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# Evaluation of the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and Their Families (DCYF)'s Youth Workforce Development (YWD) Programming: Midterm Report

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**Prepared for:**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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We are pleased to submit this Midterm Report for the Evaluation of the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and their Families (DCYF's) Youth Workforce Development-General Programs. DCYF contracted with Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) to assess program quality and performance and determine the influence of DCYF's investments on youth's readiness to learn and their success in school. This Midterm Report presents interim findings from the evaluation. It focuses on the characteristics and practices of eight YWD-General programs that were visited by SPR as part of this evaluation. The report also discusses Program Observation Visit (POV) ratings and Youth Satisfaction survey scores across all of DCYF's program quality domains. Finally, the report highlights best practices, explores the relationships, if any, between program quality and survey results, and assesses the capacity building provided to YWD-General programs.

## Overview of YWD-General Site Visit Sample

This report provides a broad overview of the quality and outcomes of seventeen YWD-General programs, but focuses on the eight programs visited by the SPR evaluation team to gain a deeper understanding of specific program practices that may lead to high quality services and high performance.<sup>1</sup> SPR worked with DCYF staff to select the eight programs based on (1) the diversity of program approaches; (2) feedback from program officers and DCYF staff about which sites demonstrate best practices in specific areas of program operations and performance, including youth leadership, sectoral focus, postsecondary connections, school partnerships, wraparound services, and employer partnerships; and (3) program size, to ensure that the site visit sample included both small and large programs. We pay attention to the factors that influence these programs' practices and the challenges they face in meeting their programmatic goals.

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<sup>1</sup> The eight programs that were visited by the SPR evaluation team include: (1) the Mayor's Youth Employment and Education Program (MYEEP); (2) San Francisco YouthWorks; (3) Youthline IT/Digital Media Work Experience/BACR; (4) Wellness Academy/Huckleberry Youth Programs; (5) Work Resource Program/Jewish Vocational Services (JVS); (6) Pathways to Advancement/Juma Ventures; (7) Bridges from School to Work/Marriott Foundation; (8) ENVISION/Oasis For Girls.

These eight programs are diverse in many respects, including their size, organizational structure, organizational capacity, and program design. Most of the programs have been in operation for at least 16 years and operate many other programs besides the YWD-General program. The programs all target low-income, high-school aged youth. In addition, several programs target youth that meet other criteria pertaining to age, grade level, gender, sexual identity, disability status, average school grades, and the schools that they attend.

The program designs for the sample programs also vary greatly. Six have two separate offerings per year—a school-year program and a summer program—both of which provide work readiness training and work-based learning opportunities. The duration of these program cycles typically is less than twelve months, although two programs work with their cohorts for multiple years. Programs typically enroll one to three cohorts each year. One program in the sample allows youth to enroll at any time throughout the year.

## **Program Quality and Best Practices**

We examine the Program Officer Visit (POV) ratings<sup>2</sup> and youth survey scores<sup>3</sup> for the six Point of Service Quality Domains on which programs are assessed. These ratings provide a snapshot of program quality and can be examined to determine whether there is a correlation between quality and performance. (Please see Appendix III-A for a list of POV and survey items in each domain.)

### **Overall POV and Survey Ratings**

- Across all YWD-General programs, the two highest POV and survey scores are in program environment and youth development.
- The scores in POV data are lower than in the youth survey data for two out of five quality domains: intentional skill building and transition support.
- The youth survey scores are lower than the POV scores in three out of five domains: program environment and safety, diversity, and youth development. This is not surprising, as the youth survey contained fewer questions than did the POV protocol for these domains.
- Youth reported much higher levels of satisfaction with transition support than program officers did; this area had the largest difference between the youth survey and POV scores.

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<sup>2</sup> The YWD-General programs are assessed on six quality domains in the Program Officer Visit (POV) protocol: (1) program environment and safety; (2) diversity, access, equity, and inclusion; (3) youth development; (4) intentional skill building; (5) transition support; and (6) employer engagement. Program officers rate program quality on a scale from one to five, but programs can only receive a score of “1” “3” or “5.”

<sup>3</sup> We examine program outcomes using the FY 2011–2012 DCYF youth satisfaction survey results and data from the Contractor Management System (CMS).

**Program Environment and Safety.** YWD-General programs received the highest POV and survey scores in this domain (4.6 and 4.4, respectively). The vast majority of individual programs in the YWD-General Other category received a perfect POV score of 5.0 on this dimension. Only one program received a score below 4.0. Some best practices used by our site visit sample to promote a positive program environment include: building trusting relationships between youth and adults, developing guiding principles for interactions between youth and staff and among youth, and celebrating youth accomplishments through public recognition events.

**Diversity, Access, Equity, Inclusion.** Both the POV and youth survey scores are somewhat low in this domain (4.1 and 3.7 respectively). The youth survey score for all YWD-General programs on this domain is below a 4.0, which is the lowest score among all of the quality domains. This low score is not surprising, since there was only one question on the survey, asking youth whether program staff understand their family’s culture. The POV sub-area with the highest score (4.5 overall) is related to the programs’ ability to implement practices that encourage youth interaction. The sub-area with the lowest score (3.6 overall) concerns the programs’ ability to celebrate youths’ culture, identity, and individuality. Despite the low scores in this area, we found that many of the sample programs make a strong effort to celebrate youths’ racial and cultural backgrounds. They do so by explicitly focusing on youths’ cultural backgrounds in their curriculum and program design, incorporating “culturally-relevant content” into their programming, and deliberately hiring staff that have had life experiences similar to those of their participants.

**Youth Development.** This domain received the second highest ratings from the POV and youth survey (4.4 and 4.1, respectively), suggesting that YWD-General programs have strong program practices in this area. Overall, the programs received high ratings for supporting youth engagement, and ensuring that staff members are able to be attentive to youth, two sub-areas within this domain. The YWD-General programs received a lower score for the adequacy with which staff address negative behaviors calmly and with respect. This may be due simply to the POV protocol’s instructions to give programs a score of 3.0 if negative behaviors were not observed. Although programs were not rated on youth leadership opportunities, we observed program practices that promote authentic youth leadership, though the intensity of such practices differed by program. The most intensive model of youth leadership in the YWD-General programs enabled youth to serve as leaders in the organization. Less intensive approaches involved one-time events that allowed youth to practice their leadership skills. This variation in leadership development stems from different program models in the sample. Several programs explicitly focus on youth leadership development as a key strategy to youth engagement in the

program and at the workplace. Others stated that they do not emphasize youth leadership in their approach, because they preferred to focus on job placement.

Case management support is an important dimension of youth development that we examined during our site visits to the eight sample programs. The vast majority of programs provide some form of case management support because of their strong belief that youth—particularly those who are “at risk” require ongoing support from caring adults. This is why so many programs in our sample emphasize frequent contact between youth and their case managers. Dimensions of strong case management support include frequent and intentional contact between youth and adults, clear expectations of the frequency and intensity of contact, and an emphasis on supporting both academics and job readiness skills. However, programs are also mindful of their limited capacity to provide in-depth support in this area, and therefore commonly refer youth to other organizations for specialized wraparound services.

**Intentional Skill Building.** YWD-General programs received a POV rating of 3.9 on this domain and a survey rating of 4.1. Highly rated programs in our site visit sample have clearly articulated plans and curricula for skill building related to “in-program activities” and work-based learning opportunities/placements. Programs emphasize job readiness/soft skills training as well as computer literacy training. The sample programs make an effort to align youths’ interests and goals to their program activities through the use of career assessments and goal setting activities. Youth reported learning valuable skills through the YWD-General programs, especially interviewing and what to do if they are going to be late or absent from a job. Promising practices in specific areas of skill development included: carrying out sequences of work readiness and soft skills workshops; facilitating mock interview activities; helping youth establish IDAs; providing youth with extensive experience with digital media software; and running program workshops with the same expectations youth would experience on the job.

**Transition Support.** Programs are expected to develop a clear plan for youth to continue their academic and professional growth beyond the YWD program. Overall, the YWD-General programs received the lowest POV rating for the domain of transition support (3.2), but a relatively strong youth survey score (4.1). This disparity is likely due to fundamental differences in what the survey and the POV measure, although a change in the POV scoring rubric and more defined program requirements related to transition may lessen this difference in the future. The programs that scored well in this domain exhibit some promising practices, such as embedding transition planning throughout program enrollment and continuing to support youth after they enter post-secondary education or unsubsidized employment.

**Employer Engagement.** Employers and worksite supervisors are natural partners for YWD-General programs, which is why they are expected to connect youth to local employers so that youth gain valuable work experience opportunities and exposure to the world of work. Overall,

the programs received a relatively low POV rating for this domain (3.4) and a lower rating on their engagement of public and private sector worksites (3.0). Despite this rating, we observed some promising practices among the sample programs. These include using a retention coach to support newly placed youth, having employers provide work readiness training, maintaining frequent contact with employers, and organizing regular workshops for employers.

**Placement.** Overall, YWD-General programs placed 93 percent of the number of youth they initially projected to place and 95 percent of these youth either completed their placements or were still employed at the end of the contract year.<sup>4</sup> In addition, about two-thirds of youth survey respondents reported that their programs had provided them with sufficient support to maintain their placements. These results were about the same across all three strategies, demonstrating that most YWD-General programs see providing support to youth after placement as a very important component of their program models. Promising practices in the area of placements include the following: assigning a dedicated job developer, using a sectoral approach to finding placements, emphasizing the youth development focus of placements to worksite supervisors, building in discussions between supervisors and youth on a regular basis, beginning the matching process early on in program enrollment, placing youth only when they are ready, and providing youth with clear career ladders as an incentive for strong workplace performance.

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<sup>4</sup> When placement records did not include a placement end date or a reason for termination, we assumed the participants were still employed. However, because programs do not consistently record end dates in CMS, it is difficult to verify that participants are still employed at the end of the contract year.

# I. INTRODUCTION

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This Midterm Report presents interim findings from the evaluation of the Youth Workforce Development-General (YWD) programs, funded by San Francisco’s Department of Children, Youth, and their Families (DCYF). The 17 programs in the YWD-General funding area that are included in our evaluation are: the Mayor’s Youth Employment and Education Program (MYEEP), YouthWorks, and 15 other programs which we refer to in the report as YWD-General-Other).<sup>5</sup> These programs are designed to provide the general population of youth in San Francisco with work readiness and workplace experiences that prepare them for future educational and career success.

DCYF has contracted with Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) to evaluate the YWD-General Programs. The goals of the evaluation are to (1) describe the programs’ service models and approaches and the characteristics of the youth they serve; (2) assess performance measures; (3) describe the quality of in-program activities and work experience placements; (4) examine the quality of capacity building efforts; and (5) determine the impact of DCYF’s investments on youth’s readiness to learn and their success in school.

This Midterm Report builds on findings from the Internal Planning Report (IPR) that we submitted to DCYF in December 2012. It focuses on the characteristics and practices of high quality YWD-General programs and describes the factors that may affect program quality. We

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<sup>5</sup> We refer to all 17 YWD General programs as “YWD General Programs.” YWD-General Other programs refers to 15 YWD General programs (excluding MYEEP and Youth Works). The 17 YWD General programs include: Bridges from School to Work/Marriott Foundation; Careers in Science Intern Program/CA Academy of Sciences; Matchbridge/United Way of the Bay Area (United Way); ENVISION/Oasis for Girl; Pathways/Enterprise for High School Students; Pathways to Advancement/Juma Ventures; Queer Youth Training Collaborative/LYRIC; Spotlight on the Arts Youth Employment Program/California Lawyers for the Arts (CLA); Transition Program for Youth with Hearing Loss/Hearing Support Center of Northern CA (HSCNC); UpStar Records/Sunset Youth Services; Wellness Academy/Huckleberry Youth Programs (Huckleberry); Work Resource Program/Jewish Vocational Services (JVS); Youth Employment and Multicultural Leadership Program/Richmond District Neighborhood Center (RDNC); Youthline IT/Digital Media Work Experience/Bay Area Community Resources (BACR). Note that all of these programs are funded under the YWD-General strategy, including MYEEP and YouthWorks. However, because MYEEP and YouthWorks are far larger than any other YWD-General programs, we refer to them as different “strategies” from the other YWD-General programs and analyze them separately in this report.

highlight best practices, analyze program quality ratings by program characteristics, and explore the relationships, if any, between program characteristics and performance outcomes. Because of their potential effects on program quality, the report examines programs' experiences participating in the capacity building efforts available to them. Below we describe the quality domains that are addressed in the report and the data sources used to assess program quality.

## **Program Quality**

Our assessment of program quality is guided by DCYF's key Point of Service Quality Domains/dimensions described below. These dimensions provide the framework for DCYF's YWD Program Observation Visit (POV) Protocol that program officers use during their annual program site visits. Each visit includes a review of program curricula; interviews with the site coordinator, participating youth, and an employer (if applicable); an audit of youth portfolios or files; and a 90 to 120 minute observation. During these visits, program officers rate program quality using a numerical rating system (from one to five) to assess the degree to which each quality indicator is present in the programs. Program officers also use the POV protocol to describe the programs' areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. Summaries of the ratings and other key findings from these site visits—called Site Visit Reports—are distributed to grantees in order to promote reflection and dialogue about program improvement, if needed.

### Program Quality Domains<sup>6</sup>

DCYF has identified six key dimensions of quality that programs are expected to address in their programming.

**Program environment and safety.** Program space is safe and clean, and can be adapted for a variety of activities. Youth and staff interact in a friendly, respectful way.

**Promoting diversity.** Program activities, space, and norms encourage inclusive attitudes and behaviors among staff and youth.

**Youth development.** Youth have meaningful input in program activities and have multiple leadership opportunities. When available, we also include the provision of case management support and wraparound services in this domain, as these services are intended to promote youth engagement in the program.<sup>7</sup>

**Intentional skill building.** The program provides skill-building activities that focus on specific skills, promote higher levels of mastery, and allow youth to present their work to others. Included in this category are the presence and quality of work readiness and job search skills.

**Transition support.** Youth have clear plans for continuing their academic and professional growth after the program, and are connected to relevant organizations to enable this growth.

**Employer engagement.** Program coordinates with employers to connect youth to work experiences, work-based learning, and employment opportunities to ensure that activities are relevant to employer needs, post-secondary requirements, and/or industry standards.

## Data Sources

The analysis in this report uses data from a wide variety of sources, including:

- **Site visits to eight selected YWD-General programs.** Our analysis of best practices is informed by SPR's half-day site visits to eight selected program sites. These programs—listed in Appendix I-A—were selected based on (1) the diversity of program approaches; (2) feedback from program officers and DCYF staff about which sites demonstrate best practices in specific areas of program operations and performance, including youth leadership, sectoral focus, postsecondary connections, school partnerships, wraparound services, and employer partnerships; and (3) program size, to ensure that the site visit sample

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<sup>6</sup> The quality domains are adapted from DCYF's 2012 YWD Site Visit Protocol. The domains align to the California Afterschool Program Quality Self Assessment Tool. They further incorporate the Quality Standards for Youth Workforce Programs adopted by the Youth Council of the Workforce Investment San Francisco (Board) and DCYF in 2010. This set of standards are based on the based on the PEPNet Quality Standards developed by the National Youth Employment Coalition. We adapted these dimensions for the evaluation in order to align the key dimensions to the research questions.

<sup>7</sup> Note that DCYF only requires and rates wraparound services for YWD programs funded to serve high-risk youth and these program are not part of this report.

included both small and large programs.<sup>8</sup> The goals of the site visits were to document key programmatic features that may affect the grantees' program design, service options, and outcomes; examine the design and implementation of the YWD-General programs; and assess the quality of placements as well as other program activities.

- **Completed Program Observation Visit (POV) protocols.** During their own site visits, DCYF staff complete these protocols, which ask them to summarize program strengths and weaknesses and rate programs on six program quality domains. These POV data are integrated into our analysis of program quality, described in Chapters III and IV.<sup>9</sup>
- **DCYF's Contract Management System (CMS).** We rely on CMS data to identify participant characteristics, enrollment and retention patterns, and job placement outcomes. The analysis in this Midterm Report uses data files extracted from CMS in August of 2012 for all participants in YWD-General programs during the City's 2011–2012 fiscal year.
- **DCYF Youth Satisfaction Survey from fiscal year 2011–2012.** The Midterm Report includes data from the Youth Satisfaction Survey, which was administered to 966 youth across all YWD programs during the spring of 2012.<sup>10</sup> The 28-question survey includes questions pertaining to demographics, ratings of DCYF programs along the program quality dimensions described above, and other questions. This Midterm Report uses these survey data to assess program outcomes in relation to program quality ratings in the POV data.
- **Year-End Reports.** These program-level reports draw on CMS and survey data to summarize individual grantees' program characteristics and performance outcomes. SPR delivered these reports to DCYF in October of 2012, and will release a second round in the fall of 2013.

These data sources provide rich information about YWD-General programs; however, these data have some important limitations. The main limitation of the survey data relates to the timing. The survey was administered only in the spring of fiscal year 2011–2012, thereby missing youth who attended summer or fall 2011 program cycles. The main limitations of CMS data are in two areas: 1) grantees did not report service hours or attendance in a consistent way, and 2) data on

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<sup>8</sup> Due to their large size and unique city support, DCYF requested that we visit both MYEEP and YouthWorks.

<sup>9</sup> POV reports were not conducted for the following YWD programs: Spotlight on the Arts/ California Lawyers for the Arts; Queer Youth Training Collaborative/Lyric; Youth Employment and Multicultural Leadership/RDNC; and Workreation/SF Recreation and Park Center.

<sup>10</sup> The 2011–2012 survey included 966 respondents out of 3,121 program enrollees. While this appears to represent only a 31 percent response rate, it is important to note that only youth who were enrolled in programs during the spring of 2012 were able to complete the survey. Youth who finished the program earlier, dropped out, or were enrolled in programming that took place only in summer or fall 2011 are not represented in the survey sample. Workreation/SFRPD is not included in the survey data we used in our analyses because the program did not submit any completed survey forms to DCYF.

employment placements were not fully populated and placement data, notably the end date of placements, were not consistently reported.

