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Opportunity Youth Background

Opportunity youth (OY) are 16 to 24-year-olds who are not engaged in school or work. Many of these youth face various barriers preventing them from achieving their life goals. Some of these barriers stem from being a part of government systems that are difficult to maneuver. These include foster care involvement, homelessness, lack of citizenship, juvenile/criminal justice system involvement, low income and/or young parents.

In Denver alone, there are an estimated 8,800 OY, which represents about 13 percent of the population, contributing to a large, untapped talent pool for the business community. This number goes up to 32,000 when you look at the whole Denver metro region. When OY are not engaged in education or employment, OY collectively cost 2011 economic analysis quantified that untapped potential in terms of both direct taxpayer burden and broader social cost. Research found that each opportunity youth represents an immediate taxpayer burden of $13,900 per year and an immediate social burden of $37,450 per year in 2011 dollars. Those costs compound over time.¹ OY are vital to contributing to the Colorado economy. By engaging them in education, training and work (while providing the critical supports needed for success), we can break the cycle of poverty and help them design their own unique path to success and keep our economy strong.

Denver Opportunity Youth Initiative

Summary

A critical need exists to connect opportunity youth to education and training opportunities leading to sustainable employment, and there are too few pathways currently established to effectively make that link for disconnected youth in Denver. Opportunity youth lack access to internships or work experience, mentoring or support services that would enable them to transition successfully from education into employment and to engage meaningfully with the workforce.

The Denver Opportunity Youth Initiative (DOYI) aims to fill gaps in Denver’s youth workforce system. This system is ripe for meaningful collective impact work that engages a network of service providers, educators and workforce connectors to establish clear pathways to education and employment for disconnected youth.

DOYI is a collaborative community strategy to build and deepen these needed educational and career pathways for OY. The initiative, led by the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce, is a collaborative effort across local foundations, public/private entities, Denver Public Schools, community-based organizations, businesses, workforce centers and postsecondary institutions (all with different, yet crucial, expertise and contributions to help OY successfully achieve their life goals).
Acknowledgements

Together, each partner brings to the table an important aspect of completing this work. Guided by proven principles of using data to guide decisions and assess impact, leveraging funding and collaborating across sectors, DOYI can begin to move the meter for opportunity youth.

**DOYI STEERING COMMITTEE**

Members include representatives from the following organizations: CareeWise Colorado, Colorado Department of Education, Colorado Department of Higher Education, Colorado Public Television Channel 12 (CPT 12), Colorado Workforce Development Coalition, Colorado Youth for a Change, Community College of Denver, Denver Office of Children’s Affairs, Denver Workforce Services, Denver Public Schools, Goodwill Denver, Mile High United Way (MHUW), Mile High Youth Corp and Park Hill Collective Impact.

**CURRENT FUNDERS**

Past funders include: Donnell-Kay Foundation, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, The Colorado Health Foundation, Denver Post Season to Share/DaVita.

*Thank you all for your support! We are able to do this important work because of you.*
Foreword

Denver has a population of close to 9000 OY who face a wide variety of challenges to re-engaging in education or the workforce. The challenges these youth have faced are many, but none too great. These challenges include having limited English proficiency, being pregnant or parenting, being former foster youth, having disabilities and having been involved with the judicial system.

There are many things our local systems can do to improve the outcomes for OY and DOY is working with these partners.

- Colorado is the 7th-lowest in the United States for high school completion, at 79%.
- 11% of first-generation college students who go to college earn a college degree.

With 74 percent of jobs in Colorado will requiring a post-secondary education by 2020, and only 56 percent of Coloradans having one, employers are expressing their concern to find talent to fill in-demand positions. As a result, Denver was in need of a collective effort to improve education and employment outcomes for the city’s OY population. DOY members knew the city needed dynamic approaches that were not ‘one size fits all’ and included public and private partnerships, research, community voice, strategic planning and new pilots that could start to move the needle on the problems Denver’s OY were facing.

This report summarizes the experiences of DOY and its pilots over the 2017-2018 program year. It highlights what we learned and makes recommendations for institutional and systemic changes and concludes with what’s next for the initiative.

