Reengaging San Diego’s Opportunity Youth:
AN EVALUATION OF THE SAN DIEGO YOUTH OPPORTUNITY PATHWAYS INITIATIVE

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OVERVIEW

Opportunity Youth (OY) are defined as Youth who are neither accumulating human capital academically nor accumulating labor market skills by working between the ages of 16 and 24 years old.\(^1\)^\(^2\) OY have characteristics such as limited work experience, with many in poverty, without great family support, they have a higher risk of being involved in criminal activities, and experience substantially diminished opportunities over their lifetimes. In San Diego County, there are 52,920 Opportunity Youth, accounting for 11.7 percent of the Youth in the region. It is critical for Youth to get experience early in their adult years through educational, training, and work experience.

The San Diego Youth Opportunity Pathways Initiative (PATHWAYS) started in 2013 with the hopes of positively impacting San Diego’s Opportunity Youth. San Diego Youth Development Office (YDO) convened stakeholders and formed the multi-sector PATHWAYS collaborative. The collaborative developed a reengagement program to pilot comprehensive reengagement services, referred to as the PATHWAYS Reengagement Pilot program.

PATHWAYS Reengagement Pilot program was structured using the collective impact framework with collaboration of workforce, K-12, child welfare, juvenile justice systems and Youth service providers. Identified Opportunity Youth received academic and mentoring support from the San Diego Unified School District’s Drop-Out Prevention Office, and workforce training and case management support from the Urban League of San Diego County and their partners. Typically, organizations that provide Youth services only focus on a few barriers (such as shelter, food, academic support, etc.). Although many of them may refer clients to other organization/resources, they rarely work in a collaborative holistic fashion. The purpose of the PATHWAYS Reengagement Pilot program is to test the theory of change model (see page 11) that supposes that through outreach and reengagement activities, mentoring, case management services, and educational and workforce programming; OY will achieve academic and workforce training success that result in certification, credentialing and employment in living wage jobs and careers. Case managers worked with Youth to engage them, they came up with short-term and long-term plans, and connected Youth to resources when necessary.

This report looks at the development of the PATHWAYS collaborative operating structure, the development and implementation of the Reengagement Pilot program, and OY outcomes. The first two sections of this report examine the structure and role the PATHWAYS collaborative played in the creation of the Reengagement Pilot program. These sections include the history and goals of the PATHWAYS collaborative, the development of the Theory of Change Model that informed the Reengagement Pilot program, the funding acquired to implement services, and the organizations selected for this program. The second half of this report looks at the implementation and impact of the Pathways Reengagement Pilot program. This section of the report looks at the programmatic elements, the caseload numbers, the everyday tasks and challenges faced by staff. The following section of the report provides attainments and outcomes by the end of the second year of the program; with 87 Opportunity Youth earning a high school diploma (or equivalent), and more than 105 Youth getting work experience during the course of two years. Lastly, the final section provides a comprehensive lessons learned and recommendations section.

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2 For the purpose of this Initiative the age ranges of OY is 16 to 21 years old.
Opportunity Youth (OY) are defined as Youth between the ages of 16 and 24 years old, who are neither accumulating human capital academically nor accumulating labor market skills by working. 3 4 Many Opportunity Youth have characteristics such as home instability, with many in poverty, without great family support, with disproportionately more Youth involved in criminal activities; these challenges are exasperated when Youth have limited work experience, substantially diminishing their opportunities over their lifetimes. Furthermore, the High School graduation rate for Opportunity Youth is much lower than national averages for all Youth. Experts estimate Opportunity Youth have a high school graduation rate of 18 percent lower than the rest of the Youth population. By age 28 years old, only 1 percent of Opportunity Youth will have completed an Associate’s degree, compared to 36 percent of the rest of the population. When Youth are not able to get skills through education, training, or work experience they are less likely to be employed and are more likely to rely on government programs, therefore, having costly implications for society.

In 2016, there were approximately 5.3 million Youth between the ages of 16 and 24 years old who were not enrolled in school and not working in the United States. This accounts for 13.2 percent of all Youth in the nation. In San Diego County, this number was 52,920 Opportunity Youth accounting for 11.7 percent of the Youth in the region. 5 It is critical for Youth to get experience early in their adult years through educational, training, and work experience.

The economic climate continues to recover since the great recession from 2008, with conditions being exponentially more disadvantageous for Opportunity Youth. Not only is it more challenging for Youth to find employment, individuals with limited work experience early in their Youth have lower earnings as adults- with many not being able to earn a livable wage. 6 Furthermore, even when a Youth does graduate high school and enrolls in college, a college education often becomes a financial burden when they are faced with the reality of the rising cost of higher education. 7

The San Diego Youth Opportunity Pathways (PATHWAYS) Reengagement Pilot program operated from 2014 to 2017 and provided outreach, reengagement, mentoring, case management services, workforce and employment services to 232 OY over a 3 year period. The collaborative and pilot program were designed using the collective impact framework, with San Diego Youth Development Office (YDO) serving as backbone organization of a multi-sector collaborative to provide reengagement services to identified OY. The direct services provided were part of the PATHWAYS Reengagement Pilot. While the collaborative provided systems, philanthropic, policy change. The purpose of the PATHWAYS Reengagement Pilot program is to test the theory of change model (see page 11) that supposes that through outreach and reengagement activities, mentoring, case management services, and educational and workforce programming; OY will achieve academic and workforce training success that result in certification, credentialing and employment in living wage jobs and careers.

The following includes analyses of PATHWAYS and the impact it had on San Diego’s OY.

4 For the purpose of this Initiative the age ranges of OY is 16 to 21 years old.
5 Opportunity Index, Nationwide and San Diego County, opportunityindex.org, 2016.
THE SAN DIEGO YOUTH OPPORTUNITY PATHWAYS INITIATIVE

Operating Structure

The San Diego Youth Opportunity Pathways Initiative (PATHWAYS) started in September 2013 and completed in June 2017. The planning phase of the initiative was conducted by the PATHWAYS collaborative, which includes more than 30 local organizations. San Diego Youth Development Office (YDO) served as the backbone organization of this collective impact effort; convening, connecting and engaging the multi-sectoral collaborative, as well as providing leadership and coordination during implementation of the Reengagement Pilot program efforts. The PATHWAYS Initiative is also a member of the Opportunity Youth Network and YDO is an Opportunity Youth Incentive Fund Grantee.

THE PATHWAYS COLLABORATIVE

The PATHWAYS collaborative was formed in September 2013 as an effort between 39 organizations and 67 individuals with one common goal of addressing the disproportionate high school dropout rates and the OY crisis. A Reengagement Pilot program to provide services to OY and in-school Youth at severe risk of dropping out was designed using a collective approach. These partners included City of San Diego Mayor’s Office, San Diego Unified School District, San Diego County Probation and Child Welfare departments, San Diego Workforce Partnership, San Diego Continuing Education, community-based organizations, Philanthropy and Youth (see Appendix A for full list).

The PATHWAYS collaborative members served in one or more of the following three capacities 1) as advisors, 2) on the steering committee, or 3) on one or more momentum teams.

Advisory Group members were comprised of public, non-profit, philanthropy, community, and private organizations that engaged and reflected on the priorities of the PATHWAYS Initiative (e.g., expand collaborative partners to address gaps in areas of need). In addition, advisors were to serve as a resource to the Reengagement Pilot program to match Youth with apprenticeship opportunities.

Steering Committee members were high level leaders and decision makers representing public, private, and non-profit entities with decision making authority, and supporters who offered a critical lens for identifying new stakeholders and opportunities.

Momentum Team members consisted of key content experts, service providers, or Opportunity Youth that worked throughout the development phase to develop the PATHWAYS Initiative’s four core components: Scoping & Metrics, Pathways & Programs, Policy & Advocacy, and Sustainability. Members served as the working group arm of the collaborative.

The collaborative served in the capacities above, with specific focus on developing the Reengagement Pilot program through the following four metrices:

Scoping & Metrics – Collaborative members conducted data analysis to determine the need for a PATHWAYS Reengagement Pilot program in the San Diego region. Momentum team members analyzed data from the U.S. Census Bureau, San Diego Unified School District, and other sources to determine high school drop-out rates, teen births, school attendance rates, crime data, probation and child welfare cases and other metrices. Additionally, the Scoping & Team members narrowed down the geographic areas in San Diego County with the greatest concentration of Opportunity Youth.

Pathways & Programs – Collaborative members created a PATHWAYS Theory of Change Model that would provide comprehensive services to Opportunity Youth that had the potential to garner positive impact on Youth’s educational attainment, workforce readiness, and behavioral health.
Policy & Advocacy – Stakeholders worked on informing and influencing policy and system changes for the allocation of resources and funds for Opportunity Youth. Members met with local senior political officials, such as the Mayor of San Diego, council district offices, community leaders, and others.

Sustainability – Committee members advocated to secure sustainable funding for the PATHWAYS Reengagement Pilot program partners to be able to implement the program and work with San Diego’s Opportunity Youth.

The PATHWAYS Initiative collaborative partners developed and determined aspects of the Reengagement Pilot program, such as participants’ criteria, identifying Youth services, and securing funding for the program.

FUNDING THE PATHWAYS INITIATIVE

The idea for the collaborative and reengagement pilot came together before any of the funding was committed. To understand the importance of the collaboration, it is helpful to understand the history of how funding came together for the PATHWAYS Reengagement Pilot program.

In 2012, The California Endowment provided seed funding to create the San Diego Youth Development Office (YDO). It was envisioned that the YDO would be a catalyst for collaboration among local systems that impact the lives of children, Youth and families in order to increase positive Youth development funding and strategic focus on prevention activities that would bring about positive outcomes for ALL regardless of socioeconomic background, race, ethnicity, immigration status, or residential zip code. The idea of a Youth development office began with the San Diego Organizing Project and was championed by members of the community some of whom were affiliated with San Diego Workforce Partnership, San Diego Unified School District’s Drop Out Prevention Office, and City of San Diego’s Commission on Gang Prevention and Intervention.

In August 2012, the Director of the YDO was hired. He started convening the aforementioned organizations and Youth serving systems. These leaders (including Youth) started meeting to strategize ways they could collaborate to provide services to address the barriers faced by OY. The Aspen Institute’s Forum for Community Solutions awarded funding for the San Diego Youth Opportunity Pathways Initiative in 2013 through its Opportunity Youth Incentive Fund (OYIF) for the planning of the PATHWAYS Reengagement Pilot program, including strategizing on local philanthropic match funding partners. After the planning year, YDO was awarded implementation funding from OYIF on behalf of the PATHWAYS Initiative for three years.

As a result of the OYIF award, the PATHWAYS collaborative was able to leverage support from local public and private entities to implement the PATHWAYS Reengagement Pilot program. Private philanthropic funding was secured from The California Endowment, Pacific Western Bank, The Parker Foundation, San Diego Grantmakers Social Equity Funders Collaborative and Union Bank. Public funding was secured from the San Diego Workforce Partnership and the San Diego Unified School District. The private philanthropic funding supported backbone and PATHWAYS collaborative activities, while the public funding (Workforce Investment Act & Public Education) supported the reengagement activities provided by the Youth serving organizations and the San Diego Unified School District’s (SDUSD) Office of Drop-Out Prevention.