The main limitations to the POV data are five-fold: First, although the instrument's rating scale ranges from one to five, program officers can only assign programs a score of "one," "three," or "five." They cannot rate any dimensions "two" or "four," thus effectively decreasing the scale to three points.<sup>11</sup> Such a narrow scale limits our ability to distinguish differences in the ratings for specific programs, and this restricts our ability to provide useful information about a specific program's progress towards achieving higher ratings.<sup>12</sup> Second, because the POVs are completed by more than one program officer, they are subject to inter-rater or inter-observer reliability problems, due to natural inconsistencies among raters. Thus, while the POV ratings provide useful snapshots of program quality at a given point in time, these inconsistencies mean they may be somewhat unreliable.

A third limitation is that the protocol used by program officers to capture POV data changed significantly during the data collection period. In September 2012, DCYF program officers began using a revised POV protocol that added new sub-dimensions, changed the scoring rubric for others, and eliminated yet other sub-areas on which grantees had been rated in the previous protocol. In at least two cases, the wording of particular sub-dimensions was also adjusted. Although we have adjusted the POV data set used in this report to accommodate such changes as much as possible, comparisons of ratings across programs that were rated using different versions of the POV protocol may be somewhat problematic. A fourth limitation of the POV data is that site visits during which the data were collected were conducted on a rolling basis over a twelve-month period, stretching from February 2012 to February 2013. Consequently, comparisons of programs rated nearly a year apart may be misleading, as differences in ratings might be due differences in timing rather than true differences in program quality. Finally, a fifth limitation of the POV data is that the number of sites for which we have POV results (13) is very small and this limits the likelihood that any of the analyses we conduct with these data will yield statistically significant results.

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<sup>11</sup> It is important to note that due to averaging across many individual ratings, the POV rating results presented in this report do include scores other than one, three, or five.

<sup>12</sup> Adding more points to a rating scale increases the sensitivity of the scale, yielding a greater likelihood that the scale will detect true differences between programs on the dimensions being measured. So, for example, on this scale two programs may appear to be performing at the same level because both points of performance fall between three and five, but in reality one may be performing far worse than the other.

## Overview of the Report

The remainder of this report is organized into the following chapters:

- **Chapter II: Characteristics of YWD-General Programs** briefly describes the programs in the YWD-General Strategy and programs selected for the evaluation Site Visit Sample.
- **Chapter III: Program Quality and Best Practices, Part 1** describes the quality and performance ratings as well as promising practices for the following program quality dimensions: program environment and safety; diversity, access, equity, inclusion; and youth development. We describe program quality in relation to outcomes and best practices among the eight selected programs that we visited.
- **Chapter IV: Program Quality and Best Practices, Part 2** describes the quality and performance ratings as well as promising practices for the following program quality dimensions: intentional skill building; transition support; and employer engagement. We also examine program performance and best practices related to placement services.

## **II. CHARACTERISTICS OF YWD-GENERAL PROGRAMS**

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This chapter provides a brief overview of the eight selected program sites that served as the Site Visit Sample.

### **Overview of YWD-General Site Visit Sample**

SPR worked closely with DCYF to select eight sites to serve as case studies based on (1) their diversity of program approach; (2) feedback from program officers and DCYF staff about which sites demonstrate best practices in program operations and performance, and (3) the size of the program to ensure that the site visit sample included both small and large programs. Exhibit II-1 uses data primarily collected during the site visits to summarize these sites.

## Exhibit II-1: Summary of Site Visit Sample (FY 2011-2012)

Program Name/Organization	# of YWD Youth Served <sup>13</sup>	Years in Operation (Program)	Number of Programs Including YWD	Total Org. Budget	Total Program Budget/DCYF Grant <sup>14</sup>
1. MYEEP/ Japanese Community Youth Council	854	23	10	\$8,604,214	\$4,610,000/\$2,778,000
2. YouthWorks/ Japanese Community Youth Council	569	16	10	\$8,604,214	\$1,361,801/\$376,523
3. Work Resource Program/Jewish Vocational Service	280	20	25	\$6,700,000	\$403,500/\$310,000
4. Wellness Academy/ Huckleberry	55	5	8	\$4,215,903	\$347,191/\$150,000
5. Pathways to Advancement/ Juma Ventures	118	19	3	\$5,021,406	\$1,603,768/\$129,000
6. Bridges from School to Work/Marriott Fdn.	155	16	1	\$8,803,172	\$561,349/200,000
7. ENVISION/Oasis For Girls	33	1.5	3	\$362,585	\$124,000/\$75,000
8. YouthLine IT/Digital Media Work Experience/Bay Area Community Resources	17	2	4	\$950,000	\$65,000/\$60,000

### Summary of Site Visit Programs

As a prelude to the discussion of service quality that begins in Chapter III, this section presents a brief overview of the programs in our site visit sample and of the sites where program services are provided. Exhibit II-2 below lists each of the eight programs, their lead agencies, a brief description of who each program serves, and what services they provide.

In general, most youth receive program services at the DCYF grantee's headquarters. However, three programs in our sample provide most program services at other locations. One of these programs is MYEEP, which subcontracts with eight community agencies to provide services. Youth attend classes and workshops at 10 locations throughout San Francisco (primarily at the

<sup>13</sup> Source: CMS.

<sup>14</sup> Source: CMS.

offices of the MYEEP subcontractors). The other two programs—Work Resource Program/JVS and Transition Program for Youth with Hearing Loss/HSCNC—provide services primarily at various public schools located in San Francisco.

### Exhibit II-2: Description of Site Visit Sample Programs

Program/Agency	Program Description <sup>15</sup>
1. MYEEP/ Japanese Community Youth Council	MYEEP provides San Francisco youth with the opportunity to build work experience through employment at nonprofit and public sector organizations. Afterschool employment opportunities is available to ninth and tenth graders during the school year and summer employment is available to youth between the ages of 14 and 17. MYEEP also helps participants develop job search skills, explore post-secondary education and various career opportunities, and learn numerous life skills.
2. YouthWorks/ Japanese Community Youth Council	San Francisco YouthWorks is a citywide high school internship program that teaches 11th and 12th grade interns crucial job skills while sparking their interest in public service careers.
3. YouthLine IT/Digital Media Work Experience/Bay Area Community Resources	Youthline provides at-risk youth with paid internships in the digital media field. The program hires 14- to 17-year-olds who gain work experience working on BACR's YouthLine, a youth-run, youth-led phone line and website. Youth learn about website and database development, and video, internet, and television show production. Youth receive academic support, case management, life skills coaching, and peer mentoring.
4. Work Resource Program/Jewish Vocational Service	Work Resource Program provides youth with disabilities at up to 20 SFUSD high schools with comprehensive job search skills, job readiness and career exploration training, and year-round job placement and retention services, along with access to post-secondary education counseling and referrals to appropriate transition and support services.
5. Wellness Academy/Huckleberry	Huckleberry's Wellness Academy provides low-income teens who are first-generation college bound with a comprehensive health career training program that includes health education, career exploration, internships, job-readiness skills, job placement assistance, academic case management, academic tutoring, post-secondary counseling, and more.
6. Pathways to Advancement/ Juma Ventures	Youth enrolled in the Pathways to Advancement program work in various Bay Area sports stadiums to earn work experience. Youth also receive education and career counseling, tutoring, individual development and college/career transition plans, summer job training and placement, financial literacy skills, and Individual Development Accounts.
7. Bridges from School to Work/Marriott Fdn.	Bridges from School to Work is a workforce development program serving youth with special needs and multiple barriers to employment. Bridges provides comprehensive pre-employment, placement, and retention services.
8. ENVISION/Oasis For Girls	ENVISION prepares young women for advanced education and careers through technology training, vocational education, and leadership development opportunities. Program participants are low-income young women of color.

<sup>15</sup> The program descriptions are adapted from the grantees' work plans

### III. PROGRAM QUALITY AND BEST PRACTICES: PART 1

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YWD-General programs are assessed on six Point of Service Quality Domains in the Program Observation Visit (POV) protocol: (1) program environment and safety; (2) diversity, access, equity, and inclusion; (3) youth development; (4) intentional skill building; (5) transition support; and (6) employer engagement. This chapter describes the ratings of the first three of these quality domains, discussing the quality ratings, program performance, and best practices within them. Chapter IV describes the quality, performance, and best practices of the remaining quality domains. We also explore the relationship, if any, between high quality programs—as determined by program officers using the POV protocol—and outcomes from the FY 2011–2012 DCYF youth satisfaction survey results.<sup>16</sup>

This chapter relies heavily on comparisons of POV ratings and survey results by strategy and individual programs to assess program quality. To calculate youth survey scores for each domain, we averaged youth responses across the questions related to each domain.<sup>17</sup> The survey items and POV items in each domain are listed in Appendix III-A. We then calculated averages by YWD-General strategy (MYEEP, YouthWorks, and YWD-General Other programs) and for individual programs. To measure the generalizability of these results to all YWD-General participants, we conducted tests of statistical significance for the differences between these averages; we found that they were statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> The youth satisfaction survey asks youth to rate their experiences with YWD-General programs on a scale of 1 to 5, along the following dimensions: (1) youth development—support; (2) youth development—engagement; (3) youth development—interaction; (4) promoting diversity, access, equity, and inclusion; (5) program environment and safety; (6) intentional skill building; and (7) transition support. Because the youth satisfaction survey does not ask any questions related to employer engagement, that domain does not have a survey score.

<sup>17</sup> As part of the preparation of the Year-End Reports, SPR worked with DCYF to assign specific survey questions to each DCYF quality domain based on the specific focus of the questions. We included 16 YWD-General programs in our analysis or survey results. Workreation/SFRPD is not included because the program did not submit youth satisfaction survey data.

<sup>18</sup> We used one-way ANOVA tests.

To calculate overall POV ratings by quality domain, we averaged the POV scores for each of the thirteen programs for which we have data.<sup>19</sup> As with the survey data, we also calculated these averages by strategy (MYEEP, YouthWorks, and YWD-General Other programs), and conducted tests of statistical significance to determine whether we could generalize the POV scores across all YWD-General programs (even those for whom we don't have data). Unfortunately, due to the small size of our POV data set (13 programs), the differences in mean results whether by strategy or YWD-General Other program were not statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level.

## Summary Findings on Program Quality and Performance

Before discussing the program quality and performance scores by each quality dimension, we provide a summary of these ratings for all programs in Exhibit III-1.<sup>20</sup> Several key themes emerge from this exhibit:

- Programs scored highest on program environment and safety and youth development in both the POV and youth survey scores.
- Youth reported much higher levels of satisfaction with transition support (4.1) than did program officers (3.2). This quality domain had the largest difference between the youth survey ratings and POV scores. This difference highlights the disconnect between what youth perceive as high quality and the scoring rubric on the POV protocol used by program officers.
- The youth survey score is lower than the POV score in three out of five domains: program environment and safety, diversity, and youth development. We draw on qualitative data to understand the possible reasons for these differences.

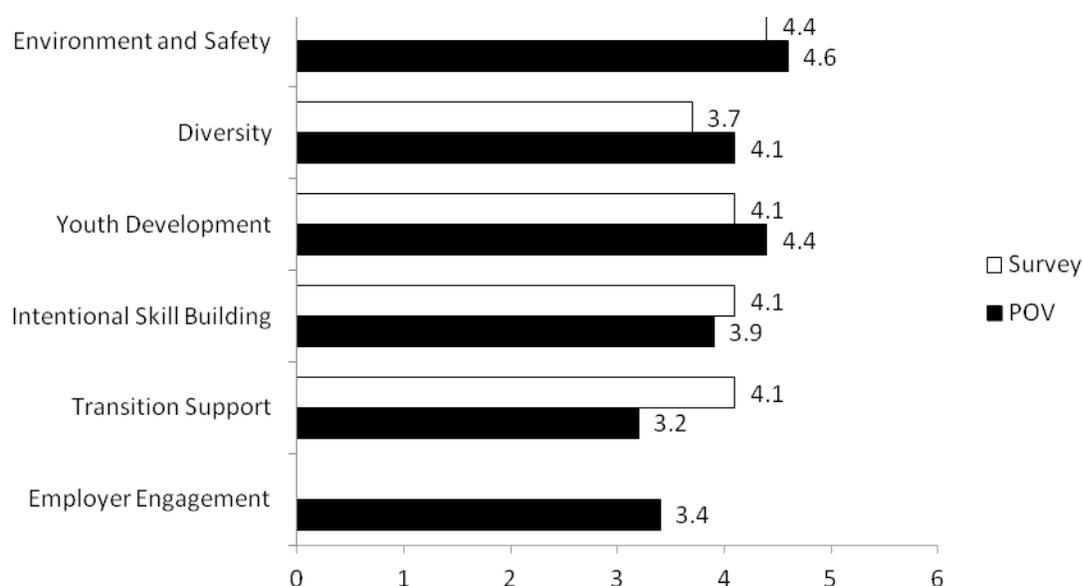
This summary provides a broad-level overview of the POV and survey data together to set the stage for a deeper analysis of program quality and the specific practices that may contribute to quality. Next, we explore the meaning and context of these scores and program practices more closely.

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<sup>19</sup> As we do not have POV data for the following programs, they are excluded from our analysis of POV scores: Queer Youth Training Collaborative/LYRIC, Spotlight on the Arts Youth Employment Project/CLA, Workreation/SFRPD, and Youth Employment and Multicultural Leadership Program/RDNC.

<sup>20</sup> See Appendix III-A: Overall Program Environment and Safety Ratings by YWD-General Other Programs for program-level POV and survey scores.

**Exhibit III-1:  
Quality and Performance Ratings for All Programs<sup>21</sup>**



## Program Environment and Safety

Ample research shows that high quality youth programs provide a healthy, nurturing, and physically and emotionally safe environment for youth, where they are respected by adults and peers alike.<sup>22</sup> DCYF’s POV protocol defines program environment and safety in a similar fashion, noting that in desirable conditions, “the program space is safe, clean, and can be adapted for a variety of activities. Youth and staff interact in a friendly, respectful way.” The youth survey asks participants to rate their level of agreement with two statements related to this domain: “I feel physically unsafe when I am at this program” and “The adults in this program treat all youth fairly.”

## Overall Environment and Safety Ratings

As shown in Exhibit III-2, YWD-General programs overall scored well in program environment and safety, with a total score of 4.4 on the youth survey and 4.6 on the POV. YouthWorks received the highest ratings in both the POV (5.0) and youth survey (4.5). These high ratings

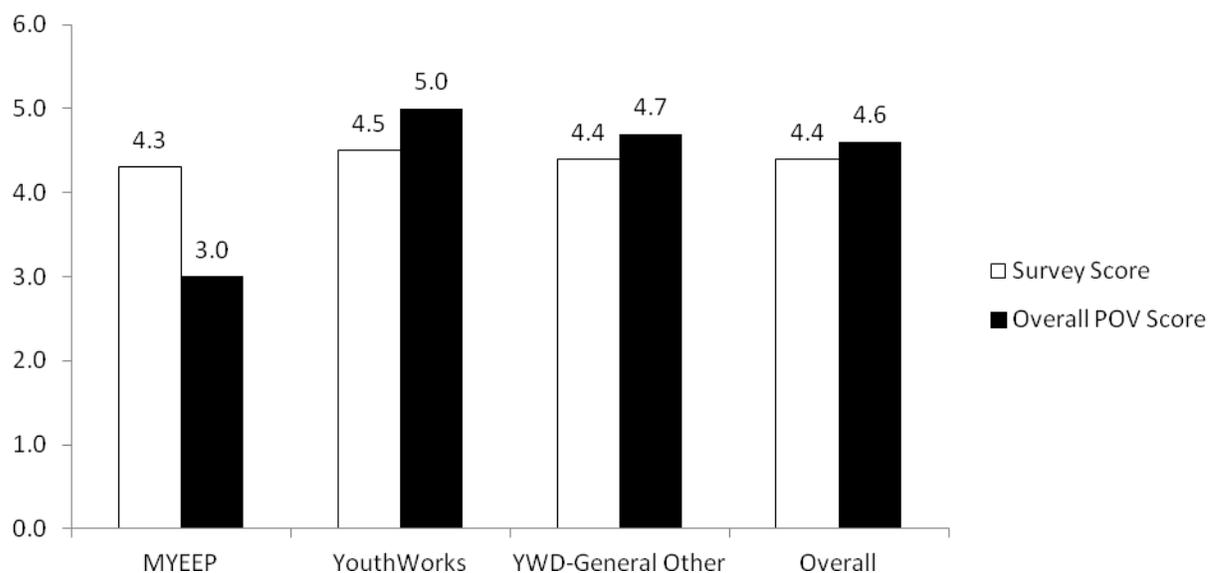
<sup>21</sup> There were no questions pertaining to employer engagement in the youth survey. Differences in survey scores between YWD-General programs and between the three YWD-General strategies were statistically significant across all five domains at the 95% confidence level.

<sup>22</sup> Pittman, K.K., with M. Wright. (1991). *Bridging the Gap: A Rationale for Enhancing the Role of Community Organizations in Promoting Youth Development*. (Washington DC: Academy for Educational Development).

suggest that YWD-General programs are consistently offering safe spaces for youth to interact, learn, and grow. Other key findings are as follows:

- In general, program officers rated program environment and safety slightly higher than did youth participants.
- There is some variation across programs within the YWD-General Other category. Eight out of 13 programs for which we have POV data received a perfect score of 5.0 in this category. One program received a 3.5 POV score, which decreased the overall score for this group of programs. .

