



SOUTHEAST PENNSYLVANIA OPPORTUNITY YOUTH STUDY

UNDERSTANDING AND RESPONDING
TO THE IMPACTS OF THE PANDEMIC



SOUTHEAST PENNSYLVANIA

**Workforce Development
Planning Region**

BERKS BUCKS CHESTER DELAWARE MONTGOMERY PHILADELPHIA

Agenda



Purpose of the Study and the
Process Used



OY Facts and Figures



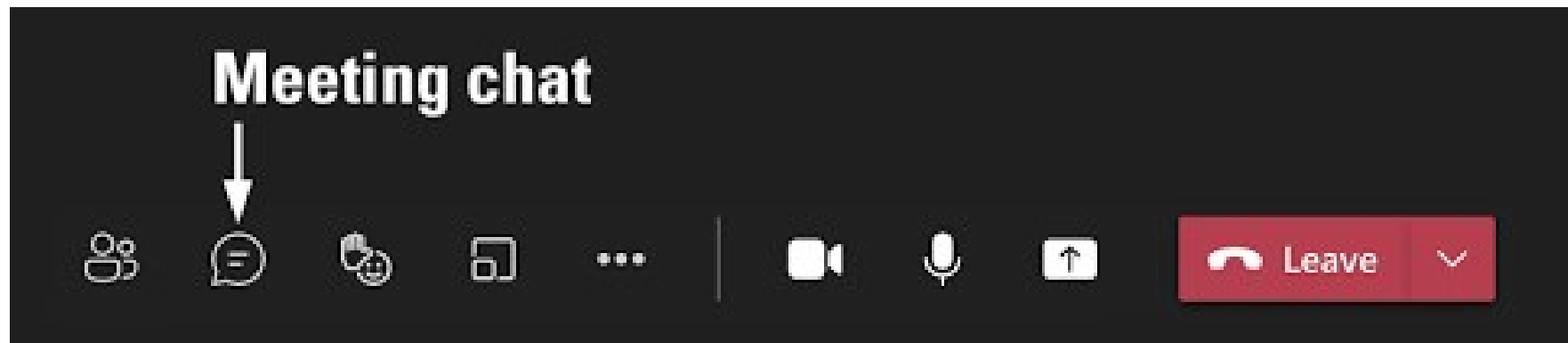
Survey Data and Findings



Recommendations



Use the Chat Box!





Purpose of the Study

- The study will help guide county-based and regional strategies to reengage youth in educational and occupation programs.
- The data collected and analyzed in this study include the demographics and attributes of disconnected youth, the COVID-19 impact on disconnected youth by county and region, secondary indicator data related to disconnected youth.
- The report identifies regional themes and includes strategies and recommendations to address the most critical needs associated with Southeast Pennsylvania (SEPA) opportunity youth.



Mixed-methods Approach

- Qualitative data
- Quantitative data
- Collaborative inquiry



Data Collected

- **Secondary Research**

- Measure of America
- U.S. Census Bureau
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- Pennsylvania Department of Human Services

- **Surveyed Stakeholder Groups**

- Community-based organizations (CBOs)
- Opportunity Youth (OY)

