LESSONS FROM TWO NATIONAL STUDIES OF SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES**

**Jeanne Bellotti:** Great, thanks so much, Damon. I appreciate being invited to talk. I'd like to start by setting the stage for some of the speakers to come who will talk about their first-hand experiences by discussing two studies that Mathematica conducted for the Department of Labor and ACF on Summer Youth Employment initiatives.

### **ROADMAP FOR THE PRESENTATION**

**Jeanne Bellotti:** I'll begin by giving a little bit of background and describing for you our evaluation designs and then spend the bulk of my time talking about some of the high-level key findings that will, hopefully, help set the stage for the rest of the presentation.

### **BACKGROUND AND EVALUATION DESIGNS - HISTORY OF SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT**

**Jeanne Bellotti:** There is a long history of investment in Summer Youth Employment; in particular the Workforce Investment System has offered these types of services for many, many years. Under the Job Training Partnership Act, or JTPA, there was a large, self-standing program that supported these types of activities. To give you a sense of the scale, back in 1990, there was \$871 million allocated solely for summer youth activities so it really was a very intensive program. Once there was a transition to the Workforce Investment Act, Summer Youth Employment became only one component of ten required youth activities and, as a result, the emphasis decreased significantly. Once there was a full transition to WIA in 2000, far fewer youth were being placed in these types of employment opportunities. That isn't to say though that youth were – there were still a portion of youth that were being served and there were a range of different funding sources that helped to support summer programs going forward after 2000. In particular, the WIA formula funds in many local areas were being used for this activity, as I mentioned, one of ten required elements. Federal TANF dollars were used in many local areas, as well as state and local funds, both from public and private funders.

### **ARRA WIA AND TANF EMERGENCY FUNDS**

**Jeanne Bellotti:** Then came the Recovery Act. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funded two different streams of resources that helped continue summer youth at a much higher level. The ARRA WIA funds that were passed down included \$1.2 billion for employment and training of youth. Congress put out particular guidance placing an emphasis on funding summer jobs in 2009. Now the eligibility criteria for those funds was similar to the Workforce Investment Act but WIA typically only covers 14 to 21-year-olds and ARRA allowed them to serve youth up to the age of 24. The bulk of the resources from these WIA ARRA funds were used in 2009 and, as a result, there wasn't a very large pool of money to continue programs in 2010. In the spring of 2010, the Assistant Secretaries from ACF and ETA put out a technical guidance letter that encouraged state and local areas to use their TANF Emergency Contingency Funds to continue to support summer youth activities in 2010. In fact, 19 states and the District of Columbia took them up on that advice and went ahead and used TANF Emergency Funds for that purpose.

### **TWO NATIONAL EVALUATIONS**

**Jeanne Bellotti:** The two studies that I plan on talking about were intended to document the implementation of these programs, how they unfolded on the ground and the partnerships that were developed, and also to examine the youth and employer perspectives on how their experiences unfolded. The study of the 2009 ARRA Summer Youth Initiatives used two primary data sources. We were able to

get state performance data that was submitted from all 50 states to the Federal Department of Labor from May to November of 2009, and we also conducted in-depth site visits to 20 local programs that were selected by the Evaluation Team in collaboration with the Department of Labor to get a wide variety of different types of programs and also focus on those that had some very interesting and innovative strategies. Then the study of the 2010 TANF Emergency Fund Youth Programs was funded by the Department of Labor and ACF and it included telephone interviews with state workforce and TANF administrators in seven states as well as in-depth site visits to ten local areas in those states. In both of these studies, we talked with folks at the administrative level, frontline staff and we also interviewed a subset of youth as well as employers.

## **KEY FINDINGS - FUNDING STREAMS**

**Jeanne Bellotti:** Here are some of our key findings that I thought were of particular relevance for this webinar. In terms of funding, in the 2009 program, we found that in our 20 local areas, the ARRA WIA funds did support the vast majority of activities. Some of the local areas that had ongoing programs did continue to use those funds to support additional youth, but the ARRA WIA funds were by far the largest component. In 2010, however, the local areas did tend to combine funding sources much more often. In particular, the three most common were the TANF Emergency Fund, WIA ARRA funds that were left over that had not been completely spent, as well as WIA formula funds. The interesting thing about the multiple funding streams was that it did create some complications in local areas. There were three different ways that they combined funding sources. The first was that they stacked the funding, so they spent one funding source at the beginning of the summer and once it was exhausted, they started using the second funding source. In other local areas, they used them simultaneously so that when a youth came in and was determined eligible, they determined which pool the youth should draw funds from. Based on the eligibility criteria for the TANF funds versus the WIA funds, they'd say okay, this person is going to be funded by TANF and this person is going to be funded by WIA. Then the other strategy was to use them simultaneously but to offer very different services. The youth that came in and were using TANF funds might receive a different set of services than those that would come in and receive the WIA funds. There was some complication that came with that but most local areas did their best to try and work through it.

## **AGENCY PARTNERSHIPS**

**Jeanne Bellotti:** In terms of agency partnerships, in all of our study sites in both of our two years that we looked at, workforce agencies administered the program directly. In 2009, we found very little collaboration with TANF agencies, although they did serve as a referral source for some local areas. But in 2010, they obviously played a much more active role and it was a supportive role in most cases. They served as joint applicants for the TANF Emergency Funds and oftentimes helped to determine policies and eligibility both at the state and local levels. Then once the programs got off the ground, they oftentimes provided lists of eligible youth for workforce areas to do recruitment and they provided guidance on eligibility verification for the TANF eligibility requirements.

There were some perceived benefits of these partnerships but also a few challenges. In terms of benefits, the agency staff did report that they learned a lot about each other's missions and the needs of each other's customer bases, which they may not have had as much familiarity in the past. The customers themselves also often learned about the availability of other services in their communities that they just weren't aware of. Then the youth obviously got some expanded opportunities because of the combination of these resources. In terms of challenges, there were, in both years, because the funding came fairly late, there were delays in both the funding and the guidance of how eligibility would come down and some guidance on the types of services to be offered and that created a bit of confusion. The agencies also have different cultures and in some local areas that was a bit of a challenge to overcome. Then lastly, the short-term nature of the funding itself I think discouraged long-term partnerships or, in some sense, people didn't feel vested enough, that the funding would continue so they weren't focused on how to keep these partnerships going over time.

## **YOUTH RECRUITMENT**

**Jeanne Bellotti:** Let's talk about the program itself. It was pretty amazing, I have to say, when these programs got off the ground, how many youth came forward and were seeking opportunities. There were a lot of people out there that really wanted to get jobs and in 2009 it was quite overwhelming. The high amount of applications really strained local capacity and in most sites they did have to put some youth on waiting lists. The Department of Labor had also targeted a couple of key groups as high priority and the two that they found fairly difficult to reach were older youth, which is that 21 to 24-year-old range, as well as veterans and their spouses. Then in 2010, most of the sites focused on TANF youths and TANF-eligible youths and, in particular, they found that it was difficult to reach TANF youth in some sites because families had concerns that the summer wages that youths would be earning would count against family income and, therefore, reduce their TANF benefits.