SDUSD’s Office of Drop-Out Prevention had been focusing its efforts on retention of high school students (9th – 12th graders) via the Check and Connect Mentor program. As a PATHWAYS Collaborative member, SDUSD leadership and board agreed to allocate funds to expand Check and Connect and to collaborative with the WIA funded organization to provide comprehensive services to in-school students identified as at-risk of dropping out of high school.

The second major funding partner for the Reengagement Pilot program was the San Diego Workforce Partnership (SDWP). SDWP was involved in the planning of the PATHWAYS Initiative. SDWP’s Youth council and workforce investment board agreed to make WIA funding available for workforce readiness, internships and education, employment and case management services for both in-school and out-of-school Youth. SDWP utilized an open and competitive procurement process in selecting the organization to conduct the services. Via a Request for Quotation process an award (and subsequent contract) was made to the Urban League of San Diego County (Urban League).
The PATHWAYS Reengagement Pilot service providers are the organizations that worked to provide direct services to OY. The two main partners that provided services to Youth included the SDUSD’s Office of Drop-Out Prevention and the Urban League. Both organizations agreed to follow the PATHWAYS Initiative Collective Impact framework created by the PATHWAYS Initiative collaborative, to provide Opportunity Youth with comprehensive services working in collaboration with YDO and each of the implementing partners. During the course of the three years, there were changes in the main partners providing services (from their partners to staffing changes). The following is a summarized breakdown of the operating compositions of the key players providing services to Opportunity Youth participating in the PATHWAYS Reengagement Pilot program.

**SDUSD Drop-Out Prevention Office**
The SDUSD Drop-Out Prevention office partnered with PATHWAYS to provide mentor services to at risk Opportunity Youth in high school (from ages 16 to 21 years old). The office used the Check & Connect mentor model, created by the University of Minnesota, to provide comprehensive interventions that engage students at risk of dropping out of high school through mentoring services. These Check & Connect Mentors checked-in on students on a weekly basis to address any academic, attendance, or behavioral concerns. The mentors are SDUSD staff and work closely with school teachers and administrators.

The Program Manager of the SDUSD Drop-Out Prevention office was a member of the PATHWAYS collaborative from its beginning. In the time frame that the Reengagement Pilot program started and ended, the program manager retired and was replaced by another program manager. During this three-year time frame, there was also a change in staff of Check & Connect mentors, the program went from four to two mentors.

**The Urban League of San Diego County and Partners**
The Urban League was contracted by the SDWP to provide training, employment, and case management services to Opportunity Youth. The Urban League focused on engaging out-of-school Youth by getting them re-engaged in their education or in getting them enrolled in training opportunities such as internships or apprenticeships. With the end goal of helping Opportunity Youth get gainful employment. In the three-year timeframe of the PATHWAYS Reengagement Pilot program, the structure of the services the Urban League provided changed significantly.

During year one, Urban League partnered with four other community organizations to expand its reach of Opportunity Youth. Partners included the Union of Pan Asian Communities (UPAC), Harmonium Inc., Manpower, Somali Family Service of San Diego. Each of these subcontractors had experience and relationships in the Asian, Hispanic, Somali and other minority communities. The thought process was that by including these subcontractors the PATHWAYS Initiative would be able to increase their reach by collaborating with organizations that already served their communities. Urban League and each of their partner organizations were responsible for recruiting and providing case management services to Opportunity Youth. The individuals providing direct services to Youth were called Opportunity Coaches.

During year two, the Urban League started to solely provide services to Opportunity Youth directly. The organization ended its relationships with its subcontractors from year one. Urban League hired additional staff to provide Youth with comprehensive services. During this time, there were also changes in staffing. The primary director of Urban League remained, however, the project manager changed from year one to year two. Furthermore, although more staff were hired for the PATHWAYS Reengagement Pilot program their roles were not clear, and by the end of year two there were only two opportunity coaches (one for reengaging those that had not participated and another coach for the actively participating Youth).

**International Rescue Committee**
During the third year of the PATHWAYS Reengagement Pilot program the SDWP changed the contractor of employment and training services for Opportunity Youth from the Urban League to the International Rescue Committee (IRC). IRC took over the PATHWAYS Reengagement Pilot Program work in November 2016 through June 2017.
THE VISION
The vision for the PATHWAYS Reengagement Pilot program was to create a model in which two public Youth serving systems (K-12 & Workforce) work together to provide comprehensive services to Opportunity Youth, with specific focus on education, training and employment. Also, connecting Youth to resources through case management services to provide solutions to the challenges they face.

THE THEORY OF CHANGE MODEL (THE PLAN)
The PATHWAYS Initiative designed the PATHWAYS Theory of Change Model (also known as the Reengagement Pilot program) with the intention of allowing Youth to join the program at any stage of their academic or professional career. The model was designed to be comprehensive to give Youth the resources they needed whether they were focusing on completing their education or getting successful employment. The following are the four phases:

 Phase 1: Outreach & Reengagement
To start, Check & Connect Mentors and Opportunity Coaches were all to conduct a thorough assessment of Opportunity Youth’s goals, skill level, interests, and any needs they may have (such as housing, food assistance, etc.). During this phase, Youth and their coaches and mentors would develop academic, training and employment plans (short term and long term). This initial phase was known as the Hope and Interest section in which Youth were initially engaged.

 Phase 2: Educational Momentum
The educational momentum phase is when in-school Youth receive tutoring and work on credit recovery. The goal for this phase varied from helping Youth graduate High School and/or to get to college.

For out-of-school Youth, this phase consisted of getting Youth job readiness training by enrolling them in training programs, apprenticeships, or internships.

Both of these groups of students were to receive case management, educational and employment plan support, as well as, basic needs assistance from housing, behavioral health and other services.

 Phase 3: Certification & Credentialing
During the Certification and Credentialing phase, Opportunity Youth earn educational certificates such as high school diplomas, higher education degrees, industry certifications, or work experience through apprenticeships. Youth would continue receive case management, career planning guidance, and assistance with their basic needs.

 Phase 4: Employment
The final goal and phase was for Opportunity Youth to obtain employment in a job earning a living age in a high demand industry.

Figure 1 shows an illustration of the PATHWAYS Theory of Change model.
Integrated into each of the phases included working with Youth to stabilize them by providing case management (housing, basic needs, behavioral health, and other needs).

The plan for the Reengagement Pilot program was for SDUSD Check & Connect Mentors and the Urban League Opportunity Coaches to work together to provide comprehensive guidance and resources to help Youth obtain their educational, professional, and personal goals (as well as basic needs).

**IDENTIFYING THE OPPORTUNITY YOUTH**

**San Diego County**

In 2016, San Diego had approximately 452,308 Youth between 16 and 24 years old in the region. Of these Youth, 52,920 were unemployed or not enrolled in school. This accounts for 11.7 percent of all Youth throughout the County.  

The unemployment rate for Youth is higher than the average unemployment rate for adults. In San Diego County there were approximately 90,075 Youth between 16 and 24 years old unemployed, accounting for 19.9 percent (compared to the general 8.7% overall unemployment rate).  

The 16 to 19 year old and 20 to 24 year old age groups have the highest unemployment rates, with an unemployment rate of 29.1 percent and 14.1 percent for 16 to 19 years and 20 to 24 years old, respectively. These Youth are neither accumulating human capital in school or college or labor market skills by working.

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8. Opportunity Index, San Diego County, opportunityindex.org, 2016
9. Unemployment numbers reported only include individuals seeking employment (part-time or full-time).
The Reengagement Pilot Program’s Focus
Nationwide Opportunity Youth are typically defined as Youth that were not engaged in education or employment between the ages of 16 to 24 years old. Because SDWP WIA funds were allotted specifically to fund services for Youth between the ages of 16 and 21 years old, the PATHWAYS Initiative collaborative changed the definition of participating Opportunity Youth in the PATHWAYS Reengagement Pilot program to only include Youth between the ages of 16 and 21 years old (instead of 24 years old) to meet the funding partners’ requirements. The focus of the Reengagement Pilot program was to be placed on Youth that were at risk of dropping out (or have dropped out) of high school, have a criminal record, dependent on social services, foster children, homeless, or are generally disengaged.

There were two different groups of Opportunity Youth participating in the Reengagement Pilot program those that were in high school and out-of-school.

Geographic Focus
Early in the design process of the PATHWAYS Reengagement Initiative, the collaborative conducted a needs assessment of the San Diego region that had a high percentage of Opportunity Youth. Partners collaborated to create a web-based map application to get a visual of the geographic areas in San Diego County with the most Opportunity Youth (Figure 2).

Figure 2: PATHWAYS Heat Map

The heat map included metrics such as areas with low high school attendance, areas with high unemployment rates for 16 to 24 year old Youth, mapping of location of Youth 18 to 24 years old under juvenile probation supervision, areas with high birth rates of women aged 15 to 19 year old Youth, and location of foster youth. The data driven approach led to the identification of six census tracts in San Diego County. This geography was later expanded to include adjacent census tracts to increase potential area of recruiting Opportunity Youth. Within the geographic scope of the expanded identified census tracts there were 5,223 Youth that were not enrolled in school, accounting for 37.2 percent of 15 to 24 year olds within these census tracts. Additionally, there were Youth residing in these census tracts that were disengaged from school but technically enrolled, the three main high schools located near these census tracts were Crawford High School, Hoover High School and Lincoln High School. These schools have high school drop-out rates of 9.7, 8.1 and 11.6 percent, respectively.

The unemployment figures within these census tracts were alarmingly high with 4,630 of 16 to 24 year olds (or 37.2 percent) of Youth being unemployed. Figure 3 shows a comparison of both San Diego County, the original targeted census tracts, and the expanded targeted census tracts. See appendix B for a list of the original and expanded identified census tracts.

12 Heat Map Application Content and Sources Handout, YDO
13 Data was only available at group level. The datasets were not able to be broken down in the 15 to 21 year old range.
15 Unemployment numbers reported only include individuals seeking employment (part-time or full-time).
It should be noted, that the application/contract work with the other partners (SDUSD and Urban League) all included verbiage to recruit Opportunity Youth specifically focused on the pre-identified census tracts.

Figure 4 shows a map of the Reengagement Pilot program areas.

Figure 4: Map of Reengagement Pilot Program Census Tracts

17 Insyt Analytics Census Tract Map.
WORKING WITH YOUTH/IMPLEMENTATION

The PATHWAYS Initiative took one year to design and develop. In 2014, the SDUSD, San Diego Urban League and their partners (UPAC, Harmonium and Somali Services) began recruiting Youth and implementing the design of the PATHWAYS Initiative (moving forward referred to as the Reengagement Pilot program).

RECRUITMENT

SDUSD Check & Connect Mentors and Urban League Opportunity Coaches were each responsible for recruiting Youth. Since the Check & Connect Mentors are part of the SDUSD they were able to access a list of at risk students that met the criteria identified by the collaborative. The mentors reached out and enrolled students that were underperforming academically, had significant absences, and/or behavioral issues.

