



DC DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT SERVICES - OFFICE OF YOUTH PROGRAMS

**2016 Program Evaluation:
Marion Barry Summer Youth Employment Program**

Final Report

September 30, 2016

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

In August 2016, the District of Columbia Department of Employment Services engaged BDA Global to perform an evaluation of the Office of Youth Program's (OYP) Marion Barry Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), which has been in operation since 1979. The program provides summer employment over a 6 to 9-week period, and engages city youth on a variety of work and educational enrichment opportunities with a broad range of hosts. These include private sector employers, federal government, DC Government, schools, and Community Based Organizations (CBOs). The evaluation was conducted between August 10 and September 16, 2016.

The intent of the evaluation is to identify strengths and deficiencies that significantly impact the implementation of the SYEP program and to provide an analysis and recommendations that lead to sustainable improvements in the following three (3) areas:

- **Customer (youth)-centered functions:** Examining those functions that directly relate to the provision of programs and services and that meet the needs of the program's customers (youth residents). These include services such as workforce readiness, high-growth industry career exploration, academic enrichment through experiential programs, applied skills development and job experience.
- **Organizational functions:** Examining existing policies and procedures, as well as their implementation, to evaluate the organization's ability to effectively develop, implement, coordinate, and continuously improve its services and programs based on best practices, models, and legislatively mandated requirements. These functions include but are not limited to management of information, contract/grant management, internal/external communications, infrastructure support, staff competencies and performance, staff training, operating policies and procedures, and stakeholder engagement.
- **Management, administration and operational structures, functions and systems:** Examining the operational structure that exists to effectively coordinate and deliver programs and services, and carry out the SYEP mission. These include:
 1. Management functions for policy development and implementation, budget financial management, leadership, accountability and responsiveness.
 2. Administrative functions consist of facilitation of staff/stakeholder communications and the flow of information throughout the organization, which includes data management, correspondence, and reports control and management.
 3. The operations function coordinates a multitude of direct and indirect services for internal and external customers and manages routine and emergent operational requirements as well as orchestrates the planning and coordination of special activities.

Methodology

To accomplish the stated project objectives, BDA Global obtained and reviewed documentation to evaluate the organizational structure and mission success, and met with program personnel to evaluate service delivery capacity, methods, and operational effectiveness, including service outcomes, and conducted 2 focus groups – one with hosts and one with youth, to obtain stakeholder feedback.

The evaluation was structured into 3 areas of analysis, yielding findings and recommendations consistent with evaluation requirements. These areas are:

- **Program Planning and Management:** Examining the program planning process, resources in place for program implementation, and approaches to quality control and program optimization.
- **Policies and Procedures:** Examining policies and procedure in place for recruiting, determining eligibility and enrolling youth, as well as for program implementation and determining youth outcomes. Also, examining policies and procedures for host participation, and for measuring service delivery success.
- **Infrastructure and Use of Technology:** Examining infrastructure in place for supporting the program, including recruitment materials, resource materials, and automated tools to support the application, enrollment processes, and ongoing support for youth and hosts.

Summary Results

It is a tremendous accomplishment to establish eligibility, enroll, and place thousands of City youth annually in educational enrichment and workforce readiness programs, as well as to recruit and coordinate a network of hosts. The quality of placements and levels of work skills developed are, however, not consistently evaluated to assure that the program is effective in fulfilling its overarching goals. DC Code Section 32-241 (g) (3) states: It is the sense of the Council that the Department of Employment Services shall consult with the Council on revising the existing evaluation requirement for the summer youth jobs program to focus on program outcomes and program effectiveness.

It is, hence, critical that more emphasis be placed on planning, strategy, service delivery, and evaluation to positively affect outcomes. With this objective in mind, BDA Global identified 25 findings and recommendations, as indicated in summary format in Section 1 and in detail in Section 3 of the report.

Top priority recommendations include:

1. Engage in long-term strategic planning and develop a 5-year strategic plan
2. Enhance branding to support program development goals
3. Develop a broader and more robust approach to supporting the needs of youth with disabilities

4. Increase scope of host outreach and recruitment initiatives
5. Establish Corporate Liaison Position to further develop private sector participation
6. Develop more detailed Standard Operating Procedures to ensure standardization and to maintain institutional knowledge
7. Enforce rules that require youth to report to assigned workplaces and adhere strictly and consistently to rules related to transfers
8. Ensure comprehensive and uniform evaluations for all youth participants
9. Institute quality assurance measures to assure a high standard of CBO program delivery and youth development
10. Explore the possibility of outsourcing the transfer management and timekeeping processes to a private sector company that specializes in data management
11. Enhance the youth portal to accept digitized proof of eligibility documentation
12. Make online timesheet submission a condition for host participation in the program
13. Require hosts to provide more detailed job descriptions, enabling better matching



SECTION 1: RESULTS IN BRIEF

The following section outlines the background of the project, scope of work performed, and summarizes findings and recommendations.

1.1 Background

The Department of Employment Services' Office of Youth Programs is charged with developing and administering workforce development programs for District of Columbia youth, ages 14-24. OYP provides occupational skills training, work experience, academic enrichment, and life skills training to facilitate the development of work habits and skills that are essential for success in the workplace.

The Marion Barry Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) engages thousands of youth who reside in the District in educational enrichment and workforce readiness programs, offered by a number of types of hosts that span various sectors, including Public Sector; Public, Charter, and Private Schools; Community Based Nonprofit Organizations (CBOs); Federal Government; District Government; and the Private Sector. The following diagram reflects the 2016 versus 2015 participation levels, by sector:

Sector	2016		2015	
	Hosts	Participants	Hosts	Participants
1. Community Based Organizations	250	4,685	201	5,144
2. District Government Agencies	73	3,440	57	5,030
3. Federal Agencies	35	334	29	376
4. Private Sector	278	1,567	114	1,401
5. Schools	79	2,072	71	2,000
6. Other	3	0	1	1
TOTAL	718	12,098	473	13,952

It is mandated that the SYEP program be evaluated by an independent 3rd party annually, hence the impetus for this study.

1.2 Scope

DOES requested that BDA Global conduct an evaluation of the SYEP Program to identify its strengths, deficiencies and opportunities for improvement. It is anticipated that the findings from the comprehensive evaluation will be used to identify deficiencies, and provide recommendations for improvements to specific program areas as identified. The examination included an analysis of:

1. Customer (youth)-centered functions directly related to the provision of programs and services to customers
2. Organizational functions that are vital to the organization's ability to effectively develop, implement, coordinate, evaluate and continuously improve its services and programs based on best practice(s) models and legislatively mandated requirements
3. Management, administration and operational structures, functions and systems which impact the organization's ability to effectively coordinate and support the delivery of programs and services and carry out its mission.