## **SERVICE MODELS**

**Jeanne Bellotti:** Once enrolled in the program, there were typically three ways that services were provided. Some sites offered very little beyond the actual work experience, placing someone in a job. But most of them did offer some sort of work readiness training and that ranged in intensity from just a few hours to activities all summer long. That was really to give some basic skills, expose youth to careers and prepare them for the summer jobs that they were going to begin. Then some sites also offered academic services and this was typically just to a subset of their youth, not all of them, and most often it was some sort of occupational skills training that piggybacked on the job that they had during the summer.

## **EMPLOYER INVOLVEMENT**

**Jeanne Bellotti:** Employer involvement was clearly critical to this initiative since so many youth were coming in the door and recruitment of employers began very early on before youth were actually enrolled. The sites did target private, public and non-profit sector employers, although there were some sites that had concerns about enrolling private employers because they were essentially subsidizing employees in private companies with public dollars. There were some mixed views on that. Employers were generally screened for suitability, either through employer applications or a workforce development employee going out and doing a worksite visit or having signed agreements where it actually laid out the responsibilities of the employer with that youth employee.

## **COMMON INDUSTRIES FOR SUMMER WORK**

**Jeanne Bellotti:** I wanted to just give you a quick idea of what kinds of jobs these youth had. This is from our first study of the 2009 ARRA WIA program and the most common industries that we saw were medical and health, public services, parks and recreation, and education or childcare. Although they really did run the gamut, we had some really unique and interesting employment opportunities out there as well.

## **COMMON TASKS PERFORMED BY YOUTH**

**Jeanne Bellotti:** Then the common tasks that youth performed, as you might imagine, in many cases were entry-level positions, but in some cases were much more advanced, particularly those older youths that had a significant work history. But the most common we found were administrative or clerical duties, park reclamation and outdoor maintenance, some janitorial and indoor maintenance, and then construction, recycling, and childcare, senior care and camp counseling.

## **YOUTH TRANSITIONS TO NEW OPPORTUNITIES**

**Jeanne Bellotti:** Then the last thing I wanted to talk about very quickly before I turn it over to the next speaker was youth transitions to new opportunities, so what happened when summer ended. We found that in these two studies, most of the youth did return to school in the fall and many of them were high school students, and some did go back to post-secondary. Many of the sites did have an emphasis on trying to connect these youth with post-secondary opportunities oftentimes through community colleges. Some of

them could receive WIA youth or adult services through their year-round program, however, there were waiting lists and so this excess demand limited the number of youth that could go that route. Then obviously, some sought permanent jobs. We did say here that every single site that we went to, at least a portion of their youth were getting permanent jobs, oftentimes again these older youth. But the sites were worried that the economy would limit the number that could keep their jobs and, as I mentioned, with many going back to school, some of them were not looking to continue in their jobs. Unfortunately, our two studies did not continue to follow or track these youth beyond the summer months so we're uncertain of what happened to them in the long run. That's an area where I do think additional research would be interesting and needed.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**Jeanne Bellotti:** The two reports, if you're interested in more details, are on the Mathematica website and I'm certainly available beyond the questions in this webinar. If anyone would like to contact me, my email address is there as well. Thank you.

**Damon Waters:** Thank you, Jeanne. Now we're going to turn it over to John Wilcox, the Executive Director for Corporate Voices for Working Families. John?

## **CORPORATE VOICES FOR WORKING FAMILIES: IMPROVING THE LIVES OF WORKING FAMILIES**

**John Wilcox:** All right, thanks very much and thanks for those remarks, Jeanne, really appreciate it and we look forward to the findings from this past summer's Summer Youth Employment experience. As the introduction said, I'm John Wilcox and I'm the Executive Director of Corporate Voices for Working Families. I'll be talking mostly from a business perspective about what we've learned about successful partnerships between businesses and non-profits, and service providers and government agencies. My goal will be to share what's working from a business perspective. In other words, why business would engage with summer job programs, why business would engage with programs that build pathways for young people to either further work or to education, both in broad strokes and in terms of the practical strategies it takes from where we sit to make cross sector partnerships productive.

## **ABOUT CORPORATE VOICES**

**John Wilcox:** Let me first say a word or two about Corporate Voices to give you an idea of who we are and why we come to the table. We're a coalition of 50 or so, mostly very large firms. If you added up all our companies' net revenues, we would exceed more than \$2 trillion. Our companies employ more than six million employees across all 50 states.

## **PARTNER COMPANIES**

**John Wilcox:** I think you see from the list on the next slide, almost all our partner companies are big brand, Fortune 500 companies. They all have some skin in the game in terms of their public presence and the images that they stand for. They also represent themselves as leading the business community in terms both the private business policies which affect working families and the business community's response to public policy questions. We're non-profit and non-partisan and we really do two things. The first is that we're a platform for our companies to speak from, whether it's in terms of shaping public policy or leading private business policy, and we're also a learning community. Our companies spend as much time learning from what each other is doing in terms of their programs and initiatives that affect their workers and their workers' families than they do anything else. At the core, Corporate Voices believes that business and working families and communities only really succeed when everybody prospers. Our companies are committed to their bottom-line, as well they should be, but they also believe that the competitiveness of American business is tied to the quality and skills of our workforce, and that's really what brings us to this table. Before I get into the summer jobs and to three examples of how companies are more deeply connecting with Summer Jobs Initiatives and with employment of TANF eligible populations in general, let me say a word or two about the broad picture because it's our sense that knowing where business is coming

from is critical to making a sustainable and sustaining relationship with employers. At the end of the day, private employers and private jobs far outstrip the number of government and public sector jobs. So if we're to build a system that works for the sheer numbers of young people that are in need of jobs and in need of pathways to sustaining careers, from where we sit, figuring out how to work with private business is critical to that end goal.