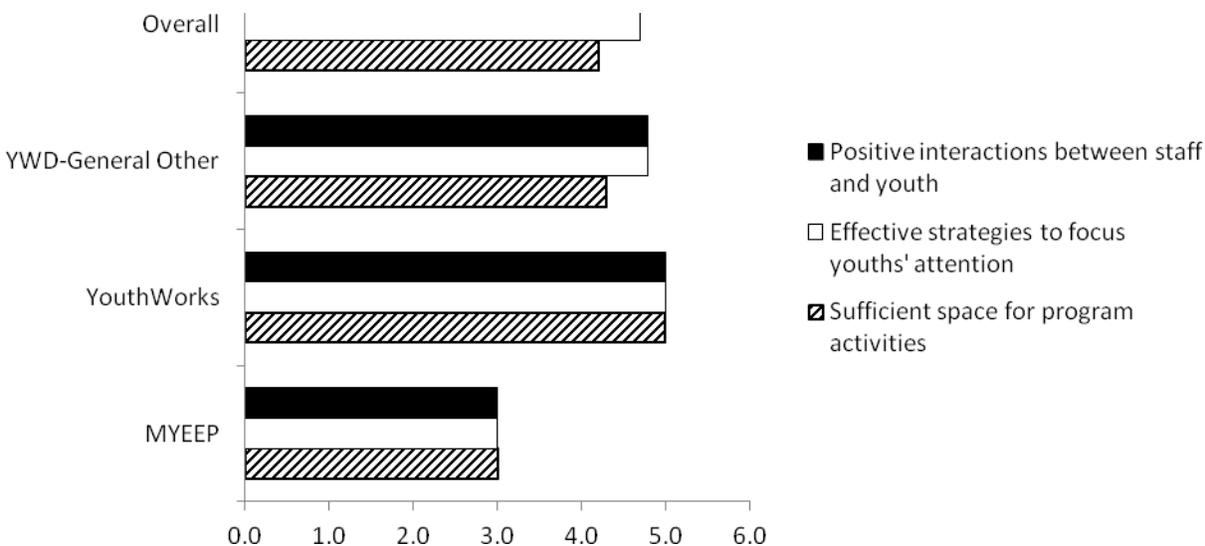
**Exhibit III-2:  
Quality and Performance Ratings for Environment and Safety**



### **Ratings and Best Practices for Sub-Areas of Program Environment and Safety**

To better understand the nuances of the POV scores for environment and safety, this section examines the specific sub-areas for this domain within the POV protocol and the ratings that were assigned to them. Exhibit III-3, which summarizes the three core sub-dimensions of program environment, shows that most program officers felt that all programs display positive interactions between staff and youth, effective strategies to focus youths’ attention, and sufficient space for program activities. YWD-General Other programs scored well in two sub-areas—promoting positive interactions between staff and youth and implementing effective strategies to focus youths’ attention.

**Exhibit III-3:  
POV Quality Ratings for Environment and Safety Sub-Areas**



We explored whether the POV and survey ratings aligned to our observations and interviews among the site visit sample. In general, POV and survey scores did not appear to align, primarily reflecting the limitations of the POV tool discussed above as well as underlying differences between what the two data sources specifically measure.<sup>23</sup> For example, this discrepancy is reflected in our observation of three programs that appear to be promoting positive and safe spaces for youth: ENVISION/Oasis For Girls; Pathways to Advancement/Juma Ventures; and MYEEP.<sup>24</sup>

- ENVISION/Oasis For Girls.** This girls-only program enrolls a small number of youth. During our site visit, participants reported that the small group size promotes a strong sense of safety and belonging. The program also reaches out to youths’ families to facilitate relationships between youth, their families, and program staff. For these reasons, youth shared glowing comments about the program environment. For example:

*We disclose what our dreams are, which is pretty personal; telling [staff] what we’re good at and what we want to be, and our personal attributes so that she can help us.*

<sup>23</sup> For example, as will be discussed in Chapter VI, the survey primarily measures short-term outcomes for these domains while the POV measures the implementation of specific interventions that DCYF expects to lead to outcomes.

<sup>24</sup> The apparent lack of alignment between the survey and POV scores was across all quality domains. Note, however, that due to the small number of sites with POV scores, these differences are not statistically significant.

- **Pathways to Advancement/Juma Ventures.** Pathways to Advancement has developed intentional strategies to support a positive and safe program environment. One key way in which the program does this is through strong relation-building strategies between youth, the Youth Development Coordinators (YDCs), and case managers/counselors. Pathways to Advancement makes an effort to hire racially and culturally diverse staff that represent youths' backgrounds and experiences in order to promote this bonding. In addition, the YDCs make an effort to build trust with the youth, by getting to know them during one-on-one sessions, checking in with them at work and at school, and showing that they care about them. These activities enable trust building, according to the YDCs: "We definitely have to build that trust. That's where that consistency comes in. Being transparent, building trust through consistency."
- **MYEEP.** MYEEP makes a strong effort to encourage positive adult and youth interaction through several activities, including the annual five-day Counselor in Training (CIT) retreat in the Santa Cruz mountains, which is designed to promote bonding between youth and adult staff members. Youth participants also noted that they feel physically and emotionally safe in the program and that the staff are friendly and easy to talk to. One participant in particular noted that her coordinator is very trustworthy, will often approach her when she is not feeling well, and has given her "a lot of good advice." Another participant shared an anecdote about how her coordinator responded after she lost her wallet:

*Afterwards she pulled me out and said "So, how you holding up?" And I said, "Err..I'm doing well." And she knew I wasn't telling the truth and she said, "OK, so you want to tell me what's up with your wallet? How did you find out it was stolen?" And I told her what happened is that when I came back, the wallet was gone, and she was like, 'I will try my best to find out who did it. I'm not going to blame you if it was your fault, but I do hope you get it back and learn from your mistake.'" Right at that moment it hit me that I can trust her with anything in the world. She doesn't go like, "ah it's your fault."*

Programs with positive program environments share some common best practices.

- **Make intentional efforts to promote strong relationships between youth and adults.** This is a strategy that many programs view as essential to creating safe spaces for youth. For example, Youthline IT/Digital Media Work Experience, a program operated by Bay Area Community Resources (BACR), is mindful of promoting strong relationships between youth participants and the young adult staff, and this was noticeable during our observations and the youth focus group. Youth described the adult staff as "family." The following youth quote is illustrative:

*I see this place as my second home, my second family. I spend a lot of time here. I love it. I feel secure knowing that people here would have my back. It's about the relationship I have with them.*

- **Acknowledge and celebrate youth accomplishments.** A number of programs acknowledge and celebrate youth accomplishments through monthly meetings or

at other public events sponsored by the program. Pathways to Advancement/Juma Ventures, for example, holds monthly youth meetings where they devote half of their time to announcing youth accomplishments, including youth promotions and youth employees of the month, who are rewarded with gift cards. The youth managers usually present these awards, further creating a sense of ownership and belonging.

## **Diversity, Access, Equity, and Inclusion**

DCYF’s POV protocol defines diversity, access, equity, and inclusion in the following way: “The program space, activities, and norms encourage inclusive attitudes and behaviors among staff and youth.” This definition aligns with research on youth development, which indicates that high quality after school programs “embrace and value diversity,” and demonstrate commitment to promoting, understanding, and sharing the diverse backgrounds and experiences of youth and their families.<sup>25</sup> The POV protocol includes three sub-dimensions of diversity, which, as shown in Exhibit III-5, focus on celebrating youths’ culture, modeling acceptance and inclusive behavior, and engaging in activities that acknowledge youths’ culture and promote interaction among them. There is limited data about this dimension on the youth survey, as there was only one question that asked youth about whether program staff understand their family culture. Exhibits III-4 and III-5 summarize findings in this area.

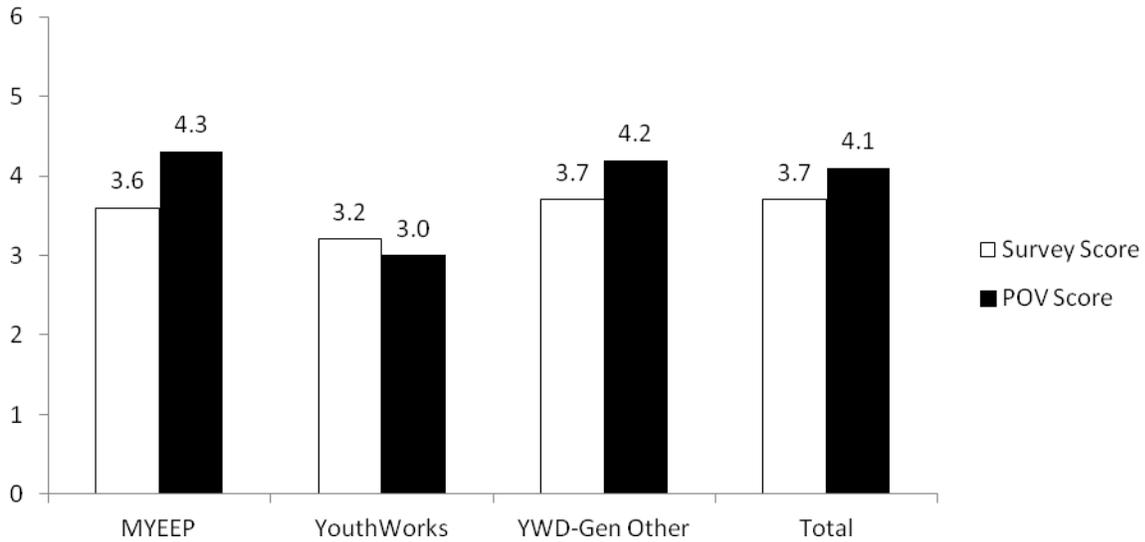
### **Overall Diversity Ratings**

The total POV and youth survey scores for diversity, access, equity, and inclusion hover at 4.1 and 3.7, respectively. The somewhat low scores are affected by low individual program and strategy scores, with two strategies and two programs receiving scores lower than 4.0 on the POV rating. As noted above, there was only one question in the survey for this area, which limits our ability to fully assess youth perceptions of diversity, access, equity, and inclusion.

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<sup>25</sup> See the California Afterschool Quality Self-Assessment Tool, downloaded from [www.afterschoolnetwork.org](http://www.afterschoolnetwork.org).

**Exhibit III-4:  
Quality and Performance Ratings for Diversity, Access, Equity, Inclusion**

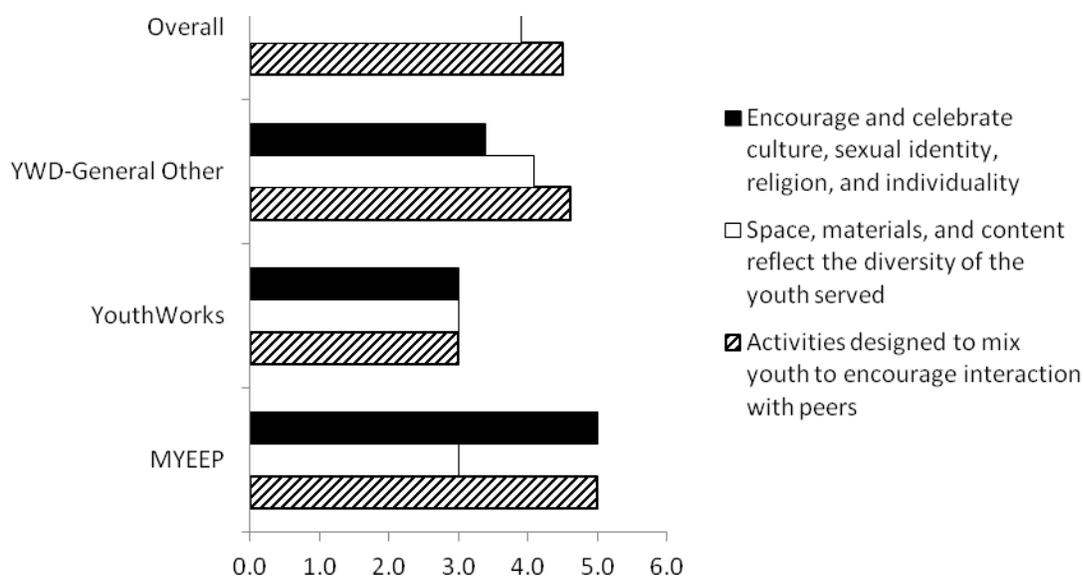


### **Ratings and Promising Practices for Sub-Areas of Diversity**

The sub-areas within the diversity domain provide additional context for the overall POV scores. Programs were rated well in their ability to implement activities that are “designed to mix youth to encourage youth to interact with others,” suggesting that they are mindful about providing a diverse mix of program activities that promote intergroup relationships.

By strategy, YWD-General Other programs scored at least a 3.4 or above in all sub-areas, with the highest score in implementing activities designed to promote youth interaction (4.6).

**Exhibit III-5:  
POV Quality Ratings for Diversity Sub-Areas**



Despite the mixed scores for YWD-General programs on the diversity dimension, site visit data show that this is an area of key strength among the eight programs selected for site visits. Some promising practices include the following:

- **Explicitly focus on youths’ cultural backgrounds in their curriculum and program design.** At Youthline IT/Digital Media Work Experience/BACR, program staff members lead youth in activities that delve into issues of diversity and inclusion during group meetings. Through these discussions, the program’s blog and television show, or independent projects, youth have opportunities to share their cultural and family backgrounds and ways of life. One youth acknowledged the program’s inclusive environment by stating, “You can be whoever you are here and it’s known—that’s who you are.”
- **Incorporate “diverse content” into their programming.** At Pathways to Advancement/Juma Ventures, the YDCs or counselors incorporate “diverse content” into their in-program activities. For the “junior classes” (workshops for high school juniors), for example, the YDCs discuss what it means to be low-income and a person of color. The YDCs explained that acknowledging youths’ backgrounds and cultures promotes a “safe” and “culturally competent” environment for open dialogue.
- **Deliberately hire staff with shared experiences as the youth.** Best practice programs make a conscious effort to hire racially and culturally diverse staff, or staff with similar life experiences as the youth participants.
- **Expand outreach to target neighborhoods and schools to reach racially and culturally diverse youth.** As noted in Chapter II, the programs also attempt to

reach diverse groups of participants by conducting outreach across San Francisco, with some programs making conscious efforts to reach schools with low test scores or schools that serve low-income youth. MYEEP, for instance, subcontracts with community-based programs that are located throughout San Francisco, especially those that target low-income youth. In addition, at least two programs specifically target youth with learning disabilities to ensure a broad representation of participants.

## Youth Development

Youth development is a core, underlying philosophy that drives many of the YWD-General programs. At the heart of youth development is the use of a holistic approach to support youths' growth through a diverse mix of assistance and opportunities. This is perhaps why DCYF's POV protocol defines youth development in multiple layers, to ensure that participants are actively engaged in program activities, have meaningful input in activities and decision making, and have multiple opportunities to play leadership roles within the program. The POV protocol assesses programs in three youth development sub-dimensions: the ability to create a supportive environment, the quality of staff interaction with youth, and the ability to successfully engage youth in the program. The youth survey includes four questions to assess youth development and support, youth engagement, and youth and adult interaction.<sup>26</sup>

In this section we first present the findings from the POV and survey data. We then discuss other practices and elements of YWD-General programs that contribute to positive youth development, such as youth leadership, case management support, and wraparound services.

### Overall Youth Development Ratings

The youth development quality dimension clearly stands out as a key strength for the YWD-General programs. This is reflected in the relatively high overall POV and youth survey scores (4.4 and 4.1, respectively) and in our interviews with program staff and youth (please see Exhibit III-6). There is, however, some variation in the overall POV scores among YWD-General Other programs.

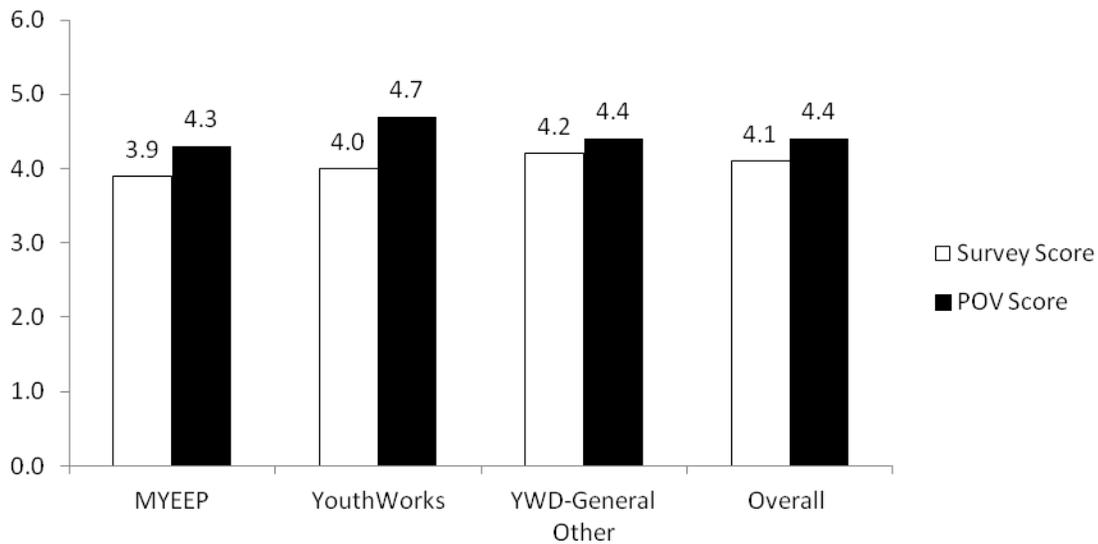
Overall, youth survey scores are lower than POV scores across programs, suggesting again that program officers are rating programs higher than youth on some of the quality dimensions, such as program environment, as discussed above. However, the POV and youth survey scores for

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<sup>26</sup> Youth were asked how strongly they agreed with the following statements: "At this program, there is someone who I can go to about issues that I am having with this program or my work site"; "There is an adult at this program who really cares about me"; "I have been asked for my opinion about how to make this program better"; and "I like coming to this program."

youth development are consistent in about one-third of the programs. For instance, four out of 13 programs (30 percent) received youth survey scores ranging from 3.7 to 3.9. These same programs received similar POV ratings (hovering just at or under 4.0). While these scores do not suggest a deficit in youth development activities, they do suggest that programs should pay close attention to relationship building between youth and adults and opportunities for youth input—key elements assessed in the youth survey.

