**Workforce 3One**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**How Can ETA Assist Grantees in Serving Disconnected Youth Under WIOA?: Discovery Session**

**Tuesday, December 1, 2015**

*Transcript by*

*Noble Transcription Services*

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ERIC BELLINO: And if we're ready to begin, I'll turn it over to Leo Miller.

LEO MILLER: Thank you, everybody. There's some stuff going on that I really don't understand, but it's all happening right here.

So we've got a group of probably about 60 people joining us from the web land and we're going to try and integrate what's happening here in the room with what's happening out there. You're going to see a lot of stuff happen over here. There's chatting, there's – (inaudible) – there's going to be people asking questions. I want to just start – I really can't ask this in web land. So for the folks in the room, I just want to see, do we have folks here from D.C., the District of Columbia present with us?

Do you see Delaware? Delaware is here. Thank you. Maryland? All right. Maryland's in the room. Pennsylvania? All right, we've got some Pennsylvanians. Virginia? West Virginia? Anybody in the wrong meeting? So thank you for coming. This is the second session.

I'm Leo Miller. I'm from the U.S. Department of Labor. I'm sorry? Oh, I'm from New York's Department of Labor; you can see me there with my name and title. I'm in the right meeting.

This is our second session on serving disconnected youth. And remember, I'm from the Department of Labor and this is being recorded. This is something we've had challenges with in the past.

In 1998, when the Workforce Investment Act passed, it said that we would serve in-school youth and out-of-school youth, but there's been a lot of studies that show that kids that come through our programs don't do so well. We struggle with literacy and numeracy gains. We struggle recruiting them. We struggle retaining them and especially those out-of-school youth. Are any of our youth panels out-of-school youth?

We have a panel of youth back here that we're going to hear from later. Out-of-school youth are a tough bunch of customers and it's because they don't understand us all the time and we don't understand them. They live in a connected world, everything technology. There's even apps that we've bought today that shows them how to dress for interviews. There's apps for everything. They are connected. They're on social media.

They want to learn things from many different ways, many different times and we sometimes approach youth service from we know best, trust me, follow me. They live on the outside of our know-best world and we live on the outside of their hyper-connected world and somehow we've got to bridge that gap.

So today, what we've put together in this room is representatives – and on the web – representatives from our formula grants under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Our state leaders, our health and human services providers – Eileen (sp), you're here from HHS. Are any other HHS folks in the room with us today? We have folks doing education and literacy. We have folks from voc rehab. We're setting the stage for a conversation this afternoon. We're going to have a conversation on how we can better recruit, retain and ultimately serve these folks that we all want to serve so badly.

So with that said, we have a great partner in the room. Mr. Edwards, come on up. This is a guy – we've been talking about this meeting for about a year and a half and you helped us make it happen, we're so thankful. Who are you?

MARK EDWARDS: I'm Mark Edwards. I'm the president and CEO of Philadelphia Works. We are the workforce development board for Philadelphia. I bring you greetings on behalf of the fantastic staff, Lloyd Carter (sp) and the rest of the Philadelphia Works team. I'm going to ask that you raise your hand and give a wave. They are the team that is responsible for putting this call together. So they come to me and they tell me what to say and what to do and tell me how much money they need.

And so with that, I just want to thank our industry partnership participants, our private sector employers. No public dollars are being used to fund the – (inaudible) – that we've all tried to all private dollars, but they're happy to make the investment to make today's conversation comfortable for us, because this is a really important conversation for us. We feel like this is something that we've done well in Philadelphia in terms of meeting our numbers, but we can do a lot better when you look at all the statistics that talk about the quality of life of young people in the City of Philadelphia.

Clearly, we all need to do a better job in Philadelphia. We are the workforce development board. We outsource our youth service providing work to our youthforce administrator, PYN, who is here in the room. So I want to give a shout out to PYN who's here in the room and – (inaudible) – Townsend and Jeff Brown, our board chair, for the fantastic nationally and even now internationally recognized work that they do.

And so with that, I'm going to get out of the way and put the spotlight on my young people, because we're proud of the work that they're doing here in Philadelphia and our commitment to them. It's represented here today by virtue of this use of time and my commitment and the staff's commitment that we're going to do a better job in connecting disconnected youth.

MR. MILLER: Thanks, Mark. You know, I'm intrigued that your staff tell you what to do, because mine refuses to let me even be involved in this meeting. I had to find out where it was on my own. So I want to recognize our staff in the Department of Labor, Toby Willis and Jake Blanche (sp) have done a great job putting this together, thank you. The discretionary grants that we have in the room, if you have a discretionary investment with us, would you just raise your hand so I can see?

Discretionary means not formula. So CTF, for example; is CTF here? We've got a couple discretionary grants in the room.

MR. : We need more in this area.

MR. MILLER: We definitely do. (Chuckles.) We are underrepresented – that's one of the things I hadn't intended to bring up, but when it comes – (inaudible). I always have something to talk about. We are underrepresented in the discretionary grants nationwide. We tend to get about 11 percent of the discretionary grants. And so my challenge too is let's get some more in here. So Toby, why don't you walk us through the agenda and what's (inaudible) today.

TOBY WILLIS: Thank you, Leo. So the morning, again, will be information that has been gathered from various sources about youth and the impact of the workforce system on youth.

So we will begin the morning with a presentation from Dr. Sara Heller. She's from the University of Pennsylvania's Department of Criminology and she will talk about her work in studying summer jobs for disadvantaged youth followed by Kara Markley, a senior economist from U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics and she will provide us national, regional and then very specific targeted group perspectives on how our populations are impacted.

And lastly and most importantly will be a panel of youth who are from, again, our health and human service partners, our Department of Labor partners as well as our adult education partner program so that we understand, from various aspects, how we can better engage them. And with that said, folks on the internet, you are not in the room, so the way we will get your voices heard is through the chat function. If you have a question that you would like to pose to a presenter, please type it in the chat window.

We will document it on a card and get it to the presenter that's speaking at the time. If there is not time available for your question to be answered, we will definitely have a time after the presentations today where we will try and get those questions answered. At the end of the day, we will also have a summary of all of the days' events, comments and questions so that everyone has a white paper or the like to go back and work on or share with those who were not able to attend.

At this time, I would like to have a quick overview of our information gathering from our youth and employment research, our employment statistics and our various youth program participants and then we will share some facilitated discussions and identify areas of need or gaps that we don't know about or where we would like to investigate further in serving youth and then decide what future technical assistance points we will engage in the spring. So we have to distill six separate focus groups information down to five main topic areas for the spring session.

That's a lot of work. It's enough getting consensus in one group, but then to get all groups to come down to five points – (inaudible) – but that's the mission for today. Next slide, please.

So we'll begin with Dr. Heller. We'll follow up, again, with our supervisory economist – (inaudible) – and then our youth panel. Dr. Heller, if you are ready to go –

SARA KELLER: I'm here. Can you guys hear me?

MR. WILLIS: We can hear you.

MS. KELLER: Perfect. So thank you so much for having me, everyone. Welcome. As you heard, I'm a professor at the University of Pennsylvania and I noticed in the chat that a bunch of you are from Job Corps centers. You may have been on mine for my prior webinar a couple months ago. If so, I hope we're not starting off the morning with you already bored with me. But this is a different set of research. So I hope it will engage your interest for the first thing in the morning.

So I'm going to talk to you this morning about summer jobs and especially the summer jobs program in Chicago. So the Chicago folks view summer jobs as a violence prevention program and you hear this saying all the time in the community that nothing stops a bullet like a job. And there's lots of reasons we would think that's true, jobs provide money, they provide information on the value of schooling and the labor market, connections to employer networks might make it easier to find a job in the future and then of course, developing work skills, soft skills, self-efficacy and what we like to sort of call incapacitation.

Kids are working; they are physically unable to be standing on the corner getting themselves into trouble. But when you start to really think through the theory of summer jobs, you realize it's not clear cut. So violence happens mostly evenings and weekends. Jobs are mostly during the day. So that incapacitation effect might be a little bit poorly targeted. Youth are earning money, but we're not forcing them to spend that money on pro-social activities.

They might spend it on things that actually don't decrease violence and crime and they're spending more time in transit going back and forth to work with a different set of peers, which we know can sometimes give rise to conflict. So I'm an applied researcher. I like to look at evidence. So if the theory doesn't tell us the answer, let's think about the evidence. But in fact, when we think about summer jobs in particular, there's surprisingly little really rigorous evidence about their effects.

So there's a lot of correlational research on summer jobs, which makes us think probably they're going to have positive effects, but a lot of those studies sort of compared the youth who show up for the programs to the youth who don't. So if you guys think about the youth who walk through the door and the youth who don't walk through your door, they're probably not the same youth. Maybe the youth who come through your door are a little bit more motivated, maybe they have a little bit more family support giving them that extra nudge or maybe they're doing worse already, they're really in more desperate need of help.

And so studies who are comparing the kids who show up to the kids who don't have trouble separating the effect of the program itself from all of these preexisting differences between kids who show up and don't. So one solution to that, what we might call more rigorous research, is to run a lottery. So this sets up something sort of like a clinical trial in medicine where you take everyone who's interested in the program, run a lottery that creates what we might call in quotes here treatment groups, kids who get offered the program and the control group, kids who don't get offered the program.

And the only difference between those two groups is the flip of a coin. And so we know at the end of the day that any difference between those two groups is really because of the program itself, not because of many differences in motivation or family support or anything else. So there can be sometimes concerns about running lotteries like this, but in our case, in Chicago and in fact, a lot of other cases, it's actually a particularly fair way to allocate slots.

So as you guys all know well, there's never enough money to serve as many youth as we would want that could be served by the program. So you have to allocate the limited number of spots some way and a lottery is a particularly fair way to do that, that you don't have to only give jobs to kids you know, so it depends on who knows whom and you don't ever have to turn a kid away because someone doesn't think they're well qualified enough.

The lottery is just a fair way to say, it's luck of the draw who gets the slot. So I'm going to tell you a little bit now about the program that I evaluated in Chicago. It's run by the Department of Family and Support Services in Chicago and a network of nonprofit community partners who are the ones who actually implement the program. So back in 2012, when I first started evaluating the program, it was an eight-week program.

It's since gotten shorter to six weeks, because the school district lengthened the school year. So the summer got shorter. In the first year, youth got all nonprofit and government minimum wage jobs, so 25 hours a week for 8 weeks. Everyone also got a job mentor at a ratio of about 10 to 1. So these are adults whose jobs are to help youth learn to be good employees and overcome their barriers to employment, whether it's transportation, family challenges or conflicts with supervisors.

And then there's a series of small elements. At this point, it was a one-day job readiness training. Kids get a meal a day, because they're there over lunch and bus passes at the beginning of the program before paychecks start coming out to help with transportation challenges. And for a subset of youth, they also cognitive behavioral therapy-based curriculum for two hours a day. So they're working fewer hours at the job, but getting paid for the CDP-based curriculum.

I will say at the outset that I think two hours a day is too much. If you're thinking about something like this, I would recommend a little bit less time there. And so we set this program up back in the summer 2012 as a lottery study. So a little over 1,600 youth applied, but there were only funds to serve 700 youth. So we ran a lottery to allocate youth to slots. And you can see here, this is a map of Chicago and the darker areas are higher violence neighborhoods.

So you can see, again, as Chicago is thinking about this as a violence prevention program, they really targeted high violence neighborhoods. So each green dot there is an applicant and you can see they really successfully recruited applicants from the highest violence neighborhoods in Chicago. And then what I'm going to do is track the youth in administrative data. So data from the Chicago Police Department, the Chicago Public Schools and the Illinois Unemployment Insurance records so that I can measure criminal activities, school, education outcomes and employment down the line.

And one benefit of doing this with administrative data rather than having to go out and find youth and survey them, one, if you're going to ask about illegal activity, probably administrative data is a little bit better way to get the real answer, but it's also much cheaper. So people think about these randomized control trials as massively expensive, but if you don't have to go out and survey youth, it's actually not that expensive.

So this makes it a very manageable study. So this is a little bit about who was in the program. You can see, on average, kids were not quite 17, almost all African American, almost all poor as measured by free and reduced lunch eligibility. About 20 percent had an arrest record in the year prior to the program. In the school year in the Chicago Public Schools was about 170 days. So kids are missing about six weeks of school in the school year prior to the program.