## EMPLOYERS AND JOBS

**John Wilcox:** So not to put too fine a point on it but the big picture is pretty grim. Everyone is aware of the overall unemployment rate; it just dipped below 8%. The full unemployment rate is more like 15% if you count everybody that isn't working as much as they want to be. There's a contradiction buried in those numbers and that's one that we hear at Corporate Voices every day, and that's that employers say they can't find qualified workers. There's a big skills gap between what employers say they need in terms of entry-level worker skills and the skills that entry-level worker applicants bring to their first day on the job. Employers in study after study are saying that the new entrants to the workforce are challenged for the initial demands of work. For example, a recent Manpower study said that 46% of executives say that the talent gap is holding them back. They aren't making significant moves in terms of their businesses growing and expanding because they can't find the workers they need. Corporate Voices' own research backs this up. We did a survey, a research project a couple of years ago called "*Are They Really Ready to Work,*" which really asked employers to quantify the skills that are there or not there in their entry-level employees. What they came back with was that a majority of incoming workers don't have especially the soft skills, and by soft skills I mean professionalism and work ethic, oral and written communications, teamwork collaboration. There's a caveat here and the caveat is that a full and (inaudible) discussion of employers and the skill gap and employers' need for skilled workers wouldn't be complete unless we acknowledged the fact that the employment landscape itself has changed. Twenty years ago when I was initially applying to some jobs, it was an in-person interview process. You would send in a resume, you'd get to talk to somebody, it would work out or it wouldn't. Now when a young person applies, that's a couple of steps down the road. The first thing you do when you apply to a big company is you fill out a form that's probably on a computer. If you go into a Home Depot, for example, there's a kiosk right there that they'll sit you down at and you'll fill out this form. It's the same with every large employer. Now Peter Cappelli has a new book out in which he discusses in some detail the impact of employers doing all they can to assemble as many candidates for any particular job before they actually make hiring decisions. Almost certainly one of the impacts of that technology has been that employers' bar for what they think is the minimum number of skills that are acceptable has gone up. The real risk that we run in terms of thinking about TANF eligible populations and folks who have historically fallen under the Summer Jobs Programs is that that bar is getting set far too high for them ever to qualify for. So one of our goals at Corporate Voices is to figure out ways to connect employers to these populations, to demonstrate for employers the ways in which these populations meet their business needs, and so to try to ensure that those relationships go beyond just a couple of weeks one summer and are, in fact, sustaining relationships, especially between the employers and the service providers and government agencies who can operate as significant bottom-line business benefits as they supply the talent needs of these companies.

**John Wilcox:** There are some hopeful thoughts buried in the grim, big picture. One is that employers are certain that the skill levels with their workers do increase with further education. Employers are doing much of that education themselves. It's well-known in employer circles, but perhaps less well-known outside, but employer investment in education and training of employees is, in fact, the largest education effort in the country. It far outstrips, for example, our collective investment in two-year and four-year colleges. Employers will continue to do that but employers also rely on the education system to produce qualified candidates for them to get into their training systems and programs. From an employer perspective, many employers have grave concerns about the ability of the current education system to continue to provide the number of educated and trained entry-level candidates they need.

## WHAT IS WORKING?

**John Wilcox:** So what is working? Let me describe three models which we found are working from an employer perspective. I want to describe these both so you get an idea of what is working in terms of the

actual jobs that people are taking, but also what's working from an employer perspective, because we are certain if there are these three that we have identified, there's certainly many more out there or many more potential ones. From that perspective, from the perspective of building relationships between TANF oriented service agencies and private sector employers, it's the models themselves that are important. If these models work, there are other similar models that will certainly work in your situations.

## WHAT IS WORKING – DIRECT SUPPORT

**John Wilcox:** Let me first describe a model that CVS Caremark and other companies like PG&E and Johns Hopkins Hospital have used to great effect, and that's really direct support for their workers' employment. CVS Caremark, for example, uses the Work Opportunity Tax Credits to subsidize new employees who are working in their Pathways to Pharmacy initiative. This is an initiative that takes young, entry-level employees, puts them in a training program in regional training centers that are run by CVS with cooperation from the WIA system. What comes out the other end are trained pharmacy techs several rungs up the employment ladder towards a sustainable employment. CVS's business needs are met both by the continual supply of qualified workers for those pharmacy tech positions but also on a bottom-line sense. In 2009, for example, CVS spent something like \$2.9 million in terms of out-of-pocket costs running the training centers, providing the training, but the folks who went through it were subsidized to the tune of \$36 million. Could CVS afford to do \$2.9 million out-of-pocket without that return? Probably not. From a business perspective, having that number appear as a positive on the bottom-line changes the dynamic within CVS from, "Hey, this is a nice thing to do to our community," or "This is a good thing to get us involved with our different community outreach programs," to "This is a fundamental, bottom-line plus. This helps our division, our company report positive quarter-after-quarter good returns that our stockholders are pleased with and our management can tout as part of their success story." That's really what's made the difference at CVS and it's also what's made the difference at PG&E and Johns Hopkins. Hopkins, for example, reports a 74% return on similar programs. Those numbers are nothing to sneeze at and recognizing that the private sector perspective will always be around their bottom-line, at the bottom-line, is critical in understanding why those drivers work for businesses in those ways.

## WHAT IS WORKING – GROW YOUR OWN

**John Wilcox:** The second model I want to talk briefly about is really a "grow your own" model, and this focuses on Verizon Wireless. Verizon had for many years a huge problem and that was that something like 80-85% of their employees are entry-level. They're the folks who are working in the stores; those are the folks who are busily working on towers, all aspects of the wireless business. The trouble that they had was they had tremendous turnover. They had over 100% turnover, meaning every employee was turning over within a given year and it was costing them, frankly, a ton of money. How did they address it? The solution they came up with was a mixed blend of tuition assistance, educational attainment, career advancement. Really Verizon Wireless decided let's invest in our employees. The results have been striking. Their turnover has dropped by half, career mobility, meaning the degree to which they are able to carry this experience within Verizon, has gone up 20%, nearly three-quarters of supervisors report better performance and there are a series of other metrics that they use internally. The critical thing to understand about Verizon is really two things. The first is that they are using and training of entry-level workers, in many cases, TANF eligible and folks from similar populations. They're using that training as a deliberate development exercise to meet one of their core needs which is entry-level workers. The second thing to recognize about the Verizon Wireless example is that they have matrixed it. They are able to tell you to the dime what each training costs and how it is a positive impact on their bottom-line. Similar to CVS and PG&E and Johns Hopkins' story about direct support, Verizon's is more from within as they grow their own future employees. The core thing to remember about both examples is that the employers are able to document why this makes sense for them in terms of their bottom-line impact.

## WHAT IS WORKING – INTEGRATED SUPPORTS

**John Wilcox:** The third example I want to point to is a bit different. This is an example that takes a look at AOL, the giant online company, and their enduring partnership with Year Up. One of the things that all of the companies that belong to Corporate Voices who hire entry-level workers report is that they really



have two problems in terms of employing, hiring and retaining entry-level workers. The first is the obvious of how do we get a good supply of qualified workers to take these entry-level positions. The second is a little less obvious and that's how do we identify folks out of that entry-level population and hire new workers who we can groom to promote to the next level. It turns out that second step is quite a bit harder for many companies. As big as the gap is between employers' expectations and many entry-level workers' skills and qualifications, there's an even bigger gap between employers' expectations for entry-level junior management and the skills and qualifications of existing front-line, entry-level workers. One solution to this problem is the Year Up model. Year Up is a non-profit. They've got operations in a number of cities now; they started in Boston a number of years ago. The model is essentially a wraparound social support model. They take young people who absolutely come from TANF eligible populations, folks who in many cases might qualify for summer jobs programs like we're discussing here today, they immerse them in a six-month internship program where they get the sort of training and soft and hard skills that they need to compete in their entry-level positions, and then that wraparound support continues over the next six months as they go through a paid internship at a partner employer. AOL is one example but there are a number of others, State Street Bank, for example, in Boston. The results have been striking. Once the yearlong Year Up experience is finished, not only are many of these young people gainfully employed and on positive tracks towards continual employment and higher education, but in many cases, they've become almost evangelical about what the program has done for them and their families. Now, the trouble with Year Up program is it's clearly an expensive proposition. Doing this for every eligible young person in the country is probably out of the question but elements of it, elements of recognizing that TANF eligible populations may need wraparound social support services when they go, not just for initial job interviews, but also as they continue to be employed, it is from where we sit from a business perspective, a critical part of the puzzle.