The Opportunity Coaches from the Urban League and subcontracted partners recruited Youth using a snowball method. They reached out to the students that the Check & Connect Mentors had recruited, asked if they had any siblings or friends that they knew that would be interested in participating. Coaches went on the street to recruit students (at bus stops, fast food places, etc.) within the targeted census tracts (and the later expanded census tracts).

Participating Opportunity Youth were recruited at different times. The Youth that received SDUSD Check & Connect Mentor services were enrolled in November 2014 and started receiving services immediately at that time. Urban League Youth enrolled on a rolling basis between August 2014 and the last Youth being enrolled in the program in June 2015 and started receiving services at various times.

A RANDOMIZED CONTROL TRIAL

There were two recruiting methodologies for recruiting Opportunity Youth to the Reengagement Pilot program, by snowball method and through random assignment.

The SDUSD Check & Connect mentors had a master list of all SDUSD students at high schools within the geographic scope of the program effort. Mentors pre-qualified students that had recently dropped out of school, or were at risk of dropping out/failing. Mentors reached out to students and their parents to get them to sign consent forms to participate in the pilot program (or control group). The research team randomly selected 2/3 of the students to participate in the program. All students would receive Check & Connect mentor services, however, the selected 2/3 students would get more comprehensive services (including those from the Urban League).

Changing the Geographic Boundaries

As recruitment efforts moved forward it soon became evident that the restriction of only working within specific census tracts was a hindrance on Opportunity Youth recruitment. Upon realization, the PATHWAYS Initiative partners attempted to expand the geographic scope of the program. Unfortunately, this expansion was complicated because the SDWP contract specifically identified the communities in the pre-identified census tracts, and a contractual amendment would be required. YDO and partners met with SDWP to negotiate a redrawing of the boundaries. SDWP was able to expand the geography to areas that were adjacent to the pre-identified geographies. This allowed the PATHWAYS Reengagement Pilot program to expand to 15 census tracts (see Appendix B for a complete list).

Proof of Eligibility, Documentation, and Attainments

Each entity (SDUSD and Urban League) had their own eligibility and documentation they had to collect from participating students (and in some cases their parents). The SDUSD staff obtained consent forms from their participating students. This included getting permission from students’ parents to participate in the program with a clear understanding that there would be a randomized control trial component to the program- and that not all students would receive comprehensive services. Due to the fact that all School District youth need to
have complete access to all school district services, all youth could receive Check & Connect Mentor services. However, those youth that were selected as part of the control group were told they may not be selected to participate in the Reengagement Pilot program where they would get comprehensive services from the Urban League. 18 Appendix C includes a copy of the notice of the program sent to school principals.

Urban League had different criteria and documentation they needed to collect. Their criteria was primarily driven by their funder, the SDWP. Because the SDWP funding came from U.S. Department of Labor Youth funds, participants in the Reengagement Pilot program had to provide proof of U.S. Citizenship, proof of family income, and required students to complete an applications and assessment test (TABE). Figure 4 shows a checklist of everything the youth were required to complete prior to being enrolled in the Reengagement Pilot program.

Figure 5: Urban League Enrollment Documentation Requirements

| Proof of U.S. Citizenship | TABE Test | Proof of income | Complete Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Applications |

SDWP had multiple training sessions in which they trained Urban League and partners to collect information and upload to SDWP’s CalJobs system. Opportunity Coaches were responsible to meet with Opportunity Youth at least once a quarter (or once every 3 months). They had to update the CalJobs system within three days of meeting with their Opportunity Youth (or attempting outreach).

In addition, Urban League had specific attainments they had to meet for each Youth. For example, if an in-school Youth tested below a 9th grade level, they had to take a post-test within 12 months and make a gain of one or more grade levels. Out-of-School Youth that were tested below a 9th grade level had to do the same within 6 or 12 months. Figures 6 and 7 below lists the attainments that in-school and out-of-school Youth had to complete to be successful attainments.

Figure 6: In-School Youth Attainments for SDWP

- Successful completion of academic goal
- Engagement in work experience pre-apprenticeship activities
- Enrollment in postsecondary institution
- Summer employment
- Enrollment in internship or job shadowing
- Earning post-secondary education credits while enrolled in high school
- If an in-school youth tested below a 9th grade level, they had to take a post-test within 12 months and make a gain of one or more grade levels.

Figure 7: Out-of-School Youth Attainments for SDWP

- Successful completion of individual career plan
- Clear progression towards individual career plan
- Paid work experience through apprenticeship or internship
- Support youth through enrollment in postsecondary institution
- Comprehensive student support of life skills, financial literacy, and engagement activities
- If out-of-school youth tested below a 9th grade level, they had to take a post-test within 6 to 12 months and make a gain of one or more grade levels.

18 Control group participants are defined as those that did not get comprehensive services. (i.e. they received services from Check & Connect mentors, however, not from Urban League).
If a Youth did not remain active for 90 days (with zero case note entries from Urban League or their partners), then the Youth was automatically “soft exited” from the program in CalJobs. Once a Youth was exited from the program (whether it be successful or a “soft exit”), Urban League was still responsible for providing follow-up services at least once every quarter (or every 3 months) to help Youth connect to resources as needed. Once a Youth was exited from the program, they became ineligible for specific services such as working with Manpower, participating in some internship opportunities, or in getting incentives for incentives (more about incentives in the sections that follow).

**Case Management**

SDUSD Check & Connect Mentors and Urban League (and partners) Opportunity Coaches all took a case manager role when working with Opportunity Youth. The case management of each entity varied throughout the two years of the Reengagement Pilot program. Throughout this report, there are references to the services provided by mentors and coaches, references to case managers refers to both Check & Connect Mentors and Opportunity Coaches.

SDUSD Check & Connect Mentors and Urban League Opportunity Coaches had different performance metrics and as a result difference case-loads for each case manager. SDUSD Check & Connect Mentors had a much smaller case load ranging from 16 to 33 students per mentor, averaging at 25 students per mentor. They also had a higher expectation of having met with students at least once a week. Urban League and their partners’ caseloads varied from 34 to 74 Youth per full-time coach, averaging at 53 students per coach. Although, opportunity coaches were only expected to touch base with Youth once every three months, the burden of having so many Youth proved to be overwhelming for coaches. This case load only worsened when the Urban League ended its contract with its partners, giving all the Youth to one to two Opportunity Coaches.

**Working with Youth**

Case managers worked on an individual basis with each opportunity youth. After the initial enrollment, Check & Connect Mentors and Opportunity Coaches met one-on-one with each youth to develop a plan. SDUSD in-school students had two case managers, one Check & Connect Mentor and one Opportunity Coach. Although, the program was designed for youth to receive comprehensive services from both case managers. In reality, most SDUSD high school students only met with their Check & Connect Mentor on a frequent basis. Many of the students were focused on trying to graduate high school, and did not want to add job training or a job to their work load.

For the most part, case managers had similar approaches when working with youth. They met individually with each youth meeting them at their schools, home, or at local establishments (coffe shops, fast food places, etc.). When a case manager met with youth they asked them questions regarding their academic or employment/career goals. Also, if they were experience any challenges. The types of challenges youth faced varied from teen pregnancy, homelessness, needing food stamps, transportation issues, to needing counseling (details on challenges youth faced in the following pages). Case managers would then connect youth to various resources such as giving youth a bus pass, connecting them to housing programs, providing resources to the family (such as legal, connecting to public services such as food stamps), etc.

If a youth was not responsive, case managers would go through many efforts to try and reach youth. These efforts included texting, calling, calling parents/or other family members, trying to track youth through their friends/family, making house calls, and other ways.

Although there were many ways in which Check & Connect Mentors and Opportunity Coaches provided similar services, they also had various differences.

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19 As staff changes and engagement of opportunity youth changed throughout the program these caseloads varied. The numbers reported were ranges and averages at the beginning of the Reengagement Pilot program.

20 The caseload range for both full-time and part-time Opportunity Coaches was 12 to 74 youth, with an average case load of 45 youth.

21 The number of opportunity coaches during year two was never made clear. From the research team’s understanding there were two opportunity coaches. One Opportunity Coach to reengage students that had been “soft exited” from the program, and one Opportunity Coach to provide everyone else with services.
Check & Connect mentors were able to be advocates for youth in their schools. As SDUSD employees, they had the support from the students’ teachers and school administrators. Mentors were able to access student data, attendance records, grades, and other documentation.

Opportunity Coaches were able to provide youth with training and employment support. The Urban League and their partners provided monetary incentives for students when they achieved certain objectives such as completing TABE testing, attending workshops, completing education or training programs, internship placement, being employed for a specific timeframe, and other incentives. The Urban League and their partners connected youth to a number of community resources. Working together with community resource sites in the spirit of collaboration. Although most of those partners did not have a contractual obligation, they updated coaches on students’ status.

Tracking

The PATHWAYS Initiative collaborative and the PATHWAYS Reengagement Pilot program partners agreed on the importance of tracking Opportunity Youth’s outcomes and services they received. The Reengagement Pilot program was to demonstrate the affect that providing services in a collective impact framework could have. All partners verbally agreed that they would have data sharing agreements and track various Opportunity Youth elements.

Each of the partners had their own metrics they were required to track as part of their funding.

When YDO received funding from the Aspen Institute, it was with the understanding that they would track demographic information, educational attainments, employment attainments, and whether Youth experienced specific challenges (such as foster Youth, homeless, etc.). YDO contracted Insyt Analytics to create a tracking tool for SDUSD and Urban League (and partners) to upload Opportunity Youth attainments, challenges, and plans. This was to be a collaborative tool in which partners would be able to share and track each Youth.

The SDUSD were required to track specific metrics. The tracking system they used were for the Check & Connect model, which included weekly tracking of each interaction they had with Opportunity Youth. This system was restricted to SDUSD staff and could not be edited to include other metrics that YDO needed tracked. SDUSD leadership agreed to use the Tracking Tool created by Insyt Analytics, as long as, changes were made to the tool to include everything the Check & Connect system tracked. Mentors received access and training for the shared tracking tool, to update each Youth’s metrics, challenges, and meetings with them.

The Urban League and their partners were required to use SDWP’s CalJobs system. The CalJobs system is the system that is required by all entities receiving WIA (or WIOA) funding. The SDWP provided multiple training sessions to train Opportunity Coaches from Urban League and their partners how to update the system. Each coach was responsible for updating the system each time their Youth met with them, received a service or attainment. The CalJobs system was the primary method in which SDWP used to monitor if the Urban League was meeting its monthly performance metrics. If three months went by without any updates in the CalJobs system made on a single Youth, that Youth would be closed out as being “not engaged” and would close the file. The CalJobs system tracked many metrics, it did not track everything that the PATHWAYS Initiative needed to track. In addition, access was restricted to the Urban League and their partners, and extraction of that data was heavily limited. Although, originally the Urban League verbally agreed to use the shared tracking tool created by Insyt Analytics. Their willingness to use the shared tracking tool changed as the program commenced, and it became apparent that updating the CalJobs system was more cumbersome than expected. In order to collect the required information, the Insyt Analytics research team agreed to gather the required information by meeting with Opportunity Coaches twice a year to gather education, training, and employment metrics on each participating Youth. In addition, to taking this step the research team also reviewed CalJobs notes on all the participating Opportunity Youth to ensure collecting the most recent data available.
The evaluation team tracked and measured Youth outcomes for Opportunity Youth in the PATHWAYS Reengagement Pilot program from the beginning of the program to the end of year two of the Pilot program.