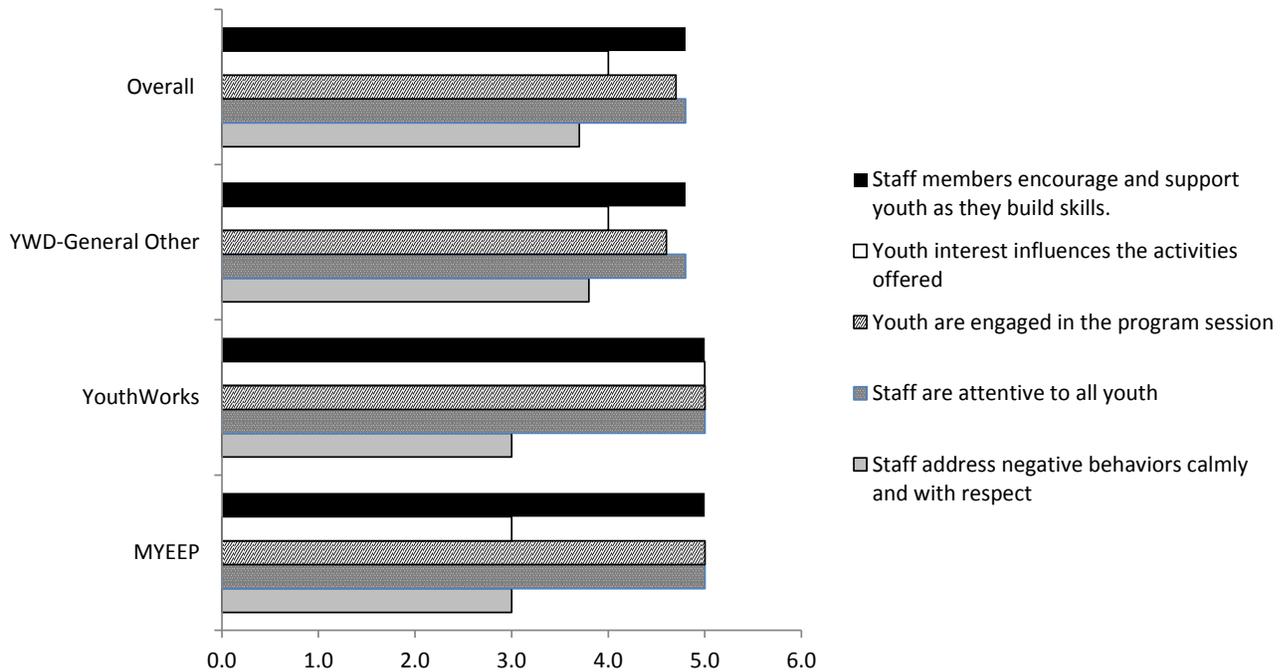
**Exhibit III-6:  
Quality and Performance Ratings for Youth Development**



### **Ratings and Promising Practices for Sub-Areas of Youth Development**

Several of the sub-dimensions of youth development show strong program practices—including those that support youth engagement and those in which staff are able to be attentive to youth—with most programs scoring at least 4.0 and above in these sub-areas (please see Exhibit III-7).

**Exhibit III-7:  
POV Quality Ratings for Youth Development Sub-Areas**



## Youth Leadership

Youth leadership is an important sub-dimension of youth development and a core program element for the vast majority of the YWD-General programs. Through youth leadership, programs seek to instill in youth a strong sense of responsibility and work ethic, which they view as key to their programs' workforce development approach. Youth leadership is available in many forms, such as the following:

- **Youth managers/supervisors.** Youth have opportunities to serve as managers or supervisors responsible for training youth and monitoring their progress.
  - *Pathways to Advancement/Juma Ventures.* Youth have a concrete career ladder at Juma Ventures. They start as food vendors in sports stadiums, and they can move up to be youth managers who train and supervise other youth workers and help them stock their items (food, cups, etc.) during sporting events. During their work shifts, youth managers typically check on youth workers every 20 minutes or so to see if they need supplies or support. They also check inventory and cash-out the registers at the end of the night. To be managers, youth have to apply for the position and/or be nominated by an adult manager, as well as demonstrate maturity and experience.

- *MYEEP*. Youth serve as leaders through the Counselor in Training (CIT) leadership program, which trains youth to serve as peer leaders to youth participants. CITs assist MYEEP coordinators by developing and conducting workshops and helping youth participate in program activities. After being CITs, youth can apply to be “Project Coordinators” who work in MYEEP’s central office and are responsible for training CITs, leading workshops, and coordinating the CIT retreat.
- *YouthWorks*. At YouthWorks, youth serve as Youth Leaders in Training (YLT). Like MYEEP’s CITs, YLTs assist adult staff members by developing and conducting workshops and helping youth participate in program activities. They also support adult staff members with basic office functions and assist youth participants in filling out their Individual Development Plans.
- **Peer mentors.** Youth leaders can serve as formal mentors to youth participants, serving as both supervisors and peer mentors. This model, available at Youthline IT/Digital Media Work Experience/BACR through the internship program, provides meaningful opportunities for youth leaders to mentor and train youth participants on how to create videos, develop websites, answer phone lines, and host television shows.
- **Program-level leadership.** The least intensive model of youth leadership that we observed is one that allows youth to practice their leadership skills by formally or informally leading program activities. These activities are sporadic in nature, and include facilitating youth meetings, assisting adults with youth trainings, helping to take attendance, coordinating snacks, managing clean up, etc. One program (Wellness Academy/Huckleberry) recently tried to deepen its program-level leadership through the development of a youth-led community action research project, which allowed youth to select research topics and lead the projects on their own.
- **Public speaking opportunities.** Several programs provide youth opportunities for public speaking as a way to exercise their leadership potential. Youth in one program had the opportunity to present to local community based organizations about health topics that they learned in their internships, including maintaining a healthy body image, healthy relationships, safe sex, HIV, STDs, etc. Many programs also allow youth to speak at fundraisers or board meetings to share their experiences in the program.

These examples suggest that YWD-General programs are thoughtful about building youth leadership, though the intensity of opportunities varies widely. One program, Youthline IT/Digital Media Work Experience/BACR, a youth-run, youth-led organization, consistently and authentically engages youth leaders in all aspects of program operations, from serving as core program staff to contributing to key decisions about the program, including selecting youth interns for Youthline. Another organization (Wellness Academy/Huckleberry Youth Programs)

is in the process of developing more meaningful leadership opportunities and will be creating a youth advisory board to inform the program’s future direction. The variation in quality and intensity of youth leadership among the YWD-General programs is to be expected, as many programs focus squarely on job development or job placement—a focus that often trumps leadership development.

## **Case Management Support**

The provision of case management support or wraparound services is a critical feature for workforce development programs, especially those serving at-risk youth. While the YWD-General programs are not rated on the presence of case management or wraparound services, nor are they required to provide these services, a number of program staff noted that this support is essential to engaging youth and helping them succeed.<sup>27</sup> Several programs were clear that they have limited capacity and resources to provide case management support, though all eight of the programs we visited devote at least some staff time to this support. Programs devote from one to 10 staff members to case management functions. Their caseloads vary significantly in size, from a low of fewer than 20 active participants per case manager to a high of about 50 or more active participants.

Among the eight sites in the site visit sample, we observed that case managers play a central role in the vast majority of the YWD-General programs.<sup>28</sup> They provide youth with emotional support, advice, encouragement, and guidance on making the right decisions. Case managers also assess youths’ service needs and identify barriers to employment through one-on-one meetings, interviews, and the completion of forms that detail educational and career goals, family situations, and work experiences.<sup>29</sup>

Case managers typically use the information from these assessments to develop service and career/educational plans jointly with participants. The plans serve as blueprints for service design, as case managers work with youth to outline concrete short- and long-term goals and action plans that outline the steps participants should take to achieve those goals. At Work Resource Program/Jewish Vocational Services, these plans are viewed as “living documents”

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<sup>27</sup> Only programs funded by DCYF as YWD-High Risk programs are rated on wraparound services. The reason for this difference in the POV protocol’s structure is that the more “general” population of youth that DCYF did not expect that the “general” population of youth served by YWD-General programs would necessarily require wraparound services to achieve program goals.

<sup>28</sup> The YWD-General programs refer to the staff who work one-one with youth—who we refer to as case managers—in many ways, calling them “academic case managers,” “youth development coordinators,” “employment representatives,” and “program coordinators,” to name a just a few.

<sup>29</sup> Educational and career goal setting and plan development will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter IV.

that are frequently updated as youth reach milestones such as completing workshops or placements at their worksites.

Several YWD programs in our site visit sample are implementing noteworthy practices in the area of case management support, as highlighted below.

**Wellness Academy/Huckleberry.** Academic Case Managers (ACMs) provide personal and academic counseling, meeting with youth about once per month to guide them on the college application process, help them fill out financial aid forms, prepare them for the SAT, and connect them to academic tutors, if needed. ACMs also monitor student grades and visit students at school to check on progress. To facilitate communication, ACMs contact youth by texting, emailing, and connecting with them through social media.

**Bridges from School to Work/Marriott Foundation.** Case managers, called Employer Representatives (ER), are responsible for working individually with youth to provide job readiness skills. The frequency and duration of meetings with youth vary according to the needs of the participants and where youth are in their job searches. Some youth meet with an ER almost every day, especially when they are at the height of a job search.

There are a number of dimensions of case management support that stand out within these programs, as described below.

- **Contact between youth and adults is a core feature.** Indeed, some programs such as Pathways to Advancement/Juma Ventures requires that YDCs record their interactions with youth in the program's internal data management system, Efforts to Outcomes (ETO). This system is a good way to ensure that staff not only meet with youth on a regular basis, but also record those interactions for reporting purposes.
- **Set expectations for the frequency and intensity of contact between case managers and youth.** Setting these kinds of expectations is an important strategy for several programs because it ensures accountability among the case managers and youth. For youth this expectation is established at the onset, so that they are clear about what is expected of them. For case managers this is a formal policy, ensuring that there is a common understanding of their roles and responsibilities.
- **Emphasize both academic support and job readiness skills.** For most programs, the balance of this support is somewhat equal, as they strive to ensure that youth succeed in school so that they can aim for post-secondary education. Both Wellness Academy/Huckleberry and Youthline IT/Digital Media Work Experience/BACR offer this dual approach. The ability to offer both types of support is made possible either in-house or through connections to external partners who provide tutors in-kind or for a nominal fee.

- **Refer youth for wraparound services if not available in-house.** Lastly, at least three of the sites we visited intentionally refer youth for wraparound services because they do not have in-house expertise to provide services like housing and childcare. Several programs however, provide as many of the supportive services in-house as possible in order to better monitor youths’ progress and support them while they are in the program.

One of the most intensive models is available at Pathways to Advancement/Juma Ventures, described below.

### **Juma Ventures: A Model for Intensive Case Management Support**

The Pathways to Advancement Program is one of three programs at Juma Ventures. The program emphasizes case management support or wraparound services, which are provided by Youth Development Coordinators (YDCs). The YDCs provide a multitude of support to youth, such as one-on-one and group counseling, frequent check-ins at worksites, academic monitoring and support, and financial literacy. Because Juma Ventures believes the relationship between the YDCs and youth is essential to youths’ success, the program requires that YDCs meet at least two hours per month with youth, either one-on-one or in group settings.

YDCs check in with youth at least monthly (more often if youths’ grades are low) to ask whether they need changes to their work hours. YDCs also meet with worksite supervisors during these visits, checking to see how youth are doing and identifying any potential issues with schedules, behavior, etc.

YDCs monitor academic progress in several ways. They check in with youth at school, meeting them during lunch. They also monitor their grades (accessible through the GearUP program, which partners with Juma Ventures) and coordinate tutoring if needed. YDCs also provide guidance to youth on how to navigate the education system (e.g., how to interact with teachers, handle conflicts, etc.). Finally, they make sure that youth are on track to get into and succeed in college. This includes making sure they have signed up for the right classes and are prepared for the SAT, providing college application support, and helping with completion of financial aid forms.

Youth relationships with YDCs are the “crux” of Juma, according to program staff members. As a result, Juma is extremely careful to track and document all contact that youth have with their YDCs in their Effort-to-Outcomes (ETO) system. They run monthly, quarterly, and yearly reports in order to monitor youth and make sure YDCs have manageable caseloads.

## **Summary**

There are a number of key findings that can be drawn from this chapter. These include:

### **Overall POV and Survey Ratings**

- Across all YWD-General programs, the two highest POV and survey scores are in program environment and youth development.

- The scores in POV data are lower than in the youth survey data for two out of five quality domains: intentional skill building and transition support.
- The youth survey scores are lower than the POV scores in three out of five domains: program environment and safety, diversity, and youth development. This is not surprising, as the youth survey contained fewer questions than did the POV protocol for these domains.
- Youth reported much higher levels of satisfaction with transition support than program officers did; this area had the largest difference between the youth survey and POV scores.

### **Program Environment and Safety**

- POV ratings are higher than the youth survey scores for program environment and safety.
- The vast majority of individual programs in the YWD-General Other category received a perfect POV score of 5.0 on this dimension. Only one program received a score below 4.0.
- Program practices that promote a positive program environment include those focused on promoting a sense of belonging in the program, such as building trusting relationships between youth and adults, developing guiding principles for interactions between youth and staff and among youth, and celebrating youth accomplishments through public recognition events.

### **Diversity, Access, Equity, and Inclusion**

- Overall diversity ratings hover at 4.1 and 3.7 for the POV and youth survey, respectively. These low scores are affected by low individual scores for two strategies and two individual YWD-General Other programs..
- The youth survey score for all YWD-General programs on this domain is below a 4.0, which is the lowest score among all of the quality domains. This low survey score is not surprising, since there was only one question on the survey, asking youth whether program staff understand their family's culture.
- The sub-area with the highest score (4.5 overall) is related to the programs' ability to implement practices that encourage youth interaction. The sub-area with the lowest score (3.6 overall) concerns the programs' ability to celebrate youths' culture, identity, and individuality.

### **Youth Development**

- Programs scored high in the youth development domain, with overall scores of 4.4 and 4.1 on the POV and youth survey, respectively. Most programs are implementing effective program practices in several sub-areas of youth development, including those that support youth engagement and those in which staff are able to be attentive to youth, with most programs scoring over 4.0 and above in these sub-areas.

## Youth Leadership

Youth have ample opportunities to be leaders in the vast majority of YWD-General programs. The depth and intensity of these opportunities vary widely, with some programs offering youth formal leadership roles in the organizations, and others assigning leadership of limited activities so that youth can practice their skills. Some of the youth leadership opportunities at the eight site visit programs include:

- **Youth managers and youth supervisors** who have responsibility for managing, supervising, and training youth participants.
- **Peer mentors** who train and guide youth participants, and serve as strong sounding boards for them.
- **Leadership activities**, which include specific program-level roles for youth to practice leadership skills, such as facilitating meetings, organizing events, and assisting adult leaders with youth trainings.
- **Public speaking opportunities**, where youth develop speaking skills at public fundraisers and other community events.

## Case Management/Wraparound Services

Many YWD-General programs emphasize case management/wraparound services as essential to ensuring youths' success in school and at the worksite, even if they lack the capacity to provide in-depth services in this area. Programs devote about one to 10 staff members to case management functions. Their caseloads vary significantly in size, from a low of fewer than 20 active participants per case manager to a high of about 50 or more active participants. The dimensions of strong case management support are as follows:

- Frequent and intentional contact between youth and adults.
- Clear expectations for the frequency and intensity of contact between case managers and youth. This is an important strategy for several programs, as it ensures accountability.
- Emphases on both academic support and job readiness skills. For most programs, the balance of this support is somewhat equal, as they strive to ensure that youth succeed in school so that they can aim for post-secondary education.
- In programs with limited capacity and expertise, programs refer youth to other programs for wraparound services. Some programs prefer to support youth with resources available in-house, however, to better monitor their progress and support them while in the program.

The next chapter describes the remaining three program quality domains in the POV: intentional skill building, transition support, and employer engagement. It also describes the quality of placement services using DCYF performance measure data from CMS.

## IV. PROGRAM QUALITY AND BEST PRACTICES: PART 2

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This chapter continues the discussion of services, quality ratings, and best practices by describing the POV results for the final three point of service quality domains: (4) intentional skill building, (5) transition support, and (6) employer engagement.<sup>30</sup> In this chapter, we also discuss performance and best practices related to placement services. As noted in the previous chapter, we examine program outcomes using both the FY 2011–2012 DCYF youth satisfaction survey results and program performance data from CMS.<sup>31</sup>

We begin the chapter by discussing the quality ratings, performance outcomes, and best practices for intentional skill building. This is followed by a discussion of transition support, employer engagement, and finally, placement services.

### Intentional Skill Building

According to the DCYF point-of-service quality domains, intentional skill building activities should:

*...promote youth skill building by intentionally focusing on a specific skill, promoting successively higher levels of mastery, and allowing youth to present their work or perform for others.*<sup>32</sup>

Based on this overall guidance, DCYF program officers rated each YWD-General program on ten specific sub-areas related to intentional skill building. These included sub-areas that focused on how well programs facilitated the development of job search skills, soft skills, financial literacy, and computer literacy. Programs were also rated on how well they facilitated the assessment of their participants' career interests and on how well they were able to assist youth with setting realistic academic and career goals and developing plans for achieving those goals.

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<sup>30</sup> As noted in the previous chapter, differences in POV ratings by strategy or program are not statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level.

<sup>31</sup> As discussed in Chapter III, differences between program-level and strategy-level survey results in each domain are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

<sup>32</sup> DCYF Youth Workforce Development Site Visit Protocol (September 2012), p. 2.

Finally, program officers rated programs on their use of effective skill building methods for youth. These methods included ensuring that all skill building sessions “focused on specific skills, concepts, or content areas,” included “de-briefs and checks for understanding,” and used “active learning principles” and gave youth “the opportunity to build critical thinking skills.”