## TOOLS

**John Wilcox:** So let me tell about a couple of tools which exist which might be helpful. On our website you can find a series of things. The first is there's a little picture up on your screen of a document we put on a number of years ago, which is a business engagement toolkit for community-based organizations. The nominal purpose of this was to talk about CBOs that wanted to engage with business around the education pipeline, you know, the connection between K through 12 and higher education, but really what it serves as is a general purpose "how to work with business" toolkit. You'll find in it things like surveys of your local business contacts, examples of how business would approach a meeting around a partnership. We had a lot of great feedback about this. The toolkit is totally free and I would encourage anyone to go to our website and check it out. There are a number of other tools on the website which we'd also encourage you to take a look at. One is a document around "*Understanding the Needs of Your Business Partners.*" It's all about building and conducting successful business surveys, and really the core of this document is around communication with your business partners and asking each other what is it that we need to get out of this relationship. It sounds elemental but if there's one thing we had to point to after years of working with business and community partners and trying to make those relationships productive, it's that piece -- communication, the simple act of asking each other what it is that they need to get out of the relationship that is different than what you bring to it. And the final piece, the second to last piece I'd point you to is a "*Business Engagement Stakeholder Wheel.*" A question that we get from lots of community-based organizations is, "We know lots of businesses but how do I know who to go to?" This is a simple tool which lets you take a look in a systemic way at the myriad contacts that you already have in the business community and what vectors they might be interested in engaging with you on. It is, as much as anything else, a tool to help you think through the methods by which you might work with business. The last thing I'd like to mention is a toolkit which isn't up on our website but is on the Opportunity Nation website and let me give you that URL. It's [www.opportunitynation.org](http://www.opportunitynation.org). It's the "*Connecting Youth and Business Employer*" toolkit. This toolkit is part of a larger effort driven by the White House Council for Community Solutions that this past summer has been focusing on re-engaging disconnected youth throughout the country. The idea behind the toolkit is to give employers a step-by-step guide on how to work with disconnected youth with a goal towards both employing them over the short-term, but really, in the end, building a pathway for those youth to find a way to sustainable, sustaining employment and higher education. I would encourage anybody, not just businesses, to go take a look at this because it gives as good a short overview as there is out there of the perspective that business would bring to any potential

relationship between service providers or government agencies who are representative of TANF eligible young people or the Summer Jobs Program and the private sector.

**John Wilcox:** At the end of the day, Corporate Voices and its partner companies are convinced that the only sustainable way that we're going to get the numbers down, the sheer numbers of folks who are eligible for these programs that don't have jobs, into jobs and onto sustainable paths, is by productive relationships, productive partnerships between the sectors. That's why we're here and we'd be delighted to try to help anybody on the phone as they move forward to that sort of positive relationship. With that, I'd be happy to pass along to the next speaker.

**Damon Waters:** Thanks, John. We're going to turn it over now to James Chapman who is a Program Development Specialist at the Southeast Tennessee Development District, Local Workforce Investment Area Five. James?

## **MAXIMIZING WIA YOUTH FUNDS TO SUPPORT SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES**

**James Chapman:** Hello, everyone and thank you for having me and giving me the opportunity to share some information with you all today. I am James Chapman. I'm with the Southeast Tennessee Development District. A little bit about the Development District. It is made up of workforce development, economic development, community development and housing development, and it is the administrative entity for Local Workforce Investment Area Five. So I'm going to talk a little bit about what we've been doing from a local area perspective and trying to manage and maximize the WIA Youth funds to support summer employment initiatives.

## **EXPERIENCE WITH SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAMS**

**James Chapman:** Something about myself, I have a little bit of experience with Summer Youth Programs. I was a participant in 2009 and I know this was mentioned earlier but in 2009, the Summer Work Experience Program was funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act so I'm going to bring you all up to speed. With the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, in 2009, I was a participant and at the end of that summer, they hired me as a case manager to serve and deliver services to those same young people who I was in the program with the previous summer. So all the way up until 2010, I was a case manager. During that summer, we actually had a combination – the next summer, we had the combination of American Recovery Reinvestment Act funds and local program funds. So that was a very unique situation and I know that Jeanne actually made mention of that earlier, that it was a little bit of a scramble trying to figure out which participants were going to be funded by which funds and how we would deliver those services and trying to make sure that everyone stayed afloat and everyone knew what was going on. In 2011 and in 2012, I served in the position that I currently hold as a Program Manager managing the WIA Youth Program. Those ARRA funds that we had in 2009 and 2010 are depleted so now we just use our local funds that we're allocated every year. We've been trying to maximize those funds and do the best that we can with those local program funds.

## **CHANGES BY THE NUMBERS**

**James Chapman:** Just to give you all a picture of the numbers that have changed since 2009, we served 661 total participants in 2009 with 155 worksites. In 2010, we served 335 participants with 127 worksites. In 2011, 170 participants with 160 worksites. And in 2012, we served 140 participants with 56 worksites. Again, our area covers nine counties with a combination of urban and rural counties and, as you can see, each year those numbers have cut in half or almost in half since 2009. That's primarily because of those Recovery Act funds no longer being in existence.

## **MAXIMIZING FUNDS = DOING MORE WITH LESS**

**James Chapman:** Maximizing funds for us means doing more with less and it starts with the orientation with our Summer Youth Programs. We try to make sure that we put an emphasis on workplace behavior

training and that's very important. As a matter of fact, a short story about that, we conducted a budgeting workshop this past summer. One of our participants was actually able to save up enough money throughout that entire summer to buy a car. So that just goes to show some of the emphasis that we put on budgeting and appropriate dress and all of those things that have to do with workplace behavior. The thing about having our staff come in and do those types of training sessions during orientation with our participants is it's cost-effective. It doesn't cost a whole lot of money to do CPR certifications and it doesn't cost a whole lot of money to just have our staff go over workplace behavior training and teaching our young people about how to budget their money wisely so that the funds that they receive throughout the summer, they don't just blow it and they can actually receive something productive out of it.