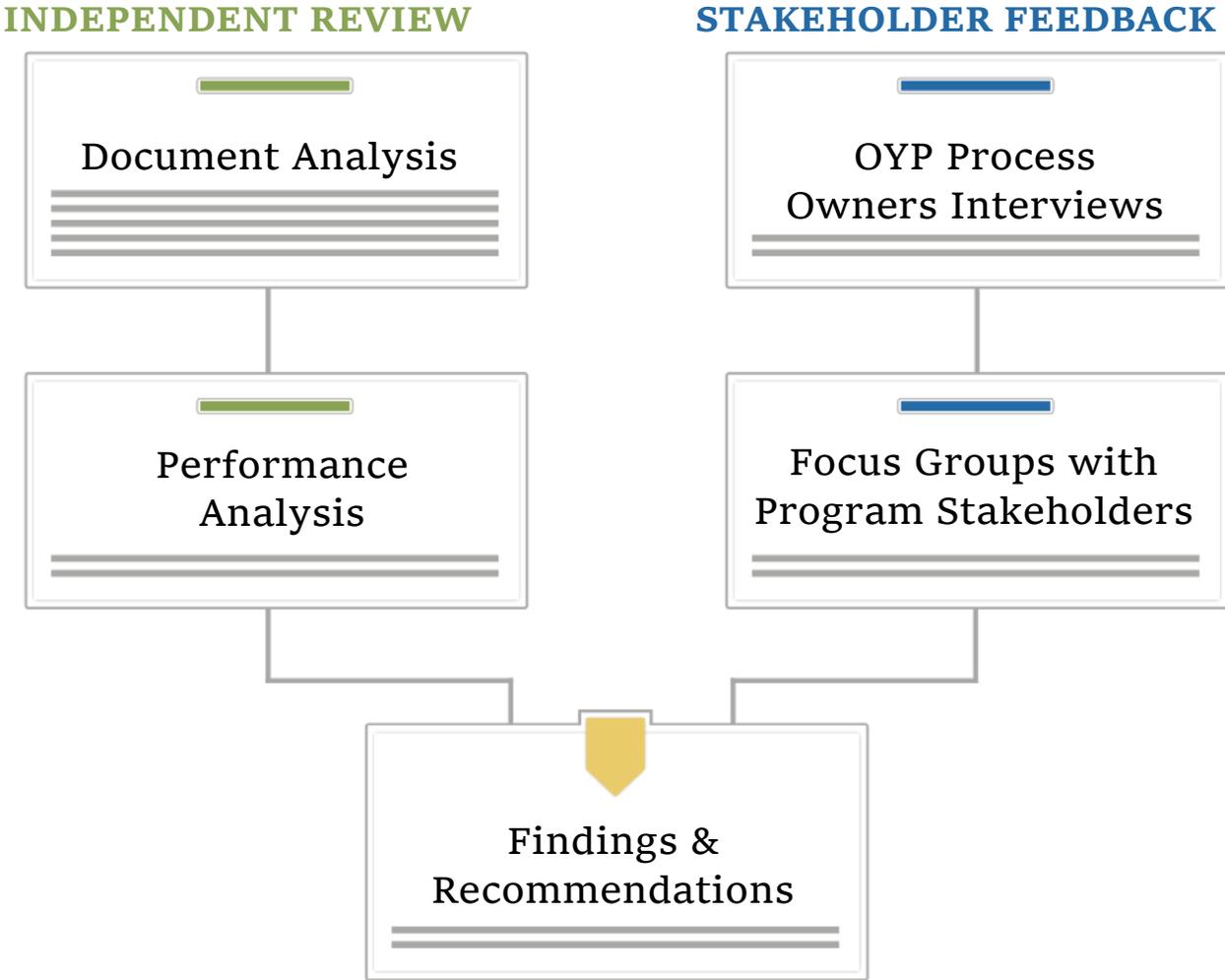
1.3 General Approach

The evaluation was customized to address the areas of concern specified in the scope of work, above, and was designed to identify efficiency and effectiveness issues in the operation of the SYEP program. BDA Global’s analysis focused on the performance of the 2016 program which ran from June 27, 2016 to August 5, 2016 and was structured to examine the performance of the program during that period, including:

- 1. Program Planning and Management – An examination of strategic and action planning performed to administer the program, including alignment of resources toward achieving program goals.
- 2. Policies and Procedures – An examination of OYP’s policies and procedures to accomplish SYEP program objectives.
- 3. Structure and use of Technology - An examination of the SYEP program structure and the use of systems to support the achievement of program goals.

Figure 1.0, below, illustrates the mission driven approach taken in performing the review:

Exhibit 1 – Evaluation Approach





1.4 SYEP Program Status and Accomplishments

Though our review is focused on identifying opportunities to enhance the program’s performance, there are a number of program accomplishments that are noteworthy, including:

- In 2016, SYEP grew host participation across all sectors, with total host participation growing from 473 to 718, an increase of 52%.
- In 2016, SYEP grew the number of private sector hosts substantially from 114 in 2015 to 278 in 2016.
- SYEP was able to get the program off the ground and meet their milestone dates despite a one-month mandated delay in initiating the program.
- SYEP expanded services to adult participants, ages 22-24, including hiring job coaches to assist in their professional development
- SYEP reduced the number of youth transfers significantly in 2016, from 4,458 in 2015 to 3,154 in 2016

1.5 Summary of Assessment Findings and Recommendations

BDA Global’s analysis resulted in 25 findings and recommendations across the 3 analytic areas including

Analytic Area	Number of Findings
Program Planning and Management	8
Policies and Procedures	9
Structure and use of Technology	8
Total	25

The table below provides a summary of the findings and recommendations which are cross-walked to the detailed findings and recommendations, outlined in Section 3 of the report.

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Review Area	Findings	Recommendation	Reference
eArea 1 – Program Planning and Management	<p>1. Need for Strategic Planning: The current year plan provided a macro view of the major program steps and due dates, but lacked specificity. For a program of this size and magnitude, it would be beneficial to develop a detailed written strategic plan, with short term and longer term goals and objectives.</p>	<p>It is recommended that OYP develop a 5-year strategic plan with clearly defined program goals, objectives, and target outcomes, including targets for host and youth participation, and defining success in attaining both qualitative and quantitative youth outcomes.</p> <p>Furthermore, program goals should be linked to employee performance goals and should be reflected in the annual performance evaluation process.</p>	Page 15
Area 1 Program Planning and Management	<p>2. Need for Enhanced Branding: Program branding could be enhanced to attract a wider array of hosts. The current brand was developed years ago and does not fully convey the scope and vital importance of this program.</p>	<p>Materials and messaging should convey consistent branding and provide a motivating message to potential hosts, highlighting their civic duty in providing opportunities for District youth and self-interest in developing a more professional workforce.</p> <p>It is recommended that OYP undertake a branding and outreach modernization effort, in order to give this signature program the exposure and recognition it deserves.</p> <p>This should include examining the use of graphics and marketing materials for coherent messaging and developing a standardized approach for outreach.</p> <p>In addition, it is important to use this branding effort to educate the community on the positive impact this program can have on youths' long term career opportunities, while serving the employer's interest in fulfilling their civic obligations and developing a more professional workforce.</p>	Page 16



