

District of Columbia

YOUTH WORKFORCE **LEADERS** ACADEMY

2014–15



Special Thanks

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We are also deeply indebted to our guest speakers who contributed their time and expertise:

- *Tad Asbury*, Marriott Foundation for People with Disabilities
- *Rhonda Basha*, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy
- *Bridget Brown*, National Association of Workforce Development Professionals
- *Ja'Sent Brown*, DC ReEngagement Center
- *Jennifer Brown Lerner*, American Youth Policy Forum
- *Laura Burgher*, DC Workforce Investment Council
- *Ashley Denault*, Spark Policy Institute
- *Julene Jarnot*, New Futures DC
- *Curtis Richards*, Institute for Educational Leadership
- *Jaime Roberts*, Latin American Youth Center
- *Noel Tiezen*, Skyland Workforce Center
- *Jennifer Thomas*, Institute for Educational Leadership
- *Taryn Williams*, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy

Back Cover Photos: Global Kids, Higher Achievement, Urban Alliance, Year Up

YWLA Staff and Advisors

DC Alliance of Youth Advocates

Amy Dudas | Maggie Riden

Institute for Educational Leadership

Jason Farr | Patricia D. Gill | Julie Jean-Louis | Mindy Larson | Curtis Richards

The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region

Dawn Leary | Benton Murphy

About the Youth Workforce Leaders Academy

Funded by the Greater Washington Workforce Development Collaborative, the Youth Workforce Leaders Academy (YWLA) is a year-long learning community that supports professionals at District of Columbia youth workforce development providers, including nonprofit and government agency staff, in building their own skills and bringing innovative and proven practices back to their organizations. The DC Alliance of Youth Advocates and the Institute for Educational Leadership's Center for Workforce Development collaboratively lead the Academy.

The cadre of 15 youth service professionals who were competitively selected to participate in the YWLA represent a diverse mix of nonprofit organizations and public agencies that provide youth workforce development services.

YWLA Activities

- Completing a self-assessment of competencies in youth workforce development
- Attending monthly in-person learning sessions (July 2014 to May 2015)
- Participating in online peer-to-peer discussions and expert-led webinars
- Creating and carrying out a professional development plan identifying specific actions to address an organizational challenge or priority and to achieve personal learning goals
- Sharing organizational resources and strategies with peers including contributing to a local resource guide for youth workforce development professionals
- Developing and presenting a capstone project

Monthly Session Topics

- Foundations of the Work: Youth Rights and Policies
- Youth Development and Youth Voice
- Program Design and Delivery
- Career Exploration
- Workforce Preparation
- Assessment and Individualized Planning
- Employer Engagement
- Access to Resources: Collaboration and Partnership
- Engaging Families

YWLA Participant Benefits

- New resources, strategies, and tools for working with youth
- Networking with other professionals from the D.C. region and across the country
- Better understanding of own professional strengths and areas for improvement
- Knowledge about regional and national policy and innovative strategies
- Improved practices with youth and enhanced program activities

YWLA Organizational Benefits

- National resources and frameworks for quality program design
- New partnership opportunities with community and national organizations
- Staff with increased capacity and resources to share with colleagues
- Real-time information about local and national policy trends and emerging practices
- Expert-led webinars open to the entire staff that foster a culture of continuous improvement and knowledge sharing

Najmah Ahmad, Director of Curriculum Outreach



nahmad@theurbanalliance.org

Urban Alliance

www.urbanalliance.org

Urban Alliance empowers under-resourced youth to aspire, work, and succeed through paid internships,

formal training, and mentorship.

Experience

1.5 years at organization, 8 years in the field

Personal Impact

“Participating in this program was an awesome opportunity. It challenged my own thinking of what youth development means, particularly working with and advocating for youth with disabilities.”

Organizational Impact

“I have been able to share industry information surrounding workforce development with the organization. I was able to present on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and my capstone project will

broaden the scope of program offerings.”

Capstone Project

Navigating Success; Staying the Course – “I have created workshops for the Curriculum Outreach Department that will prepare youth for success and increase the odds of matriculation once they enter college. The curriculum centers around three main areas: exploring campus services, leadership and identity development, and managing home sickness and relationships back home. The curriculum will be facilitated in all of our service areas: Washington, DC, Northern Virginia, Baltimore, and Chicago.”

Paula Billingsley, Alumni Programs VISTA



pbillingsley@higherachievement.org

Higher Achievement

www.higherachievement.org

Higher Achievement’s proven model provides a rigorous year-round learning environment, caring role models, and a culture of high expectations, resulting in college-bound scholars with the character, confidence, and skills to succeed.

