Credentials
That Work

JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

# OPPORTUNITY AWAITS

RECONNECTING FRANKLIN COUNTY YOUNG ADULTS TO
SCHOOL AND WORK

By Dave Altstadt, with Mamadou Ndiaye, Mary Wright, and Dudney Sylla

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Columbus Foundation commissioned Jobs for the Future (JFF) to examine the education and employment challenges facing young adults, age 18 to 25, who are not college bound. The Foundation asked JFF to: (1) identify employment opportunities for gaining financial stability; (2) assess local capacity in education and workforce development to serve youth, in particular in preparing for the newly revised GED; and (3) recommend best practices that support system changes and sustainable solutions to addressing youth needs.

In undertaking this research assignment, JFF focused specifically on young adults who are neither attending school nor working or at-risk, known nationally as "Opportunity Youth." To better understand the Opportunity Youth population in Franklin County and their employment and education situation, JFF collected and analyzed demographic and labor market data, conducted a literature review of local and national practices, and interviewed numerous local employers, education and workforce development providers, systems leaders, funders, and young adults.

Below is a brief summation of major research findings:

## Key Characteristics of Opportunity Youth in Franklin County

- Franklin County is home to 20,500 young adults (ages 16 to 24) who are not in school and who are not working. Together they produce a substantial fiscal and social burden, in total exceeding $647,100,000 annually in lost productivity, tax revenue, and higher expenditures on criminal justice, public assistance, and healthcare.

- In 2012, 67 percent of Franklin County students graduated from high school, compared to the state average of 81 percent. Each year 2,000 young adults in Franklin County drop out of district and charter schools.

- An estimated 51,000 Franklin County youth, ages 18 to 24, do not have any college experience, including 18,000 who lack a high school diploma or GED.

- About half of all youth in Franklin County (age 16 to 24) are not working. This includes more than 17,000 youth who are actively job searching but cannot find work, resulting in an unemployment rate of 17 percent (highest among all age categories in Franklin County).

- Young adults have high rates of poverty (37 percent) and low median household incomes ($21,561). One in four young adult households earn less than $10,000 per year, including 40 percent of young African-American households.

## Key Employment Findings

- Four key sectors of the local economy—healthcare, manufacturing, logistics, and call centers—provide good employment opportunities for Opportunity Youth who are able to attain a high school credential. Combined, these sectors had nearly 5,000 job openings in 2013 for high school educated workers; median wages exceeded $13 an hour in 15 of the largest 18 occupations not requiring a college degree.

- However employers, for the most part, are not hiring Opportunity Youth. Employers in these four sectors cited several major reasons including: lack of a high school diploma or GED; a transient work history; lack of foundational/customer service skills; a bad attitude or work ethic; and failure to pass a drug test or disclose a criminal record.

- Workplace challenges faced by youth also must be seen in light of several underlying barriers, such as: unreliable or unaffordable access to childcare; unmet basic needs, such as housing, clothing, and food; weak support networks; and diagnosed and undiagnosed mental health issues. Transportation challenges exist including limited bus routes and schedules. These factors all point to potential strategies for building skills and capacities in Opportunity Youth that can help them succeed in the workforce.

- In focus groups with Opportunity Youth in Franklin County, the youth expressed a desire to find meaningful work, but were unable to identify an industry or occupation that they could pursue. All had held jobs at some point, mainly in the service sector, yet saw no path to advancement.

- The research indicated that the majority of jobs in sectors that pay a good wage (this study defines baseline financial stability for single young adults as $12 an hour and $16.37 for a family of three) and have growth potential typically require more than a high school diploma or GED. Very few other options were found that had a solid career potential without this credential.

## Key Education and Workforce Development Findings

- Re-engaging Opportunity Youth is mostly left up to chance in Franklin County. Only a handful of education and workforce development programs actively recruit or tailor services to meet their specific needs of Opportunity Youth. Among the handful of targeted programs, capacity and impact is limited.

- Of the estimated 18,000 youth (ages 18-24) without a high school diploma or GED, fewer than 2,250 are in dropout recovery schools, and even fewer are enrolled in Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) programs to help prepare for the GED.

- Most dropout recovery charter schools are ineffective (17 percent graduation rate), and there is reportedly limited enrollment of youth in federally funded workforce development services for youth.

- Although local ABLE providers have a good track record of helping Opportunity Youth earn a GED, they have struggled to connect youth to college and careers. Recent changes to the GED are adding new pressures to improve academic readiness and computer skills prior to sitting for the test.

- Most short-term and degree-level education and training programs offered in Franklin County are not geared toward engaging at-risk populations or helping them overcome barriers to employment.

- Education and human service agencies generally lack strong connections and success with employers. Several employers said they are willing to consider job placements for at-risk clients and students, but generally said that these client referrals do not work out. Despite some success stories, employers said schools and agencies should work harder to build and maintain strong relationships with the business community and provide them with the talent they need.

- No local funder is investing specifically in bringing Opportunity Youth into the talent pipeline, while numerous community initiatives have not yet focused on the needs and assets of Opportunity Youth.

## Key Recommendations

- Opportunity Youth have different needs and respond to different strategies than other at-risk populations, even if they share similar risk factors. Without adequate bridge programming, young people lack the educational background and skill levels to succeed in career pathway programs. Some may lack the stability in their lives and maturity to persist and complete. Young adults in particular often need additional support that older adults may not. Therefore, it is critical that education and employment strategies target Opportunity Youth specifically to address their unique needs and build on their unique assets.

- Base programmatic decisions on existing models. **Re-engagement**, **Education Momentum**, **Connection to Career**, and **Youth Development** are the best practices for success with Opportunity Youth. Numerous communities have put these principles into practice through the use of re-engagement centers, back on track and accelerated opportunity program models, college and career bridge initiatives such as Year Up, and barrier removal first approaches.

- The Columbus Foundation may choose to focus its investment and effort narrowly to address a specific unmet need of Opportunity Youth. Or, it might take a large-scale systems change approach (such as Collective Impact or Back on Track) to improve access to and delivery of education and job readiness services.

- Critical areas of focus include: **Secondary credential completion**, by strengthening outreach efforts and improving capacity and effectiveness of diploma and GED

programs at preparing Opportunity Youth for college and careers; and **Job readiness**, by emphasizing foundational skills development, resolving social emotional issues and other employment barriers, and building stronger partnerships with employers.

# INTRODUCTION

Since the Great Recession ended in June 2009, Central Ohio has enjoyed rapid job growth and rising household incomes, making it the envy of other metro areas in Ohio and the nation.[1] Maintaining these economic gains depends upon the Columbus region satisfying employers' increasing demand for skilled, job-ready workers. Recognizing this economic imperative, education, civic, and business leaders are hard at work on a variety of skill-building initiatives, ranging from retraining unemployed and disadvantaged adults for growth industries, to strengthening college and career pathways for high school students, to increasing degree completion and career exposure of college students.[2]

Greater attention must be paid to another critical segment of the workforce—the tens of thousands of young adults in Franklin County who are struggling to get by, start a career, or go to college (Figure 1). Of the utmost concern, Columbus and its surrounding suburbs are home to an estimated 20,500,16 to 24-year-olds, who are neither attending school nor working.[3] Among those over the age of 18, 18,000 do not have a high school diploma or GED. They are disproportionately minorities; African Americans and Hispanics are more likely to drop out of high school and be low-income than their white counterparts.[4]

Nationally, the Opportunity Youth population has been hardest hit by the Great Recession. In fact, by 2014, the total number of employed Americans returned to pre-recession levels for American 25 years of age or older. However, job prospects continue to be dismal for young people between 17-24 years of age trying to establish themselves in the workforce, particularly for those whose credentials top out at a high school diploma or less. Today, the unemployment rate for Opportunity Youth is more than double the unemployment rate for those 25 and over and, worryingly, there has been a marked and continued increase in youth long-term unemployment.[5] On the other hand, surveys tell us that these young people like others their age, strongly desire good jobs and understand the need for skills and credentials. Yet unlike their more privileged and affluent peers, they see few obvious paths forward.

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[1] Yost, Mary. "Columbus 2020 is on track to exceed economic development goals," Columbus CEO. October 2014. Accessed 10/15/14 at http://www.columbusceo.com/content/stories/2014/10/Columbus_2020/columbus-2020-is-on-track-to-exceed-economic-development-goals.html.

[2] For a list of Central Ohio initiatives, see Appendix.

[3] See: http://opportunityindex.org/#6.00/41.162/-84.807/Franklin/Ohio

[4] Additional demographic data are available in the PowerPoint deck accompanying this report

[5] Issues by the Numbers; The Geography of Jobs: Mapping the Recovery; (P.1) Deloitte University Press; June 2014

**Figure 1. Opportunity Youth in Franklin County**
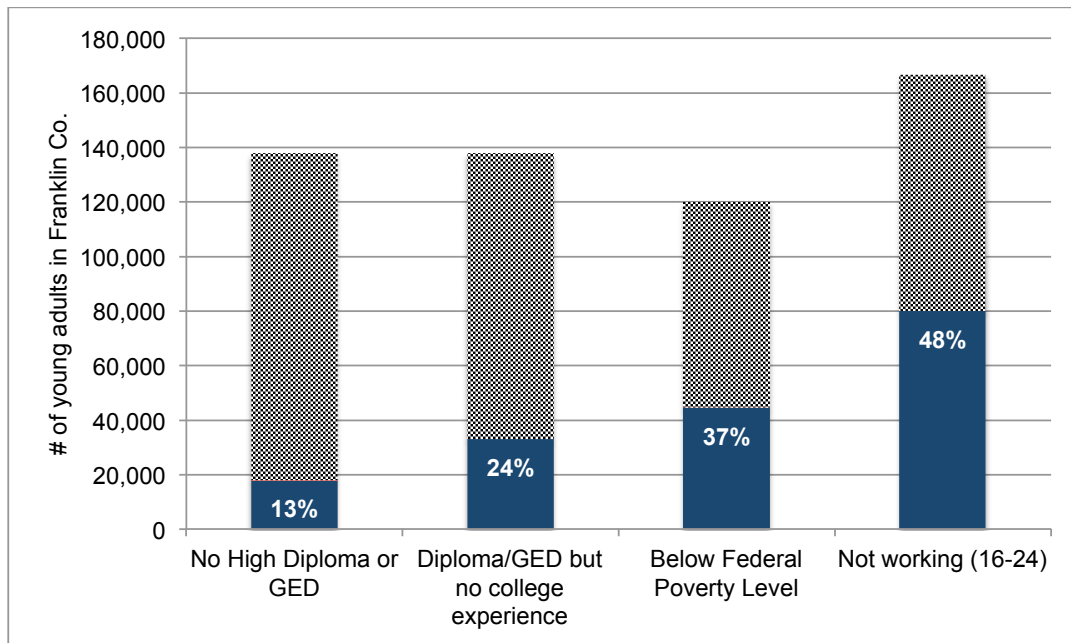
Source: *American Community Survey*, 2008-2012 5-year estimates for Franklin Co.

**No college experience:** An estimated 51,000 Franklin Co. youth, age 18 to 24, do not have any college experience—one-third lack a high school diploma or GED. Each year, 2,000 youth in Franklin County drop out of public and charter schools.

**Living in poverty:** An estimated 44,500 Franklin County youth 18-24 are below the federal poverty level. Franklin County households headed by adults younger than 25 have a median income of just $21,561—far lower than any other age group in the local labor market. One in four young adult households earn less than $10,000 per year, including 40 percent of young African-American households.

**Not working:** An estimated 80,000 youth, age 16 to 24, are not working. This includes more than 17,000 youth who are actively searching for a job, for an unemployment rate of 17 percent. In all, only 62 percent of youth are participating in the labor force—the lowest among Franklin County's working-age population, ages 16–64.

Their disconnection is costly. For each year youth are off track, they produce a substantial fiscal and social burden, to the tune of $37,450 *per* individual in lost productivity and tax revenue and higher expenditures on criminal justice, public assistance, and healthcare.[6] The combined economic burden of disconnected youth in Franklin County alone exceeds three-quarter of a billion dollars *each* year. Municipal and county governments and human service agencies are scrambling with only limited resources to respond to the growing needs of this population.

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[6] Belfield, Clive et al. 2012. *The Economic Value of Opportunity Youth.* Civic Enterprises. Accessed 10/15/14 at http://www.civicenterprises.net/MediaLibrary/Docs/econ_value_opportunity_youth.pdf.
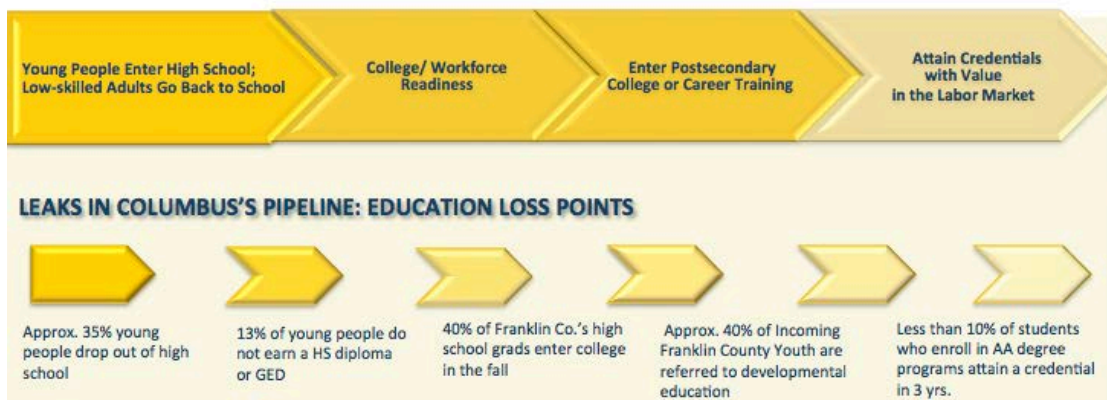
Meanwhile, area employers are facing a dearth in supply of young adult candidates ready to work and able to stay on the job.

Despite their challenges, many of these young adults are resilient[7] and demonstrate resourcefulness, adaptability, energy and eagerness to learn.[8] With the appropriate structures, these young people could be poised to enter career paths that lead to financial stability. For that reason they are now known as Opportunity Youth, as coined in the 2012 publication *Opportunity Road*.[9]

These young adults have "leaked" from the education to workforce pipeline (Figure 2). Reconnecting them to opportunity will require genuine engagement and an unwavering commitment of Franklin County's civic, business, human service, and education leaders as well as youth and their families. Just as important is a willingness from all stakeholders to take on different approaches to school and work.

### Figure 2. Education to Economic Opportunity Pipeline

*By 2020, 64% of all jobs in the Ohio economy will require postsecondary education and training beyond high school*

| Young People Enter High School; Low-skilled Adults Go Back to School | College/ Workforce Readiness | Enter Postsecondary College or Career Training | Attain Credentials with Value in the Labor Market |

**LEAKS IN COLUMBUS'S PIPELINE: EDUCATION LOSS POINTS**

| Approx. 35% young people drop out of high school | 13% of young people do not earn a HS diploma or GED | 40% of Franklin Co.'s high school grads enter college in the fall | Approx. 40% of Incoming Franklin County Youth are referred to developmental education | Less than 10% of students who enroll in AA degree programs attain a credential in 3 yrs. |

Franklin County has many foundational pieces in place to take on this challenge: well-articulated regional goals for education attainment[10] and economic development,[11] an engaged business community, a culture of collaboration and innovation among education and human service

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[7] Bridgeland, John and Jessica Milano. 2012. *Opportunity Road: The Promise and Challenge of America's Forgotten Youth*. Accessed 10/17/14 at http://www.civicenterprises.net/medialibrary/docs/opportunity_road.pdf.

[8] Jobs for the Future interviews with education and workforce development providers and youth in Columbus, August 11-12, 2014.

[9] Bridgeland and Milano 2012

[10] See, Central Ohio Compact: http://www.cscc.edu/centralohiocompact/

[11] See, Columbus 2020: http://columbusregion.com/Columbus2020/About-us.aspx

providers, interested private and public funders, and civic-mindedness and leadership when the need for reform arises.[12] *This report provides the background information and possible strategies for action to help the Columbus region determine its approach for increased attention to and investment in reconnecting Opportunity Youth.*

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***ABOUT THIS STUDY:*** *The Columbus Foundation commissioned Jobs for the Future to examine the education and employment challenges facing young adults, age 18 to 25,[13] who are not college bound. The Foundation asked JFF to (1) identify employment opportunities for gaining financial stability, (2) assess local capacity in education and workforce development to serve youth, in particular in preparing for the newly revised GED, and (3) recommend best practices that support system changes and sustainable solutions to addressing youth needs. In undertaking this research endeavor, JFF interviewed representatives of 16 local employers; three business development and labor market research organizations; 15 education, human service, and workforce providers; and 11 state and local funders, researchers, and systems offices. JFF also interviewed 13 young adults referred by six community groups. In addition, JFF conducted a literature review and analyzed traditional and "real-time" labor market information.*

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[12] See, Columbus Education Commission: http://reimaginecolumbuseducation.org/

[13] Due to constraints with multiple data sources, JFF uses varying age ranges in reporting demographic and employment figures.

# CLOSING THE OPPORTUNITY DIVIDE IN FRANKLIN COUNTY

Columbus has several community-based initiatives that are available to Opportunity Youth. However, existing providers are unable to provide services to all the Opportunity Youth in need.

Opportunity Youth have different needs and respond to different strategies than older adults, even if they share similar risk factors, like joblessness, low skills, or homelessness. Therefore, it is critical that education and employment strategies be targeted specifically to Opportunity Youth and are designed to address their unique needs (Figure 3).