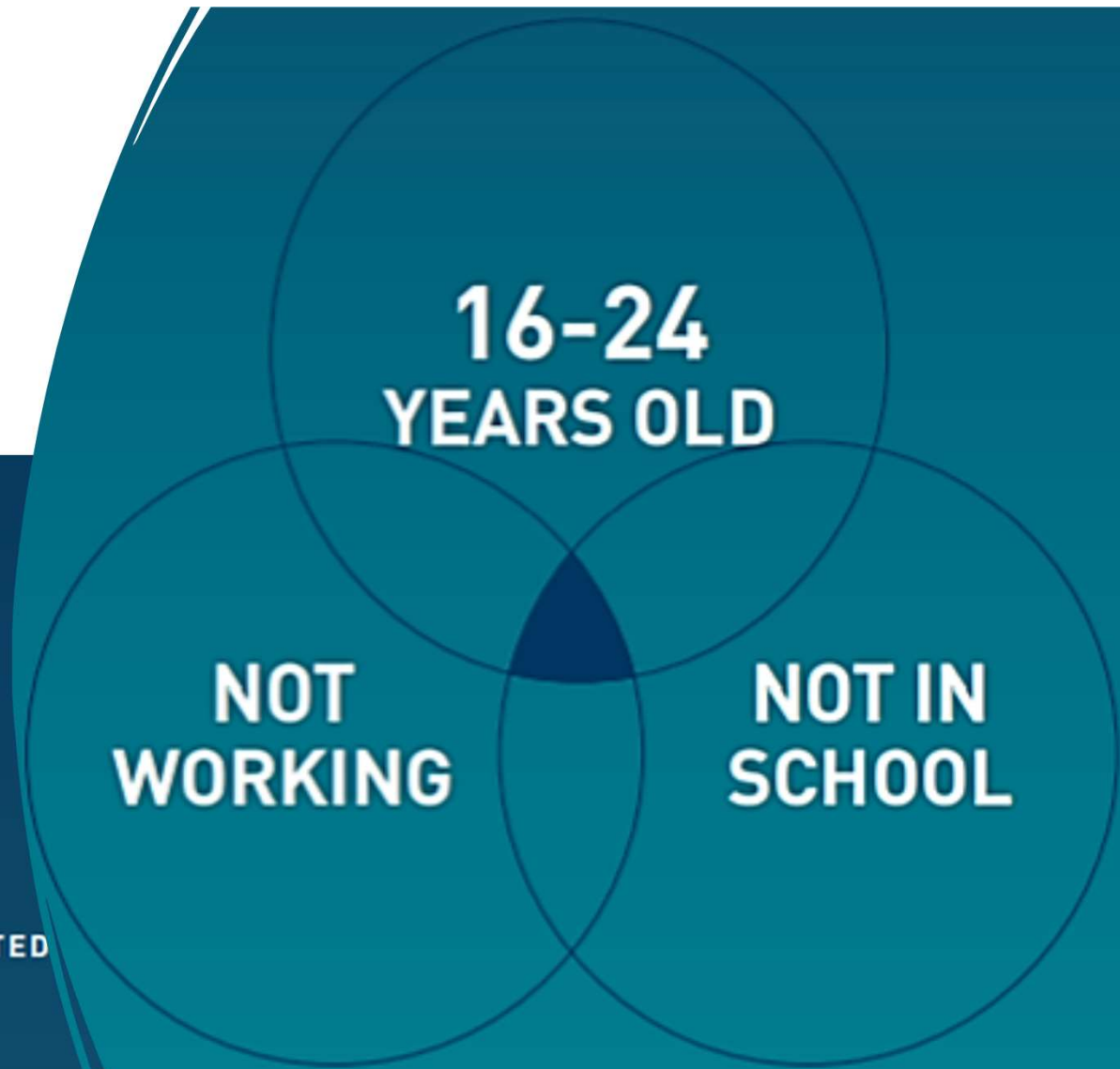
Opportunity Youth Facts and Figures

38,970,400

UNITED STATES YOUTH POPULATION
(Teens & Young Adults 16-24 Years Old)

11.2%

OF YOUTH IN THE UNITED STATES IS ARE DISCONNECTED
(4,353,300 PEOPLE)



Opportunity Youth Facts and Figures

CHALLENGES FACED BY DISCONNECTED YOUTH

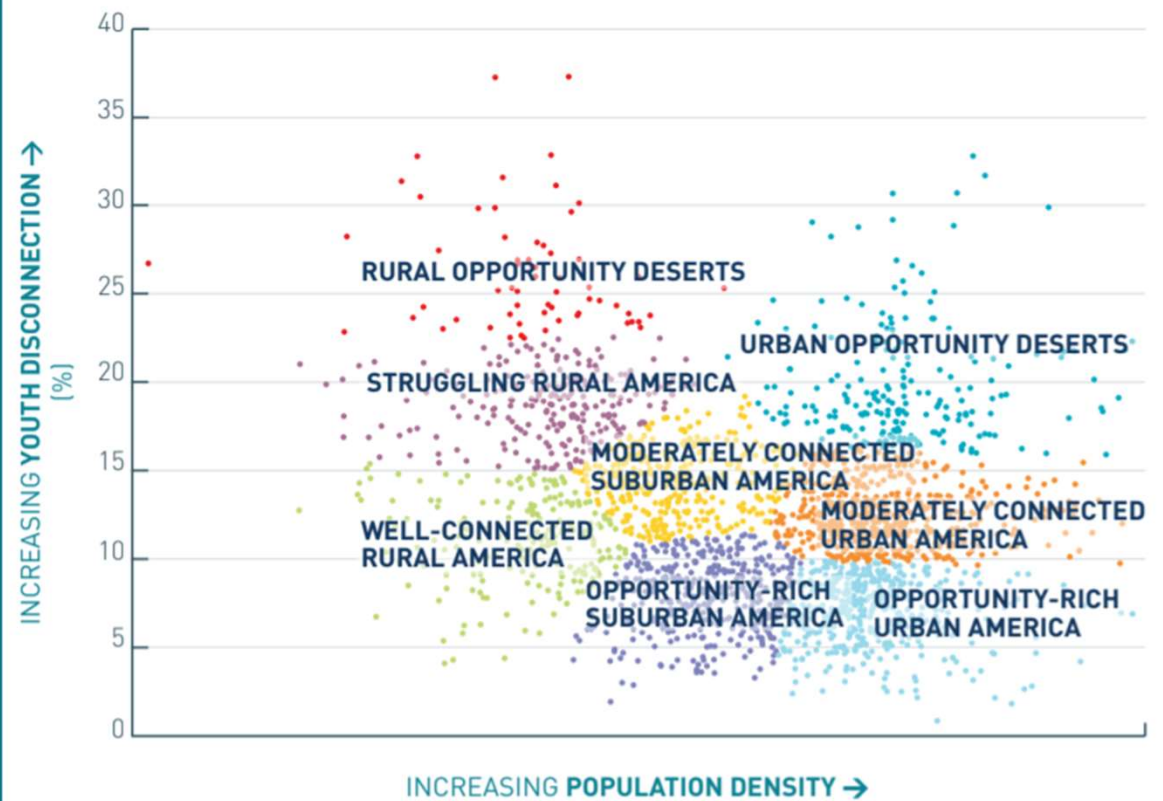


Opportunity Youth Facts and Figures

1. Opportunity-Rich Urban America
2. Opportunity-Rich Suburban America
3. Well-Connected Rural America
4. Moderately Connected Urban America
5. Moderately Connected Suburban America
6. Struggling Rural America
7. Urban Opportunity Deserts
8. Rural Opportunity Deserts

FIGURE 5 WE CLUSTERED SIMILAR PUMAS INTO COMMUNITY TYPES

This typology offers a new way to think about youth disconnection by place to supplement our analysis by region, state, metro area, county, and congressional district.



Source: Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2014–2018.