Youth also rated the quality of intentional skill building on the youth satisfaction survey by indicating how strongly they agreed with the four statements related to what skills they learned in the program.<sup>33</sup>

## **Overall Intentional Skill Building Ratings**

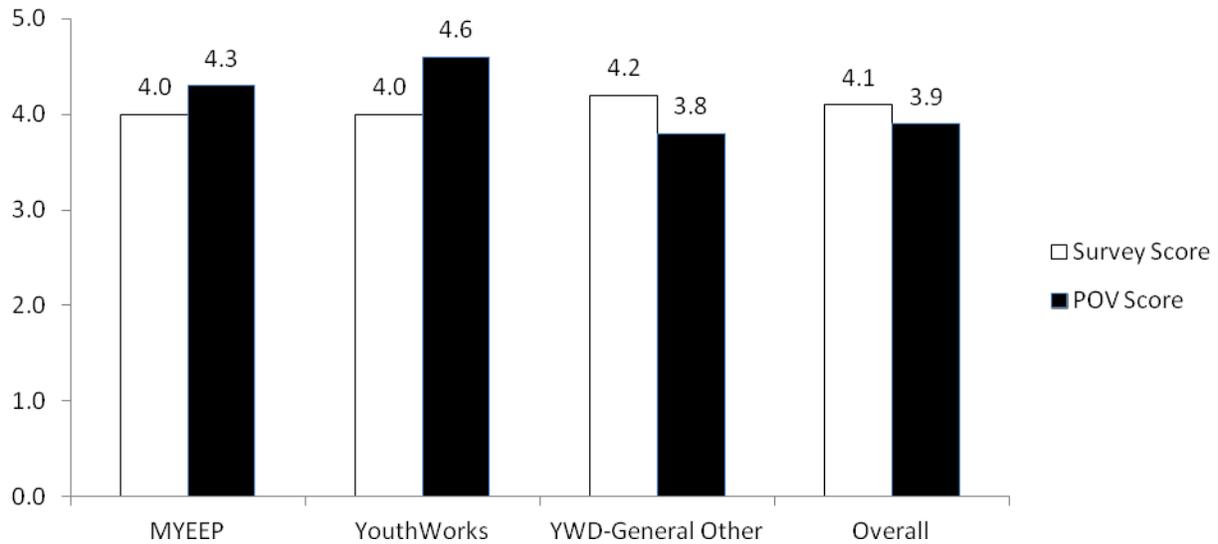
Overall, YWD-General programs received a 3.9 rating from DCYF program officers on intentional skill building (see Exhibit IV-1), which was slightly lower than the 4.1 rating for this domain on the youth survey. Differences in ratings in this quality domain are not surprising given the wide difference in the focus and breadth of the sub-areas and questions that make up the overall ratings. The POV ratings in intentional skill building are based on 10 sub-area ratings that assess the quality of skill development in four specific skill areas, the use of four specific methods for teaching skill building, as well as the quality of career assessment activities and career/educational goal setting and plan development. By contrast, the survey rating is based on youth responses to four statements about whether they had learned a useful work-related skill, if they had learned skills or information that interested or excited them, and if they had received feedback on how their program performance could be improved. The variation in survey ratings for individual YWD-General Other programs was much narrower than it was for POV ratings.<sup>34</sup> They ranged from a high of 4.6 to a low of 3.5.

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<sup>33</sup> These statements included: “I have learned skills in this program that I can take to my next job.” “Staff or site supervisors provide useful feedback on how I could improve my performance in this program or at the work site.” “At this program, I learned new information about a topic that interests me.” “At this program, I learned a new skill that I’m excited about.”

<sup>34</sup> The narrower range of survey ratings may be due to the difference in the size of the scale used in the survey versus the POV protocol. The survey uses a standard five-point Likert scale, while the POV protocol, although it ranges from one to five, is actually only a three-point scale. Consequently, the POV scale, given the limited number of rating options, is likely to be subject to wider variability.

## Exhibit IV-1: Quality and Performance Ratings for Intentional Skill Building



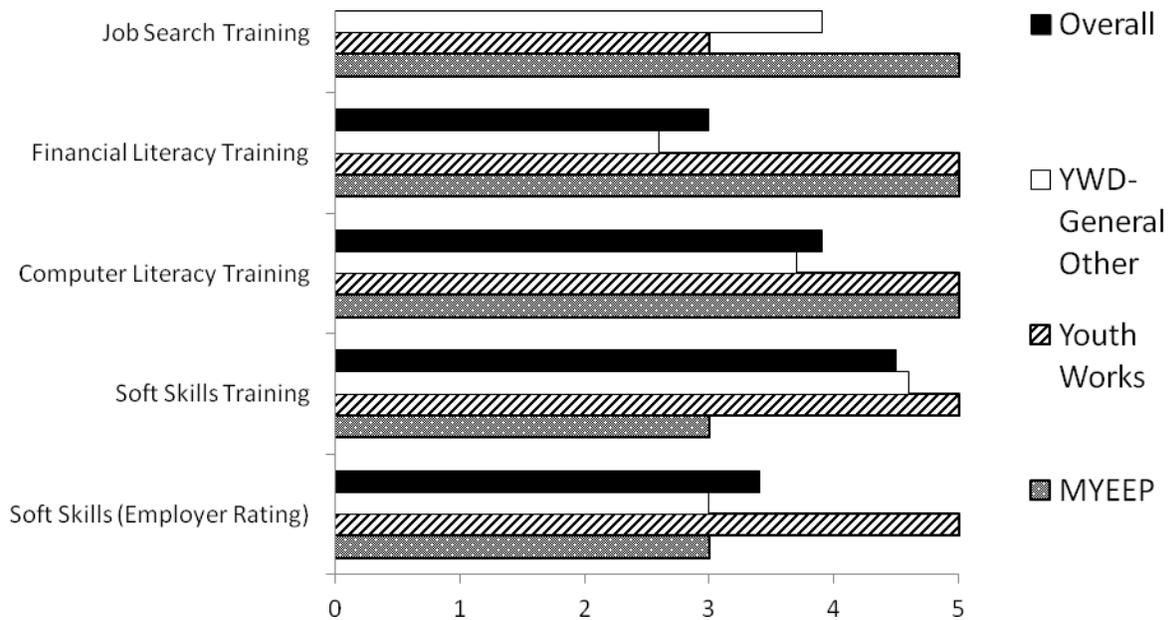
### Ratings and Promising Practices for Sub-Areas of Intentional Skill Building

To better understand the POV scores, we examined the specific sub-areas within the POV protocol and the ratings that were assigned to them. Because intentional skill building included the most sub-areas of any quality domain in the POV protocol, we have grouped them into three topical areas: specific areas of skill development, including job search skills, financial literacy, computer literacy, and soft skills; career assessment, goal setting, and plan development; and effective methods for skill development. The POV ratings for each group of sub-areas, along with illustrative examples of best practices garnered from our site visit sample, are presented below.

#### ***Specific Areas of Skill Development***

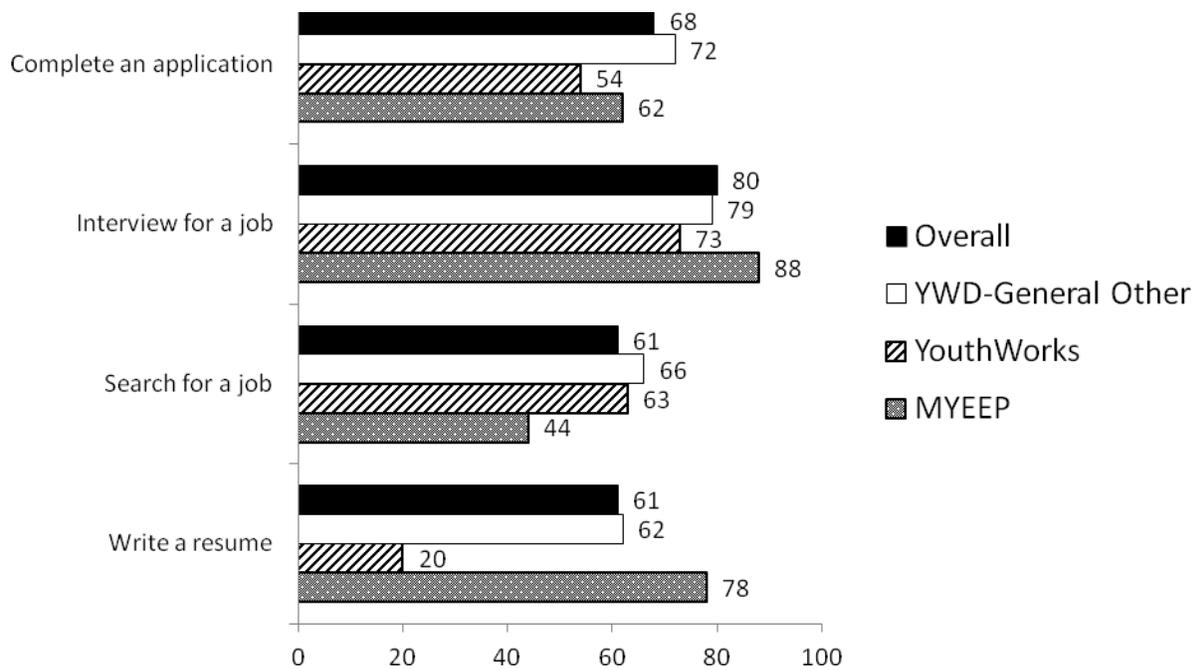
Ratings of the quality of programs' skill building in specific areas varied by type of skill, with soft skills training rated the highest in quality overall (4.5) and financial literacy rated the lowest (3.0) (please see Exhibit IV-2). Among specific YWD-General Other programs, POV ratings ranged from a high average of 5.0 in all of these specific skill areas to a low average of 3.0

**Exhibit IV-2: POV Quality Ratings for Development of Specific Skills**



In addition to these POV scores, the youth survey also provides some additional insight into the quality of two of these specific skill building areas: job search skills and soft skills training. For each of these skill building areas, the survey asked youth what specific skills they learned as a result of their participation in a YWD-General program. In the area of job search skills, the survey asked youth which of the following skills they had learned through the program: how to write a resume, how to search for a job, how to interview for a job, and how to complete an application. As shown in Exhibit IV-3, the skill that youth most often reported learning—overall and for all three strategies—was how to interview for a job. Completing an application was the next most common skill they reported learning overall (68 percent), although results by strategy varied as they did for the other two skills.

**Exhibit IV-3: Percentage of Youth Who Reported Learning Specific Job Search Skills from YWD-General Programs<sup>35</sup>**



Regarding soft skills, the survey asked youth if they had learned any of five specific skills.<sup>36</sup>

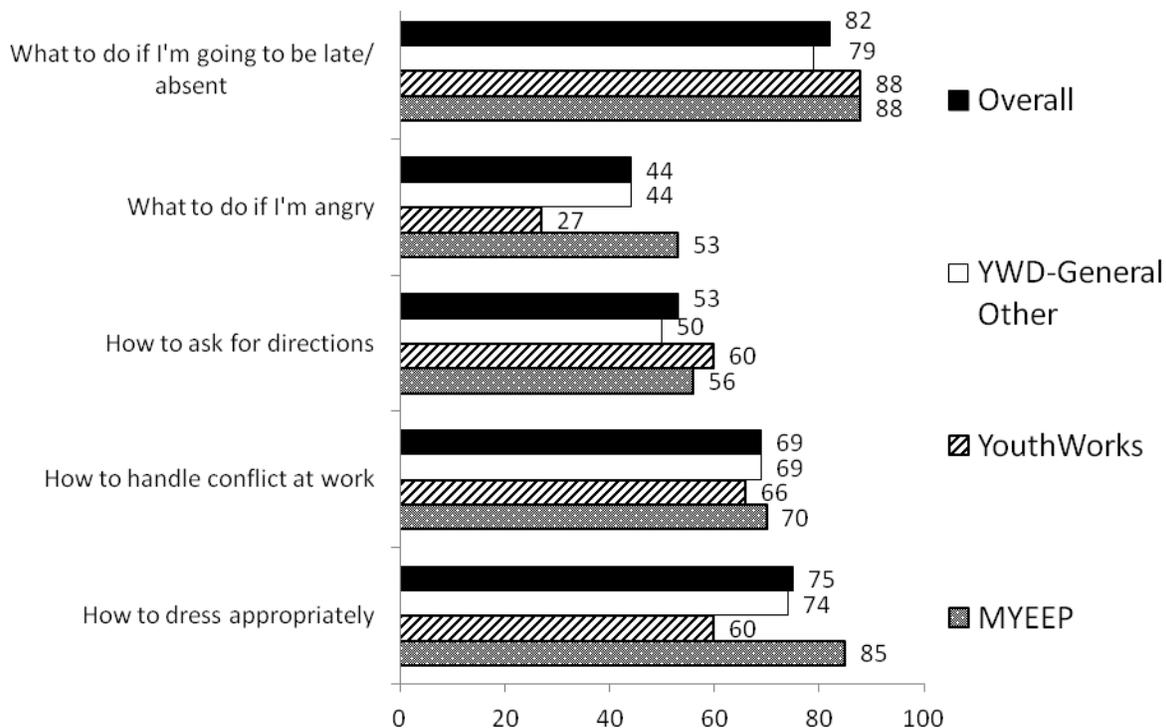
As shown in Exhibit IV-4, the most common soft skill youth reported learning was what to do if they were going to be late or absent to work (82 percent). The least common soft skill they reported learning was what to do when they were angry (44 percent). That both of these skills were also the most and least common across all three strategies implies that there is general consensus among YWD-General programs about the most and least important soft skills youth need to learn.

Several programs among our site visit sample had high quality scores in each of these skill building areas. To attain these high ratings, these programs use a number of promising practices related to skill building in these specific areas. We discuss the promising practices we encountered for each specific skill building area below, beginning with those in the area of job search skills development.

<sup>35</sup> The difference between program-level scores and strategy-level scores are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level for each skill.

<sup>36</sup> The specific survey question asked, “At this program, I learned the following work place skills (you may check more than one activity):” The specific check boxes for the question included: “How to dress appropriately.” “How to handle conflict at work.” “How to ask for directions.” “What to do if I’m angry.” “What to do if I’m going to be late or absent.”

**Exhibit IV-4: Percentage of Youth Who Reported Learning Specific Soft Skills from YWD-General Programs<sup>37</sup>**



**Promising Practices in Job Search Skills Development**

In the area of job search skills, the programs with the highest POV scores all offer training in how to conduct a job search, how to develop a resume, how to complete a job application, and how to interview. Typically, skill building sessions on all of these and other job search topics are provided during sequences of work readiness workshops. Sometimes these sequences stretch over many months, as with MYEEP’s school-year program cycle (October to April), or even years in Wellness Academy/Huckleberry’s case (mid-sophomore year to senior year). At other programs that received high rankings in job search skills, however, such as Bridges from School to Work/Marriott Foundation, these workshop sequences last less than a week.

One job search skill building activity that seemed to resonate particularly strongly with participants was mock interviews. In focus groups at both Wellness Academy/Huckleberry and

<sup>37</sup>The difference between program-level scores are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level for all five soft skills. The difference between strategy-level scores is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level for all soft skills except “how to handle conflict at work” and “how to ask for directions.”

Youthline IT/Digital Media Work Experience/BACR, youth emphasized how the mock interview activity—which at the Wellness Academy sometimes includes employer partners—was especially helpful. Wellness Academy participants noted that completing mock interviews helped them to feel more comfortable interviewing with employers for internship positions.

### ***Promising Practices in Financial Literacy***

To receive the highest possible POV ranking in the area of financial literacy, programs must cover budgeting, savings goals, bank accounts, and obtaining credit. They must also assist youth with setting up bank accounts. Pathways to Advancement/Juma Ventures has a notably strong and comprehensive approach. In addition to facilitating workshops and panel discussions on financial literacy, program staff members work with youth to develop financial assessments, to create personal financial plans, and to help them file their taxes. One of the most innovative components of Pathways to Advancement/Juma Ventures' approach is that the program helps youth set up Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) to save for college. These IDAs provide a particularly strong incentive for youth to save, as Pathways to Advancement provides a two-to-one match for every dollar saved by participants.

### ***Promising Practices in Computer Literacy***

To receive the highest possible POV rating for computer literacy, programs need to have a functioning computer lab with internet access available to participants. They also have to have adults available to provide instruction and support for computer use. Youthline IT/Digital Media Work Experience/BACR appears to have one of the most intensive computer literacy programs among our sample of eight sites. During their six-month internship, Youthline IT participants receive extensive training on how to use specific types of software needed to create material for the Youthline television show and videos, including iMovie and Final Cut Pro. In addition, because participants assist with Youthline hotline, they learn how to use Salesforce software, the database that the program uses for the hotline.