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**Figure 3. Underlying Barriers to Opportunity**

**What is keeping Opportunity Youth from success?**

Responses from education and human service leaders participating in our focus group:

**Weak Supports**
- Unreliable / inaccessible transportation
- Unaffordable childcare
- Lack of education tailored to needs
- Lack of mentors
- No career advancement options
- Lack of family/ friend support

**Personal Crises**
- Unstable housing
- Unplanned birth
- Criminal conviction

**Disincentives to work**
- Low wage/ dead end jobs
- Arduous job application process
- More income/ less hassle collecting public assistance
- Lack of skills
- Substance abuse
- Availability of public assistance

**Past Failure**
- Dropout or poor performance in high school and college
- Spotty/ transient work history

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National best practice research identifies four key components that should be incorporated in an Opportunity Youth initiative:[14]

1. **Re-engagement.** Identifying youth who have been disconnected from education and careers on a local level, understanding the specific needs of the population, and working closely with youth to connect them to programs and supports that help them surmount their individual challenges.

2. **Educational Momentum.** Helping youth reach early and frequent education milestones in addition to attaining longer term education goals, such as completing a high school degree, GED, and postsecondary credential or degree.

3. **Connection to Career.** Connecting youth with relevant work experiences to help them gain the credentials and connections that will facilitate their entry into family-supporting careers.

4. **Youth Development.** Developing the leadership skills and addressing the social and emotional needs of youth to help them become engaged and productive members of their communities.

Below, each component is examined in turn. We assessed the major needs in Franklin County and highlight community-based programs in Central Ohio and across the nation that have put these principles into practice and are achieving success with Opportunity Youth.

## RE-ENGAGEMENT

As is true in most communities across the county, there is no single entity in Franklin County that is tasked with the overall responsibility to re-engage Opportunity Youth. Although area public school districts employ truant officers in an attempt to find absent school-age youth, none of the schools are focused on reengaging older youth in diploma programs.[15] Instead, a wide range of community-based organizations provides varying services to Opportunity Youth. And because there is not a comprehensive approach to targeting services to Opportunity Youth, their participation is left to chance. Even where targeted programs do exist, Franklin County engages

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[14] Corcoran, Mimi et al. 2012. *Collective Impact for Opportunity Youth. FSG*. Accessed 10/20/14 at http://www.aspeninstitute.org/sites/default/files/content/docs/resources/FSG_Collective_Impact_for_Opportunity_Youth_Report.pdf

[15] Until about 10 years ago, Columbus City Schools provided secondary credential completion options for adults through North High School. Through recent efforts of Learn4Life Columbus, the school district and other community partners are exploring new options for reengaging out-of-school youth and young adults to support their work readiness.

just a small portion of Opportunity Youth in secondary education completion programs (Figure 4), employment services[16] or training programs.

Limited funding hamstrings the reach of existing programs. For example, local providers of Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) receive an average of only $639 in federal and state resources *per* student. Comparatively, the county's 16 designated "dropout recovery" charter schools appear to have ample state and federal resources to provide nontraditional pathways to a high school diploma for at-risk youth age 16 to 21. The schools receive $8,525 per pupil; however, their lack of local property tax revenue means they have fewer resources than traditional public schools, which are funded at an average of $10,614 per pupil, even though they are serving youth with high needs. Also, as the next section will show, the performance of these schools is lacking.

**Figure 4. Number of Franklin County Opportunity Youth Enrolled in ABLE and Dropout Recovery Schools, Compared to Need**
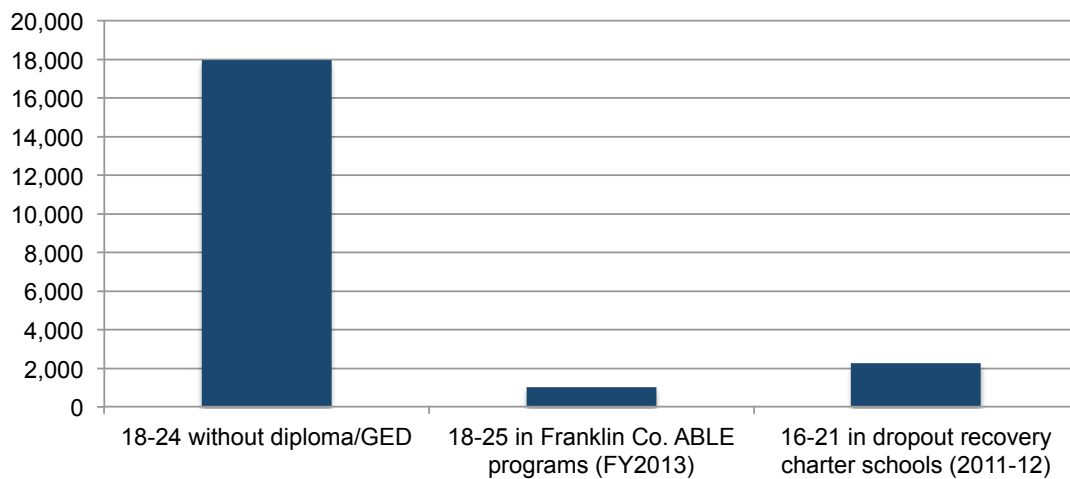


Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Ohio Board of Regents, Ohio Department of Education

How the youth are recruited into these programs also matters. Community-based organizations (CBOs), such as Columbus Urban League and Godman Guild, primarily operate within racial or neighborhood enclaves, respectively, rather than having a broader reach across Franklin County. Moreover, according to our survey of 12 CBOs, Opportunity Youth generally find programs through walk-ins, word of mouth, and advertising—as opposed to through proactive measures by program staff and partner agencies to identify and invite youth in for assistance. A

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[16] COWIC enrolled 41 Franklin County youth in WIA Youth services in PY2012 and 180 youth in PY2013. See, Ohio Workforce Investment Act Program Year 2012 Annual Report. Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. Accessed 10/22/14 at http://www.doleta.gov/performance/results/AnnualReports/PY2012/OHWIAAnnualReport2012.pdf

more active approach is needed, but recruitment should be done in a welcoming, non-punitive manner. Currently, school truant officers and courts are the entities that approach these young people and they are often unwilling or unable to take this approach.

One structure that could be used by Franklin County to develop a more comprehensive effort to reengage Opportunity Youth and offer them support in overcoming the challenges that led to their dropping out of school in the first place is demonstrated in a "Re-engagement Center."

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**Re-engagement Center—***Boston, Dubuque, Omaha, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C.*[17]

Each city has created a neighborhood center devoted exclusively to re-engaging Opportunity Youth in school and work. Staff performs community outreach to identify Opportunity Youth and help them achieve their education and career goals, such as completing high school, earning a GED, enrolling in postsecondary programs, and/or entering/retaining employment. Staff may deliver direct services or make referrals to appropriate partner organizations. The results to date are encouraging. The National League of Cities' Dropout Reengagement Network reports that reengagement centers and programs in 13 cities across the country have reached out to 41,000 young people between 2001-2013, and referred 10,000, or 25 percent of them for enrollment. Of 6,000 confirmed reenrolled students, 73 percent were still in school or had graduated at the end of 2013.[18]

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## EDUCATIONAL MOMENTUM

*"If young people drop out of high school today, they are basically condemned to poverty and social failure."*

> *—Arne Duncan, Secretary of Education*[19]

 Any effort to help Opportunity Youth earn a secondary credential (and go on to postsecondary), first must take stock of the current statistics in Franklin County. According to an analysis by KidsCount, the high school graduation rate for Franklin County was only 67 percent in 2012, compared to the state average of 81 percent.[20]

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[17] Washington DC's center opened October, 2014

[18] Institute for Youth, Education & Families. *2013 Municipal Action Guide: Reconnecting Youth Through Dropout Reengagement Centers*. National League of Cities. Accessed 10/22/14 at

http://www.nlc.org/Documents/Find%20City%20Solutions/IYEF/Education/Final_YEF_DropoutReengagementMAG2013.pdf

[19] Interview on Marketplace October 30, 2014 www.marketplace.org

[20] Moreover, 33 percent of high school seniors in Franklin County did not graduate on time.

As alarming as those countywide figures appear, local dropout recovery schools have not been very effective in graduating students. Despite some innovative practices, such as the YouthBuild Community School, overall just 17 percent of dropout recovery students graduated with a diploma during the 2013-14 school year (Figure 5).

**Figure 5. Number of High School Dropouts, Franklin County**
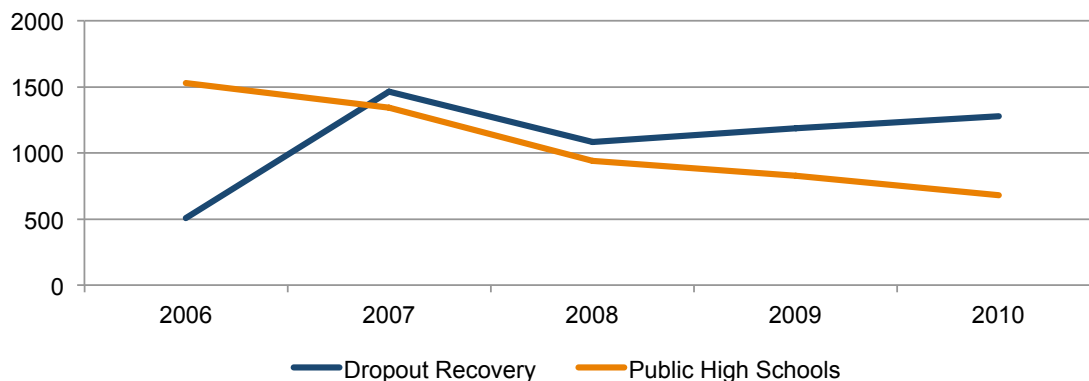


Source: Ohio Education Research Center, data analyzed by Jobs for the Future

At the same time, Columbus City Schools is experiencing significant attrition from 9th to 12th grades (Figure 6) and is in dire need of more effective options for youth who drop out of school. Best practice elsewhere in the country demonstrates that effective schools and programs for former dropouts can routinely achieve graduation rates three to four times higher than those in Columbus. Additionally, very few graduating seniors enroll in and complete college, following similar countywide trends (Figure 7). A forthcoming Ohio Education Research Center study on Columbus City School student outcomes promises to shed more light on the experiences of students leaving the district, including those who enrolled in a dropout recovery school as well as those who entered college.

## Figure 6. Columbus Student Attrition
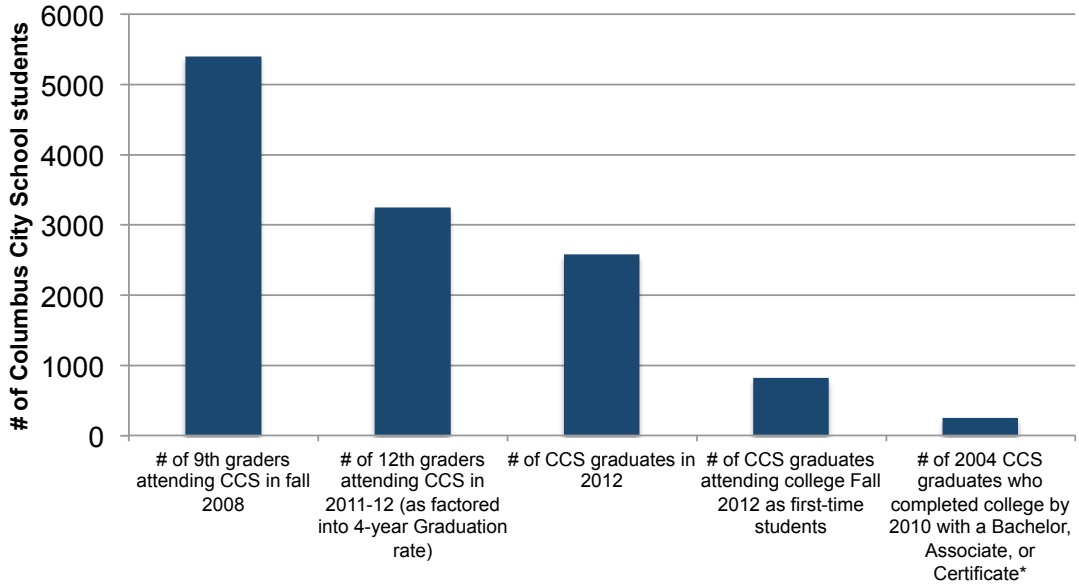


Source: Ohio Department of Education, Ohio Board of Regents

## Figure 7. College Enrollment and Completion Rates for Franklin County Youth
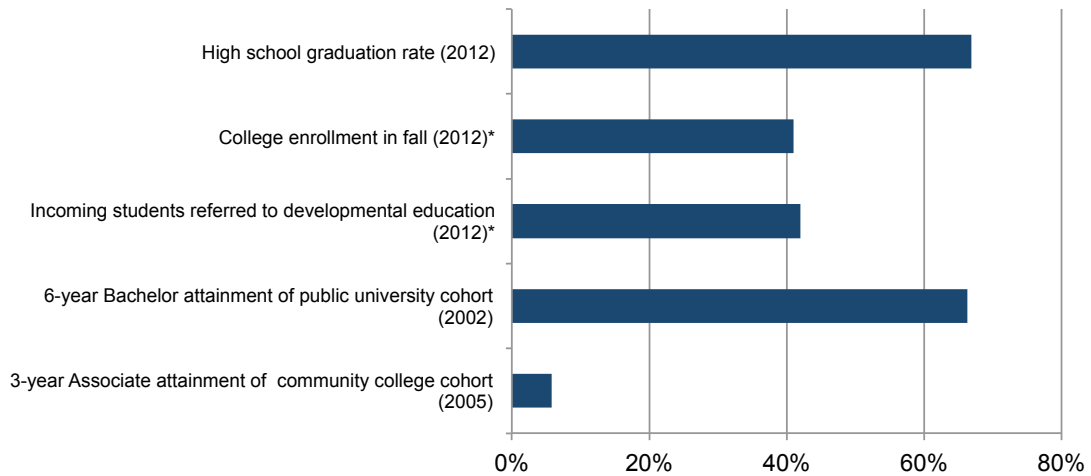


Source: Ohio Department of Education, Ohio Board of Regents

* Factors in only students attend public high schools

In contrast, local ABLE (Adult Basic and Literary Education) providers generally performed well in preparing young adults to pass the GED, though they only serve small numbers of students (Figure 8). Statewide ABLE produces 1 in 4 GED test takers, but account for 1 in 3 awarded a GED. This represents a promising foundation on which to build.

It is too early to assess the impact of the new GED curriculum, the switch to a computer-based test, and the decrease in testing sites across Franklin County, but some immediate drop-off in test taking is anticipated. Increased academic rigor of the new GED is raising the bar for ABLE programs and other GED prep providers in Franklin County to ensure their students are college-ready prior to sitting for the test.[21] Local ABLE programs have struggled to help participants translate their success on the GED to realizing their college and career goals (Figure 8). The struggles of GED holders are reinforced by national research reporting that only one-third to one-half of those with a GED ultimately enroll in postsecondary education; and among those who do, the vast majority drop out after one semester.[22]

Three national models offer promising strategies for helping Opportunity Youth achieve a secondary credential in addition to realizing longer-term education goals.

### Figure 8. Number of Franklin County ABLE Participants, 18-25, by Cohort (FY13)



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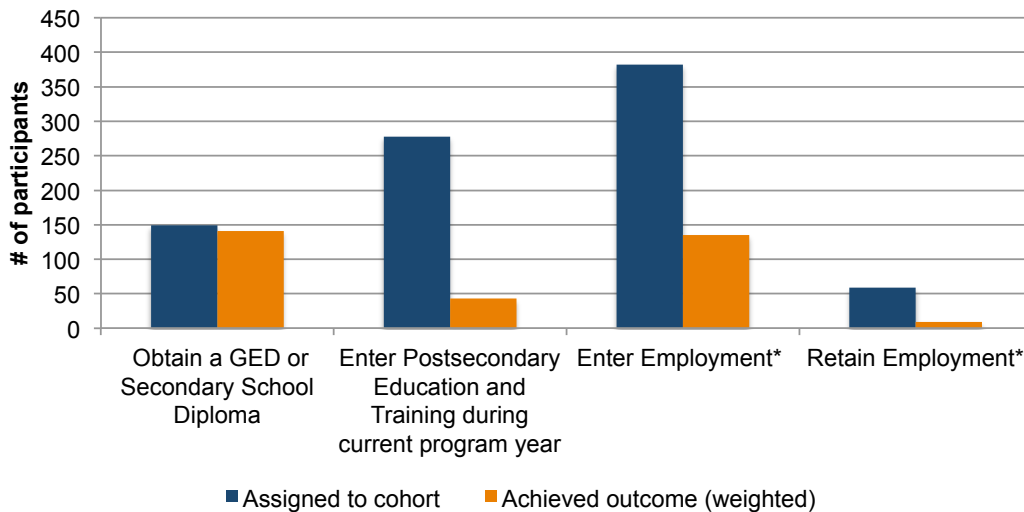
[21] Clymer, Carol. 2012. *Preparing for the New GED Test: What to Consider Before 2014.* The Working Poor Families Project. Accessed 10/21/14 at http://www.workingpoorfamilies.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/WPFP-fall-brief_2012.pdf

[22] Goldberger, Sue. 2007. *Doing the Math: What It Means to Double the Number of Low-Income College Graduates.* In *Minding the Gap*, Nancy Hoffman, Joel Vargas, Andrea Venezia, and Marc S. Miller, eds. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Source: Ohio Board of Regents

* Weighted number; **Incomplete results, only students exiting July 1–Dec. 31, 2012

**Program Models for Improving Educational Momentum**

**Back on Track:** A model developed by Jobs for the Future for the programs and schools working with Opportunity Youth, Back on Track incorporates three phases: Enriched Preparation, Postsecondary Bridging, and First-year Support.[23] Back on Track schools and programs reengage young people who have fallen off track from graduation or dropped out by offering them rich academic, social/emotional preparation and a clear path through college and career training. A number of national networks and their local affiliates—including YouthBuild USA[24] and its Columbus affiliate YouthBuild Columbus, The Corps Network, the National Youth Employment Coalition—are implementing the Back on Track model in New York, Texas, Pennsylvania, Colorado, Illinois, and elsewhere. A third party evaluation by Brandeis University for the Gates-funded Postsecondary Success Initiative, which tested Back on Track as a strategy for building pathways to postsecondary credentials for Opportunity Youth, indicated that high numbers of participating youth (57 percent) are entering some form of postsecondary education through these Back on Track interventions. For youth entering bridge programming after earning a diploma or GED, the numbers are even higher. Youth prepared through bridge programming show evidence of succeeding in higher education: 60 percent are enrolled in full-time study and over 50 percent completed a first year of postsecondary education and training.

