PACE CAREER PATHWAYS PROGRAM PROFILE:

Year Up

July 2014

OPRE

PACE
Pathways for Advancing Careers and Education

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Introduction

A substantial gap exists between the skills of the labor force and the needs of employers in many high-growth industries, including health care, technology, and manufacturing. This gap results in unemployment while well-paying jobs go unfilled. At the same time, many low-skilled adults persist in low-wage work with little opportunity for advancement. Career pathways programs aim to address the economy's vital need for skilled workers while offering low-wage workers the opportunity to obtain education and training and advance into the middle class.

To achieve their goals, career pathways programs offer low-skilled adults well-articulated training and employment steps targeted to locally in-demand jobs combined with promising instructional approaches and supportive services. Policy makers and practitioners show great interest in career pathways programs as education and training approaches for low-skilled individuals. Along these lines, the Pathways for Advancing Careers and Education (PACE) study is using an experimental design to assess the effectiveness of nine career pathway programs across the country (See Box 1 at the conclusion of this profile).

An experimental evaluation design assigns individuals eligible for a program via lottery to a treatment group that can participate in the program or a control group that cannot participate but can access other services in the community. Because the assignment process is random, there are no systematic differences between the treatment and control groups at the time they enter the study. Thus, any differences detected during the follow-up period can be attributed to the program. Random assignment is considered the gold standard of program evaluation.

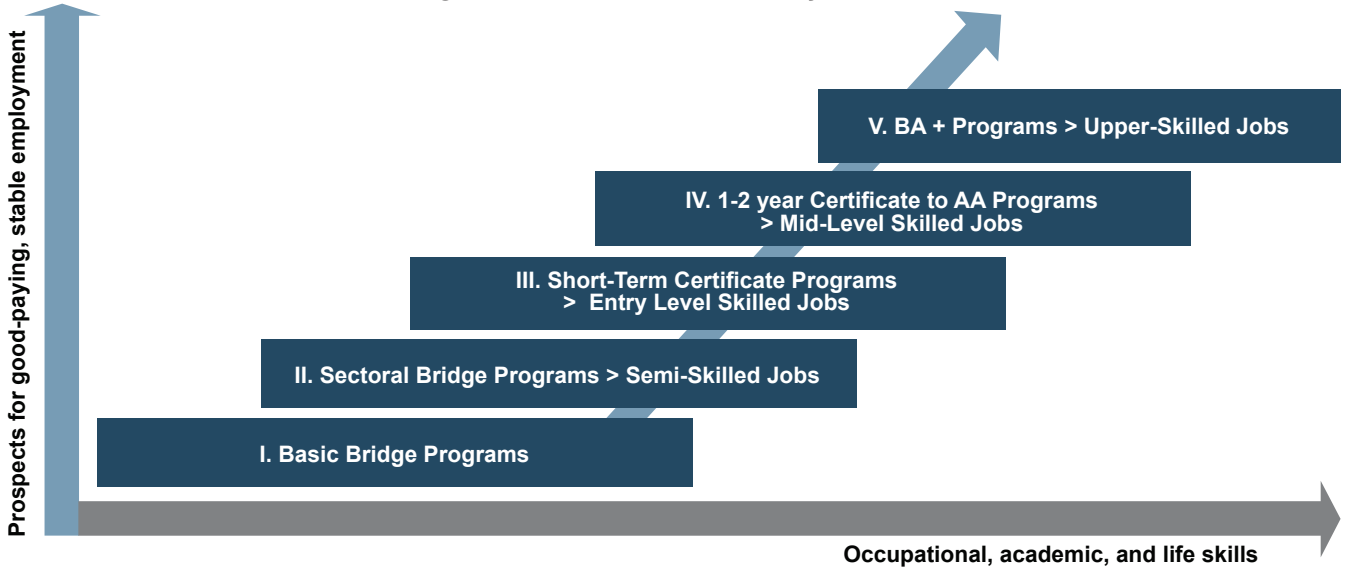
This profile is an overview of *Year Up,* a 501(c)3 organization whose mission is to "close the Opportunity Divide by providing urban young adults with the skills, experience, and support that will empower them to reach their potential through professional careers and higher education."[1,2] The one-year program offers 18- to 24-year-olds a comprehensive service package that includes 21 weeks of occupational training, classes in professional skills and business communications, guidance and supports, and connections to employment that include a six-month internship. An earlier impact study of three Year Up locations highlighted the program's promise – evaluators from the Economic Mobility Corporation found that Year Up had positive impacts on earnings.[3] The PACE study will expand on these efforts by including 8 Year Up sites, studying a much larger group of participants, and exploring additional outcomes.

This profile first describes the career pathway framework used in the PACE evaluation, a framework that provides a common metric for describing and assessing career pathways programs, and then discusses Year Up's program model and how it fits within the career pathways framework.[4]

The Career Pathways Framework

The career pathways approach presupposes that postsecondary education and training should be organized as a series of manageable steps leading to successively better credentials and employment opportunities in growing occupations. Each step is designed to prepare participants for the next level of employment and education and also provide a credential with labor market value. To effectively engage, retain, and facilitate learning, programs integrate four core elements: (1) comprehensive assessment, (2) promising approaches to basic and

Figure 1: The Career Pathways Steps



occupational skills, (3) academic and nonacademic support, and (4) strategies for connecting participants to employers. Individual programs vary in terms of emphasis placed on each core component, although all are comprehensive in nature in order to address the learning and life challenges facing adult participants. Career pathways programs typically include partnerships with multiple providers, including community-based organizations, community and technical colleges, human services and workforce agencies, and employers and their representatives.

Although steps in career pathways programs vary with their target populations, focal occupations, and service strategies, the broad training and employment levels shown in Figure 1 provide a basis for classifying programs.