### ***Promising Practices in Soft Skills Development***

According to the POV protocol, to receive the highest rating from program officers in the soft skills sub-area, programs must cover six or more of 14 specific social competencies related to keeping a job, such as communicating, appropriate dress, decision-making and self-management. Only one program was assessed as covering all of the 14 possible competencies listed in the POV protocol. Participants in this program, who take part in monthly workshops that commonly focus on soft skills, seemed genuinely enthusiastic about the skills they learned during these sessions, in particular communication and listening skills. Said one youth participant:

*I didn't know there were so many ways to listen to someone and help someone out without telling them your side of the story. There are so many*

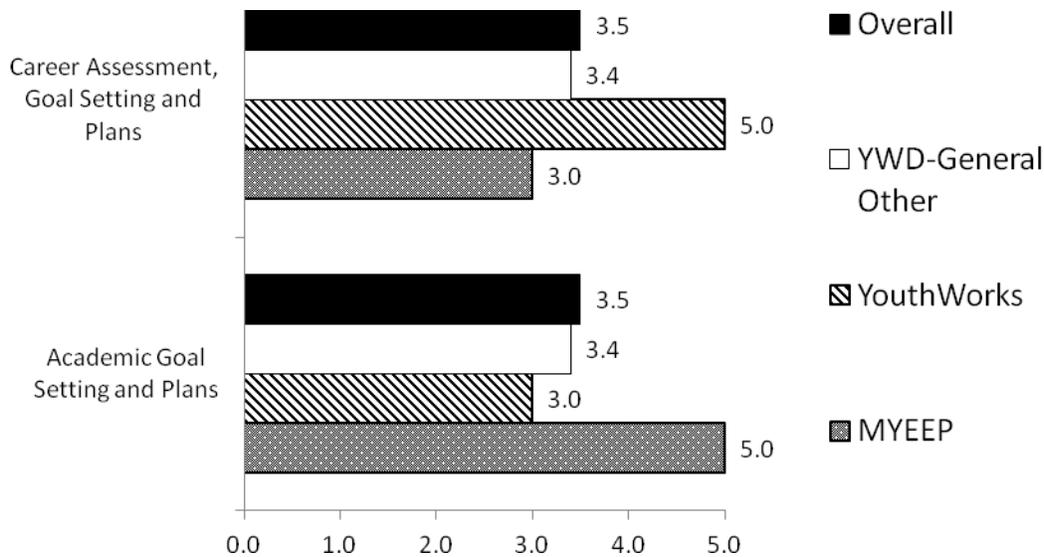
*different ways to communicate with someone. There's so much to learn and it's so interesting. This is something they don't teach in school, you don't learn in other jobs. But you learn that here.*

YouthWorks has a comprehensive curriculum—particularly for its school-year program cycle—that covers six primary soft skills competencies (workplace communication, collaboration, adaptability, productivity, responsibility and effort, and initiative). In addition, YouthWorks runs its training workshops in a way that mirrors the requirements of the workplace, requiring youth to show up on time or see their stipend reduced, and they may be transitioned out of the program if they have more than three unexcused absences. Prior to being placed in an internship, all youth must also go through a two-day pre-employment workshop and, if they do not perform well during this workshop, they are not offered placements and are not allowed to continue in the program.

**Career Assessment, Goal Setting, and Plan Development**

Ratings on the quality of YWD-General programs' intentional skill building also include two sub-areas that rate programs on how well they assist participants with career assessments, setting career and academic goals, and developing plans to achieve those goals. For these sub-areas, YWD-General programs overall received only a 3.5 rating (please see Exhibit IV-5).

**Exhibit IV-5: POV Quality Ratings for Career Assessment, Goal Setting, and Plan Development**



## ***Promising Practices in Career and Academic Assessment, Goal Setting, and Plan Development***

To further illustrate the operations of programs with the highest POV ratings in these sub-areas, this section discusses several of the promising practices of our sample of eight programs related to assessment, goal-setting, and the development of plans to achieve those goals.

### **Assessment**

- **Use a combination of formal and informal assessments.** At Pathways to Advancement/Juma Ventures—one of the highest rated programs in both of these sub-areas—staff members use a combination of informal and formal assessments to evaluate the needs and interests of participants. Among the informal assessments used by Pathways to Advancement is a tool called “The Wheel of Life,” in which participants assess their level of satisfaction on various aspects of their lives, including their careers. Staff members carry out a more formal assessment of academic and career interests and skills during one-on-one meetings between staff members and participants. This formal assessment measures participant competency along a number of career and educational domains.
- **Assess academics up-front and career interests later on.** At Wellness Academy/Huckleberry, another high-ranking program in both of these areas, participants are assessed up front through one-on-one meetings with staff regarding their academic situations as well as their academic strengths and plans. Later in the program, participants take part in a career assessment that Wellness Academy staff members developed based on the Holland Codes.<sup>38</sup> This assessment, which is carried out in a group setting, assesses participant personality traits and interests and matches those interests with specific professions and occupations.

### **Goal Setting and Plan Development**

Based on the information from these career and academic assessments, the highest-rated programs work with youth to set academic and career goals and develop realistic plans for achieving them. They also regularly check in with participants about their progress in achieving their goals. Here are some examples:

- **Develop plans based on assessment results and check-in regularly.** At Wellness Academy/Huckleberry, academic case managers use the results of the academic and career assessments to develop plans that identify participants’ post

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<sup>38</sup> The Holland Codes are letters that stand for a particular personality "type": “R” = Realistic (Doers), “I” = Investigative (Thinkers), “A” = Artistic (Creators), “S” = Social (Helpers), “E” = Enterprising (Persuaders), and “C” = Conventional (Organizers). These codes are then matched with specific professions that individuals with that personality type would be likely to succeed in. The Holland codes were developed by the psychologist [John L. Holland](#).

high school goals and the immediate steps needed to realize these goals. Because participants' interests are likely to change over the more than three years they spend with the Wellness Academy, youth meet with their case managers about twice a month throughout the program to update the plans as needed.

- **Assist youth with setting goals that are broader than just post-secondary and career plans.** MYEEP's approach to goal setting and plan development for its school-year participants is broader than that of many other programs, perhaps reflecting the fact that MYEEP

school-year participants are typically only 14 or 15-years-old. The plan developed by MYEEP school-year participants—called a Youth Development Plan—does include professional and personal goals as well as a number of other key characteristics, including information about their cultural backgrounds, family and friends they care about most, their strengths, and their favorite childhood memories. (Please see the accompanying text box, *What's in MYEEP Youth Development Plans?*)

- **Provide on-going opportunities for goal-setting and plan development and allow youth to present their plans to their peers so that they feel ownership of their plans.** Typically, MYEEP school-year participants work on a specific component of their Youth Development Plans during each week of the program's 10-week fall pre-employment module. At the end of this pre-employment component, each participant creates a PowerPoint presentation about the plan and uses it to present the plan to peers and program staff members. This approach helps youth to feel ownership of their plans.

#### **What's in MYEEP Youth Development Plans?**

One MYEEP participant's Youth Development Plan included:

- Her age, the high school she attends, and her grade level;
- Her favorite quote, "Live as if you were going to die tomorrow";
- Her strengths, which included honesty and being responsible;
- Her family and friends, who she "cares for most" and have the "most influence on her";
- Her cultural background, which included a mention of cuisine, celebrations, religion and music;
- Her favorite childhood memory—her cousin helping her to ride a bike;
- "Bad habits" that she would like to break;
- Her goal of studying harder to be successful;
- Her savings goals;
- Her short-term academic goals, which were to earn between a 3.83 and 4.00 GPA and get an A in biology;
- Her college goals, which identified her "dream school" (Stanford) and listed her other target schools;
- Her career goal, which was to become a lawyer;
- Skills she wants to develop, such as learning how not to procrastinate;
- Her goals after MYEEP (to continue to work);
- Her favorite memory from workshop (an ice breaker); and
- Final words of wisdom.

### ***Effective Skill Building Methods***

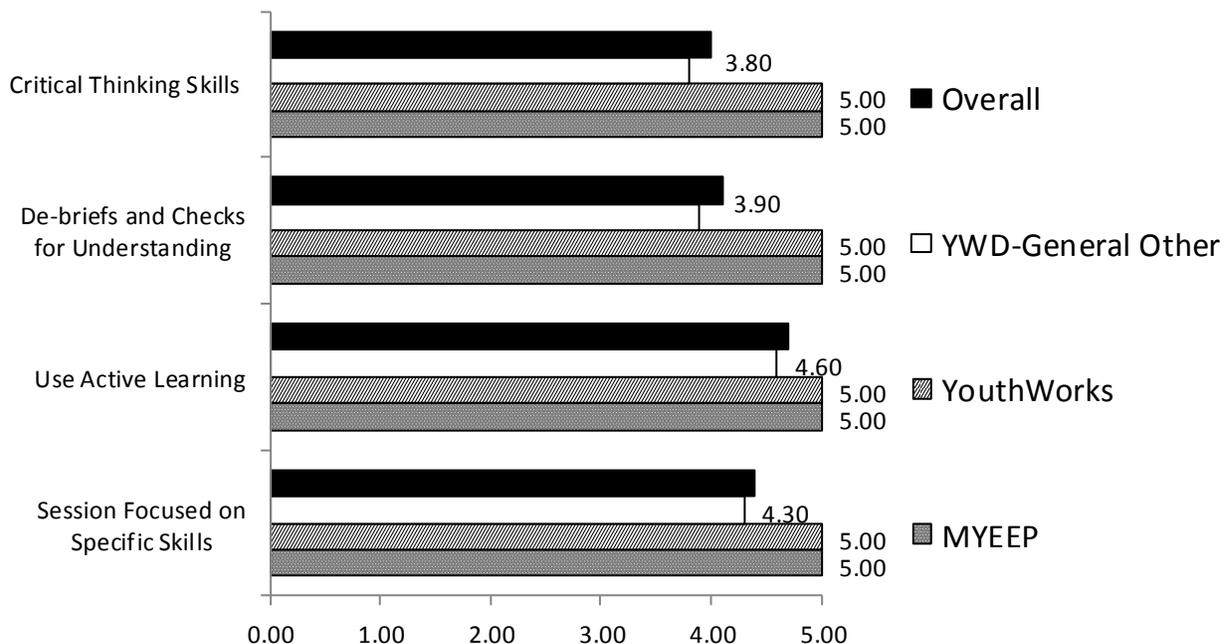
The final four sub-areas within intentional skills building all relate to specific methods that researchers have found to be effective in helping youth to build their skills. These methods include providing youth with opportunities to build critical thinking skills by asking them open-ended questions; by including debriefs and checks for understanding in the lessons; by using active learning principles, including a mix of hands-on activities linked with adult-directed instruction; and by ensuring that each session is focused on a specific skill, concept, or content area.

Overall, YWD-General programs had an average rating of 4.3 on these four sub-areas, with the highest rating (4.7) in the use of active learning principles and the lowest in the development of critical thinking skills (4.0) (please see Exhibit IV-6).

### ***Promising Practices in the Use of Effective Skill Building Methods***

One promising practice used by a number of the highest rated programs among our sample of eight sites is to develop a detailed curriculum for skill building sessions. MYEEP, for example, has developed a curriculum for each of its skill building workshop sequences. By doing so, the program ensures that each of its 10 site coordinators across multiple sub-contractors is covering the same topics and using a consistent approach based on the evidence-based practices outlined in the POV protocol. MYEEP's fall 2012 curriculum, for example, specifies that during the second week of the program, the first workshop of that week should focus on career exploration, while the second should focus on time management. The curriculum also presents well-defined objectives for each of these sessions that make clear what specific aspects of the topic should be covered.

**Exhibit IV-6: POV Quality Ratings for Use of Effective Skill Building Methods**



Another important aspect of these skill building curricula is that they emphasize and map out specific activities for each session that include a mix of adult-led instruction and active learning. For example, YouthWorks’ *Fall 2012 Curriculum Trainer’s Guide* for the Career Exploration workshop outlines ten different activities related to career exploration that include adult and youth staff members explaining things to youth; participant-led group activities; paired discussions; and individual work.

These curricula can also outline specific times and activities for adult staff members to build in checks for understanding, debriefs, and open-ended discussion with youth to build critical thinking skills. For example, in a planned activity in MYEEP’s fall 2012 curriculum called “Is the Jar Full,” the session outline includes a debrief on what participants learn from the activity. The outline also includes twelve sample debrief questions, all of which are primarily open-ended and aimed at generating a critical discussion among youth about the importance of time management (please see a sample of these questions in the accompanying textbox).

Despite the usefulness of having a well-developed curriculum, both MYEEP and YouthWorks make sure to allow their youth and adult staff members the flexibility to make adjustments to the curriculum to fit with their individual training styles and experiences, as well as the interests and personalities of each specific cohort of participants. For example, one MYEEP staff person noted that while she tends to incorporate more environmental and social justice elements in her workshops, her colleague who is more arts-oriented tends to use more arts-based approaches.

## Transition Support

According to the point-of-service quality domains, transition support activities should result in participants who have:

*...a clear plan for continuing their academic and professional growth after leaving the program and [who] are connected with relevant organizations to do so.<sup>39</sup>*

Based on this overall guidance, the current POV protocol’s scoring rubric for this quality domain awards a score of 5.0 only to programs that create written transition plans with youth that “document steps for continuing with educational and/or career advancement to achieve stated goals.” In addition, “Resources and supports” must be documented.<sup>40</sup>

### **Selected Sample Debrief Questions for MYEEP’s “Is the Jar Full” Activity**

- Which of the two vases best represents how you manage time in your life?
- Are the things that take up the most time in your life also the things that are most important to you? Or not necessarily? Why is that?
- Do you plan out your week? Or, do you live day-by-day, hour-by-hour?
- Do you find yourself always late on things or trying to catch up to the next deadline (e.g., finishing homework or studying for the next class right before it happens)? How does that happen?
- What are the non-negotiable priorities in your life right now?
- Is it possible for your priorities to change over time?

Youth rated the quality of transition support on the youth satisfaction survey by indicating their level of agreement with the several specific statements.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> DCYF Youth Workforce Development Site Visit Protocol (September 2012), p. 2.

<sup>40</sup> DCYF Youth Workforce Development Site Visit Protocol (September 2012), p. 18.

<sup>41</sup> These statements included: “After I complete this program, I feel I will be able to find a job on my own.” “At this program, I explored future career options.” “This program helped me figure out what I want to do in the future (like going to college or starting a working career).” “As a result of this program, I understand the steps I need to take to get into college.” “As a result of this program, I

## Overall Transition Support Ratings

Overall, YWD-General programs received only a 3.2 rating from DCYF program officers on transitional support (please see Exhibit IV-7), which was nearly a full point lower than the 4.1 rating of this domain on the youth survey.<sup>42</sup> Interestingly, survey ratings on this domain were generally higher than POV ratings for most programs.. As with the overall scores, the differences between the POV ratings and the survey ratings for all strategies were about a point, most likely because program officers and youth were rating programs in this domain based on different criteria.

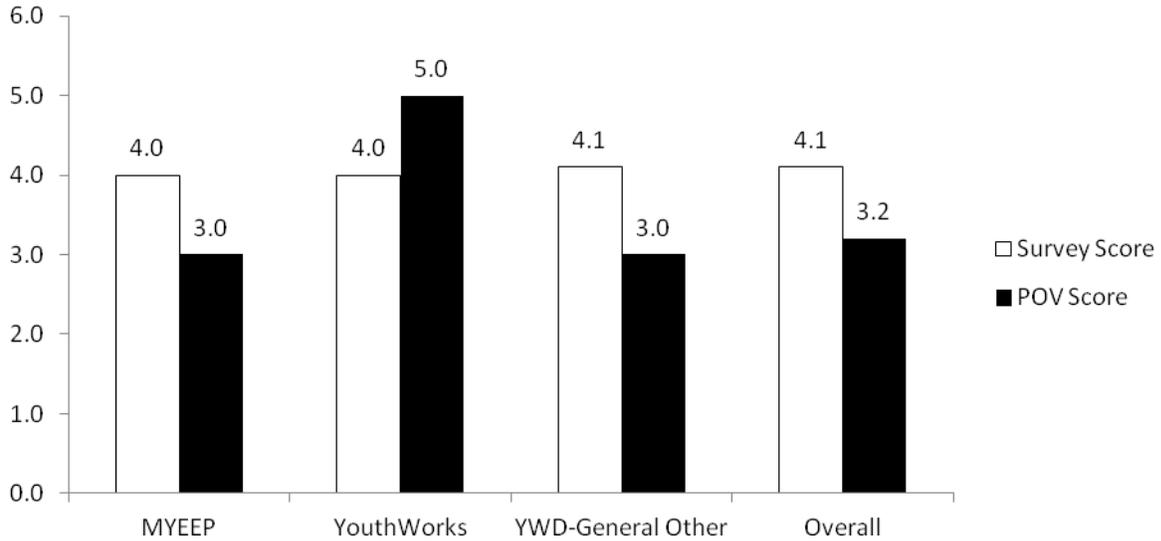
Among other YWD-General Other programs, POV ratings ranged from a high of 5.0 to a low of 1.0. These differences in ratings among programs were also due, at least in part, to a change in the POV scoring rubric for this dimension. The new POV protocol's rubric for YWD-General programs no longer includes a requirement that programs "have an extensive list of community partners (with MOUs in place)" or that "supports be provided for at least one year." Instead, YWD-General programs only need to ensure that youth have written transition plans. that document next steps for achieving their goals and that "resources and supports are documented" to receive the highest POV rating. Programs rated since the change in the rubric have an overall rating of 3.6, nearly a full point higher than the overall rating for programs scored under the previous POV protocol (2.7). The variation among programs by survey ratings was much narrower than for POV scores, as they ranged from a high of 4.5 to a low of 3.7. Differences in POV and survey ratings averaged 1.5 points, but were as large as 3.4 points for one program..

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understand the steps I need to take to get a job after finishing my education." "This program did *not* help me get ready for my next step in work or education."

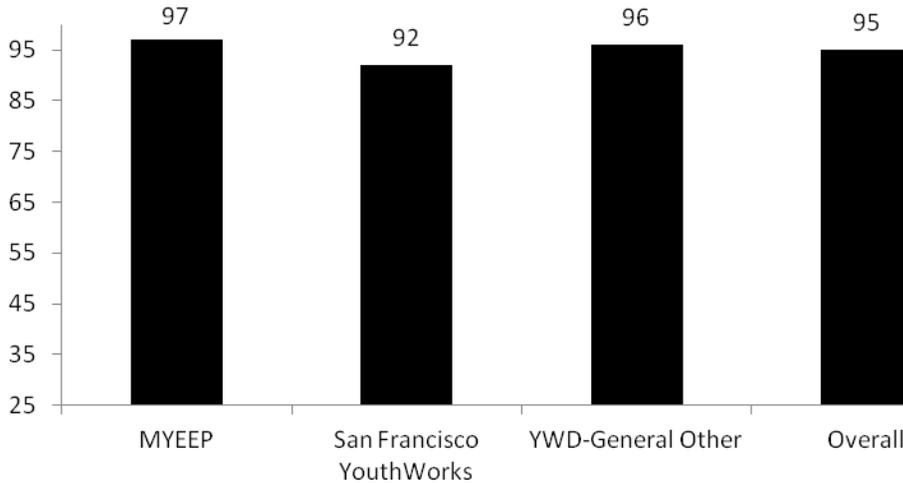
<sup>42</sup> The specific aspects of transition support being rated by program officers on the POV protocol and by youth on the survey differed in important ways. Youth were basically asked to rate programs based on whether they helped them develop post-program goals and to be clear on the steps they needed to follow to achieve those goals. By contrast, program officers rated programs on whether they used three specific service strategies that DCYF *expects* will result in youth making successful post-program career or educational transitions.