**James Chapman:** Continuing along with our Summer Programs, when we actually get started, we have service learning opportunities with our young people and on-the-job learning opportunities with our young people. The reason why we call it on-the-job learning as opposed to on-the-job training is because the young people that we serve, all of these young people are under the age of 21 years old and some of them this will be their first time ever having employment, and so it's a learning experience for them. We were able to last year work with the American Cancer Society. If you see the picture that's on the left there, some of our young people were selling t-shirts and doing fundraisers and things of that nature and, as a result, they were able to raise \$10,000 in six weeks. All of those funds were given to the American Cancer Society. So we really were able to be in a situation where our young people could gain some real experience and learn what it's like to work and to partner with non-profit agencies and see their work go to an organization such as the American Cancer Society, which we are very thankful to have.

**James Chapman:** When we try to conclude our Summer Programs, we usually do a program luncheon. We will ask our young people to come and to wear shirts and ties and business casual dress to get them into the mindset of being around their peers and networking and they will talk about the things that they have done throughout the summertime. They'll talk about the things that they're thankful for and it's just a moment of reflection. We will bring in the worksite supervisors that we had with them throughout that summer and they will get up and say some things and share some stories. We're very thankful to be able to have our program luncheon at the end of the summertime. Another thing that we've been doing for the past two summers is our Leadership Development function. We would select a certain amount of young people and take them to Washington DC, and those young people would get a chance to see historical monuments and federal legislators and policymakers and be able to really understand a holistic approach of how everything comes together. It's a great leadership development opportunity for the young people, it's an eye-opening experience for them, and so we usually select those who do the best throughout the summertime. If they're never late and they're always on time or they go the extra mile on extra duties with their worksite supervisors, and that's just an incentive for them by going to Washington DC at the end of the summer.

## **IDENTIFYING A TARGET MARKET**

**James Chapman:** With all of the transitions that have been going on since 2009, and now that we no longer have the ARRA stimulus funds and we're only operating with our local monies, we have to identify a target market. When you're operating with your local funds, things such as suitability have to come into play because now everyone who's in our program falls under our performance measures and those performance measures, of course, help us stay afloat. So we really want to make sure that we are identifying youth who will want to receive those services that we can offer year-round as opposed to just serving a young person who may just want to come in for a summer job and then after the summer is over, our staff can't contact them and things of that nature. A lot of times we will target high school seniors between the ages of 17 to 21. Because they're at that transition age where they're getting ready to go into post-secondary education or they're getting ready to enter into the workforce, we feel like getting those people viable work experience is going to be the best. Suitability is key now because not only are our young people who are in our WIA program eligible for work experience, but they're also eligible for supportive services such as books, tools, travel assistance and things of that nature. So when they go on to occupational skills training and they need assistance with books or they need assistance with tools and things of that nature, we can be there for them on a year-round basis to continue to help them out with those things, as well as if they're needing assistance with tutoring or with leadership development opportunities.

As you know, those things are things that are in our program elements to cover under the Workforce Investment Act, so we make sure that on the front-end, our participants have a good understanding of what they're getting signed up for and all of the services that they will be eligible for.

## MARKETING THE SERVICES

**James Chapman:** Marketing the services is so important now because when things continue to change from year to year, we want to make sure that all of our partners, all of our worksites, all of the local families, the school systems, adult education, job corps, all of these people who we will work with know what's going on and it's so important. There was a lot of confusion from 2009 and 2010 and then '11 to '12 because we had to serve such smaller scales and then we had to explain to those families why we were serving less. Then we had to figure out ways to give them a better understanding and to educate them on how everybody who comes through our program is not just a summer participant but they're a year-round participant. We had to educate our worksites and let them know that yes, we may not be able to send you anybody this summer as we were the previous summer. Then, of course, our partners, working with TANF and Policy Studies Inc., which is an employment training program, to give us referrals and things of that nature so we can serve that population. It was very important to deliver a consistent message to all of our partners and all of our worksites and people in the school systems and adult education. So marketing the services has become extremely important now because we are trying to make stronger connections so when we make those connections and people are telling and delivering services on our behalf, we have to make sure that everyone knows what's going on.

## IN CONCLUSION

**James Chapman:** In conclusion, maximizing WIA funds to support summer employment initiatives takes creativity; it takes proper budgeting and effective marketing of the local youth program. Use of the WIA program funds for Summer Employment Initiatives is a local Workforce Investment Board decision and it is seen as valuable by our elected officials. Because we have seen so many positive outcomes with our Work Experience Program, just this past summer, about 30 young people gained full-time employment, even more incidents of post-secondary education and the majority of those young people are still enrolled in our program receiving support services, so we feel that this is something that's very important. We try to make sure that we do tactical budgeting on the front-end to try to set aside monies so that we can operate a summer program if funds allow us to. Then we want to make sure that our local Workforce Investment Board is fully aware of everything that's going on so that they can support us in whatever way possible.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

**James Chapman:** Here is my contact information. If anyone has any additional questions that I can't answer during this webinar, feel free to contact me or shoot me an email and I'll be in touch with you. That is it. Thank you all.

**Damon Waters:** Thank you, James. Now we're going to turn it over to Gerren Price, Program Director for the DC Department of Employment Services Office of Youth Programs. Gerren?

## MAYOR VINCENT C. GRAY'S 2012 ONE CITY SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SYEP)

**Gerren Price:** Hi everybody. This is Gerren Price, the Director of Youth Programs at the DC Department of Employment Services and I have the very difficult job of being the last presenter, I believe, to share some information here today. I know James talked a little bit about his background and I thought it was great that he participated in the SYEP. I, too, am actually an SYEP alum so summer programs are near and dear to my heart, however, I'm not going to give the year in which I participated in an effort not to disclose too much information here but it was definitely before 2009. I will say some of the things kind of unique to our programming here in the District of Columbia, which I think makes us a little bit more unique from perhaps some other cities, is that we actually for many years have had a really strong pool of local resources to tap into. So we did benefit from using some WIA money in the past and, in 2009, the

Reinvestment Recovery Act dollars as well, in 2009 and 2010 actually played a role, as well as the TANF Emergency Fund. But really in 2011 and '12, we were entirely locally funded using locally assessed tax dollars here in the District of Columbia. We have had a number of different challenges and I guess what I really would like to do is just kind of give you guys an overview of what we did this past summer, some of the changes that we've implemented and really some of the practices that we've tried to make sure that were really at the forefront of making this a meaningful experience for our employers and also for our young people, and to really ensure that they're getting the most out of their engagement with us through the program.

