



2020 Summer Programming Supporting Youth Through the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) is a critical program that provides summer employment to 75,000 young people ages 14-24 in New York City. SYEP accomplishes two essential functions for young people:

1. Acts as an economic stimulus for low-income families and communities; and
2. Offers important educational benefits, improving GPAs and retention for participants the following semester and preventing summer learning loss.

The Campaign for Summer Jobs (CSJ) was disappointed by New York City's decision to completely eliminate SYEP for Summer 2020 without any alternative plans in place to engage and support young people this summer. Many families rely on SYEP income during regular summers, and the impact of COVID-19 has been hardest in low-income communities where many youth participate in SYEP. Providers often hear from SYEP participants that they use their wages to buy food since they're out of school for the summer, pay for school supplies for themselves and siblings in the fall, and generally to help out their households with bills. Furthermore, with NYC schools being closed for three months before the summer, it is reasonable to expect spring learning loss that will compound the traditional effects of summer learning loss.

Without coordinated alternative programming delivered safely via remote mechanisms, these effects are likely to be amplified. It is crucial that the City engage in a planning process with providers, advocates, youth development experts, and young people themselves to ensure that there are appropriate plans and programs in place for Summer 2020, particularly in light of the Mayor's recent announcement that schools would be closed and distance learning would be in place for the rest of the academic year.

This document compiles ideas and suggestions generated by SYEP providers for workforce-focused programming alternatives for Summer 2020. It is not an exhaustive list, but rather ideas to begin a dialogue and collaborative planning process for Summer 2020.

Process Recommendations:

- Leverage existing DOE software to do secure remote/online recruitment for programming with wages or stipends, as enrollment in SYEP requires the collection of sensitive information like Social Security Numbers
 - Providers pointed to vendors, like Submittable, who have the technology to do this for a small fee, should the City be unable to build something on their own
- Consider launching programs in mid-July to give providers/DYCD ramp-up time
- Consider prioritizing teens/young people from communities hardest-hit by COVID-19 for priority access to SYEP

Activity Suggestions:

Providers were clear that, given how difficult it is to get Personal Protective Equipment, it would be inappropriate to place young people in frontline, essential positions while social distancing measures are in effect. If public health experts say that it is safe to relax social distancing requirements by July, internship opportunities that could be ramped up quickly include:

- Counsellors at Afterschool and Youth Services programs run by nonprofit organizations;
- Support at cultural institutions;
- Positions with small business partners; and
- Customer service jobs.

Should we remain under social distancing guidelines for the entire summer, providers had many ideas for remote learning options. In addition to Hats and Ladders--the application that was being developed for launch in Summer 2020 that offered portions of orientation as well as online career-exposure components--providers suggested the below remote opportunities:

- The younger-youth (YY) model could be brought entirely online fairly easily given the way it operates. Providers felt confident that it would take limited time/resources to adapt curricula to be remote.
- For older-youth (OY), providers felt it was important to distinguish the opportunities and give them a more robust experience, such as:
 - Occupational training resulting in an industry-recognized credential – can be built on existing curricula for other DYCD- or philanthropically-funded programs, such as:
 - National Retail Federation
 - Food Protection/food handlers
 - Microsoft Office User Specialist
 - Google Suites
 - CDL test prep
 - DOE's list of credentials
 - Potential partnership w/ CUNY for credits
 - Career exploration supports
 - Socially-distant placements in summer camp with nonprofit providers who have been running REC sites and have experience with safe practices
 - Remote/virtual job “placement”
 - Helping businesses troubleshoot problems/issues they're having,

- Working in teams to help community businesses plan re-launches when social distancing is lifted
- Helping with social media plans for businesses, etc.
- Call centers/remote check-in on vulnerable community members/seniors, including 311

The Campaign for Summer Jobs is ready to plan with the City to ensure that the Summer is safe and productive for everyone. For questions, please reach out to J.T. Falcone, policy analyst at United Neighborhood Houses, at jfalcone@unhny.org.