Opportunity Youth Facts and Figures

Eight Community Types

| County | PUMA | PUMA cont. | Area Type | Community Type | Youth Disconnection |
|--------------|---------------------|--|-----------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Berks | Northwest | Wyomissing Borough | Suburban | Moderately Connected | 15.5% |
| Berks | East | | Suburban | Opportunity Rich | 7.7% |
| Berks | Southwest | Reading City | Urban | Moderately Connected | 13.0% |
| Bucks | Southwest | | Urban | Moderately Connected | 9.6% |
| Bucks | Southeast | Levittown | Urban | Opportunity Rich | 6.0% |
| Chester | West Central | Coatesville City | Suburban | Moderately Connected | 12.2% |
| Chester | North | Phoenixville Borough | Suburban | Opportunity Rich | 8.6% |
| Chester | East Central | West Chester Borough | Urban | Opportunity Rich | 4.2% |
| Chester | South | | Suburban | Opportunity Rich | 9.3% |
| Delaware | West | | Urban | Moderately Connected | 14.1% |
| Delaware | North | Broomall & Ardmore (West) | Urban | Opportunity Rich | 3.7% |
| Delaware | Southeast | Chester City | Urban | Moderately Connected | 15.2% |
| Delaware | East | Yeadon, Darby Lansdowne Boroughs & Drexel Hill | Urban | Moderately Connected | 13.2% |
| Montgomery | Northeast | Lansdale Borough | Urban | Opportunity Rich | 5.6% |
| Montgomery | Southeast | Willow Grove, Horsham & | Urban | Opportunity Rich | 5.5% |
| Montgomery | Central | Norristown Borough | Urban | Moderately Connected | 10.7% |
| Montgomery | Southwest | King of Prussia & Ardmore (East) | Urban | Moderately Connected | 10.8% |
| Montgomery | South Central | | Urban | Opportunity Rich | 7.4% |
| Philadelphia | West | | Urban | Moderately Connected | 14.4% |
| Philadelphia | Southwest | | Urban | Moderately Connected | 14.6% |
| Philadelphia | Southeast | | Urban | Moderately Connected | 13.1% |
| Philadelphia | Center City | | Urban | Opportunity Rich | 7.3% |
| Philadelphia | Central | | Urban | Opportunity Desert | 18.5% |
| Philadelphia | Northwest | | Urban | Moderately Connected | 10.0% |
| Philadelphia | North | | Urban | Opportunity Desert | 18.7% |
| Philadelphia | Near Northeast-West | | Urban | Opportunity Desert | 16.5% |
| Philadelphia | Far Northeast | | Urban | Opportunity Desert | 16.5% |
| Philadelphia | Near Northeast-East | | Urban | Opportunity Desert | 20.5% |
| Philadelphia | East | | Urban | Opportunity Desert | 30.7% |

COVID-19 IMPACTS ON SEPA

Trends

METRIC

Cases per 100K



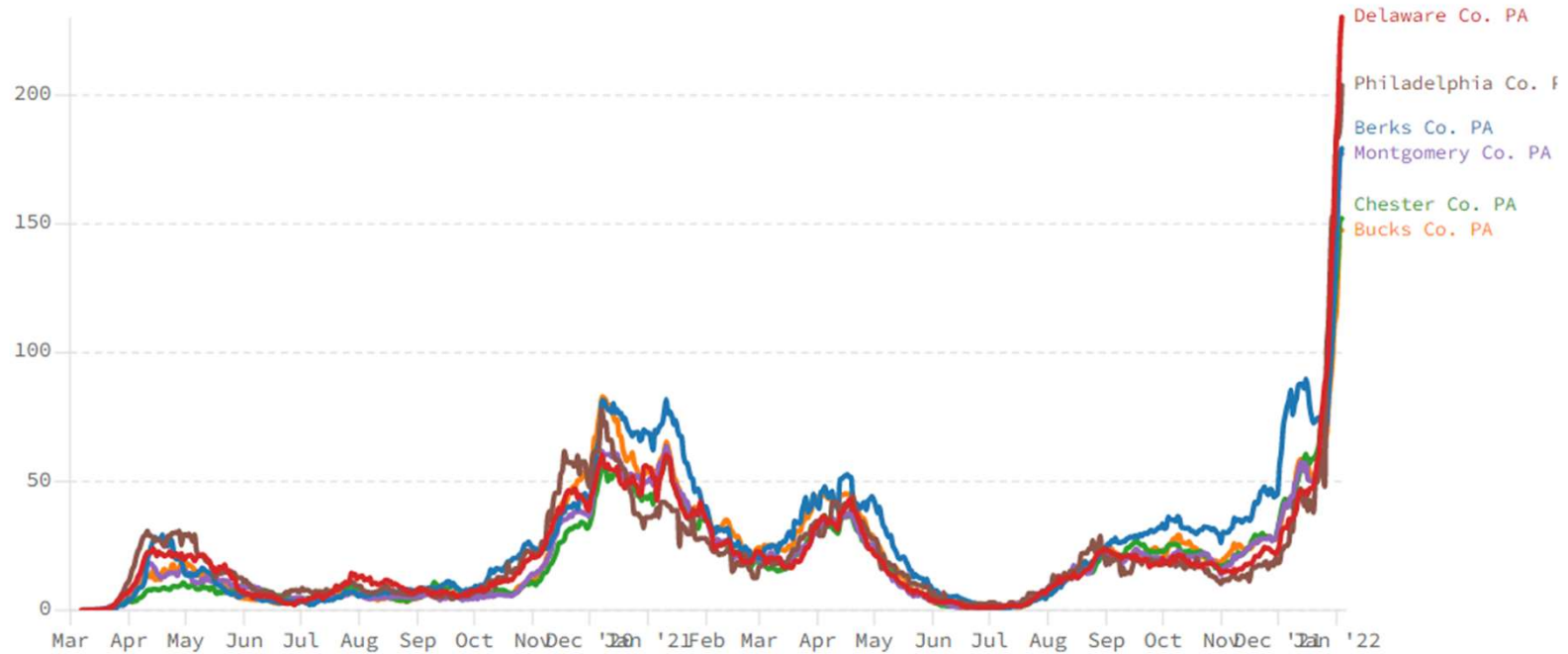
PAST # OF DAYS

All time



LOCATIONS

Berks County, PA; Bucks County, PA; Chester C...