**Exhibit IV-7: Quality and Performance Ratings for Transition Support**



Another measure of the transition support being provided by YWD-General programs is the percentage of program completers in CMS who have completed transition plans. As shown in Exhibit IV-8, below, the vast majority of YWD-General program finishers also developed transition plans.<sup>43</sup>

**Exhibit IV-8: Percentage of Program Completers with Transition Plans**



<sup>43</sup> Five YWD-General Other programs (Work Resource Program/JVS, Workcreation/SFRPD, Youth Employment and Multicultural Leadership Program/RDNC, MatchBridge/United Way, Pathways/Enterprise for High School Students) are excluded from these results, as they did not complete the transition plan field in CMS.

## Promising Practices in Transition Support

To further illustrate the operations of the programs with the highest POV ratings in the area of transition support, this section discusses several promising practices used by these programs.

- **Embed transition support throughout the program.** From early on, Youthline IT/Digital Media Work Experience/BACR participants work closely with their case managers to identify the steps needed to enroll in their desired post-secondary education programs. They also participate in SAT preparation and financial aid workshops offered by Youthline. As they near the end of their internships, youth begin to use a component of the program's management information system (called The Road to Academic and College Success, or TRACS) to help them create plans that they can use to work independently toward achieving their goals. At about the same time, if they want to continue working, youth also begin meeting with their case managers to conduct a job search.
- **Create formal mechanisms for supporting youth even after they graduate from high school.** Two other programs with high ratings in the area of transition support—Pathways to Advancement/Juma Ventures and Wellness Academy/Huckleberry—focus almost exclusively on assisting youth in the transition to post-secondary education. In particular, a unique and innovative feature of both of these programs is that they have formal mechanisms for supporting youth even after they graduate from high school. Wellness Academy, for example, continues to work with its participants throughout their first year of college, using a consultant to provide individualized coaching to support their transitions to college. The consultant helps Wellness Academy participants navigate college resources and encourages them to advocate for themselves in the college setting. The consultant regularly checks in and monitors how youth are doing through email, Facebook, texting, and by phone. This support continues throughout the participants' first year in college no matter where they attend school.

Pathways to Advancement/Juma Ventures has a similar approach in that youth who attend college in the Bay Area can transfer seamlessly into Juma Ventures' College Program and receive support during their first two years in college. This support includes counseling on what classes to take, information on how to navigate financial aid systems, academic advising, help with budgeting, and referrals to supportive services. In addition, College Program staff can also help participants find summer internships or part-time employment during school and assist them with accessing matched savings through their IDAs and scholarships.

- **Assist youth with the transition to unsubsidized employment through regular communication.** Bridges from School to Work/Marriott Foundation's transitional support focuses almost entirely on helping youth succeed in maintaining entry level unsubsidized employment. Bridges staff members communicate with youth frequently during their first days and weeks of employment to provide support. For example, during a participant's first week of employment, Bridges staff communicate with them three to four times, ideally at

the job site. Over the next three weeks, staff members meet with participants at least five more times. Staff members continue meeting with youth over the next 17 months, with decreasing frequency.

- **Provide additional training to employed youth through a retention coach.** Another important means of support for Bridges from School to Work/Marriot Foundation’s participants is provided via the program’s retention coach. This staff member provides any additional training needed for youth to succeed in their placements. For example, the manager at Noah’s Bagels reported that a Bridges participant, despite his admirable attitude and work ethic, was continuing to struggle with sandwich recipes and operation of the cash register after completing his on-the-job training. The retention coach worked with this participant for two to four hours per week over the course of a month until he had mastered his job duties and was able to keep his job.

## Employer Engagement

According to the point-of-service quality domains, employer engagement should involve each program working

*...with employers to connect youth to work experiences, work-based learning and employment opportunities and to ensure its workforce development activities and the competencies that youth develop are relevant to employer needs, post-secondary requirements and/or industry standards.<sup>44</sup>*

Based on this overall guidance, program officers rated each YWD-General program on three specific sub-areas related to employer engagement:

- “Did (CBO) provide enough preparation and training to your organization to prepare you to supervise their youth before their employment/internship began?” [Asked of worksite supervisor.]
- “Has (CBO) been providing enough support now that you are working with (employed youth)? Do they conduct site visits (or *if in-house placement* What level of support does agency provide you?)? Are they able to address problems or answer questions?” [Asked of worksite supervisor.]
- “The program actively engages public and private sector work sites to strengthen program activities.”<sup>45</sup>

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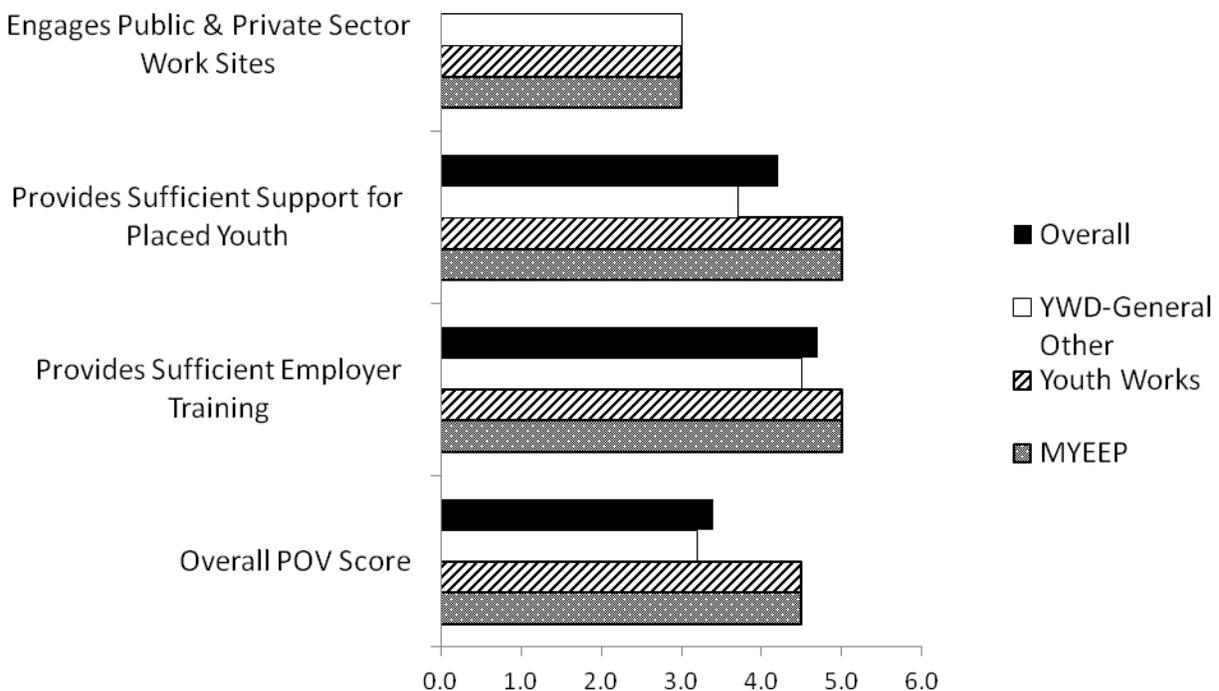
<sup>44</sup> DCYF Youth Workforce Development Site Visit Protocol (September 2012), p. 2.

<sup>45</sup> In the 2012 POV protocol, DCYF added a fourth sub-area for employer engagement that asks program officers (rather than worksite supervisors) to rate programs on the sufficiency of their training and preparation of employers for placements at their worksites. Because about half of the YWD-General programs for which we have POV results were not rated on this new sub-area (because they were assessed using the 2011 POV

## Overall Employer Engagement Ratings

Overall, YWD-General programs received a 3.4 rating from DCYF program officers and worksite supervisors on employer engagement (please see Exhibit IV-9).

**Exhibit IV-9: Employer Engagement Ratings by Strategy**



## Promising Practices in Employer Engagement

The YWD-General program with perhaps the most well-developed and innovative practices in the area of employer engagement is Bridges from School to Work/Marriott Foundation. One of the most innovative elements of Bridges' approach to working with employers is their use of a retention coach. As discussed above, the retention coach provides additional training to youth as needed to help them maintain their placements. Worksite supervisors who were interviewed as part of SPR's site visits specifically commented on how much they appreciated this assistance. Both supervisors have worked with youth who needed additional help that they did not have time to give. Without the assistance of the retention coach, these youth might have failed in their positions, wasting the employers' time and resources. Because of the support, these worksite supervisors reported that they feel more comfortable hiring Bridges participants than they do

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protocol), we do not present the results of this sub-area separately, although we do include its results in the calculation of overall ratings.

other youth, and that they often refer other employers looking for workers to the Bridges program. Other innovative employer engagement approaches used by Bridges and other YWD-General programs include the following:

- **Use employers to provide training to youth participants.** For example, managers from Old Navy, Ben & Jerry’s, and Noah’s Bagels have all facilitated Bridge’s customer service training workshop for participants. Bridges offers interested youth these employer trainings as a stand-alone session or, when possible, during its pre-employment workshop series.
- **Communicate frequently with employers.** During the first month of a youth’s placement, Bridges staff members communicate with the youth’s employer at least once per week. After the first month, they continue to interact with the employer about every two weeks, although eventually the frequency of communication drops to monthly. The program also asks the employer to complete a performance evaluation of youth after their first month of placement to highlight any red flags the employer may have observed. The two employers interviewed as part of SPR’s site visits appreciated these check-ins and reported feeling comfortable contacting Bridges staff members whenever issues with placed youth arise.
- **Assign program staff a “caseload” of employers to emphasize relationship building.** YouthWorks staff members are each assigned a certain number of worksite supervisors who they basically consider to be on their “caseloads.” YouthWorks staff members work hard to develop strong relationships with these employers, making regular site visits as necessary. For example, one staff member who was relatively new to the program said that she has made extra site visits to worksites to get to know the employers on her caseload.
- **Provide employer partners with on-going training on how to successfully work with placed youth.** Another YouthWorks promising practice in the area of employer engagement is the program’s employer workshop series. All worksite supervisors are required to attend both an initial orientation as well as one additional workshop during each program cycle in which they have a youth intern. These employer workshops occur either once per month or once every two months and they usually have a turnout of 20 to 25 employers. The workshops often focus on providing worksite supervisors with guidance on how to be successful in working with high school-aged youth.

## Placement

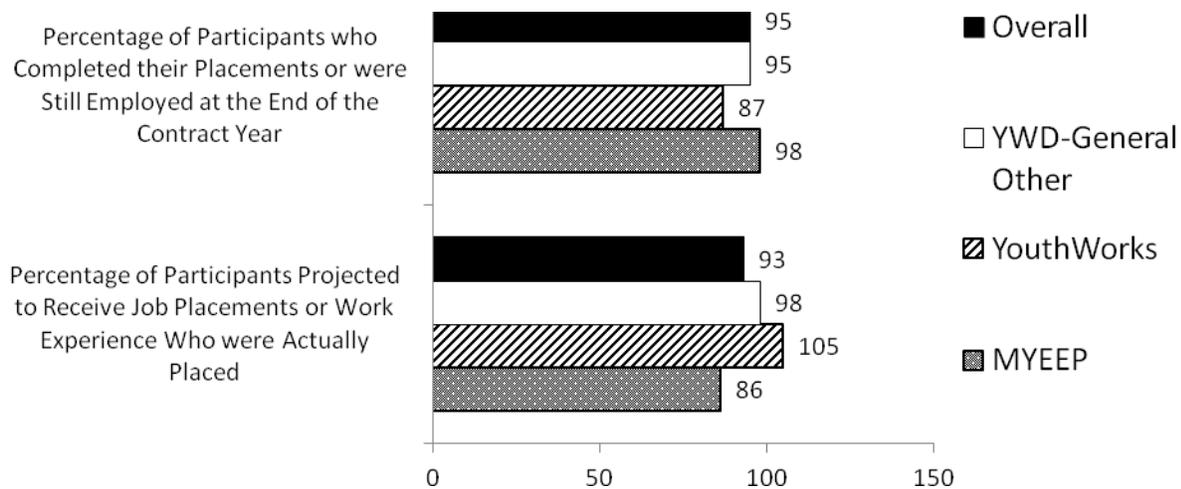
Placement is not an official DCYF quality domain, but work-based learning is a key component of youth workforce development programs and we have therefore included it as an additional area to assess for quality. However, because neither the POV protocol nor the youth survey includes any questions specifically focused on the quality of placements, this section uses an alternative to DCYF performance measure #5 and performance measure #7 as the quantitative measures of quality. These two measures are calculated as follows:

- **Alternative to Performance Measure #5.** Percentage of participants expected to receive job placements or work experience who were actually placed (calculated by dividing the number of participants who received placements by the number of participants programs projected that they would place).<sup>46</sup>
- **Performance Measure # 7.** Percentage of participants who completed their placements or were still employed at the end of the contract year (calculated by dividing the number of completed placements plus the number of placements without an end date by the number of participants).

## Overall Placement Results

Overall, YWD-General programs placed 93 percent of the number of participants they projected to place and 95 percent of youth who were placed either completed their placements or were still employed at the end of the contract year (please see Exhibit IV-10).<sup>47</sup> The percentage of youth who completed their placements ranged from 100 percent to 60 percent.

**Exhibit IV-10: Overall Placement Results for YWD-General Programs<sup>48</sup>**



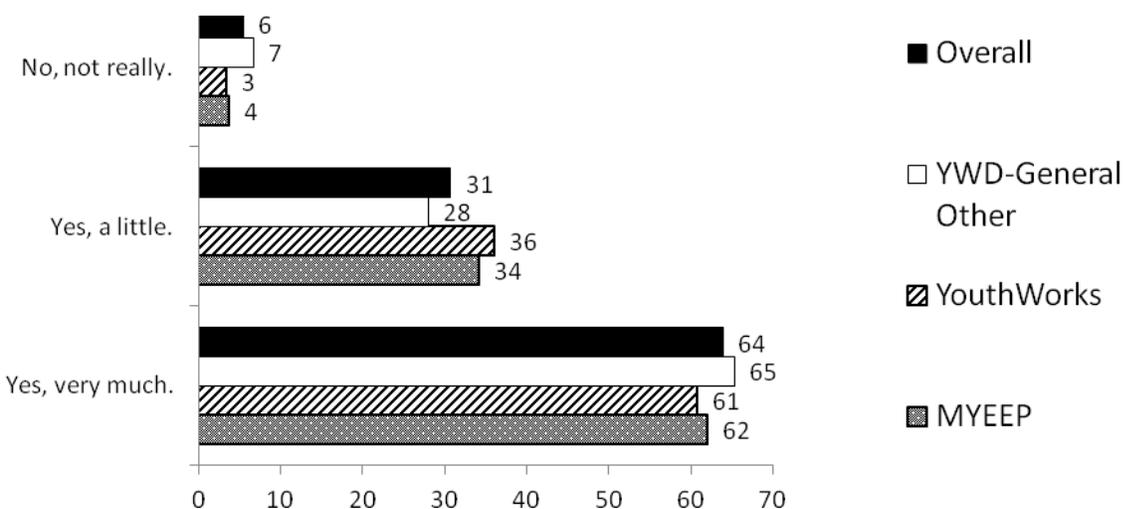
<sup>46</sup> The difference between DCYF’s performance measure #5 and this alternative measure is that the denominator used in the DCYF measure is the number of *participants* programs projected to serve, while the denominator for this alternative measure is the number of *placements* programs projected to make. We chose to use this alternative measure because it seems unfair to expect programs to place more participants than they project to place.

<sup>47</sup> Because programs do not consistently record end dates in CMS, it is difficult to ascertain if youth were still employed at the end of the contract year.

<sup>48</sup> Source: CMS.

In addition to these CMS performance measures, the youth survey provides additional insight into the quality of placement and work experience services, including the level of support that youth receive from programs to maintain employment. As shown in Exhibit IV-11, overall about two-thirds of youth survey respondents reported that their programs had provided them a lot of support to help them maintain their placements, about one-third reported that they had received some support, and only a very small percentage reported that they had received no support. These results were about the same across all three strategies, demonstrating that most YWD-General programs see providing support to youth after placement as a very important component of their program models.

**Exhibit IV-11: Percentage of Youth Who Reported That Staff Support Is Sufficient to Maintain Placements<sup>49</sup>**



Among specific YWD-General Other programs, the program with by far the best results for this survey question included 92 percent of survey respondents reporting that they had received a great deal of support to keep their placements and no respondents reported receiving no support. By contrast, in the program with the poorest results on this survey question only 42 percent of survey respondents served by the program reported receiving a lot of support to maintain their placements, and 14 percent reported that they had received no support at all.

<sup>49</sup> Program-level differences were statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. Strategy-level differences were not statistically significant.