Review Area	Findings	Recommendation	Reference
<p>Area 1 Program Planning and Management</p>	<p>3. Need for broader support for youth with disabilities: There is a need to develop a broader and more robust approach to supporting youth with disabilities. Current efforts are geared toward addressing individual needs as they are identified and often after placement. Additionally, one of the critical issues of concern is that although youth are invited to disclose their disabilities, they are under no obligation to do so. As a result, disabled youth often begin their summer employment with their host unaware that they are disabled, or unaware of what the disability is or how to deal with it. Additionally, some hosts that participated in the focus group, indicated that they were not aware of the SYEP command center that provides support for them in addressing the needs of youth participants with disabilities.</p>	<p>It is recommended that a more proactive and holistic approach be taken to meeting the needs of City’s disabled youth who are interested in participating in the program. This would necessitate building an infrastructure that would provide information, interventions, and specialized services in advance of the program start date and throughout the program.</p>	<p>Page 17</p>
<p>Area 1 Program Planning and Management</p>	<p>4. Need to enhance the host orientation process: Hosts often do not attend an in-person orientation but instead review a PowerPoint orientation document. In addition, it is common for supervisors who interface directly with youth to not have received any orientation.</p>	<p>It is recommended that all supervisors be required to attend a mandatory in-person orientation session, since they are the ones interfacing directly with the youth.</p> <p>Orientations should be tiered to allow those supervisors that previously participated in the program to attend a refresher, while supervisors new to the program would be required to attend a more in-depth session.</p>	<p>Page 18</p>



Review Area	Findings	Recommendation	Reference
		In addition, hosts should be encouraged to invite youth to a pre-employment onsite visit to familiarize them with their specific placement.	
Area 1 Program Planning and Management	5. Need to enhance the youth orientation process: Youth are required to participate in a brief orientation session that is provided by SYEP. This session provides basic information about the program's requirements and expectations, such as getting to work on time and how to dress, but appears to not fully cover strategies that would enable youth make to make the most of this opportunity. This is of particular importance for youth entering the workforce for the first time.	It is recommended that youth who intend to participate in the program be required to attend a more in-depth SYEP orientation to better prepare them. In addition, youth should be encouraged to attend pre-employment onsite visits, when made available by hosts, to familiarize them with their specific placement.	Page 19
Area 1 Program Planning and Management	6. Need to enhance approaches to host recruitment: It appears that outreach efforts are limited in breadth and scope, and many desirable hosts are not contacted directly. In that vein, the potential population has not been adequately analyzed, segmented, and mined.	There are numerous actions that are recommended to improve OYPs host development efforts and outcomes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance Research • Collaborations • Partnerships • Corporate Placement Programs • Out-year Recruitment of Hosts • Host Liaison Function 	Page 20
Area 1 Program Planning and Management	7. Consider benefits of creating a Corporate Outreach Liaison function: According the 2014 US Census, there were over 22,000 private sector businesses operating in the District of Columbia. With	It is recommended that a new position be created to target the participation of established private sector, corporate employers. Many of these entities operate in high-growth industry sectors, such as agricultural and environmental, information technology and	Page 21



Review Area	Findings	Recommendation	Reference
	<p>less than 300 current private sector hosts participating in the program in 2016, there is a substantial opportunity to grow and enhance the program and to provide more opportunities to youth.</p>	<p>telecommunications, media/publications/communications/entertainment, and business/professional services.</p>	
<p>Area 1 Program Planning and Management</p>	<p>8. Recruitment of Youth: In 2015, the Office of the DC Auditor found that approximately 75 percent of youth determined eligible for SYEP, resided in Wards 5, 7, and 8, and more than half of those determined eligible resided in wards 7 and 8. These statistics held true in 2016.</p> <p>While the program engages thousands of city youth annually, the opportunities it affords should be well publicized to all youth who can benefit across the City.</p>	<p>It is recommended that OYP actively market the SYEP program throughout the City. Gaining youth participants from every ward is likely to lead to more community involvement and support for the program citywide.</p>	<p>Page 21</p>
<p>Area 2: Policies and Procedures</p>	<p>9. Standard Operating Procedures: Current SOPs do not provide detailed guidance on how to perform required tasks. While key staff members have largely been with OYP for a number of years and know their processes, SOPs with greater specificity would promote consistency in execution and be helpful in the case of staff changes.</p>	<p>It is recommended that OYP develop SOPs that provide specific and clear direction for how each step in every key process is expected to be performed. SOPs should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process summary, including intended outcomes • Pertinent Policies and Requirements • Step-by-step actions required • Deliverables • Handoffs and approvals • Supporting Exhibits and Reference Materials 	<p>Page 22</p>



Review Area	Findings	Recommendation	Reference
Area 2: Policies and Procedures	<p>10. Lack of Written Performance Metrics: Currently plans provide a broad outline of the tasks to be performed and due dates but lack specificity regarding goals and outcomes.</p>	<p>As part of the annual program planning process, quantitative goals, consistent with those in the strategic plan, should be adopted and assigned to key program personnel in writing. These should be reflected in each staff member's performance evaluation as well.</p>	Page 23
Area 2: Policies and Procedures	<p>11. Transfers and Consequential Payroll Issues: While OYP has made progress in reducing the number of youth transfers in 2016, many youth participants continue to show up at different workplaces than those they were assigned to, for various reasons. SYEP currently has rules to prevent youth from getting paid by employers they were not originally assigned to, but these rules are, by all accounts, largely not enforced. Allowing youth to subvert the job matching process by appearing and remaining at host sites to which they were not assigned, may lead to unhelpful workforce behaviors.</p>	<p>It is recommended that current rules be enforced and youth be required to report to the host to whom they were assigned. On no occasion, should a youth participant be allowed to remain at another site unless they meet one of the three current allowable criteria for transfer – 1) site closing, 2) safety (verified by police department), or 3) medical need documented by a physician (or if there is an exceptional circumstance).</p>	Page 23
Area 2: Policies and Procedures	<p>12. Tiered Placement of Youth: Currently the process to assign youth does not consider the level of effort and preparedness of the individual applying for the program.</p>	<p>It is recommended that efforts be made to assign youth based on a tiered placement system, that recognizes levels of workplace readiness. For example, youth that had success in previous years' programs could be given priority on assignments. In addition, youth who have been proactive by attending a youth fair and/or preparing a resume, for example, could also be given priority on assignments. Youth given priority could be invited to special SYEP sponsored matching events to introduce employers to prospective hires.</p>	Page 24



Review Area	Findings	Recommendation	Reference
Area 2 Procedures and Procedures	13. Use of Feedback Mechanisms for Program Enhancement: DOES holds employer Focus groups and conducts surveys at the end of the program, but have engaged relatively few participants to obtain feedback. For example, in 2015, only 20 of 706 hosts attended a focus group and in 2016 only youth in the 22-24 age range were surveyed for feedback.	It is recommended that OYP solicit feedback from all hosts and all youth who participate in the program. Surveys should be sent to all youth participants and all participating hosts. Focus groups should be designed to get feedback from a representative sample of hosts, by sector. Feedback collected through these efforts should feed into a continuous improvement loop.	Page 25
Area 2 Procedures and Procedures	14. Communication Issues between SYEP and host/youth participants: There are instances when program features were not communicated to hosts until the day the program started. For example, in 2016 hosts reported that they had no prior knowledge of OYP's plans for youth to go offsite for professional development activities. Similarly, older youth reported that they did not know that they would have job coaches.	It is recommended that OYP develop a communication plan prior to program rollout, with assigned roles and responsibilities for sharing information pertinent to the hosts and youth participants. This plan might include a calendar which specifies recurring events, such as one-day per week professional development activities that some youth are required to participate in offsite, as well as one-time events, and due dates (such as for host evaluations of participating youth).	Page 25
Area 2 Procedures and Procedures	15. Youth Performance Evaluations Not Performed Consistently: OYP contacted hosts to evaluate youth, but requests were not made uniformly for all participants. Hosts reported that they were called randomly with requests for evaluations of some youth but not others.	It is recommended that OYP require evaluations for all youth participants. In addition, the host participant should be required to discuss each youth's performance in person prior to the end of the program, in order to support the youth's professional development.	Page 26
Area 2 Procedures	16. Need for Increased Vetting of Service Delivery by CBO Sites. There is currently	It is recommended that SYEP engage staff or contractors with educational assessment backgrounds to act as	Page 26