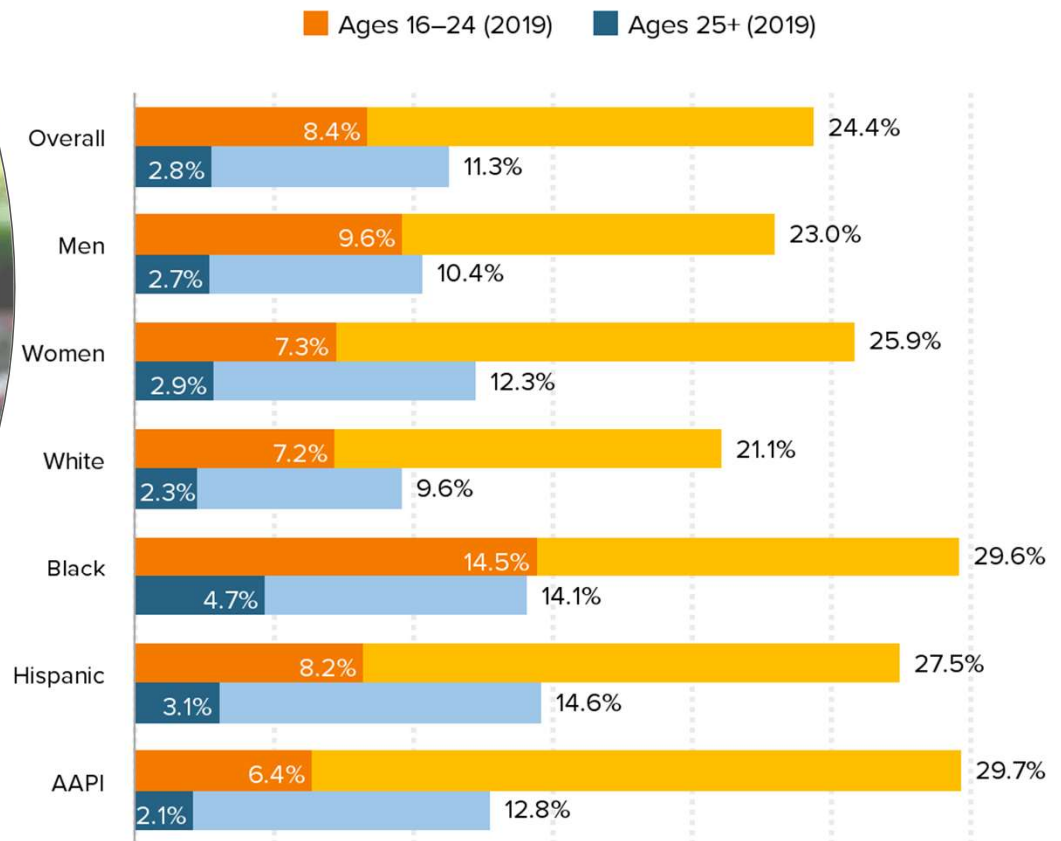


COVID-19 IMPACTS ON YOUNG ADULTS NATIONALLY



Unemployment skyrocketed for young workers in the COVID-19 labor market

Unemployment rates in the spring of 2019 and 2020, by age, gender, and race/ethnicity





COVID-19 IMPACTS ON OPPORTUNITY YOUTH IN SOUTHEAST PENNSYLVANIA



Survey Responses

- 6,037 total responses were collected.
- 1,052 responses accepted for analysis.
- Eligible participants were compensated with a digital gift card.



Unemployment During COVID-19 Pandemic

- Nearly half (49%, 494) reported they stopped working directly from the effects of the pandemic.
- A total of 36% (365) reported they were not comfortable seeking a job or working because of the pandemic.
- A third (33%, 338) reported they found it hard to find a job because they were feeling more depressed and/or anxious because of the pandemic.

