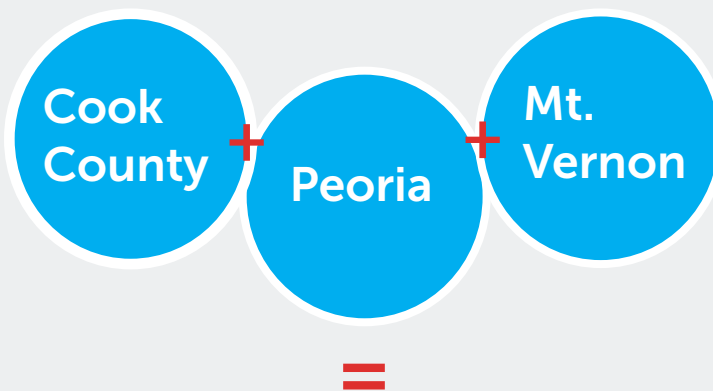


Making Youth Apprenticeships Work for Illinois' Young Adults

Context

Illinois is launching a youth apprenticeship (YA) pilot program in the summer of 2017 in an effort to reduce high youth unemployment and address a shortage of skilled personnel in key sectors. In the YA program, young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 learn in-demand skills, earn industry recognized credentials, and prepare for other workforce development opportunities such as registered apprenticeships and college programs. On behalf of the Governor's Cabinet on Children and Youth, Young Invincibles convened roundtables to gather community-informed recommendations on designing a 2017-2018 YA pilot program and future YA programs that meet the needs of young adults. The findings are based on the community perspectives gathered at the roundtables.*

Community Input



125 young adults and service providers supporting youth, from the foster care and juvenile justice system, workforce development programs, and community colleges

*Roundtables took place in the Spring of 2017.

Goals

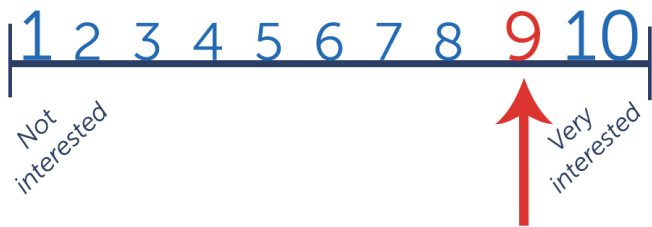
- Explore the benefits youth apprenticeship programs can bring to young adults
- Understand the challenges youth apprenticeship programs will face
- Inform youth apprenticeship outreach and marketing campaigns

Key Benefits

A word cloud of key benefits in various shades of blue. The words are: 'career experience', 'being in an environment I can grow', 'Career', 'job security', 'Paid training', 'Pay', 'Skill development', 'getting a job', 'Learning cool things', 'gaining experience in field of choice', and 'chance for hands on learning'.

Resounding Interest from Young Adults

On a scale of 1 to 10...



Survey Results: On a scale of 1 – 10, with 10 being very interested, the average young adult and staff level of interest in apprenticeships exceeded 9.

Top Barriers

1. Ability to Succeed

Some young people will lack the social-emotional and technical skills and life circumstances (including access to child care and stable housing) necessary to succeed in a YA program.

2. Culture Fit

The model was daunting to many young adults, leading them to question whether they would fit in, feel welcomed, and have access to trusted person who supported them. This fear will prevent some young adults from even applying for YA openings.

3. Accessing Worksites

If workplaces are far from where young people live or public transportation routes, many young adults will struggle to access the workplace.

4. Finding & Understanding Youth Apprenticeship Job Listings

The young adults were concerned about finding and understanding job listings announcing apprenticeship openings.

Solutions

Track program outcomes: Determine whether diverse young adults participate and meaningfully benefit from youth apprenticeships by tracking the number of apprentices coming from underrepresented populations (including women, young parents, people of color, and disconnected youth) and participants' outcomes (including rates for completing and securing employment, joining registered apprenticeship programs, or enrolling in college).

Provide wraparound services: Populations targeted by Illinois youth apprenticeship programs may face hunger and unstable housing or need access to transportation, child care, and health care, barriers that would prevent apprentices from thriving in a workplace setting. Wraparound services would help provide young adults with the life circumstances necessary to succeed.

Provide a range of trainings: Some young adults will struggle to meet expectations without additional training, including coaching on career goals, interviewing, social-emotional skills such as processing feedback, and core competencies such as math and literacy.

Create welcoming workplaces: Young adults will flourish in environments that are welcoming, where expectations are clearly laid out from the start, and excellent work is recognized. The state should train worksite mentors on best practices with developing young adults.

Proactive, consumer-friendly marketing: Illinois and program providers must launch a proactive educational campaign to overcome the public's limited knowledge of apprenticeships, putting compelling information directly into young adults' hands through social media, websites young adults use to find nearby opportunities, and by educating teachers, school counselors, social workers, and the many others who guide young adults as they explore their career options.