Helping Youth Experiencing Homelessness Succeed in Employment: Practices, Programs, and Policies

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Welcome! Meet the Presenters:

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We are dedicated to ending chronic unemployment and poverty.

Our National Center on Employment & Homelessness works to ensure that employment in quality jobs is a key element in preventing and ending homelessness.
The Toolkit:
An Overview

Opportunity
Youth
Employment
Toolkit
Opportunity Youth Employment Toolkit: Why, What, & How

Momentum in policy, practice, funding, and research.

Research brief, policy brief, & case studies.

Lit review and lots of interviews with practitioners & researchers.
The Policy Context: A (Slightly) Deeper Dive
The Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act & Youth Experiencing Homelessness

75 percent of funds must be used to serve out-of-school youth (OSY).

Raises OSY service eligibility age from 21 to 24 years old.

Amends performance measures.

Focus on “earn and learn” employment and education strategies for youth.
Positive Impacts of Youth Employment

- Increase family income.
- Increase future employment & earnings.
- Foster health & positive relationships.
- Support transitions to education.
- Decrease justice involvement.
- Decrease costs to society.
#1: Target & Reach Youth Who Can Benefit Most

Target intensive services to youth facing the greatest barriers & reach out to youth who don’t seek services on their own.
#2: Design **Program Engagement** to Align with the **Realities** of Serving Youth

Engage with youth for as long as it takes.

Offer multiple chances to fail and try again.
#3: Address the **Unique Developmental Needs** of Opportunity Youth

Meet youth “where they are.”

Apply **therapeutic concepts** to employment services:

- Change theory
- Motivational Interviewing
- Trauma-informed Care
- Positive Youth Development
#4: Offer **paid employment opportunities**

Real work for real pay delivers experience and skills and can be a powerful engagement tool.
#5: Build **trusting** relationships

Trusting relationships are critical and take time to build, especially with youth who have experienced trauma.
#6: Educate employers

Address preconceptions and equip employers to facilitate workplace success.
And since you’re still here:

Awesome new website!

www.heartlandalliance.org/nationalinitiatives
With so many (free!) toolkits

- WIOA Planning & Implementation Toolkit
- Opportunity Youth Employment Toolkit
- Employer Engagement Toolkit
- Working To End Homelessness Toolkit
- Transitional Jobs Programs Toolkit
- TANF and Transitional Jobs Toolkit

www.heartlandalliance.org/nationalinitiatives
Lighting the way for young moms!
WHO WE ARE

Bright Endeavors is a social enterprise in Chicago that provides transformative workforce tools to young moms by manufacturing and selling soy candles.
WHO WE SERVE

Along with our umbrella agency New Moms, we serve two generations – young moms (ages 16-24) and their children.

- 100% are pregnant and/or parenting
- 80% have dropped out of school
- Average 4\textsuperscript{th} grade reading level
- 100% live in extreme poverty
- 70% are victims of abuse
WRAP-AROUND SERVICES

New Moms offers 3 programs:

• Transitional housing at New Moms
• Home visiting, parent support & doula
• Workforce development through Bright Endeavors
OUTREACH & INTAKE

• Targeted, multi-lingual outreach
• Screen for parenting status & age only
• New Moms’ wraparound services are in-house referral sources
• Rolling admission
• Job training begins every 6 weeks
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: 3 PHASES

Classroom

Bright Endeavors

Job Placement & Retention

Individualized Coaching, Mentorship, and Retention
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: CLASSROOM

Five weeks of cohort-based classroom training:

- Orientation one week before class begins
- Day 1 paired with Supportive Employment Coach
- Tangible incentives
- Career assessments & goal setting
- Build professional portfolios
- Age-appropriate soft skills training
- Weekly employer, college outings, guest speakers
- Financial literacy
- Final week: drug test & interview at Bright Endeavors

Classroom → Bright Endeavors → Job Placement & Retention
Eight weeks of *paid* training manufacturing soy candles:

- Immediate on-the-job feedback & coaching
- Pre- and post-shift meetings
- Daily candle production quotas
- Customer site visits
- Mid-point and final evaluations
- Train incoming cohorts
- Frequent job search with Job Developer
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: EMPLOYMENT

Employment focus throughout all phases:

- Job Developer builds employer partners
- Frequent job fairs & career outings
- On-site corporate volunteer groups
- Weekly open computer lab sessions
- Cultivated weekly Job Leads packet
- Celebrate every job placement
- Job Club held 3x/weekly for graduates

Plus ongoing retention services & program re-entry!
PROGRAM DESIGN FOR OPPORTUNITY YOUTH

- Screen in
- Utilize Stages of Change, motivational interviewing & trauma-informed care
- Program schedule aligns with daycare
- Promote tangible incentives: money, items
- Daily rituals define clear organizational values
- Celebrate achievement publicly
- “Program pause” & dismissal re-entry policy
- Retention services for up to 2 years
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

• Provide intensive coaching, goal setting, and on-the-job training
  → 39 permanent job placements this year, 87% above min wage

• Increase of confidence, professionalism and responsibility in participants
  → 64% retained employment for at least one year

• Empower adolescent mothers for economic independence
  → Average income increases 3.7 times (from $318 to $1,204/month)
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Group Activity (part one)
Group Activity (part one)

Q – How does your barrier impact young people getting and keeping employment?

1. Unstable Housing
2. Lack of Family Supports
3. Justice System Involvement
4. Child Welfare System Involvement
5. Gang Affiliation
6. Drug and/or Alcohol Addiction
7. Low Educational Attainment
8. Lack of Affordable Child Care
9. Discriminatory Hiring Practices
10. Physical and/or Mental Health
Group Activity (part two)
Group Activity (part two)

Q – How would you overcome this barrier? What do we do?

1. Unstable Housing
2. Lack of Family Supports
3. Justice System Involvement
4. Child Welfare System Involvement
5. Gang Affiliation
6. Drug and/or Alcohol Addiction
7. Low Educational Attainment
8. Lack of Affordable Child Care
9. Discriminatory Hiring Practices
10. Physical and/or Mental Health
Questions...?
Thank you – please be in touch!

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