The work of DOY and partners, an improving economy, and the new focus on this population have resulted in a decrease in the number of opportunity youth in Denver, but much work still needs to be done. The needs of those who remain disconnected are even more complex. Our greatest opportunity lies in the success of these individuals, and we must continue to find holistic approaches to help them realize their potential.
Emily Griffith GED Plus Pilot Programs

BACKGROUND

In collaboration with Denver Public Schools (DPS), DOYI funds a full-time position through Goodwill Industries that serves as a navigator and career coach providing needed social and wraparound supports and workforce readiness support. This coach provides direct support to students at Emily Griffith High School and those enrolled in its GED program. This program also encourages concurrent enrollment, allowing students to earn college credit while they study for their GED.

This project has changed over the past three years. It began as a class format where students would go through Goodwill’s curriculum. This year, the class time is minimal, and interventions are focused one-on-one meetings.

RESULTS

95 students
27 students placed into employment
4 internships

From September 2017–September 2018.

Additionally this year, DOYI:

- Facilitated two college visits to Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver) and the Community College of Denver (CCD)
- Assisted 17 students with FAFSA completion
- Hosted one resource fair per semester involving:
  - 10 post-secondary institutions
  - 9 community resources
  - 8 employers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EG GED Plus</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EG High School</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NEXT STEPS

- This pilot is in the third year. DOYI will work closely with DPS to evaluate pilot learnings and make modifications based on the new DOYI strategic plan.

lessons learned

››› GED programs are relatively new to Denver and to all of Colorado. DOYI, Goodwill and DPS have adjusted their roles and programming after learning about students’ needs increases.

››› The time spent with students is vital to relationship building. When strong relationships are built, students share and are willing to identify the support they need.

››› Eligibility requirements and insufficient staff are barriers to accessing resources for the students.

››› Referrals need to be streamlined.

››› In-school youth need employers willing to offer flexible schedules.
Zero Dropouts

BACKGROUND

Starting in 2014, DOYI established a system of career coaching and service navigation able to support OY regardless of documentation, age, education level or background. This career navigator pilot was specifically designed to meet OY where they are, both on the education ladder and in the communities where they reside. Denver OY has been able to leverage and influence the network of providers, both nonprofit and government, to adopt the community-based career navigator model in order to strengthen the connections among OY, education and employment.

The Career Navigator found success in recruiting OY through outreach to the community, partner organizations, K-12 schools, postsecondary institutions, nonprofit partners and, most importantly, word of mouth from the youth themselves. The career navigator model helps connect partners and is able to bridge the gap and serve OY who may not have otherwise been eligible for services as a result of documentation or eligibility nuances.

LESSONS LEARNED

>>> There is a need to implement a strong data collection system, such as a customer relationship management (CRM) tool (e.g., Salesforce) to document participants and outcomes.

>>> Youth must be encouraged to refer their friends and family.

>>> Partners who traditionally were only able to provide one specific service or function for OY were grateful to have additional support and a contact who could help meet with, advise, enroll and connect OY to appropriate resources outside of their own programs.

>>> Youth appreciate the fact that the navigator can meet them in the community instead of having to show up at an office.
RESULTS

Figure 1: Age Ranges of Participants

- Under 18: 23%
- Ages 18-20: 6%
- Ages 21-24: 28%
- Age 25: 43%

From September 2017-September 2018.

Top Four Referral Sources:
1. Youth who have already had experience with the career coach
2. Denver Opportunity Youth Initiative program staff
3. Denver Center for 21st Century Learning
4. Colorado High School Charter

To understand the barriers the Denver OY population faces, DOYI keeps close track of what youth request in terms of barrier removal, as well as the services to which they are referred.

Figure 2: PY17-18 Barrier Removal Assistance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wraparound/Barrier Removal</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)/immigration status, legal assistance (justice system), domestic violence, benefits program enrollment)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3: PY17-18 Education Pursuits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Outcomes</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in GED or high school program</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persisting in degree/certification/training program</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4: Zero Dropouts Career Interests from September 2017-September 2018

- Retail Services (customer service, hospitality) 28%
- Trades (construction, electrical, manufacturing, automotive) 29%
- Health Care 8%
- Information Technology (IT) 9%
- Human Services, Education 9%
- Arts 5%
- Other 5%
- Unsure, Exploring 7%

Figure 5: Work Readiness Assistance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Readiness Assistance</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Résumé, cover letter</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview attained</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mock interview</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dress for Success</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6: Employment Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Outcomes</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retention (in progress)</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job attained</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work experience/training</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay increase</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NEXT STEPS**