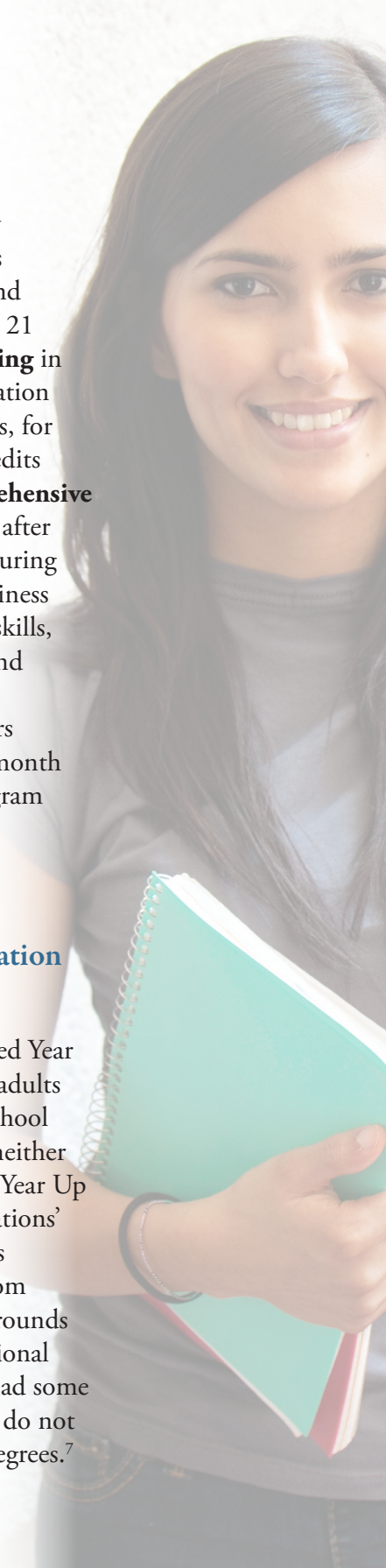
The first two steps (I and II) represent "on ramp" programs designed to prepare low-skilled participants for college-level training and lower-skilled jobs with a career focus. The next two steps (III and IV) provide college-level training for "middle skills" employment—jobs requiring some college but less than a bachelor's degree (e.g., an associate's degree or shorter certificate program). The final step (V) includes interventions to promote completion of a bachelor's degree and more advanced credentials. Career pathways are designed to allow entries, exits, and re-entries at each stage—depending on skill levels and prior training, employment prospects, and changing personal situations. Programs vary in terms of entry and exit points as well as steps incorporated.

Year Up

Year Up brings together several key components of the career pathways framework, focusing on steps III and IV. The year-long program features 21 weeks of **occupational skills training** in high demand fields such as information technology and financial operations, for which students can earn college credits from a partner institution. **Comprehensive supports**, provided to participants after acceptance into the program and during the program, include classes in business communications and professional skills, an educational stipend, advising, and connections to other resources and supports. Finally, the program offers **links to employers** through a six-month corporate internship and post-program employment placement assistance. We describe each of these program components below.[5]

Program Goals, Target Population and Structure

In 2000, Gerald Chertavian founded Year Up to serve "disconnected" young adults ages 18 to 24–youth with a high school or equivalent degree, but who are neither employed nor in school full-time.[6] Year Up designed its model to meet corporations' hiring needs for entry-level workers by preparing these young adults from economically disadvantaged backgrounds with relevant technical and professional skills. Though students may have had some prior college experience, most sites do not accept applicants with bachelor's degrees.[7]

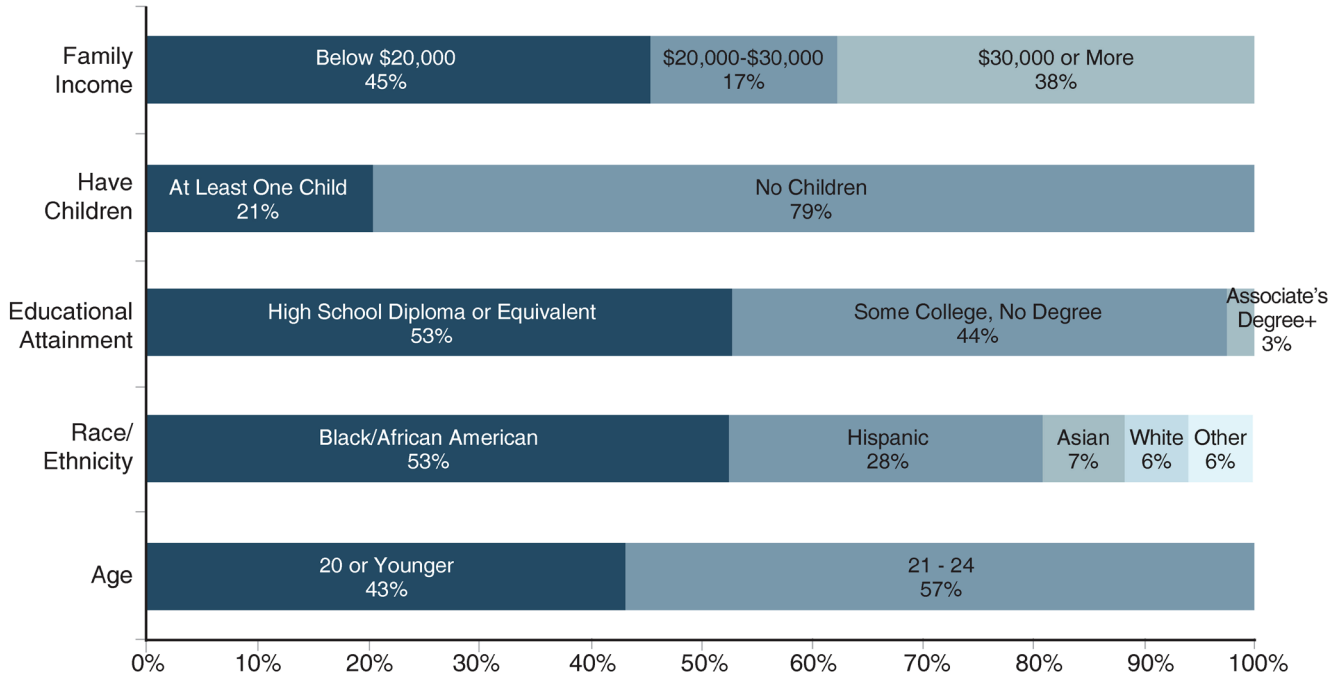


Year Up students are typically low- or moderate-income. Year Up seeks to recruit a diverse group of relatively motivated students (see Figure 2) who, with assistance, can overcome challenges or barriers that may be affecting their ability to pursue career-track employment.

