

Themes from Learning Circles with Youth, Young Adults & Agencies

Updated 3/2/2021

Youth engagement was conducted between spring and summer 2019 and reflects point in time feedback. Please use for internal purposes only and consult with HSD before sharing or posting publicly.

Youth/Young Adult feedback:

1. Employment
 - Employment: little to no access to jobs that pay well in the short term and have long term career potential.
 - Limited interest in traditional job training, resume prep, pre-employment readiness services; significant interest in getting connected with people who can hire them to use the skills they've learned or invest in their business ideas.
2. Mentoring/Relationships with Adults
 - Looking for long term relationships with adults, mentors, service providers. Need relationships that take them through multiple stages of their lives. Looking for mentors who have accomplished the things they want to accomplish, and look like them.
 - Young people value relationships with one another and with trusted adults they can relate to who have experienced what they have, reflect who they are and are doing the things they want to do, too.
 - Adults they encounter need training on implicit bias
 - Want access to adults who can help them
 - Want adults to make opportunities for youth voice
 - Positive relationships with family and family support
 - Development of life skills
 - Support for life after school
3. Space
 - High interest in access to safe spaces, expressed by LGBTQ young people in particular.
 - Interest in space that is for youth, where they can relax and just exist, as well as participate in activities.
 - Youth need support to learn how to stand up for themselves
 - Appropriate space to practice their religion, be themselves.
 - Space to have fun without expectations
 - Time to rest and sleep
4. Other
 - Culturally specific programming
 - Need connections to opportunities--the drive and skills are there for older youth/young adults, but they lack the connections
 - Field Learning

2019 Community Engagement Learning Circles

- Space for undocumented students to share their stories.
- Undocumented students need resources; lots of gaps in resources for these students.
- Peer support is important and there should be opportunities for that
- Direct funding for specific needs (money for start-up costs for young people to open businesses, money for higher education)
- Affordability: transportation, housing, cost of professional training and higher education is a significant concern. Free lunch in school was raised as a priority. Free food in general. Free healthcare expressed as a priority. Access to hygiene products. Looking for a higher minimum wage. Young people are looking to the City to address this.
- Housing: Fair housing opportunities, support with searching and applying for housing, transitional housing, maternal housing support, traditional housing, shelters, roommate search support
- Drug counseling
- Education: quality education, sexual health education, political engagement and knowledge, support to stay in school

Agency feedback:

- Funding for undocumented youth
- Lack of consensus regarding what is the most underserved age group/most important group to serve: grade school through middle school, middle school through high school, or high school through young adult (age 24).
- Providing opportunities for youth to peer mentor other youth.
- Create pathways for youth of color to enter education profession and other fields that work with young people, as youth need and want to see themselves in the adults who work with them.
- Parents of youth need help to learn what bias's they may be perpetuating themselves.
- Culturally (and linguistically) specific programming works the best.
- Flexible funding is needed by agencies.