Experience

1 year at organization, 2 years in youth development

Personal Impact

“I learned a lot about youth development, workforce program design, and family engagement. I got to know wonderful D.C. youth workers and learn from all our experiences.”

Organizational Impact

“Paula has shared resources, materials, and ideas from this opportunity with Higher Achievement. She has also referred youth to other organizations in the network.”

Capstone Project

Alumni Career Month at Higher Achievement – High school youth and community members gathered for a series of workforce development programming, including an informational interview night, resume workshop, internship workshop, and social event in January. Youth explored career fields and practiced job search techniques.

Kimberly Davis, College Access Coordinator



kdavis@floc.org

For Love of Children

www.floc.org

For Love of Children (FLOC) provides educational services beyond the classroom to help students suc-

ceed from first grade through college and career. FLOC brings together students, volunteers, families, and community partners in proven programs that teach, empower, and transform.

Experience

2 years at organization, 4 years in the field

Personal Impact

“I learned a lot about program design, evaluation, and family engagement and was able to apply the information and tools in my youth work. I also met great like-minded individuals with whom I hope to stay in contact.”

Organizational Impact

“Kim has shared many tools and ideas from this opportunity with her co-workers.”

Capstone Project

Scholars Empowerment Curriculum

– Middle and high school youth participated in four weeks of civic engagement workshops that engaged students in current societal issues and strengthened student voice. Youth learned about fair and equitable high school choices, police brutality, gentrification, and people of color in children’s media.

Elizabeth Edwards, Associate Director of Program



eedwards@yearup.org

Higher Achievement

www.yearup.org

Year Up’s mission is to close the Opportunity Divide by providing urban young adults with the skills,

experience, and support that will empower them to reach their potential through professional careers and higher education.

Experience

5 years at organization, 11 years in the field

Personal Impact

“It was a powerful experience to work with so many insightful, driven people engaged in youth development and local workforce development and share questions, ideas, and resources.”

Organizational Impact

“Every month I brought a YWLA tool or idea back to the program team at Year Up—from a STAR

method graphic organizer, to the concept of adultism, to a deeper understanding of the Americans with Disabilities Act.”

Capstone Project

IT Certifications for All

– A model for a 47-week program that would result in Year Up graduates earning at least two IT certifications by the end of their year: 1) a MOS certification (Microsoft Office Specialist), and 2) one of four track-specific certifications: networking (Net+), hardware/helpdesk (A+), web development (MCSD), or quality assurance (CASQ).

Libby Hill, Senior Trainer



libby@globalkids.org

Global Kids

www.globalkids.org

Global Kids works to develop youth leaders for the global stage through dynamic global education and

leadership development programs. Global Kids inspires underserved youth to achieve academic excellence, self-actualization, and global competency, and empowers them to take action on issues facing their communities and our world.

Experience

3+ years at organization, 10 years in the field

Personal Impact

“YWLA provided me access to amazing resources on youth workforce development, from the trainers to guest speakers to toolkits to a cadre of D.C. professionals.”

Organizational Impact

“The resources have been invaluable in redesigning our program impact strategies and communicating what our students gain from the program.”

Capstone Project

Tracking Youth Workforce Development in Global Kids' Programming

– This capstone project developed an outcomes plan for a new Global Kids' pilot program that focuses on workforce development and career readiness. This project included creating tools to track program impact on youth and overall youth success.

Marcia N. Huff, Esq., Senior Manager



marciabuff@youngwomensproject.org

The Young Women's Project

www.youngwomensproject.org

The Young Women's Project is a multicultural organization that builds the leadership and power of young women (and men) so that they can shape D.C. policies and institutions to expand rights and opportunities of D.C. youth.

Experience

2.5 years at organization, 12 years in the field

Personal Impact

“Learning how to engage, challenge and support youth as they grow into successful members of the workforce.”

Organizational Impact

“Our organization has benefitted from the networking and relationship building. We also have information and materials to use in our professional development sessions.”

Capstone Project

Workforce Readiness Curricula for High School & College Students

– Through curricula and lesson plans high school and college youth staff members will build employment skills, explore careers, and learn how to set and work toward education and employment goals.

Angela Hughes, Manager of Operations (Education & Training)



ahughes@ywcanca.org

YWCA National Capital Area

www.ywcanca.org

The YWCA is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women,

and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. Our vision is to provide women and their families with programs that foster independence, economic stability, and overall well-being.

Experience

4 years at organization, 12 years in the field

Personal Impact

“I have been enlightened by the wealth of expertise shared. I can apply techniques and knowledge to create opportunities for young people. The professional network will be highly referenced and hopefully birth new partnerships.”