Year Up aims to assist these 18- to 24-year-olds through training for knowledge-based careers in growing industries. The program teaches students high demand technical and professional skills, connects them with employers, and provides college credits via articulation or dual enrollment agreements with a local college partner. Year Up offers these services in eight sites across the United States with a national headquarters in Boston.[8] A team of "national" staff support local sites with operations assistance (such as human resources, marketing, and accounting), facilitate cross-site knowledge building, and provide guidance and oversight with respect to implementation of the program model. Each Year Up site is in or near the central business districts of the city in which it operates. Year Up receives funding from a combination of employers, foundations, individuals and government agencies.

Year Up enrolls participants in small cohorts of 40-45 students, called "learning communities" in March and September of each year. During the first half of the program—the "Learning and Development" phase—students attend classes at Year Up from 8:30 AM until 3:30 PM four days a week, and for a half day on Wednesdays. Training

Figure 2: Key Demographic Characteristics of PACE Study Participants Enrolled at Year Up
(for the March 2013, September 2013, and March 2014 cohorts)



addresses both occupation-specific and general skills. The focus of technical training varies by office and cohort. Fields include information technology (the most common emphasis), quality assurance, financial operations, project management or customer service. Other classes focus on professional and business communication skills. Students gain experience in writing, giving presentations, interacting with clients and colleagues, and developing critical thinking skills. Year Up sites work with local partner colleges to establish dual enrollment or articulation agreements so that students can earn college credit for their participation in Year Up.

In the second half of the program, students apply and further develop these skills during a six-month internship with an employment partner (see Figure 3 for examples of internship responsibilities). Students work at the internship site full-time for four and a half days a week. On Wednesdays, students return to the Year Up site to spend a half day in skills workshops, sharing their internship experiences, and planning for education and careers after graduation from the program.

In addition to providing work-based learning opportunities, internships also provide connections with potential post-program employers and important experience and references to add to résumés. Students also participate in job search workshops, résumé reviews, mock interview sessions and college fairs.

Year Up's internal data indicate that it has placed more than 6,600 students in internship positions since 2001, and the program maintains active relationships with more than 350 employers. Internship sponsors include companies such as American Express, State Street, Bank of America, Google, Kaiser Permanente, JPMorgan Chase, CVS/Caremark, Salesforce and LinkedIn. Corporate partners are typically large firms with over 500 employees and represent a wide range of industries, including financial services, professional services,

Figure 3: Typical Internship Responsibilities for Year Up Students

Occupational Track	Examples of Internship Responsibilities
Information Technology	Help desk, desktop support
Quality Assurance	Testing hardware for devices not yet on the market (e.g., mobile phones), testing software, websites, games or applications
Financial Operations	Fund administration, portfolio accounting, trade reconciliation
Project Management	Management support in the fields of IT, quality assurance and financial operations
Customer Service	Call center and customer relations roles, as well as human resources and administrative support functions

media, technology, healthcare, biotech, education, government, nonprofit, retail and manufacturing. Year Up also aims to be a pipeline of talent for these corporate partners, with internships providing key opportunities to learn how Year Up graduates can meet their needs.

Career Pathway Components

The following sections describe Year Up's approach to key career pathway components. Year Up sites have some degree of flexibility in how they implement the program model, and this profile describes some of the variation that occurs. Future PACE reports will explore site variation in further detail.

Comprehensive Assessment

Year Up undertakes a comprehensive assessment of its students' academic and non-academic strengths and barriers, beginning during the admissions process and continuing throughout participation in the program. This section focuses on the up-front assessments conducted during program admissions, in which Year Up invests substantial effort and resources. As part of its admissions process, Year Up administers a relatively intensive, multi-stage assessment and screening process. Interested individuals must submit an application including references, a résumé and a two-page essay describing their interest in the program. Applicants also participate in a "learning assessment" and a one-on-one interview with program staff.

The learning assessment serves as an all-purpose group interview, with each site customizing the experience to meet its needs. Most sites assess applicants' reading, writing, and critical thinking abilities. Some sites also assess applicants' math abilities, as well as their engagement in a mock occupational lesson (e.g., IT or customer service).[9, 10] The purpose of the lesson is to see how the applicant engages with the instructor, approaches problem solving, interacts with other applicants, and responds to the learning environment. Another common learning assessment component is a timed writing sample, designed to ensure students have the minimum writing abilities needed to be successful in the program. Learning assessments generally include a public speaking activity and activities to evaluate students' attitude and motivation. Known at Year Up as "interactives", these group exercises focus on empowerment, teamwork, and group dynamics – and serve as a key instructional tool throughout the program. By including interactives as part of the application process, applicants also gain additional insight into Year Up activities and the program's core values (see Box), helping applicants evaluate whether Year Up is the right program for them.

The majority of applicants move next to a one-on-one interview with program staff. The interview provides another opportunity for staff to assess applicants' strengths, motivation, career interests, reasons for applying to the program and any barriers that might present challenges for their performance and

Site-Specific Variation: Assessment

- **Year Up Atlanta** exempts applicants with a specific SAT®, ACT® or Compass® score from the academic assessment component of the learning assessment, but not from other group learning assessment activities.
- **Year Up Puget Sound** administers a self-awareness and self-sufficiency assessment that includes goal-setting elements and provides individuals who are not prepared for Year Up with tangible steps to address barriers, either during the current admissions cycle or to prepare them to re-apply in a future admissions cycle.

persistence in the program. Identification of most barriers does not automatically render an applicant ineligible; rather, this process assists staff in determining whether, with available Year Up support, the applicant is likely to be able to meet the demands of the program. As part of the interview, staff may inquire whether the individual has stable housing, a reliable child care plan, and a transportation plan, among other factors perceived to support program participation. In some instances, applicants may work with the program's student services or academic staff to address areas of concerns before the program will make an eligibility decision. In other cases, the admissions process may reveal to staff that applicants are not sufficiently interested in Year Up's occupational tracks or are not ready for the rigors of the program. Individuals who are not admitted are provided with feedback as to how they might improve their application for a subsequent cycle (e.g., steps to address barriers to participation, additional exploration to determine if the program is a good fit for their career interests).

