



2016 Program Report Card: Work Readiness Supports

Achieving Youth Results (AYR) Goal:

Our community will provide children, youth and families with healthy, safe, and thriving environments

Program: Youth Employment Services (YES)

Agency: Ithaca Youth Bureau

CLIENTS:

Youth ages 14-20

PARTNERS:

Ithaca City School District , parents, worksite partners

RESULTS BASED ACCOUNTABILITY HEADLINE PERFORMANCE MEASURES

HOW MUCH:

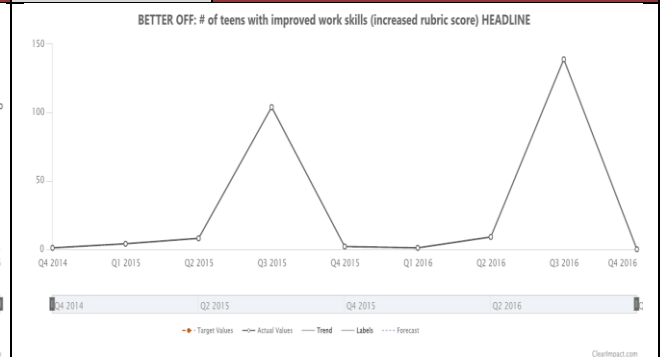
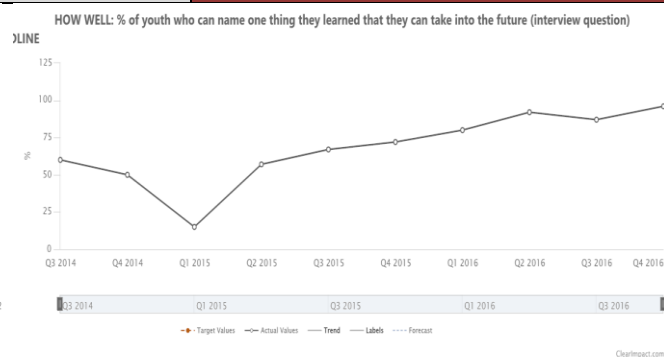
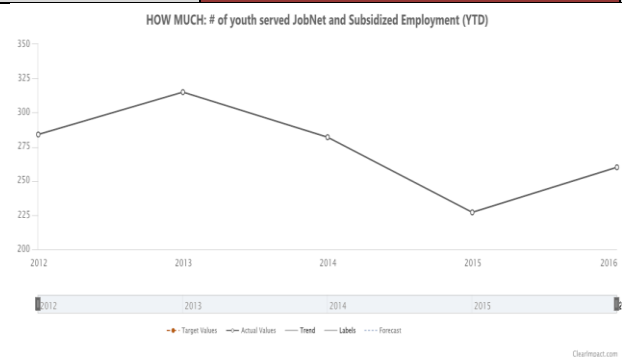
260 youth

HOW WELL:

100%

BETTER OFF:

92%



THE STORY BEHIND THE DATA

GRAPH 1: # of youth served- Youth Employment Service provides work-readiness and employment opportunities for teens in Tompkins County between the ages of 14 and 20.

GRAPH 2: % of youth who can name one thing they learned that they can take into the future (interview question) - Youth begin working with Youth Employment Service by filling out an application, followed by an Interview and Skills Assessment. The interview is conducted in a one-on-one setting, and includes common job interview questions, as well as questions regarding a teen's work interest, level of experience, availability, and transportation. Staff provide feedback on the teen's application and interview skills, highlighting both areas of strength and areas to improve. At the conclusion of the interview, staff ask teens if they can name something they learned about applying and interviewing for jobs through the YES application and interview. This question is asked of every teen who enrolls in our program. The percentage of youth who can name one thing they learned from YES that they can take into the future has been steadily increasing.

GRAPH 3: % of teens with improved work skills (increased rubric score)- All teens who participate in YES receive an initial Skills Assessment after their interview. Teens who participate in subsidized employment have two additional evaluations completed during their work experience, both in the middle and at the end of the placement. The evaluations include assessments both by the teen and the worksite supervisor, as well as the YES staff caseworker. The focus of these evaluations is a rubric, which includes nine assessment criteria (such as Attendance and Punctuality, Quality of Work, Communication Skills, etc.) and was designed to align with the NYS Career Development and Occupational Studies Commencement Credential. The percentage of teens who improve their work skills appears volatile on a longitudinal chart, primarily because the sample size varies widely.