- As DOYI continues to develop more pathways and pilots with other organizations, this position becomes critical to make sure all youth that go through a pathway or pilot program are connected to a career navigator.
- This navigator will assist with the juvenile justice pilot, the MSU Denver re-engagement pilot and other pilots as needed.
Denver Youth Leadership Academy

BACKGROUND

The leadership academy is a 10-week program for young adults to develop their civic engagement, advocacy and leadership skills. Young Invincibles (YI) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to elevating the voices of young adults in the political process. YI has partnered with DOYI to host the inaugural Denver Youth Leadership Academy. Twenty-one young adults from across the Denver metro area participated in this year’s program, and 15 successfully completed it. Participants had the opportunity to learn about current education and workforce issues in Colorado and share their opinions with government agencies, nonprofits and businesses interested in working with young adults.

RESULTS

Data from the 2018 Cohort

*Figure 7: Participant Demographics by Gender*

- 75% Female
- 25% Male

What was the most valuable part of the leadership academy?

Our young leaders answered...

- “Seeing and learning that there are other youth that care about social change.”
- “Learning about different events and opportunities I can become a part of.”
- “Definitely the mental health discussion.”
- “The network of young leaders I was able to connect with.”
LESSONS LEARNED

>>> Most young people want to be civically engaged! We received over 50 applicants for the Leadership Academy with minimal recruitment efforts outside of social media and email.

>>> It is crucial that programs like this exist to help talented opportunity youth turn their ideas into action.

>>> Convening the academy over the summer break made it easier for youth to attend.

>>> A listserv should be created so participants can reach out to each other and to the adults.

>>> Opportunities for engagement must be ready for the graduates.

NEXT STEPS

DOYI will work with the second cohort of the Denver Youth Leadership Academy in the summer of 2019. Based on input from the youth, the following changes will be made:

- More time to dive into topics
- A networking event
- Increased diversity of speakers: “A lot of our guests were white men/women. It’s hard to see myself doing this work if I don’t see many people that look like me doing the work.”
- Financial skills training
- A group outing/advocacy project

denveroy.org // 2017-2018 YEAR-END REPORT // p13
Health Care Pre-Apprenticeship Program

BACKGROUND

The Denver Opportunity Youth Initiative, in partnership with the Greater Metro Denver Health Care Partnership, Adams County Workforce Center, Denver Workforce Services, Arapahoe Douglas Workforce Center and the Central Colorado Area Health Education Center (AHEC) provided a unique health care learning opportunity for opportunity youth, a Health Care Pre-Apprenticeship Program. This is the second year of the regional program. Read this Business Altitude article for more about the program.

This pilot leveraged local workforce dollars and made connections with employers. This cohort model works well to provide both training and exposure for youth, as well as provide a cohort of youth ready for entry-level jobs in the health care field.

RESULTS

35 participants

100% completion rate

81% employed or in postsecondary training in healthcare field

From June 2017-October 2018

LESSONS LEARNED

>>> Short-term industry-specific training involving soft skills and hands-on experience is a catalyst to help opportunity youth tap into high demand and high growth careers.

>>> Public and private partnerships are necessary for success by providing flexible funding for training and work experience at no cost to the participants.

>>> Having it over the summer break made it easier for youth to attend.

>>> Pay participants a stipend! Many young people quit their jobs or cut hours at work to participate in this training and are often supporting families and children. Stipends help them provide for their basic needs while they are in training. DOYI provided a stipend of $100 per week, conditional on attendance.

>>> Industry must be involved! Field trips to employer partners and guest speakers are a great way for employers to meet the participants in a non-formal manner and the participants to decide if the employer is the right fit for them. Students found field trips most rewarding.

>>> Phase 2—Seek funding from employers to sustain training over time and increase employer buy-in.
Figure 11: Health Care Pre-Apprenticeship Demographics and Results from June 2017–October 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants &amp; Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total (#)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American/Black</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers upon entry</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropped out of high school</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster care</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homelessness</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower income</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-training placement</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working or placed in the health care field</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing education in health care field</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NEXT STEPS**

- The Health Care Pre-Apprenticeship Program will move to Denver Health for the 2019-20 program year. Denver Health will be introducing emergency medical technician (EMT) training along with other professional development opportunities taught by Denver Health staff.