Year Up Core Values

- Respect and value others
- Build trust; be honest
- Engage and embrace diversity
- Be accountable
- Work hard and have fun
- Strive to learn

In addition to informing program admission, Year Up also uses its comprehensive assessment process to inform several aspects of service delivery. Information gleaned during the initial assessment of an applicant's readiness for the program is used to help student services teams work with students to navigate anticipated challenges during the program, and is updated at two points during the Learning and Development phase. Sites may adjust or tweak academic or non-academic supports provided based on the needs of the incoming class of students (e.g., allocate additional resources towards tutoring or support groups). Information from the admissions process may also help inform the composition of the learning communities. In some sites, staff attempt to balance participant characteristics, strengths, or supportive needs within a given cohort (see further discussion in the *Academic and Non-academic Supports* section).

Skills Training

Year Up students receive 21 weeks of in-classroom, occupational skills training in one of the following fields (depending on the local office): information technology, quality assurance, financial operations, project management, and customer service. This is known as the Learning and Development phase. Sites have the flexibility to choose or develop the curricula that will meet local employer needs. Some sites use an existing curriculum, such as Cisco's IT Essentials for those in the IT track, whereas others use curricula they

developed with input from employers and assistance from consultants. Sites also work with their partner colleges to ensure that occupational training (and, in most instances, business communications curricula) meets the college standards for awarding credit for training during Year Up. The number of credits and conditions for granting them vary by college—for example, some colleges require students to submit work such as essays, projects or portfolios, and final exams in order to receive college credit. Figure 4 provides details about the occupational training offered at each Year Up site and the associated college credits.

Although completion of Year Up does not normally result in an occupational certificate, a few partner colleges award Year Up graduates certificates for work completed in Year Up (e.g., Fundamentals of Technical Support or Intro to Information Technology certificates). Additionally, several Year Up sites provide access to study materials to prepare to take occupational certification tests, such as the CompTIA A+ certification.

During the Learning and Development phase, students also take classes in "business communications." These classes draw upon the

Figure 4: Selected Characteristics of Local Year Up Programs

Location and Year of Inception	Students Enrolled Each Program Cycle	Occupational Focus	Partner College	Maximum Credits Awarded for Participation in Year Up
Atlanta *2009*	85	Information Technology	Atlanta Metropolitan College	21 credits + Information Technology Certificate
Bay Area *San Francisco- 2008* *San Jose-2012*	80 (San Francisco) 40 (San Jose)	Information Technology, Quality Assurance	Foothill College	29 quarter credits + Fundamentals of Technical Support Certificate
Boston *2001*	180 (plans to expand to 220 in 2014)	Information Technology, Financial Operations	Cambridge College	18 credits
Chicago *2010*	80	Information Technology	Harold Washington College	18 credits
National Capital Region (Greater Washington, DC) *2006*	120	Information Technology	Northern Virginia Community College	18 credits
New York *2006*	135	Information Technology, Quality Assurance, Financial Operations, Project Management	SUNY Empire State College	30+ credits (18-21 credits per track, with additional credits possible for submitting an internship portfolio)
Providence *2005*	80	Information Technology, Customer Service	Community College of Rhode Island	23 credits for IT; 22 for Customer Service
Puget Sound (Greater Seattle Area) *2011*	80	Information Technology, Quality Assurance	Bellevue College	18 credits + Intro to Information Technology Certificate

Site-Specific Variation: Preparing Students for Occupational Certificates

- **Year Up Bay Area** works with corporate partners to develop and offer IT elective classes to help students prepare to take exams for certifications such as Linux or LAMP Stack.
- **Year Up New York** is working to align its project management curriculum to meet the requirements for the Project Management Institute's Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM®) designation.

concept of code switching – or being able to move alternately between two different languages or dialects – to encourage students to become fluent in the language and culture of corporate America, while simultaneously acknowledging students' backgrounds and the environments in which they live. In these classes, students learn how to compose, analyze and respond to professional emails and enhance their reading, writing, and critical thinking abilities within the context of a professional environment. Students also learn public speaking techniques and how to express ideas persuasively, as well as develop an "elevator pitch" about their career interests and skills.

Academic and Non-academic Supports

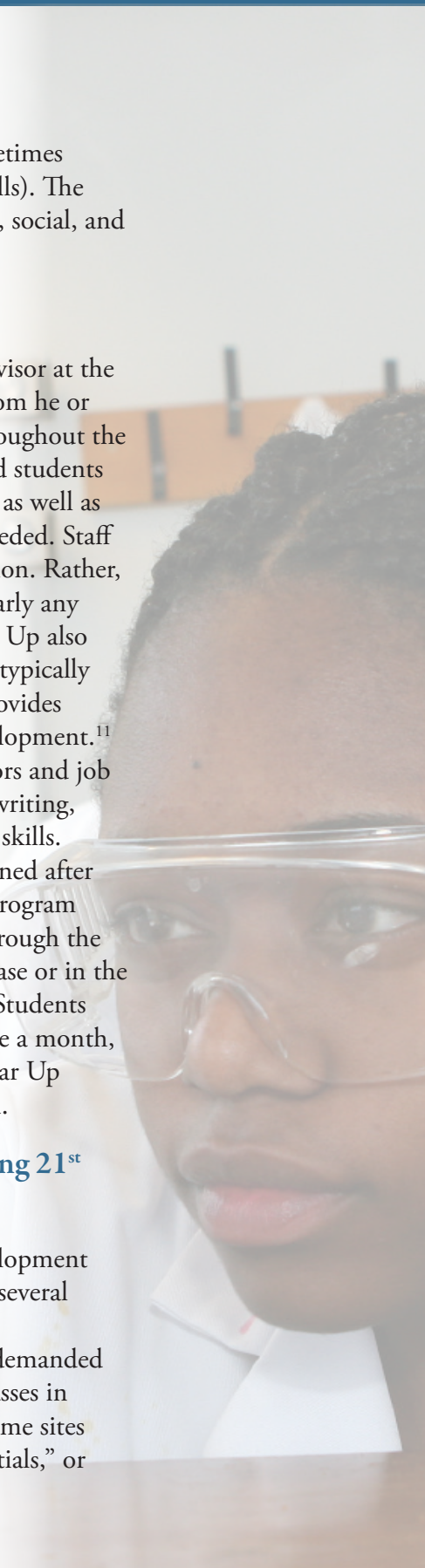
A philosophy of "high expectations, high support" underpins Year Up's approach to these services. Supports include advising and mentoring, as well as those aimed at fostering 21st century competencies involving so-called "intrapersonal" and "interpersonal" skills (sometimes referenced as "life" or "soft" skills). The program also includes financial, social, and instructional supports.