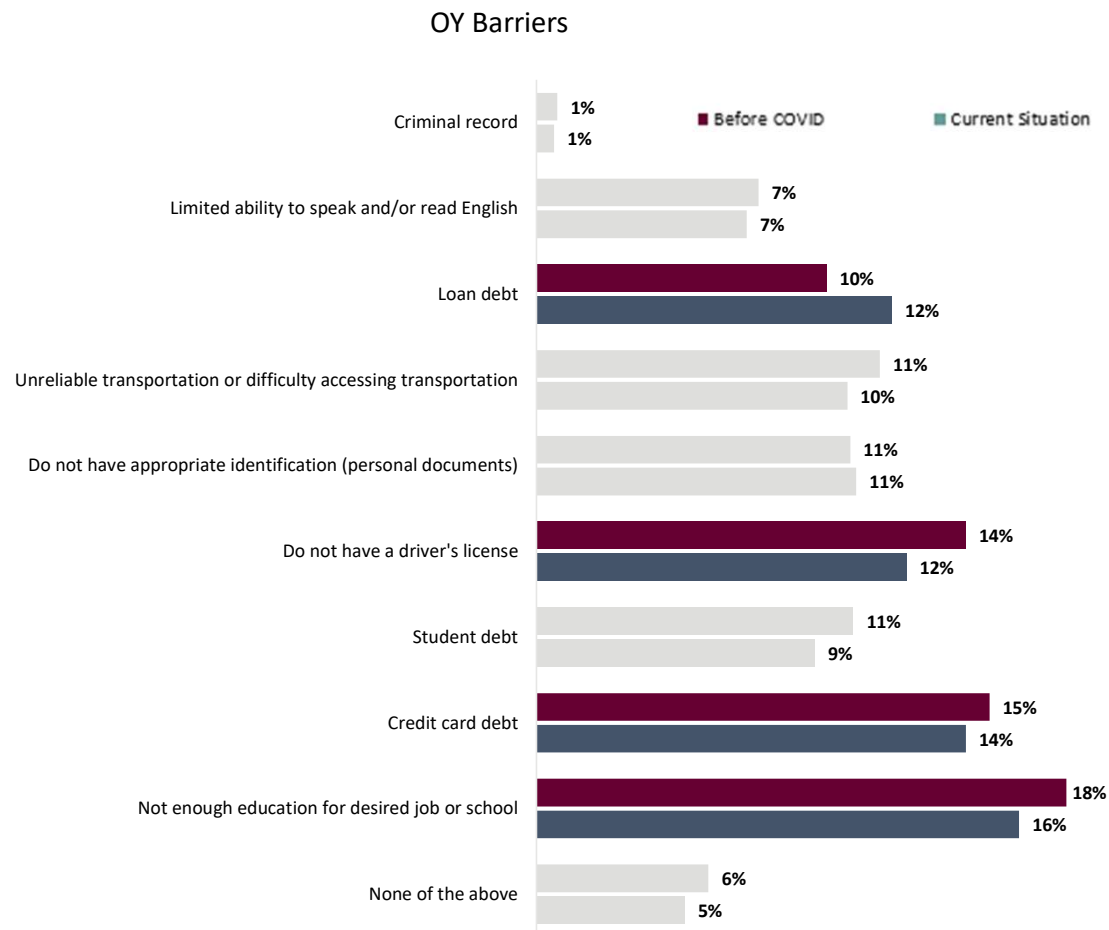
“It [COVID-19] affects my life, affects my work, makes me lose my job, and has a great impact on me.”

– Survey Respondent

“Living conditions are not good, I can't go out, and I am very depressed.”