- Centura Health will be recruiting for 40 medical assistant apprentices over the next year, with other hospitals joining in and adopting the apprenticeship model. As a result, we see the Health Care Pre-Apprenticeship Program continuing to grow and adjust its curriculum based on employer needs.

**LESSONS LEARNED CONTINUED**

- Recruitment must begin early, four to six months prior to start date. Cohorts in June work well, as seniors graduate and may not have a college or career plan for after high school.

- Pictures, videos and testimonials provide good marketing for continued recruitment and funding.

- It is crucial that programs like this exist to help talented opportunity youth turn their ideas into action.

- Make sure to have opportunities for engagement ready for the graduates.
Metropolitan State University of Denver Pilot

BACKGROUND

MSU Denver Roadways does a great job of mentoring and supporting students while they are in college, but MSU Denver had never undertaken a re-engagement project like this one.

Prior to the fall 2018 semester, MSU Denver and DOYI partnered on a pilot to invite MSU Denver students that were between the ages of 16-24 and had dropped out with a GPA of 2.5 or above and less than $200 debt.

Starting in late June, academic navigators for Roadways reached out to over 700 inactive students who previously attended MSU Denver, encouraging them to return to college. Outreach included postcard mailings, phone calls, emails and individual visits.

RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligible students</th>
<th>731</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>30</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>enrolled for fall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interested for spring 2019 semester</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>referred to DOYI navigators</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2018 Cohort

The return on this investment for MSU Denver is what’s most impressive. Revenue from fall tuition and fees for 17 students equals over $51,000.

Due to the success of this pilot, MSU Denver will be investing $40,000 in expanding this pilot and hiring a long-term staff to assist with re-engagement.

NEXT STEPS

- DOYI will continue this partnership to re-engage former MSU Denver students for the 2019-20 academic year.
- MSU Denver will experiment with outreach via social media such as Facebook and LinkedIn.
- MSU Denver and DOYI will partner to raise additional funds, as well as integrate with other programs within MSU Denver.

lessons Learned

- Multiple avenues of outreach (email, phone and social media) work well, but the number reached is lower than expected.
- Only 7 of the 17 returned for the spring semester. These students likely needed a higher level of support once re-entering MSU Denver.
- 3 of the 30 students that intended to enroll in spring did so. It likely would have been beneficial to have someone reach out to the 30 students that had shown interest in re-enrolling for the spring.
State Youth Council (SYC)

**BACKGROUND**
The State Youth Council (SYC)—a subcommittee of the Education and Training Steering Committee within the Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC)—has been convened to focus on initiatives surrounding young adults in Colorado and how they can best receive training, education and workforce assistance through the workforce development system to compete within and contribute to the economy. The mission of the SYC is to influence policy and practice at both the state and local levels in the development and implementation of pathways to economic success for Colorado businesses and young adults. See 2018-19 Strategic Plan.

**RESULTS**
Data below reflect the work of 2017-18

- 15 young leaders from around the state have been recruited to serve on the SYC and are compensated for their time
- 24 young leaders participated in a SYC hosted a facilitation training for 24 young leaders from across the state in partnership with Mile High Youth Corps and University of Colorado at Denver
- Five young leaders were funded to attend the following conferences:
  - The Opportunity Youth United’s National Community Action Team convening in Washington, D.C., where the group started developing a plan to move forward recommendations to improve education and employment outcomes for youth
  - The National Association of Workforce Development Professionals Youth Symposium conference in Chicago
- Three SYC young leaders were featured in Young Invincible’s blog post focused on higher education

**NEXT STEPS**

- Think Big Conference
  - The SYC will release a request for applications and award innovation grants to local youth-serving organizations and youth around the state for projects focused on youth voice, awareness building of subpopulations of youth, and business engagement and career pathways for youth.
- The SYC developed a plan to start requesting business sponsorships to support young leaders on the Council.