Review Area	Findings	Recommendation	Reference
and Procedures	minimal vetting of the quality of CBO programs and analysis of actual service delivery. Furthermore, youth focus group participants reported that staff at one CBO were involved repeatedly in overt disagreements and arguments amongst themselves, and wore clothing that youth were prohibited from wearing.	Program Monitors and evaluate the training that is being delivered by CBOs to ensure that it meets a high quality standard. Program Monitors should be tasked with assessing the curriculum to determine whether it the content is sufficient and whether is being delivered effectively.	
Area 2 Procedures and Procedures	17. Handbooks not posted online in advance: Host and youth handbooks were not posted in their entirety on the OYP website in 2016.	Handbooks that fully describe the roles and responsibilities of both host and youth participants should be made available on the OYP website well in advance of the program start date each year.	Page 27
Area 3: Structure and use of Technology	18. Need for improved Data Management: There were 3,154 youth transfers in 2016, necessitating a large number of payroll changes, processed by OYP staff. In addition, timekeeping entry issues occurred frequently throughout the program period, and placed a heavy administrative burden on OYP staff.	It is recommended that OYP analyze its operational cost for dealing with transfer and payroll issues for the summer program. It is further recommended that OYP conduct a business case analysis and explore the possibility of achieving efficiencies and cost savings from outsourcing the transfer management and timekeeping processes to a private sector entity that specializes in this form of data management.	Page 27
Area 3: Infrastructure and use of Technology	19. Need for Single Sign On for Hosts: There are currently 2 portals for Hosts – one for signing up as a host and the other for time and attendance. Aside from ease of access considerations, the portal labels do not clearly designate the content. This results in a lot of extra work for program liaisons because hosts call frequently to ask	It is recommended that there OYP develop a single sign-on with one point of entry for both sets of data. This would lead to ease of access, and lessen the number of inquiries and requests for assistance from OYP staff.	Page 28



Review Area	Findings	Recommendation	Reference
	<p>questions about where to find information that should be easily accessible.</p>		
<p>Area 3: Structure and use of Technology</p>	<p>20. Need for More Robust FAQs: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for youth and their answers are not as detailed and helpful as they could be. Examples include 1) problems downloading W4s, 2) and issues understanding the importance of completing W4 forms.</p>	<p>It is recommended that FAQs include a baseline set of information to ensure youth are well prepared to begin their employment and maximize their experience. At a minimum, FAQs should consistently include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A direct link with easily downloadable W-4 forms 2. Explanation of the consequences of not filling out a W-4 form 3. Payment processes and the importance of designating an active account 4. Basics on using public transportation 5. Workplace Expectations 	<p>Page 28</p>
<p>Area 3: Structure and use of Technology</p>	<p>21. Robust Online Proof of Eligibility: Currently, documentation to establish youth eligibility has to be presented in person. OYP's systems do not facilitate electronic submission of proof of eligibility and is possibly one factor contributing to attrition early in the process. OYP's systems are also not integrated with the systems of other agencies that may have data that would establish eligibility. According to SYEP, 6,060 youth were not eligible in 2015 because of failure to submit required eligibility documentation before the deadline. In 2016, that number grew to 7,798 youth who failed to submit required</p>	<p>It is recommended that the system be enhanced to enable youth to upload eligibility documentation and eliminate the need to appear in person at OYP. This will reduce the administrative burden on staff and likely reduce attrition early in the eligibility process.</p> <p>OYP systems should be integrated with those of other District agencies that collect data on youth that would qualify them for participation in the SYEP program, by establishing residence.</p>	<p>Page 28</p>



Review Area	Findings	Recommendation	Reference
	documents, and increase of 1,738 over the prior.		
Area 3: Structure and use of Technology	22. Consider the potential advantages of instituting a Multi-Year Registration capability: The current registration portal facilitates the tracking of current year activity only, which limits the ability of the agency to register hosts for future years in advance.	To allow flexibility in how the program is developed for out-years, it is recommended that the host system be configured to allow for multi-year registrations, which would facilitate perpetual business development efforts.	Page 29
Area 3: Structure and use of Technology	23. Need to Implement 100% Automated Timekeeping: Currently some hosts complete manual timesheets. As a result, there are cases where OYP staff pick up timesheets from host sites and then enter the time directly. This process is inefficient.	It is recommended that OYP make online timesheet submission a condition for participating in the program. In the worst-case scenario, OYP might consider acquiring handheld devices equipped with wireless cards that hosts can be assigned during the summer to enter time.	Page 29
Area 3: Structure and use of Technology	24. Position Profiles: While hosts currently provide job descriptions, there are no requirements specifying the level of detail to be provided. Consequently, hosts often provide very succinct descriptions that lack specificity, and youth have no real way of knowing what the position entails.	It is recommended that the job description section of the system be configured with standard fields that capture important data about the position, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size of Organization • Work Location • Required Dress Code • Office or non-office Environment (Please Describe) • Common tasks to be performed • Level of Customer Interface – None, Some, Often • Desired education / experience / skills 	Page 30



Review Area	Findings	Recommendation	Reference
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefits to Youth – What Youth can expect to learn 	
Area 3: Structure and use of Technology	25. Youth Pay Issues: Youth faced a number of issues this year receiving pay in their designated depository. On numerous occasions, the first payment went to the Citibank card, even when the participant selected the credit union for deposit.	There is a need to examine OYPs system controls to assure that deposits are correctly routed.	Page 30



SECTION 2: PROJECT APPROACH

This section describes the analytic methodology used in the project.

2.1 General Approach

In assessing OYP's SYEP program, BDA Global first reviewed available documentation, next refined our analytic approach, and then conducted interviews with a number of program personnel, and focus groups with youth participants and hosts, to gain insights on where there might be structural or procedural deficiencies or opportunities for improvement.

In addition, BDA Global synthesized collected data and examined SYEP operations to develop options for potential improvement. Based on the results of our analysis a comprehensive set of findings and recommendations were developed.

2.2 Methodology

BDA Global's analysis was conducted in 3 phases - Phase 1 – Data Gathering and Preliminary Assessment; Phase 2 – Detailed Analysis, and Phase 3 – Recommendation Development and Report Writing

Specifically, BDA Global performed the following critical steps:

Phase 1

- Reviewed program documentation
- Interviewed SYEP personnel
- Conducted focus groups with hosts and youth participants
- Interviewed OCP Contracting Officer
- Examined organizational structure
- Reviewed contracting mechanisms for Community Based Organizations

Phase 2 – Detailed Analysis

- Identified program strengths and weaknesses
- Developed findings and considered options for recommendations

Phase 3 – Recommendations Development and Evaluation Report Writing

- Developed recommendations
- Drafted evaluation report including findings and recommendations



SECTION 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section provides detailed findings and recommendations, developed to enhance program outcomes.