AGENCY ACTION PLAN to “Turn the Curve”

2016 Action Plan

- YES will work in 2017 to increase our presence at ICSD by taking the following actions: secure an afterschool space for offering workshops and outreach after the school day, target Family Groups at LACS and AVID classrooms at IHS with eligible teens and offer them workshops as a way of demonstrating our services, speak to sports teams and extracurricular groups about YES.
- YES will implement an “Interview Scheduled” card (given when a teen turns in their application) to remind teens of their interviews and reduce the number of teens who fill out an application but never finish the enrollment process.
- YES will experiment with hosting outreach in alternate locations, adding more interactive elements to our outreach stations, and tabling at community and school events.
- YES will formalize the practice of framing the interview by telling youth beforehand that they will be asked to name something they learned.
- YES will create a follow-up question to ask teens who say they didn’t learn anything new, to provoke reflection for teens and to help us learn how we might better serve them.
- YES will implement a written feedback form that staff will complete at the conclusion of the interview, which will give teens clear feedback on both their application and interview, and will be something they can keep and reference in the future.
- YES will continue to invest in training our staff how to score appropriately using the Employability Profile, and work to create a scoring guidebook to make this training even clearer in 2017. We will also expand this training to worksite supervisors, to refresh them on the purpose and importance of the assessment.
- Our *Better Off* performance measure only applies to teens in subsidized work experiences, which lends itself to volatility in the data and an incomplete measure of how well *all* of our youth participants are doing. That is why, while we will continue to track this measure, we would like to propose adding a performance measure in 2017 that will track the percentage of teens who meet the objective of their experience with YES. We feel that this measure would be a better indicator of how well our teens are doing overall, across our various program components. Ultimately, we would want this new measure to replace the current one as a headline measure for our program

2015 Action Plan

- **Implemented in beginning of Q2] Create a JobNet Update Form that allows us to collect RBA-related information without requiring teens to participate in an interview every time they become active in our program.** This form worked well in 2015, helping us to collect RBA information on existing teens without creating the extra hurdle of filling out a fresh application. *At this point in 2016, it is becoming unnecessary because we already have RBA information on all of our active teens for the last two years. We may choose to retire this form in 2017.*
- **Consistency in training new staff conducting interviews on the importance of asking the RBA-related questions.** Issues with staff consistency in the interview have all but disappeared. We hired two new staff in 2016 and they were trained using the RBA-adjusted interview from the beginning. *Everything that we implemented in our 2015 action plan for this measure was successful.*
- **We will reinstate the paper rubric, creating an additional step in between collecting the evaluation and entering the rubric in the database, which will require more personal evaluation from YES caseworkers to determine rubric scores.** Reinstating the paper rubric was helpful in making the distinction that YES caseworkers are ultimately responsible for synthesizing the evaluations of teens and supervisors with their own observations to make a final score. Without it, caseworkers tended to base their evaluations solely on the supervisor’s assessment, which often led to inconsistencies, either because different supervisors filled out the evaluations for the same team, or because supervisors do not have the depth of knowledge of the Employability Profile set forth by NYS CDOS to make scores that truly reflect the teen’s skill level. *The paper rubric proved to be a successful intermediary step for caseworkers and we will continue to use it moving forward.*
- **We will spend more time training seasonal caseworkers to help them understand their role in the scoring process and provide them with more resources to help them form sound scores for participants on their caseloads that reflect the Employability Profile requirements and align with year-round staff.** The time spent training caseworkers on the evaluation led to much more consistent rubric scores than in years past. In the past, rubrics completed by year round staff were much lower in general than those completed by seasonal caseworkers. This could lead in odd jumps in a teen’s score, based not improvement or decline in their performance, but rather on who was scoring them. This discrepancy seems to be disappearing with the addition of the paper rubric and the scoring training we’ve implemented. *In 2017, we hope to expand this by creating a clear scoring guidebook that includes common indicators for each score level in all of the assessment criteria.*