**YouthBuild:** Students in Back on Track YouthBuild programs spend half their time in competency-based academic classes and the other half in building trades workshops and jobsites. As a tool to improve retention and financial stability, YouthBuild pays students minimum wage for each hour they spend attending class and on work-related activities. YouthBuild Columbus Community School has taken strides to strengthen pathways to college and careers. Through a dual enrollment agreement, YouthBuild students can earn high school and college credit by attending Columbus State Community College's State Tested Nursing Assistant (STNA) program. Upon completion of the STNA program, they qualify for nurse assistant positions and may consider continuing their education toward nursing and allied health careers. A third party evaluation by Brandeis University of seven YouthBuild programs around the country implementing the Back on Track model—including YouthBuild Community School in Columbus—shows promising outcomes to help Opportunity Youth enter and persist in postsecondary education and training through the use of Back on Track.

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[23] For more information on Back on Track, see http://www.jff.org/initiatives/back-track-designs

[24] There are 273 YouthBuild in 46 states, D.C. and the Virgin Islands. The Postsecondary Success Initiative, which implemented Back on Track model and was evaluated by Brandeis University, involved YouthBuild programs in the following cities: Atlanta; Austin; Baltimore; Bogalusa, Louisiana; Brockton, Massachusetts; Cambridge, Massachusetts; Columbus, Ohio; Denver, Forrest Park, Georgia; Fresno, California; Lennox, California; Los Angeles; Madison, Wisconsin; McLean County, Illinois; New York; Philadelphia; Portland, Oregon; and Providence, Rhode Island

**Accelerating Opportunity:** Accelerating Opportunity aims to fundamentally change the structure of Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Career and Technical Education (CTE) in order to increase the number of low-skilled adults (including young adults) who complete credentials of value in the labor market. Operating in Arkansas, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, and Mississippi, Accelerating Opportunity has led states and institutions to adopt evidence-based instructional and organizational models (such as integrating basic skills and occupational skills), deliver comprehensive student supports, and develop common assessments and braided funding. It builds on the successes of Breaking Through and Washington State's experience with Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST).

Using the Accelerating Opportunity model, The Georgia Technical College System has implemented an initial pilot of integrated pathways in Criminal Justice, Business Administrative Technology (Medical Concentration), Early Childhood Care, and Welding at Middle Georgia Technical College starting in the 2012-13 academic year. To date, 73 students have enrolled in the program and 57 of them have earned their GED. The remaining students are still working toward their GED. The program also has awarded 73 certificates to participants who have completed their GED and those working towards it.

## CONNECTION TO CAREER

Many young adults in Franklin County have tenuous connections to the labor market. Only half of youth, 16-24, have a job. Although some are not actively searching for employment, 17 percent are unemployed. The young adults in the labor force primarily work in retail, food, and hotels. Job retention is low, as are their monthly earnings, compared to older adults (Figure 9) and those with more education (Figure 10).

**Figure 9. Four-quarter Average for Earnings and Turnover by Workforce Age, Franklin, Co. (2012 Q3-2013 Q2)**
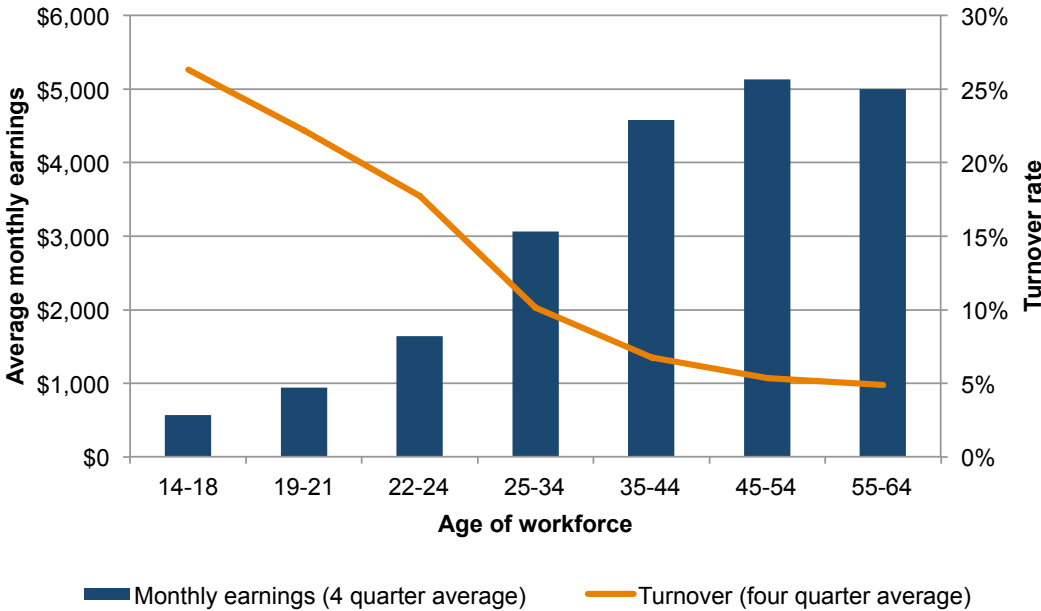


Source: U.S. Census, Quarterly Workforce Indicators

**Figure 10. Four-quarter Average for Earnings and Turnover by Education Level, Franklin, Co. (2012 Q3-2013 Q2)**
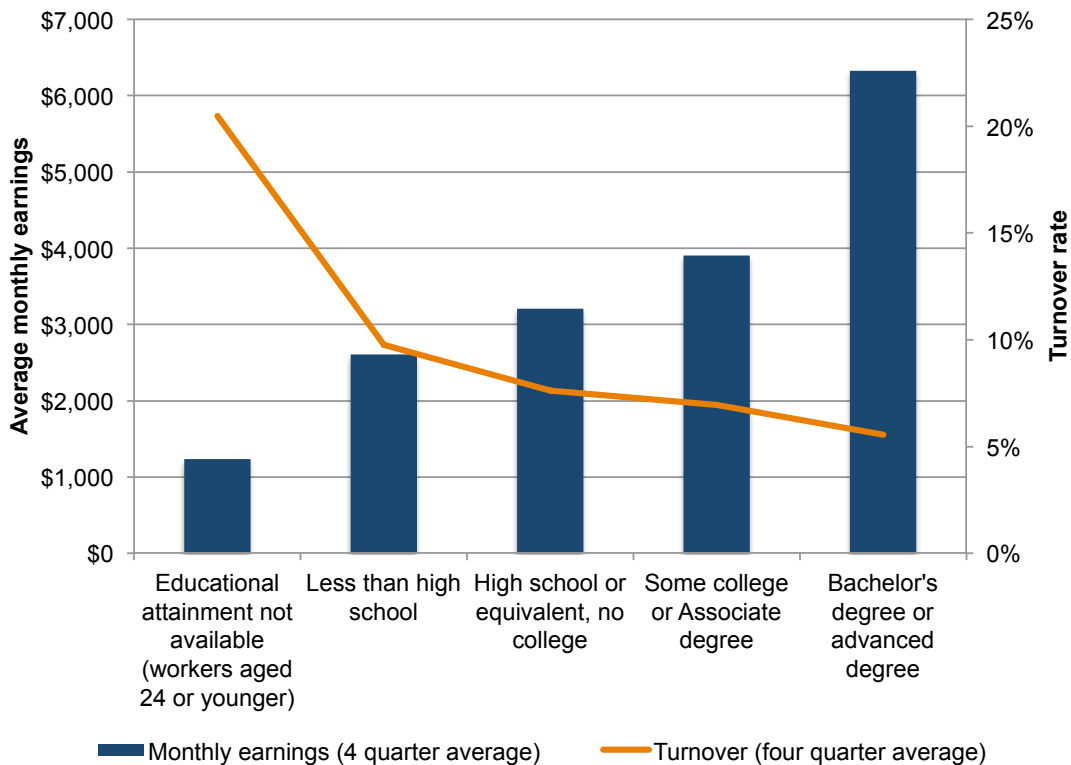


Source: U.S. Census, Quarterly Workforce Indicators

These trends were reflected in the focus groups conversation with 13 Opportunity Youth in Franklin County.[25] All of them had held a job at some point—primarily in the service sector—but were not making strides to advancing in a career. They expressed a desire to find meaningful work, but were unable to identify an industry or occupation that they could pursue, aside from two mentioning a goal of working in healthcare. Interestingly, several mentioned wanting to "be their own boss," out of desire to set their own rules, work time, and pay.

Central Ohio Workforce Investment Corporation (COWIC), in partnership with the City of Columbus and Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services has worked mightily to

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[25] Focus groups were held in August 2014. JFF interviewed representatives of 16 local employers; three business development and labor market research organizations; 15 education, human service, and workforce providers; and 10 state and local funders, researchers, and systems offices. In addition, JFF interviewed 13 young adults referred by six community groups. See the attached data tables for listing of attendees.

enhance work experience of youth through the S.O.A.R.hire!, a summer jobs initiative. In 2013, COWIC placed nearly 1,200 area youth, age 14-24, in summer jobs and internships with local employers and organizations.[26] Half were age 17 and over, and 9 out 10 participants were African Americans. Despite the commitment to connect youth to the world of work, there is some question as to the effectiveness of S.O.A.R.hire!. Surveys of employers during the program reported that fewer than 1 in 10 youth made any improvement in communication (9 percent), effort (8 percent), relationships (7 percent), and analytic thinking (5 percent). Only 11 percent demonstrated better performance on tasks and projects. Clearly, more targeted efforts to help youth develop these skills through work-based learning is called for.

Moreover, as Franklin County's recipient of federal Workforce Investment Act funds, COWIC is statutorily required to provide job search assistance, career counseling, and academic support services to youth, age 14-21, with barriers to employment. Yet, as recently as 2013, COWIC enrolled very few youth in its WIA-funded services or helped to place them into permanent jobs.[27] COWIC is taking steps to improve results; over the past year, the agency has launched or partnered on a several workforce development projects.[28] Due to recent changes in federal workforce development legislation, COWIC will need to focus greater attention on engaging youth and young adults in need of education and employment (*see box*).

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**Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act**

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) may spur significant change in the services provided to in-school and out-of-school youth, when implemented in 2015. The law increases the portion of state and local youth funds that must go towards serving out-of-school youth to 75 percent—a major shift from in-school to out-of-school populations. The law also increases the age of out-of-school youth who may be served from 21 to 24 years old. And, the law places a priority on outcomes and services that show enrollment, persistence, and success in postsecondary education and training—especially in high-demand fields—while also providing an opportunity for local workforce boards to rethink who they contract with to provide such services and pathways to youth. There is also an emphasis on work-based learning for young people—a strategy that holds great potential for Opportunity Youth. All of these changes will require states and local areas to restructure how they prepare youth under the law—even those who have historically served out-of-school youth with success. These legislative changes provide Columbus with a unique opportunity to invest WIOA funding in effective strategies for the Opportunity Youth population.

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[26] *2013 Annual Youth Report: S.O.A.R.hire!* Accessed 10/21/14 at
http://638e67d12b66515e28e001d123b5ed5d425ae536.gripelements.com/2013_youth_report_flipbook2.pdf

[27] COWIC enrolled 41 Franklin County youth in WIA Youth services in PY2012 and 180 youth in PY2013. See, Ohio Workforce Investment Act Program Year 2012 Annual Report. Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. Accessed 10/22/14 at http://www.doleta.gov/performance/results/AnnualReports/PY2012/OHWIAAnnualReport2012.pdf.

[28] COWIC is partnering on a Starbucks national initiative in which Opportunity Youth are provided supportive services and placed into permanent jobs with Starbucks' suppliers. COWIC is actively referring its WIA Youth participants to distribution and food processing jobs available at SK Foods. For more info, see http://leadersup.org/piloting-win-win-partnership-columbus-ohio.

Franklin County's existing strategies for connecting Opportunity Youth to employment are not sufficient. These young people need to be directed toward training and jobs that will offer them the best prospects for achieving financial stability.

## Sectors for Success

To determine which sector and jobs would meet this goal, there were several parameters applied to the analysis. First and foremost is the wage rate that would allow Opportunity Youth to achieve financial stability. For the purposes of this study the baseline wage rate is $12 per hour. This rate is based on the recommendations from local employers and providers as to the earnings that young adults without children would need. For families, the living wage for a family of three, $16.37 an hour, as defined by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology is used.[29] These figures are for starting salaries. In Franklin County, the median wage is $24.38. (Figure 11).

### Figure 11. Defining Financial Stability

| Definition | Hourly Wage |
| --- | --- |
| Ohio Minimum Wage (as of January 1, 2014) | $7.95 |
| Focus Group "Consensus" Wage | $12.00 |
| MIT "Living" Wage for family of 3 | $16.37 |
| Median Wage (Franklin County) | $24.38 |

Sources: MIT (living wage), EMSI (median wage), U.S. Department of Labor (minimum wage), JFF facilitated focus groups of Franklin County employers and education and service providers, August 2014 (consensus wage)

Clearly, not all sectors of the economy have career pathways that will move workers to these wage levels. To identify which employment sectors would move Opportunity Youth toward the middle class, population-specific and geographically-based workforce and education needs were analyzed, as well as the current and projected state of local and regional labor markets. Traditional sources of labor market information (LMI), as well as real-time LMI—technology that uses Internet job postings to produce detailed analyses about job vacancies, skill needs, and

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[29] See http://livingwage.mit.edu/. Worth noting, JPMorgan Chase also is using this wage level for identifying middle-skill career paths in Columbus metro area as part of the New Skills at Work initiative.

credential requirements in real time—were used to select the sectors and occupations on which to focus.[30]

JFF narrowed down the labor market analysis to four sectors—healthcare, manufacturing, logistics, and call centers based on several criteria. Each offer ample employment options for high school educated workforce, have wages sufficient to meet the outlined wage criteria, and have opportunities for advancement to higher skilled, higher-wage careers. Although retail, restaurants, and hotels employ nearly half of all working young adults in Franklin County, the selected four sectors offer better wages in entry-level jobs and stronger pathways to financial stability.

Combined, healthcare, manufacturing, logistics, and call centers employ nearly 200,000 workers, about two out of three in occupations that generally do not require a college degree (Figure 12). Moreover, employers in these sectors actively recruit high school educated workers. For every five job openings that employers advertised online in 2013, two required only a high school diploma or GED (Figure 13). Conversations with the Columbus Chamber, employers, and schools revealed that high school educated workers could expect to earn an entry-level wage of $11 to $12 an hour at a call center, about $9.50 at a logistics firm, and $9.50 to $15 in healthcare. And the prospect for even better pay exists in each sector without additional certification or degrees. Median wages are more than $13 an hour in 15 of the 18 high school-level occupations that employ the largest number of workers in these sectors (Figure 14). On the other hand, only two of these occupations—frontline supervisors in healthcare and sales in manufacturing and logistics—exceed the MIT living wage level for Franklin County.

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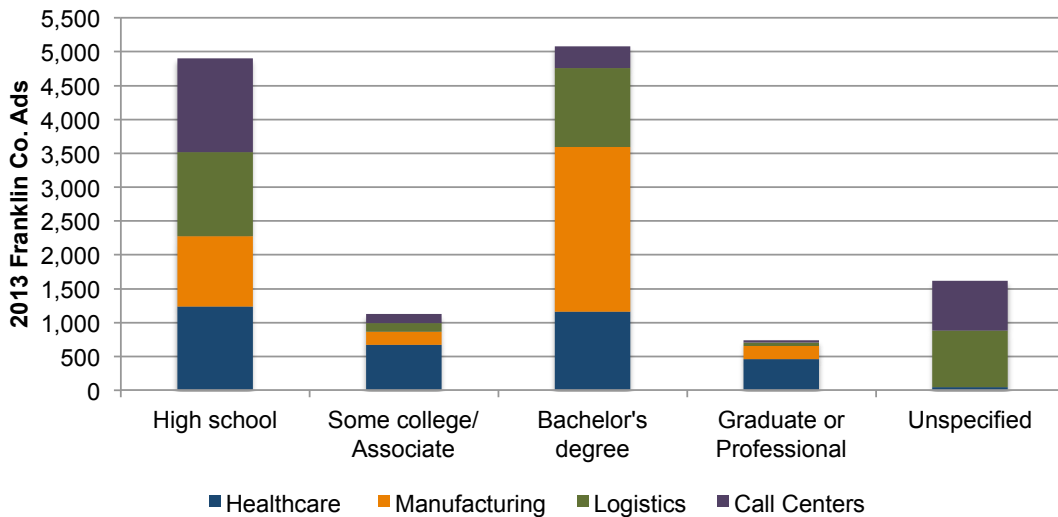[30] Selected sectors are included in the analysis by Bill Lafayette as to the growth sectors for Columbus "Identifying High-Output Industries in the Columbus MSA Economy."