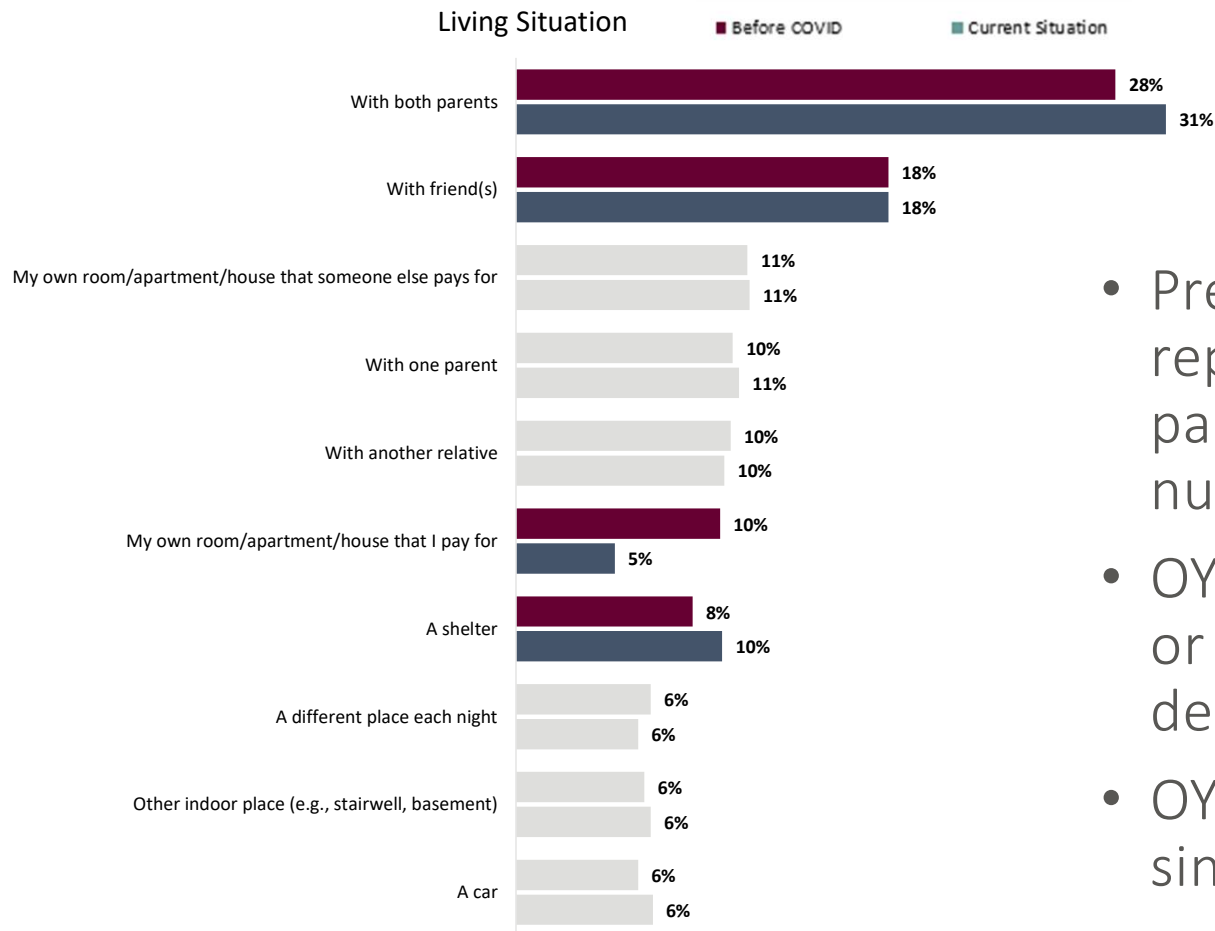
– Survey Respondent

Opportunity Youth Barriers Before and After COVID-19



- OY experience(d) credit card debt and not having enough education for their desired job or school both before the pandemic and currently.
- Loan debt was the only barrier to increase in their current situation compared with before the pandemic.

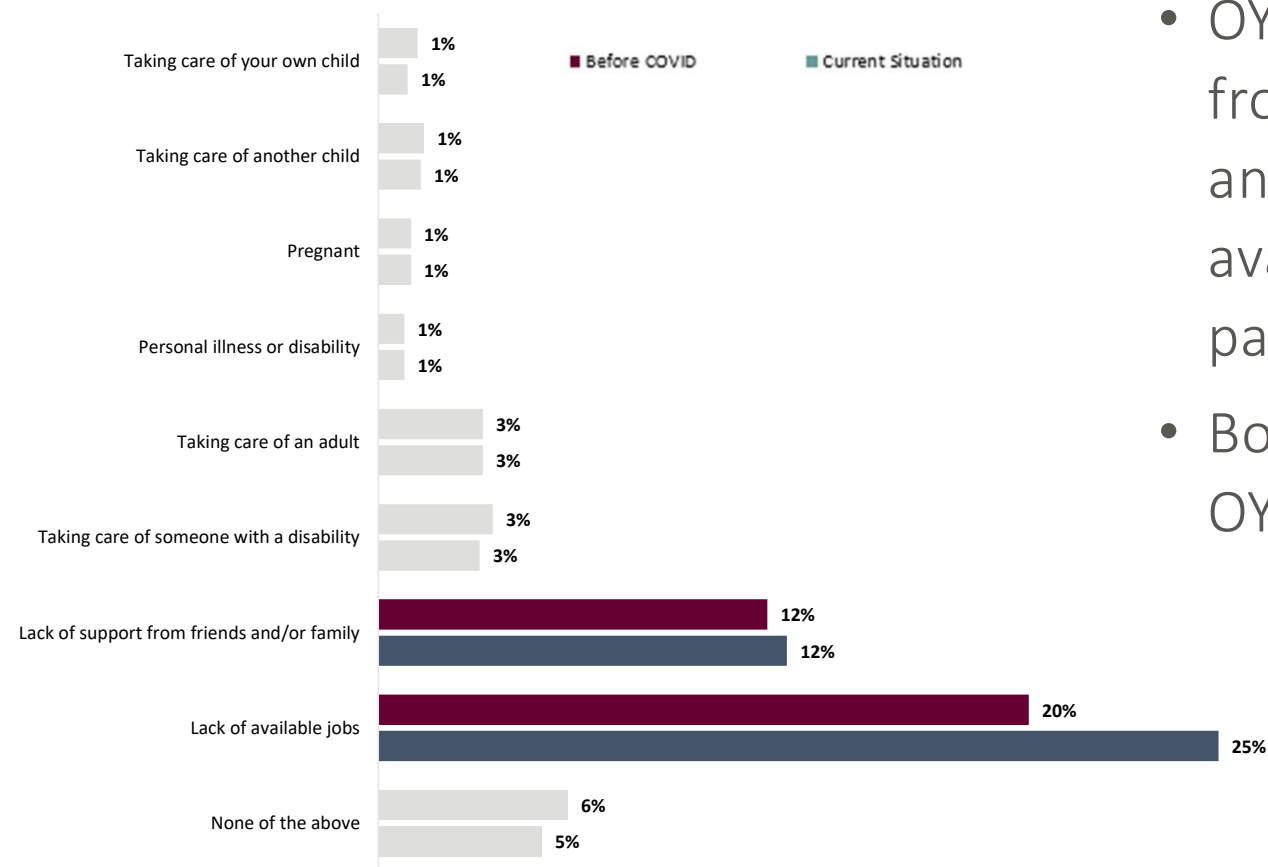
Opportunity Youth Living Situations Before and After COVID-19



- Pre-COVID-19, OY most often reported living with both parents. For the present, this number slightly increased.
- OY owning their own room, apt, or house that they pay for decreased since the pandemic.
- OY living in shelters increased since the pandemic.

Opportunity Situations Before and After COVID-19

OY Situations



- OY reported lacking support from their friends and family and experienced a lack of available jobs before the pandemic.
- Both of these remained true in OY's current situation.