Throughout the program Check & Connect Mentors and Opportunity Coaches alike have been working with Opportunity Youth. Case managers reached out to Youth by various methods from scheduling meetings, calling, texting, conducting home visits, conducting school visits, to going to frequent known hangout spots for Youth.

The difficulty of effort in following-up varies from student to student, and from Check & Connect Mentor and Opportunity Coaches. Some students are quick to follow-up with their case managers, others are less likely for various reasons, whether it be because they are disengaged, change in contact information, and/or they move without a forwarding address. Unfortunately, these types of challenges are part in dealing with a disconnected population.

The following are snapshots of student outcomes during two different phases of the Reengagement Pilot program. Phase 1 was the inception and onboarding of students. These are the outcomes Youth had accomplished when starting the program. Phase 2 include the outcome from the last known communication with student. This will vary from student to student, as some students disengaged at different timeframes.

The evaluation includes outcomes to the end of year two of the program, because during year three a different subcontractor, IRC, took over services for Urban League. Upon doing this, only a small percent (less than 15 percent) of all Youth were eligible for all SDWP services. The following is the analysis through the end of year two of the PATHWAYS Reengagement Pilot program.

Profiles
There were 232 opportunity youth that started with the Reengagement Pilot program. These youth varied from high school students who were at risk of not graduating to young unemployed adults. The majority of youth were enrolled in-school at the beginning of the program, accounting for 67 percent of all enrolled opportunity youth.22 Out-of-school youth accounted for 33 percent of youth enrollments. Figure 8 shows the overall demographic profile of all the opportunity youth at the beginning of the program.23

Figure 8: Opportunity Youth Demographic Profile (n=232)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race and Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American/Black</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do Not Wish To Answer</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Age ranges: 16 to 21 years old
In-School Youth: 155
(104 part of SDUSD Check & Connect Program)
Median Age: 18.4 years old
Out-of-School Youth: 77

22 Only 45 percent of all youth received Check & Connect Mentor services, as the remaining youth were enrolled outside the San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD).
As like other programs dealing with a disengaged population, many of the Youth disengaged and then reengaged throughout the course of the program. This was particularly the case for the Urban League’s Youth. Opportunity Coaches reported that Youth told them they were not interested in the program anymore, they asked case managers to stop calling, and after some persistence sometimes coaches were able to re-engage Youth. Other times, Opportunity Coaches lost touch with Youth (either by the Youth’s choice or if Youth moved and did not forward a change in contact information). Coaches reported 47 Youth (accounting for 20 percent of all enrolled Youth) becoming disengaged by end of the second year of this program. 24 Check & Connect Mentors also lost touch with some of their Youth, this was especially the case when students graduated from high school, as the mentors only provided informal mentoring as students reached out to them. The following data is based on when Coaches and Mentors last verified Opportunity Youth’s status.

Educational Attainments
Charter school program with students ranging from grades in 10 to 12th grade. The average GPA for participating Youth was 1.84 on a 4.0 weighted scale. This GPA average changed to 2.04 by the end of the program, demonstrating a half a percent increase or .20 points. 25

In the two years of services from the Pathways Reengagement Pilot program many of the Youth had positive educational attainments. By the end of the year two, 113 Youth had graduated from high school (or Option 2 diploma). Sixty-seven students still remained enrolled in a High School or GED program, with the majority of the Youth enrolled in a SDUSD public schools, local charter/community schools, or GED programs. 26 The most popular charter schools were Urban Corps of San Diego and Diego Hills Charter School. Urban Corps of San Diego caters to Youth ages 18 to 26 years old, providing students an opportunity to earn a high school diploma and receive paid job training. Within this time frame there were a total of 32 students that were high school drop-outs (an increase of 8 Youth compared to those that enrolled as high school drop-outs).

After Youth received their high school diploma or GED, Check & Connect Mentors worked with their students to determine if they wanted to move on to post-secondary school, employment, or both. If students wanted to enroll in a post-secondary school, mentors worked with students to help them. Opportunity Coaches also worked with their students (those without mentors) to get them enrolled in college or university.

As the out-of-school provider, Opportunity Coaches worked with Youth to develop a plan, by connecting Youth to resources and helping them get where they wanted to in the next phase in their life. At the end of year two, there were 39 students enrolled in a post-secondary school (trade school, college, or university). Figure 9 shows the change in the educational attainments of Opportunity Youth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status/Attainment</th>
<th>Beginning of the Program</th>
<th>End of Year Two</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in High School or Equivalent (H.S.)</td>
<td>172 youth</td>
<td>67 youth</td>
<td>-105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.S. Graduate</td>
<td>26 youth</td>
<td>113 youth</td>
<td>+87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in College</td>
<td>7 youth</td>
<td>39 youth</td>
<td>+32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both Check & Connect Mentors and Opportunity Coaches provided in-school Youth with guidance and services to help them complete their education. However, each of these partners provided services in two very different formats. With Check & Connect Mentors meeting with students on a weekly basis, and Opportunity Coaches having more flexibility on how often they met with Youth. Figures 10 and 11 show a breakdown of outcomes from each of the two different case managers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status/Attainment</th>
<th>Beginning of the Program</th>
<th>End of Year Two</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in High School or Equivalent (H.S.)</td>
<td>104 youth</td>
<td>35 youth</td>
<td>-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.S. Graduate</td>
<td>0 youth</td>
<td>61 youth</td>
<td>+61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in College</td>
<td>0 youth</td>
<td>22 youth</td>
<td>+22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24 This number is much larger if the youth that were “soft exited” from the program are counted. Unfortunately, according to case managers many of the “soft exited” youth were done so inadvertently due to case notes not being saved in the CalJobs system.
25 GPA data for SDUSD public school students only (those receiving Check & Connect Mentor services).
26 Student enrollment numbers are those of students still enrolled at the end of year two.
27 Numbers may not equal because of students’ whose status is unknown.
Figure 11: Opportunity Coaches’ Youth Educational Attainments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status/Attainment</th>
<th>Beginning of the Program</th>
<th>End of Year Two</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in High School or Equivalent (H.S.)</td>
<td>68 youth</td>
<td>32 youth</td>
<td>-36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.S. Graduate</td>
<td>26 youth</td>
<td>52 youth</td>
<td>+26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in College</td>
<td>7 youth</td>
<td>17 youth</td>
<td>+10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 12 shows a comparison of the percent change in educational outcomes for Opportunity Youth by whether they received education services from Check & Connect Mentors or Opportunity Coaches. Check & Connect Mentor students appear to have a higher high school graduation percent rate than those receiving services from Opportunity Coaches. Although, it should be noted, that Opportunity Coaches lost contact with many of the students, some of drop-out students (and graduates) may be unaccounted for in this analysis.

Figure 12: Comparison of Opportunity Youth’s Outcomes by Percent Change

As the last two years progressed, case managers helped Youth with their educational attainments by getting them the resources to get to school (such as bus passes), tutoring help, assisting Youth in determining the best school to meet their needs (charter schools with specific resources such as child care or apprenticeship opportunities), taking students to community college to take placement exams, or purchasing college books for Youth. When Opportunity Youth were asked the impact that case managers had on their education, the majority rated case managers as having an average 8.4 impact on a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being negative impact, 5 being no impact, and 10 being great positive impact. Figure 13 shows how Youth answered how much impact case managers have had on their education.

Figure 13: Impact Case Managers have had on Opportunity Youth’s Education (n=73)

Receiving a high school diploma or equivalent is a rite of passage for many youth. For some opportunity youth, this is more of a challenging feat because of external factors. Case managers shared stories about youth having to overcome numerous challenges including lack of support for their education from youth’s parents (more in Youth Challenges section). Some students are enrolled in school and working to contribute to the household. The following is an anecdotal story of the lack of support that some opportunity youth faced at home.

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28 High school drop-out data not reported because “n” equals less than 10 youth
29 Details such as names and part of the stories have been changed to prevent identification of opportunity youth.
“One of my kids- let’s call her Jane- does well in school, when she goes to class. The problem is that she doesn’t always go to class. Her parents do not support her getting an education and sometimes they need her to stay home to take care of her younger siblings. I used to call whenever the student missed school, Jane asked me to stop calling because her parents would yell at her saying that I was bothering them by calling. Jane now emails me when she has to miss school. When I met with Jane’s parents they made it clear that school was not a priority and that they needed Jane at home sometimes to take care of her siblings- or to help by working.”

Check & Connect Mentors worked in particular worked exclusively with in-school Opportunity Youth. The mentors served as advocates for students in their schools. Teachers and administrators recognized the Check & Connect mentor program as part of the SDUSD; they were able to be official student advocates. Mentors encouraged some Youth to get tested for an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for Youth they suspected qualified as needing special education. By classifying a Youth for IEP students received additional academic resources. In addition, when a Youth was over 18 years of age (or repeating their senior year), high school counselors would automatically recommend that Youth transfer to a Charter School to complete their academic degree. Although, transferring to a Charter School has many benefits to some children. Mentors expressed great concern for many of their Youth from transferring because some charter schools had greater flexibility when it came to completing courses and attendance. Students that were motivated and driven could succeed but it made the process slower and more challenging for Youth that did not have a lot of self-discipline. Mentors would often advocate for their Youth to keep them enrolled in their local high school by working with school administrators. One mentor explained:

“The problem with this model [students transferring to some charter schools] is that some of the charter/adult schools have much less oversight over students. With many schools only requiring students to attend class once a week. This model works for students that are self-motivated and can attend class/complete their coursework at a fast pace. However, this is not the case for the majority of students who are underperforming and need more attention. Each charter/adult school has their own method of operating.”

Sometimes (on an individual basis), mentors recommended Youth to transfer to a specific charter school if they had the resources they needed (such as smaller classrooms or child care services). Check & Connect Mentors checked-in on each of the Youth on a weekly basis. In addition, mentors would receive communication from students’ teacher if a student missed a class or did not turn in assignments on time. In most cases, counselors and teachers know when a student is part of the program and reach out to the student’s mentor if there are any academic issues. Mentors shared multiple instances when a Youth’s teacher contacted them regarding a students’ performance. The following are some examples of how mentors advocated for Opportunity Youth:

“One of my kids shared that they had turned in an assignment very late and his teacher would not accept it. I was surprised because he had walked me through his assignment and had even asked me for materials. When I talked to the teacher, he advised me he couldn’t accept the assignment because it was late and that the student in question was lazy and always showing up to class high. The mentor explained to the teacher that the student did not do drugs (that they could drug test if he wanted). That the student had extracurricular activities and worked after school to help his parents financially. The reason he was having challenges completing assignments was because he was so tired was staying up late after work to do his homework. After hearing this the teacher allowed the student to make up assignments and was more understanding.”