They're coming from neighborhoods with about 19 percent unemployment rates and for those who we can look for in the unemployment insurance records, not very many of them had been working in the year prior to the program. And so the main results here are violent crime arrests. So that gray bar is the control group, youth who didn't get offered the program and the red bar is the treatment group, youth who did get offered the program.

So over the next 16 months, there's a 43 percent decline in arrests for violent crime. That's a huge drop in violent crime. You can think about that as about 4 fewer arrests per 100 youth offered the program. And we don't see any declines in other types of crime, no increases in school performance or at least in short-term employment outcomes, although maybe we need to wait a little bit longer to see that show up.

Really, the thing it looks like the program is doing is decreasing violent crime arrests. So this is extremely promising; right? This is a huge decline in violence and it happens mostly after the program. So this is not just keeping youth busy over the summer and then everyone sort of goes back to their normal way of operating. In fact, if you look just after the summer, you still see a decline in violence.

So youth are learning something that they're taking with them, of changing their behavior and from just eight weeks, which is I think really surprising and hopeful. Because violence is so socially costly, the benefits of the program may already outweigh the costs. So we need a little bit longer-term data to be sure. And so the study of the first rigorous evidence linking summer jobs with a decline in crime.

And in fact, just after this, a study came out of the New York City's summer jobs program, which found similar patterns of results. They find a decline in mortality that's likely driven by a drop in homicides, but again, no employment impacts. The program seems to really be changing violent-specific outcomes. I will say too, this is the first time – (inaudible) – I'm in the progress of doing some more work in Chicago for following years and this is not public yet.

So I'll deny it if you say that I told you. But one of the findings that seems to be coming out of that is that this is a finding specific to targeting youth who are still in school. And this may not be a surprise to you that it seems like kids who are already out of school and more disconnected might need a bigger push than the six to eight-week program could offer. So these study results put Chicago in the news.

This is one of the benefits of engaging in this really rigorous kind of research is that these results made headlines. You can see there's some from the Washington Post, U.S. News & World Report and New York and Chicago magazines. And even more exciting, partly because of the study results, Magic Johnson and some corporate partners decided to give $10 million to expand this job program. So it's going from 700 slots in that first year, it's now 2,000.

Next year, it's going to be 3,000 and Mayor Emanuel is pushing for more and more every year. So I think this helps to demonstrate the payoff from engaging in this kind of rigorous research where you can really convincingly document the effects of the program. And now what I'm really excited about is that we're starting to work in Philadelphia on a similar study.

So Mayor Nutter and the city government along with Philadelphia Youth Network, who are in the room, approached me and said, we have this program called WorkReady that is not so different from One Summer PLUS in Chicago and we would really like to be able to do a rigorous study with it.

And so we're aiming now to answer the research questions of whether summer jobs have similar or other effects with a slightly different program model and a different population and a different context. And for me, this is a really important question, because I don't think you can assume that you can just take something off the shelf that works in one place and apply it somewhere else and assume that everything is going to work exactly the same.

So I think this kind of generalized ability question is really, really important for helping us understand what's going on and what the potential of these kinds of programs really is. So this summer in 2015, we did a small pilot study with the WorkReady program and we're working on planning a larger scale evaluation for next summer in 2016. And so we're already deep in the planning stages and we're trying to figure out how big it's going to be and how many slots we're going to have.

As everyone in the room knows, one of the challenges of figuring that out and figuring out how we're going to be able to conduct the study is the challenge of securing funding early enough to know how many slots there are. And so that's something that as we work through that and both the city and PYN has been really great in putting the nose to the grindstone and trying to work that out so that we can plan things in advance to get this study going in Philadelphia.

So I'm going to conclude here and I'm going to leave out some time for Q&A, because for me, I think that's going to be the most interesting part of this rather than me going on and on about the program. So I think one thing I take out of this research is that it's worth thinking broadly about the effects of youth employment programs. You know, I know there have been a lot of rigorous studies on other youth employment programs for disconnected youth and as you've already heard this morning, we don't necessarily know how to have a positive effect.

And I think part of that might be because a lot of studies were focused just on employment. But keeping youth safe is equally important and keeping them out of prison is equally important. So I think it's worth thinking broadly about what program models might affect which outcomes. I also think it's really exciting that Chicago became this national leader in part because of a willingness to evaluate their programs. So it's a scary thing to open up your program to researchers to say, we're going to figure out if these programs really have the effect that we want them to be having.

Chicago also had a lot of amazing administrative data that they opened up to researchers and now affiliates helping to lead that charge. And I think it's really important to be leading that charge, because there's so much left to learn about mechanisms, why is the program reducing violent crime, especially after the summer ends and as I said, how generalizable are those results to other populations in other places?

So I hope that as you guys go forward and start brainstorming about ways to reach disconnected youth that you also think a little bit about incorporating some outcome evaluation into your own programs. It can be a little bit scary, but it is often certainly a lot of work, but it's often not quite as much work as you think and I think the payoffs are really big as we've seen in Chicago and now I hope Philadelphia.

So with that, I think I'll stop and I'll take a look at the questions that are getting written in.

MR. MILLER: And (inaudible). We actually have a couple questions here. The first is actually a comment from one of the participants here. The majority of youth brought in to this particular program by grandmother, mother or girlfriend. So I think the question here is really about the funding that you have so far. "Has there been any distinction for gender or for any of these relationships, grandmother, mother or girlfriend?"

MS. HELLER: Yeah. So I'll say the way that the recruiting worked in Chicago was mostly school based. So the community partners went into schools and advertised the program and encouraged people to apply to the program. So I think in this case, it's not necessarily the case that these youth are brought in by family members or girlfriends. In this first year of the study, we did have both boys and girls in the program and the effects were pretty similar across those two genders.

In the second year of the program that I talked very briefly about, the city decided to concentrate on all males, because boys are so disproportionately involved in violence and we did, again, see the violence decline there with gender. So I haven't found any big gender differences yet, but I think with terms of other outcomes. And in Philadelphia, we're starting to think about measuring things like mental health and substance abuse.

And so you might think that there would also be gender differences there, which is a question we'll try to look at.

MR. MILLER: And we have another question here that can connect in a lot of ways with what you were saying about being a school supportive program. And the question is, "Did you solicit parental input or involving outside of that daily program?"

MS. HELLER: So I think the program is not necessarily structured to require parental involvement, although, obviously, for kids who are under 18, parents have to consent to program participation. I think, though, that the adult mentors do sometimes, when it's appropriate, talk and involve the parents some. So some of the challenges that you face in being able to show up and show up on time are family based.

And so I think in those cases, the mentor for the youth might be in touch with the family and get them involved and help them figure out how to support the youth.

MR. MILLER: And I think I have one more here from the group who is in person here. So getting youth into a job is step one. "What seems to work to support retention?"

MS. HELLER: Can you say that one more time? Sorry, I'm having a little bit of trouble hearing.

MR. MILLER: No. Not at all. Getting youth into a job is step one. What seems to work to support retention?

MS. HELLER: That is a great question and I think it's something that we continue to work in Chicago to figure out. So anecdotally, I think these job mentors play a big role in that. So like I said, it's a ratio of 10 to 1 and it's someone, who, when something goes wrong, is there basically immediately to help intervene and they give the youth their cell phone numbers and say that they're available 24/7, which is not something that everybody has the capacity to do, but for just over the summer, that works out well.

And so if things happen, if kids realize that they're not going to be able to show up in the morning, they can get in touch with their mentor, they can figure out ways to handle that. And so I think anecdotally, that matters a lot. Now, I'd say that in the New York program, they don't have that kind of separate mentorship. So there's a little bit less intensive support and they're still finding that there is decline in New York.

So I think it's an open question about how important having a separate mentor is versus having an adult, like an employer or someone more generally in the provider's office to provide slightly less intensive support. That's a question we're also trying to answer in future research in Chicago. But I know anecdotally, some of those mentors did things, like drove kids to Springfield, which is the capitol in Illinois, because they didn't have their birth certificate. And so they needed to go get a copy of that.

And some other mentors would show up in court when kids got in trouble and convinced the judge not to send the kids to detention, because he was enrolled in a jobs programs. And so I think, especially as we move to thinking about more disconnected youth, is that potentially a way to help with retention? And the program really did it successfully that first year of the program. Of the kids who started the program, 90 percent of them finished and were still working in the last week, which I think is a pretty extraordinary retention rate.

MR. MILLER: And I have another one here. "Did you assess which components of the program youth valued the most? And if so, what were those components?"

MS. HELLER: So I don't have a rigorous answer to that, but I can tell you just from talking to some of the youth the things I heard. I think obviously, the paycheck was high on the list. Kids really like getting paid and what that gives them. There's actually some pretty amazing YouTube videos if you look up on YouTube One Summer Chicago PLUS of where you can hear directly from youth, which is way more interesting than from me about what they valued.

I think you hear things like the pride of earning a paycheck. There's one gentleman named Deshawn Shepard (sp) who talks about learning how to dress and that he shows off the clothes he's wearing in the video and says, I never would've worn these clothes before, but now I do and I have a job and I bought these clothes myself. So I think some of it is a little learning and this adult mentorship and some of it is just what you get from having a job, which includes money.

MR. MILLER: And we're also wondering, "What does research identify how much doesn't work in this program? Have you seen anything?"

MS. HELLER: That's a great question. So unfortunately, I think there are lots and lots of program that don't seem to work. So I think in the past, especially my read of the literature with the more disconnected youth rather than the in-school youth who were a part of this program is that it really takes a lot of intensity and a lot of money to have a positive impact on youth outcome. So I think we've seen things, like Job Corps, like career academies that have been successful, but those are sometimes multi years, sometimes residential interventions.

So it takes a much bigger push than we see in summer jobs for the disconnected youth. So I think some of the things that have been less successful are the lighter touch interventions – for youth who are poorly matched to a lighter touch intervention who might need more intensive involvement.

MR. MILLER: A question from one of our youth panelists, actually is, "Once a youth is fired or quits, what's done to further benefit them at that point?"

MS. HELLER: That's a great question. So one of the ways that the program that is named the PLUS part of One Summer PLUS is that the program works really, really hard to make sure that kids don't get fired or quit. So one of the roles of the mentor is to mediate conflicts with supervisors. So if youth are unhappy with how they're being treated in the workplace or supervisors are unhappy with performance, the program provides a way to help both youth and supervisors work through that and figure that out.

If a placement is just really not working out and youth do get fired, they work really hard to find something else that's a better fit for the youth. So that's part of the PLUS part of the program, that they try hard to prevent that from happening in the first place. I would be interested, though, if the person who asked that question had other ideas about what to do in those cases. (Chuckles.)

MR. MILLER: He's shaking his head, but I think we're going to hear from him later. Are there any other questions? Either here or if you're on the webinar, feel free to type it into the box.

MS. HELLER: I see someone is typing in the box. So I think there's something coming. I might as well, I guess, while the questions are coming, throw the question about how to keep youth engaged and what happens when placements aren't working out to the PYN folks, because I know that they also deal with that all the time.

MR. EDWARDS: Dr. Heller, was there a question for PYN specifically?

MS. HELLER: I mean, it was, because I know them, but I'm sure that there are also other ideas in the room too.

MR. EDWARDS: Do you have a quick comment?

MS. : Sure. So the Philadelphia Youth Network, we manage WorkReady Philadelphia; it's a little bit different in scale than the One Chicago Summer in that we serve – last year we had 10,818 young people in work sites. So we have a little bit of experience with young people when they're in placements that might be challenging. Another key difference is that we have work site supervisors.

We also have youth development staff on staff who support those work site supervisors. So there are a couple of things that we do when people run into challenges, (for instance ?). So first steps, we spend a significant amount of time training the work site supervisors, because we want our summer experiences to mimic real-world work experience.

The second is that we meet with young people once a week during the – some of our interventionists work with young people once a week during their six weeks of the program to have their peers support them with conflict resolution, to learn skills around how to manage their work site and also, to understand what each other is going through.

So we use the expertise of young people to help them support in times of transition. Now, that does not mean that we have not had young people who get fired. I would say over the years, we've had some very interesting reasons why young people get fired and here's the things that we do for that. So first is we use it as a teachable moment. So every young person who has been terminated has to come to our offices. They have a meeting with our staff. We go through the incident.