3.0 Background

The following findings and recommendations were developed as a result of BDA Global's analysis of OYP's administration of the DOL grant program. Recommendations are tailored to provide guidance to improve program management and operations. The following narrative highlights findings and recommendations related to program staffing, program operations, and outreach and marketing activities performed by OYP staff and service providers.

STUDY AREA NO. 1 – PROGRAM PLANNING & MANAGEMENT

3.1 Finding No. 1

FINDING NO. 1 - NEED FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING

Need for Strategic Planning: The program planning process is not well documented. The current year plan provided a macro view of the major program steps and due dates, but lacked specificity. For a program of this size and magnitude, it would be beneficial to develop a detailed written strategic plan, with short term and longer term goals and objectives.

3.1.1 Recommendation No. 1

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1

It is recommended that OYP develop a 5-year strategic plan with clearly defined program goals, objectives, and target outcomes, including targets for host and youth participation, and defining success in attaining both qualitative and quantitative youth outcomes.

Furthermore, program goals should be linked to employee performance goals and should be reflected in the annual performance evaluation process.

A strategic plan is important to drive OYP's long-term vision for the SYEP program and will help to ascertain the direction in which it wants to go. The following diagram highlights the key steps in effective strategic planning:



Exhibit 2 – Strategic Planning Components



3.2 Finding No. 2

FINDING NO. 2 – NEED FOR ENHANCED BRANDING

Enhance Branding: Program branding could be enhanced to attract a wider array of hosts. The current brand was developed years ago and does not fully convey the scope and importance of this vital program.

3.2.1 Recommendation No. 2

RECOMMENDATION NO. 2

Materials and messaging should convey consistent branding and provide a motivating message to potential hosts, highlighting their civic duty in providing opportunities for District youth and self-interest in developing a more professional workforce.

It is recommended that OYP undertake a branding and outreach modernization effort, in order to give this signature program the exposure and recognition it deserves. This should include examining the use of consistent graphics and marketing materials for coherent messaging and developing a standardized approach for outreach.



In addition, it is important to use this branding effort to educate the community on the positive impact this program can have on youths' long term career opportunities, while serving the employers' interest in fulfilling their civic obligations and developing a more professional workforce.

Improved branding will also serve employers' own long term interests in developing a more professional workforce and instill a sense of confidence that they as well as the youth will ultimately benefit from the program.

With that in mind, it is also recommended that branding be based on a clearly defined mission and vision for the program, which should in turn drive strategic priorities.

3.3 Finding No. 3

FINDING NO. 3 – NEED FOR BROADER SUPPORT FOR DISABILITIES

Need for broader support for youth with disabilities: There is a need to develop a broader and more robust approach to supporting youth with disabilities. Current efforts are geared toward addressing individual needs as they are identified and often after placement. Additionally, one of the critical issues of concern is that although youth are invited to disclose their disabilities, they are under no obligation to do so. As a result, disabled youth often begin their summer employment with their host unaware that they are disabled, or unaware of what the disability is or how to deal with it. Additionally, some hosts that participated in the focus group, indicated that they were not aware of the SYEP command center that provides support for them in addressing the needs of youth participants with disabilities.

3.3.1 Recommendation No. 3

RECOMMENDATION NO. 3

Develop Task Force

It is recommended that a more proactive and holistic approach be taken to meeting the needs of City's disabled youth who are interested in participating in the program. This would necessitate building an infrastructure that would provide information, interventions, and specialized services in advance of the program start date and throughout the program. In that vein, it is recommended that OYP establish a Task Force, convened from disability specialists throughout City government, to discuss how to better help support disabled youth participating in SYEP (employers who participated in the focus group cited difficulties, particularly in dealing with youth with disabilities who were older – 22-24 years old). This Task Force should include an attorney knowledgeable about Protected Health Information (PHI) and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliance, and other disabilities professionals to help SYEP craft a program to better attempt to ascertain disabilities of youth participants and improve placement of these youth.

This Task Force can also begin compilation of a directory additional resources available around the City to support disabled youth, their parents, and the employers who host these youth participants. Furthermore, the Task Force could also be charged with providing guidance on better ways to determine the needs of disabled youth and better avenues to provide support to both employers and youth.



Parent Orientations

It is recommended that SYEP offer a separate orientation for parents who have concerns about their children's disabilities and potential placements. This would encourage upfront dialogue and reassure parents that the needs of their children are being appropriately addressed.

Employer Roundtables

Consider hosting "Disabled in the Work Place" employer roundtables/orientation sessions to encourage employers to consider engaging disabled youth by assuring them that they will be supported in meeting the needs of these youth.

Partner with a Facility that Works with Severely Disabled

SYEP should explore partnering with a facility that works with severely disabled youth on creating an occupational training program for youth in that category. In such an arrangement, SYEP would send severely disabled youth to occupational training program instead of placing them with employers who might not be equipped to deal with them effectively. This facility could provide counseling and placement services in addition to supporting employers who are hosting one or more disabled youth.

3.4 Finding No. 4

FINDING NO. 4 – NEED TO ENHANCE HOST ORIENTATION PROCESS

Need to enhance the Host Orientation Process: Hosts often do not attend an in-person orientation but instead review a PowerPoint orientation document. In addition, it is common for supervisors who interface directly with youth to not have received any orientation.

3.4.1 Recommendation No. 4

RECOMMENDATION NO. 4

It is recommended that all supervisors be required to attend a mandatory in-person orientation session, since they are the ones interfacing directly with the youth. It is also advisable to instruct site monitors to randomly check that each supervisor has completed the orientation. It should be communicated to hosts in advance of the start of the summer program that these random checks may occur and that any supervisor who has not completed the course cannot interface with youth until they complete it.

Orientation sessions should cover:

- Time and attendance
- Lessons learned from previous employers, including sharing best practices
- How to mentor youth
- How to deal effectively with millennials
- Behavior management strategies to de-escalate situations
- How to terminate youth if need be



- Approaches for developing an appropriate internship plan, including structuring programs to keep youth engaged, and defining expectations
- Resources available for supporting the needs of youth with disabilities
- Approaches for motivating youth
- Support services available from other City agencies
- Setting performance goals and tracking outcomes
- Providing feedback in a constructive fashion and utilizing standardized feedback mechanisms

Orientations should be tiered to allow those supervisors that previously participated in the program to attend a refresher, while supervisors new to the program would be required to attend a more in-depth session.

In addition, hosts should be encouraged to invite youth to a pre-employment onsite visit to familiarize them with their specific placement.

3.5 Finding No. 5

FINDING NO. 5 – NEED TO ENHANCE YOUTH ORIENTATION PROCESS

Need to enhance the Youth Orientation Process: Youth are required to participate in a brief orientation session that is provided by SYEP. This session provides basic information about the program’s requirements and expectations, such as getting to work on time and how to dress, but appears too short to cover strategies that would enable youth make to make the most of this opportunity. This is of particular importance for youth entering the workforce for the first time.