## Promising Practices in Placement

There are a number of promising practices employed by YWD-General programs in the area of placement. As discussed in the previous section, Bridges from School to Work/Marriott Foundation is perceived by its participants to be very successful in helping youth maintain their placements and has developed a number of promising practices in this area. Certainly one such practice is the extensive communication between Bridges staff members, participants, and their employers during the early stages of a placement. As discussed above, Bridges staff members communicate with employers and youth multiple times during the youths' first week of employment, allowing these staff members to learn very quickly about any potential challenges youth are facing and to provide assistance. In addition, another promising practice related to placement support that was already discussed above is the use of a retention coach to support youth in danger of losing their placements. Other innovative approaches to placement used by Bridges and other YWD-General programs included the following:

- **Employ a dedicated staff member to support worksite placements.** Bridges from School to Work/Marriott Foundation has been particularly successful in this area despite the fact that its employers are not subsidized for hiring Bridges participants.<sup>50</sup> One strategy employed by Bridges is to have a dedicated job developer on staff whose sole purpose is recruiting employer partners. This job developer uses a number of strategies to recruit new employers, including cold calling, in-person meetings, job fairs, and referrals from current employers. Bridges also holds an annual event honoring one employer and one participant; the job developer uses that event as a marketing tool by inviting prospective employer partners.
- **Develop high-quality placements through a sectoral approach.** Another key aspect of a successful placement/work experience program is the ability to find quality positions where youth will engage in interesting and meaningful work and have supervisors who are committed to mentoring them. One promising tactic used by Wellness Academy/Huckleberry is to take a sectoral approach and develop fewer, more targeted placements. All of Wellness Academy's placements are connected to the health care field and Wellness Academy staff members try to ensure that placement supervisors provide youth with opportunities to observe and learn about as many of the activities going on in the workplace as possible. That way, even if they end up doing a lot of general administrative work and their day-to-day activities are not as interesting as they would like, youth still gain a clearer idea of what it would be like to have a career in the health care field.

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<sup>50</sup> Most YWD-General programs provide youth with a subsidized wage for participating in placements so that employers do not have to pay them. Bridges from School to Work/Marriott Foundation does not.

- **Emphasize to employers the youth development focus of placements.** During YouthWorks’ employer trainings and in subsequent check-in meetings, YouthWorks staff members make clear to worksite supervisors that the focus of the program is on youth development and not necessarily on meeting their agencies’ organizational needs. Therefore, it is important that supervisors provide YouthWorks participants with a diversity of tasks, rather than just have them file all day long.
- **Build-in required check-ins between youth and their supervisors.** On each YouthWorks timesheet there are two varying discussion topics that worksite supervisors are required to discuss with interns before they sign. These feedback sessions—which ensure regular check-ins between YouthWorks participants and their worksite supervisors at least every two weeks—are seen as an important opportunity to integrate the program curriculum into the internship. This is an important feature, given that youth spend far more time at their internships than they do at YouthWorks workshops.
- **Begin matching youth with an appropriate placement from the beginning.** YouthWorks begins the process of matching youth with a placement right from the outset of the program. As part of the initial interviews that youth go through to be accepted into YouthWorks, staff members carefully evaluate their skills and professional interests to see if they are suitable for any available placements. If there is not a good match between a prospective participant and an open placement, YouthWorks will not enroll the participant into its program.
- **Be flexible about when youth are placed.** Wellness Academy does not require youth to take part in placements at any particular time. Instead, they are flexible and make placements only when youth say they want to be placed, have availability in their schedules, and are on track academically.
- **Provide youth workers with placements that have a clear career ladder and the training and support to move up that ladder.** As discussed in the previous chapter, in the Pathways to Advancement program, youth begin working at Bay Area sports venues as “vendors,” meaning they carry goods around the stadium and sell them. After working for a while in this capacity, they can move up to the role of cart worker, selling coffee, espresso drinks, desserts, ice cream, and nuts. Finally, after success as cart workers, they can become youth managers, where they supervise other youth workers and take on management duties. By providing such a clear career ladder as part of their placement process, Pathways provides its youth workers with a strong incentive to work hard in their placements so that they can be promoted to the next level.

## Relationship between Quality Ratings and Program and Grantee Characteristics

To examine the relationship between program quality and program and grantee characteristics, we investigated the relationship between each of the following factors and program quality, as measured by POV and survey ratings:

- Program budget
- Agency budget
- Number of line staff (FTE)
- Years of program existence
- Years of DCYF funding<sup>51</sup>

We carried out this analysis by conducting tests of statistical correlation between each of these factors and the quality results. Unsurprisingly, due to the small number of YWD-General programs, the analysis did not demonstrate statistically significant associations between any of these program characteristics and program quality.<sup>52</sup>

## Summary

A number of key findings can be drawn from this chapter. These include:

### Intentional Skill Building

- Overall, YWD-General programs received a 3.9 rating from DCYF program officers on intentional skill building, which was slightly lower than the 4.1 rating for this domain on the youth survey.

#### *Specific Areas of Skill Development*

- Ratings of the quality of programs' skill building in specific areas varied by type of skill, with soft skills training rated the highest in quality overall (4.5) and financial literacy rated the lowest (3.0).
- The most common job search skill that youth reported learning—overall and for all three strategies—was how to interview for a job.
- Promising practices in specific areas of skill development included: carrying out sequences of work readiness and soft skills workshops; facilitating mock interview activities; helping youth establish IDAs; providing youth with extensive experience with digital media software; and running program workshops with the same expectations youth would experience on the job.

#### *Career Assessment, Goal Setting, and Plan Development*

- For these sub-areas, YWD-General programs overall received only a 3.5 rating.

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<sup>51</sup> Because we only had data on staffing, years of existence, and years of receiving DCYF funding from the eight programs that participated in site visits, we only included eight programs in the analysis of staffing, years of experience and years of receiving DCYF funding.

<sup>52</sup> Correlation coefficients generated by these tests are small and not statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level.

- Promising practices in this sub-area included: using both formal and informal career and academic assessments; using those assessments to develop career and academic plans; assist youth with setting goals that are broader than just post-secondary and career plans; provide youth with on-going opportunities for goal setting and have youth present their plans to their peers.

### ***Effective Skill Building Methods***

- Overall, YWD-General programs had an average rating of 4.3 on the four sub-areas in effective skill building, with the highest rating (4.7) in the use of active learning principles and the lowest in the development of critical thinking skills (4.0).
- Promising practices in this sub-area included the development of detailed skill building curricula with an emphasis on effective skill building methods.

### **Transition Support**

- Overall, YWD-General programs received a 3.2 rating from DCYF program officers on transitional support, which was nearly a full point lower than the 4.1 rating of this domain in the youth survey.
- The vast majority of YWD-General program completers completed transition plans.
- Promising practices in this quality domain included: embedding transition planning throughout enrollment; supporting youth even after they have started college or unsubsidized employment; assisting youth with the transition to unsubsidized employment through frequent communication and additional training provided by a retention coach.

### **Employer Engagement**

- Overall, YWD-General programs received a 3.4 rating from DCYF program officers and worksite supervisors on employer engagement.
- By contrast, YWD-General Other programs received only a 3.7 rating for this sub-area. And finally, all three strategies received a rating of 3.0 on their engagement of public and private sector worksites.
- Promising practices in the domain of employer engagement included: use of a retention coach; having employers provide training to participants; maintaining frequent communication with employers; and organizing workshops for employers.

### **Placement**

- Overall, YWD-General programs placed 93 percent of the participants they projected to place and 95 percent of placed youth either completed their placements or were still employed at the end of the contract year.
- Overall about two-thirds of all survey respondents reported that their programs had provided them a lot of support to help them maintain their placements, about

one-third reported that they had received some support, and only a very small percentage reported that they had received no support.

- These results were about the same across all three strategies, demonstrating that most YWD-General programs see providing support to youth after placement as a very important component of their program models.
- Promising practices in the area of placement included: communicating frequently with youth and using a retention coach to support them during their placements; employing a dedicated job developer; taking a sectoral approach to finding placements; emphasizing the youth development focus of placements to worksite supervisors; requiring brief discussions between worksite supervisors and youth when timesheets are signed; matching youth with appropriate placements from the beginning; placing youth only when they are ready; and providing youth with clear career ladders for promotion.

### **Relationship between Quality Ratings and Program and Organizational Characteristics**

- Basic tests of association between program and grantee characteristics and program quality and performance measures results showed no strong association.

## V. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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This Midterm Report presented key findings on the quality of YWD General programs and their performance, and discussed the relationship if any, between program quality and performance. To contextualize these findings, we highlighted promising practices of the eight programs in the site visit sample. The previous chapters described the characteristics of YWD-General programs, including the sample programs, analyzed the POV and youth survey ratings for each program quality domain, discussed the quality of job placements, and assessed the quality and experience of the capacity building support that the programs received. This final chapter summarizes the key findings of the previous chapters.

### Summary of Findings

#### Program Quality and Best Practices

We examined the POV and survey data together to set the stage for a deeper analysis of program quality and the specific practices that may contribute to quality. Overall, YWD-General programs scored highest on program environment and safety and youth development in both the POV and youth survey scores. They scored lowest on diversity and transition support.

A summary of the results of our program quality assessment is as follows:

- **Program Environment and Safety.** This is the highest-rated domain for YWD-General programs. Program practices that promote a positive program environment include those focused on promoting a sense of belonging in the program, such as building trusting relationships between youth and adults, developing guiding principles for interactions between youth and staff and among youth, and celebrating youth accomplishments through public recognition events. Discussions with youth participants confirm these findings, who consistently reported feeling physically and emotionally safe in their programs.
- **Diversity, Access, Equity, and Inclusion.** Despite somewhat lower survey scores on this domain (3.7), we found that many programs make a strong effort to celebrate youths' racial and cultural backgrounds by explicitly focusing on youths' cultural backgrounds in their curriculum and program design, incorporating "diverse content" into their programming, and deliberately hiring staff with shared experiences as the youth.

- **Youth Development.** This domain received the second highest ratings in the POV and youth survey, suggesting that YWD-General programs have fairly strong program practices in this area. In particular, programs received high ratings for supporting youth engagement, and ensuring that staff are able to be attentive to youth, two sub-areas within youth development.
  - **Youth leadership** is a sub-dimension of youth development that we examined explicitly during the site visits. Youth have ample opportunities to be leaders in the vast majority of our site visit sample. The depth and intensity of these opportunities vary widely, with some programs offering youth formal leadership roles in the organizations, and others assigning leadership of limited activities so that youth can practice their skills.
  - **Case management.** Because most of YWD-General participants come from low-income families and face some barriers to employment, the YWD-General programs in our sample paid special attention to the provision of case management support even if they lack the capacity to provide in-depth services in this area. Programs with strong case management support systems implemented the following practices: make frequent and intentional contact between youth and adults, emphasize both academic support and job readiness skills, and refer youth to other programs for wraparound services if needed.
- **Intentional Skill Building.** This domain received a 3.9 overall score from DCYF program officers. One promising practice related to this domain is to develop clear and intentional strategies to enhance youths' skills. Another promising practice is to use the results of career and academic assessment to develop career and educational plans, and update them regularly. Lastly, programs developed detailed curricula to guide their instruction in skill building sessions.
- **Transition Support.** Despite receiving only a 3.5 rating from DCYF program officers, youth gave YWD-General programs a much higher score on this domain. In addition, a review of CMS data on the percentage of program completers showed that 95 percent had transition plans.<sup>53</sup> Promising practices in transition support included embedding transition planning throughout program enrollment and continuing to provide support—including providing training—even after participants enter post-secondary education or unsubsidized employment.
- **Employer Engagement.** As with transition support, DCYF program officers gave YWD-General programs a relatively low rating on this domain (3.4). Despite this overall rating, a number of YWD-General programs have developed promising practices in this area. These include using a retention coach to support newly placed youth, having employers provide work readiness training, maintaining frequent contact with employers, and organizing regular workshops for employers.

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<sup>53</sup> The difference between the POV and the CMS results may be smaller in the future due to a change in the POV rubric for YWD-General programs that focuses this domain primarily on the existence of transition plans.

- **Placement.** Overall, YWD-General programs placed 93 percent of the number of youth they projected to place and 95 percent of these youth either completed their placements or were still employed at the end of the contract year. In addition, about two-thirds of youth survey respondents reported that their programs provided them with sufficient support to maintain their placements. These results were broadly shared across all YWD-General strategies, reflecting the importance most programs place on providing youth with work-based learning opportunities. Promising practices in this area include employing a dedicated job developer, using a sectoral approach to finding placements, emphasizing the youth development focus of placements to worksite supervisors, building in discussions between supervisors and youth when timesheets are signed, beginning the matching process early on in program enrollment, placing youth only when they are ready, and providing youth with clear career ladders as an incentive for strong workplace performance.
- **Relationship between Quality Ratings and Program and Grantee Characteristics.** We examined the relationship between program quality and program and grantee characteristics by conducting tests of statistical correlation. Unsurprisingly, given the small number of YWD-General programs in our sample, the analysis did not demonstrate any statistically significant associations.

This report highlighted numerous promising practices and lessons learned from a sample of eight selected YWD-General programs. As discussed in this report, the YWD-General Programs are offering invaluable support to San Francisco’s vulnerable youth. Program staff universally expressed the significance of the YWD-General programs on the lives of the participants. Participants themselves consistently pointed to the value of the program in helping them gain work experience and appreciate the support from the caring staff that work in these programs. In subsequent months, the evaluation team will examine the FY 2012-2013 youth survey and student-level data from the San Francisco Unified School District. These data will allow SPR to examine academic and disciplinary data from SFUSD to assess whether participants are “ready to learn” and able to “succeed in school.” Results from the analysis of these data will be presented in the Final Report, which will be submitted to DCYF in the fall of 2013.

## APPENDICES

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### Appendix I-A: Selected Programs for SPR Site Visits

<u>Grantee</u>	<u>Program</u>	<u>Size<sup>54</sup></u>	<u>Rationale for Selection</u>
Japanese Community Youth Council	Mayor's Youth Employment and Education Program (MYEEP)	Large	Signature City program and large scale investment
Japanese Community Youth Council	San Francisco YouthWorks	Large	Signature City program and large scale investment
Bay Area Community Resources	Youthline IT/Digital Media Work Experience	Small	Identified by program officers as a best practice site for youth leadership
Huckleberry Youth Programs	Wellness Academy - San Francisco	Small	Identified by program officers as a best practice site for sectoral focus and postsecondary connections

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<sup>54</sup> We define program size as follows: Small programs reported fewer than 50 DCYF-funded youth per year, medium programs reported 50-99 DCYF-funded youth per year, and large programs reported more than 100 DCYF-funded youth in FY 2011-12.

<b>Grantee</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Size<sup>54</sup></b>	<b>Rationale for Selection</b>
Jewish Vocational Service (JVS)	Work Resource Program (WRP)	Large	Identified by program officers as a best practice site for School-CBO partnerships
Juma Ventures	Pathways to Advancement - Youth Workforce Development for Educational Success	Medium	Identified by program officers as a best practice site for wraparound services
Marriott Foundation for People with Disabilities	Bridges from school to work	Large	Identified by program officers as a best practice site for employer partnerships
Oasis For Girls	ENVISION	Small	Identified by DCYF staff as a best practice site for CBO-school partnership given future grantmaking strategies

**Appendix III-A: Survey and POV Items by Domain**

Items, by Domain	Data Source
<b>Diversity, Access, Equity and Inclusion</b>	
Activities are designed to deliberately mix youth to encourage youth to interact with peers from a variety of social groups.	
The program space, materials, and content reflect the diversity of the youth served.	POV
Staff members model inclusive, tolerant attitudes and behaviors.	
The program encourages and celebrates youth expressions of culture, sexual identity, religion, and individuality.	
The people who work at this program understand my family's culture.	Survey
<b>Employer Engagement</b>	
Did (CB) provide enough preparation and training to your organization to prepare you to supervise their youth before their employment/internships began? (employer interview)	
Has (CBO) been providing enough support now that you are working with (employed youth)? Doe they conduct site visits (or if in-house placement, What level of support does agency provide you?)? Are they available to address problems or answer questions?	POV
The program actively engages public and private sector work sites to strengthen program activities.	
<b>Program Environment and Safety</b>	
There is enough space for the activities offered during the observation.	POV
Staff use effective strategies to focus youths' attention.	

Items, by Domain	Data Source
Interactions between staff and youth are predominantly positive.	
I feel physically unsafe when I am at this program.	
The adults in this program treat all youth fairly.	Survey
<b>Intentional Skill Building</b>	
Each session is focused on a specific skills, concept or content area.	
The program helps youth set personal academic goals and create realistic plans to achieve them.	
The program helps youth assess career interests, set career goals, and create realistic plans to achieve them.	
Program ensures that all youth have a plan for how they will continue to pursue and achieve academic and career goals.	
To what extent was (youth employee) prepared in area of soft skills (e.g., accepts supervision well, dresses appropriately and is on time for work, takes responsibility, communicates well, problem solving and decision-making)? Were they adequately prepared to enter a workplace environment? (employer feedback)	POV
Sessions incorporate de-briefs and checks for understanding.	
Active learning principles are incorporated into activities.	
Youth have opportunity to build critical thinking skills.	
Youth develop independent living skills, including computer literacy.	
Helps develop skills and conduct job search to secure employment	

Items, by Domain	Data Source
Helps youth develop thinking and social competencies (soft skills) to maintain employment	
Program supports youth in developing independent living skills, including financial literacy	
Provide or refer youth to wraparound support that reduces barrier, builds connection, and provides a strong safety net for high risk youth.	
I have learned skills in this program that I can take to my next job.	
Staff or site supervisors provide useful feedback on how I could improve my performance in this program or at the work site.	Survey
At this program, I learned new information about a topic that interests me.	
At this program, I learned a new skill that I'm excited about.	
<b>Youth Development</b>	
Staff address negative behaviors calmly and respectfully.	
Staff are attentive to all youth throughout the session.	POV
Youth are engaged in the program session.	
At this program, there is someone who I can go to about issues that I am having with this program or my work site.	
There is an adult at this program who really cares about me at this program.	Survey
I have been asked for my opinion about how to make this program better.	
I like coming to this program.	
<b>Transition Support</b>	

Items, by Domain	Data Source
After I complete this program, I feel I will be able to find a job on my own.	
At this program, I explored future career options.	
This program did not help me get ready for my next step in work or education.	
This program helped me figure out what I want to do in the future (like going to college or starting a working career).	Survey
As a result of this program, I understand the steps I need to take to get into college.	
As a result of this program, I understand the steps I need to take to get a job after finishing my education.	