**LESSONS LEARNED**

- Already existing youth councils or advocacy groups should be leveraged to recruit young adults.
- The Youth Leadership Academy was a great way to groom, train and recruit potential SYC young leaders.
- Youth and adult partnerships have been proven as a successful way of moving work forward.
- Council members’ skills and assets should be accessed, and they should be encouraged to fill roles specific to these skills and assets.
- An onboarding and training process needs to be developed for new young leaders and adult council members.
- Young leaders should be trained and given the opportunity to lead meetings.
- Having several youth engaged has given the young leaders confidence to speak up and lead their peers.
- It is helpful to develop monthly meetings for young leaders outside of regularly scheduled council meetings to build rapport and keep things moving.
- Unique and creative ways can be found to pay young people for their participation.
Career Navigator Toolkit

BACKGROUND

The Career Navigator Toolkit is a collection of practices and tips from career navigators across Colorado to help professionals get up to speed and navigate all aspects of employment for young people. See the full toolkit at denveroy.org/career-navigator-toolkit. Topics include the following:

- What is a career navigator?
- Engagement strategies for opportunity youth
- How to set up the first meeting and follow up
- Developing a career plan
- Preparing for work
- Retention and upskilling
- Education and work-based learning
- Supportive services

RESULTS

1,370 views of the Career Navigator Toolkit website in the first three months

50 participants in Career Navigator training, including one in-person and one online training opportunity

From September 2018-December 2018.

LESSONS LEARNED

>>> Denver OY learned that this is a high-transition position, so with the help of navigators from across the metro region, we developed a career navigator toolkit to onboard new navigators and get them helping youth in an efficient manner as quickly as possible.

>>> Training sessions were well received, but more time is needed for training.

>>> Youth must be involved in training sessions. Career navigators highly valued youth voices during the in-person training.

>>> There was a surprising amount of interest from school counselors.

denveroy.org // 2017-2018 YEAR-END REPORT // p19
A suggestion for version 2.0 is to include videos and training modules.

The Career Exploration Tools section of the toolkit was identified as most valued in survey results collected at the in-person training.

The First Meeting and Follow-up section was identified as least relevant in the survey results.

Participants identified the most important skills and traits of a youth career navigator as the following:

- Patience, good listener
- Confident and competent
- Flexible, knowledgeable, adaptable
- Motivator and resourceful
- Emotionally supportive
- Empathetic, open-minded, caring, well rounded, fun, engaging
- Mentor, enthusiastic, growth mindset
- Networker, empathic communication, cultural competency
- Open and honest
- Genuine, compassionate

**NEXT STEPS**

- Raise money for version 2.0
- Continue trainings
DOYI Data Report

BACKGROUND

In November 2018, DOYI released a data report on the opportunity youth population in Denver that also showed how the state is constricted by the lack of robust data. To create strong and grounded policy, Colorado must work to understand the opportunity youth population. Programs across Colorado are working to close the economic and social divides by developing career pathway programs where opportunity youth are the focus and not an afterthought.

This report is the first attempt in Denver to look at the data for this population in order to understand what they experience, with the goal of ultimately making data-driven decisions with schools, government, businesses and nonprofits that are charged with moving opportunity youth into better education and the jobs our economy needs filled.

The original intent of this report was to provide data regarding high school completion, post-secondary attainment and employment data across the subpopulations identified nationally as more likely to be opportunity youth:

- Youth in foster care
- Youth who are experiencing homelessness
- Youth who are immigrants or refugees
- Youth involved in the juvenile justice system
- Youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning (LGBTQ)
- Youth who are pregnant or parenting
- Youth with disabilities

RESULTS

Did you know that:

- 61% of OY have a high school diploma or greater?
- The greatest barrier to employment based on WIOA data is being pregnant or parenting?
- 21% of foster care youth have experienced homelessness in the past 2 years (at age 19)?

Read the whole report – Denver Opportunity Youth Population Data Report

NEXT STEPS

- Engage partners in sharing data.
- Implement initiative data dashboard.
- Use the data collected to influence programming across the initiative
Univision Public Service Announcement (PSA)

BACKGROUND
Univision partnered with DOYI to produce and air a public service announcement inviting young people back to school to finish their studies or learn about nontraditional options. The pilot was a huge success, with over 130 callers, and it was a great example of partnership. Colorado Youth for a Change (CYC) was able to receive the calls through its bilingual navigator. If the callers did not fit the CYC criteria, they worked with Goodwill, ResCare and Denver Public Schools-Family and Community Engagement to provide seamless referrals. Thanks to Univision, which donated all video editing and airtime, zero cost was associated with this effort.