3.5.1 Recommendation No. 5

RECOMMENDATION NO. 5

It is recommended that youth who intend to participate in the program be required to attend a more in-depth SYEP orientation to better prepare them. Sessions should include:

- Appropriate workplace etiquette, attitudes, and behaviors
- Taking directions and meeting host expectations
- Importance of taking initiative and realizing results
- Importance of Teamwork
- Communication skills to achieve success
- Employment and Payroll Issues
 - Completing W-4 forms
 - Direct Deposit and using active accounts
 - Citibank and DGE Credit Union Options
- Financial Literacy and Managing Money
- Emphasis on the importance of youth verifying their assigned place of work in advance of showing up at the work site; noting OYP’s non-tolerance for non-compliance. To ensure that they are able to verify work assignments youth must have



their own email addresses, must sign up with own username and password, and must login to verify assigned place of work before reporting to work.

In addition, youth should be encouraged to attend pre-employment onsite visits, when made available by hosts, to familiarize them with their specific placement. Hosts should also be encouraged to offer such site visits and to provide a pre-employment orientation.

Furthermore, SYEP should consider offering an orientation workshop for parents on the summer programs and how they can best support their children in making the most of the opportunity.

3.6 Finding No. 6

FINDING NO. 6 – NEED TO ENHANCE TO HOST RECRUITMENT APPROACHES

There is a need to enhance approaches to host recruitment: It appears that outreach efforts are limited in breadth and scope, and many desirable hosts are not contacted directly. In that vein, the potential population has not been adequately analyzed, segmented, and mined. Some of the sectors that are relatively underrepresented would likely to yield highly developmental opportunities, if engaged.

These include:

- Law Firms
- Technology Companies
- Consulting Businesses
- Federal Government Agencies

3.6.1 Recommendation No. 6

RECOMMENDATION NO. 6

There are numerous actions that are recommended to improve OYPs host development efforts and outcomes.

Advance Research: It is recommended that OYP do advance research through all available DC employer listings to ascertain which hosts should be targeted. OYP should develop a strategic approach to making contact with desirable employers, by sector, with a disciplined plan for relationship development.

Collaborations: There is an opportunity to develop MOUs and other collaborative arrangements with business development organizations such as DC's Department of Small and Local Business Development, DC's Chamber of Commerce, and the Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency, to recruit businesses with the interest and capacity to engage City youth.

Partnerships: It is also recommended that SYEP look into partnering with private sector companies and explore the possibility of some hosts funding parts of the program and/or subsidizing the program by combining it with their existing internship programs. This would be appropriate and possibly of interest to larger employers with well-developed internship programs.



Corporate Placement Program: As noted in the 2015 Office of the DC Auditor MBSYEP Audit Report, more private sector involvement could help OYP to develop more job placements in the private, for profit sector, which would help to place older youth into permanent, unsubsidized jobs, as other cities have done.

Out-year Recruitment of Hosts: It is recommended that OYP explore opportunities to recruit hosts for future years, taking a more dynamic approach to host development. This would require a system enhancement to facilitate parallel tracking for current and future hosts.

Host Liaison Function: OYP should consider developing a host liaison function, where existing hosts recruit other hosts in their sector to participate in the program.

3.7 Finding No. 7

FINDING NO. 7 – CONSIDER CORPORATE OUTREACH LIAISON POSITION

Consider benefits of creating a Corporate Outreach Liaison function: According the 2014 US Census, there were over 22,000 private sector businesses operating in the District of Columbia. With less than 300 current private sector hosts participating in the program in 2016, there is a substantial opportunity to grow and enhance the program and to provide more opportunities to youth.

3.7.1 Recommendation No. 7

RECOMMENDATION NO. 7

It is recommended that a new position be created to target the participation of established private sector, corporate employers and to possibly design a program to place older youth in private-sector internships that could lead to full-time employment. Many of these entities operate in high-growth industry sectors, such as agricultural and environmental, information technology and telecommunications, media/publications/communications/entertainment, and business/professional services.

Having more hosts from these high growth sectors would provide youth with increased opportunities to gain exposure in areas that are projected to generate more jobs in the future, and would hence increase their opportunities to position themselves for future full time employment.

SYEP should also proactively consider attending job fairs and other corporate recruiting events and use them as a platform for recruiting potential hosts.

3.8 Finding No. 8

FINDING NO. 8 – NEED TO INCREASE EFFORT TO RECRUIT YOUTH

Need to Increase Effort to Recruit Youth: In 2015, the Office of the DC Auditor found that approximately 75 percent of youth determined eligible for SYEP, resided in Wards 5, 7, and 8, and more than half of those determined eligible resided in wards 7 and 8. These statistics held true in 2016.



In addition, the total number of youth participating in the program dropped to 12,128 in 2016, from 13,216 in 2015.

3.8.1 Recommendation No. 8

RECOMMENDATION NO. 8

It is recommended that OYP actively market the SYEP program widely throughout the City. While the program engages thousands of youth annually, the opportunities it affords should be well publicized to all youth who can benefit across the City. Gaining youth participants from every ward is likely to lead to more community involvement and support for the program citywide.

While it is true that some communications and outreach efforts, such as public service announcements are disseminated city-wide, more efforts could be made to engage youth from wards that are not as heavily participative in the program.

While it is recognized that one of the primary purposes of the program is to serve underprivileged youth and there are high numbers of youth from low income households in the wards from which most youth participants are currently enrolled, all wards of the City contain youth who would benefit greatly from participation in the program.

STUDY AREA NO. 2 – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

3.9 Finding No. 9

FINDING NO. 9 – NEED FOR DETAILED STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Need for more detailed Standard Operating Procedures: Current SOPs do not provide detailed guidance on how to perform required tasks. While key staff members have largely been with OYP for a number of years and know their processes, SOPs with greater specificity would promote consistency in execution and be helpful in the case of staff changes.

3.9.1 Recommendation No. 9

RECOMMENDATION NO. 9

It is recommended that OYP develop SOPs that provide specific and clear direction for how each step in every key process is expected to be performed. SOPs should include:

- Process summary, including intended outcomes
- Pertinent Policies and Requirements
- Step-by-step actions required
- Deliverables



- Handoffs and approvals
- Supporting Exhibits and Reference Materials

3.10 Finding No. 10

FINDING NO. 10 – LACK OF PERFORMANCE METRICS

Lack of Performance Metrics: Currently plans provide a broad outline of the of tasks to be performed and due dates but lack specificity regarding goals and outcomes.

3.10.1 Recommendation No. 10

RECOMMENDATION NO. 10

As part of the annual program planning process, quantitative goals, consistent with those in the strategic plan, should adopted and assigned to key program personnel. These should be reflected in each staff member’s performance evaluation as well.