Accelerators for OY



Relationship Building
and Trust

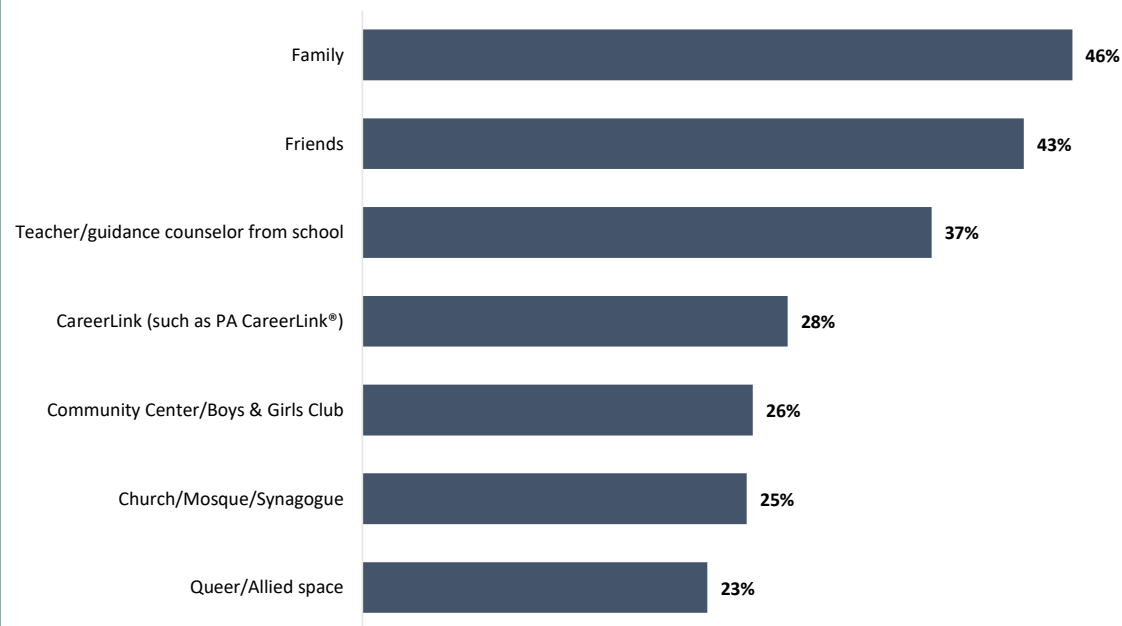


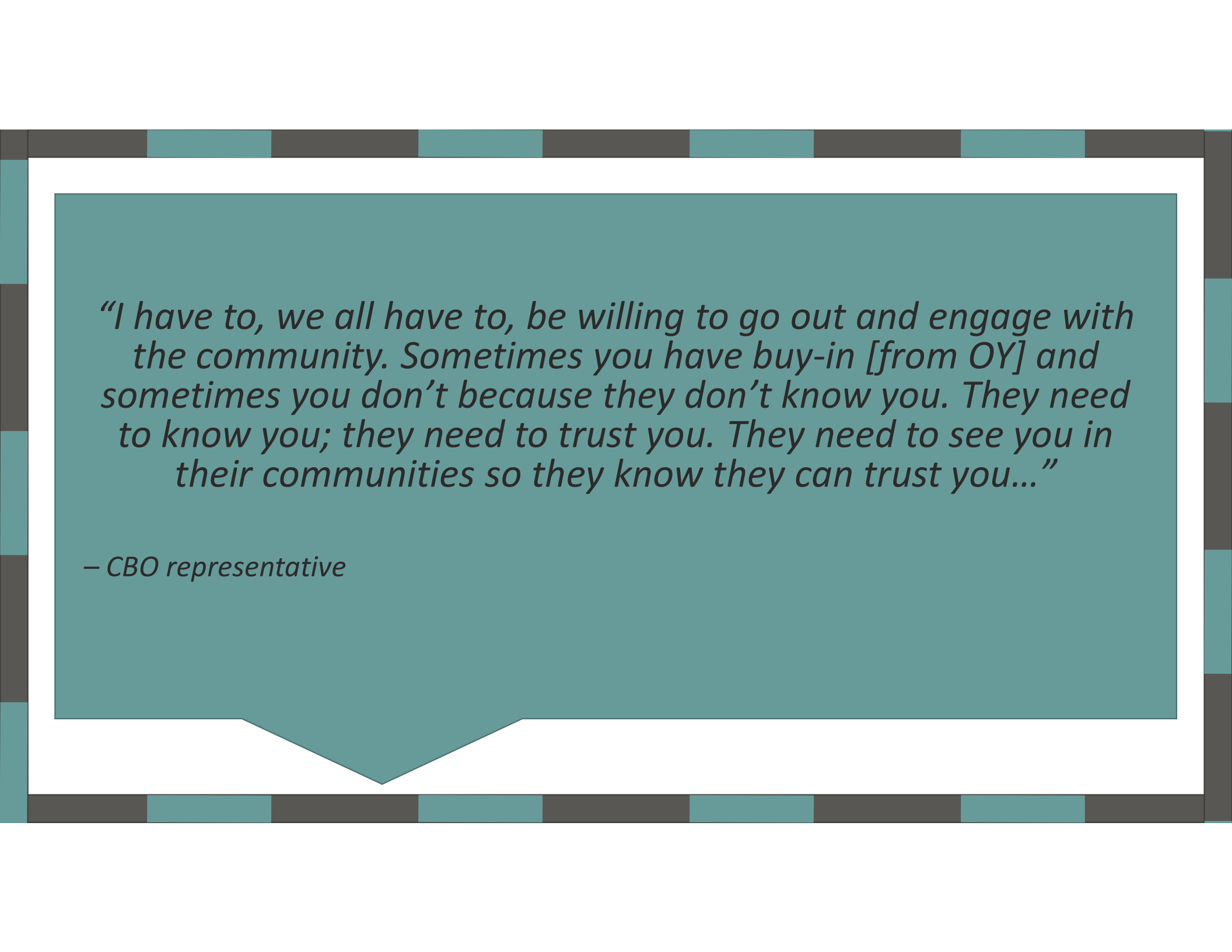
Paid Opportunities



Online Engagement

Who can help you if you want to go back to school or get a job?