We decide whether or not to get some additional advocacy. Sometimes, with the intervention of an adult, the work site is willing to take the young person back and we're able to put them back in that situation and they can grow from that. Other times when young people do things that are worthy of termination, we actually allow the termination to go through and that is also because it's designed to be a teachable moment.

So we've had things where if there's been – (inaudible) – or violence in the workplace, those things are unacceptable in anybody's job. What we don't want to do is give young people the wrong expectations or – (inaudible) – easily navigated. So there's a couple of different ways that we do that. There have been times where we have to take young people out of other work sites, because that location was not suitable for their developmental needs or their – (inaudible) – needs.

And so we have replaced some people as well. So it's an individual situation. It's not a cookie cutter experience for us. We've had 15 years of doing this work. So we have a couple of different levels of interventions that – (inaudible).

MS. HELLER: Thanks. So I see another question from the chat. I'll read it, because I don't know if you guys can see that too. But it says, "Much of these who enter these programs tend to fall back into these systems? Is there training or information for these students on how to better navigate them or how to exit them?" So I think that's definitely right. And even in this program, you see there's a 43 percent decline in violent crimes, but it's not going to zero.

So I think – you know, I'm in the criminology department now. So I understand how common it is that when you start to get involved in the criminal justice system, it's very easy to end up back there. So I think what we see in the summer jobs program is that it's at least happening less, which is good. I think it's a little bit of a mystery about how that's working and what part of the training is doing that.

My best guess, which I think we're working now to do some surveys and figure this out in a really evidenced based way is that youth are learning how to handle conflicts better. So through that – some of the process that you just heard with teachable moments, also, in the case of this program with some of the cognitive behavioral therapy-based curriculum, which is about getting youth to think about their own thinking, slow down and make slightly more reflective decisions rather than reflexive decision, that the process of learning that is part of what's helping youth to navigate and exit the criminal justice system.

So one of the things I heard from one of the employers on site visits is that one of the biggest challenges that young people have when they walk through his door is how defensive they are. So you say, you have to wear closed toed shoes to work and the kids blow up in your face. And so he, as an employer, said, I think it's my job to help them learn not to do that, to help them learn to regulate some of those impulses.

And so my guess about part of the reason this program is working, and this is partly based on some of my other work with different kinds of programs that also have some of these elements, is that that process of learning how to do some of that self-regulation and thinking about thinking and slowing down a little bit is part of what the program is teaching.

MR. MILLER: And we have another question from one of our youth panelists. "What type of employment does the program find and/or qualify youth for it?"

MS. HELLER: So in this first year of the program, it was all nonprofit and government jobs. So that were things like – you saw the picture of someone working in a community garden. So youth took a vacant lot in their own neighborhood and cleared it out and learned a little bit about urban gardening and planted gardens. And you saw the picture of the youth with his new tomatoes he's very proud of.

So some of them are those outdoor improvement, community improvement projects. Some of them are working in an alderman's office, which alderman's is basically a political office in Chicago. Some of them are working in the schools. So either helping to maintain the schools or doing other projects in schools. And then in later years of the program, it's also expanded to the private sector. So there are also restaurant and retail jobs and other kinds of office jobs.

And I think in terms of preparation for those, I think the nonprofit community providers work very hard to match youth skills to the right kind of jobs. So they talk to the youth about what they're interested in and try to match them to jobs that they're actually interested in doing, which is always good. Another big one is summer camp counselors. So things like working at the YMCA, which I think the kids I talked to, at least really enjoyed – they liked being role models for the younger youth.

But most of them don't require a lot of particular skills or training going in. Chicago, actually has a huge summer program outside of this program. And so in some of those other programs, kids learn things like – they spend some classroom time learning how to fix bikes and be bike mechanics and then they go out and do some work on that in bike shops. So I think it's a pretty huge range of different kinds of jobs that are basically entry level that don't require particular skills.

MR. MILLER: And our youth panelists, actually, are coming up with some really great questions. "Do youth have the opportunity to turn summer jobs into full-time jobs? If so, how many youth have utilized this opportunity?"

MS. HELLER: So that is always the goal, I think. We are collecting survey data now to be able to answer the how many question. You know, I think one of the challenges is always money. So the government is paying the bill for the wages over the summer and then after the summer, to turn that into a real job, that has to shift to employers. So something, like I think 67 percent of employers say that if they had the capacity to hire the young person who was working for them, they would.

They definitely want to hire the youth that they're having successful experiences. Whether or not they have the budget to do it and how often that happens is a question that we're working on answering. You know, I know some specific cases where it happens. In particular, one of the local hospitals had an HIV education program that one of the youth was working as an educator about HIV and that, I know turned into a real full-time job.

I think that tends to happen more with the nonprofit and private sector jobs rather than the government jobs that involves, as we all know, a little bit more of bureaucracy for finding a way to hire people, but that is definitely the goal of the program. I think they would really like to maximize how much that happens. And I think that's what youth say too; right, when you say, what do you need after the program, everyone says a job.

MR. MILLER: And we're starting to run a little long, but I do want to ask you one more question from a group here and that's, "Do you have any advice generally with specifically to youth service providers that may be in the room or are joining us by the web?"

MS. HELLER: Oh man, that's a broad question. That's hard to answer. I think I guess I have to get on my professorial soapbox a little bit and really encourage you to think about involving researchers in what you're doing, but I know that is a scary thing. But it's so hard to make decisions and figure out what to do when you don't have any data on what is working and what you think is working might not be working.

And so I think outside of the substantive things, which I think you're going to hear about more through the day, I would encourage you to think about trying to evaluate what you're doing so that you can answer those questions for yourself and the specific questions about your programs that you have questions on, find ways to answer that. And I think partnering with economics is always a great way to do that for not very much money.

MR. MILLER: And unfortunately, we are running low on time. We do have one more question. All the questions that we have here have been captured. So if your question is not asked, we will make sure that we include it as part of the conversation going forward. There's one more youth question. "How do you teach the youth how to deal with conflicts and use it in a real world situation?"

MS. HELLER: I mean, I think with supervision is the idea that there is a little bit of job training up front and then the mentor is there as the demands are put on youth to help them figure out what they need and how to learn and to give them feedback. You know, I think the employers that the providers recruit also tend to be employers who are willing to invest in youth and spend that time teaching, that these are not necessarily jobs, like working on the line at McDonald's where if you mess up once, then the employer is going to say, forget it, I can find someone else, that these are also employers who care about youth development and invest in wanting to teach those lessons.

MR. MILLER: All right. Thank you, Dr. Heller. We appreciate all the work you're doing and will continue to do. We're going to move along to our Bureau of Labor Statics expert, Kara Markley and she can begin her presentation.

MS. HELLER: Thanks, everyone.

KARA MARKLEY: I think you can hear me a little better if I stand closer to the microphone. So I apologize to the people in the front. You have to kind of look here, look there. While we're waiting for the slides to be loaded, I'll just tell you a little bit about myself.

My name is Kara Markley. I'm a regional economist with the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which is part of the Department of Labor. And what we have are stats exactly what Dr. Heller was just saying. It's kind of hard to tell how you're doing if you don't have numbers to back it up. So what we have, all we have, at the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics are numbers.

Now, I will say sometimes they're not the most interesting things, but we try to make them a little interesting. So I have with me Rebecca Garvin. She is an economist on my staff and I just want to say thank you to her. She helped me put this presentation together and by helped, I mean, she put it together. (Chuckles.)

She took the stats, which are just numbers and made some pretty grasps and pictures for you. So hopefully we can get something out of these numbers; all right. So here we go. Look at the first slide. Next slide, please.

So what do we have? This is a slide that's just looking at our overall economy in the United States. Right now, our unemployment rate, as of October, 2015, 5 percent. Pretty good compared to where we were, which was at 10 percent a few years ago during the recession. So not bad.

In October, we added 271,000 jobs in our overall economy. Again, pretty darn good. The average hourly wage for all employees on non-farm payroll, which is basically everyone not working on a farm, $25.20 an hour and the consumer price index increased .2 percent. Now, what's that? That's basically just inflation. How much are prices going up over the years? That is really darn well.

On average, we see prices increasing approximately 2 percent every year. Right now, we're on pace at .2 percent, a tenth of that basically because our energy prices are so low right now. So that's really helping to keep prices low in all realms of the economic spectrum, food prices, things like that as well. So with all of that in mind, what we're going to do now for the rest of the presentation is look at three targeted groups, our youth, our veterans, and we're also going to be looking at our young veterans, in particular and then those with disabilities.

So compared to the United States as a whole, how are those three effective groups doing? And what we're about to see may not be too encouraging. These are numbers and they're going to tell the story, but hopefully what they will be is motivating. We know we have work to do, the numbers are going to tell us that, now we've got to get to work. So let's move on. First, we're going to look at youth. What's the situation of our youth at this time?

Next slide, please. Here we go. For youth, and we're defining youth for most of these slides as 16 to 24 (years old). Unemployment rate for that group is 10.6 percent. So what did we just say the unemployment rate for the nation was? Who was paying attention?

ALL: Five.

MS. MARKLEY: Five. So double the unemployment rate for this group. There were approximately 1.53 million unemployed and looking for full-time work. We've got another 694 (thousand) out of 700,000 looking for part-time work. So in total, there were 2.2 million youth looking for work, unemployed, which is a pretty big number; right? Next slide, what have we got? We are going to be looking at the different breakouts of education and what your unemployment rate by level of education attained for this group of youth.

Now, it's kind of hard to see, especially for you guys in the back here, but basically, let me just give you the highlights of this slide. The black line in the middle is youth on average, the dotted black line. So it's hovering around 10 percent right now. Well, we said 10.6 percent was the unemployment rate for youth. Now, that top line, that blue line, what do you think that is? Those are the youth in that age group that don't even have a high school education.

Now, let's look at the peak there. That peak is hard to see the numbers on the left-hand side. But that peaked at almost 40 percent unemployment right after the recession. And that rescission is that light gray bar kind of in the middle of the dates there. That was when we were in the low point of our economy here. So almost 40 percent. Meanwhile, total youth unemployment hovered around 20 percent during that time.

So half, still pretty high, but not nearly as high that those that don't have a high school education. And that yellow line right below it is for those who have a high school education. And then obviously, the two lines below the average, meaning your unemployment rate is likely to be lower, are those with some college or some sort of degree. And then the lowest line, the bottom line are those with a bachelor's degree or higher.

So obviously, if you have more education, you're less likely to be unemployed, more likely to have a job making money. Makes sense; right? Next slide. Here we just have the 2.2 million youth and we're breaking it out by gender. Just something to keep in mind, the number on the less, this is in thousands, 1,231,000 unemployed males and then almost 1 million females. So slightly more men in that age group.

Next slide. And here we like to look at data any way we can break it out. We like to look at it by state, because obviously, here we're talking about the mid-Atlantic region. So our states are, as well as the rest of the East Coast, in that red area. Thank you, Toby. Toby knows his geography. Thank you. (Chuckles.)

So what that means in the red, the states in that area are anywhere between 10 percent and almost 15 percent unemployment rate and that's right around the average. However, in our region, the regional average for our state is actually 12 percent, a little higher than the national average. And in particular, Delaware 12.2 percent, District of Columbia, the highest in our region, probably not a surprise, 14.7 percent. So almost 15 percent unemployment. Maryland, 11.3 (percent); Pennsylvania, 11.5 (percent); Virginia, 11.4 (percent). So all of them, the same for those three states. And West Virginia, 11.0 percent for youth.

And a little slight difference for this slide, I would just want to point out, is that for whatever reason, when we calculate the youth unemployment by state, we do it for 20 to 24 years old versus 16 (years old). I'm not sure why – (inaudible) – it's what we do. So – (inaudible). Next slide we are going to look at that same data by state. These are the rates just for the states in our region. So that's all that's on the screen compared to the United States.

And we're also, again, breaking it out by gender. You can see, especially for Delaware, District of Columbia, West Virginia and Pennsylvania almost double the rate for male versus female unemployment. So that really sticks out for those states. And in all states, the male rate is higher, but particularly in those four states. Next slide, please. The next slide here, we're just looking at sheer volume.