Advising and Mentoring

Each student receives a staff advisor at the onset of the program, with whom he or she meets in person weekly throughout the year. At some sites, advisors and students meet for regular group sessions as well as on a one-on-one basis when needed. Staff advising is not a separate function. Rather, advisors may be involved in nearly any aspect of the organization. Year Up also pairs students with a mentor—typically from the community—who provides guidance and professional development.[11] Volunteer mentors serve as tutors and job coaches to provide training in writing, résumés and other professional skills. At most sites, mentors are assigned after the students have been in the program for some time (e.g., midway through the Learning and Development phase or in the early stages of the internship). Students and mentors meet once or twice a month, typically outside of standard Year Up hours, throughout the program.

Supports Aimed at Fostering 21st Century Competencies

During the Learning and Development phase, the program introduces several supports designed to foster the development of competencies demanded by employers. Students take classes in professional skills (known in some sites as "Pro Skills," "Business Essentials," or



Site-Specific Variation: Developing 21st Century Competencies

- Two sites—**Boston and New York**—have implemented or are piloting a business math class as part of their professional skills curricula.
- **National Capital Region** students take a 16-week Healthy Behaviors Initiative class during the Learning and Development phase of the program. Topics addressed include health and wellness, self-esteem, and conflict resolution, among others.

"Corporate Culture and Persona"). Though sites have flexibility in what to include in the professional skills curriculum, classes typically address business etiquette, non-verbal communication, workplace relationship skills, and appropriate responses to common workplace scenarios. Students also build on skills developed during Business Communications by giving tours to visitors (often funders or potential corporate partners), in which they describe the facilities, what they are learning in the program, and their career aspirations. To help students manage their lives outside of the classroom or workplace, students typically also receive instruction in personal finance topics such as debt, managing credit, and budgeting.

Year Up specifies expected responsibilities and behaviors in a formal contract that each student must sign in exchange for the opportunity to receive the program's training and supports. The contract sets forth expectations for attendance, being on time, professional dress, behavior and conduct, completion of assignments, and respecting the core values and norms of the program (refer to Box). Described by one staff member as a tool that outlines the "rules to the game for corporate America," students learn about the contract during the admissions process and are asked to sign it upon beginning the program.

The student contract is connected to the educational stipend using a points system described below:

- Each student begins the program with 200 points.
- Deviations from expectations outlined in the contract, known as "infractions," result in a reduction of points and that week's stipend (e.g., a 15 point infraction translates to a reduction in the stipend of $15). For example, if a student were to come to class dressed in inappropriate attire for the professional environment, that student would "earn" an infraction.
- Students can earn bonus points by upholding all elements of the contract, including perfect attendance, in a given week. Bonus points do not increase the amount of the stipend, but may position students to be considered for rewards or participation in special events (e.g., lunch with a guest speaker).
- If a student falls below a certain point level (usually 100 to 150 points, depending on the site), he or she is asked to undertake a self-reflection exercise. The student must outline both how he or she arrived at that juncture and present his or her plan for improvement to the learning community (see discussion under Social Supports below).
- If a student's point total falls to zero, the student is said to have "fired him/herself" from the program.

Though the content and structure varies, each site's contract is designed to ensure that expectations are clear and enforcement of those expectations is conducted in a consistent manner.

Year Up stresses a high feedback culture in which students learn both to accept feedback and to provide it to others in an appropriate manner. Students are

given the opportunity to provide feedback on activities in the classroom using the plus/delta approach, which involves identifying positive aspects of recent experiences (the "plus"), and aspects they might wish to change (the "delta").[12] In "Friday Feedback" sessions, students gather to provide specific feedback for other students using a similar framework, with the aim of helping each other progress in their professional development. To underscore the program's philosophy of "high expectations, high support," students are also encouraged to provide feedback to program staff. Friday Feedback sessions are also used to promote accountability, and point totals and infractions earned by students during the week are read aloud. Though Friday Feedback is a formal mechanism, students also are encouraged to assist in each other's professional development by providing feedback informally.