**Figure 12. 2013 Jobs in Franklin County by Educational Classification of Occupations**
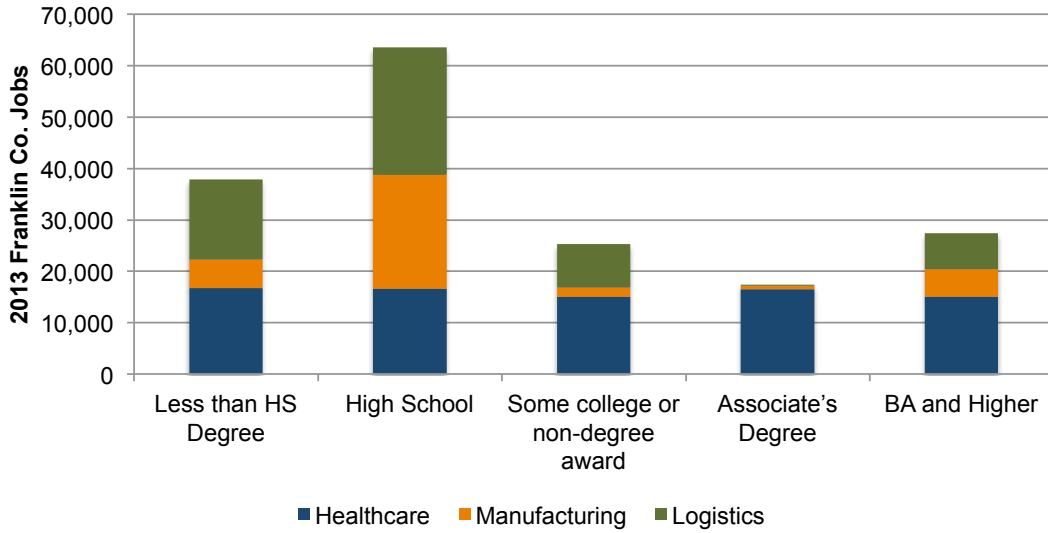


Source: EMSI

**Figure 13. Minimum Required Education in 2012 Job Ads for Franklin County**



Source: Burning Glass

**Figure 14. Top Occupations in Franklin County Requiring Only a High School Credential**

| Sector | Occupation | Median Hourly Wage | Annual Projected Job Openings |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Healthcare** | Medical Secretaries | $15.39 | 174 |
| | Receptionists and Information Clerks | $12.73 | 151 |
| | Billing and Posting Clerks | $16.10 | 106 |
| | Office Clerks, General | $14.20 | 476 |
| | First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support | $23.64 | 213 |
| **Manufacturing** | Team Assemblers | $11.57 | 98 |
| | Packaging and Filing Machine Operators and Tenders | $13.49 | 47 |
| | Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers | $14.30 | 47 |
| | Sales Representatives, Wholesale/Manufacturing | $24.68 | 156 |
| | Printing Press Operators | $16.82 | 24 |
| **Logistics** | Sales Representatives, Wholesale/Manufacturing | $24.68 | 156 |
| | Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers | $13.58 | 73 |
| | Customer Service Representatives | $14.94 | 568 |
| | Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks | $13.93 | 106 |
| | Office Clerks, General | $14.20 | 476 |
| **Call Centers** | Telemarketers | $9.15 | 89 |
| | Bill and Account Collectors | $13.21 | 156 |
| | Customer Service Representatives | $14.94 | 568 |

Source: EMSI

To get Opportunity Youth into these careers requires addressing both the supply and demand side of the employment question. The Opportunity Youth *supplied* to the market must be prepared for the world of work. Employers must be engaged (and convinced) as to the benefits of employing this population. The current market mismatch can be seen in the Appendix (Accelerating Momentum for an Employer Demand Strategy).

## Credentials for Careers

The majority of jobs in sectors that pay a good wage and have growth potential typically require more than a high school diploma or GED (Figure 15 and 16).[31] When conducting the labor market analysis, very few occupations were found that had solid career potential—as demonstrated through wages—without a postsecondary credential. As noted above, the efforts around high school completion need to be bolstered so as to give these youth the first step to a career.

Business leaders say that in ten years, 55 percent of jobs at their firms will require some kind of postsecondary degree, credential, or certification.[32] And, the Center on Education and the Workforce estimates that by 2020, 64 percent of all job openings in Ohio will require some postsecondary education or training. The majority of these "college" jobs will require a middle-skill credential, such as an Associate's degree or vocational certificate, as opposed to a Bachelor's degree or above.[33] Demand for middle skills will be particularly strong in occupational areas commonly found in healthcare, manufacturing, logistics, and call centers (Figure 15a). Additionally, wage data suggests that achieving this report's target earnings will be more likely if the employee has at least some post secondary education (Figure 15b). In 2013, individuals who graduated from high school had an average hourly wage of $16.20 while those with some college were making $17.57.[34]

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[31] Also see: Altstadt, David et al. Forthcoming. *Skills in Demand: Building a Middle-Skill Workforce to Grow the Columbus Economy.* Jobs For The Future. For JPMorgan Chase *New Skills at Work*.

[32] 2013 Gallup- Lumina Foundation Poll on Higher Education

[33] County-Specific Projections are not available. For State Level Data, See *Recovery: Job Growth And Education Requirements Through 2020* at http://Cew.Georgetown.Edu/Recovery2020/States

[34] Source: EPI analysis of Current Population Outgoing Rotation Group microdata. Available at: http://www.epi.org/publication/raising-americas-pay-data/

## Figure 15. 2020 Ohio Job Projections in Select Occupations



Legend:
- ■ Healthcare Professional & Technical
- ■ Healthcare Support
- ■ Production
- ■ Transportation and Material Moving
- ■ Sales & related
- ■ Office & administrative support
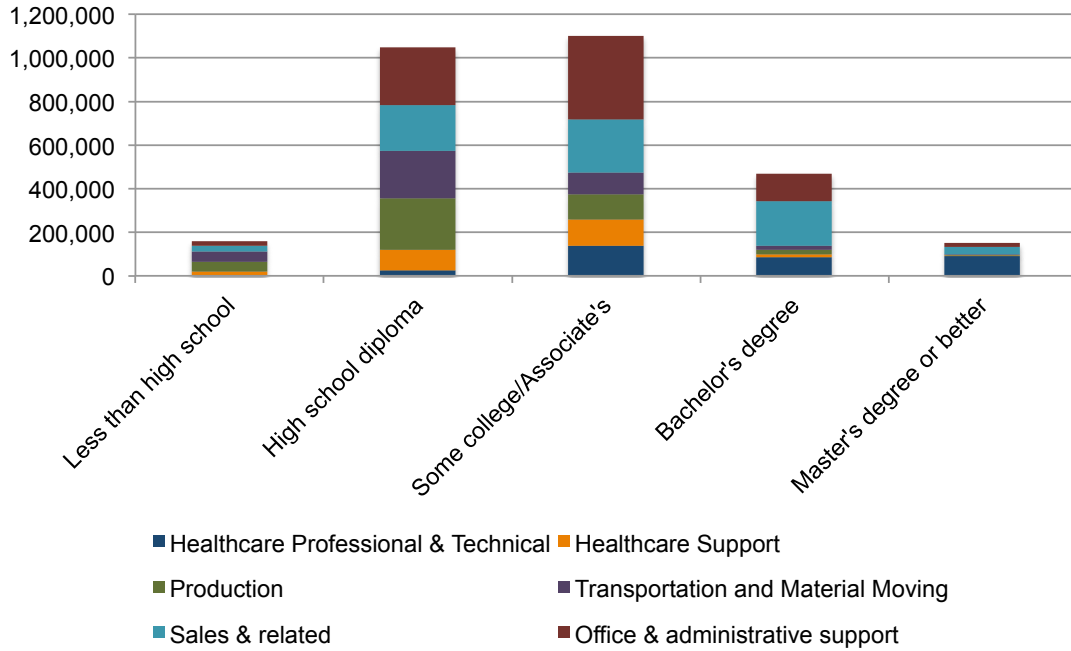
## Figure 16. Median Hourly Wage in Franklin County by Education Classification



Legend:
- ■ Healthcare
- ■ Manufacturing
- ■ Logistics
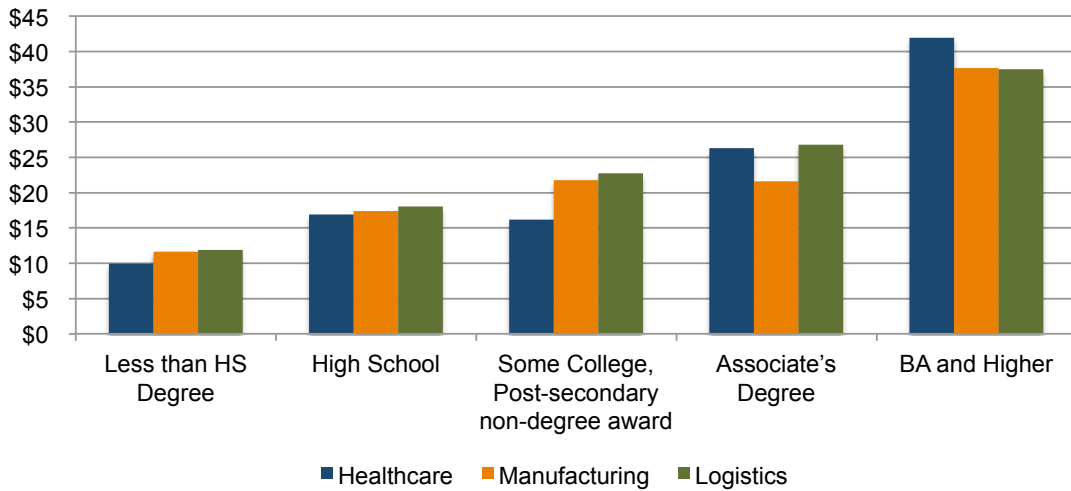
Source: EMSI

Note: three occupations commonly held at call centers each require less than a postsecondary education and pay a median hourly wage, ranging from $9.15 (telemarketers) to $14.94 (customer service representatives); therefore, the best chance at advancement in reassignment to another business unit.

## Skills for Success

*"To succeed in today's workplace, young people need more than basic reading and math skills. They need substantial content knowledge and information technology skills, advanced thinking skills, flexibility to adapt to change, and interpersonal skills to succeed in multicultural, cross-functional teams."*

*—J. Willard Marriott, Jr. Chairman and CEO, Marriott International, Inc.* [35]

Furthermore, there needs to be a focus on teaching workforce readiness skills. Nationally, 40 percent of employers cite lack of skills[36] as the main reason for job vacancies. Two-thirds report difficulty filling open positions.[37] It is interesting to note that from the analysis of job postings in Franklin County, there are several basic skills that the majority of employers demand (Figure 17). These workforce readiness skills—communication, critical thinking, and writing—are required regardless of occupation and must be delivered. It is clear that employers desire these skills. According to recent polls, business leaders indicated their desire for employees to possess strong communication skills, including writing and speaking skills.[38] In survey after survey, employers state they cannot find workers with what they consider to be basic skills for job success. In fact, in a recent survey by the Columbus Chamber, small businesses in Franklin County noted that job-specific and foundational skill deficiencies were primary reasons why they have difficulty finding qualified workers.[39]

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[35] The Conference Board, *Are The Really Ready to Work? Employers Perspective on the Basic Knowledge and Applied Skills for New Entrants to the 21st Century U.S. Workforce, 2006*

[36] McKinsey & Company. *Education to Employment: Designing a System that Works*. 2013

[37] Manpower Group, 2012, Talent Shortage Survey Research Results

[38] 2013 Gallup – Lumina Foundation Poll

[39] Jung Kim. 2014. *Columbus Small Business Workforce Survey. Columbus Chamber.* Accessed 11/7/14 at http://www.columbus.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Columbus-Small-Business-Workforce-Survey-FINAL-REPORT1.pdf

**Figure 17. Top Baseline Skills Requirements in High School-Level Job Postings**
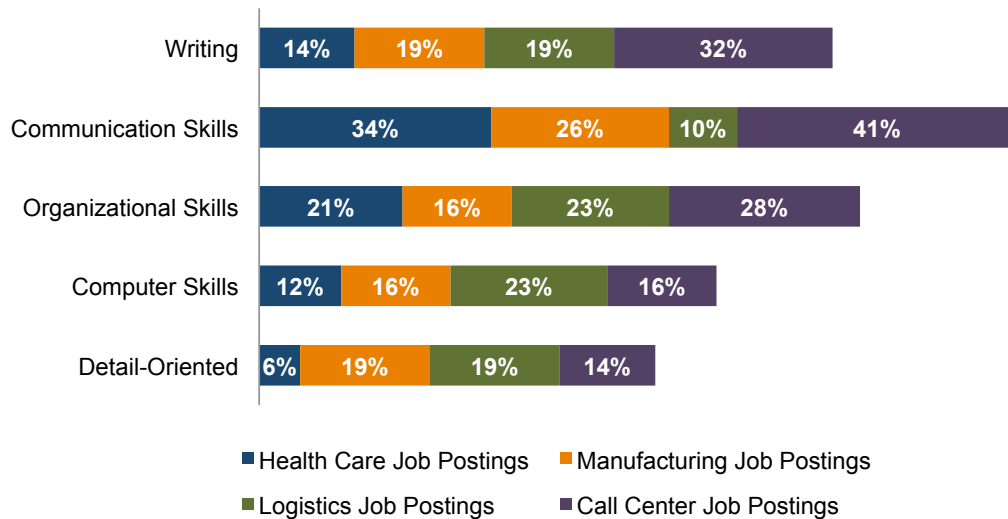


Source: Burning Glass

*"STEM capability must define the entire workforce. It's how work is done. It's how processes improve. It's how discoveries are made and applied."*

*—Alexander Cummings, Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer, The Coca-Cola Company[40]*

It is also clear that basic STEM fluency is required for advancement in today's economy. There are many reports that describe the shortage of talent for STEM occupations. Under the traditional definition of STEM occupations, it is expected that they will only be 5 percent of the US economy by 2018. However, there is a growing recognition that STEM competencies are needed in more and more occupations outside of the traditional STEM fields. And, more importantly, those employees that use STEM competencies earn significantly more than those who do not.[41] These skills include some of the more recognizable workforce readiness skills such as critical thinking and problem solving, but add mathematics, skills related to technology such as design, coding, quality control, systems analysis, and evaluation. All of these skills are required in the targeted sectors identified in this report.

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[40] See, Stem Connector:
http://www.stemconnector.org/directory/results/percent%20of%20jobs%20that%20need%20STEM%20skills

[41] Georgetown University, Center on Education and the Workforce, STEM—Executive Summary p. 2. cew.georgetown.edu/STEM

## Employer Engagement

*"It's a win for the urban communities—it's a win for the student and a win for our company. We would not be doing this unless these students were active contributors as employees. They more than pull their weight"*

*—Kenneth Chenault, CEO and Chairman, American Express[42]*

Employers are not finding the candidates they need from the traditional labor market sources, so a new pool of applicants needs to be developed. Employers must be engaged to understand the value of Opportunity Youth. Unfortunately, employers participating in our focus groups have had less than great experience with this demographic. They noted several major reasons why they do not hire young adult applicants for entry-level jobs and why those they do hire don't often remain employees (Figure 18). Chief among their concerns is a lack of job readiness. Employers shared that Opportunity Youth can make up for their lack of work experience and advanced education by displaying an entrepreneurial spirit, motivation/tenacity to advance career, a curiosity and willingness to learn and work in team, a positive attitude, a passion for customer service, and strong soft skills—a hiring preference borne out in job ads.

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[42] Source: CBS 'Help Wanted' 60 Minutes. Originally aired on 1/26/2014.

**Figure 18. Franklin County Employer Focus Group**

**Major reasons for not hiring a young adult job applicant**

- Lacks high school credential—diploma or GED
- Lacks professionalism in job interview
- Transient work history
- Unsuitable for job conditions—weeding out of job applicants after experiencing work conditions during jobsite tours (e.g., refrigerated warehouse, call center operation, hospital floor)
- Lacks a penchant for customer service as well as other high-demand foundational skills—math, communication, organizational, computer, detail-oriented (Figure 4)
- Doesn't disclose a criminal record on a job application form—most employers interviewed have hired individuals with prior, non-violent offense as long as it is disclosed on a job application and is not related to the job
- Fails drug test

**Major causes of turnover among young adult workers**

- Bad attitude: take offense to supervisor orders, no motivation to work hard or improve performance, unwillingness to work in teams
- Poor attendance: unexcused/questionable reasons for absences, stop showing up for work

Several employers told us they are willing to partner with human service agencies to consider job placements for at-risk clients and students. However, employers noted that the client referrals they receive almost never work out. They said agencies should spend less time helping clients polish their resume and, instead, focus on helping clients develop professional behaviors. Some employers shared success stories partnering on college initiatives but generally speaking, their overall sentiment was that agencies, high schools, and colleges did not work hard to build and maintain strong relationships with the business community and provide them with the talent they need.

The Grads of Life campaign (www.gradsoflife.org) demonstrates several examples of how businesses have successfully integrated the hiring of Opportunity Youth in to their organization. Employers will have to rethink the way they hire and train some of these employees and may have to identify some additional services for this demographic. This effort is not dissimilar to

how the workplace has adapted to the needs of working parents, veterans or people with disabilities or to how employers have worked to expand hiring of other populations.

Numerous education institutions in Franklin County offer short-term training programs[43] and degree programs to prepare individuals for jobs in manufacturing, healthcare, and logistics, as well as for office environments and for customer service positions applicable to call center operations. Yet, most of these short-term and degree-level education and training programs are not geared toward engaging at-risk populations or helping them overcome barriers to employment. Conversely, numerous community-based organizations attempt to enhance work readiness of their clientele, but do not provide them job-related training and connections to employers.

A handful of organizations in Franklin County are trying to bridge this divide by providing supportive on ramps to careers and postsecondary education and training to at-risk populations. For example, the YouthBuild Community School and the recently launched FastPath initiative of Columbus State Community College (*see box*) are two such programs. In addition, Year Up is a national model geared to toward disconnected high school graduates (*see box*).

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**Fast Path**

Through Fast Path, Columbus State provides four weeks of noncredit training for entry into specific entry-level healthcare positions, including dietary, building service, and patient care, with a goal of placing program graduates at Nationwide Children's Hospital and other hospital partners. New hires can expect to earn $9.32 to $14.26 per hour in full-time jobs with benefits. Once employed at these hospitals, program graduates could gain access to tuition assistance or other professional development opportunities to advance their career.

Enrollment is open only to low-income, unemployed, or underemployed Columbus residents over age 18, who hold a high school diploma or GED and have a ninth grade proficiency in math and English. They must be referred through area human service agencies, which are being asked to screen potential applicants for suitability (including passing a drug test and criminal background check) and offer career counseling and other supports to enrollees. Candidates who do not meet the academic requirements will be referred to ABLE providers to improve their basic skills and obtain a GED.