## **D.O.E.S. OFFICE OF YOUTH PROGRAMS**

**Gerren Price:** To give you guys a little bit of a background about the Department of Employment Services and the Office of Youth Programs as a whole; our mission is really to make sure that we're preparing District youth to be ready for work and that we're connecting them to opportunities. That includes full-time employment, educational opportunities, re-engagement with schools. We really do, in a lot of ways, kind of play the role of being a de facto re-engagement center for a lot of young people who are trying to get reconnected to school opportunities and other opportunities for them to work. We have a number of different programs that we offer. I'm not going to read through all of them but a number of our efforts are kind of focused on year-round. But you'll see that while we serve quite a number of youth on a year-round basis, it's really in the summertime that our service levels swell. We have been really fortunate to be able to serve over the past two summers upwards of 14,000 young people through the Summer Youth Employment Program. The SYEP itself actually began in 1979 under former Mayor Marion Barry and it was really at the time kind of seen as the leading pathway for young people in the District of Columbia to be connected to employment and a lot of young people actually – many employees that you'll meet actually to this day will credit the Summer Youth Program as kind of being their gateway to careers in the federal government and in the local government here in the District. So it really kind of has a strong reputation for being that driving force and connection to employment for our youth. Then we've had I think over the years a number of different challenges, some were very highly publicized. Really 2007 and 2008 was kind of the culmination of a lot of kind of mismanagement and a few poor decisions that really led to severe overspending to servicing young people who actually didn't meet the eligibility requirements, what I have kind of personally witnessed as being really a breakdown in some of the employer relationships and partnerships that had been developed over years that we're just now starting to be able to rebuild. I've been fortunate to be here with the Department of Employment Services for about two and a half years. For about a year and a half, I've been in the current capacity of Associate Director.

## **PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS IN 2012**

**Gerren Price:** I guess some of the things that we try to make sure were really key and really just enhancements in 2012 over prior years, it was mentioned before in terms of marketing and communication, and I think that that's probably one of the most critical aspects to the program. It's really making sure that everybody is aware of the application process, the dates, and the deadlines really from the employers' standpoint and also from our youth. We also really wanted to make a targeted effort to ensure that the youth application process really had some feet to it, so it wasn't just signing up and being prepared to start collecting a check, but it was really applying for the program and having to apply yourself by making sure that youth had to submit resumes, by requiring interviews for particular job positions, we host a job fair where young people are able to come and interact with employers and have an experience in terms of just figuring out what job opportunities they're interested in, and a mandatory orientation that we feel kind of covers a lot in terms of work readiness and making sure that they understand what the expectations are of them as they're walking into their summer roles. Additionally, we had a clothing drive for our young people because we had noted over in past years that a lot of our youth had major challenges just in terms of having the attire that they needed to be ready for the worksite. So we made sure that we did a lot more around helping to obtain resources and partnering with our other community-based organizations and partners throughout the District just to ensure that young people weren't ill-prepared in terms of their attire. Also, we've had a really major focus on truancy. Truancy in our high schools in DC has been at an all-time really historic high and a lot of people have said that it's contributed to just the larger issue around youth dropout and disconnection from school. So one of the things that we're looking to do in this next year's

Summer Program is actually including a truancy requirement where if somebody has been chronically truant, we now have a partnership lined up with the District of Columbia Public School System as well as the Charter School Board and the Deputy Mayor for Education's office where we are able to get real-time data on their truancy and we can use that to actually make the determination about what level of engagement young people will have in the summers. We're really looking forward to kind of expanding that and trying to reinforce positive behaviors through participation in the SYEP. The other piece that we really have tried to make a major focus of our work is trying to connect the young people who really need to be working outside of just the six-week summer internship that we have to offer through this program and looking at those youth who are the traditional definition of disconnected, who kind of fit that criteria and are not currently in school but are not working. What we've found is that of the 21,000 young people who applied to participate in our program, we had about 2,200 of them who self-identified as being not currently in school and not having work. Of that group, 406 of them also indicated that they had dropped out of school before graduating and did not currently have a GED and were not working on a GED. So just to gauge the size of a population that we're looking at, and that's really 2,000 plus young people who should be in the workforce or should be meaningfully engaged in something who really aren't, outside of this Summer Youth Program, so major challenges here.

**Gerren Price:** Also, just wanting to make sure that we improve our employer support by centralizing some workshops and kind of having opportunities for youth to gain skills. We partnered with the Bank One DC organization here in DC and also the (unclear) Corporation to offer free financial literacy training, which was a completely web-based and free program for young people throughout the city. So we had a lot of our partner employers who encouraged their youth to participate in that. Then we also had a lot more opportunities for our youth to be able to interview and to screen young people.

#### **SYEP 2012 DATA AT-A-GLANCE**

**Gerren Price:** Moving along, just a little bit of data to kind of give you a sense of the just overall size and scope of the program and some of the things that we – highlights we would have to share with you guys. We had 20,671 young people who applied for the Summer Jobs Program in 2012. More than half of these applicants came from Wards 7 and 8, and if you're familiar with DC, you would know that those are our two wards that have the highest rates of poverty. It was actually an increase in participation from Ward 8. We saw that most of our applicants were actually brand new to the program and we had some who actually were returners; 14,352 of these young people were fully certified as eligible and that means they were able to prove that they were within age and they were DC residents and they were the ones who we ultimately assigned to job positions and were considered our participants in the program. We had 484 participating employers for a total of 17,433 job positions that were available at more than 1,200 worksites throughout the city. You'll see that we have really a healthy mix I think of private employers, government employers and community-based organizations and also some schools and universities that partner with us as well. But we were really encouraged by the private sector because we saw quite an increase in their participation this year. Our total budget for FY12, and again, this is all through local funds, was \$13.5 million but what we found is that we actually ended up with just under \$2 million in surplus from this year largely due to attrition, and we'll kind of talk about that in a moment as well.

#### **PARTICIPANT ENROLLMENT**

**Gerren Price:** I don't want to go into too much detail about the breakdown of participants but this slide here just gives you a little sense of just the age groups that we're working with. You'll see that the largest population we serve is 18 to 21, but we do also serve quite a large number of younger youth. They are also – I would say we have some of the biggest challenges really identifying opportunities for youth who are in the younger age category.

#### **PARTICIPATING EMPLOYERS**

**Gerren Price:** In terms of our employers, I already talked a little bit about the breakdown, but again, we had over 484 participating employers.

## **PROGRAM DATES**

**Gerren Price:** Our program ran for six weeks from Monday, June 25, through Friday, August 3, for a total of 29 program days.

## **YOUTH APPLICATION PROCESS**

**Gerren Price:** I talked a little bit about the application process and we definitely didn't have any challenges in terms of getting young people to apply. We were very successful in getting word out to all of our community partners, to our school principals, counselors, our recreation centers and libraries, and really the day that the application became available online; we had 10,770 applications that were received. Literally within the first weekend and a day, we had over 15,000 applications. More than 1,000 young people came to visit us at our DOES Headquarter Building where we actually had a kickoff opportunity for young people to come and get assistance in completing their applications. I mentioned before that we wanted to make sure that that application process really had some significant meaningful aspects to it, so in addition to young people having to apply online, they also had to submit documentation to prove their eligibility and then, additionally, they had to submit a resume or self-profile, attend an in-person orientation session. We had our SYEP Career Exploration Fair which we actually hold during the public school spring break for young people to come in and engage with employers.