3.11 Finding No. 11

FINDING NO. 11 – HIGH NUMBER OF TRANSFERS & CONSEQUENTIAL ISSUES

Transfers and Consequential Issues: While OYP has made progress in reducing the number of youth transfers in 2016, many youth participants continue to show up at different workplaces than those they were assigned to, for various reasons. SYEP currently has rules to prevent youth from getting paid by employers they were not originally assigned to, but these rules are, by all accounts, largely not enforced. Allowing youth to subvert the job matching process by appearing and remaining at host sites to which they were not assigned, may lead to unhelpful workforce behaviors. Key concerns include:

Youth Initiated Transfers: Many youth participants show up at different workplaces than those they were assigned to, for various reasons, including how convenient it is to home, whether it sounds like more fun than the host site they were assigned to, where their friends are assigned, and whether it is indoors or outdoors, based on their preference. Hosts are inherently incited to keep them, since in some cases they represent “free” workers, and in the case of CBOs, payment is provided for each youth participant, including extra youth who are subsequently assigned to them.

This year 3,154 youth were transferred to programs they were not originally assigned to. This placed an enormous administrative burden on SYEP staff shortly after the program commenced, since considerable time was dedicated to getting youth re-assigned quickly. This is necessary to ensure that participants are paid in a timely fashion.

Roster Confusion: Though the IT system only permits youth to be assigned to one host, hosts do not always download an updated registration list at the start of the first day of the program, as instructed. Hosts, therefore, frequently have names of youth on their rosters who have already been transferred, since transfers are made by SYEP up until the evening before the program starts. Hosts then report that the youth did not show up for work, which causes confusion.



Transfers Resulting from Background Check Issues: Schools and some government agencies require that youth participants undergo background checks prior to reporting to the work site. If the youth participant is unable to produce documentation that they have completed the background check successfully on day one, they are not allowed to work at the school or agency and a transfer must be initiated.

Payroll Issues: SYEP currently has rules to prevent youth from getting paid by employers they were not originally assigned to, but these rules are, by all accounts, largely not enforced.

3.11.1 Recommendation No. 11

RECOMMENDATION NO. 11

Take Steps to Minimize Youth Initiated Transfers

It is recommended that current rules be enforced and that youth be required to report to the host to whom they were assigned. On no occasion should a youth participant be allowed to remain at another site unless they meet one of the three current allowable criteria for transfer – 1) site closing, 2) safety (verified by police department), or 3) medical need documented by a physician (or if there is an exceptional circumstance). Enforcement of the transfer rules should be consistent; if a youth shows up at the wrong host site, they should not get paid. The fact that these rules are going to be enforced should be emphasized in youth orientation sessions.

In addition to minimizing the administrative burden that results from the large number of transfers, enforcing these rules also serves to teach youth a vital life lesson, namely that one is accountable to meet one's obligations.

Require Hosts to Download Latest Roster

To address the issue of hosts not utilizing the most up-to-date roster at the start of the program, it is recommended that this topic be emphasized in the host orientation. Furthermore, it is recommended that SYEP develop system-generated automated reminders that are sent to host points of contact prior to and immediately after the start of the summer program.

Require Youth to Complete Background Checks Prior to Start Dates

Youth participants who are required to complete background checks should be asked to submit these completed background checks SYEP for review no less than 5 business days prior to the start of the summer program. This would allow adequate time to validate that they are cleared to report to schools or agencies, and leave sufficient time to make transfers, when necessary.

3.12 Finding No. 12

FINDING NO. 12 – CONSIDER IMPLEMENTING TIERED PLACEMENTS

Consider Implementing a Tiered Placement System of Youth: Currently the process to assign youth does not consider the level of effort and preparedness of the individual applying for the program.



3.12.1 Recommendation No. 12

RECOMMENDATION NO. 12

It is recommended that efforts be made to assign youth based on a tiered placement system, that recognizes levels of workplace readiness. For example, youth that had success in previous years' programs could be given priority on assignments. In addition, youth who have been proactive by attending a youth fair and/or preparing a resume, for example, could also be given priority on assignments. Youth given priority could be invited to special SYEP sponsored matching events to introduce employers to prospective hires.

3.13 Finding No. 13

FINDING NO. 13 – NEED FOR IMPROVED USE OF FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

Use of Feedback Mechanisms for Program Enhancement: DOES holds employer Focus groups and conducts surveys at the end of the program, but have engaged relatively few participants to attain feedback. For example, in 2015, only 20 of 706 hosts attended a focus group and in 2016 only youth in the 22-24 age range were surveyed for feedback.

3.13.1 Recommendation No. 13

RECOMMENDATION NO. 13

It is recommended that OYP solicit in-depth feedback from all hosts and all youth who participate in the program. Surveys should be sent to all youth participants and all participating hosts. Focus groups should be designed to obtain feedback from a representative sample of hosts, by sector. Feedback collected through these efforts should feed into a continuous improvement loop, and should be used to inform program planning for the following year.

3.14 Finding No. 14

FINDING NO. 14 – COMMUNICATION ISSUES

Communication Issues between SYEP and host/youth participants: There are instances where program features were not communicated with hosts until the day the program started. For example, in 2016 some hosts reported that they had no prior knowledge of OYP's plans for youth to go offsite for professional development activities. Similarly, some older youth reported that they did not know that they would have job coaches.

3.14.1 Recommendation No. 14

RECOMMENDATION NO. 14

It is recommended that OYP develop a communication plan prior to program rollout, with assigned roles and responsibilities for sharing information pertinent to the host and youth



participants. This plan might include a calendar which specifies recurring events, such as one-day per week professional development activities that some youth are required to participate in offsite, as well as one-time events, and due dates (such as for host evaluations of participating youth).

The plan should also identify channels for communication, and specify how and when communication will take place. The plan should consider the use of automation tools, and utilize such tools for managing communications with hosts and youth, including reminders at critical junctures.

3.15 Finding No. 15

FINDING NO. 15 – INCONSISTENT USE OF YOUTH PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Youth Performance Evaluations Not Performed Consistently: OYP contacted hosts to evaluate youth, but requests were not made uniformly for all participants. Hosts reported that they were called randomly with requests for evaluations of some youth but not others.

3.15.1 Recommendation No. 15

RECOMMENDATION NO. 15

It is recommended that OYP require evaluations for all youth participants. In addition, the host participant should be required to discuss each youth's performance in person prior to the end of the program, in order to support the youth's professional development.

Specific guidance on how to provide feedback to youth should be covered in the host orientation and in the host handbook.

3.16 Finding No. 16

FINDING NO. 16 – NEED FOR INCREASED VETTING OF SERVICE DELIVERY

Need for Increased Vetting of Service Delivery by CBO Sites. There is currently minimal vetting of the quality of CBO program content and analysis of actual service delivery. Furthermore, youth focus group participants reported that staff at one CBO were involved repeatedly in overt disagreements and arguments amongst themselves, and wore clothing that youth were prohibited from wearing.

3.16.1 Recommendation No. 16

RECOMMENDATION NO. 16

It is recommended that SYEP engage staff or contractors with educational assessment backgrounds to act as Program Monitors and evaluate the training that is being offered by CBOs to ensure that it meets a high quality standard. Program Monitors should be tasked with assessing the curriculum to determine whether it the content is sufficient and whether is being



delivered effectively. It is also recommended that SYEP consider developing a core curriculum so that there is a baseline level of service to be provided by all CBOs.

It is further recommended that program monitors conduct random site visits, and comment on the overall program quality and achievement, including the substance of youth development instruction and activities, and the effectiveness and appropriateness of supervisors and other staff that directly interface with the youth.