The goal is that program participants obtain the training and wraparound services they need to be successful and that employers receive a new supply of vetted job applicants from their local neighborhoods. In this way, Columbus State is taking on the role of "workforce intermediary" by acting as a primary point of entry or contact with employers and matching programs and clients with desired skill needs.

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[43] A listing is available in the PowerPoint deck attached to this report.

Now that Columbus State has designed the strategy and forged ties with employers, the question is whether the FastPath program can be sustained or scaled up. The City of Columbus awarded $1.5 million to start up the program, but it is unclear how Columbus State will keep the program going after the initial funding dries up at the end of the year. In recent years, Columbus State was forced to shut down the highly successful LogisticsArt program after exhausting a federal labor department grant.

**Year Up**—*Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Baltimore, Jacksonville, Miami, New York, Northern Virginia, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Providence, Seattle, San Francisco*.

The intensive one-year college and career bridge program provides training, mentorship, internships, and job placements for Opportunity Youth with a high school diploma or GED. Students receive stipends and structured support from program staff and working professionals as they spend six months in the classroom learning technical, professional, and communication skills. In the second half of the program, students intern with leading businesses and organizations, including Fortune 500 companies. More than 80 percent of program graduates are working or in school full-time within four months after graduation.[44] Employed Year Up graduates earn an average of $15 per hour—the equivalent of $30,000 per year. Over 90 percent of corporate partners would recommend the Year Up program to a friend or colleague.

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Finally, it is critical to support programs that develop the leadership skills and address the social and emotional needs of youth to help them become engaged and productive members of their communities. Youth development practices should underpin all phases of pathways, from Reengagement, to Educational Momentum, to Connection to Career.

Our conversations with human service and education providers in Franklin County uncovered stories of youth who appeared to get back on track only to disconnect again. They suggested a range of supports that young people need to stay on track in programming leading to skills and credentials that will help them succeed. They identified their top objectives for young adult participants as follows:

- Develop realistic expectations about work and life
- Understand that discipline and right attitude are required to achieve goals
- Earn a credential that can be built upon

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[44] Roder, Anne and Mark Elliott. 2011. *A Promising Start: Year Up's Initial Impacts on Low-Income Young Adults' Careers. Economic Mobility Corporation*. Accessed 10/20/14 at http://www.yearup.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/emc_study.pdf

- Visualize success
- Get a job
- Make better decisions
- Set realistic goals
- Find a role model

Learn4Life Columbus has identified a series of strategies to address the social emotional needs of youth at risk of school failure. In partnership with Columbus City Schools, local mental health agencies, corrections, and community-based organizations, Learn4Life is piloting the use of social emotional assessments for middle and high school youth. Youth deemed to have certain risk factors, such as poor academics, behaviors, and attendance, will be referred to agencies for wraparound supports. The group plans to extend its reach to older youth who have already dropped out of high school.

There is a growing recognition that Opportunity Youth need to stabilize their lives as they focus their attention on school and work. Communities around the country have prioritized resources and attention to removing barriers to success (*see box*). Several CBOs in Franklin County also recognize this need.

For instance, Godman Guild provides on-site childcare for parents enrolled in ABLE and other education and training programs. A young mother told us that the convenience and quality of the childcare service was a major factor in staying enrolled in the ABLE program. Other organizations without this childcare capacity recognize the value too. For instance, the GED prep program staff at Columbus State commonly refers GED students with small children to the Godman Guild ABLE program.

Access to reliable and affordable transportation poses another barrier to school and work for Opportunity Youth. According to the U.S. Census, 74 percent of young adults across Franklin County, age 16 to 24, drive a car to work, while only 4 percent say they take public transit. Experience would suggest that far fewer low-income and disadvantaged youth have access to a car. Among the 13 young adults interviewed, about half said they take the public bus to get to school or work, while others drive and rely on rides from friends and family. As further evidence, case managers drove many of these youth to the focus group. Strikingly, one young person explained that he would walk 30 to 45 minutes each way to his summer job. His experience suggests some Opportunity Youth might be unfamiliar or unaccustomed with taking public transit, lack bus money, and/or do not find bus routes that match their school or work destinations.

Numerous education and human service providers shared experiences about gaps in public transit service, particularly to reach the growing job opportunities in office parks and warehouses along and beyond Interstate 270. In particular, they noted that Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) has limited bus routes, stops, and schedules to take workers to and from the logistics hub around Rickenbacker Airport. There are a few examples of employers that were

willing to provide transportation services when it was in their economic interest to do so. However, these actions addressed short-term gaps, not a long-term need. In the past, COTA has used grant money to expand service to Rickenbacker, but focus group participants said a more sustainable solution is needed.

On the other hand, both employers and service providers said Opportunity Youth (and the regional workforce, in general) is resistant to taking public transportation. One Rickenbacker area employer told us that few of his workers take the bus even though his warehouse is near one of the few public bus stops in the area.

Addressing barriers to getting to school and work will take multiple strategies. In some cases, the potential impact of CBO efforts is constrained by funding. For instance, Columbus Urban League staff identified that restrictions in use of grant funds meant the agency is unable to provide bus tokens, along with other stabilization services, to youth participating in its "First Step" basic skills program.

Going forward, it is important that Franklin County not attempt to address specific obstacles to work and school, such as transportation or childcare, in isolation. These barriers are a reflection of larger systemic issues. Thus, the focus should be on giving Opportunity Youth the right skills, supports and attitudes to get the good jobs that lead to financial stability.

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**Barrier Removal *First*—*Alameda County, California***

With financial support from the Opportunity Youth Incentive Fund,[45] Urban Strategies is convening a cross-sector collaborative comprised of community-based organizations, postsecondary training providers, employers, social service agencies, and youth leaders to design and implement pathways to postsecondary and career success for Opportunity Youth. Partners are coordinating the delivery of core stabilization services to ensure that young peoples' basic needs (including stable housing, food, healthcare, transportation) are met quickly, so that they can successfully re-enroll in school. Through a barrier removal first strategy, Alameda County aims to improve education and workforce outcomes of 2,300 "cross-over" opportunity youth defined as young people who are boys and men of color involved in the child welfare and/or juvenile justice systems.

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[45] For more information on the Opportunity Youth Incentive Fund, see: http://aspencommunitysolutions.org/the-fund/

# SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COLUMBUS FOUNDATION

Franklin County is fortunate to have a diverse array of public and private funders of education, human service, and workforce initiatives, including United Way of Central Ohio, The Columbus Foundation, City of Columbus, Franklin County Commissioners, JPMorgan Chase, AEP, and Nationwide Insurance, among others. However, no funder has yet invested specifically in bringing Opportunity Youth into the talent pipeline. Moreover, numerous community initiatives such as Central Ohio Compact, Columbus Education Commission, and Columbus 2020, have not focused on the needs of Opportunity Youth, while Learn4Life Columbus is just beginning to turn its attention to them.

Franklin County needs a broad-based community effort to develop the structures and supports necessary for Opportunity Youth to reach economic stability. There is a need for a community response to the challenges around providing the structures and support for Opportunity Youth to reach economic stability. To have a more immediate impact on this population, significant attention needs to be paid to programs that address high school graduation rates and GED attainment. These programs can be significantly strengthened to improve academic outcomes and incorporate the workforce readiness skills that employers in all sectors require. With the help of employers, career pathways can be developed for these new entrants to the workforce that allow them to make their way. Figure 19 provides a framework for strengthening the options.

The Columbus Foundation has the opportunity to decide if it wants to approach the challenge of Opportunity Youth comprehensively, or, if it would prefer to target particular programs or approaches. The Columbus Foundation can choose to focus on particular program models to address the issue in a more limited way—such as focusing strictly on the high school diploma/GED. A more systemic set of solutions will require more partners, additional funding models, and looking at a longer career horizon. In crafting its response, the Columbus Foundation should pay close attention to state and federal policy changes, which may offer levers for action, such as WIOA and others identified in Figure 20.

**Figure 19. Framework for Strengthening Programs for Opportunity Youth**

| Moving from 1.0 Models to | 2.0 Solutions |
|---|---|
| Focus on initial rung of career ladder | Focus on continued career advancement |
| Perfunctory employer engagement | Strategic and ongoing employer partnership |
| Narrow job training | Combined focus on professional, foundational, and technical skills |
| HS diploma/ GED as end point | Diploma/ GED as entry point to postsecondary with support for transitions |
| Data limited to participant outcomes | Broad use of data in program design and implementation |
| Focus on most ready | On-ramps for more challenged populations |
| Reliance on a single funding source | Braided funding approach |
| Siloed approach to education, workforce, and economic development | Move towards system alignment and common strategies |

| Sector | Policy Changes/ Opportunities |
|---|---|
| **Secondary Schools** | • Ohio's Straight A Fund that supports Dual Enrollment can leverage other strategies for improving school success[46] <br><br> • Pilot funds for dropout recovery schools to serve older youth (age 21 and over) |
| **Postsecondary Education** | • Performance-based funding of community colleges could produce creaming, reduce college access to students testing into Developmental Education[47] <br><br> • Ohio Technical Centers program graduates now receive college credit <br><br> • $40 million college internship program[48] could be reformed to support work experiences for non-degree postsecondary and adult education students <br><br> • Growing interest in improving access to (and resources for) career counseling at colleges and universities <br><br> • $82 million federal funding as part of a Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) grant (announced in September 2014). The U.S. Department of Education grant is designed to help low-income and first-generation college students prepare for college and receive support needed to achieve success in postsecondary education. Ohio's share is $3.5 Million a year for seven years. |
| **Workforce Development** | • Governor's efforts to align workforce development programs[49] <br><br> • A unified WIOA plan could bolster focus/resources for ABLE <br><br> • $15 million Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant program awarded to a consortium of Ohio Community Colleges including Columbus State Community College to develop an advanced manufacturing training model to promote job readiness, skills development, pathways to credentials and online/hybrid courses to prepare Ohioans for jobs in this growing industry (announced in September 2014) |

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[46] See: http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Straight-A-Fund

[47] See: https://www.ohiohighered.org/press/new-performance-based-model-higher-education-ohio

[48] See: https://www.ohiohighered.org/omic

[49] See: http://workforce.ohio.gov/Portals/0/pdf/OWT%202014%20strategic%20plan%20041614.pdf

In either case, there are a variety of programmatic options that can be considered individually or in tandem, including:

- **Strengthening of diploma completion options**—such as supporting persistence and completion for public high school students at risk of dropping out or repeating senior year and enhancing effectiveness of dropout recovery schools (potential partners include school districts, dropout recovery schools). One possibility is to start with those who are older and closer to graduation, with credit recovery and on-ramps to postsecondary credentials. At the same time, stakeholders could strengthen schools for those who are further behind (i.e., dropped out in ninth grade) with more extended and supportive programming so that they can earn a high school credential.

- **Building the capacity of ABLE/GED providers** to adjust to the new GED requirements and/or implement Back on Track interventions. This calls for a shift from test prep to college and career ready curriculum and instruction, partnering with postsecondary/training programs to create a bridge to a career/program of study, and providing the social, emotional supports that Opportunity Youth need to be successful in postsecondary education and the world of work (potential partners include ABLE providers, Columbus State Community College, and other community-based organizations).

- **Opening a Reengagement Center** located in one or more key neighborhoods (potential partners: Settlement Houses, CBOs serving minorities, and/or school districts).

- **Identifying an employer focused workforce intermediary** to participate in programs designed to employ Opportunity Youth (potential partners include Columbus State and Columbus Chamber).

- **Developing internship programs** that are limited to short-term on-the-job experiences or are modeled after Year Up; and more intensive than S.O.A.R.Hire! (potential partners—COWIC, City of Columbus, Franklin County, Columbus Chamber, Year Up).

- **Adopting a *Barrier Removal First* approach** that would enhance the funding and coordination across agencies (potential partners—Human Service Chamber and Learn4Life Columbus).

- **Designing and offering professional development for staff serving Opportunity Youth** to ensure front line workers across one or multiple organizations have the tools and techniques to address the social and emotional needs of Opportunity Youth (potential partner—Human Service Chamber)

- **Funding existing innovations** by deploying resources or developing a campaign for greater investment (potential models: YouthBuild and FastPath)

The Columbus Foundation may wish to convene community stakeholders (including the organizations identified above) to identify critical needs and potential solutions. The following questions could guide the conversations:

**1. Which segment(s) of Opportunity Youth population to focus on?**

Opportunity Youth vary by age, skill level, and education level; therefore, programming for the population should be designed according to the specific segment of the population targeted. For example, an 18-year old who left high school without a diploma but with a relatively high number of credits will require different programming than youth who are 22-24 and have a high school credential but have not gone on further education and are disconnected from the labor market.

**2. What pathways will be put in place to help reengage Opportunity Youth and put them on a path to financial stability?**

Once stakeholders have identified the population to emphasize, they will need to determine what programming should be put into place to help them succeed. Programming should combine both credential attainment (depending on the population, either high school credential or postsecondary credential, or an extended pathway that delivers both) as well as work readiness and work experience. Specific supports should be put into place that can help address the underlying barriers identified in this report.

**3. How will the pathways be implemented (outreach, referral, intake, orientation, integrated pathways, supportive services), resources leveraged (WIOA, individual donors, corporate philanthropy, state funds), and progress measured (performance measures, data sharing agreements, and data collection and reporting)?**

Once the population has been identified and the pathway defined, stakeholders will need to consider the appropriate delivery vehicles and implementation supports. In other communities across the country, pathways are delivered through partnerships between community-based organizations, K-12, workforce providers, postsecondary institutions, and employers. A range of resources can be leveraged to support the pathways, as indicated in Figure 20.

**4. Who are the key partners on these pathways?**

- Employers
- Funders
- Youth leaders
- Education institutions
- Human service agencies
- Civic groups
- Government

In addition, the Foundation may also want to sort the options based on speed of implementation, timeline to achieve measurable results, amount of investment, number of

partners required, etc., to determine which projects can be "quick hits" and which will require a longer investment period.

Should the Foundation want to look at more systemic change, two options are identified below: using a collective impact approach to drive towards solutions, and a pathways demonstration project carried out by selected community-based organizations in partnership with Columbus State

## COLLECTIVE IMPACT FOR OPPORTUNITY YOUTH

Collective Impact provides a robust approach for bringing together cross-sector stakeholders to collaboratively identify and implement solutions[50]. The Columbus Foundation may want to consider using collective impact as a strategy to drive the design and implementation of pathways that opportunity youth will need to attain credentials that lead to jobs that provide financial stability. The Columbus Foundation may approach this work by taking the following steps:

1. **Identify a Backbone Organization.** The Collective Impact approach needs a well-known, trusted organization to act as neutral convener of stakeholders and to guide them through the development and implementation of goals and related strategies. The "backbone organization" also is responsible for identifying technical assistance resources to support the work of the collaborative; it also coordinates and leverages the allocation of resources amongst collaborative members and ensures that the work of the collaborative partners are mutually reinforcing. Because of its reputation within the community, The Columbus Foundation may need to take on this role or identify an organization that is well positioned to do it. However, enhanced staff capacity may be needed.

2. **Convene a symposium to bring attention to the need for pathways to employment for Opportunity Youth and formally launch the Collective Impact process.** During our August site visit, employers, education and human service providers, systems leaders, and youth inquired how and when The Columbus Foundation would continue and expand the conversation. Holding a symposium with key stakeholders is the first step toward implementing a Collective Impact approach by:

   • Identifying influential champions to join a cross-sector group
   • Scoping and segmenting the population to define the problem
   • Identifying potential solutions

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[50] Kania, John and Mark Kramer. Collective Impact. Stanford Social Impact Review. Winter 2011.

- Creating urgency and make the case for change
- Identifying financial resources to launch and sustain the effort

3. **Create a common agenda and track progress to achieving actionable goals.** After building community buy-in through the symposium and other stakeholder alignment processes, the backbone organization would need to turn its attention to convening a cross-sector collaborative group comprised of community-based organizations, postsecondary training providers, employers, social service agencies, and youth leaders. In this phase, the group would establish a collective action plan, aligning disparate agencies and interests around a defined set of outcomes they hope to achieve in serving Opportunity Youth. These outcomes should be measured and tracked. Therefore, the backbone organization would need to work with the cross-sector group and other partners to develop a data system and establish data sharing agreements, memoranda of understanding (MOUs) to help synch up efforts, monitor performance, and track progress.

4. **Strengthen capacity and evidence for most promising practices for improving success in school and work.** Achieving greater impact will require the Franklin County education and human service community to do things differently and better. As a funder and champion of this effort, The Columbus Foundation would have the unique ability to help the community accomplish both. The Foundation should advise cross-sector partners on how to incorporate the four key components into current program offerings or in adopting new strategies, which could be drawn from the highlighted models. Sustainable and effective programs will require increasing the capacity of program providers. The Foundation could support capacity building by awarding seed money or applying for other grant funding, but ultimately scaling up innovations will require leveraging a host of federal, state, and local public funding sources that support career-technical, secondary, postsecondary, and adult education as well as human services, workforce development, and community development.

## A "PATHWAYS TO FINANCIAL STABILITY FOR OPPORTUNITY YOUTH" DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

The Columbus Foundation may provide funding to a select number of community-based organizations in partnership with Columbus State to implement Back on Track interventions targeted at Opportunity Youth. Results from these projects can be used to make the case for sustained funding and scaling the model across Franklin County. More broadly, this investment would provide the Foundation and partners with a blueprint for how community-based organizations—which represent a critical link for Opportunity youth—and postsecondary institutions can work together and leverage resources to create seamless pathways to postsecondary and career success for Opportunity Youth. The foundation may approach this work in the following way:

1. **Prepare an RFP to select lead ABLE/GED provider(s) to improve their program delivery serving as on-ramps to postsecondary and career success for Opportunity Youth.** The award would give them the resources to better position themselves as critical partners in a comprehensive system for serving Opportunity Youth in Franklin County and for future funding from the state, federal, and foundation sources. The RFP would specify required Back on Track interventions, funding parameters, target outcomes, and data tracking and reporting requirements.

