



Annual Report 2019-20

Letter from the Executive Director and Board Chair



Dear Youth Job Center friends,

It's likely that in the 37 years Youth Job Center has been working with young people to pursue meaningful employment, we have never experienced a year quite like fiscal year 2020. From a global pandemic, to a renewed commitment to fighting racial injustice, to massive unemployment, the past year has been like no other. And while the world as we know it has changed, YJC has deepened its commitment to helping youth and young adults achieve success in the workplace and in life, a goal now more important than ever.

In the 2019-2020 program year YJC experienced significant challenges and disruptions. The agency also experienced successes, developing new and innovative ways to support young people and expanding our reach beyond our immediate communities. We built new partnerships and expanded the scope of services available to young people, working with partners like Chicago Public Schools to make our curriculum available to more young people throughout Chicagoland. We incorporated Financial Literacy training and coaching into our already strong programs. But we also know that we have a long way to go together, as our nation and economy work to rebuild.

In this Annual Report you will learn about YJC's challenges and accomplishments in the 2019-2020 program year. We share what YJC is doing to create greater equity in our agency, in our work, and in our partnerships, understanding that if we are to create true change, that change must start with us.

Please enjoy this report. We hope you will join us in this work in the coming years. Together we will create a stronger and more just community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karen Tollenaar Demorest".

Karen Tollenaar Demorest
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Hurwitz".

Scott Hurwitz
Board Chair, 2018-2020

A Reflection on the Importance of Equity

As an agency that primarily serves Black and Brown youth, we see the systemic inequities that have been built into our society and the resulting harm. And as a result of this spring's experiences in racial injustice, protest, and unrest, we have re-committed to becoming an anti-racist organization.

While we've stated our desire to do this work for quite a while, we have only recently embraced the discomfort that is here to stay. We are pushing ourselves and each other to be better and do better. YJC has formed a staff Equity Team and an Equity Committee of the Board of Directors. These two groups will work together to better understand how racism has become entrenched in many institutions today, how our roles need to shift, and what we can do as individuals and as an agency to push toward greater equity. Though this work is just beginning we commit to the following:

- Call out racist behaviors as unacceptable, both within and outside of our organization
- Increase our advocacy for our young people to be treated fairly in all places of work and in the greater community
- Examine how we participate in a racist system that perpetuates the cycle of oppression
- Further change how we hire, modifying practices to eliminate bias and effect change at all agency levels
- Invite honest dialogue even when it's uncomfortable
- Expand training and support for our staff, to better empower Black and Brown youth
- Diversify our leadership team and Board of Directors

This is a long, challenging, and sometimes painful journey, but we would not make any other choice. Our discussions have been open, honest, raw, and at times, difficult, while also being tremendously informative. Together we are developing productive solutions and strategies on our path to being anti-racist.

We know many of you are also on this journey. Together we will make long overdue and lasting change, and once and for all show the world that

BLACK LIVES MATTER



Youth Job Center Programs

Youth Job Center provides high-quality programs at the intersection of youth development, workforce development, and career exploration and planning. YJC staff help young people develop skills to succeed in the workplace and in life, serving youth and young adults ages 14-25 both in and out of school.

All Youth Job Center programs are designed to help young people move onto a successful career path that meets their passions, needs, and interests. The agency has a long history of working with youth from diverse backgrounds at all stages of the career pathway process; and our services lead to the development of valuable skills that help youth experience success and overcome challenges throughout their lifetime.

Services provided by Youth Job Center programs include:

Job Training and Placement

Retention & Career Advancement Support

Guided Career Exploration

Training on Goal Setting

Financial Literacy Training & Coaching

Personalized Career Advising

Training on Networking & Professionalism

Work-Based Learning Programs

Youth Job Center has a wide reach and serves as many young people as possible, while personalizing the services provided to each young person based on their needs, interests, and experiences.

In-School Programs

A group of young people are sitting around a long wooden table in a bright, modern classroom or community center. They are focused on their laptops and papers. A woman in a black top stands at the head of the table, presenting something to the group. The room has large windows and other tables in the background.