## **JOB MATCHING AND ASSIGNMENTS**

**Gerren Price:** We have set up a database that the young people can access and that our employer access, where young people can actually apply to the job opportunities that are interesting to them and they're able to search it by career category, by the type of work that's being conducted there, and can generally help to really search for opportunities that they think would be a good fit for them. Meanwhile, employers are able to log in and see the young people, their resumes, what they've applied to and are actually able to make selections as well. That actually contributes to really the major way that we end up placing young people inside their summer internships. Actually, I think that's probably the most important aspect of what we do is really the placement factor. I mean a lot of times with a large program, you know, some of the other cities around the country that have really large numbers, this is kind of the point of concern that I think a lot of people have is how do you make a large program really tailored to the individual needs of young people, and this has really been a really strong suite for us in terms of making that happen, because our young people have the opportunity to engage in the process and employers know how to engage as well. In terms of that job matching, I talked already about having that electronic database and also the Career Fair. Then we also held a number of private interview events as well, which we got a lot of positive feedback about.

## **TIME AND ATTENDANCE**

**Gerren Price:** All of our time and attendance is recorded on paper timesheets and then the employers are actually able to submit that time into an electronic payroll system. We had previously worked with contractors. We had ADP in the past that provided payroll services, but we actually were able this year to bring a lot of that operation in-house and we were able to save about \$1.2 million just by operating some of that in-house using our own systems that our IT team actually created for us.

## **PAYROLL AND HOURS**

**Gerren Price:** Additionally, just in terms of the payroll, our youngest youth are able to work 20 hours per week and our older participants who are 16 to 21 can do up to 25 hours per week. We pay the older youth the minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour and our younger youth actually receive a stipend of \$5.25 per hour. The way that we have the program structured is that our younger youth are actually receiving work readiness training and so a lot of their programs are more around work behaviors, development of skills, whereas our older youth are actually in more experienced-based opportunities with some of our government partners and private employers so they're actually gaining hands-on work experience in the field that they indicated that they're interested in.

## **PAY DATES AND PROCEDURES**

**Gerren Price:** I'm not going to go over too much around the pay dates but we had four pay periods and we actually processed all of our pay via a VISA Debit Card with Citibank.

## **PAYROLL PROBLEM RESOLUTION**

**Gerren Price:** We were able to resolve any pay problems that folks had, again, using the online system that we had created.

## **PROGRAM ATTRITION/RETENTION**

**Gerren Price:** One thing that I really wanted to talk about and has been a major challenge for us has been just the attrition of young people who participate with us. We had 14,352 participants but an attrition rate of about 22.1%. As you take a look at this graph here, you'll see that really attrition as the program kind of continued, less and less youth were continuing through and we had a really high dropout rate. What we've noticed happens a lot is that really after the first pay date, a lot of our young people drop out of the program and we do have quite a few who what we see are the ones that were less engaged kind of at the beginning of the process in terms of the application and selecting their career opportunities. They tend to be the ones that end up dropping out. But we're currently doing some more kind of individualized drawing down on why particular youth actually decided to leave the program and kind of what were some of the challenges around that.

## **PROPOSED ENHANCEMENTS FOR SYEP 2013**

**Gerren Price:** Some of the things that we're looking to do in exploring for next year, we actually have been in the process of surveying and doing focus groups with our employers and our youth as we kind of do at the end of each year just to find out what things worked and what hadn't worked. Again, we're going to be expanding involvement in that truancy campaign just to make sure that we're connecting school attendance to the SYEP eligibility and really, in a way, just to try to discourage youth from being truant from school. Additionally, we're trying to increase participant retention. We're going to introduce a participation commitment form and also conduct some exit interviews so that as youth are dropping out, we're actually capturing some of the reasons why, different factors that are playing into their decisions. We want to increase the diversity of our employers. We've been doing quite a good job I think of outreaching and rebuilding some of the connections we had in the private sector and with some of our community-based partners, but I think we still have a ways to go there. We really want to expand some of those opportunities for our disconnected youth. This year we were really fortunate to host a few hiring events with some of our partner employers and we were able to get 131 of our young people who were out of school and not currently working connected to full-time opportunities prior to the start of the Summer Youth Program. I think what we want to do is to try to set a much higher goal for that and really just see more of our young people who are applying for the program and need to be connected to work, connected to opportunities much earlier on. Then I mentioned the financial literacy that was kind of offered across the board, but what we want to try to do also is to identify other areas where we can share training opportunities and really think smart about how we can introduce other important workforce elements, such as customer service training and other opportunities. We're also considering a new wage structure and it's actually currently going before the DC Council for approval in terms of getting the legislation passed. But we really want to see a more tiered structured so that if young people are performing well and really actively engaged in the program, that we're rewarding that behavior and that participation over the course of multiple years will really result in more of a tangible benefit to those youth. So that's really all I have and I'd just be open to any questions that anyone might have for us.

**James Butler:** Thank you so much to all of our presenters. So that concludes all of our presenters for today so at this time, what we'd like to do is to invite you to submit your questions for our presenters through the WebEx system and we'll have Mike explain to you again how to ask those questions. I just wanted to remind you that if you have a question for a specific speaker or program, to be sure and specify that in your question.



## QUESTIONS

**Okay, so to start us off, if you do have any questions, in the lower, right-hand corner of your screen, there is a Question and Answer box. Please just type your question in there and I will pose those questions to the panelists. The first question we have: Have any of you had experience working with youth in foster care and what challenges have you encountered with this particular group and did you identify any specific funding sources to serve this group? Gerren, maybe we can start with you or if any of the other panelists can jump in on that question.**

**Gerren Price:** Yes, so I would say we had this past summer it was just over 200 young people who were in the foster care system who also were working in the Summer Youth Employment Program, and we have had quite a number of experiences, not just in our Summer Program, but really year-round trying to connect better to the foster care system. One of the things that we've seen quite a bit is that a lot of our youth were being transitioned out the foster care side and were really kind of coming out of that system not really prepared for the workforce and not necessarily having the school credential necessary, in terms of having the diploma or GED. So we've been trying to do a lot more through our year-round programs to really focus there, and we actually have a new partnership that's coming directly with our Child and Family Services Agency just to make sure that we're having much more earlier engagement opportunities and that we're connecting the CFSA youth who are participants in the Summer Program to internships that are closely aligned to what their interests are and just making sure that they're actually following through and gaining the experience that they need.

**Thank you, Gerren. Our next question is regarding some research on youth summer employment and violence. Are any of you aware of research stating that those who participate in summer youth programs are less involved in violence? Perhaps, Jeanne, you could start us off with that?**

**Jeanne Bellotti:** Yes, I can't say that off the top of my head I know any particular research sources. We did find a lot of anecdotal evidence in our national study that youths were off the streets and weren't getting into trouble as much as they would otherwise. We heard that both from program participants themselves as well as from the program administrators and staff members, but I can't say that I know of any research that's specifically targeted to that issue.

**John Wilcox:** This is John. The only thing I'd add to that is my vague recollection of a report from maybe a year or two ago out of DC looking at the connection between summer vacation and increased youth crime rates and debunking it. I think they called it an urban legend. I want to say it was from the DC Lawyers for Youth or somebody like that perhaps. I imagine a Google search would turn it up.