“I have to, we all have to, be willing to go out and engage with the community. Sometimes you have buy-in [from OY] and sometimes you don’t because they don’t know you. They need to know you; they need to trust you. They need to see you in their communities so they know they can trust you...”

– CBO representative



Challenges for OY



Connecting Services/
Coordinating Efforts



Mental Health



Transportation



Accessing Services



Online Engagement

“There are not enough mental health services to support kids or their families during this pandemic. It was bad enough prior to COVID-19 and the need has just grown exponentially”.

– CBO Representative

“I had one youth participant who desperately needed counseling services. There are only two options available in this county, and both options have a three-month waiting list. He had to just sit there while his mental health was getting worse and worse.”

– CBO Representative

Opportunities



Collaboration Across Organizations

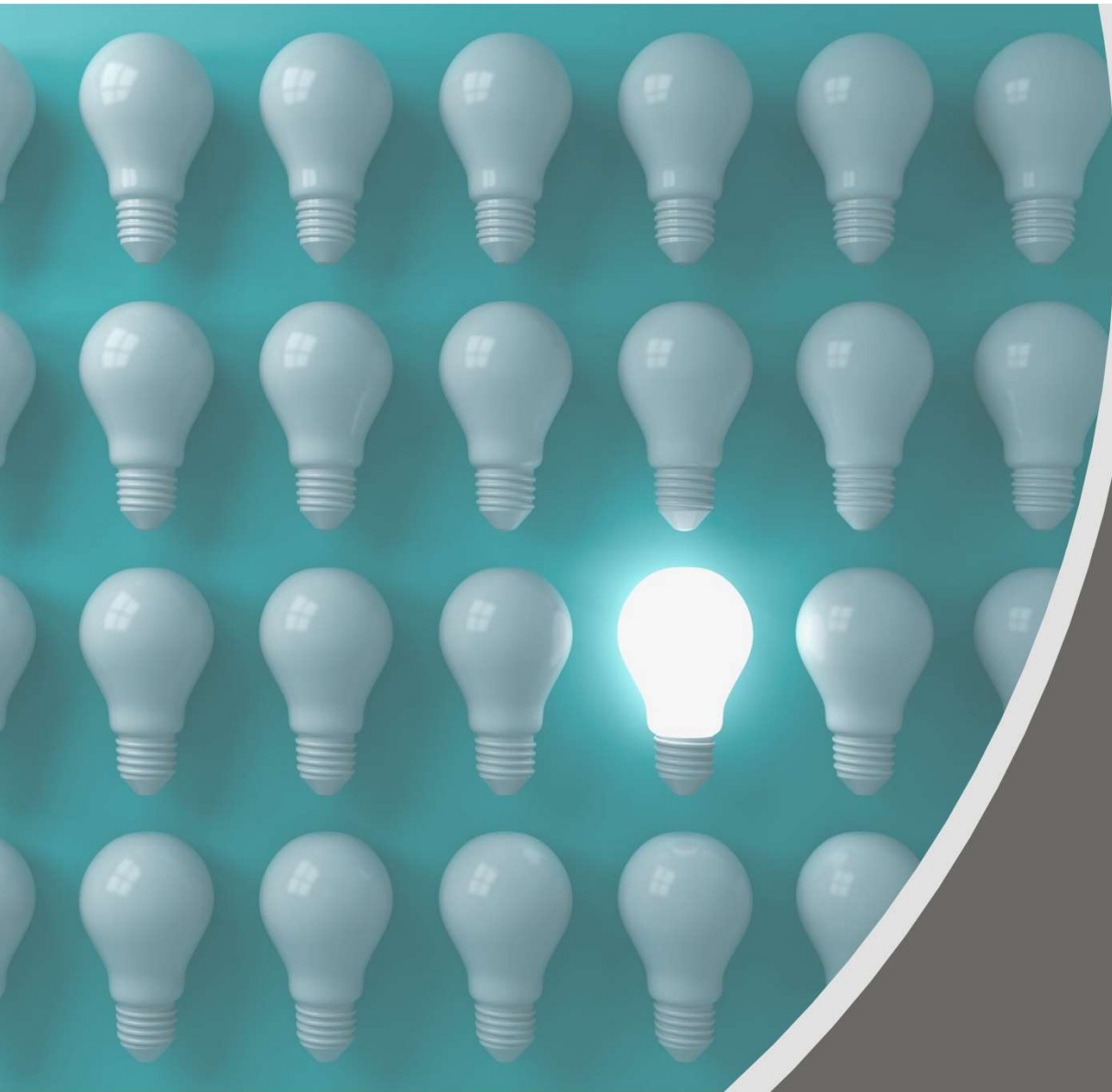


Involving Opportunity Youth



“I’m younger, so I know a lot of other younger people in our community. So, if I reach out to them and say, ‘Come in and just talk to the people here and see what they can do for you’, it means a lot, you know? Because they trust me; if I say it’s good, they believe me.”

– OY Representative



Recommendations



Recommendation #1

Increase Awareness of Opportunity Youth Services in Southeast Pennsylvania

Implement a Hub-and-Spoke Model for
Opportunity Youth Services

Create a Peer Specialist/Youth Ambassador
Certification Program for Opportunity Youth



Recommendation #2

Ensure Robust Support for
and Awareness of Mental
Health Services



Recommendation #3

Develop Paid Work
Experience -> Full Time
Employment Pathways



Recommendation #4

Facilitate Regular Meetings
of Youth Program Leads



Questions?



Next Steps