These are the sheer numbers of unemployed by state. And to some, it's no surprise, of course, that the larger states, like Pennsylvania and Virginia have more unemployed people. That's really not a shock there. But again, we're breaking it out by male and female and again, Pennsylvania, clearly double the number of men who are unemployed versus the women. All states, again, the number is higher for men, but Pennsylvania, you can clearly see that difference.

So that is about all the data I have for the youth unemployment and where youth are. If you have questions, we're going to take them at the end. Again, there's nothing earth shattering here and again, a lot of this is not very encouraging, but it's putting it at where we are right now and if there is work to be done, which is why we are here. So the next group we're going to look at are veterans, another targeted group, another group that needs help getting jobs.

In 2014, there were 21.2 million men and women who were veterans. 10.5 (million) of those were not in the labor force. So either they were retired, they were in school, they were at home. So we're taking them out. 10.5 (million) of those, they're not who we're talking about here. 10.2 (million) of them were employed and 573,000 were unemployed. So for all veterans, that's an unemployment rate of 5.3 percent compared with the national average of 5.0 (percent), they're doing pretty good.

Now, we do have data, on the next slide, looking at just those young veterans. Again, a little bit of different age group, (inaudible) this way, but now we're looking at 18 to 24. I think you can't be a veteran if you're below 18. So that probably makes sense why they do it that way. But this really, really tells a story. That orange line in the middle that looks relatively flat, those are our non-veterans in this age group and that crazy blue line with all the spikes, those are our veterans in this age group. That's crazy.

So the young veterans, they are hovering right now around 15 percent unemployment compared to the overall rate of 5 percent for the total economy and 10 percent for youth. So the young veterans are actually 5 percent higher than just youth in general. And as you can see, they are always higher and at some points, much, much higher than the unemployment rate for youth. So that really tells a story here; right? We've really got to help these guys get jobs.

That's really all I've got for veterans. Next we're going to move on to people with – oh, somebody put a handicap sign on there. That's not on my slides. Thanks whoever put that graspic – thanks, Toby. Nice, I like it. This slide, youth (inaudible) with disabilities now it has a handicapped sign. So what we did is we had a special study done – if we move to the next slide, I'm going to tell you about this study.

We realized that we don't have enough data on people with disabilities in the economy. So what we did at the Bureau of Labor Statistics is we have this survey that gives us the monthly unemployment rate. It's called the Current Population Survey. And what they do is they go out and they actually interview people in their household. It's called the Household Survey and they ask them a bunch of questions, do you have a job, do you not have a job, have you looked for work, are you a veteran, all that stuff.

So that's where we get all this information, but we realized we didn't have enough information specifically pertaining to people with disabilities. So we took that survey and we took it a step further and in 2012, did a special survey just on disabilities. So to that survey that was developed, 60,000 households that we interviewed, we added a whole new survey of questions pertaining just to disabilities.

So if you had a person in your household who had a disability, you had a whole new host of questions you had to answer that month, but it tells us a lot of (inaudible) and we're going to look at it here. So let's see what that survey asked us. Next slide, please.

So we classified someone in the household as having a disability if they answered yes to any of the following questions, does anyone have a serious difficulty hearing, is anyone blind or does anyone have serious difficulty seeing when wearing glasses, because of the physical, mental or emotional condition, does anyone have serious difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions, does anyone have serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs, does anyone have difficulty dressing or bathing or because of a physical, mental or emotional condition, does anyone have difficulty doing errands alone, such as visiting a doctor's office or shopping?

So if anyone in your household, when you were surveyed, answered yes to any of those questions, we then asked you this whole host of disability questions to follow. So here is what we found. In 2012, again, this was three years ago, but still probably very relevant today, over 28.3 million people had a disability. That is our largest group that we're talking about yet. 45.4 percent of people with a disability were over 65 years old.

So that group, 45 percent of these people, is not really who we're talking about here, because they're over the working age. They're kind of out of scope for what we're talking about in this session. However, 15.1 percent of the people with disabilities age 25 and older had a bachelor's degree or higher. That compared with 33 percent who had a bachelor's degree or higher of people who didn't have a disability.

So less than half of the people with disability compared to those who didn't have a disability had a bachelor's degree. So what does that say? That says there's definitely some kind of barrier for those people to getting an education. And this next statistic here, the labor force participation rate of all persons with a disability was 20.9 percent. So basically, what that says is that people with disability, only one out of five of them actually was even – I'm not even saying had a job, either had a job or wanted to have a job.

So only one out of five was actually even looking for work or had a job. That compared with 64 percent of the rest of the population. So clearly, big barriers there for disabled people. And that's why we're here talking about it.

So next slide, please. I'm out of order here. Then what we did is – I think we went back. Could we go forward? Thank you. I'm like I'm out of order, somebody's out of order.

Then we said, clearly, there's some kind of thing going on here, there's some barriers to these people. We asked, do you consider any of the following a barrier to employment? And we said, lack of education or training, lack of job counseling, lack of transportation, lack of government assistance, need for special features at the job, employer or coworker attitudes, your disability or other. So we asked, do you have any barrier or do you consider yourself to have a barrier? And here's what we saw. Next, please. Thank you.

We saw that, it's hard to see these numbers, well over double the people that surveyed with a disability considered themselves to have at least one of those barriers on this screen. And let's take a look at the next slide what those barriers were. The blue bars are all people with disabilities and the orange is if you had less than a high school diploma. We broke that out. The largest barrier was the lack of education or training and especially for that group with less than a high school diploma.

That obviously makes sense; right? Other ones were lack of job counseling, lack of transportation, lack of government assistance, need for special features at the job or employer or coworker attitudes, but clearly, those first two, lack of education and training and lack of job counseling, those are two that we can address. Next slide, please. And here's another one, of those that never worked, so now we're just looking at those disabled that are unemployed, why have you never worked?

Again, the highest answer or the largest answer was that lack of education or training. And next slide. We asked people, in the past five years, and I think this is asked of those people who do not have a job, the unemployed, how you received any assistance for any of the following. And these are obviously all programs that we're familiar with. And here's how they answered on the next slide.

Of those people who were employed, 12 percent had received some sort of education or training assistance in the past 5 years. Now, here's a really standout, the second bar, those who were unemployed, 28 percent had received training assistance, but they're unemployed. The next two are also not currently working, but previously worked, 12 percent of those had received assistance, but are not currently working.

And finally, that last bar, never worked, but 8 percent of those had received some sort of training or assistance. So that speaks to the effectiveness of these programs, because three of them bars there are not currently working. And we're going to blow through the next few slides, because I know we have questions. This one's my favorite slide of all, education pays. It speaks to why we're here.

Lower levels of education have higher unemployment rates. As you go up in education, much less chance of being unemployed. And look at the salaries on the right-hand side, speaks to the same thing, lower education, much lower salaries. I think this is not rocket science here that I'm telling you. Higher degrees comes with more money. Next slide, please.

This is just a slide showing that although the entire economy is project to grow over the next 10 years, those jobs with some sort of post-secondary degree, associate's degree or above are growing at much faster rates than those with high school education or below.

And the next few slides we're going to quickly click through, these are the jobs that are the fastest growing jobs for less than a high school degree. As you can see, not real exciting jobs, retail sales. And on the right-hand side, that's the median wages for those jobs, very low wages compared to the median annual wage at the bottom, $34,000. All these jobs are less than the average wage.

Next slide, same thing, a high school diploma, a little higher wages, but still you want to get past that. You want to get a little higher, at least over the median wage. Next slide shows associates degrees. These jobs mostly have higher than average wages. There's a few on there that are still little below, you have to pick wisely, but it just goes to show with a little training or degree, your wages will go up. And these, again, are the largest growing jobs in the associate's degree category.

So I'm going to stop here and I'm going to answer your questions. And we have some coming in. "In the information shown in the stats for the youth 16 to 24, how many were in foster care or live in a single family home. Do you think it plays a major or minor – (inaudible) – from the youth getting a youth education or job?"

Unfortunately, in our stats, we wouldn't know that. We wouldn't know if it's foster care or living in a single family home. So unfortunately, I can't answer that question, but it's a great question. There's probably private researchers out there that would have that information. Thank you. And, "What role did age play in the percent of the disabled unemployed?" Again, great question, we can only slice and dice these statistics so many ways. So we unfortunately don't have disabilities by age statistics.

When you start slicing and dicing too small of a sample for us to talk about, so we don't have that either. Sorry. (Chuckles.)

Any other questions? Well, I thank you for inviting us to speak here and I'm really looking forward to hearing especially what the youth have to say after this. Thank you.

MR. MILLER: Thank you, Kara. All right. Those who are on the web allow us a couple minutes to transition in the room. You have two minutes. So you will hear some silence, but we will be back shortly.

(Audio break.)

All right. We have assembled our youth panelists and they are representative, again, of several federal agencies, locally funded programs from Health & Human Services, Department of Labor, Job Corps centers, our adult education, what we call in Philadelphia, E3 Power Center. So we have our youth represented here and they will be facilitated by another youth panelist. So, again, you will only hear their voice as this is their voices of experience and we're here to learn from them today about how we can do our job better. Kimberly.

KIMBERLY SAM: Good morning, everyone. My name is Kimberly Sam (sp). I'm a former disconnected youth that was with the adult literacy programs here for District 1199C, GED to College assistance program.

ANTONIO MOREL: Good morning, everyone. My name is Antonio Morel (sp) and I'm representing the Maryland State Youth Advisory Board.

MARKO BEARDS: Good morning, everyone. My name is Marko Beards (sp). I'm representing ETS YouthBuild.

CORINTHIA LEWIS: Hi. Good morning. My name is Corinthia Lewis (sp) and I'm – (inaudible) – and we're representing Job Corps in Philadelphia.

FRANK: I'm Frank – (inaudible). And first I want to say I apologize for my dress attire. I'm Frank – (inaudible) – and I represent ETS YouthBuild currently.

FELICIA: Good morning. My name is Felicia – (inaudible) – and I represent Philadelphia's Job Corps – (inaudible).

TYLER LIGGINS: Good morning. My name is Tyler Liggins (sp). I represent Maryland State Youth Advisory Board also.

JESSICA FETTER: Good morning. My name is Jessica Fetter (sp) and I am an alumni – (inaudible) – YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School.

ANTHONY SIMPSON: Good morning. I'm Anthony Simpson (sp) and I'm a graduate of – (inaudible).

MS. SAM: Good morning. And I'll be the moderator of this panel amongst my peers. So I'll just jump right into the conversation. And feel free – (inaudible) – ladies and gentlemen could just answer the question. Jump into the quality of the program, what were you doing at the time that you decided to enroll in your current program?

MR. : I had just graduated from Burlington Institute (sp) and – (inaudible) – by the program – (inaudible) – construction course and I took it as an opportunity for me to freshen up on my skills. I just enrolled in the construction field.

MR. : I had just entered foster care and I was attending a teen conference in foster – (inaudible) – conference where one, we have – (inaudible) – foster youth.

MR. : Well, when I was (inaudible), I just got kicked out of the high school district. So I was 18 and at crossroads. I should say that I was like – I felt like I was a zombie walking the streets. I had no education – (inaudible). So I was looking, but everywhere I turned, it was like the age affected my – (inaudible). So then I tried to visit – (inaudible) – YouthBuild, but it – (inaudible) – and all my options – (inaudible). Then I heard about the YouthBuild 23rd and Allegheny. It's kind of been a – (inaudible) – on the north side, because – (inaudible) – YouthBuild is spacy and out in the open. It's on the main strip intersection.

(inaudible) (Chuckles.)

Tyler Liggins: Tyler Liggins. I was at a teen conference and it was one of my first months in foster care. I really enjoyed seeing the leadership skills that the other youth were exemplifying and it kind of just sparked an interest, I want to be that leader and that's what drove me to join my local youth advisory board and a couple of months later, to join my second advisory board.

MS. SAM: So a follow up on that question is, what was it that motivated you to enroll into your program?

MS. : Well, – (inaudible) – in Job Corps is that Job Corps, they have multiple opportunities, like they pay for college. You know, it gives you a chance to start a career and just not have a job more so, because I didn't want to sit around and be lazy and just having a high school diploma is not enough for me. So that's what motivated me.