**Thank you. We have a question for Gerren, Mr. Price. Were the VISA gift cards more cost-effective for you than using paychecks, and are employees able to deposit those gift card funds into their bank account?**

**Gerren Price:** Yes, actually though I should clarify. It's not a VISA gift card but it's actually a VISA debit card, so it's a card that could be loaded with funds and can be used anywhere where VISA is accepted or at an ATM, automatic teller machine. It actually is extremely cost-effective for us and I would actually encourage anyone who's interested to look into it because, basically, it's almost at no cost for us in terms of the actual card and the mailing and issuing and the customer service aspect of it. The only real fee that's ever assessed is that if a young person is to lose and have to replace the card, there's kind of a nominal fee assessed there, and if you use one of the out of network ATMs, there's a \$1 charge for using that. I think that's kind of how the company kind of makes a lot of their money, but what we found is that they have so many in-network ATMs in our local area, that it really hasn't proved to be a problem for any of our participants. So we actually are really fortunate that it's virtually at no cost to us and it's a much more – for us at least – a very efficient and clean process in terms of making sure that youth receive the cards in-hand and that we're able to control the money really on the backend via electronic means. So if there is a pay dispute or an issue, we can have funds loaded to somebody's card literally overnight. We have had some

instances where there's been a mistake or an issue and we can literally load that money same day so the young person's able to have their funds and can access them anywhere.

**Thank you. This next question I'm going to ask James Chapman if you have any insight on this. Working with youth with disabilities?**

**James Chapman:** Yes, sure, so a lot of our youth, through my experience, have had disabilities that we work with. Of course, we do not shy away from any youth who have disabilities and we work a lot with VOC Rehab, Vocational Rehabilitation, to serve those young people. We just make sure that we intake all of the necessary information to make sure that those participants tell us which needs that they may have or particular barriers that they may have before we place them with a worksite, and then we communicate that information with the worksite supervisor so that we can get that participant a full experience.

**Thank you. Any other panelists have advice on working with youth with disabilities?**

(no response)

**The next question we have is: With funds evaporating, where do the panelists suggest looking for funding in the 2012-2013 year?**

**James Chapman:** I can answer that.

**Sure, go right ahead.**

**James Chapman:** When it comes to the summer program, I know that another one of my youth leads in the state of Tennessee has been requesting employers to provide a match, so some of those employers who we know that have been working with us from summer to summer, as opposed to just sending them the participants and us paying the full payroll for that participant, they have actually extended out the invitation for employers to provide a match. So they would pay a certain amount and then we would pay a certain amount and that still – that's become very effective for them and they've been able to maximize their funds and continue to serve the same volume that they've served in the past by allowing those employers who are able to provide matched dollars. They're not receiving the participants for 100% no cost to them, but they are still saving money and still receiving a help throughout the busy summer months.

**John Wilcox:** This is John. If I could add to that. To echo that the private sector is a clear alternative, especially as funding from federal sources continues to dry up, even though demand by all accounts is not drying up, where to get the resources to support these needed programs is clearly a really, a pertinent question. For Corporate Voices it underscores the need to better align the processes and outcomes of TANF serving programs, TANF population serving programs with the needs of business. We just mentioned the idea of a shared match. From an employer perspective, as long as those employees are productive and that works from a bottom-line perspective, there's no reason at all why a shared match couldn't work. But the critical part from an employer perspective is ensuring that the employer is getting the employees what they need and the processes aren't getting too much in the way of the bottom-line for the employer which is, at the end of the day, what they have to focus on.

**Thank you and I want to thank all of our attendees today for your great questions. As we're running short on time, we're going to conclude with one final question but we will send out all of the questions and answers to the registered attendees in the coming weeks and the webinar and transcript will be posted to the Welfare Peer TA network website. Our final question for all of the panelists is if you could conclude with just three or four keys to success for developing and maintaining successful Summer Youth Employment Programs that our attendees can take away as they think about formulating their program for next year.**

**Jeanne Bellotti:** This is Jeanne. Maybe I can just start with one from my perspective and it was the biggest challenge that I think we heard all the way around. My suggestion would be start early, which I think it's great that this seminar is happening in October because in both of our studies, that was probably

the number one challenge was that everybody was behind the eight ball because they didn't hear about federal funding and guidance until fairly late into the winter and spring. So I do think planning ahead and working through your funding sources, your employer recruitment strategy, and your youth recruitment strategy will be key to getting things off the ground.

**John Wilcox:** This is John. In a similar vein, I'd like to encourage anyone who's listening to think of employers, particularly private sector employers, beyond just the three months of the Summer Employment Program and think of them instead in terms of an enduring relationship. That's the kind of backbone work which would start in September and October of the preceding year and it really would continue year-round. The payoff that you get for that is an engaged employer base. And especially given shrinking budgets and increasing emphasis on measurable outcomes that, we think, could be a win for everybody.

**James Chapman:** This is James Chapman and I would say planning, budgeting and a partnership in order to maximize your resources to support your Summer Programs are going to be essential. If you have those people who you know can do certain things that you can't and you can partner with them to serve your participants, then you're going to be better off.

**Gerren Price:** Hi and this is Gerren. I would say really for us, two things that have been huge and I think everyone – I echo what everyone said in terms of starting early and effective planning and proper engagement, but I think really focusing in on the job matching process of how young people are actually placed with employers for their internship. I just think it's such a critical point and I've found that the young people who are able to like actively engage in that process of selecting where they're going and kind of understanding what they're going to learn and the expectations, they're the ones who tend to successfully complete those programs and the employers have a much better experience when they have a young person who's actively interested in really being there for the summer. The other thing I would say, our success with a lot of private employers has been not necessarily trying to impose our model and our restrictions on them, but just trying to be more flexible and working around what some of their needs are. We have been more flexible around some of our dates and if they need to do a certain training prior to starting, we really try to work with them around any of their kind of individual needs that they might have just to make sure that we're being really sensitive to what types of needs they have and we're not losing that partnership.

**Damon Waters:** Thank you, Lynn, and to our speakers for that Q&A. So we're actually going to turn this over to James Butler to close us out.

James Butler: Thank you, Damon. First of all, I just would like to thank all of you, the listeners who called in to participate in today's webinar. And also to thank our presenters for taking time out of your schedules to share your experience on Summer Youth Employment and Career Pathways. So thank you, Jeanne, John, James and Gerren. A special thank you to ICF International for all that they do in assisting in putting these webinars together. We hope that this webinar was beneficial to you today as you explore ways to better serve and support your youth through Summer Youth Employment Programs and, again, we encourage each of you to visit the registration website so that you can access a host of important resources related to creating and sustaining Summer Youth Employment Programs gathered from our partners in the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation and from the Welfare Peer TA network. A transcript and audio recording of today's webinar will be made available for everyone within the coming weeks so be sure and fill out the evaluation. As you close out today, it will pop up as you exit the webinar. And on behalf of the Office of Family Assistance, I do thank you and have a pleasant day.

(End of audio.)