2. **Create a community of practice amongst providers through regular convenings** (in-person/virtual) designed to share best practices in high priority practice areas such as recruitment, intake/orientation, college ready curriculum and instruction, comprehensive supportive services, using data for continuous improvement, and partnership development.

3. **Provide targeted technical assistance to partners** collectively during convenings as well as individually during site visits and webinars to address specific issue areas

4. **Use data across grantee sites to assess how Back on Track is implemented across sites and gather early outcomes achieved as a result of the implementation** with a focus on postsecondary enrollment and persistence and employment attainment as key measures of success.

5. **Create a communication/advocacy plan using results from the evaluation.** The communication/advocacy plan would aim to share results widely with key stakeholders including local government, foundations, and the broader community. More specifically, it would increase awareness of issues faced by Opportunity Youth in Franklin County, highlight the goals and interventions of The Columbus Foundation-led demonstration project, and the results the partners have collectively achieved. The plan would also include key policy recommendations for scaling up Back on Track programs to achieve improved outcomes for a larger number Opportunity Youth in Franklin County.

## CONCLUSION

This report echoes a familiar drumbeat: A high school diploma or GED is just the entry pass to the workforce pipeline and financial stability. However, while there are some opportunities in the Columbus area for those with only the minimum credential, the vast majority of jobs available now and expected in the future—regardless of sector—require some postsecondary credential. This educational achievement is particularly important if the goal is to access jobs that have pay levels sufficient for financial stability. The segment of the population that The Columbus Foundation is considering addressing—Opportunity Youth—has additional barriers to success including low academic achievement, lack of job related skills, access to transportation—that can be overcome with specialized structures and supports. Social service agencies, schools, and employers can provide these. Employers must play a role in engaging this demographic both as providers of work-based learning but also as mentors and partners in their success. They can be engaged in this effort because they need these workers to maintain their operations.

There is no doubt that the Opportunity Youth in Columbus/Franklin County need additional attention and investment in to achieve economic stability. In this report, Jobs for the Future has given The Columbus Foundation demographic, employment, and programmatic information to help decide how it wants to engage in addressing the needs of this underserved population. It may decide to engage on a programmatic level and address one aspect of the need, or to make systemic long-term change that will require the efforts of multiple players in the community. There are strong economic and social reasons to engage The Columbus Foundation's assets in this important work.

# APPENDIX

## Skill-Building Initiatives

| Areas of Focus | Providers |
|---|---|
| Retraining Unemployed and Disadvantaged | Fast Path, Logistics Art, Restoration Academy, SNAP Work Experience pilot, WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. Many human service agencies deliver general job readiness services for clientele. In addition, many community-based organizations, schools, and colleges offer GED preparatory courses |
| College and Career Pathways for high schools students | Pathways to Prosperity, Credits Count |
| Increase postsecondary credential attainment rates | Central Ohio Compact strategies, including Cougar Edge/Bridge, Preferred Pathways |
| Improving career exposure of college students | Columbus Chamber internship program |
| Youth-specific initiatives | Dropout Recovery charter schools, Franklin County YouthBuild, LEAP, S.O.A.R.Hire!. WIA Youth services, Columbus Urban League "First Step" |

# Accelerating Momentum for an Employer Demand Strategy



Source: The Bridgespan Group, Year Up and the Employment Pathways Project

# SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

These slides provide additional background for the report *Opportunity Awaits: How Franklin County can Reconnect Young Adults to School and Work*. Sections include:

Research Background
Characteristics of Opportunity Youth
Employment Outlook for Opportunity Youth
Strengthening Education and Career Pathways

**JOBS FOR THE FUTURE**

EDUCATION FOR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

**JOBS FOR THE FUTURE**

# RESEARCH BACKGROUND

## METHODOLOGY

| Area of Inquiry | Specifics | JFF Research Methods |
|---|---|---|
| **Demographics** | Geography<br>Race<br>School district<br>Education attainment<br>Employment statistics | U.S. Census data analysis<br>Literature review |
| **Labor market for high school credential holders** | Employment needs<br>Salaries<br>Skill gaps<br>Transportation needs | Traditional/real-time LMI<br>Literature review<br>Informant interviews |
| **GED trends** | Preparation options<br>GED demographics<br>Time and cost trends<br>Impact of new GED<br>Program gaps and duplication<br>Public/private funding | State data<br>Literature review<br>Informant interviews |
| **Workforce development, training, and services** | Trends affecting services<br>Program gaps and duplication<br>Private/public funding | Literature review<br>Informant interviews |

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## COLUMBUS LABOR MARKET INFORMANTS

| Overall | Healthcare | MFG | Logistics | Call Centers |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Columbus Chamber | OSU Medical Center | Worthington Industries | Big Lots | Huntington Bank |
| Columbus 2020 | Nationwide Children's | Dr. Pepper Snapple | DSW, Inc. | Nationwide Insurance |
| Regionomics | Ohio Health | | Spartan Logistics | Discover Financial Services |
| | | | Boar's Head | Grange Insurance |
| | | | L Brands | Chase |
| | | | Prologistix | |

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## EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE INFORMANTS

| Systems | Dropout Recovery | Adult Education | Career Tech |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ohio Board of Regents | Life Skills High School | Columbus Urban League | COWIC |
| United Way of Central Ohio | Capital High School | Godman Guild | Columbus State |
| Columbus Dept. of Education | Early College Academy | Franklin Co. YouthBuild | Delaware Area Career Center |
| Educational Service Center | YouthBuild Columbus | Columbus Literacy Council | Per Scholas |
| Ohio Association of Community Colleges | | Columbus State | Columbus City Schools |
| Ohio Education Research Center | | Columbus City Schools | |
| Kirwin Institute | | Goodwill Columbus | |
| Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools | | Tolles Career Center | |
| Learn4Life Columbus | | | |

| Referral Agencies |
|---|
| St. Stephen's Community House |
| Godman Guild |
| Columbus Urban League |
| Ohio Association of Foodbanks |
| YouthBuild Franklin County |
| BARACK Recreation Center |

# CHARACTERISTICS OF OPPORTUNITY YOUTH

## PREVALENCE OF OPPORTUNITY YOUTH RISK FACTORS

**JOBS FOR THE FUTURE**

| Risk Factor | Age Range | No. in Franklin Co | Percent in Franklin Co |
|---|---|---|---|
| **No college experience or degree** | **18-24** | **50,988** | **37%** |
| Only a high school diploma/GED | 18-24 | 33,037 | 24% |
| No high school credential | 18-24 | 17,951 | 13% |
| Did not complete high school on time* | | | 33% |
| **Living in Poverty** | **18-24** | **44,490** | **37%** |
| Households earning >80% of median income | Under 25 | 22,874 | 74% |
| **Not working** | **16-24** | **80,010** | **48%** |
| Unemployed | 16-24 | 17,414 | 17% |
| Not in Labor Force | 16-24 | 62,596 | 38% |
| **Disconnected from school *and* work** | **16-24** | **~20,484** | **12%** |

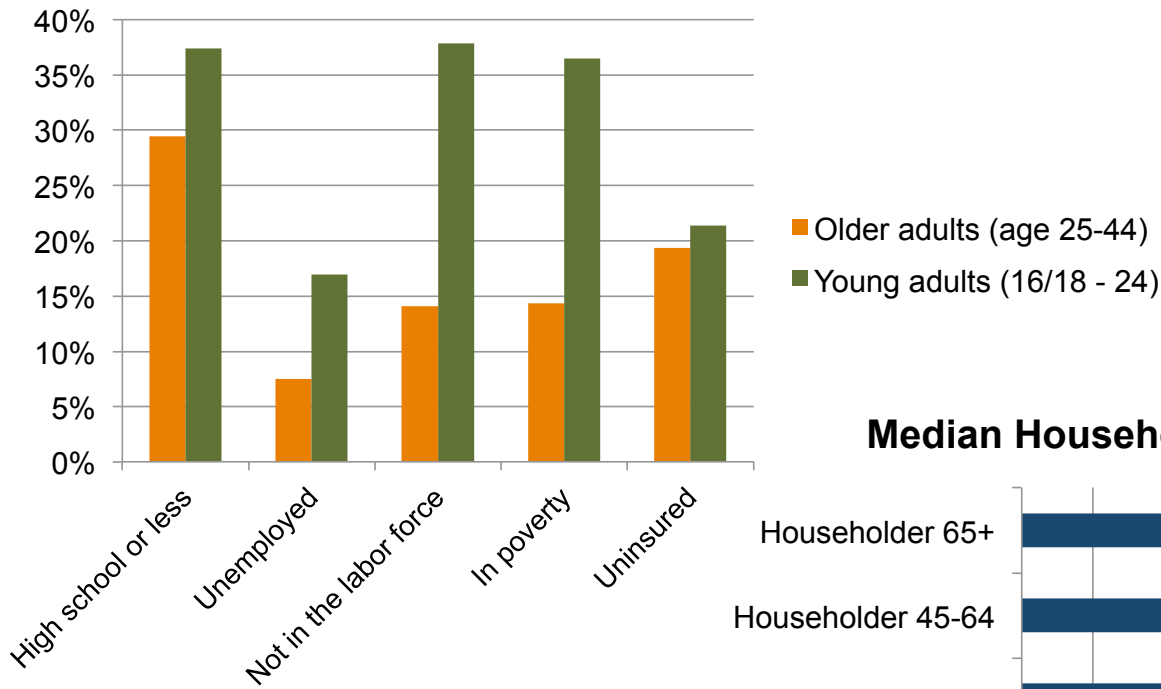Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
* 4-year longitudinal graduation rate for 2012 as reported by the Ohio Department of Education
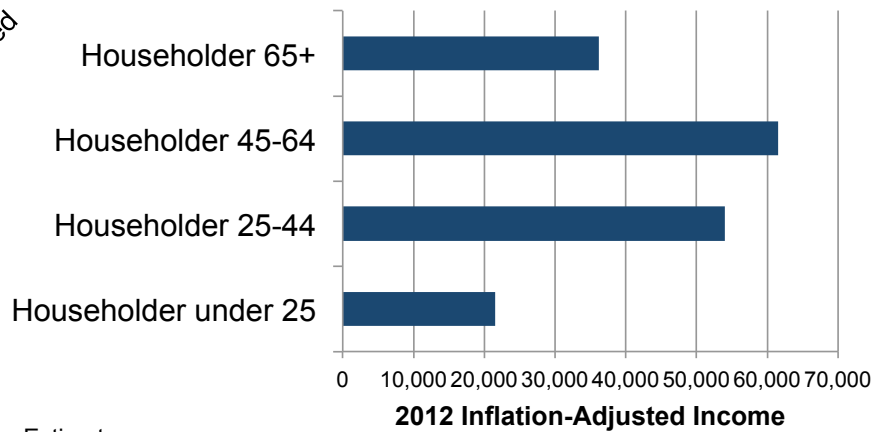** Opportunity Index analysis of 2012 ACS PUMS microdata

- More likely to head very low-income households in Franklin Co.
  - Nearly 40% of African-American households and 20% of non-Hispanic white households are headed by adults under 25 and earn less than $10,000 a year
- Graduation rates
  - In all but two districts, black students have lower graduation rates than average
  - Across all districts, Hispanic students have lower graduation rates than average
- Vast majority served in second-chance programs
  - Two-thirds of ABLE participants (18-25) are of color
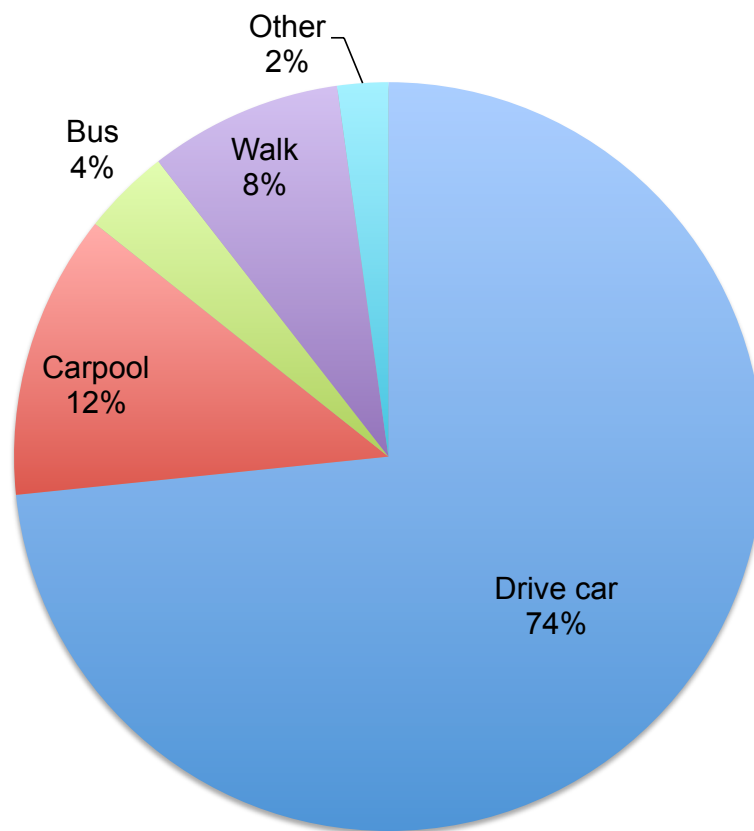  - 91% of S.O.A.R.Hire! participants

# EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT OF YOUTH IN FOCUS GROUP

**JOBS FOR THE FUTURE**

| Category | Value |
|---|---|
| Never had a job | 0% |
| Have previously held a job | 62% |
| Have a job right now | 38% |
| Drive to school/work | 38% |
| Rely on family/friend for ride | 15% |
| Take bus to school/work | 46% |
| Have a high school diploma | 62% |
| GED | 8% |
| No diploma/GED | 31% |
| Attended college | 54% |
| Colllege degree | 0% |
| Planning to attend school this fall | 62% |