MS. : What motivated me to go into my program that I'm in now is because I had a child or whatever you want to say and I didn't want them to look at me like I was not good enough for her, – (inaudible). I was doing the – (inaudible). I wasn't wanting to go down that path. I wanted to go down the right path and Job Corps had a lot of opportunities for me and I didn't want to just sit around being lazy and stuff like that. So I wanted to keep myself going and plus, – (inaudible) – is not an option for me.

MR. : What motivated me to pursue my GED was that it was kind of an abstract of – (inaudible) – in the public school district. You know, when you're going through the regular schools, you often run into teachers who don't care, are just there for the paycheck. So I found myself being consistently being disengaged when I was in those classes. I found myself just looking away from them and looking past them trying to figure out how to find myself away from this environment.

So I decided to get my GED, because I felt that it's a fast track and I worked at my own pace and it enabled for me to really find myself amongst those who were motivated, who weren't – (inaudible) – out of school district.

MS. : What motivated me to go to Job Corps is because I didn't want my daughter to look at me and be like – and not do anything and (inaudible), sit around and not do anything, because when I was young, I lost my mom and dad. My mom died when I was 16, my dad died when I was 17. And I didn't have – (inaudible) – went into a depression. And once I had my daughter, I'm like it's time to get up and do something. So that's why I enrolled in the Job Corps.

I will need to get my diploma and I always wanted to be a nurse. I went to high school – (inaudible) – start a trade and once I heard about Job Corps, I enrolled in Job Corps – (inaudible).

MR. : What motivated me to enroll in YouthBuild was the opportunity to hone in on my skills and I just recently picked up at – (inaudible). I didn't have that much one-on-one time, because it was a big class and – (inaudible) – that was very interested in construction courses. It was very beneficial to me.

MR. : What motivated me to join was is I was – (inaudible). After that, they – (inaudible) – known each other for years. So – (inaudible) – YouthBuild. A lot of people elected the family setting school. The family setting help motivate me to get my high school diploma and move forward.

MR. : Same thing, being in foster care, you struggle with having a good support system. Joining the youth advisory board allowed me to gain the trust of my peers, especially Tyler. Tyler and I, we serve as the chair and co-chair on the youth advisory board and I call him up when I'm having troubles. Even if I need help with a math quiz or something, he's there on the spone helping me out. Being on the youth advisory board opened doors to many opportunities as well.

I got an opportunity to go to the White House. I got an opportunity to intern at DHR and my local DSS. So that's why I joined.

MR. : What motivated me was being a part of something. I could really – (inaudible) – it, especially like the – (inaudible) – like me to show leadership and take over and treat everything like it's yours, like it's – (inaudible). Being a part of something – (inaudible). Another thing, if you're not a part of something, it makes you feel like when you've got too much time on your hands, that's when it – (inaudible) – started up.

This whole – (inaudible) – coming here – (inaudible). There's too much time – (inaudible) – when you're looking at where am I going? Am I doing anything positive with my life? Am I making an example for the people that are in my shoes? And that's what motivated me to get back into school. I found out that it was another opportunity, whether it's my last opportunity. – (inaudible) – don't think that it was – (inaudible). You know, I'm – (inaudible).

MS. SAM: Well, I thank you all for sharing your internal and external motivations and your drives regarding to your – (inaudible) – grant. But let's think about our peers who are not here – (inaudible) – into the program. If you have friends with similar situations, what do you think is keeping them from enrolling? What do you think would motivate them to roll into a – (inaudible) – grant?

MR. : Well, as I said, being in foster care, you run into that unfortunate situation in not having support. I know a lot of my peers, they just don't have the support system that they need. I'm not saying all, but just the peers that I have come across, they don't have that support. And one thing that can motivate them is just to have that support system, have that person standing next to them, you can do this, I believe in you, you can accomplish it.

My sponsor, Carlton Fawnville (sp), he calls me every day. He tells me, you can do this. And I'm saying, Carlton, I don't know if I can do this. Go ahead, man, you've got this. I was nervous about speaking today. I'm pretty sure you guys are going to do great. So just having that support system from an adult or peer. It doesn't matter, just support is everything.

MR. : I think mainly what kind of stops a lot of disconnected youth from going into these types of programs is the bureaucracy, the presentation of a lot of them where you might find yourself surrounded by a lot of white grown men in suits who try to tell you what's good for you and you believe that it's good for you, but it's kind of hard to take heed to the words that they're not from your environment.

So it's all about them making you feel comfortable. It's nice to have panel groups, it's nice to wear a nice pair of khakis, but sometimes just allowing them to be themselves and work into the environment – (inaudible) – helping educate them.

MS. : I just wonder, though, sometimes it's not about the support system and stuff like that, but some people do have support systems and people being in their corners. They just want to use it for an excuse. They just don't want to do this, because me personally, I've got a lot of friends that struggle and stuff like that and I'm always there to help them and push them and be in their corner, but they don't want to do it. So how can I change them? Their mindset is their mindset as mine is mine.

MR. MILLER: Why don't they want to do it? Why do you think –

MS. : Well, my friend, she came from South Carolina or whatever and I saw her – (inaudible) – and she would be like, I can't get a transfer up here. It's the same way you transfer from here to there. So why can't you do it the same way? Why is it that hard for you? I just feel like she doesn't want to do it. I can help her do it and stuff like that, but she – (inaudible) – probably be – (inaudible) – and stuff like that.

I let her use my – (inaudible) – and stuff to get everything – (inaudible) – so she could do everything – everything could – (inaudible) – so she could do whatever she wanted to do, but she just doesn't want to do it.

MR. : I mean, I believe it's a lot to do with perception on how society grades – (inaudible) – and being a foster or going to get your GED or struggling to get your high school diploma and graduate at the age of 19, 20 or 21. So it's not – I don't believe it's not that they don't want to do it, I believe it's the perception of somebody looking at you and ask you, when did you graduate or what do you have? And you tell them, I have my GED or I'm in foster care. For instance, – (inaudible) – to go into the army.

When I was down in the medical procedure (inaudible), they asked me to put in my next of kin. I told them I don't have one. They asked me why. I told them I'm a foster kid. Everybody in the room looked at me and said, I'm sorry. So – (inaudible) – I'm not on death row, I'm not doing nothing bad, I'm a perfectly fine human enrolling in the army just like the rest of you. So what's the point of being (inaudible)? That was the perception of society.

And society places a major part on how the youth in this generation of the millennials – (inaudible) – from a lot of things to where we are – all our – (inaudible) – social media to where – (inaudible) – decide what we are to who as to – (inaudible) – or the next – (inaudible). That's really what – (inaudible) – of not education or what's your highest score on your SAT or what college you can get into.

MR. : – (inaudible) – (Chuckles.)

MR. MILLER: You said you can name your – (inaudible). – (inaudible) – a couple sentences about the GED and the SAT.

MR. : A lot of people, when they – (inaudible) – you, do you have your GED? It's like, cool, you have it, but it's not what society tells you you should have. Society tells you you should have your high school diploma by the age of 17 or 18. Society tells you you should have a associates degree and then a master's degree and then a bachelor's and then a doctorial or professional degree. Well, it's not like that in how our millennial generation looks at it.

And I don't want to – (inaudible) – the media, I can see a rapper or an R&B artist or a country star with all these brands and they tell us to buy these things or to go do these things. So I'm like, cool, this is what the people that I look up to is doing, why should I not do it? They don't tell us, stay in school, get an education. And a lot of these hip-hop stars and country artists, they don't inform you that they have a college degree.

They actually graduated from high school and a lot of things that they're – (inaudible) – about are not their true life.

MR. : – (inaudible) – so the reason they don't want to do it is because it has a lot to do with pride, greed and I believe – (inaudible). If you're not – (inaudible) – on motivation and encouragement later on in life, it's not – (inaudible). You can't handle the spotlight. You can adapt to the surroundings and I believe you're supposed to adapt to others surrounding you that you become part of, because – (inaudible).

I'd like to say I like being – (inaudible) – to the work, because I think that is the reason, because you don't know what – (inaudible). When you're go into not knowing the (inaudible), you get used to that. So later on in life on your own, you don't know how to handle it. – (inaudible) – everybody wants to talk on the microphone. (Chuckles.)

MR. : – (inaudible) – what Tyler said, I think it's easy for us young people to say that this is what society wants and the – (inaudible) – cultural conventions into some big machine, but if a lot of times you sat down and you really planned out your life, you would see that what society wants is not – (inaudible) – society wants is usually what's better. And at least you feel like you're being forced in that it's only because those around you often support in a way that they don't actually understand how to break it down to you.

So I think that we should get rid of that language where society wants this, society wants that, kind of separate ourselves from being against society and just say, what do you want, what do I want? I want to go to a two-year college. That's what I want to do and if that's something that society has curated for me because of my age and my gender, whatever, that's only going to help me in the long run.

MS. SAM: Okay. Moving on to the next question. Who else in your life helps you with your future plans?

MR. : My wife helps me with my future plans. That's pretty much it. (Chuckles.)

MR. : I can say my brother – (inaudible) – group home from the group home stuff and he – (inaudible). My friends have also (inaudible), my supportive adults at DHR and DSS, my biological – I have a – (inaudible) – small support to help me and push me along.

MS. : Well, I would say a lot of people from my program (inaudible), because before I go in there, I never said I'm going to college and with the support and help from them, I pursued – (inaudible) – and they're way supportive of it.

MS. : I would say, what she was saying, that it's the same that we – (inaudible) – my teacher. I love my teacher, Ms. Smith (sp). She is just so wonderful. (Chuckles.)

It's more so – I feel the staff has – (inaudible) – and more so who you hang around, because it could be like say she was a person that I wanted to hang around and she is a bad influence on me, they are prohibiting me from going out there and getting what I need to get done and doing what I need to do. I just think it's around the people that you live in your life, things like that.

MR. : – (inaudible) – questions – (inaudible) – – (Chuckles.)

MS. SAM: Who else helps you in your life with your future plans?

MR. : I would have to say Ms. Panky (sp), she's over there. If it wasn't for her, I don't know where I'd be, because this really is a long road out here and – (inaudible) – – (Chuckles.)

So – (inaudible) – Ms. Panky – (inaudible). She's been like a mother figure replacement and not anybody I want to replace her with. – (inaudible) – (Chuckles.)

MR. : So my support comes from my peers on the youth advisory board, my dad – well, he's my foster dad, but we don't use foster, so I just say my dad, my social worker and my independent live-in coordinator. They all support me. There was a time where I was going through some tough things and I felt like quitting, just letting everything go. My dad said, if you're going to do that, you've got to get up out of the house and I didn't want to get out of the house. (Chuckles.)

That's the whole reason right there. And then my social worker is saying, I'm not your biological mom, but like I said, I speak to her like I'm the biological – (inaudible) – – (Chuckles.)

You know, motivates – (inaudible) – – you know, – (inaudible) – biological or not, they're there. I mean, I'm grateful for them.

MS. : What motivates me is one of my – (inaudible). She goes to my school now. She motivates me with everything, like if I need help with my daughter, she's the main person that I call. My (inaudible), I call her. (Chuckles.)

She's the main one that motivates me. Even when mom and dad (inaudible), she was the main person that was here for me and she's one – (inaudible).

MS. SAM: Okay. – (inaudible) – what was your first interaction with the program and tell me about that experience, if you can recall.

MR. : So my first interaction with the youth advisory board was, are they going to like me, these people look like they know what – (inaudible) – about their stuff, they already established their leadership skills, – (inaudible) – about their business, I'm new, I'm young, I don't know what I'm doing. First meeting everyone welcomed me with welcome arms. It was like, so tell us about yourself. They put me on the spot. You know, I was nervous, of course, but it was a wonderful experience.

It wasn't what I was expecting. I wasn't expecting strangers to become family and that's how it turned out to be.

MR. : My first encounter with YouthBuild – (inaudible) – quite easy. I wasn't nervous, because I knew everything I had to do, because I was tipped by one of my friends that – well, he insisted that I come to the program. So I knew what I had to bring. So everything (inaudible), why did I want to join the program. People were all smiles. So I felt it was welcoming – (inaudible).