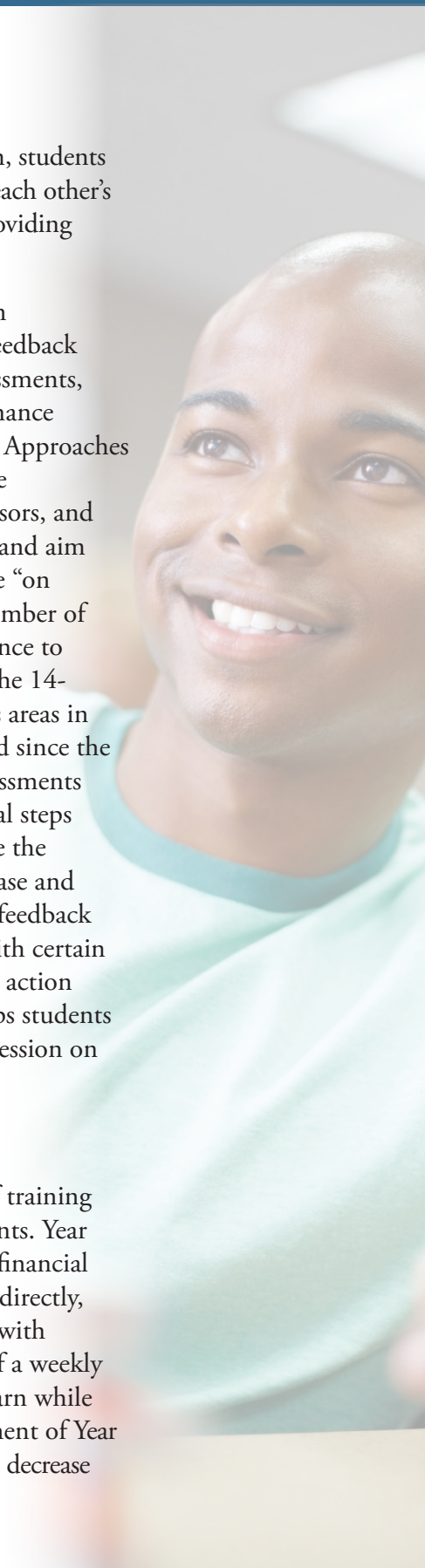
Site-Specific Variation: Feedback

- Students at the **Year Up Chicago** go before a panel of staff for an individual, in-person assessment known as an Internship Readiness Assessment. Staff panelists ask students questions about how they would approach specified problems or tasks. All curricula areas are fair game, and staff look for evidence of clarity and professionalism in presentations.
- If students are not deemed "internship ready", staff provide students with feedback and one more opportunity to pass the assessment. If students do not pass on a second try, they are considered to have "fired themselves" from the program. Though staff note that the high stakes of this assessment can create anxiety for students, they explain that the assessment provides students with an opportunity to demonstrate their skills (and manage their nerves) in an environment similar to internships and post-program employment.

In addition to graded classroom assignments, students receive feedback from 7-week and 14-week assessments, which are analogous to performance reviews in the corporate world. Approaches vary by site, but tend to include feedback from instructors, advisors, and learning community directors, and aim to identify whether students are "on track" or "not on track" in a number of domains from course performance to demonstrated independence. The 14-week assessment also highlights areas in which the student has improved since the previous assessment. These assessments help students identify additional steps needed to successfully complete the Learning and Development phase and earn an internship. As another feedback mechanism, some sites work with certain students to develop "hire-ready action plans" that outline tangible steps students can take to make a strong impression on potential employers.

Financial Assistance

Year Up provides its package of training and services at no cost to students. Year Up also helps students address financial needs in two other ways. Most directly, the program provides students with financial support in the form of a weekly stipend. The opportunity to "earn while you learn" is an important element of Year Up's program, as it is designed to decrease



the need for students to work long hours outside of the program. Program staff note that the stipend also enables many participants to enter the program who otherwise would not be able to afford to do so. The stipend is performance-based: failure to demonstrate behaviors consistent with success at work – as noted above, infractions such as arriving late – trigger reductions in the stipend amount. The stipend amount varies by location, and by phase of the program (ranging from $150-$190 per week in the Learning and Development phase to $190-$260 per week in the internship phase). Students earn a higher stipend during the internship phase than during the Learning and Development phase of the program due to the longer hours worked. Expectations regarding stipend reductions are outlined in the student contract (see above).

Year Up also puts strong emphasis on helping students complete the Federal Application for Federal Student Aid. For students who are eligible for Pell grants or other grant aid, Year Up asks that students apply this assistance towards the cost of their tuition for college credits earned as part of completing the Year Up program. Year Up will cover the remaining cost of the college credits that students earn as part of participating in Year Up.

Social Supports

Year Up aims to build strong social supports through all phases of the program, often starting before the first day of classes and extending beyond graduation. To foster a sense of belonging and to help recently accepted students acclimate to the demands of Year Up, many sites offer pre-program activities. These activities include welcome receptions or "bring a supporter" events open to friends and family, question and answer sessions with the site director or other senior program staff, and "Gear Up for Year Up" sessions aimed at bolstering students' engagement.

Site-Specific Variation: Social Support

- At the **New York** site, recently accepted students are given access to the program's online learning management system, Schoology®, to connect with other students and instructors before the program begins. By accessing Schoology® in advance of the program, students can join online discussions through the system's interactive interface and begin to form social connections with each other, as well as become familiar with a key tool of the site's learning environment.

Students are grouped in learning communities of 40-45 students, supported by designated staff members, who learn together and share a common Year Up identity. During the first week of the program, known as Orientation or "O-week," students engage in activities designed to build cohesion and trust among the learning community. Students in the learning community also establish shared norms for classroom behavior. Year Up uses "interactives" (i.e., interactive activities) to help students learn what they share in common with others in the community, as well as to highlight unique experiences that students may bring to the program. Other interactives during this week aim to show students the importance of building a network of individuals who desire to see them succeed at Year Up and in their careers. These activities aim to impart the idea that the community supports its members and holds them accountable, throughout the program.

Year Up's social services staff includes trained social workers and mental health professionals equipped to support students' efforts to negotiate challenges outside of Year Up. Several sites have groups facilitated by social services staff to help students make positive life choices (e.g., related to substance use). For students needing more intensive supports, the program coordinates with a network of community-based providers to provide students with

a wide range of specialized social services, including housing for students aging out of foster care or who are homeless, discounted childcare, legal advice, medical insurance and care, and guidance on accessing the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Instructional Supports

The program provides varying forms of tutoring and extra assistance to students who need additional academic help. The format and extent of this assistance varies. In most sites, instructors or teaching assistants remain available in computer labs after classes to assist students who have questions about the course material. The National Capital Region site recently implemented a peer tutoring program. In Providence, students experiencing challenges balancing Year Up and other life demands attend an "empowerment group" at lunch where students engage in problem-solving to assist each other to get "back on track."