Check & Connect Mentors served as an advocate and champion for Youth. At the beginning of the year, mentors reach out to each of their Youth’s teachers to make sure they know which of their students are enrolled in the Check & Connect mentor program. They work together to encourage student’s success. With many teachers contacting mentors if students were late, missing assignments, or underperforming.

Opportunity Coaches were also able to help Youth reconnect with their education. They helped Youth enroll in charter programs such as Urban Corps where Youth can complete their high school education and receive paid apprenticeship training. The ability for many of these Youth to be able to earn a wage, learn job skills, and gain their education at the same proved to be valuable. This type of program is invaluable for Youth that need an income now. One Youth shared the impact that the program has had on his education.

“When I was in High School, thinking about dropping out my mentor [extracted mentor’s name] guided me through & worked with me until I became successful.” – High School Youth

Both Check & Connect Mentors and Opportunity Coaches worked with in-school youth, the former worked with 68% of all high school youth participating in the PATHWAYS Reengagement Pilot. 30 Opportunity Coaches primarily worked with opportunity youth enrolled in programs outside of the San Diego Unified School District.

30 For this purpose high school youth includes those enrolled in High School, Charter School, or GED programs.
Check & Connect Mentors and Opportunity Coaches worked with Youth in enrolling them in postsecondary education. Mentors and Coaches guided Youth through the registration system. They both shared taking students to local community colleges and universities to take assessment tests, connect them to local resources such as Extended Opportunity Programs & Services (EOPS), and to show them their college campus. Opportunity Coaches had the additional added value that they could assist Youth by paying for books through their incentive program.  

Students could submit receipts to get reimbursed for books; however, for some students it was a challenge to even provide the additional funds to get his/her books. In these scenarios, Opportunity Coaches went with their students and purchased the books directly.

**Preparing Youth for the Workforce: Workshops, Training, Internships, and Apprenticeships**

Urban League Opportunity Coaches worked on preparing Youth for the workforce. They did this in a variety of ways from connecting Youth to certification training, skill workshops, apprenticeships and internships. Urban League partnered with Manpower, a job placement agency, to provide employment, work readiness, life skills, and soft-skills training.

Manpower offered a MyLife Work Readiness workshop to teach Youth accountability, leadership, and basic skills for the world of work. This 2 week summer workshop took place Monday through Friday from 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm. Youth enrolled in the workshop could also access an online training module, “ManpowerYou” (formerly known as Training & Development Center), where students could learn from a variety of workforce topics from Microsoft Office Suite, customer service, accounting, and IT certifications. Sixty-two Youth enrolled in the MyLife Work Readiness workshop and 22 took advantage of the online ManpowerYou component.

The MyLife program was structured like a game with participants needing to find solutions for real-world scenarios. Youth were split into two groups. They would each generate a virtual persona with specific education and resources. As the workshop progressed, the choices students made in prior rounds effected the choices they had moving forward. Youth had to find employment (that was attainable based on their persona’s education level), they received virtual paychecks, had to create budgets (including 401k, savings, etc.), and had to learn how to deal with random life scenarios. For the life scenarios component, Youth would randomly select a scenario from a grab bag. These scenarios varied from personal roadblocks that may arise, such as getting pregnant, to workplace issues that may occur. The following is one scenario:

“You’ve been asked to work offsite in Oceanside for the next 6 months. If you commute from where you currently live, you will reimbursed for mileage at the rate of $.45 per mile daily. But you will need to get 2 oil changes and have your tires rotated once during that time. Oh, and by the way, on the first day you make the trip, a rock hit your windshield and it’s cracked and needs to be replaced. You also have the option to temporarily relocate to North County, but you will bear the entire expense. Will you commute from Chula Vista every day? Why? Why not? How much will you spend to repair the windshield? Remember your auto insurance has a $500.00 deductible.”

Youth would have to find solutions for these scenarios. Each scenario would always come back to how Youth would solve the scenario if they were making minimum wage. These real-world scenarios were intended to help Youth understand how they could problem solve the unexpected. Youth also worked on their resumes, learned interviewing basics, and applied for internships.

Manpower also held financial literacy and career exploration workshops. These workshops helped prepare Youth with the knowledge they need to succeed in the real-world. Over 80 Youth participated in one or more of these workshops. With the average Youth attending 0.58 of a workshop, with 55 percent of (n=128) Youth not participating in a single workshop. Of the 45 percent of (n=104) Youth that did participate in a workshop, they attended on average 1.3 workshops from the MyLife courses, financial literacy, to Career Exploration workshops.

Opportunity Coaches also connected Youth to specialized certification programs such as getting their Food Handlers certificate, Guard Card, Microsoft certification to Mental Health First Aid Training and other specialized training which Youth demonstrated interest in. Figure 14 shows a breakdown of the types of training Youth completed.

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31 EOPS student services is a state funded program to retain students of an educationally or economically disadvantaged background. Part of the services include counseling, priority registration, book vouchers, monthly bus passes, scantrons and blue books, tutoring services, grants, and cap & gowns (for graduation).

32 Enrollment numbers from Manpower and Caljobs data set.

33 Note there was a discrepancy in Manpower and Caljob data entered. Manpower data only showed 48 enrolled and 29 completed during the course of the Pathways Reengagement Pilot program. Caljob notes showed many more completions.

34 Manpower and CaJobs case notes (2014-2016)
In addition to training, Urban League and Manpower helped Youth get workforce experience through paid internships. Throughout the two years of the Reengagement Pilot program there were 42 internships of 40 Youth. Youth performed a variety of duties from child care, food service, to administrative functions. The amount of time Youth were in internship placements varied from 16 hours to 132 hours per intern, with the average placement lasting 103 hours. Youth were able to learn from their internships and get work experience. Figure 15 lists the sites in which Youth worked.

Thirty-three Youth participated in apprenticeship programs, allowing them to learn about a specific trade and complete their GED requirements (if they had not received a diploma). Youth enrolled in programs such as Urban Corps and Associated General Contractors (ACG), specializing in construction, recycling, and solar industry programs. Youth worked a specific number of hours (varied by program) to get them hands-on training.

Youth in the Workforce: Employment
The primary goal of the Reengagement Pilot program was for participating Youth to obtain gainful employment. The Urban League was specifically contracted to assist Youth in obtaining employment (or helping the Youth get closer to being employed). At the beginning of the Reengagement Pilot program, Opportunity Coaches worked with students to identify their career goals and interests. Coaches connected students to permanent and temporary employment opportunities, encouraging Youth to seek their own jobs as well. At the beginning of the program there were seven Youth already employed, by the end of the two years this number increased to 105 employed Youth. Figure 16 shows a breakdown of the type of industries Youth received jobs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Industry</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure and Hospitality</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and Business Services</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>105</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

35 CalJobs case notes (2014-2016)
36 Manpower data
The research team was able to survey 74 Opportunity Youth participating in the Reengagement Pilot, accounting for only 32 percent of all enrolled Opportunity Youth. It should be noted that survey responses were from all Youth with their experience with the Reengagement program, the research team was not able to differentiate students’ experiences between Check & Connect Mentors and Opportunity Coaches. Throughout the following section there are references to Check & Connect Mentors and Opportunity Coaches, as these were the primary partners responsible for providing specific services to Youth (for example, Opportunity Coaches connected Youth to workforce training opportunities and employment prospects).

Surveyed Youth shared that from a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being negative impact, 5 being neutral, and 10 being great positive impact, the PATHWAYS Reengagement Pilot program had an average of an 8.2 positive impact on Youth's career goals. Figure 17 shows how Youth responded.

**Figure 17: Impact Program had on Opportunity Youth's Career Goals (n=73)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative Impact</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>37.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Impact</td>
<td>52.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Positive Impact</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using the same scale, Youth reported a positive impact of the program on their employment with an average of 7.5 positive impact (a little less than a 1 point difference).

**Figure 18: Impact Program had on Opportunity Youth's Employment (n=72)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative Impact</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Impact</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Positive Impact</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Opportunity Coaches helped Youth connect or prepare for jobs, providing resume writing assistance, transportation assistance to employment (bus passes), and even purchasing interview clothes and uniforms. When coaches met with Youth, they tried to get an understanding of their career goals to connect Youth with internships or employment opportunities within similar fields. In some cases, they connected Youth to temporary and permanent employment to help Youth earn money and experience. Some of these jobs included working security for the San Diego Comic Con, getting a guard card, and getting jobs with the County of San Diego administrative offices. Working with Manpower’s network and with Opportunity Coaches’ individual connections they were able to connect many Youth to jobs. In addition, coaches encouraged Youth to seek their own employment by teaching them job seeking techniques and referring them to job fairs.

**Connecting with Youth**

Partners experiences connecting with Youth varied considerably depending on the organization working with Youth. Because Check & Connect Mentors are located within the school district, they had open access to all of the high school campuses. They were able to connect with students at their schools. For the students that were not as engaged, or had significant absences, mentors reached out by phone or text, even conducting home visits.

Opportunity Coaches had much more difficulty connecting with Youth throughout the course of the pilot. They reached out via phone, text, or conducting home visits as well. However, they had a much more challenging time connecting with Youth, as many of their contact phone numbers changed throughout the course of the pilot program. This was likely exasperated because of the change in service providers with Youth enrolling and starting to work with one agency (such as Somali Family Service of San Diego) and then having a change in Opportunity Coaches to someone else without any “hand-off” or communication.

In interviews with Youth, it quickly became evident that many of the Youth did not know they were even part of the PATHWAYS Reengagement Pilot program. Many of the out-of-school Youth reported meeting their case manager once when they initially enrolled and not hearing back from them again. Some of these cases had been more than a year since their initial enrollment. Out-of-School interviewees agreed to meet with the research team at Insyt Analytics out of curiosity and to learn about potential resources Urban League could provide (in addition, someone from Urban League had promised them a monetary incentive for taking the time to meet with the research team). Part of the reason for this confusion could be in part because of the change in service providers throughout the course of the program. An analysis of CalJobs records for the first two years showed 17 entries per Youth (including unsuccessful contact attempts). Of those Youth surveyed, about 43 percent reported meeting frequently with their case managers. Figure 19 illustrates a breakdown of all Youth’s responses from surveys.

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37 Note: Check & Connect Mentors did not update the Caljobs system. They updated their own tracking tool.

38 Note: Case managers reported entries in Caljobs not updating. The research team is unaware how many records “disappeared” because of technical errors.
It should be noted that many of the in-school Youth were required to check-in with their Check & Connect Mentors through their school. To get a better understanding of how often out-of-school Youth met with Opportunity Coaches, the research team created another analysis. Figure 15 shows that almost 44 percent of Youth reported meeting with case managers on a frequent basis. Many of these Youth are in the high school program, which requires them to touch base with their Check & Connect Mentors on a weekly basis. Figure 20 shows that the majority (46 percent) of Youth not enrolled in high school met monthly or every-two-months with their case managers, with 40 percent of Youth never to rarely meeting with their case managers. Since these were out-of-school Youth one can infer that case managers meeting with Youth were Opportunity Coaches.

These numbers do not include Youth that did not complete the survey, it will likely miss those that are most disengaged in the program. According to case notes, by the end of the two years there were 44 Youth that were completely disconnected.