RESULTS
Data below reflect the Summer 2018 PSA results

133 total calls Callers were referred to

- Colorado Youth for a Change
- Center for Family Opportunity
- ResCare
- Zero Dropouts
- Denver Public Schools (DPS) Choice
- Metropolitan State University of Denver
- Goodwill
- Adams 12

NEXT STEPS
- If Univision and DOYI partners are willing, DOYI would like to repeat this pilot in the summer of 2019.

LESSEONS LEARNED
>>> A collaborative approach was useful
>>> In this instance, the referrals were based on the strengths of each organization, primarily dependent on age and whether the caller was seeking a high school diploma or equivalent or postsecondary education.
Manager Mentor Training

BACKGROUND
DOYI has seen more and more businesses raising their hands to be part of developing the talent pipeline through the many workforce-related programs. The Manager Mentor Training was designed to educate front-line managers who are committed to hosting young people on how to help them be successful in work environments. The two main topics covered were positive youth development and step-by-step suggestions for mentoring youth at work.

The training included the below topics:
- What it takes to create a culture where youth can contribute and be successful
- The qualities of a good mentor for youth
- What is available to businesses from the organizations placing the youth

RESULTS
- 9 people participated in the program

NEXT STEPS
- DOYI will conduct another training in 2019.

LESSONS LEARNED
- Webinar or online format could have increased employer participation.
- This training could be brought into already existing industry meeting groups (i.e., sector partnership, chamber committee meetings, board meetings, etc.).
Digital Connection Grant

BACKGROUND

The Denver Opportunity Youth Initiative received funding from the Aspen Institute Forum for Youth Connectivity to offer young adults free cellphones or tablets with one-year plans, or help pay for their current plan. Youth submitted formal applications and had to go through internet safety training.

Thanks to AT&T Wireless and Otterbox, DOYI was able to provide iPhones, iPads and the cases to protect them.

Many young adults who received devices submitted videos on how the device has helped them in school or work.

RESULTS

22 cellphones and tablets were distributed

4 youth were helped with their cellphone plans

“I have an old smartphone that doesn’t have all the apps I need for school and can’t afford to get a new one. My phone doesn’t work very well and it dies often. I need more power to be able to look for jobs and get texts.”

“If I had a cellphone it would help me to keep in contact with my son’s day care. I can make all our appointments, keep me in contact with family and my school. I attend school almost every day and I’m really motivated to graduate from high school and go to college. I would be the first one in my family to go to college.”

NEXT STEPS

Unfortunately, this was a one-time, one-year grant of funding from the Aspen Institute. Because of the high cost of the plans this project will not continue.
Opportunity Youth Media Training

BACKGROUND

As part of the funding from the Aspen Institute that also funded the cellphones, tablets and plans, DOYI was also able to offer youth digital media training in collaboration with Colorado Public Television Channel 12.

Confidence to tell your story in a digital format in an online world provides another access point for opportunity youth to express themselves and access to jobs with an “alternative” résumé.

Two different trainings were conducted. The first one centered on teaching youth the art of storytelling and the use of professional videography equipment to ultimately come out with a short video describing their strengths. The second training was adapted to the input that was received. This one was shorter and focused on telling one’s story using phones to record and edit. Check out the video!

RESULTS

7

youth trained and
four videos produced,
like Jasmine’s story

Check out Jasmine’s video at https://youtu.be/O2CHviAn3k8. Also, Sly shares his thoughts about the definition of work through his video, which can be found at https://youtu.be/xUxW01GEho.

NEXT STEPS

- This program will not continue because it was a part of the one-time, one-year funding from the Aspen Institute.

From September 2017-September 2018

denveroy.org // 2017-2018 YEAR-END REPORT // p25

LESSONS LEARNED

- More clarity is needed on training content
- Recruitment was an issue for this program
The Launch Event

BACKGROUND

A multitude of organizations are recruiting and speaking to the business community; however, very few are working together in a coordinated and systematic way. To increase collaboration and create a system that increases work-based learning opportunities throughout the metro Denver area, the Launch Event was created. The Launch Event was a collaborative event that brought together community partners and businesses to educate the business community on how to create or improve work-based learning opportunities within their organizations, identify funding sources available for labor costs and worker’s compensation, access these resources and employ best practices in retention and upskilling.