Connecting Participants to Employment

Year Up provides students with direct connections to employers during the internship phase of the program, as well as through post-program services and activities.

Internship

Following their coursework, students continue their learning through six-month internships with companies in fields related to their programs of study. Here they gain work experience, career awareness, and connections with potential future employers, while maintaining communications with Year Up staff and attending weekly meetings with staff and peers to "process" their work experiences. Since its inception, Year Up has developed thousands of career-track internships for disadvantaged young adults with major corporations. Employers pay Year Up for each student they host to defray costs associated with administering internships and Year Up services and supports more generally. The amount employers pay varies by site, but averages approximately $22,500 per student.

During their internship, students work full-time at the internship site four days a week. On Wednesdays, they work half of the day at their internship and return to Year Up for the remainder of the day to brush up on skills, continue career planning, and learn from their own and others' internship experiences. The nature of career readiness programming in Wednesday sessions varies somewhat across sites.

While in their internships, students must continue to fulfill behavioral standards specified in their contracts to earn the full stipend and graduate from the program. Internship supervisors at host employers provide Year Up with formal feedback on student attendance, dependability, initiative, technical performance and professional demeanor. Additionally, the program solicits input from host employers on areas in which Year Up can strengthen its curriculum to better meet their business

needs. Supervisors are asked to complete two surveys per internship, and have regular interaction with a Year Up team member whose job it is to manage the organizational relationship and troubleshoot any issues that may arise.

Year Up encourages students to view the internship as an opportunity to gain hands-on experience with a leading employer, with the goal of earning a strong letter of recommendation or reference from their internship supervisor/host employer, and potentially a job upon graduation from the program. Year Up reports that host employers hire approximately 30 percent of interns.

Post-Program Services

Each Year Up site's Career and Alumni Services staff members assist participants with their employment search after graduation. These activities include offering a week-long "career boot camp," distributing a list of job openings, helping students identify job fairs to attend, and working one-on-one with students on job search or résumé development. Career and Alumni Services teams also staff an on-site resource center providing internet access and help completing online job applications and other job search activities. Career and Alumni Services teams aim to assist alumni to find good jobs within four months of completing the program. To facilitate alumni engagement with Year Up and with other program graduates, sites have created alumni networking groups on social media platforms such as LinkedIn and Facebook. In some sites, alumni boards plan and host alumni events and service opportunities.

Comparison to Other Offerings

Year Up offers a comprehensive and intensive package of services. Precise data do not exist on the extent and nature of comparable services available in the eight urban areas where the program operates.

Many of the metropolitan areas in which Year Up operates offer a diverse range of workforce development, education and training options—including courses offered by community and technical colleges, for-profit postsecondary institutions, and non-profit training providers. Some of the better known organizations offering customized job training and support packages include Job Corps, Per Scholas, Jewish Vocational Services, and Goodwill Industries operate in some Year Up localities. Many training providers offer job readiness and job placement services in conjunction with technical skills training; some also offer participants mentoring from volunteers in the business community.

At some providers, training is offered free-of-charge to participants. However, for many of these education or training options, individuals likely would need to navigate financial aid or identify other sources of funding. In some communities, individuals might qualify for college access programs that provide free financial aid advising.

Other job training or workforce development programs might include an internship or paid work experience component; however, few are likely to provide a stipend throughout the training portion of the program or to connect individuals to internships of similar duration or with such caliber of employers as Year Up.

Some individuals might be eligible for Workforce Investment Act (WIA)-funded core or intensive services at providers in the local American Job Center network (sometimes known as OneStops or Career Centers). For individuals who qualify, WIA covers costs of occupational training, but not living expenses. Some individuals may qualify for limited funding for on-the-job training programs. We are not aware of any WIA-funded services comparable in breadth and intensity to Year Up's bundle of occupational training, professional and personal guidance and support, internships and employment supports.

Figure 5 illustrates the different career pathway services available through Year Up and through other community services generally.

Figure 5: Comparison of Career Pathway Components Available to Year Up participants and those Available to Nonparticipants

Career Pathway Component	Year Up	Standard Community Offerings
Assessment	• Assessment of academic skills (site-specific) • Assessments of strengths and barriers to participation • Placement assessments for college partner (e.g., Compass®)	• For WIA-funded programs, Tests of Adult Basic Education or other National Reporting System-approved basic skills assessment • College placement assessments for individuals attending community or technical colleges
Curriculum	• 21 weeks of technical skills training in the fields of Information Technology, Quality Assurance, Financial Operations, Customer Service or Project Management; full-time participation required (32 hours a week) • Business Communications classes • Students earn up to 30+ college credits, depending on the program's articulation agreements with the specific local college partner	• Occupational training opportunities at community colleges or other institutions (varying by community)
Supports	• Educational stipend of up to $260 per week while in the program • Paid tuition for college credits earned as part of the program (after Pell or other grants applied) • Professional skills classes • Staff advisors and volunteer mentors support students in their performance in the program and • Learning community provides opportunity for student support network • Emphasis on feedback aims to encourage students and to help them acclimate to professional norms • Social work and mental health professionals identify social service needs and make referrals to service providers in the community	• Financial aid assistance available at community colleges, training providers or through college access programs • Standard academic advising services provided by community colleges or other training providers • Typical supports available in the community through American Job Center network partners, community-based organizations, and government programs
Employment Connections	• Six-month, corporate internship in the student's field of study upon successful completion of the Learning and Development phase at a leading employer • Employment search and job placement assistance from Career and Alumni Services team • Alumni networking opportunities (vary by site)	• Job search and development, job readiness training, and on-the-job training provided through American Job Center network partners and other community-based organizations

Summary

Year Up aims to assist 18- to 24-year-olds with a high school diploma or equivalent to reach their potential through training for knowledge-based careers in growing industries. The program offers an intensive, year-long experience designed to prepare and connect economically disadvantaged young adults to career-track employment. At the eight sites across the nation operating the core program model, Year Up's career pathways components include:

Twenty-one weeks of occupational skills training in high demand fields such as information technology and financial operations, for which students can earn college credits from a partner institution.