Organizational Impact

“Angela has disseminated ideas that can be applied to classroom learning styles to improve our youth outcomes. She has engaged our youth population in projects that will serve as assets to our organization and strategies for our future.”

Capstone Project

Job Shadowing Opportunities through Community Mapping – Youth identified businesses along the U Street corridor to map community resources. This allowed the young people to share information about the YWCA and its programs and gave them the opportunity to meet merchants face to face. Staff were able to follow up and create job shadowing opportunities.

Jacob Newman, Workforce Director



newman@layc-dc.org

Latin American Youth Center/Maryland Multicultural Youth Centers

www.layc-dc.org

LAYC empowers a diverse population of youth to achieve a successful transition to adulthood through multi-cultural, comprehensive, and innovative programs that address youths' social, academic, and career needs.

Experience

7 years at LAYC/MMYC, 10 years in the field

Personal Impact

“YWLA was a great experience! I enjoyed learning from workforce leaders and peers about best practices and implementation strategies. I left every session with a new wealth of information to support my role as the workforce director of our Montgomery County programs.”

Organizational Impact

“The many resources provided were relevant and useful to my work and that of my team. Specifically, content around changing WIA/WIOA legislation has helped to prepare for changes that will impact many of our programs.”

Capstone Project

Alignment of Job Readiness Training for Disconnected Youth – Working with LAYC/MMYC organizational staff, including directors, managers, job developers, and job readiness training instructors to develop resources, curricula, and approaches for aligned instruction of JRT across the organization's workforce development programs.

Efuntomiwa “Mimi” Okoh, Outreach Coordinator



mokoh@nccf-cares.org

**National Center for
Children and Families
(NCCF)**

www.nccf-cares.org

NCCF’s mission is to create total healthy-living environments for vulnerable children, youth and families, and the quality of life which empowers their ability to thrive and demonstrate responsibility.

Experience

6 years at organization, 10 years in the field

Personal Impact

“I learned a lot about how all types of resources and connections impact a youth’s life and can affect significant change. I also met a great network of D.C. professionals!”

Organizational Impact

“Through this experience, I am able to provide NCCF with strategies

to facilitate opportunities for youth to experience the workforce in new and innovative ways.”

Capstone Project

Career Exploration for Youth in Foster Care – Youth will identify a career interest and have the opportunity to shadow an individual in the community in that field. At the completion of their program, youth will determine if they continue to be interested in their career choice or interested in another field.

Phyllis D. Powell, Senior Youth Workforce Development Specialist



phyllis.powell@dc.gov

**Department of Youth
Rehabilitation Services
(DYRS)**

<http://dyrs.dc.gov>

DYRS’s mission is to improve public safety and give court-involved youth the opportunity to become more productive citizens by building on the strengths of youth and their families in the least restrictive, most homelike environment consistent with public safety.

Experience

3 years with organization, 12 years in the field

Personal Impact

“I learned how to increase youth engagement and the importance of having relationships with the youth. Also, how the business community is our customer as well as the youth and how the employer is a crucial part of how we develop and imple-

ment our training and certification programs and prepare our youth for employment opportunities.”

Organizational Impact

“Phyllis has shared the knowledge, ideas, and tools she has gained from the YWLA and has incorporated some of the information into the Workforce Development Program.”

Capstone Project

Employment Retention Incentive Program – “Although we are strong in connecting youth to unsubsidized employment, most youth did not stay employed longer than 30 days; over 50% quit their jobs within the first two weeks. We developed a promising, stronger job readiness and structured job search program.”

Kristina Savoy, Program Manager



kristina.savoy2@dc.gov

**Department of
Employment Services
(DOES), Office of Youth
Programs (OYP)**

<http://does.dc.gov>

OYP develops and administers workforce development programs for District youth ages 14-24. OYP provides occupational skills training, work experience, academic enrichment, and life skills training to facilitate success in the workplace.

Experience

2 years at organization

Personal Impact

“YWLA has tremendously shifted the way in which the District’s youth provider, stakeholder, and government partner communities understand the needs and service requirements of our youth. Our shared experiences have created a revolutionary network of professionals who are now aligned towards

continuous learning and growing.”

Organizational Impact

“YWLA has allowed the DOES team to create a knowledge bank of regional and local youth services and resources to provide best practice solutions for the future.”

Capstone Project

Partnership with the Rehabilitation Services – To ensure the proper referral of Year Round and Summer Youth Employment Program, this project includes 1) developing an agreement outlining engagement and collaborative efforts and roles for both DOES and RSA and 2) creating a service referral map outlining the entry and exit points for youth receiving services.