N= 13
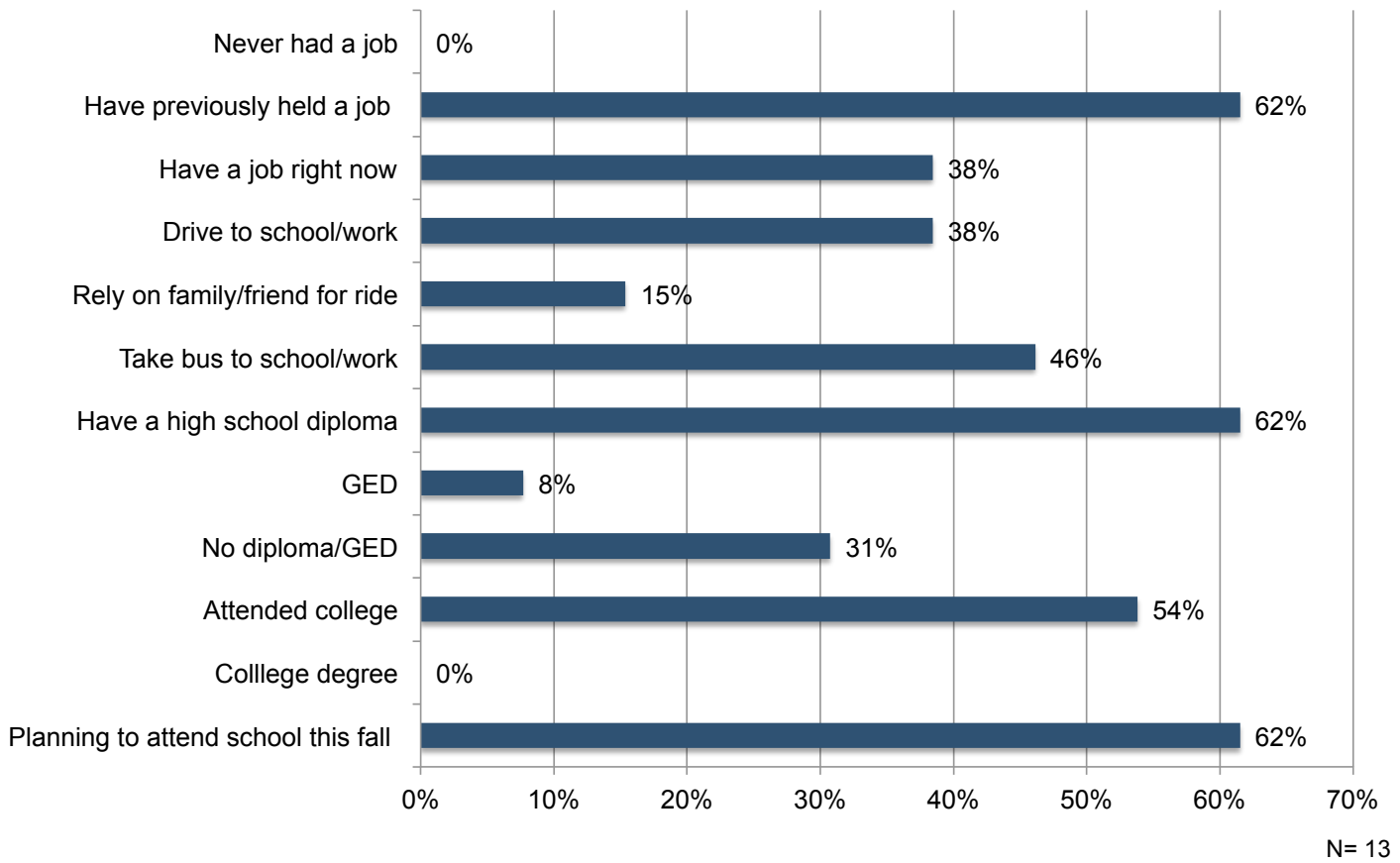
# MOST 16-24 YEAR OLDS IN FRANKLIN CO. DRIVE TO WORK

Other
2%

Bus
4%

Walk
8%

Carpool
12%

Drive car
74%

Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

# EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK FOR OPPORTUNITY YOUTH

## Franklin County Employment Sources for Youth Under 25 (2013)
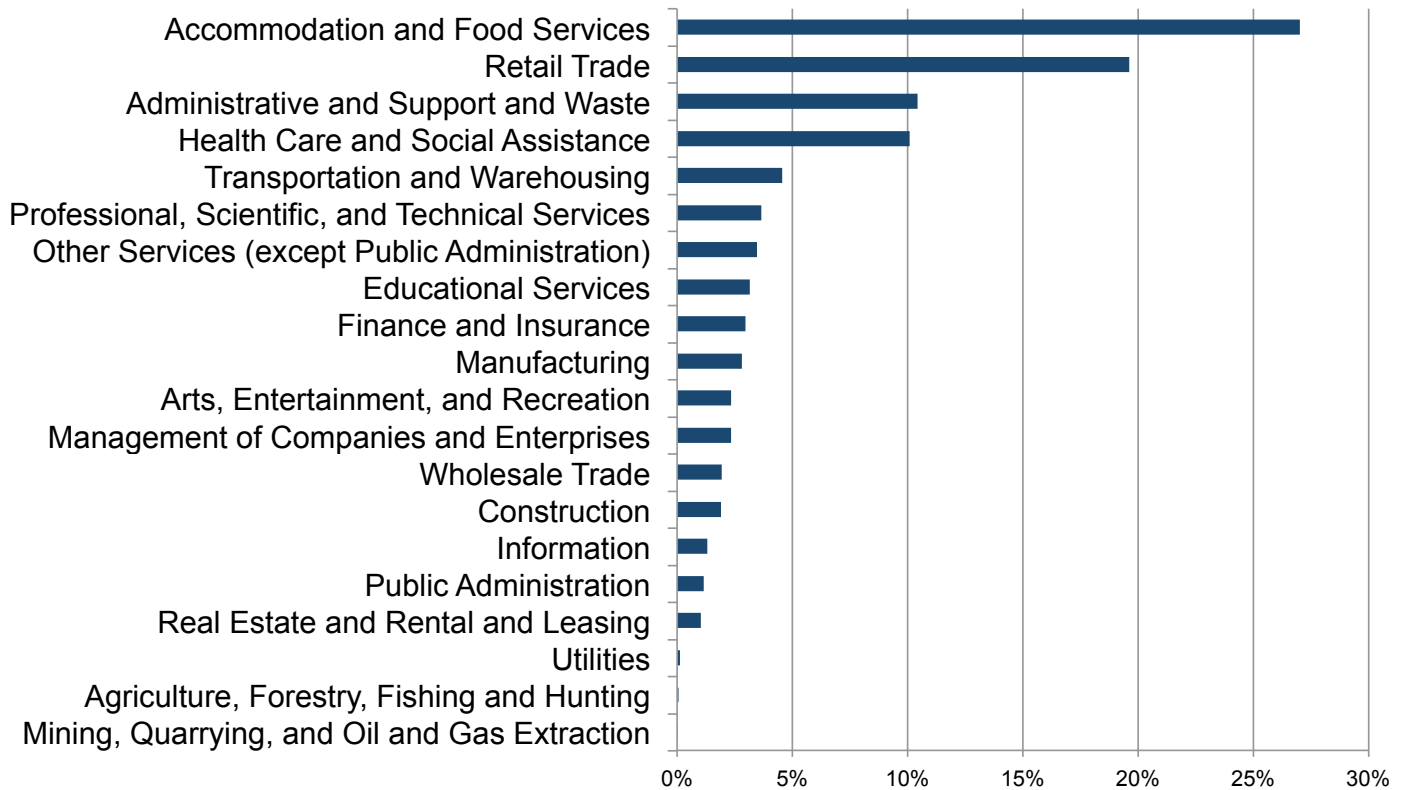


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Quarterly Workforce Indicators

## BEST SECTORS OF EMPLOYMENT FOR OPPORTUNITY YOUTH

| Health Care | Manufacturing | Logistics | Call Centers |

- Ample employment options for high-school-educated workforce
  - These sectors employ 200,000 in Franklin County—two out of three in occupations that generally do not require a college degree
  - For every five job openings that employers advertised online in 2013, two required only a high school diploma or GED
- Pay is sufficient for financial stability
  - Entry-level wages range from $11 to $12 an hour at a call center, $9.50 at a logistics firm, and $9.50 to $15 in healthcare
  - Median wages are more than $13 an hour in 86% of occupations that employ the largest number of high-school-educated workers in these sectors
- Opportunities exist for advancement to higher skilled, higher-wage careers.

## Health Care

- Young adults comprise 8.8% of workforce
- Primarily employs women (78%)
- Largest industry and strongest projected job growth in Franklin County (25.4%)
- Majority of 10-year job openings will be due to replacements
- Home Health and Hospitals are the top sectors for both growth and current distribution of jobs
- Most jobs in Columbus

## Manufacturing

- Young adults comprise 5.9% of workforce
- Primarily employs men (74%)
- Overall negative growth over the next ten years
  - However, there will be significant job openings due to replacements.
- Most jobs in Columbus and Dublin
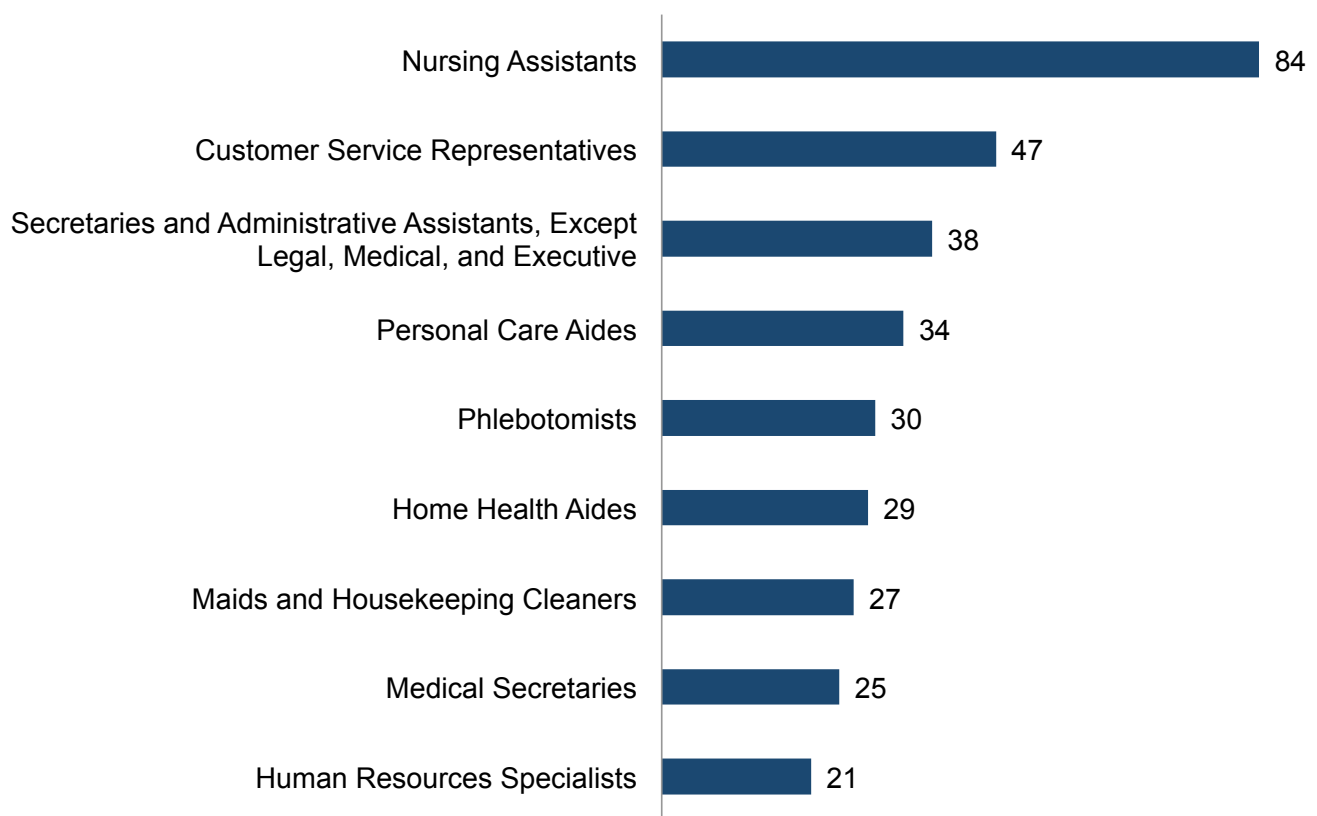
JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

## Logistics

- Young adults comprise 9% of workforce
- Primarily employs men (68%)
- Modest job growth projected (5.4%)
- Warehousing and storage sector has the highest location quotient in Franklin County (3.15)
- Most jobs in Dublin, Reynoldsburg, and Columbus

## Call Centers

- Young adults comprise 15% of workforce
- Primarily employs women (66%)
- LMI data analysis is based on three occupations: bill and account telemarketers, collectors, customer service representatives
- Most job openings will be due to replacements
- Most jobs in Columbus and Dublin

17

TOP JOB POSTINGS FOR WORKERS WITH HIGH SCHOOL DEGREE: HEALTHCARE

JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

| Job Title | Postings |
|---|---|
| Nursing Assistants | 84 |
| Customer Service Representatives | 47 |
| Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive | 38 |
| Personal Care Aides | 34 |
| Phlebotomists | 30 |
| Home Health Aides | 29 |
| Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners | 27 |
| Medical Secretaries | 25 |
| Human Resources Specialists | 21 |

Source: Burning Glass/Labor Insight data as of September-October 2014.
Industry: Healthcare
Education: High School

**TOP JOB POSTINGS FOR WORKERS WITH HIGH SCHOOL DEGREE: MANUFACTURING**

| Job Posting | Value |
|---|---|
| Customer Service Representatives | 56 |
| Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand | 51 |
| Production Workers, All Other | 33 |
| Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products | 32 |
| Retail Salespersons | 30 |
| Maintenance and Repair Workers, General | 30 |
| Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Workers, All Other | 24 |
| Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers | 17 |
| Engineering Technicians, Except Drafters, All Other | 15 |
| Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers | 15 |

Source: Burning Glass/Labor Insight data as of September-October 2014.
Industry: Manufacturing (orange)
Education: High School

19

**JOBS FOR THE FUTURE**

**TOP JOB POSTINGS FOR WORKERS WITH A HIGH SCHOOL DEGREE: LOGISTICS & DISTRIBUTION**

| Job Title | Postings |
|---|---|
| Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand | 250 |
| Stock Clerks and Order Fillers | 122 |
| Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers | 104 |
| Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators | 89 |
| Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers | 68 |
| Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks | 66 |
| Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks | 55 |
| Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers | 46 |
| First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers | 39 |
| Packers and Packagers, Hand | 35 |

Source: Burning Glass/Labor Insight data as of September-October 2014.
Industry: Logistics & Distribution Industry
Education: High School

**TOP JOB POSTINGS FOR WORKERS WITH A HIGH SCHOOL DEGREE: CALL CENTERS**

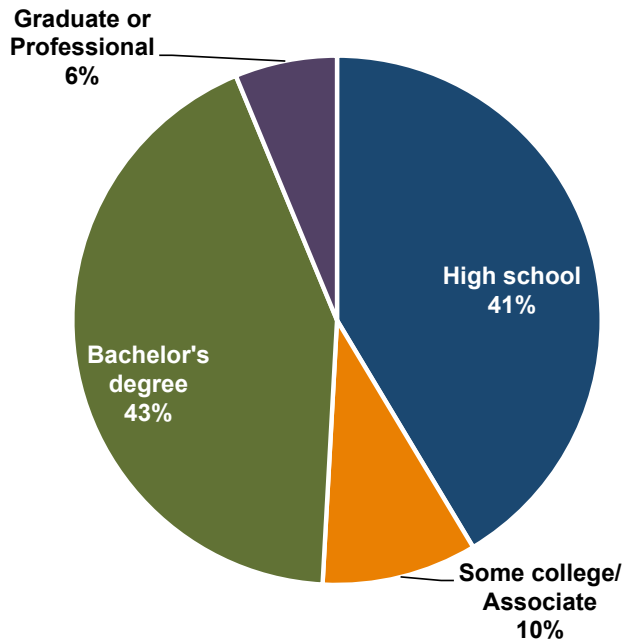| Job Title | Count |
|---|---|
| Customer Service Representative | 213 |
| Customer Service Associate | 42 |
| Customer Service Specialist | 39 |
| Center Consultant | 26 |
| Sales Representative | 24 |
| Member Services Team Member | 23 |
| Service Center Representative | 21 |
| Member Service Representative | 16 |
| Collections Specialist | 15 |
| Collections Representative | 10 |
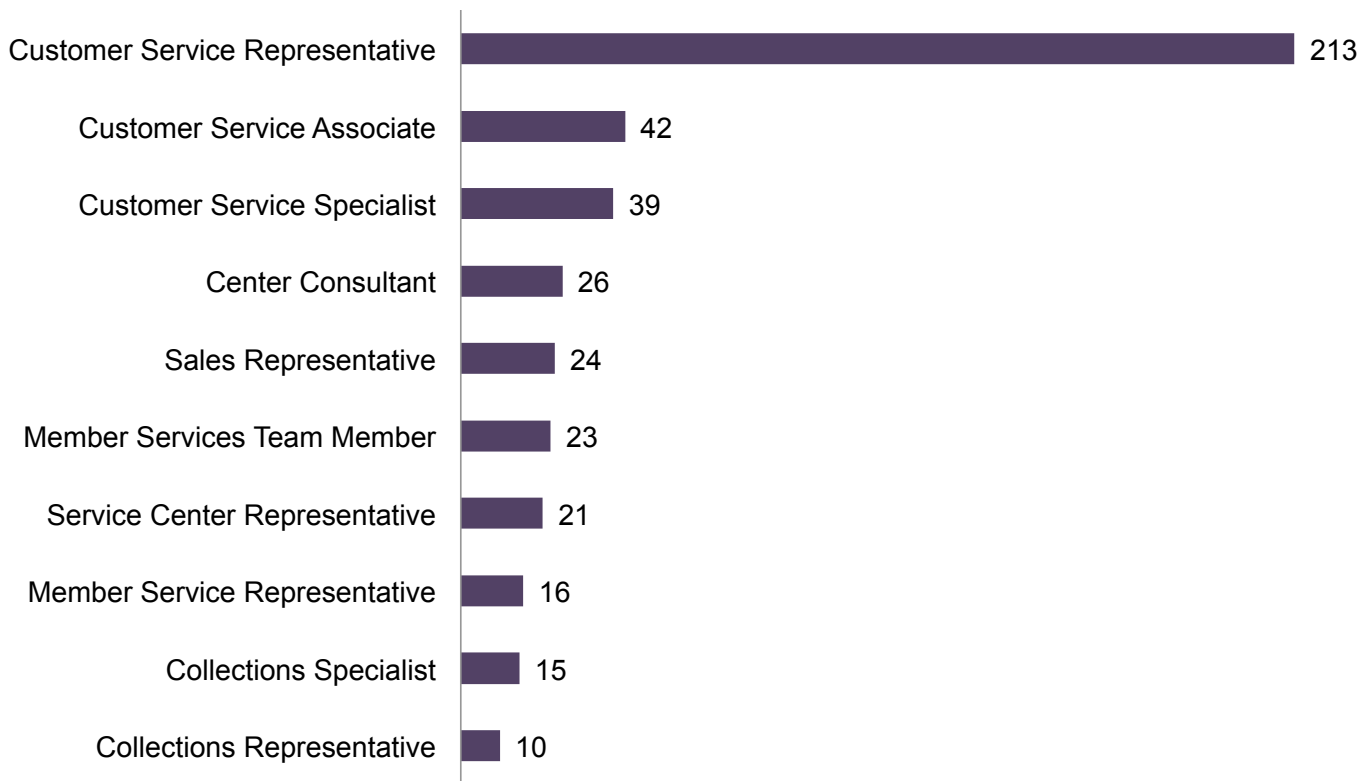
Source: Burning Glass/Labor Insight data as of September-October 2014.
Industry: Call centers
Education: High School

JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

**EMPLOYERS PREFER POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS**

JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

## Minimum Requirement
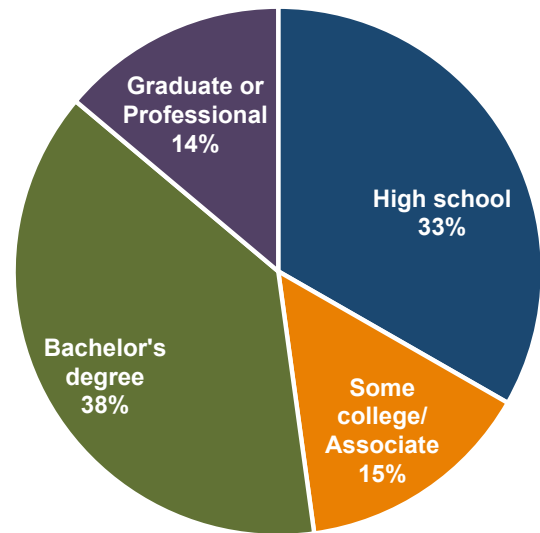
- Graduate or Professional 6%
- Bachelor's degree 43%
- High school 41%
- Some college/ Associate 10%

## Preferred/Minimum

- Graduate or Professional 14%
- High school 33%
- Some college/ Associate 15%
- Bachelor's degree 38%

Source: Burning Glass/Labor Insight data as of September-October 2014.

