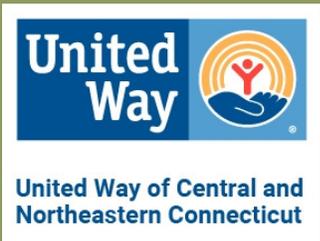


HARTFORD WORKING CITIES





WHAT IS THE GOAL OF HARTFORD WORKING CITIES?

The goal of Hartford Working Cities is to reduce the unemployment rates of marginalized young adults, particularly opportunity youth, in targeted neighborhoods in Hartford. The unemployment rate for young adults in our focus area is twice as high as the City of Hartford average and three-times higher than the state average.

<u>Region</u>	<u>Unemployment Rate</u>
Connecticut, statewide (ages 16 and over)	4%
City of Hartford (ages 16 and over)	6%
Young Adults in Hartford Working Cities neighborhoods (ages 16 to 29)	13.2%



WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS OUR INITIATIVE IS ADDRESSING?



Lack of awareness: Many young adults do not know what employment opportunities best fit their skills and interests. They are also unaware of compensation levels, the specific training they need, how to get it, how long it will take, and available scholarships and funding opportunities to cover the training. Many young adults need help developing essential skills (interview prep, communication etc.).

Service delivery system challenges: There are many programs to help young adults get the preparation services and training they need, but they are often offered in isolation from other services that would accelerate young adults' progress toward improved employment outcomes. In addition, programs have different practices related to referrals and data-sharing which limit their full potential to reach the right young adults at the right time in their lives. Also, young adults are most receptive to receiving help from people who are from their neighborhood and who are culturally competent, relatable, and understanding about their circumstances.

Employer policies and practices: Some industries with high talent demands have had limited success in hiring and retaining Hartford's young adults. Barriers to hiring and retaining include policies and practices that limit young adults' exposure to their opportunities; and/or otherwise exclude them from consideration.

Young adults are excluded from decision-making: There are very limited opportunities that compensate youth and young adults for their time and lived expertise in order to involve them in opportunities to address the aforementioned challenges.





WHAT IS THE STRATEGY TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM?

Establishing peer outreach and increasing youth leadership in decision-making:

Hartford Working Cities engages young adults from Hartford neighborhoods to develop and sustain a peer outreach network, and to provide opportunities for young adults to share their perspectives with leaders in the workforce system to influence policies and practices. The Young Legends, a group of young adults from Hartford, work to educate and connect youth and young adults ages 16-29 to quality employment opportunities and resources. They host programs and training that aim to equip youth and young adults with the skills needed to become successful in and out of the workplace. Young Legends will have neighborhood liaisons who will work to promote services and opportunities to youth specifically in their targeted neighborhood.

We are working to expand the Young Legends membership – creating a cohort of 20 Hartford young adults working to connect their peers with educational, career, and job training opportunities. Young Legends will convene this group every month and host monthly workshops focused on advocacy, leadership, and career readiness. This will allow us to create a larger and more diverse group of young leaders; it will also allow us to connect a greater number of young adults to job opportunities and services.



Increasing collaboration and alignment of partners and resources:

Hartford Working Cities partners with multiple stakeholders (see Appendix) including the Hartford Opportunity Youth Collaborative (HOYC), which was most recently chaired by former Mayor Bronin and managed by Capital Workforce Partners. Collectively we coordinate the Education and Training Consortium/Career Pathways Committee which is focused on providing more than 20 youth and workforce organizations with training opportunities that address positive youth development, mental health, wellness and trauma-informed practices. Examples of recent projects include:

- Hartford Workforce Leaders Academy: A five-month fellowship designed for senior and middle managers from workforce development and youth service organizations who influence and implement policies and practices related to employment outcomes for young adults.
- Career Navigator Community of Practice: We host monthly meetings and quarterly workshops for career navigators that will help them increase opportunities to deliver effective services and advance systems changes that improve outcomes for young adults. Our goal is to connect with approximately 50 more navigators which will allow us to expand and enhance shared practices.

Raising awareness and changing policies and practices among employers:

Hartford Working Cities partners with Workforce Solutions Collaborative of Metro Hartford and Capital Workforce Partners to coordinate career navigation services that address needs raised by regional sector partnerships. Employers have shared information about open positions and their requirements along with training opportunities, which navigators then share with service providers and young adults. Navigators also share information about challenges and barriers to employment among young adults and suggest ways that employers can adjust their practices to result in increased hiring and retention rates. An example of a recent project includes:

- Young Adults @ Work, a report developed by young adults, was shared with manufacturing employers with the intent of informing and inspiring employers.



WHAT STEPS NEED TO BE TAKEN?

- 1 Expansion of the Career Navigation Community of Practice (Launch Nov. 2023).
 - a. Co-lead launch with CWP and the City of Hartford (Nov. 2023).
 - b. Recruit more career navigator participants (Nov. 2023).
 - c. NHAP Career Navigator Pop-Up Shops (Feb. 2024).
 - d. Launch of Career Navigator Hubs (Fall-Summer 2024).
 - e. Career Navigation Peer Mentorship Certificate Program.
 - f. Career Navigation Hub Youth Committee (Jan. - Feb. 2024).

This expansion will help increase job placement opportunities for youth and young adults and improve employment retention. Youth involvement will allow us to better understand the needs and wants of those we serve.