MR. : My first reaction was confusing, because I went there and I was speaking at the meeting. It was like everybody just paid attention to what I had to say, like I was the most important person in the room when I was talking, but it was very new to me. It was very likable. It was a very lovable situation and family orientated role, but it really blew me out of the water. I expected it to be family, but there were people (inaudible), what is he doing, why is he here? So it was completely opposite of that.

MS. : My first interaction was actually good. Usually I have people blow me off, because I have a complete attitude problem, but – (Chuckles.)

I went to Job Corps and it was just different. I had people there who really cared and really understanding to my situation and helping me mold into a young lady that I need to be with controlling my attitude.

MS. : Well, my first interaction when I went to (inaudible), I didn't know I was going to come (inaudible), like people that I've come – (inaudible) – with and stuff like that. But I was just like, what am I going to start? But I was just so motivated and I wanted to be in there. Then they were like, you have to do interviews and stuff and I started getting nervous. I was like, interviews, I'm not going to make it and stuff like that.

You all are going to like me. Then I'm like – or I went through and they gave me my papers and stuff. They're like, you can come back. And I was like, I get to go (inaudible), I'm sorry. I said, that's what I wanted to do. (Chuckles.)

MR. : My first encounter was, when I get my GED, I want to – (inaudible) – my voice heard, I want to be a part of the leadership committee, what activities I can be a part of. And then it's the whole waiting process. You know you're about to start the program, but you look at the calendar, – (inaudible) – calendar – (inaudible) – hurry up. That's how it went for me.

MR. : My first encounter was a lot of anxiety at first. It was – (inaudible) – inner city. And when I went in there, I was like they're going to sit me in a room, sit me on one computer, lock the door and do these – (inaudible). (Chuckles.)

And then when you walk in, though, the staff just smiles at you and it's like we're going to study first and we're going to sit down. You can take your coat off and you can breathe. I was like, okay. (Chuckles.)

So it was a scary experience, but it was also a huge learning experience, because it taught me how to utilize nervousness to kind of conquer my – (inaudible). I was told that whatever is in the way is in the way. And so – (inaudible) – when I got set in front of a computer. I just turned that let me hurry up and get out of here and do my best and it really works. And I think that the staff, the smiles, the encouragement and the warmness really helped with that process.

MS. : My first experience at YouthBuild was it was a whole bunch of experiences. I was nervous, I felt like it was a very (inaudible), because it was like thousands of people are applying and they only can accept 450. So I'm like, I've got to get in here. And the staff that was around, all of them knew (inaudible), we're speaking to everybody individually about their situation. So it made me feel a little more comfortable, but it made me want to be able to stand out more and become more outspoken so I did get accepted.

MS. SAM: Okay. Well, next question, thinking about the opportunities or challenges, (inaudible), what was it that made you enroll in this program?

MR. : So the things that made me enroll are that the staff advisory board was – I have two other siblings in foster care and I'm a really family oriented type of person. I'm the type of person to ignore my needs and cater to my family first. And being in foster care or being in the home that I'm in now, he taught me that in order to help someone else, you've got to help yourself first. Well, being on the youth advisory board, they also taught me that you've got to accomplish your goals, you've got to get your degree before you try and help your mom and your brother and your sister.

So I joined the youth advisory board for motivation and support to allow me to continue my journey on that path to get my degree and get my career. So once that goal is accomplished, I can go back, mom, I just bought a house, you ready to move in? Hey Jerana (sp), you ready to come move in with your big bro? I'm ready to take you in, come on, come – (inaudible). So that's why I'm on this path.

MR. : I went to the same conference and what motivated to go into this program is I'd seen things I didn't like in foster care and I had certain encounters in who I wanted to change and I wanted to make a difference – (inaudible) – personality. I'm not the person that – (inaudible). I don't take no for an answer, if there's not a door there for me, I'm going to build a door and open it myself. So – (inaudible) – that would show up to me and the things that were said within the same – (inaudible) – I was like, this is something important.

And a lot of people don't know and they look down on foster care. It's like, you're a foster kid, – (inaudible). I don't have to pay for college, you do. (Chuckles.)

So while you're allowing me to do all of that – while you're in your college debt, I'm going to be somewhere in a nice hotel relaxing and probably on the beach front. So – (inaudible) – I always want to go back and help my family. I have younger brothers and sisters and even though they try – (inaudible) – my mother back at me, I really don't pay attention to that. And I want to go – (inaudible) – the situation she's in and the lifestyle she lives.

So like you say, you have to get your education first and help yourself before you help anybody else and that's my motivation every single day I wake up.

MS. : That motivated me to – (inaudible) – to hopefully want to be a nurse. – (inaudible) – and take care of them, because I really want to be a nurse.

MR. : What motivated me to join YouthBuild was I'm going to be honest, it was boredom. I just graduated from – (inaudible) – and these same skills that I had and the broad knowledge and friends just enlightened me of a program that was just down the street from where I lived and I didn't think anything about it, which was kind of awkward. – (inaudible) – they do all that. So I enrolled just for the knowledge and – (inaudible).

My younger brother, he – (inaudible). He said that he – (inaudible). He had – (inaudible) – to work. He – (inaudible) – to get in trouble. So if you – (inaudible) – things – (inaudible) – productivity, then you really can't get in trouble and I didn't.

MR. : What motivated me was I got – (inaudible) – to feel a part of something and I knew I could've. So that's kind of what motivated me and like I said, when you've got too much time on your hands, that's when it first started up, especially you've got goals that you've got and – (inaudible). I don't care what nobody says, time is everything and if you don't have time management skills, then you will be – (inaudible).

And you know (inaudible), because – (inaudible) – people say – (inaudible). So if you – (inaudible) – you're not nowhere near it then, you know – (inaudible) – change. That's the question that you could ask our youth – (inaudible) – to change – (inaudible) – change.

MS. : What motivated me was my brother. When I was dropping out of school at 17 just to work full-time so I can take care of her, eventually I got tired of the minimum wage that I just wanted better for her. So I enrolled in YouthBuild originally to get my high school diploma and I did, but getting my certification in – (inaudible) – and certified nursing, it made me be like I want to keep going, I want to show my daughter that whatever life throws at you, you can always overcome it and get to going that you never thought you could be.

MR. : What motivated me was at a young age, I was just living with a – (inaudible). And so they told me – (inaudible) – if I had a certificate. Well, I told people, listen, – (inaudible). You can't say, I've got this. (Chuckles.)

That's pretty much it.

MS. SAM: Was there anything that kept you from enrolling in the program sooner?

MR. : I didn't know it was there. (Chuckles.)

It was the same – (inaudible) – from joining the program earlier is I had to be part of my local board and – (inaudible) – and you have to fill out this application. And one thing was – (inaudible). But he told – (inaudible) – – what he told me is you can build up a resume and show them that you are applicable for the position or to join a board. Then – (inaudible) – can necessarily be (inaudible), because that's a loophole in almost every job or organization in this world.

They say you need to (inaudible), but they're not necessarily met by the people that's been here for years and years to come. So they can fire from under (inaudible), there's no way to turn them down. So that was the only thing that really was – (inaudible) – was not knowing that I could join sooner by knowing these applications and these loopholes that every organization knows.

MS. : What kept me from enrolling in my program now is I was looking into other programs and seeing, did it fit what I like or whatever? After a while, I started giving up, because I'm not thinking about (inaudible), like the – (inaudible) – and stuff like that and the enrollment was too long for me. And I was like, I don't want to do it and I kept on being lazy, like I don't want to do it. And that's probably the only – (inaudible).

MR. : What stopped me was – (inaudible) – myself and I hold myself responsible, because – (inaudible) – did the research on my time out of school. And what does (inaudible)? That's how I felt.

MR. : So what held me back a little was me being involved in too much. I have to put my hands in every little thing. And my social worker and my dad was like, Antonio, no. If I could put my hand in one more bucket, and they said, no. Pause real quick, finish this and then you can join and I eventually joined.

MR. : What stopped me was this severe lack of marketing for nonprofit alternative education programs. You know, a lot of times, you hear all this stuff about things that you would have to pay for, you had to come out of pocket for. So when the idea was presented to me, – (inaudible) – another – (inaudible) – my GED. I was like, I'm not going to pay this much, I'm not going to pay that. And then on the corner of our street, there's a – (inaudible) – that will do all that for you for free and you don't see any commercials for it.

You don't find a billboard. There's no magazine ads. So you're just stuck waiting for that one person who is connected to that, connected to that, connected to that to come find you and tell you. So I think that what stopped me and maybe a lot of other people in the program is lack of exposure, lack of advertising. It's all word of mouth, but there's really no place where it's hard to speak, because you don't have education, the word of mouth dies very, very quickly.

MS. SAM: Okay. Thinking about your enrollment process, what was your experience like getting into the program?

MS. : It was easy. (Chuckles.)

MS. : Well, they make you – (inaudible) – tell you everything – (inaudible). They tell you everything you need to bring. They set your interview up, you bring everything and get your butt in there. It's not that hard. Bring – (inaudible). I mean, you've got to want it for yourself, but it's – (inaudible).

MS. : The enrollment process at YouthBuild was a little, I wouldn't say hard, but it was long. We had to first go through information sessions and then interview and then once we got done with our interviews, if we got high enough, we were invited for little (inaudible), which was eight days. And those eight days were like if you get too (inaudible), you can't come back. If you're (inaudible), you can't come back. You know, it was from all the way – (inaudible) – to the corner of – (inaudible).

A lot of – (inaudible) – there was no days – (inaudible). (Chuckles.)

But on the last day, when we went to the accepting – (inaudible) – ceremony, they started saying we' have too many people, we're going to start naming people – (inaudible) – that won't be – won't come back. And it was like, anybody – (inaudible). It's like, we all – (inaudible) – eight days, but we're – (inaudible). You know, when we found out we all got accepted, it was like a big weight was lifted off our shoulders. It was – (inaudible).

MR. : The enrollment for YouthBuild, when I was (inaudible), it was – (inaudible). I already had a high school diploma. So it was just a matter of me having the documents ready and getting the thumbs up. I got the thumbs up. (Chuckles.)

MR. : So the application process for the youth advisory board, it was pretty simple. Make sure you're in good standing with the social worker, your independent live-in coordinator and then your – (inaudible).

MS. SAM: What was the paperwork like and was it easy for you to get everything that you needed?

MR. : Paperwork was simple. I think it was a two-page application. You had to write a short paragraph. I don't want to say an essay, but it was like a paragraph of, what do you think you could bring to the team and it was simple. We didn't really need any certain certification or IDs or anything. We just needed a signature and that paragraph.

MR. : The (inaudible), it's just a simple – there's no – (inaudible) – or chokehold. You just kind of throw out a couple of – (inaudible) – here, social security number, your basic stuff, your – (inaudible) – docs and then your – (inaudible).

MR. : – (inaudible) – for YouthBuild – (inaudible) – is other documents, applications, the – (inaudible).

MS. MARKLEY: Can you guys talk about some of your friends that maybe don't have those vital documents and what may have been (inaudible)?

MR. : That is what prohibits those vital documents.

MS. MARKLEY: Right. So if one of you could speak about that process, help in trying to get those documents.

MS. : YouthBuild, there was a lot of people that – you know, we had to bring spoto IDs, proof of residence and stuff like that, but a lot of people didn't have spoto IDs and stuff like that, social security, birth certificates. So what they did was they actually helped them give them money to get their IDs so they could probably start to get their social security card and stuff like that. (Chuckles.)

MS. SAM: Okay. Thinking about the design of the program, what did you expect to gain from your program and is anything missing?

MR. : No. Nothing is missing. I got every piece of leadership skills that I ever wanted and dreamed of and beyond. I have spoke with hundreds, been to the White House, went down to Capitol Hill and listened to – (inaudible) – speak there. There's nothing more that I actually can want. There's things that I (inaudible), but the only thing I really can say to people that stopped is that when you don't give yourself –

You know, everybody says give 100 percent, 100 percent only goes so far. That's what the world revolves around is 100 percent. This is what somebody told me, a former – (inaudible) – alumni. He said, if you work as hard as the next person, you won't get anywhere. If you work twice as hard as the next person, you will be equal to the next person. If you work three times as hard, you go past the next person.

So it's all about how you live your life on what things you want to do to get the leadership skills that I have received.

