



U.S. Department of Labor Summer Jobs and Beyond: Career Pathways for Youth

Promise Zone YES!

<http://capitalworkforce.org/youth-resources/youth-programming/career-pathways-youth/>
Capital Workforce Partners, Inc.

Period of Performance: May 2016 – June 2018



in-school youth served



out-of-school youth served



participants attained a Measurable Skill Gain



participants received work experience



participants placed in unsubsidized employment



participants placed in post-secondary education/training

Location: City of Hartford in North Hartford, Connecticut

Overview of the Program: The Capital Workforce Partners, Inc., *Promise Zone YES!* project supports a career pathway model with best and promising practices for in-school and out-of-school youth. Capital Workforce Partners, Inc., *Promise Zone YES!* offers youth 280 hours of career competency training, peer mentoring, academic and job coaching, and internships that lead to an industry-recognized credential and placement into post-secondary education and/or employment.

Grantee partners include: City of Hartford, Hartford Public Schools, Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, Metro Hartford Alliance for Careers in Health, Advanced Manufacturing Employer Partnership, and Blue Hills Civic Association.

Overall, Capital Workforce Partners, Inc., *Promise Zone YES!* and Blue Hills Civic Association successful recruited 256 youth with 94 percent attaining employment or placement into post-secondary education. Out-of-school participants were active in career competency training and internships. In-school youth mainly pursued the National Retail Federation’s Customer Service and Sales Certification, with 144 of 162 youth, or 89 percent, completing this certification.

Program Highlights:

- **Recruitment Strategies**
Capital Workforce Partners, Inc., *Promise Zone YES!* recruits in-school and out-of-school youth for their four-phased model that integrates education, youth development, health and social services, workforce development, and youth leadership development services. The program recruited in-school and out-of-school youth through promoting an online application through the Hartford Public schools. This

promotion also included no-cost radio, TV and billboards to reach both in-school and out-of-school youth.

- ***Partnership Strategies***

Capital Workforce Partners, Inc., *Promise Zone YES!* partnered with the City of Hartford, Hartford Public Schools, Connecticut State Colleges & Universities, and two employer partnerships- MetroHartford Alliances for Careers in Health Care and Advanced Manufacturing Employer Partnerships to act as the advisory board to the program. The Advisory Board was key in identifying internships, partnerships with postsecondary program opportunities, and leverage of knowledge, assets and resources. The program found it is critical to leverage partners to provide necessary services to youth including disability resources, mental health, and housing. In addition, staff learned to communicate early and often with youth, parents, and partners to support program success.

- ***Work Experience Activities***

Capital Workforce Partners, Inc., *Promise Zone YES!* adopted an innovative approach to the traditional work experience/internship that is genuinely student-driven/student-focused. Using best and most promising strategies of both in-school youth and out-of-school youth program, which includes career competency system, a tier system of youth workforce development, and a youth employment specialist staff model. Capital Workforce Partners, Inc., *Promise Zone YES!* crafted a four tier system that integrates education, youth development, health, and social services, workforce development, and youth leadership development services, delivered sequentially. Tier I includes paid work experiences and career exploration; Tier II includes work & learn and career competencies; Tier III includes enhanced skills training and subsidized employment; and Tier IV includes college and career connections. This tier system created work experience through career exploration, community service, hands-on career competency training, and internships that can lead to post-secondary education and/or unsubsidized employment. Each participant is assigned a *Youth Navigator* who will help them navigate through this tier system. This model helps strengthen connections to the appropriate educational and supportive services and match to appropriate paid work experiences.

- ***Leveraging Support (outside of WIOA resources, monetary/in-kind)***

Capital Workforce Partners, Inc., *Promise Zone YES!* found collaboration with community organizations and volunteers to increase opportunities for their career development programming. The Advisory Committee accessed committed industry sector collaborative partnerships to undertake and coordinate engagement activities, assuring that specific employers in the targeted sectors were recruited and their talent needs were met. Other leveraged support included the web-based tool, Naviance that supported the students' career exploration. In addition, supportive services such as transportation and childcare need and work supplies were leveraged through other sources.

- ***Community Impact***

Capital Workforce Partners, Inc., *Promise Zone YES!* has several system-level partnerships and initiatives in the North Hartford Promise Zone to help strengthen its future workforce. The program has leveraged knowledge, assets, and resources leading to system change. This includes work with the Hartford Opportunity Youth Collaborative (HOYC), a cross-sector, collective impact collaborative formed to engage organizations and systems throughout the city to address the needs of Opportunity Youth. In order to reconnect youth to success, HOYC is implementing a comprehensive, system-level plan that integrates education, youth development, and workforce development systems to decrease the number of Hartford youth disconnected from education and employment.