Rachel Sier, Job Developer



rachel.sier@gmail.com

**YouthBuild Public Charter
School (YBPCS)**

www.youthbuildpcs.org

YBPCS prepares youth to successfully transition into post-secondary

education and the workplace by offering, in English and Spanish, academic, vocational and workforce development programs. Students serve their community by creating housing for low-income D.C. residents.

Experience

3 years at organization, 7 years in the field

Personal Impact

“Through YWLA I developed a more holistic understanding of workforce development and gained a commitment to using universal design when creating programming.”

Organizational Impact

YouthBuild staff have benefited from utilizing the handouts, webinars, and new ideas that have come through participating in this working group.

Capstone Project

Best Practices in Employer Partnership Retention – This project focused on researching strategies for developing and maintaining partnerships between workforce development programs and local businesses which will be used to inform YouthBuild’s placement outreach for the upcoming school year.

Nadia M. Sookar, Supervisory Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist



Nadia.sookar@gmail.com

D.C. Rehabilitation Services Administration (DCRSA)

<http://dds.dc.gov>

DCRSA provides individualized

services to individuals with disabilities interested in working and achieving independence. The Youth in Transition Services Unit serves schools, students, and families.

Experience

3.5 years at organization; 5 years in the field

Personal Impact

“I gained resources and holistic insight into how to best engage youth under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. YWLA helped me prepare my organization to meet the goals and challenges of this reauthorization of the law. I gained a new understanding on youth voice and how to foster this within the culture of my organiza-

tion and my personal approach.”

Organizational Impact

“Nadia has been able to coach her staff on best practices serving youth. She has also shared tools and resources to assist her staff in helping youth with career planning, disability awareness, and fostering youth voice within the agency.”

Capstone Project

Work Experience and Reflection Among High School Students with Disabilities – “To increase access and supportive services for paid work experience in high school, we developed a summer program with the Dept. of Employment Services and SchoolTalk for Summer Youth Employment Program clients.”

Trisha Taylor, Programs Director*



trishataylor511@gmail.com

Sitar Arts Center

www.sitarartscenter.org

Sitar Arts Center advances the critical life skills of underserved children and youth and prepares them

for achievement in the 21st century through visual, performing, and digital arts education in a nurturing community.

Experience

6 years at Sitar, 10 years in the field

Personal Impact

“I loved hearing the perspectives of my YWLA colleagues. I also learned a lot about services and options available to support youth.”

Organizational Impact

“My capstone project is already being implemented in the summer programming at Sitar Arts Center.”

Capstone Project

Creating Opportunities – Sitar Intern Leadership Program – Through a selective application process, four youth will act as Intern Leaders for Sitar’s robust Summer Internship Program for Summer 2015. Students will learn more advanced management skills and have additional responsibilities to lead their peers.

* On May 15, 2015, Trisha joined the Washington Performing Arts as its education initiatives and curriculum manager.

Ashley Williams, Program Manager



Ashley.Williams@dc.gov

**Department of
Employment Services
(DOES), Office of Youth
Programs (OYP)**

<http://does.dc.gov>

OYP develops and administers workforce development programs for District youth ages 14-24. OYP provides occupational skills training, work experience, academic enrichment, and life skills training to facilitate success in the workplace.

Experience

6 years at organization

Personal Impact

“YWLA has given me a holistic viewpoint of the impact of the work we do, which will assist me with serving District youth. It has also helped me build meaningful relationships with a formidable cadre of workforce professionals.”

Organizational Impact

“Through participation with YWLA, tools and resources are shared with OYP staff to help guide future conversations and perfect service delivery.”

Capstone Project

Partnership with the Rehabilitation Services – To ensure the proper referral of Year Round and Summer Youth Employment Program, this project includes 1) developing an agreement outlining engagement and collaborative efforts and roles for both DOES and RSA and 2) creating a service referral map outlining the entry and exit points for youth receiving services.

About DCAYA and IEL



DC Alliance of Youth Advocates works to ensure all D.C. youth have access to the resources they need to grow into thriving adults. We accomplish this mission by building communities of learning, informing local policies, and conducting youth-informed research. Through the work of DCAYA, government agencies and community-based organizations are equipped with the information, tools, and funding streams they need to best serve young people in reaching their lifelong goals.



Leading Across Boundaries

The Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) is a national nonprofit organization that initiates, operates, and supports improvement and innovation initiatives at the federal, state, and local levels. IEL's mission is to build the capacity of individuals, organizations, systems, and communities to work together to prepare all children and youth for postsecondary education, careers, and citizenship. For more than 50 years, IEL has partnered across institutional boundaries, helping indi-

viduals and institutions tackle leadership challenges and leverage the resources of multiple partners to foster reform.