MR. : So what I expected to gain from the youth advisory board was experience, leadership skills and opportunities. I've had so many opportunities, like Tyler said. I met with my delegates, senators, congresswomen and men, internships. Like I stated earlier this morning, I had an internship at DHR, internship at DSS. I get these wonderful opportunities to speak at conferences, such as this.

I mean, what else am I missing? I don't know. If you guys want to throw in some money, I mean – (Chuckles.)

MS. : What I expected to get from YouthBuild was just – (inaudible) – with the program and I got so much more. You know, I left with three certifications, a trip to Puerto Rico, working on getting my bachelor's degree. You know, I've been given a support system, a family and basically, community service – you know, I never did that before coming to YouthBuild. Also, the professional development skills.

You know, I probably wouldn't have been able to talk in front of all these people in here and I can't believe I'm doing it right now. (Chuckles.)

MR. : I expected to get extensive training in a construction course and I received multiple certifications, which I passed all the tests and received all the certifications. I wasn't expecting the support. It was foreign to me. That support and friendship is like (inaudible), like do you really care if I (inaudible)? Well, they do. They put you in – you got your foot in the door, so they want you to go.

I didn't expect so many cool people that was in my neighborhood that I didn't know that lived in my neighborhood. The staff was so supportive. They cared about if I (inaudible), if I was late – (inaudible) – this day. It was everything I expected and more.

MR. : I got mostly what I was expecting in terms of academic. I would say, speaking for those who I know personally who – (inaudible) – hadn't been in a program at all, the element of psychological help, that's missing. And I'm not saying in terms of therapy sessions. The staff does do their part to make comfortable, make them get that confidence. The confidence coin goes so long when there's an emotional barrier to being there.

So I think that if there would be some sort of funding for mental health services, not therapy, just some form of (inaudible), some form of – (inaudible) – where you're allowed to take it over and it's all paid for, but we're allowed to take it again – (Chuckles.)

– because it's weird going from the ghetto to this nice building where you're expected to be a different people, take on those aspects of a professional business man. That's not – it should be expected, but it should be expected there's going to be some barriers and those should be all brought down with some type of funding.

MR. : To add onto my expectations, I said it was everything that I hoped for. And they also did (inaudible), like they actually gave me a stipend to learn and stuff, which was helpful, particularly.

MR. : Well, I expect a stipend and a trip to Puerto Rico. (Chuckles.)

I mean, what else should I be getting?

MS. SAM: What are some of the reasons that you have been successful in your program? What does success look like for you? What are some of the reasons that your peers have been unsuccessful? Start off with what are some of the reasons that you have been successful in your program?

MR. : – (inaudible). People are – (inaudible) – meeting – (inaudible) – Wilson, meeting Wanda of Good Morning America, meeting Dara McDaniel (sp) – (inaudible) – DMC, meeting a lot of former – (inaudible) – YouthBuild people who would understand who you were or that's what they are, having more of my biological family so I don't have bits of pieces of who is my family, where do I come from. I actually know my roots.

So I was dislocated – (inaudible) – until I was 16. So having that motherly – (inaudible) – and having brothers to show me what brotherly love is and how not to leave family and to stick around, you don't walk away when things get tough.

It's an hour-long list of why I have been successful. Go on a leadership retreat with the board, leading a conference like this over and over again. I don't know what else to say – (inaudible).

MR. : What made me successful; I just thought about it, the first thing is you've got to have self-determination. You've got to want to be successful. Without the want, I don't know. So self-determination, the support, like Tyler said, I love my support system group. If I fall back, I know that they've got me. And the last thing is the opportunity. I need the opportunity to be successful. I need the opportunity to speak at conferences.

I need the opportunity to have an internship. I need the opportunity to gain those experiences. So that's what made me successful.

MR. : Success to me looks like having financial ability, seeing my kids go through college. I think it's different aspects of things. Successful as a person, you want to grow and be mature, be caring and in tune with society and helping people. Career-wise, you want to have a nice career that you enjoy and you love and that pays you handsomely. (Chuckles.)

Not just money, of course, it's the fulfilment. And having finer things, that's success. That's – (inaudible).

MR. : What helped me succeed was a lot of – to make mistakes, because what's hard to conceptualize, when you're in those big offices, is that we don't always know everything. We don't come in knowing it and then choose not to do it. We come in choosing not to do it, because we don't know it. And so a lot of the programs that I was in before I went to E3 was they expected a lot from you.

They expected a lot and they expected mistakes to happen on your own time. They expected mistakes to not be some consequential little thing you're going to do on the side, but you're going to get (inaudible), because you have to, because we tell them you have to. When I was at E3 and I was (inaudible), he pulled me aside and he told me, that's not what you're – this is going to last. It may feel like right now is the day, you missed a day and that's it, but you just missed four hours of learning, you missed time.

And I think having people who understand that you're still (inaudible), – (inaudible) – understand that this is an innate behavior you're born with – (inaudible) – learn. This is what helps you to – (inaudible).

MR. : So what success looks like to me is, like he said, financial stability where you just wake up, you don't have to go outside the door struggling wondering how am I going to pay my rent, how am I going to feed my children, if you have children, am I going to get a job, am I going to get this job? So success if waking up stress-free. I mean, I know you guys are going to have stress, because there's small things, but stress-free, you're in the career that you love, you love what you do. That's what success looks like to me.

MR. MILLER: What's the third part?

MR. : I think the third part was why don't your peers succeed.

MS. SAM: What are some of the reasons that your peers have been unsuccessful?

MR. : I would say they don't have the determination or those who do have the determination, lack of marketing. It's not promoted, it's not out there, like Anthony said. It was down the street from him and he didn't know. Oh no, that was you. Yeah. So marketing, like these opportunities have to be broadcasted. Put it on a billboard, put it on a commercial. I'm not sure if they've got money for that – (Chuckles.)

– but just put it on a – (inaudible). Just let them be known.

MS. SAM: Think about our peers that joined the program and sometimes they wind up leaving or they're not there anymore, sometimes they disappear. Think about reasons why they maybe aren't successful.

MR. : I think that would come to lack of support. I mean, I know I fell by the wayside sometimes and I had that net to catch me. It's all support and trust.

MR. : I know a couple of people that didn't finish the program. And I think something like for the panel (inaudible), we had a discussion – (inaudible) – with the program – (inaudible) – and why they didn't finish. Some of it was stress, having a child and then baby mama drama and lack of transportation to get to where they needed to be. Also, pride got in the way of people telling them what to do. They weren't used to being told to – in reality, they're adults.

Never mind (inaudible), they're adults. So if you get spoken to like a child, it makes you go off guard and get – (inaudible). And I know that if you give somebody a negative reaction, they're going to react in a negative way. So just – (inaudible) – I gather from people that didn't finish the program.

MR. : They're not mentally disciplined. – (inaudible) – said about change was the atmosphere. They're not used to being thrown into – (inaudible). Everybody just centers their attention on – (inaudible). Everybody is different.

MS. SAM: Definitely the ability to – (inaudible) – and the ability to persevere through challenges and crises in life. Sometimes it can be hard for an adult, of course and just imagine when a young adult is going through something and the many trials and tribulations they have to encounter on top of trying to become a better version of themselves, especially among the – (inaudible). But let's jump back into our program. What keeps you coming back each day to your program?

MR. : What keeps me coming back is to know that I'm actually changing something. I know that I'm making a difference not only among us, but to lives of other people around me. I made a – (inaudible) – in Maryland – (inaudible) – where it gives guidelines – (inaudible) – from 14, 15, 16 to 18 and 21 and it tells you what support that you have, what programs are out there for you to go reach.

And it's giving – (inaudible) – about their social workers who – (inaudible). So just knowing that I helped do that – (inaudible) – and I know that they know information that I know. – (inaudible) – every day and motivates me – (inaudible) – something else I can change in the world – (inaudible) – advocate for youth around the whole world or around the United States. You know, what can I do to advocate regularly – (inaudible) – the voices needed for everybody.

MR. : – (inaudible) – success – (inaudible) – later on in life so I can have – (inaudible). And I remember when I came back from – (inaudible) – or I've been in your shoes – (inaudible). You can't teach that – (inaudible) – young lady – (inaudible). So I try to tell them, based on my experience – (inaudible).

MS. : What kept me coming back was during the – (inaudible) – every day, like it really does something to the people, like it makes your day and if you don't come, you're going to get them text messages, like where are you, – (inaudible). They might even show up at your front door. (Chuckles.)

Their type of support is totally amazing. And even the fact that I've graduated already last August and I'm still up there once a week having conversations with the post-secondary group about – (inaudible) – or where I'm going, how big – (inaudible) – and stuff like that. It's really amazing.

MR. : After I graduated, what kept me coming back was the fact that – (inaudible) – if I was unemployed. – (inaudible) – situations and I felt I was more comfortable asking them – (inaudible).

MR. : As a graduate at E3, what keeps me coming back is the transitional services that they have, because right now, I'm currently attending a College Success – (inaudible) – class, which they will help you pay for a class once you complete the programs. And what also keeps me coming back is moments like these where I am given opportunities to speak for those who weren't able to be here, who weren't chosen for this or those sitting at home still studying for their GED, who haven't passed it yet.

What keeps me coming back is realizing that there's people who are still stuck, people who are still trying and knowing that if I can take a little bit of what I've learned and give it back in a positive way, I'll always come back when opportunities like these are available.

MR. : So like Anthony and Tyler said, there's nothing like giving back to the community, the community that helped shape you to be the person who you are today. I would like to pay it forward like they helped me. So I've got to help them and the next person. That's just the type of person I am. And then there's no better feeling that success. Everyone in this room, I'm pretty sure you guys have reached that level of success.

Whether it's a small goal or a long-term goal, you guys reached the end. I'm pretty sure when you guys reached it, you've got to feel pretty good about it; right? That feeling of success is wonderful and I'm liking that I'm reaching my small goals and I'm continuing on my path to my long-term goal.

MS. SAM: With respect to time, I want to ask you a question regarding transition. And probably some of you have graduated already or some of us are still in the program, let's think of this question as what do you think you will need when you leave your program? Or what does our next coming cohort need as they leave the program?

MR. : When you leave the – (inaudible) – program, I think one thing that I think I would need is just a little push in the right direction. That's about it. I mean, you can say you know all the information and you know where you to go, but it's good to have that extra push to say, just go down this path in two days. I think – (inaudible) – has done a lot in terms of – (inaudible) – to a whole different direction and a lot more network and opportunities where more doors open and you're – (inaudible). So – (inaudible).

MR. : So the one thing that I would need when I transition would be the support. Well, I age-out on my birthday, January 1st. So once that hits, social worker is gone and the peer live-in coordinator is gone, – (inaudible) – is gone and I don't want to look at it like that. I want to be able to still call on you when I have my, quote-unquote, "life situations." I would think that I developed a good relationship with the support system that I have now to call upon those people if I have an everyday life question or situation.

And then the other thing that I would need or I think any youth would need when they're transitioning is opportunities. Reach back to the alumni, say I need your help with this, here's an opportunity for you to do this, opportunities and support.

MS. : Given my program – well, – (inaudible) – program, I actually called them on graduation – (inaudible) – text me – (inaudible) – and they call me and make sure I'm good. (Chuckles.)

It was like now that I'm probably – (inaudible) – – I can – (inaudible) – say I'm having trouble in this class and I need help with this paper or I'm feeling like I'm falling behind, I need a little push and they're always there to give it to me, like you've got this, you can do this. They help me prioritize my time, my study time and balance it well, taking care of my daughter – (inaudible). You know, I think the support – I know I still have that support there. So it makes it – (inaudible).

You know, the fact that I'm still getting scholarships and grants and stuff like that from them to pay for school is really (inaudible), because I don't have to think about being in debt and having that float in the back of my mind when I'm thinking about taking – (inaudible) – and stuff.

MR. : I hope that – (inaudible) – resources and hopefully financial assistance. – (inaudible) – more than anything. And I think (inaudible), positive attitude to motivate me – (inaudible).

MR. : Speaking for anyone who are leaving programs like this, I think that it's finding the balance between leaving and being independent and not being – – (inaudible) – professional – (inaudible) – – (Chuckles.)