3.17 Finding No. 17

FINDING NO. 17 – HANDBOOKS ARE NOT POSTED ONLINE IN ADVANCE

Handbooks not posted online in advance: Host and youth handbooks were not posted in their entirety on the OYP website in 2016.

3.17.1 Recommendation No. 17

RECOMMENDATION NO. 17

Handbooks that fully describe the roles and responsibilities of both host and youth participants should be made available on the OYP website well in advance of the program start date each year.

STUDY AREA NO. 3 – STRUCTURE & USE OF TECHNOLOGY

3.18 Finding No. 18

FINDING NO. 18 – NEED FOR IMPROVED DATA MANAGEMENT

Need for Improved Data Management: There were 3,154 youth transfers in 2016, necessitating a large number of payroll changes, processed by OYP staff. In addition, timekeeping entry issues occurred frequently throughout the program period, and placed a heavy administrative burden on OYP staff.

3.18.1 Recommendation No. 18

RECOMMENDATION NO. 18

It is recommended that OYP analyze its operational cost for dealing with transfer and payroll issues for the summer program. It is further recommended that OYP conduct a business case analysis and explore the possibility of achieving efficiencies and cost savings by outsourcing the transfer management and timekeeping processes to a private sector entity that specializes in this type of data management.



3.19 Finding No. 19

FINDING NO. 19 – NEED FOR SINGLE SIGN ON FOR HOSTS

Need for Single Sign On for Hosts: There are currently 2 portals for Hosts – one for signing up as a host and the other for time and attendance. Aside from the ease of access considerations, the portal labels do not clearly designate the content. This results in a lot of extra work for program liaisons because hosts call frequently to ask questions about where to find information that should be easily accessible.

3.19.1 Recommendation No. 19

RECOMMENDATION NO. 19

It is recommended that there OYP develop a single sign-on with one point of entry for both sets of data. This would lead to ease of access, and lessen the number of inquiries and requests for assistance from OYP staff.

3.20 Finding No. 20

FINDING NO. 20 – NEED FOR MORE ROBUST FAQs

Need for More Robust FAQs: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for youth and their answers are not as detailed and helpful as they could be. Examples include 1) problems downloading W4s, 2) and issues understanding the importance of completing W4 forms.

3.20.1 Recommendation No. 20

RECOMMENDATION NO. 20

It is recommended that FAQs include a baseline set of information to ensure youth a well prepared to begin their employment and maximize their experience. At a minimum, FAQs should consistently include:

- A link with easily downloadable W-4 forms
- Explanation of the consequences of not filling out a W-4 form
- Payment processes and importance of designating an active account
- Basics on using public transportation
- Workplace Expectations

3.21 Finding No. 21

FINDING NO. 21 – NEED FOR ROBUST ONLINE PROOF OF ELIGIBILITY

Robust Online Proof of Eligibility: Currently, documentation to establish youth eligibility has to be presented in person. OYP's systems do not facilitate electronic submission of proof of eligibility and is



possibly one factor contributing to attrition early in the process. OYP's systems are also not integrated with the systems of other agencies that may have data that would establish eligibility. According to SYEP, 6,060 youth were not eligible in 2015 because of failure to submit required eligibility documentation before the deadline. In 2016, that number grew to 7,798 youth who failed to submit required documents, and increase of 1,738 over the prior.

3.21.1 Recommendation No. 21

RECOMMENDATION NO. 21

It is recommended that the system be enhanced to enable youth to upload eligibility documentation and eliminate the need to appear in person at OYP. This will reduce the administration burden on staff and likely reduce attrition early in the eligibility process.

OYP systems should be integrated with those of other District agencies that collect data on youth that would qualify them for participation in the SYEP program, by establishing residence.

3.22 Finding No. 22

FINDING NO. 22 – CONSIDER MULTI-YEAR REGISTRATION CAPABILITY

Consider the potential advantages of instituting a Multi-Year Registration capability: The current registration portal facilitates the tracking of current year activity only, which limits the ability of the agency to register hosts for future years in advance.

3.22.1 Recommendation No. 22

RECOMMENDATION NO. 22

To allow flexibility in how the program is developed for out-years, it is recommended that the host system be configured to allow for multi-year registrations, which would facilitate ongoing business development efforts.

A multi-year host system would allow OYP to recruit hosts who are not interested in participating this year, but have an interest in a future year, to pre-register. Ideally, any multi-year module would also have Customer Relationship Management functionality and allow for tracking contacts that have been made, and follow-up needed, while not impacting the annual closeout process.

3.23 Finding No. 23

FINDING NO. 23 – NEED TO USE ELECTRONIC TIMEKEEPING CONSISTENTLY

Need to Implement 100% Electronic Timekeeping: Currently some hosts complete manual timesheets. As a result, there are cases where OYP staff pick up timesheets from host sites and then enter the time directly. This process is inefficient.



3.23.1 Recommendation No. 23

RECOMMENDATION NO. 23

It is recommended that OYP make online timesheet submission a condition for participating in the program. In the worst-case scenario, OYP might consider acquiring handheld devices equipped with wireless cards that hosts can be assigned during the summer and use to enter time.

3.24 Finding No. 24

FINDING NO. 24 – NEED FOR DETAILED POSITION PROFILES

Position Profiles: While hosts currently provide job descriptions, there are no requirements requiring level of detail to be provided. Consequently, hosts often provide very succinct descriptions that lack specificity, and youth have no real way of knowing what the position entails.

3.25.1 Recommendation No. 25

RECOMMENDATION NO. 24

It is recommended that the job description section of the system be configured with standard fields that capture important data about the position, such as:

- Size of Organization
- Work Location
- Required Dress Code
- Office or non-office Environment (Please Describe)
- Common tasks to be performed
- Level of Customer Interface – None, Some, Often
- Desirable education / experience / skills
- Benefits to Youth – What Youth can expect to learn

3.25 Finding No. 25

FINDING NO. 25 – NEED TO RESOLVE YOUTH PAY ISSUES

Need to Resolve Youth Pay Issues: Youth faced a number of issues this year receiving pay in their designated depository. On numerous occasions, the first payment went to the Citibank card, even when the participant selected the credit union for deposit.

3.25.1 Recommendation No. 25

RECOMMENDATION NO. 25

There is a need to examine OYPs system controls to assure that deposits are correctly routed.



SECTION 4: CONCLUSION

The following section provides a succinct conclusion based on the evaluation's results.

The SYEP Program plays an important role in shaping the development of youth residing in the District of Columbia. The program presents an opportunity for participants to gain invaluable academic enrichment and professional exposure, and to learn important skills that will serve them well in adulthood. That said, the program is administered in a manner which focuses heavily on engaging as many young people as possible and, as such, there is an annual dash to market, enroll, and engage both youth and hosts.

While this is an understandable and logical approach given the SYEP mandate of developing and administering workforce development programs for a broad swath of the City's youth, there is a tremendous opportunity to improve the engagement of hosts, precision of placements, and overall quality of the experience for participating youth.

To accomplish this, it is important that the Office of Youth Programs take a strategic approach to administering the SYEP program, and in doing so set long, medium, and short term priorities. These should provide a clear vision of how to achieve program refinements, including a plan for the implementation of the numerous recommendations detailed in this report, as deemed appropriate.