**Resources and Incentives**

Case managers provided Youth with resources and monetary incentives to help them with their education, training, and/or employment. The amount of handholding depended on each Youth and case manager. For example, an Opportunity Coach shared how they drove their Youth to their college to purchase books for them. Check & Connect Mentors shared taking their students to visit local colleges, taking them to take their college placement exam, helping their student complete the FAFSA form, and help them access resources available to them (such as campus tutoring services). Both coaches and mentors provided Youth bus passes and sometimes gas cards to help Youth get to their schools or jobs.

Urban League Opportunity Coaches were also able to provide Youth with monetary incentives for reaching specific milestones (or completing required testing). The Urban League had multiple monetary incentives for Youth, paying Youth $100 for receiving their high school (or equivalent) diploma. For Youth enrolled in college, Urban League would pay for their books. In general, students could request reimbursement by submitting a receipt. However, as the cost of books was a financial burden to many, some Opportunity Coaches took students to their school bookstore to pay for the Youth’s books directly. Figure 21 shows a list of amounts that Youth received for specific attainments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incentive</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completing High School Diploma</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolling in Post-Secondary School</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completing TABE test</td>
<td>$15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completing Surveys</td>
<td>$15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completing workshops or training programs</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving industry certification(s)</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus Pass</td>
<td>$38 youth / $70 adult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MyLife Work Readiness Training</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship Orientation</td>
<td>$20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Disconnected is defined as those whose contact information is no longer valid or refused to answer contact attempts. These youth were identified by case managers as being disengaged.
When many of the Youth are concerned about their finances and their family’s finances, having a monetary reason to complete a survey or workshop made it incentive enough for some people to complete.

The primary reasons that Youth reported enrolling in the Reengagement Pilot program was because of their interest in getting help securing employment or training and receiving help with their education. Youth also reported enrolling to get help in general and with life. With many Youth reporting that they were told it was a good opportunity for them. Figure 22 shows a list of the reasons students reported enrolling in the program.

Figure 21: Reasons Why Youth Enrolled in Reengagement Pilot Program (n=71)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee Assistance</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help with Academic Performance</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Help</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Help</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give option/selected</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following are a few testimonials directly from youth explaining why they enrolled in the Reengagement Pilot Program:

“To gain the proper skills for my career goal as well as professional and personable skills to use in the community” – Out of School Youth

“I chose to participate in this program so they can help me success in life and also to find the job that I want.” – High School Youth

“I chose to participate in this program because I knew it would give me the attention I needed. For example my check and connect mentor gives me motivation to keep up with school and if I ever need something she will help me.” – High School Youth

41 Youth may have listed more than one reason.
Youth’s Challenges

In general, the 16 to 21 year-old range is a formative time. This is a time in young adult’s life when they prepare themselves from a life of academics to career preparation or employment. For Opportunity Youth this is also the case, however, many of them have a myriad of additional challenges they must face. Figure 23 shows the top challenges faced by Opportunity Youth at the beginning of the Reengagement Pilot program and at the end of the second year.

Figure 23: Snapshot of Challenges Faced by Opportunity Youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Beginning of the Program</th>
<th>End of Year Two</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limited English</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Skills Deficient</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health/Counseling</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning or Medical/Physical Disability</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant or Parenting</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>+7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Issues/Instability</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gang Affected or Involved</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Records</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>+5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance Abuse Issues</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Case managers met with Youth throughout the program and identified challenges Youth were facing—connecting them with resources when they were available. Figure 24 shows Youth survey responses on the types of services they have experienced/been connected to since participating in the program.

Figure 24: Assistance Provided by Reengagement Program (n=73)

- Been provided mentoring/guidance: 51
- Referred to other resources: 30
- Enrolled in a job training program: 28
- Enrolled in an education program: 21
- Gained employment: 14
- Been given personal assistance (food resources, child care, etc.): 14

The most common challenge reported by case managers are family/stability issues, with 1 in 3 participants experiencing instability. These issues range from parents’ health problems, housing instability, lack of academic and emotional support from parents, and other problems. One Youth shared:

“This is a Good program, [they] help you out allot and checks on you to be on task. Brings you allot of opportunities.” – Opportunity Youth

43 Youth may have more than one challenge.
Many of participants have learning, medical, or physical disabilities requiring additional resources. Unfortunately, some of these Youth are diagnosed later in their academic career, requiring them to make-up past failed coursework and prolonging their time in high school. One Check & Connect Mentor described having to push a student's parents to allow their child to be tested for a learning disability because the parents were in denial that something was wrong.

A couple of case managers shared conducting home visits, meeting with Youth's parents and being surrounding by drugs in the living area. Other Youth abuse substances on their own or with their friends encouragement.

Homeless Youth include those that have been kicked out of their homes and are couch surfing. This also includes Youths whose families have been evicted because they cannot afford to pay the rent and are constantly moving from home to home. There were approximately 27 Youth facing these types of barriers throughout the two years of this program. These Youth were often challenging to reach, as their contact information changed often. The large majority of these students were in the Urban League's program. Opportunity Coaches connected these Youth with shelters and other resources, also reaching out to shelters to get in touch with Youth.

Other challenges faced by Youth include being pregnant or parenting, having a criminal record (often making it more challenging to find employment), having mental health issues, being on probation, and being a foster Youth. These challenges and others often impact an individual's academic performance and employment.

One of the aspects that was not clear from the beginning of the Reengagement Pilot program was how involved and available case managers were expected to be for Youth. When case managers met with Youth they advised them to let them know if they needed anything. Youth took this to mean a variety of different factors. Case managers reported picking up Youth in the middle of the night when they were stranded without a ride after they picked-up extra hours at work. Others described driving Youth to interviews or to resource centers to help Youth get the help they need. One case manager shared that one of their Youth's parents called them in a panic because their Youth was having a mental breakdown. The case manager was the only person able to calm the Youth down.

There is a level of trust that is built with Youth and their case managers. Interestingly, this trust does not seem to take long to develop for some Youth. Even with all the changes in case managers, some Youth did not seem to have a difficult time reaching out to case managers they just met. When I asked one of the case managers if they noticed this as well, they shared that they thought it was because many of the Youth really do not have anyone else they could turn to. Even during the course of interviewing Opportunity Youth, the research team found that most of the Youth opened up without reservations.

When Youth were asked to rate the level of personal support the program has had on them, they rated an average of 8.4 on using the same 1 to 10 scale. With the majority of Youth reporting that the Reenagement Pilot program had positive to great positive impact. Figure 25 shows the chart of survey respondents.

Figure 25: Impact Program has had on Opportunity Youth Personal Support (n=69)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
<th>Positive Impact</th>
<th>Great Positive Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
<td>62.3%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, Youth were asked to rate the emotional impact that the Reengagement Pilot program has had on them on the same 1 to 10 scale. Figure 26 illustrates the emotional impact that the pilot and its case managers had on Opportunity Youth. With the majority (84.7 percent) answering that they had a positive to great positive impact on receiving emotional support as well.

Figure 26: Impact Program has had on Opportunity Youth Emotional Support (n=73)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Impact</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
<th>Positive Impact</th>
<th>Great Positive Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>47.2%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Youth responded with the following comments:

“I am very proud that I was involved in this program because of it I was able to get a job.” – Out-of-School Opportunity Youth

“I really appreciate the help this program has gave me.” – Out-of-School Opportunity Youth

“The mentoring has had a good impact in my life and the my life training have good as well.” – In-School Opportunity Youth

Unfortunately, many of the challenges that youth started facing at the beginning of the program did not change by the end of year two of the program. The one challenge that had the most change was those pregnant or parenting (an increase of seven youth) and those with criminal records (an increase of five youth). There was a decrease of youth with substance abuse issues with case managers reporting that four less youth had problems. Albeit, it is worth noting that many did gain positive educational and employment attainments during that time frame. Overcoming personal and environmental challenges will likely take youth more time than the scope of this program allowed, however, at least now case managers have been able to point youth to various resources that can provide them with assistance.

Case managers assisted youth with academic guidance, training, and employment guidance and connections. They also provide other services from paying for their college textbooks, bus passes, helping obtain food stamps and connecting youth and their families to other resources. Figure 26 shows services that opportunity youth report receiving.

Figure 27: Services Youth Report Receiving through Reengagement Pilot Program (n=73)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship/internship</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutoring</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework assistance</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those Youth that were active seemed to be greatly appreciative of the resources provided through the Reengagement Pilot program. This does not mean that the program was without faults. As mentioned previously, there were many Youth that did not get involved until much later in the program. One Youth commented:

“I think you should get more opportunity coaches. I only hear from [name extracted] I go into the offices and that’s unacceptable. I should hear from the program more often.” – In-school Opportunity Youth

Other Youth, had the opportunity to get involved and chose not to be involved (or tried to get involved later). One interviewee mentioned that she wanted to take a year off after she graduated school. She mentioned how Urban League called her on numerous occasions to engage her. A year later, when they reached out again she answered the phone and started to participate in the program. She confided that she wished she had done it earlier- but there was nothing that anyone could have done to convince her of it last year.
The Pathways Reengagement Pilot program was created to provide services to San Diego’s Opportunity Youth in a comprehensive case management format. The partners were to provide a mentor style relationship and guidance for Youth. As with most pilot programs, there are always lessons learned and recommendations for future similar programs. The Moving Forward: Lessons Learned and Recommendations section provides a thorough analysis of lessons learned from the PATHWAYS collaborative and the Reengagement Pilot program. Even with the challenges that existed, it is evident that there were many successes within the three years that the program was implemented.

Through surveys and interviews, many Youth expressed gratitude towards mentors for their efforts and connections. Although, implementation of the program did not go exactly as anticipated by the Pathways Collaborative, there were still many successes throughout the two years of implementation.

Opportunity Youth in San Diego received many attainments, with 87 Youth receiving their high school diploma (or equivalent), with 67 Youth still being enrolled and on track to receive their high school diploma. Thirty-nine Youth enrolled in a college or university. Case managers were able to serve as mentors and as a resource, providing Youth with bus passes, school books, helping them with financial aid forms, and helping them navigate the different school systems.

Youth were also able to get work training experience, participating in internships, apprenticeships, and securing employment. At the beginning of the program 7 Opportunity Youth were already employed, by the end of year two, Youth had attained 105 jobs and internships. Giving Youth valuable work experience to help them be more competitive in the workplace.

It is clear from the data, that the SDUSD Check & Connect Mentors and the Urban League (and partner organizations) Opportunity Coaches had a positive impact on many of the participating Opportunity Youth from their academic achievements and workforce experience. Just as importantly, Youth that were active participants shared how much their case managers motivated and pushed them forward- connecting Youth to resources and helping them stay on task- helping prepare Opportunity Youth for a better future.
A RANDOMIZED CONTROL TRIAL

As mentioned at the beginning of this report, the Insy Analytics research team worked with YDO and the SDUSD Drop-Out Prevention office to conduct a small randomized control trial to evaluate the impact of the Pathways Reengagement Pilot program with the Youth that participated in only Check & Connect mentor services and those that also received Urban League employment and training services.