(inaudible) support you without feeling like you need that person; you know what I mean? Because by the time you leave this program, it's easy to become – you know, it's easier than running back and forth. You want to be able to leave it and feel like you are able to survive on your own without, I don't want to be that person, I want to be able to leave and stay – (inaudible). I think I have – (inaudible) – eight minutes. (Chuckles.)

MR. : The transition for me was smooth and what keeps me coming back is them telling me something – (inaudible). I go there to see how everybody is doing and then I ask them, I need some good news, like make me feel better. (Inaudible). I bring my son up there to say hi to the staff and we just talk, engage and laugh. And that's all I need is is a good laugh and make sure they're okay and I just get back to striving.

MS. SAM: Of course, this question is – (inaudible). What is the best way to keep in contact with youth and young adults?

MR. : (Inaudible, chuckles.)

MR. : Like I said earlier, the thing now is social media. It shows everything. It's not (inaudible), it's not textbook, it's definitely not the – (inaudible). We don't want you to lose any more – (inaudible). (Chuckles.)

(inaudible) and I get to put – (inaudible) – weather alerts coming, amber alerts. It's like, is this what's happening (inaudible)? You're not going – (inaudible) – today. So social media, Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, hashtags, everything like that, it's mainly social media that keeps all of us together, because the internet opens a wide variety of how to expressing into being with one another. It's a lot – once you put something on there, it's hard for somebody not to see it.

It's going to be re-shared and re-posted a thousand times. So you learn. Social media, I believe will be the best thing and sometimes for other people – not just speaking on a couple other youth, sometimes it's that word of mouth connection or the old fashioned way, sending emails and letters. You just have to know what you're dealing with and what person you're talking to. So I like to talk and I like just getting my – (inaudible). (Chuckles.)

I don't mind texting here and there, but call me.

MR. : Speaking for myself, we ask a lot of youth, what's the easiest (inaudible)? Of course, we're going to say Facebook. Of course, you're going to be like send me an emoji and come on. But I think that the experience, the best way is the way that you guys have been doing it. I'm not going to answer a Facebook message from a – (inaudible) – agent or any – (inaudible) – feedback there. If I get a letter, though, if it was official, you shouldn't have to cater to – (inaudible) – Facebook messages, because your job isn't going to send you a Facebook message to tell you to come on.

Your job isn't going to text you and say, come on. They're going to send you a letter and if you can't be aware and wise enough to look at this letter, open it and understand it, then honestly, I don't think you should be allowed to text me my schedule. That's what I think.

MR. : – (inaudible) – over the phone, because a personal voice says a lot about the who, about how you're feeling, – (inaudible) – talk to me. So – (inaudible) – online working on my patience – (Chuckles.)

– or letters, emails, something that – (inaudible). So if I need to know right then and there – I don't have time, like I said, patience. I'm really grateful on that. That's not going too good so far. (Chuckles.)

I don't have – (inaudible). And so I can know if – (inaudible) – about Reverend Tappy (sp) or – (inaudible). Just call me. (Chuckles.)

(inaudible) as far as the email, I'm not – (inaudible). Read the bottom of the sentence that says, you're hired or got – (inaudible). So – (inaudible) – activity – (inaudible) – our agency direct. I mean, – (inaudible) – and that's the only time I don't want to be thrown into the world in this way. (Chuckles.)

MS. SAM: Well, – (inaudible) – how we engage with our young people nowadays, but don't forget that we can, if a young person does feel comfortable with giving you their social media handle, then you probably can contact them that way, but I would probably recommend that you still go with the normal way with either the phone call, the letters or the emails for – (inaudible) – a text, someone's personal account – (inaudible) – professional related opportunities. So moving on, what do you think employers are looking for?

MR. : To be honest, I think employers are just looking for – I mean, we saw the statistics, we saw the facts. You know, they're looking for degrees and high school diplomas, but aside from that, apparently, there's someone who does not have their high school diploma that got a job. What got them that job? Professionalism, self-determination, communication, the small stuff.

MR. : Liability.

MR. : Yeah. The small stuff. So if I'm an employer and I see you coming into an interview and I see that you want this job, you've got to look like that. I downloaded that app, what was it, the – (inaudible). So time management is a little bare; right? (Chuckles.)

So I'm – (inaudible) – on a little thing and I still didn't get hired, because I was late. (Chuckles.)

I like the app. I downloaded all three. I'm going to work with them.

MS. MARKLEY: Funny story from my own staff, because it came from Pittsburgh. – (inaudible).

MR. : I could've sworn I had time to get to it. But see if anybody can help – (inaudible). – (inaudible).

MR. : My mom told me, – (inaudible) – the job you got is the job you want and those are words I live by. Just know what you're walking into. I walked in three interviews overdressed. – (inaudible) – (Chuckles.)

MR. : I believe it's not wasting your time, because you can get everything – (inaudible) – without time wasted. – (inaudible) – everything like that with time. If you wait then, you cannot get that back. Time always moves forward. And I think another thing – (inaudible) – being prepared. You know, they want resumes, they want little things that you have done. So the things that you tell to congressmen, you can actually get a reference from that.

You know, having your awards down, things that you have done, understanding what the job is and trying to qualify yourself or researching so you can know – (inaudible). – (inaudible) – what do you bring to my company? You can tell them, I – (inaudible) – back in 1988, your company had a large failure because of the waterworks and the plumbing system and I believe that if we go – (inaudible) – irrigation system and reduce technology or things like that, it really – (inaudible) – to help you.

So just knowing what you're going into, to researching the job and – (inaudible) – the position you're going into and giving them information at the job interview will help too.

MR. : And I think one key thing is the ability to be taught. If you're teachable and if you show the desire to want to do it, then people will think you want to taught. That'll get you– (inaudible).

MR. : – (inaudible) – wasting my time, because – (inaudible). I wouldn't care about your background and stuff. If you want to work, that – (inaudible). If you want to be – (inaudible). – (inaudible) – background, whatever you've been to, – (inaudible). I'm not here to hear no sad stories – (inaudible). (Chuckles.)

MR. : What I'm looking for from employees, to keep it quick, is I'm looking for alternative education to be taken more seriously, because when you don't go to – (inaudible) – or have a GED, you can have good skills, you can qualify, but there's always that asterisk that says you didn't graduate. I'm looking for that moment where you're allowed to not take that route and you're still able to get a job, because to be honest, we can be given summer jobs and summer programs and all that for the rest of our lives, but if we aren't able to hold a job because of what happened in the past, then that's a totally different kind of thing, because we have to be taken more seriously.

MS. : I would say – (inaudible) – sometimes it's not who you know, it's not even what you know, it's who knows you and what they know you for. So sometimes it's just about being able to be apart from the rest, like it's about being able to stand out and actually meeting people, that you're making connections with people that actually will be able to benefit you in the long run.

MR. : And just quickly to take you back, so at my job, I handle all the interviewing and pulling out the applications and what I tell the applicants on the phone before I schedule their interviews is go ahead, go online, do some research on Ruby Tuesdays to see what we're about and you never know, there might be a pop quiz in your interview. And there's always a pop quiz. So – (inaudible) – interview. (Chuckles.)

But the reason why I say that, because my general manager, he says, the way you can tell that they really want to be here is that they know what the business is about, if they know what Ruby Tuesdays is about. So I kind of just do a little teaching to tell them, go ahead and do some research, that I'm telling you the manager is going to ask you a question. I'm not a manager, but I would definitely ask you a question.

And then last night I was interviewing someone, her personality was really good and I strongly believe she would've been a great addition to the team, however, the way she came into the interview, she wasn't up to par. Remember how we said dressing is up to par. So I said, sweetie, I'm going to set you up for success. I need you to go home, come back again tomorrow, but dress professional.

You're going to get your interview, but I need you to dress for success and – (inaudible). And she said, thank you so much. So I'm going to get my interview? I said, yes, you're going to get your interview, don't worry. I just want to dress you up for success, because you never know, the other managers were looking and talking, I was like, don't worry, I already told her to come back tomorrow. So that's what employers are really looking for.

MS. SAM: I would chime in in saying that what employers are looking for, as a young people, we understand and we know what employers are looking for and they're looking for us like we're looking for them. What I need employers to do is understand that we are assets, not liability and not looking at us as young people who took the untraditional pathway and that are incapable of doing the same thing that the next person is doing at your company.

I need employers to understand that we are assets to their company and we can make big contributions when given the opportunity to become a part of their organization.

MR. : And to gain experience, you have to be given the opportunity. That's a quote that I'm talking about.

MS. SAM: So I would jump in with our last question. I think this would be the last one. What does prepare look like to you? And do you feel confident that you will be prepared?

MR. : Well, it's not like how I'm dressed right now (inaudible), it's like a nice business casual – (inaudible) – that you're comfortable in, something you know you can wear a nice pair of slacks, dress pants, (inaudible), pair of shoes – (inaudible). But have your resume on hand, having the information that you needed to know, you studied it the night before, like you said, you might get a quiz or you might be able to – (inaudible) – a couple of bullet points.

So – (inaudible) – it's like going to school. – (inaudible) – is like going to school, having a nice uniform on, knowing your information and being ready for what the teacher might bring. That's what prepare looks like.

MR. : Well, it all depends what you mean by prepare. If you mean prepare for life, that's broad, because it can vary. I mean, something can happen and you want to be survive like prepared, like with a backpack and a knife – (chuckles) – some eye drops. If you're talking about professionally, you always want to be – it varies with occupations.

If I was a trash man, being prepared if it's raining outside, I've got a poncho or if it gets too hot, I've got to – (inaudible) – that I've got on and – (inaudible). So – (inaudible) – a lot of – it looks different, depending on who's prepared. For me, prepared is how I look right now. So I look like I want whatever I'm going for. I don't look like I'm a joke. I look like I want something and I'm going to get it.

I have a pen to take down notes, being prepared. But being prepared, like I said, it has many different aspects to being prepared.

MR. : I know I've got super – I do want – – (inaudible) – know that, but being prepared means – (inaudible) – and to plan ahead of time, make sure you make eye contact, because eye contact shows a lot about presentation, whether I can take you serious or not. So being prepared means – (inaudible) – all about how you dress, because if I was you, put yourself out there as the professional – (inaudible). It's all about the – (inaudible). If I show you that I mean business – (inaudible). You'll see in my personality, my (inaudible), my confidence levels, – (inaudible).

And – (inaudible) – and I know what I'm getting myself into. I'm not calling myself – (inaudible) – my employer – (inaudible). (Inaudible). Be professional. You know, it's not just attire – (inaudible). That's the (inaudible), but as right now, you've got – (inaudible) – confidence levels, – (inaudible) – supposed to be and – (inaudible).

MR. : Okay. So I have one answer. I really agree with him, looks aren't everything, but sometimes you've just to play it, you've got to take that – (inaudible) – and just play it. You know, you've got to just – hey, you want me to look like this, I got you kind of thing. But like you said, everyone doesn't have it, I totally agree. Prepared, so looks, just get yourself ready the night before. I have a really bad habit of getting ready the morning of, which kind of makes me late on almost everything. (Chuckles.)

So I'm trying to learn how to get ready the night before. And then like you said, always having a note and paper. My advisor, she says, I can't tell if you're prepared, because you don't ever have a note and paper in your hand. I was just like, I'm sorry and I'm the president. (Chuckles.)

If she was here today, she would probably be yelling at me from across the room. So that's what prepared looks like to me.

MS. SAM: And I want to say thank you to all my youth panelists that was able to share. I want to actually give a round of applause to our – (inaudible). (Applause.)

Thank you to the audience for actually taking your time out to listen, because I know that it is one of the hardest things to do in life is listen. So thank you so much for listening to our youth panelists share their experiences, thoughts and ideas. And most importantly, thank you to you all for sharing your experiences, thoughts and ideas. (Applause.)

MR. MILLER: I want to thank our youth panel. I would also like to thank – (inaudible) – training services, Jeff, our E3 Centers, (inaudible), Philadelphia Job Corps centers, Philadelphia Youth Networks, Philadelphia YouthBuild Charter School, PHMC, – (inaudible) – Southeast Regional Workforce Development Partnership and our Youth Service, Incorporated partners for making today a success.

Those on the webinar, please know that this portion of our discussion does not end, but we will continue on this afternoon to inform what technical assistance will be provided in the spring. Thank you all for participating and this will be available shortly.

(END)