

## Program Overview

*Advance & Earn* provides a continuum of education and employment services from literacy instruction through advanced training and job placement or college enrollment to opportunity youth (youth who are not working and not in school) ages 16-24. Through the program's three connected tracks, Pre-HSE, HSE Prep and Advanced Training, the program provides literacy instruction, HSE test preparation, employer-recognized training, credentials and certifications, and paid internships supported by comprehensive support services tailored to individual needs all designed to help young people on a track toward career success.

## Quick Stats

Agency	Start Date	FY21 Number Served	FY21 Budget	FY22 Target Number Served	FY22 Budget
DYCD ACS YMI	February 2020	881	\$13,020,000 (\$9,500,000 NYC Opportunity; \$3,520,000 YMI)	900	\$13,020,000 (\$9,500,000 NYC Opportunity; \$3,520,000 YMI)

## Context

While the overall number of opportunity youth has been decreasing over the past few years, more than one in eight New Yorkers ages 16 to 24 were out of school and out of work in 2018 (116,998 of 884,886). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Aspen Institute's Opportunity Youth Forum estimates that anywhere from 259,000 (27%) to 324,000 (34%) 16 to 24 year-olds across New York City are out of school and out of work.<sup>i</sup> The cost of such a figure is great. A 2012 study estimated the full yearly cost for society of out-of-school and/or out-of-work youth to be more than \$58,000<sup>ii</sup> including lost earnings, lower economic growth and tax revenues, and higher spending on government services. This cost compounds over a lifetime to as much as \$1 million for an individual who is chronically out-of-school and/or out-of-work between the ages of 16 and 24 (about half of all opportunity youth nationally at the time of the analysis).

Qualitative assessments show that today's opportunity youth are more likely to need comprehensive support to overcome barriers such as skills deficiencies, mental health challenges, housing instability, lack of childcare, and histories of trauma and poverty.<sup>iii</sup>

## Research & Evidence

The Advance & Earn Program model represents a major redesign of the DYCD Young Adult Literacy Program (YAL) and Intern and Earn (Formerly Young Adult Internship Program). A growing body of evidence — including from NYC Opportunity evaluations of [Intern & Earn](#) and the [Young Adult Literacy](#) programs — suggests that robust programming and integrated educational and workforce development services may be effective ways to improve outcomes for opportunity youth. Best practices have emerged among programs that seek to help opportunity youth reconnect to school or work. These include longer program timelines and more robust funding; flexible and holistic approaches to service delivery; emphasis on both school- and work-based career paths; and openness to collaborating with partner organizations on complementary services. Research indicates that a greater emphasis on career exploration and work readiness in school programming can help keep young adults engaged and ease their transition from classroom to workplace.

The design of Advance & Earn builds off of this research and also incorporates significant stakeholder feedback. In partnership with the New York City Workforce Professionals Training Institute, DYCD and NYC Opportunity held a stakeholder convening, and conducted focus groups and surveys to engage service providers, youth, researchers, and others to complement this existing evidence, assess the challenges facing today's opportunity youth, identify best practices, and ultimately inform the development of a new model that aims to create a seamless pathway for participants.

## Program Description

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A&E includes robust educational and training services combined with comprehensive wraparound supports, in addition to job readiness and placement services. Through an innovative career pathways approach, this new model accommodates opportunity youth at different stages of skill development and provides them with positive short-term outcomes as well as the skills and tools they need to reach their own goals and achieve long-term career success. The program is currently offered at six sites across the City, serving all five boroughs.

Advance & Earn provides the following three program components.

**Pre-High School Equivalency (HSE):** Provides basic skills instruction (reading, writing, math) at the fourth-eighth grade reading levels, incorporating work-based themes. In addition, youth focus on college and career exploration and work readiness.

**HSE Preparation:** Prepares participants for the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) exam. Classroom instruction incorporates work-based themes and supports youth in acquiring foundational employment skills. This component also includes credential instruction, college and career exploration, financial literacy, tutoring, and work-readiness instruction, before placement in paid internships.

**Advanced Training:** Provides sector-focused, hard skills training leading to industry-based and employer-recognized skills or credentials for youth who have achieved high school diplomas or HSE credentials. During training, youth are also placed in internships and continue to explore college and career options, receive support services, and receive job placement or postsecondary placement support. Sectors/occupations currently targeted include:

- Masonry and Landscaping
- Certified Nurse's Aide & EKG/Phlebotomy Technician
- Culinary Arts
- Digital Marketing
- Commercial Driver's License (CDL)
- Direct Support Professional (DSP)

## Target Population

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All program tracks seek to serve out-of-school/ out-of work young adults, referred to as “opportunity youth”.

- **Pre-HSE:** Age 16-24 years at fourth- to eighth-grade reading levels without a high school diploma or HSE credential
- **HSE Preparation:** Age 16-24, at ninth-grade or higher reading levels without high school diplomas or HSE credential
- **Advanced Training:** 18-24 year olds who possess a high school diploma or HSE credential.

## Expected Outcomes

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### **Pre-HSE Instruction**

- 50% of enrolled participants advance in both reading and math, annually
- Of those participants who reach ninth-grade level, 80% will be placed in an HSE program, employment, or advanced training per cohort\*

### **HSE Preparation**

- 50% of enrolled participants will attain the HSE annually
- 85% of enrolled participants complete at least one basic industry credential per cohort
- Of participants who attain HSE, 80% will be placed in employment, advanced training, or post-secondary education\*
- Of participants who did not attain HSE, 80% will be placed in employment or will continue in HSE Prep program\*

\* *Note: For youth placed in employment, advanced training, or postsecondary education outside of the provider organization, evidence of those placements must be reported to DYCD within 30 days after the end of the 90-day follow-up period.*

### **Advanced Training**

- 70% of participants who start advanced training attain certification per cohort
- 70% percent of participants who attain certification either enroll in post-secondary education or attain employment in the sector of the advanced training per cohort\*

## Performance Data

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	FY21	FY22
	Actual	Target
Number of Participants Served	881	900
HSE Attainment	16%	50%
Total Credential Attainment (In Program)	39%	70%

## Evaluation

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NYC Opportunity will be conducting an implementation evaluation of Advance and Earn in FY 2023 and an outcomes evaluation in FY 2024.

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<sup>i</sup> Estimating Community-Level Numbers of Opportunity Youth for May 2020: New York City. Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions (internal communication). July 20, 2020.

<sup>ii</sup> Clive R. Belfield, Henry M. Levin, and Rachel Rosen, "The Economic Value of Opportunity Youth." 2012. Online at: [https://aspencommunitysolutions.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Economic\\_Value\\_of\\_Opportunity\\_Youth\\_Report.pdf](https://aspencommunitysolutions.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Economic_Value_of_Opportunity_Youth_Report.pdf) Original figure is \$51,350 in 2011 dollars; we have converted to 2019 dollars.

<sup>iii</sup> Lazar Treschan and Irene Lew, "Barriers to Entry: Fewer Out-of-School, Out-of-Work Young Adults, as Warning Signs Emerge," Community Service Society and JobsFirstNYC, March 2018.