The SDUSD Drop-Out Prevention office had a master list of all SDUSD students at high schools within the geographic scope of the program effort. Mentors pre-qualified students that had recently dropped out of school, or were at risk of dropping out/failing. Mentors reached out to students and their parents to get them to sign consent forms to participate in the program (or control group). The research team randomly selected two-thirds of the students to participate in the program. All students would receive Check & Connect mentor services, however, the selected two-third of students to get more comprehensive services (including those from the Urban League).

Figure 28 shows a comparison of educational attainment of Opportunity Youth in the PATHWAYS Reengagement Pilot program and those in the control group that only received Check & Connect mentor services. As it’s clear from the figures, the graduation rate is close to the same as the control group. There are less Youth still enrolled in school through the control group. The most telling figure is the 10 percent difference between students in pilot program still enrolled in school compared to those in the control group. The “other” category represents students that either transferred schools or dropped-out. The Pathways participants has almost a 10 percent lower rate of students that fall within the “other” category. A closer look at the students that dropped-out of high school, shows that students in the PATHWAYS Reengagement Pilot program were three times less likely to drop-out of high school than those in the control group.

Other outcomes such as employment for Opportunity Youth in the control trial are unknown.
MOVING FORWARD: LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are highlights of lessons learned from the San Diego Youth Opportunity Pathways Initiative (PATHWAYS), from both setting up the PATHWAYS Collaborative and the PATHWAYS Reengagement Pilot program. The research team met with ten partners to uncover lessons learned from the PATHWAYS Initiative. The following are a list of the lessons learned that were gleaned from the interviews and throughout the course of the three-year evaluation.

**Lesson 1: When a collaborative creates a reengagement project, it needs to remain involved throughout the duration of the program to ensure program integrity.**

Collaboratives need to continue to be involved throughout the life cycle of a reengagement program, not only during the planning phase but also during implementation. Although the Collaborative’s level of effort will change over time, it needs to remain involved to continue driving the greater vision and strategy of the program. This includes continuing engagement of leadership within collaborative member organizations and other partner organizations.

Collaborative members need to be involved from the setting-up of contracts with service providers to include the vision and purpose of the program in any contracts. The contractual performance metrics and outcome goals of all service providers should also align with each other and with the vision of the initiative.

**Lesson 2: Account for limitations and restrictions that are placed on services when braiding public funding streams.**

When braiding public funds (allocated for specific components of a program), service providers need to understand the restrictions and limitations of each of these funding streams. For the PATHWAYS Reengagement Pilot program there were primarily two sources of public funding – Workforce Investment Act/Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and K-12 Education. When working with public funding streams, service providers need to have a clear understanding limitations and restrictions associated with these funds. If public funds are being used for any contractual work, partners should realize that contracts governed by Federal regulations offer less flexibility. It’s critical that partners using public funds (especially Federal funds), carefully review contracts, and include as much flexibility as possible.

**Lesson 3: Service providers’ Federal contracting and financial management experience is critical to the success of reengagement programming. This is evidenced through administrative capacity and management expertise due to the complexity of Federal contract administration.**

The contractual parameters associated with Federal funding have programmatic impact on participant eligibility, required documentation, performance, outcomes and timelines. If an organization, does not have the demonstrated Federal contract management experience, programmatic outcomes will be impacted. The contractor should also take into account the administrative costs associated with managing a Federal contract.

**Lesson 4: Service providers must have management staff with strong leadership capabilities.**

Staff who manage reengagement efforts needs to be strong leaders with the capability and capacity to provide staff with guidance, support, and attainable goals. As such, they must be adept in Federal contracting (see Lesson 3) as well as services provided and how the two impact each other. Furthermore, management staff need to provide for employee professional development, corrective actions, and address employee turnover to minimize the impact on Youth participants.
Lesson 5: With a focus on individual goals, challenges, and barriers – reengagement success is dependent upon connecting, engaging and building trust with OY and their families.

Case managers need to build trust and a good rapport with Youth and their family members. OY should view the case manager as a resource. To that end, case managers should connect with Youth. They can do this by being open and accountable. Youth and their families need to know that case managers will keep their promises and do it in a timely manner. It takes time to build trust and a good rapport. Case managers should be persistent when reaching out to Youth. Checking-in with them on a frequent basis, even if the Youth does not respond. Case managers interviewed shared that Youth would listen and eventually learn they could trust them.

Case managers should work on engaging youth (and their families) throughout a program (especially for multi-year programs). One way to continue to have youth engaged throughout a program is by having them re-commit. This also ensures that participants remain aware of the services available to them and the main purpose of a program (which is to assist them). If the Youth are involved with their families, case managers should try and engage them – even in cases where families appear to be dysfunctional. In most instances, families are “gate keepers”, where you have to build family relationships in order to talk to Youth. Family members may be a good resource, providing updates or reaching out if they have concerns.

Case managers should treat each Youth as an individual. They need to keep in mind the primary goal (whether it be academics or employment) and provide services and opportunities that will assist each Youth in moving closer to that goal, making sure that “additional” opportunities do not compete for their time and effort. (For example, if the primary goal for a Youth is to graduate high school and they are struggling with their grades, case managers should not offer internship opportunities that will make it more challenging for a Youth to focus on their schooling.)

Reengagement programs need to provide supportive services, as OY often face many barriers. Case managers should keep these barriers and other external factors in mind when working with Opportunity Youth. For example, Youth shared with case managers that they could not participate in some opportunities because of the gang territories they would have to go by on their way to their destination.

Lesson 6: Staff responsible for providing case management services should be involved in the reengagement program planning phase. The reengagement program must include opportunities for programmatic adjustments during implementation as needed.

When planning reengagement programming, program staff should be included. It’s important to engage the service providers that will be implementing the program to ensure they fully understand and “buy-in” to the theory of change and programmatic elements. They also can contribute invaluable “on the ground” information that may not be available through data. If program staff cannot be a part of the planning process, then there should be flexibility built in the process to allow them to make changes when they are available.

Lesson 7: Start with a small reengagement program or services and scale up over time. Integrate incremental outcomes and data tracking early in the process to demonstrate impact.

Reengagement programs would benefit from starting small (40 - 50 OY) and scaling up on an incremental basis. This will be especially valuable for multi-year programs. Programs should ensure to build and track incremental outcomes as part of their performance metrics. When working with Opportunity Youth, case managers need to be able to track and demonstrate progress (even if small), in addition to the milestones such as achieved a high school credential.

Programs should plan how they will integrate data collection into their programmatic process. All service providers should participate in identifying tracking metrics they require. Including how program staff will track Youth, and the frequency of updating the data. It’s critical that this step occurs prior to implementation. This is especially important for any program trying to demonstrate impact.
For this evaluation, the Insyt Analytics team interviewed Pathways Reengagement Pilot program senior leaders, Check & Connect Mentors and Opportunity Coaches. The evaluation team also surveyed Opportunity Youth and collected data by tracking Opportunity Youth.

Data Collection: Reengagement Pilot Program Opportunity Youth Tracking
Insyt Analytics created a Tracking Tool to track individual Opportunity Youth. The tracking tool was intended for both service providers (SDUSD and SDUL) to update each of their Youth's challenges and attainments. After two years, the reliability of the data was not accurate because lack of consistency among users. The research team continued to use the tracking tool to update Youth challenges and achievements. Researchers met individually with case managers to inquire about each Youth, also augmenting case mangers updates with educational outcome data from the SDUSD, with reports from the CalJOBS database, and interviews with Youth.

The SDUSD provided education attainment information for in-school Opportunity Youth in High School (such as GPA, school, grade level, etc.). In addition, evaluators were able to access Youth’s basic information (such as geography, date of birth, some challenges, educational attainment, etc.). This information was entered in the Opportunity Youth Tracking Tool to track individuals' challenges, educational attainment, and employment.

In addition, the evaluator met with all Check & Connect Mentors and Opportunity Coaches to get detailed information regarding each Opportunity Youth participating in the Reengagement Pilot program. These meetings included discussions regarding each Youth’s current educational attainment, challenges, and employment.

Interviews
The research team interviewed Opportunity Youth, staff, leaders, and partners during the course of the three years of the program. The purpose of the interviews was to get a more comprehensive understanding on the impact of the program on Opportunity Youth.

In addition, the research team met with case managers on a one-on-one basis to get updates on Opportunity Youth. These informal meetings included case managers input on successes and challenges case managers faced on a daily basis.

Surveys
With the help of program partners, the research team conducted a survey of Opportunity Youth. A total of 73 survey responses were collected. Youth were advised (in written and verbally) that all survey responses would be anonymous. Although, it should be noted that case managers were responsible for distributing the survey. With the majority printing out hard copies for Youth to complete. As an incentive, Urban League paid $15 for the Youth that completed the survey. Youth wrote their names on the surveys to ensure they got credit, but were advised that the surveys would be completely anonymous.

Analysis and Report
Between August 2015 and June 2016, the evaluators collected Youth's detailed information to understand the challenges and current educational attainment of each Opportunity Youth.

Limitations of the Data
The data collected on each individual Youth was based on their observations and reporting of Youth's challenges and current standing. Other than the learning disability section in which students were tested, there were no tests to confirm if a Youth was experiencing specific challenges (such as a drug test).
## APPENDIX A – ORIGINAL COLLABORATIVE MEMBERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Committee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moises Aguirre</td>
<td>Executive Director, District Relations</td>
<td>San Diego Unified School District</td>
<td>Advisory Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Allen</td>
<td>Deputy Chief Probation Officer</td>
<td>County of San Diego, Probation Department</td>
<td>Advisory Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Barrera</td>
<td>SDUSD Board (Secretary-Treasurer)</td>
<td>San Diego Unified School District &amp; San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council</td>
<td>Advisory Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marisa Berumen</td>
<td>Deputy Chief of Staff</td>
<td>Council Office District 9</td>
<td>Advisory Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Brunker</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Jackie Robinson YMCA</td>
<td>Advisory Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Cesena</td>
<td>Police Officer Mid City Division</td>
<td>San Diego Police Department</td>
<td>Advisory Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorraine Collins</td>
<td>Dean, Workforce Development</td>
<td>San Diego Community College District</td>
<td>Advisory Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margie de Ruyter</td>
<td>Senior Director of Workforce Initiatives</td>
<td>San Diego Workforce Partnership</td>
<td>Advisory Group / Pathways &amp; Programs Momentum Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Eldred</td>
<td>Program Manager</td>
<td>The California Endowment</td>
<td>Advisory Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marne Foster</td>
<td>SDUSD Board Member</td>
<td>San Diego Unified School District Board</td>
<td>Advisory Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Elenore Garton</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Garton Strategy Group</td>
<td>Advisory Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie Gioia-Beckman</td>
<td>Senior Policy Advisor</td>
<td>San Diego County Board of Supervisors - 4th District</td>
<td>Advisory Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian Gordon</td>
<td>Pathways Site Lead</td>
<td>San Diego Youth Development Office</td>
<td>Advisory Group / Metrics &amp; Scoping Momentum Team / Pathways &amp; Programs Momentum Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaina Gross</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>United Way of San Diego County</td>
<td>Advisory Group / Pathways &amp; Programs Momentum Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy Jamison</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>San Diego Grantmakers</td>
<td>Advisory Group</td>
</tr>
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**Map Legend**

- **Original census tracts**
- **Expanded census tracts**
Subject: Check & Connect 2014 Pathways Opportunity Youth

Date: Friday, September 19, 2014 at 4:25:06 PM Pacific Daylight Time

From: Phillips Becky

To: Roberson Jennifer, Alvarez Ana, Pickett Jolie, Austin Joe, Ross John, Nash Richard, Remillard Ernest, Shelton Harry, Becker Hans, Cordero Dianne, Garcia Carmen, Casillas Christina, Rohods Gretchen, Castleberry Mary, Martinez Emma

CC: Fulcher Joe, Moore Richard, Janak Melissa, Kea, Ian Gordon, Phillips Mildred, Bell Peter, Justin Douglas

Priority: High

Dear Colleagues –

We are excited to let you know that Check & Connect mentors will be working with a new cohort of students beginning this Fall through June of 2017. Through an exciting partnership between the school district, San Diego Workforce Partnership, Youth Development Office and the Urban League of San Diego County, 150 in-school students and 100 recent dropouts will receive the services of a Check & Connect mentor to increase their engagement and persistence in school and an Urban League Opportunity Coach who will support them with job readiness training, exposure to post-secondary education, internship and employment options.