1,294

Total Youth Served

2,324

Individual Career Sessions
Provided

127

Youth Placed
in Employment

170

Postsecondary Goal
Plans were Created

454

Education Credentials
were Earned (High
School Diplomas,
GEDs, and Licenses
and Certifications)

Out-of-School Programs



294
Total Youth Served

336
Individual Career
Sessions Provided

81
Youth Placed
in Employment

59
Postsecondary Goal
Plans were Created

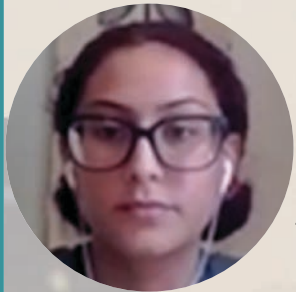
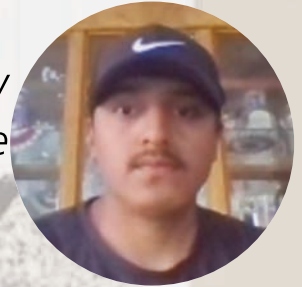
38
Education Credentials
were Earned (GEDs,
Licenses and
Certifications)

Our Impact - Building a Better Future



The Next Stop program helped me by teaching me how to set up my goals more effectively. My favorite thing was definitely being able to see the many opportunities that I have thanks to the beautiful people at YJC <3! - Anthony C.

YJC helped me develop effective communication, be prepared for interviews, and how to be dressed for an interview. I feel ready for the real world and feel more confidence with myself. - Angel M.



YJC programs have given me the motivation to find a career that is for me and get into programs and study to get me there. It's motivated me to reach out more and get the help I need in order to do that. - Brittany N.

My internship through YJC was really helpful, it gave me good advice on how to build up a resume, how to be professional, how to act or behave during a job interview, and how to organize yourself. - Axel G.S.



Because of YJC I know how to respond to people in a work environment if they are upset or have complaints. And I didn't know how to do it before. My favorite thing about the Next Stop program was the information given. I never used my google calendar and didn't know much about my rights and that session really impacted me. - Betsy V.

Volunteers - A Community at Work



Volunteering for the Youth Job Center is fun and rewarding. I've had the opportunity to work directly with YJC's participants as they begin to develop and pursue their life goals and witness their excitement when they receive their certificates for completing a Career Pathways training program or are hired for their first job. I was fortunate to have the support of mentors at critical points of my career and it's fulfilling to provide similar support to the youth I've met through YJC. - Howard E.

I volunteer at YJC because as a recent retiree I have the gift of time. After a long career in corporate America I have expertise that I'm happy to share and hopefully helps YJC's young participants successfully enter the working world. I've been impressed with the staff's dedication and the enthusiastic engagement of the youth. It's rewarding! - Lori N.



YJC's mission speaks to my core values - equality, empathy, education. As a result I feel very closely aligned with the organization. The participants at YJC are an inspiration and my participation represents my small piece of helping to improve our community by moving our youth forward in their pursuit of a better life. - Bill L.

I'd heard a lot about YJC long before I volunteered: some of the best people I knew were involved! YJC doesn't just help young people find work, it gives them the confidence and the skills they need to succeed in life. It was my great good fortune that just when I had time on my hands, YJC had a need for the technical skills I had to offer. It's been an incredibly rewarding experience to work with such a dedicated and gifted team to create something of lasting value. - Jeremy P.



I volunteer at the Youth Job Center for two reasons: First, it's wonderfully gratifying to lend support to young people who are looking to help themselves grow, develop, and get on their feet financially. But equally important, YJC knows how to effectively leverage the time and talent of volunteers. It's a perfect combination, and a great place to make a commitment! - Carolyn L.

I volunteer for YJC because it makes a difference in the lives of young adults. I believe that every young adult should have the opportunity to receive the guidance that YJC offers. My background in HR has shown me first-hand how important it is for candidates to arrive prepared for their interview and to have confidence in themselves. YJC does a fantastic job providing individuals with the skills, training, and encouragement needed to have a great interview, join the workforce, and have a successful start to their careers. I also have been impressed with how caring and dedicated the whole YJC team is. - Bridget F.



Donors

Visionary Circle

Visionary Circle members are ongoing, annual contributors whose commitment make it possible for YJC to carry out its mission and vision. These generous individuals supported YJC with gifts over \$1,000 in fiscal year 2020 and we are extremely grateful for their generous ongoing support!

\$10,000+

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Compass Group - Northwestern University

ASG Staffing

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Chicago Public Schools

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City of Evanston

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Dick's Sporting Goods

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Discovery

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Evanston Park District

Evanston Public Library

Evanston / Skokie School District 65

Evanston Township High School

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Fifth Third Bank

Five Below

Flat Top Grill

Footlocker

Forever 21

Francesca's

Gage Park High School

Gap, Inc.

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Goodwill

Great Harvest Bread Company

Greenwise

Half Price Books

Holiday Inn

Home Depot

Home Goods

Hyatt

Illinois Department of Human Services

Infant Welfare Society of Chicago

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Koi Fine Asian Cuisine & Lounge

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Summer Stuff & Explorations Camp

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The Harbour

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ThriveChicago

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U.P.S.