RESULTS

Data below reflect the 2017 Launch Event participation

40 employer participants
12 resource tables

A business toolkit was also created through resources provided by the following participating community partners:

- Colorado Department of Education and Veteran’s Services, Office of Apprenticeship, CareerWise, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Corrections, Governor’s Summer Job Hunt, Mile High Youth Corps, Mile High United Way, Work Opportunity Tax Credit, WorkLife Partnership, and Metro Area Workforce Centers

Event resources included:

- Event Flyer
- Sample Employer Interest Form
- Project Plan
- Business Toolkit

NEXT STEPS

- DOYI will explore having another Launch Event.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Talking time should be limited to 20-30 minutes and time allowed instead for employers to network with resources.
- Map of room could be provided, with bullet points on what each organization can provide.
- A location with parking should be secured.
- Post-event activities should be scheduled.
- Breakout stand-up sessions would allow businesses to walk around and learn about different topics, e.g., internships, diversity, etc.
Social Media

BACKGROUND
In an age of fast-moving information and technology, Denver OY recognizes social media as a necessary tool to reach youth and share relevant information and opportunities.

RESULTS
In 2017, we had a great year with outreach. We learned a lot about types of posts and videos that our young people liked.

- **75 posts**
- **5 events hosted**
- **47 photos uploaded**
- **4 videos posted**

Moving into 2018, we had a strong base and network from the success of 2017 and came in with new ideas to build a steady following, increasing from 113 to 285 followers. With that came more videos, opportunities, motivational posts and events promoted through our platform.

- **113 followers in 2017**
- **285 followers in 2018**

NEXT STEPS
- DOYI will keep Facebook and is looking into adding Instagram to the social media communication strategy.

Project Highlight: #voiceofthecity Podcast

Our podcast, Voice of the City, is a platform for DOYI and @itsmesimba, a local YouTuber, actor and youth leader. The podcast aims to inform and inspire the audience throughout each episode. Topics have included public speaking, why creativity is important and the importance of voting and youth engagement. We closed 2018 with six episodes and had great success and were well received with our youth. Over 105 people listened in across a variety of platforms, including: iOS (91), Anchor (51), iTunes, desktop version (9), Spotify (5) and Google Podcasts (3).
Newsletter Communications

BACKGROUND

Upcoming Events Calendar: This communication goes out on the first of the month and is used to communicate as many training or hiring and recruitment events as possible. The target audience is metro area career coaches.

The DOYI newsletter “The Connector” is a quarterly communication that spotlights youth and employers as well as current work of DOYI and partners. The target audience is the broad community and local partners.

RESULTS

Upcoming Event Calendar

- Increased mailing list by 53 percent
- Sent out over 219 opportunities

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The Connector Newsletter

- Increased mailing list by 53 percent
- Sent two newsletters in FY17-18 in February and September

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NEXT STEPS

- Both newsletters will continue

To be included in the newsletters email - Jenny.Smith@denverchamber.org
LOOKING AHEAD
DOYI Strategic Plan 2021

In fall of 2018, the steering committee of DOYI got together to develop a strategic plan that will take the initiative through 2021.

The next chapter of DOYI’s work aims to elevate youth voices and reduce the local OY population by leveraging data, piloting highly targeted programs and improving the functionality of the Initiative. We will improve our collective impact through a focus on outcomes, and effective and regular communication.

**2021 Goal.** By 2021, increase OY engagement in education or the workforce by 25 percent.

DOYI will get there by:

**#1—Elevating Youth Voice**
Strategy: Provide youth with opportunities and training to become leaders and advocates in their communities in order to make the Initiative’s work more relevant and widely understood.

**#2—Leveraging Data**
Strategy: Share and leverage partner data and metrics to increase action and awareness of the OY population.

**#3—Deploying Pilot Programs**
Strategy: Develop and deploy pilot programs that integrate education and employment pathways, leverage learnings from prior pilots and specifically engage youth justice and foster youth populations.

**#4—Evolving the Structure of the Initiative**
Strategy: Develop a diverse membership with clearly defined roles, where members share opportunities and collaborate on action/pilots/policy.

For more information at the Denver Opportunity Youth Initiative, visit our website [denveroy.org](http://denveroy.org) or contact [Lorena Zimmer@denverchamber.org](mailto:Lorena.Zimmer@denverchamber.org)