- 2 Host a cohort of the Young Legends Leadership Academy (Jan. - Feb.).
 - a. Provide up to 25 Hartford young adults with skills and tools that will help them thrive in the workforce and beyond. (Jan. - Feb. 2024).
 - b. Work with Young Legends to design the program and outreach strategy. HWC will work with HOYC organizations to identify potential participants (Oct. - Dec. 2023).

This program will help train more of our young leaders and those who may not identify as a leader. Participants will be equipped with the skills needed to become effective community advocates. All participants will be connected to a local career navigator and mentor.





YOUNG LEGENDS

LEADERSHIP • EMPOWERMENT • ADVOCACY • DEVELOPMENT



3 Recruit 25 young adults to become members of Young Legends (March-June). This expansion will allow us to:

- a. Host more workshops and programs .
- b. Educate more young adults.
- c. Train more peer mentors.
- d. Focus on peer mentorship in all neighborhoods throughout the city.
- e. Have a sustainable organization.

Young Legends will educate and enable participants to advocate for changes in public policy to address employment barriers. They will work to educate youth and young adults about various career fields and the skills and certifications needed.

4 Re-Launch HOYC to better support youth and young adult participation as collaborative partners.

- a. Recruit more young adult HOYC representatives.
- b. Identify resources to support capacity building for youth leaders.

This expansion will allow us to better incorporate the voices of young people in our decision-making process related to Hartford's opportunity youth. This will also allow us to give young people hands-on experience with making systemic change in their communities.

5 Survey Career Navigation participants (March-April 2023).

- a. An assessment of youth and young adults throughout the city was conducted to assess whether they were receiving carer navigation services, their interests, and barriers to accessing resources.

This survey will help HWC understand the quality of services and the experiences and needs of young adults already being served by our navigators. This will also inform our training of navigators in the community of practice.



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR CLASS OF 2024 YOUNG LEGENDS LEADERSHIP ACADEMY



“Changing Systems and Outcomes through Local Collaborative Leadership and Action”



The Working Cities Challenge was started by the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston to improve the lives of lower-income people in small- and mid-size cities through cross-sector collaboration and leadership.

In Connecticut, five cities participated in the Working Cities Challenge – including Hartford. The Hartford Working Cities’ (HWC) vision is for Hartford to be a place where young adults:

1. Have the skills and talents needed by local and regional business;
2. Contribute to the city’s economy; and,
3. Raise families who are economically secure and enjoy a good quality of life.

**SCAN HERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT
HARTFORD WORKING CITIES**



SCAN ME

APPENDIX A - PARTNER OVERVIEW



Hartford Next/NRZs

The purpose of the Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ) is to convene residents to create and implement strategic plans to revitalize and uplift their community. Monthly meetings are held to share issues, needs, and opportunities.

Young Legends will recruit a young adult from each targeted neighborhood to serve as a Community Liaison. The Young Legend will participate in monthly community meetings and educate and inform residents about training and job opportunities.

Capital Workforce Partners (CWP)

CWP is the regional workforce board, they help individuals overcome barriers to employment and close the gap between skills and business hiring needs. They oversee a year-round youth employment program in addition to the Summer Youth Employment Program. CWP also provides training programs specifically for disconnected youth and young adults.

HWC works in partnership with CWP for several projects including but not limited to HOYC and the Hartford Career Navigation System.

City of Hartford

City of Hartford provides funding for several youth development organizations. They also serve as partners in the development and implementation of Hartford Working Cities, HOYC, and Ascend initiatives.

SINA

In Frog Hollow, Barry Square, and South Green, we intend to align with SINA's workforce development projects. We will also promote the Walk to Work program for youth and young adults.

North Hartford Ascend Pipeline (Ascend)

A place-based initiative and multi-sector partnership that integrates achievement-oriented schools and vital, evidence-based social and community services within a networked prenatal through career pipeline. The goal of Ascend is to build an integrated and coordinated pipeline of services and support with the community that helps children and families reach their full potential. This cradle-to-career effort aims to ensure children living in the North Hartford Promise Zone – which includes the Clay Arsenal, Northeast, and Upper Albany neighborhoods – have the support and services they need to become successful in and out of school.

Hartford Working Cities is involved in the community and resident engagement work, and in the development and deployment of the NHAP workforce services and solutions, including acting as a liaison between various external providers (workforce and school-based). Specifically, HWC is working on developing Career Navigation services for young adults in the NHAP neighborhoods and is deploying Young Legends as Peer Outreach Specialists.

APPENDIX B – ORGANIZATIONS THAT PROVIDE CAREER NAVIGATION SERVICES

- American Job Center
- Blue Hills Civic Association
- Capital Community College
- Capital Workforce Partners
- Career Resources Inc.
- Catholic Charities
- Center for Latino Progress
- Community Partners in Action
- Community Renewal Team
- COMPASS Youth Collaborative, Inc.
- Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology (CCAT)
- Forge City Works
- Hartford Communities that Care
- Hartford Public Library
- Hispanic Health Council
- Journey Home
- North Hartford YMCA
- Our Piece of Pie
- ReadyCT
- ROCA
- SINA
- Urban League of Greater Hartford
- YWCA





workingcities challenge

unitedwayinc.org/hwc

In 2018, five Connecticut cities were selected to participate in the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston's Working Cities Challenge. Each city team works to address a community challenge related to workforce and economic inclusion to reduce persistent poverty.

Each Connecticut Working Cities team focuses on the root causes of unemployment. All cities share a commitment to workforce development and increasing access to education and training opportunities that lead to living wage employment.

   
@unitedwayinc



United Way of Central and
Northeastern Connecticut