Comprehensive supports including advising and mentoring, components designed to foster 21st century competencies and immerse students in corporate culture such "professional skills" classes, instructional supports, and connections to other resources and supports.

Financial assistance via tuition for college credits earned as part of the program and an educational stipend throughout both the training and internship phases, allowing students the unique opportunity to "earn while [they] learn."

Linkages to employers and hands-on experience in a professional environment through a six-month internship and post-program employment placement assistance.

To learn more about Year Up, visit http://www.yearup.org.

Endnotes

1. http://www.yearup.org/about/main.php?page=vision

2. To further its participation in PACE, Year Up receives support from the Open Society Foundations. The evaluation of Year Up through PACE is funded by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families.

3. Initial impact results were released in 2011, with follow-up results released in 2014. Further details of the Economic Mobility Corporation study of Year Up are available here: http://economicmobilitycorp.org/uploads/A%20Promising%20Start.pdf and http://economicmobilitycorp.org/uploads/sustained-gains-economic-mobility-corp.pdf

4. For more information on the PACE framework, see www.career-pathways.org: Fein, David J. (2012). *Career Pathways as a Framework for Program Design and Evaluation: A Working Paper from the Pathways for Advancing Career and Education (PACE) Project.* OPRE Report # 2012-30, Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

5. The information for this profile is based on primary data collection efforts of the PACE team (site visits, calls, meetings, and document review) conducted from August 2011 through April 2014. Additional implementation research is ongoing through 2014. Although PACE will be conducting the first formal implementation study of Year Up, important aspects of program design and implementation have received attention in several descriptive papers by outside analysts. Jobs For the Future (JFF) has published two case studies on Year Up, one in 2005 and another in 2010; The Workforce Strategy Center (WSC) released a case study in 2009. Additionally, Year Up participated in a small randomized control trial conducted by Economic Mobility Corporation in 2007.

6. For more information on the impetus for and inception of Year Up, see Chertavian, G. (2012). *A Year Up: how a pioneering program teaches young adults real skills for real jobs- with real success.* New York: Viking.

7. Applicants with an associate's degree generally are eligible. In Year Up's Atlanta site, applicants with up to 60 college credits are eligible for the program.

8. Year Up is also piloting a new program model called the Professional Training Corps (PTC), in Baltimore, Miami, and Philadelphia. In this model, the Year Up program is operated within a partner college and leverages the institutional strengths of the college with strong vocational training foci, adding

specialized curriculum, supports, and internships in an approach designed to be cost-effective and scalable. As pilots of a new model, these PTC sites are not included in the PACE evaluation of Year Up.

9. Many of Year Up's college partners also require Year Up students to take a college placement assessment as part of the dual enrollment process, such as the Compass® assessment. Although this may occur prior to the beginning of the Year Up program, it is typically not used in determining an applicant's eligibility for Year Up.

10. The thresholds at Year Up Atlanta for exemption from the academic assessment at the time of the publication of this document were: SAT: Math 400, Verbal 430; ACT: Math 17, English 17; Compass: Math 31, Reading 74, Writing 60. Compass® (developed by ACT, Inc.) is a commonly used computer-adaptive college placement assessment. Additional information about this assessment can be viewed on ACT's website (http://www.act.org/products/higher-education-act-compass/).

11. At the National Capital Region site, mentoring is optional.

12. The plus/delta approach is a tool commonly used in facilitation, debriefing and instructional environments. Its origins are debated.

Box 1: Overview of the PACE Evaluation

The Pathways for Advancing Careers and Education (PACE) evaluation, a 10-year effort funded by the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and led by Abt Associates Inc., is a random assignment evaluation of nine promising career pathways programs that aim to improve employment and self-sufficiency outcomes for low-income, low-skilled individuals. The goal is to produce methodologically rigorous evidence of the effectiveness of career pathways approaches that will address issues of interest to federal, state, and local policy makers and practitioners and have significant influence on policy and practice. PACE will include implementation, impact, and cost-benefit studies. Key study questions include

- What is the impact of each program on higher levels and quicker achievement of certificates and degrees? On earnings?
- What are the impacts of each program on individual and family well-being?
- Do impacts vary by subgroups, and, if so, which characteristics are associated with larger or smaller effects?

PACE was launched in late 2007 and began with intensive outreach to solicit the views of policymakers, program operators, researchers and advocates on promising program areas to test, resulting in a focus on the career pathways approach. The evaluation team then recruited strong career pathways programs into the study. Random assignment began in November 2011 and will conclude in September 2014.

The nine PACE Partner Sites are: Instituto del Progreso Latino, Des Moines Area Community College, Madison Area Technical College, Pima Community College, San Diego Workforce Partnership, Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement, the Washington I-BEST program in Bellingham Technical College, Everett Community College and Whatcom Community College, Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County, and Year Up. An important partner in the study is the Open Society Foundations (OSF), which provided resources for many of the programs in the PACE evaluation to expand their scale to meet the requirements of the evaluation, to enhance services in specific areas, or both. Support was also provided to specific sites by The Joyce Foundation and Kresge Foundation.

Data collection activities include two rounds of implementation research visits, two follow-up surveys with individuals in the study, and acquisition of site-specific and national administrative records on education and employment-related outcomes. The evaluation team will produce a series of reports including: program profiles for each of the PACE partner sites, site-specific implementation reports documenting the operation of the program, and site-specific impact reports examining the effect of the program on education, employment, and other related outcomes, including a cost-benefit analysis.

The PACE team includes:

Primary Evaluation Sponsor

The Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE), Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/pathways-for-advancing-careers-and-education

Other Project Sponsors

Foundations and federal agencies that have provided generous grants to support PACE programs include:

The Open Society Foundations' Special Fund for Poverty Alleviation www.soros.org

The Joyce Foundation www.joycefdn.org

The Kresge Foundation www.kresge.org

Meadows Foundation www.mfi.org.

Hearst Foundation www.hearstfdn.org

Health Profession Opportunity Grants, Administration for Children and Families http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/programs/hpog

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