As part of a national project supported by the Aspen Institute, Opportunity Youth Incentive Fund (http://aspencommunitysolutions.org/the-fund/), the San Diego program has targeted three neighborhoods for support – Colina del Sol, Lincoln Acres and Stockton/Logan. While almost 600 high school age students live in these neighborhoods, based on age and school enrollment, we have pre-qualified about 300 San Diego Unified students as eligible to participate in the program. Like other research projects, we are hoping to obtain consent from students and parents from 300 in-school students for random assignment to either receive services or be serve as a control group. The district will use our existing student information to also recruit approximately 100 recent high school dropouts for mentoring/coaching support (students who in recent years may have been identified through Project Recovery).

Eligible students have been ranked on a 0-99 scale as to the probability of on-time high school graduation developed by Dr. Julian Betts, UCSD, SANDERA. This probability score is based on middle to high school grades, language acquisition, attendance, discipline referrals and other information. Students selected for recruitment fall between 0-75% on the probability scale for on-time graduation. As in previous years, mentors/coaches will follow students to other local schools if they move during the program period. Students must live in the targeted neighborhoods in order to initially enroll in the program.

Preliminary district data shows that students living in the target neighborhoods who are eligible to participate in this program are enrolled in the following district high schools:

Clairemont (7)
Crawford (62)
Garfield (1.1)
Hoover (16)
Lincoln (68)
Madison (8)
Mission Bay (16)
Morse (2)
Point Loma (8)
San Diego High-All (53) (Bus/LEADS -80, IS-3, MVP Arts 11, SciTech 9)
Serra (2)
Twain (5)
(Approximately 28 students are divided among other district high schools that did not previously participate in Check & Connect. Almost 300 high school students in these neighborhoods are enrolled in Charter or SD Co Office of Education schools).

Attached for your information is the consent form we will use for program participation. The form will be printed in Spanish as well. We would like to begin recruiting at your school next week – September 22-26. If at all possible the assistance of your high school counselors would be appreciated (there may possibly be a gift card incentive for school personnel who assist). I will call you on Monday or Tuesday to discuss logistics and give more information about your identified students.

All of the schools listed above have had Check & Connect mentors working with students on site for the past three years and should be acquainted with our staff. Current Check & Connect mentors are: Brisa Rodrigues, Benjamin Williams, Aleandro Wiltower, and Raquel Hernandez.

As always, if you have any questions please contact me, even this weekend, and I will respond. Again, we are so happy to be able to continue this important intervention work for our students needing extra support.

Becky

Rebecca F. (Becky) Phillpott
Program Manager, Dropout Prevention
619-725-5595
619-725-5599 (Fax)
APPENDIX D – OPPORTUNITY YOUTH SURVEY

1. What is your age?

2. Gender
   Male    Female    Other

3. Please check which of the following apply to you: In-school youth (High School only)
   - In-school youth (GED)
   - In-school youth (Vocational School, College, or Other education)
   - Out-of-school youth

4. On a scale from 1 to 10 please rate how much you agree with the following statements.
   a. I know what career I want to have in the future.
   b. I have a plan and goals for my future.
   c. I am able to solve problems in a positive manner.
   d. I have the ability to make positive changes in my life.
   e. I am motivated to try new things.
   f. My family supports me in my educational/career goals

5. Please rate the level of trust you have when working with the following people. Please use a scale from 1 to 10. With 1 being do not trust at all, and 10 being very much trust:
   a. Case manager
   b. Check & Connect Mentor (SDUSD)
   (DO NOT CHECK IF OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH OR IN COLLEGE)

6. How frequently do you meet or touch base with your case manager or mentor?
   Daily
   Multiple times a week
   Weekly
   Every two weeks
   Monthly
   Every two months
   Rarely
   Never

7. Please rate the impact this program has had on you. Please use a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being negative impact, 5 being no impact all, and 10 being a great positive impact.
   Your education
   Your career goals
   Employment
   Personal support
   Emotional support

8. Have you experienced any of the following while participating in this program?
   Referred to other resources
   Been provided mentoring/guidance
   Been given personal assistance (food resources, child care, etc.)
   Gained employment
   Enrolled in an education program
   Enrolled in a job training program
9. What type of services or resources have you been referred to? (Check all that apply)
   - Shelter
   - Food stamps
   - Employment
   - Apprenticeship/internship opportunities
   - Substance abuse counseling
   - Homework assistance
   - Tutoring
   - Child care
   - Legal assistance
   - Other:

10. For the most part, what has been your experience when working with the services/resources you have been referred to? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being negative impact, 5 being no impact all, and 10 being a great positive impact.

11. Why did you choose to participate in this program? (Open ended)

12. Are there any additional comments or feedback you would like to share? (Open ended)
APPENDIX E – OPPORTUNITY YOUTH INTERVIEW GUIDE

Hi- my name is Gladys. I work for a company that is conducting an evaluation of the impact that the PATHWAYS initiative has on youth such as yourself. It’s not about what they do right or wrong. It’s about the impact they make. To understand what works and what doesn’t- to better improve services. I just want to ask you a few questions about your experience. The information you share with me today will combined with all other interviews- what you say will remain confidential- so no one will know what you said.

Student Interview Protocol

Interviewee (Name): _______________________________________________

A: Interviewee Background

1. How did you hear about the Pathways Initiative (Re-Engagement)?

2. In your own words. Can you describe the initiative and/or the types of services they provide?

3. Why did you choose to participate in this initiative?

B. Experience

4. What types of services have they given you?

5. Who contacts who? Do you call when you need something? Do they call you when something is available?

6. Can you walk me through what you do to get services?

7. Is there anywhere else you use as a resource?

8. Are there other services that would be helpful to you?

9. Tell me a little about yourself. Did you graduate high school? What are you working on (school/job)?
   a. Did UL help you get job or internship?

10. Anything you want to add?
APPENDIX F – CASE MANAGERS, LEADERSHIP, AND PARTNERS INTERVIEW GUIDE

We are conducting an evaluation of the PATHWAYS Initiative (the planning and the Re-Engagement Pilot program). As part of the evaluation, we are conducting interviews with people involved in the planning and implementation of the program. This interview should last approximately one-hour. This is a fairly informal format. I have some specific questions, I would like to ask, but please feel free to add any information you feel would be relevant.

Key:
Case Manager = CM
Leadership = L
Partner = P

Background
Q1 (CM, L, P). How long were you involved with the PATHWAYS Program? Please describe how you were involved?

Q2 (CM, L, P). What was the vision of the program that was explained to you?

Q3 (CM, L, P). What did you see your role as part of the PATHWAYS Program?

Planning
Q4 (CM, L, P). Did you participate in the planning process of PATHWAYS? What was your role?

Q5 (CM). When did you get involved in the Re-Engagement program (what year)? If you were the person to enroll your Youth, how did you prepare to work with each Youth? If you were later assigned the Youth, how did you prepare to work with each Youth? (E.g. did you meet with each Youth, read their case file, reach out, etc.)

Q6 (L). When did you get involved in the Re-Engagement program (what year)? If you were the person involved at the beginning, how did you prepare for working on this project? Were you given the opportunity to develop/make changes to the program? If you were later assigned to the project, how were you integrated into the process? (E.g. did you have an orientation, clear expectations, etc.)

Q7 (P). Describe the planning phase of the PATHWAYS project. Did you have a clear assignment/role, did you have clear expectations on the purpose of the collaborative and your role within it?

Working with Youth
Q8 (CM, L). Think back to when you were recruiting students. Was it challenging to get Opportunity Youth enrolled? What was it that made it challenging/easy? Do you have any recommendations for future programs to help in recruiting Youth (process, tactics, etc)?

Q9 (CM, L). When providing services to Youth, did you have access to all the services your Youth required (connections for emergency shelter, tutoring, etc)?

Q10 (CM, L). Think back to your Youth. Was there a difference between those that were engaged and disengaged?

Q11 (CM, L). Do you have any recommendations for future case managers how they can encourage Youth engagement?

Q12 (CM, L). The number of Youth per case manager varied dramatically. In your opinion, what is an ideal model?
Q13 (P). Were you approached by any of the partners to provide specific supports for Opportunity Youth? (Through internship, connections, resources, etc)
Administrative
Q14 (CM, L). How often did you connect with your Youth’s respective coach/mentor? Can you describe the nature of how these meetings worked? What was the primary purpose? (Were you able to strategize on ways of reaching Youth? Did you update each other on the status of your Youth?)

Q15 (CM). As you went through the case management process, how would you describe the process? Did tracking each Youth (Caljobs or through Tracking system) add a significant burden? Do you have any recommendations or thoughts on how this data can be collected in future projects to ease the burden off case managers?

Q16 (L). How would you describe the reporting process to your funder? Are their components of the reporting process that helped/hindered the program?

Q17 (CM). How often did you meet with senior leadership at your organization? Do you think this was sufficient? Could you have had additional supports from upper management (e.g. resources, flexibility, etc)?

Q18 (L). How often did you meet with case managers at your organization? Do you think this was sufficient? Could you have received additional supports from other partners to help improve the process?

Participation in PATHWAYS
Q19 (CM, L, P). Have there been benefits/opportunities from being part of the PATHWAYS Program? Please describe.

Q20 (CM, L, P). Have there been challenges from being part of the PATHWAYS Program? Please describe.

Q21 (CM, L, P). The PATHWAYS Program was a pilot initiative that was meant to showcase two organizations collaborating to help Opportunity Youth. Do you have any recommendations/lessons learned on what worked and what could be improved on in the future?

Other
Q22 (CM, L, P). Thinking about the planning, implementation, and administrative process; are there ways that San Diego Youth Development Office (YDO) could have provided additional support to help you work with Opportunity Youth?

Q23 (CM, L, P). Are there any additional comments or feedback you would like to share?
APPENDIX G – WORKS CITED


Opportunity Index, Nationwide and San Diego County, opportunityindex.org, 2016