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Whole Foods

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World Market

Year Up - Chicago

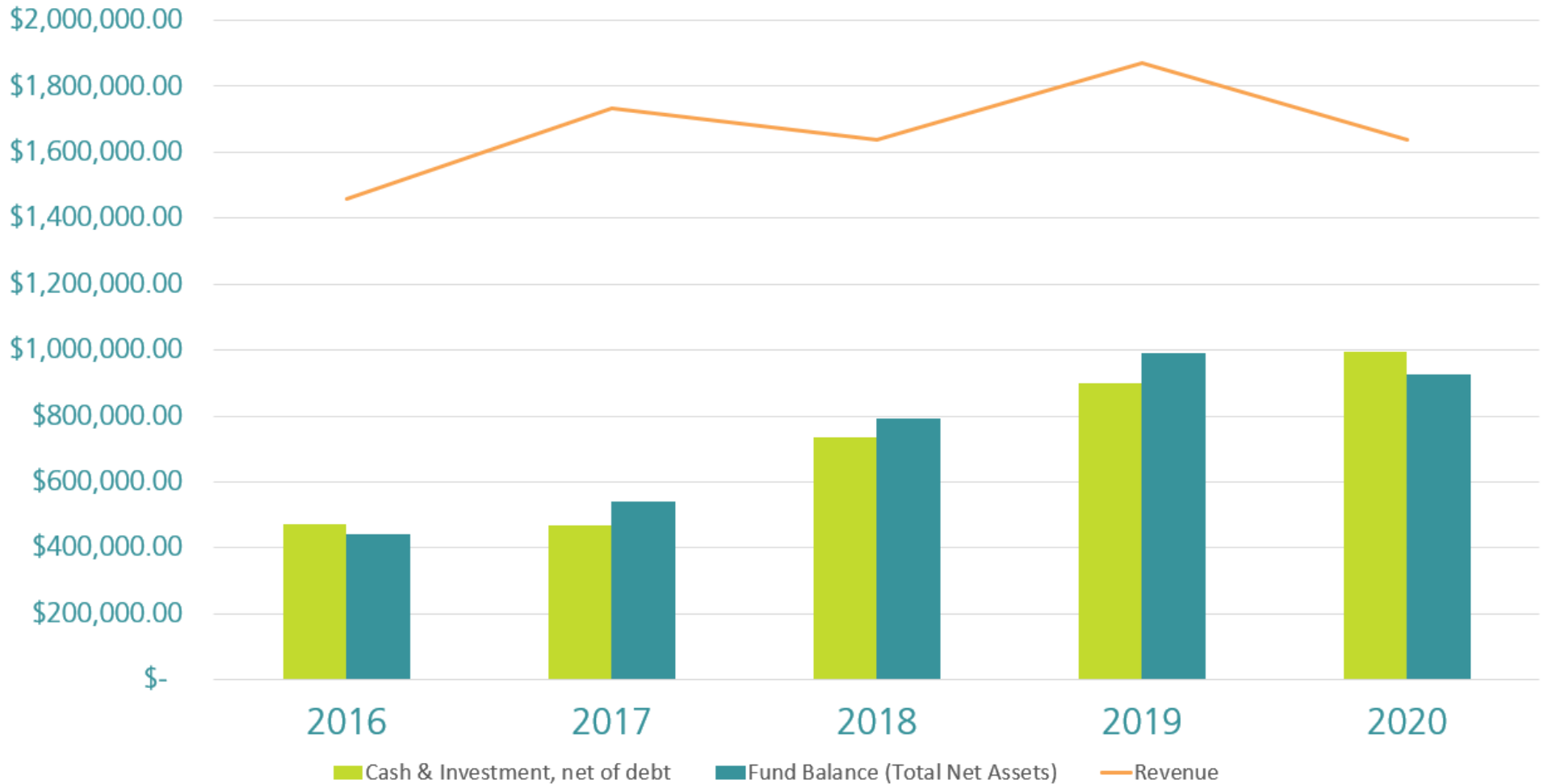
YMCA Metro Chicago

Youth & Opportunity Unlimited

YWCA-Evanston NorthShore

Zara

Financial Report



73%

of Youth Job Center funding goes directly to Programs for youth.

A full copy of Youth Job Center's fiscal year 2020 Audited Financials are available at youthjobcenter.org/annualreport

YJC Staff

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High School Career Advisor

Hester Buell
High School Career Advisor

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Djuwana Frazier
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