## Projected 2020 Educational Requirements in Ohio for Select Occupational Groups



Master's degree or higher
5%

Less than high school
5%

Bachelor's degree
16%

Associate's degree
12%

High school diploma
36%

Some college/no degree
26%
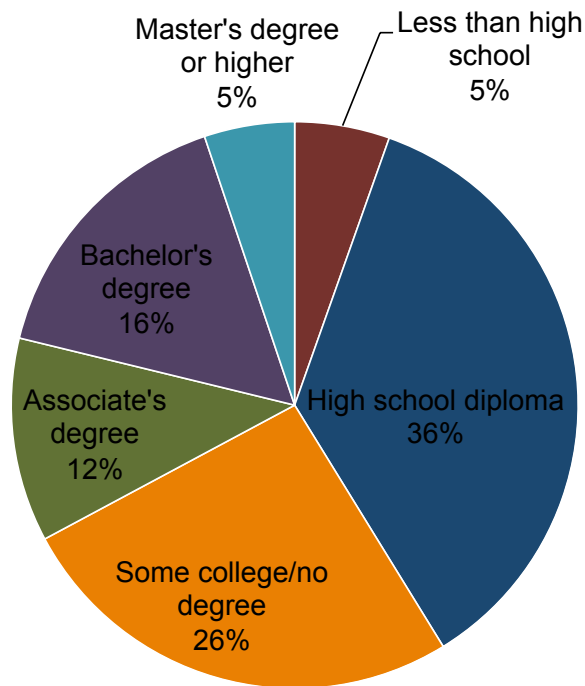
Source: Georgetown Center for Education and the Workforce
Includes projected job totals for Healthcare Professional and Technical; Healthcare Support; Production; Transportation and Material Moving; Sales & Related; and Office and Administrative

**JOBS FOR THE FUTURE**

# STRENGTHENING EDUCATION AND CAREER PATHWAYS

| Business | Conveners |
|---|---|
| Columbus 2020 | The Columbus Foundation |
| Columbus Chamber of Commerce | Central Ohio Compact |
| Columbus Region Logistics Council | Educational Service Center |
| Individual Employers—JPMorgan Chase, Nationwide Insurance, AEP, etc. | United Way of Central Ohio |
| | Columbus State Community College |
| | Human Service Chamber |
| | Learn4Life Columbus |
| **Key Funders** | |
| Columbus Foundation | Ohio Department of Education |
| United Way of Central Ohio | Ohio Board of Regents |
| COWIC | Job & Family Services |
| City of Columbus | Franklin County |

# FRANKLIN CO. PROVIDER OFFERINGS

**Secondary Credential Completion**

|  | HS diploma | GED Prep | ESOL | Basic Skills | College Bridge |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dropout Recovery | X |  |  |  |  |
| ABLE |  | X | X | X | X |
| Columbus Urban League |  |  |  | X |  |
| Columbus Literacy Council |  |  | X | X |  |
| Child Dev. Council |  | X |  | X |  |
| Columbus State |  | X |  |  | X |
| YouthBuild Franklin Co |  |  |  | X | X |
| Dominican Learning Center |  |  | X |  |  |

- **Purpose**: to provide educational opportunities below the postsecondary level for adults
  - ABE: basic skills instruction below the high school level
  - ASE: high-school-level instruction
  - EL: English language instruction.
- **Eligibility**: adults over the age of 16 who:
  - Are not currently enrolled in school
  - Lack a high school diploma
  - Lack the basic skills to function effectively in the workplace and in their daily lives
- **Funding:** federal & state match = $29 million to local providers annual cost of $639/student

| Columbus Public Schools | South-Western City Schools |
|---|---|
| Eastland-Fairfield Career & Technical | Tolles Career & Technical Center |
| Godman Guild | Delaware Area Career Center |

Source: Ohio Board of Regents, FY2013

| | Old | New (as of Jan. 2014) |
|---|---|---|
| Test subjects | 5 tests<br>• Reading<br>• Writing<br>• Math<br>• Science<br>• Social studies | 4 tests<br>• Reasoning through language arts<br>• Mathematical reasoning<br>• Science<br>• Social studies |
| Curriculum | | Aligned with Common Core |
| Testing format | Paper and pencil | Computer-based |
| Test sites | Prepare and take GED at same site –usually a school district, community college, or CBO | Designated testing centers, typically different from preparation site |
| Cost | $40 | $120 |
| Credential | General high school equivalency | General high school equivalency<br>An endorsement that indicates college and career readiness. |

- Sixteen are operated by a district, community, or charter school in Franklin Co.
- Serve students ages 16-21 who:
  - Are at least one academic year behind their peers
  - Have endured a crisis that interfered with their academic progress
- Funded with State and Federal monies (no local funds)
  - $8,525 per student on average, compared to $10,614 for public schools
- Students earn a high school diploma by:
  - Passing the Ohio Graduation Test
  - Completing Ohio Core curriculum or a competency-based instructional program
- Schools are required to help students create an individual career plan to:
  - Enter a two-year degree or apprenticeship program
  - Obtain some sort of industry certification
- Schools held accountable by a State Report Card measuring OJT passage rate, graduation rate, and "gap closing"

- Targeted to 17 to 21 year olds with low literacy levels, whether or not they have a high school diploma
  - Aims to improve literacy by one functional level
  - Uses wrap-around services to stabilize students and make them better prepared and able to work
- Makes referrals to programs that advance career and skills development
  - Godman Guild—ABLE, ServSafe, or customer service
  - Goodwill—State Tested Nursing Aide
- Provides support in enrolling in Columbus State Community College (admission, financial aid, etc.)
- Establishes connections to employers, especially those with summer job relationships

JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

Job Readiness & Barrier Removal

| Job Readiness | Barrier Removal |
|---|---|
| Franklin County JFS* | Settlement Houses |
| City of Columbus* | |
| **Job Readiness  & Barrier Removal** ||
| COWIC (WIA, SOAR Hire)* ||
| Godman Guild ||
| Jewish Family Service ||
| YouthBuild Franklin County* ||
| Columbus Urban League* ||
| Goodwill Columbus ||

* Indicates agency has an initiative targeted to Opportunity Youth

- Workforce Investment Board for Local WIA Area 11
  - Operator of Work Place Central One Stop
  - Recipient of US Department of Labor formula funds
- Three program areas:
  - Adult (18 and older)
  - Dislocated Worker (18 and older)
  - Youth (age 14-21): low-income or at-risk individuals who face one of six specific barriers to employment
- Three service levels:
  - Core (self service)
  - Intensive (significant staff assistance)
  - Training
- Also may use funds for supportive services

**LWIA 11 Participation (Program Year 2012)**
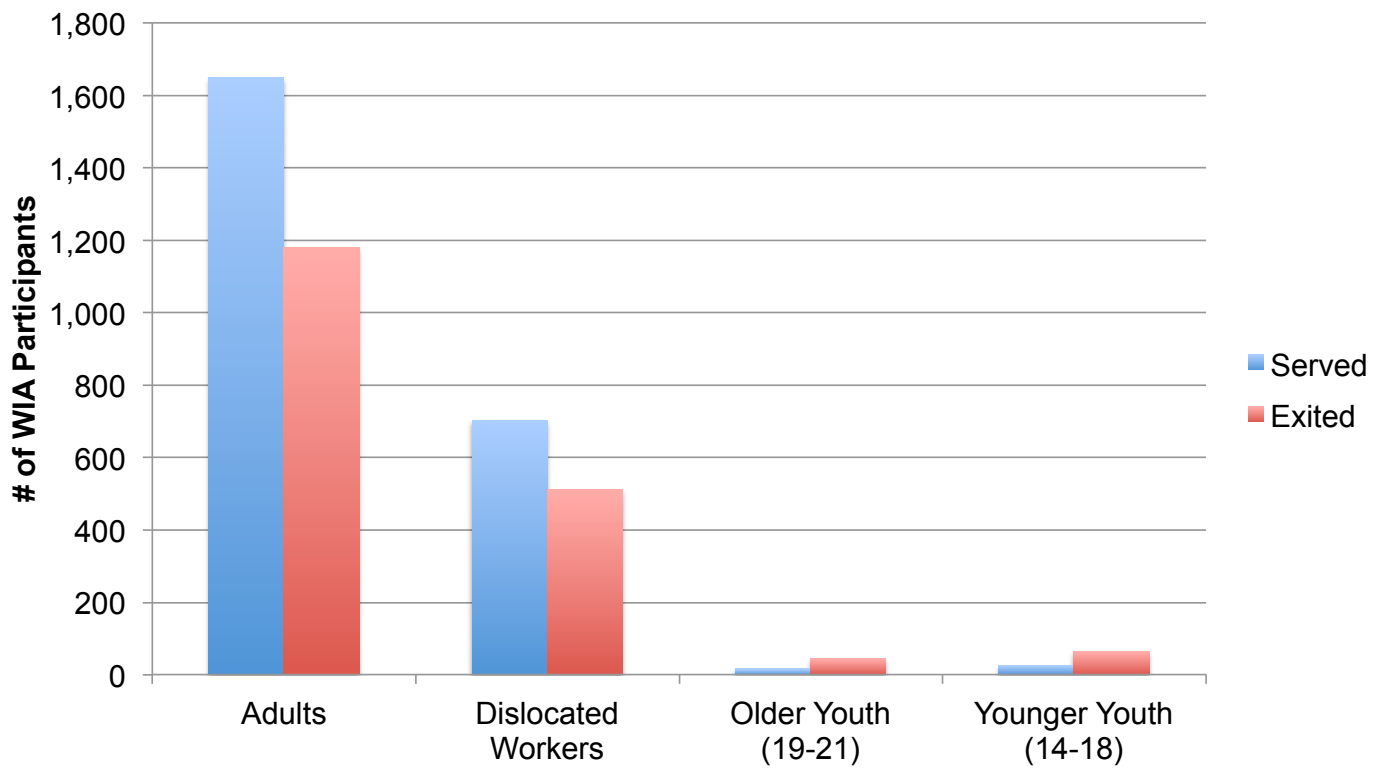
Source: Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, PY2012 participation

- Restoration Academy: City of Columbus program that places graduates into city maintenance and parks jobs
  - Targeted to young adults with criminal records
  - Provides rigorous training and supports

- Learning, Earning, and Parenting (LEAP): Works to eliminate obstacles that may hinder students from graduating
  - Cash assistance program for custodial teen parents who are:
    - Under 20 years old
    - Have not completed high school or received a GED Certificate
  - Operated by Franklin County Job and Family Services
  - Provides additional case management and services such as child care and transportation

Work Experience program for food stamp recipients that is administered by Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services in partnership with the Ohio Association of Foodbanks.

- Program Characteristics:
  - Fulfills SNAP work requirement for recipients without children
    - Participants work an average of 20 hours per week (80 hours per month) and/or participate in a Work Experience Program for up to 24 hours a month as determined by a caseworker
  - Provides job skills and experience through volunteer service
  - Places participants at a variety of host sites

**Job Skills Training**

| Ohio Technical Centers | Nonprofit Providers |
| --- | --- |
| Columbus Public Schools | Columbus Urban League |
| Eastland-Fairfield Career & Tech | YouthBuild Franklin Co. |
| Delaware Area Career Center | Godman Guild |
| Tolles Career & Technical Center | Goodwill Columbus |
| South-Western Career Academy | Jewish Family Service |
| | Per Scholas |

| Postsecondary Institution | |
| --- | --- |
| Columbus State Community College | |

| For-profit Providers | |
| --- | --- |
| American Institute of Alternative Medicine | Heritage College |
| American School of Technology | National College |
| Dental Assistant Pro | Ohio Business College |
| Everest Institute | Sanford-Brown College |
| Fortis College | Techskills Columbus |

- Joint resolution to achieve the goal of 60 percent of Central Ohio residents earning a postsecondary degree or certification in line with the Lumina Foundation's Goal 2025
    - Adopted by Central Ohio school districts and seven colleges/ universities
    - Led by Columbus State
    - Private and nonprofit partners and funders
- System-wide process to retain students within the education pipeline by:
    - Reducing or eliminating remediation
    - Expanding early college opportunities
    - Guaranteeing a bachelor's degree pathway to universities in the region.

- Pathways to Prosperity
  - Dual enrollment/career pathways for area high school students
- Preferred Pathways
  - Guarantee transfer from CSCC to OSU and other schools
- Credits Count
  - STEM-related college credits/certificates for Columbus City School students
- New Skills At Work
  - Employer partnerships to identify and resolve skill gaps
- FastTrack
- Cougar Edge / Bridge

- Unfunded initiative of Ohio Board of Regents to strengthen partnerships between ABLE and Columbus State
- Targeted to students who tested into lowest level of developmental education
  - Received a CSCC student ID and had access to campus services
  - Could not take credit-bearing class
- Columbus State referred students to ABLE classes both on and off campus
- Enrollment and Participation
  - In 2010, 700 students took Compass and tested into lowest level of developmental education
  - Hundreds were referred to ABLE
  - No financial aid available; in addition, no loans or grants for living expenses
  - Most Cougar Edge participants were from Columbus

- Free Adult Education program for Columbus residents
  - Enrolled in Columbus State and test into lowest level of developmental education
- Launched in fall 2014 with City grant of $192,000 which:
  - Pays for instructor, coordinator, and travel expenses
  - Incentivizes student attendance and performance
- Maintains relationship with other ABLE providers
  - Refers students with childcare needs to Godman Guild, which offers onsite childcare
  - Refers nonresident students to Tolles, Southwestern, and Delaware providers

- $1.5 million grant from City of Columbus to Columbus State to develop a 4-week training program for three healthcare pathways—dietary (ServSafe), building services (OSHA10), or patient care (STNA)
  - 4 cohorts, 62 enrollees, 48 completions, 36 job placements
  - Graduates guaranteed employment at Nationwide Children's Hospital and other healthcare providers
  - Full-time employment with benefits, from $9.32 to $14.26 per hour
- Program eligibility:
  - Students referred and screened by Godman, CUL, Goodwill, or Jewish Family Services
  - Students must be 18 or older, low income, unemployed or underemployed, Columbus resident, have a GED or HS diploma, and score at least 9th grade proficiency on TABE

- Funded by $4.6 million Department of Labor grant
- Three-week training program
  - Entry- to mid-level warehouse, distribution, other related jobs
  - Require 100% class attendance
- Included public and private partners who:
  - Hired graduates
  - Conducted mock interviews
  - Participated in job fairs
- Outcomes
  - 1,463 graduated and 79% placed in jobs
  - 247 graduated from Roadmaster CDL program; 97% placed in jobs

**PROVIDERS OUTREACH STRATEGY**
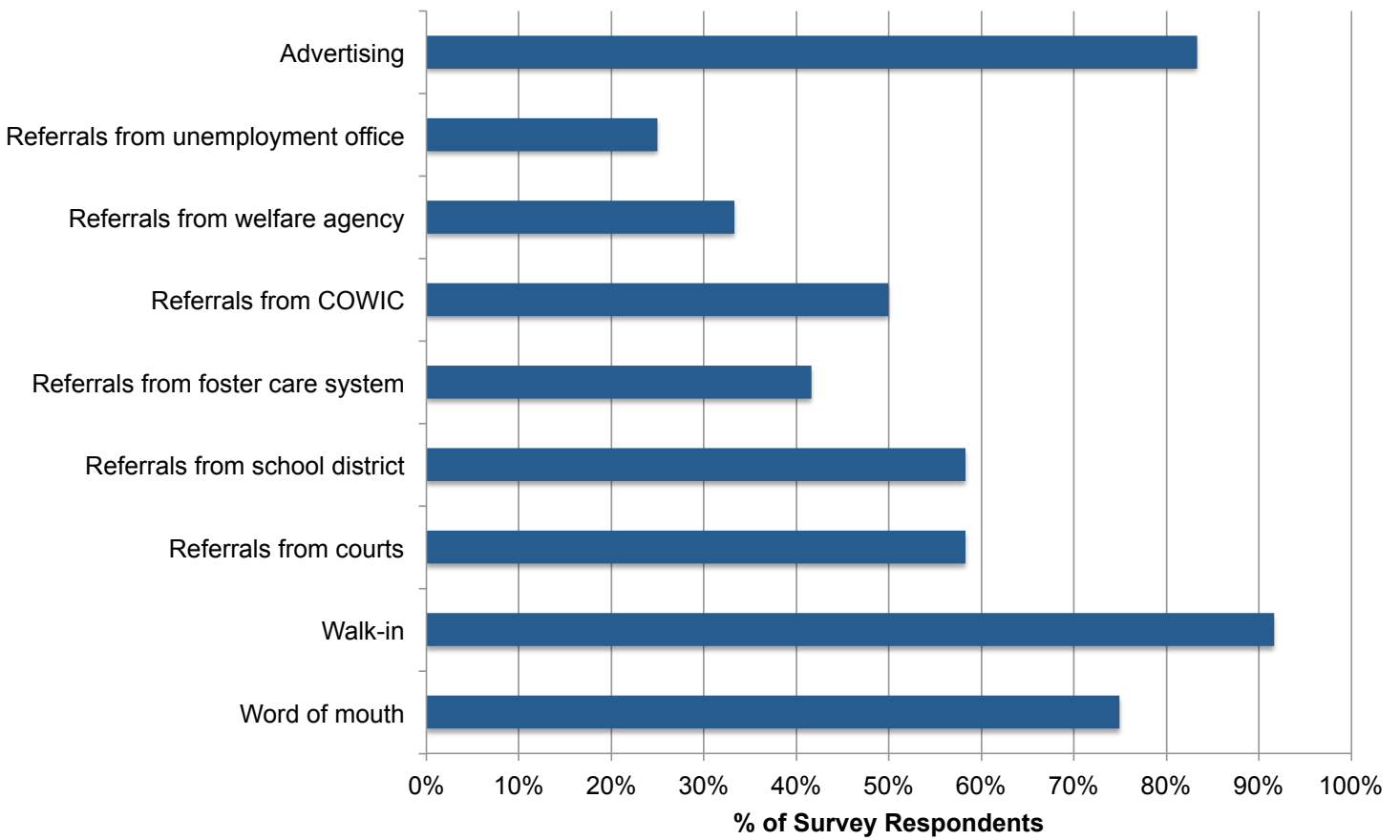
JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

JFF Survey of 12 Franklin Co. education and human service providers

**MARY V.L. WRIGHT** mwright@jff.org

**MAMADOU NDIAYE** mndiaye@jff.org

**DAVE ALTSTADT** david.altstadt.consulting@gmail.com

**JOBS FOR THE FUTURE**