

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

A YEAR IN REVIEW



MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO



Robert Clark
Chief Executive Officer & Founder
Newark Opportunity Youth Network

When we first started YouthBuild Newark in 2003, we were determined to give young people another chance. A chance to earn their GED, to gain on-the-job training, and to transform their lives.

Nearly 20 years later, that is still at the core of what we do. While our work has evolved into multiple initiatives designed to address youth disconnection, the power of transformation is the through-line that connects it all.

It is my hope that the stories shared below provide a window into the work of Newark Opportunity Youth Network and into the potential of each young person we serve. Despite all the challenges of this past school year, there is much to be celebrated. From post-secondary placements to the passage of legislation, we are proud of the work that's been done - but know there's much more that lies ahead.

Together with our partners, we look forward to the coming year and to sharing the stories of even more young people as they transform not only their own lives, but their families and communities as well.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Clark'.

Robert Clark

OUR 2022-23 SUCCESS

Our young people have continued to amaze us over the 2022-23 school year.

This year, NOYN and members of the Newark Youth Workforce Collaborative have served **4,125 opportunity youth**.



EDUCATION

LEAD Charter school students are now flame-workers in training because of the school's new Studio Assistant Program, led by [GlassRoots](#)—a local glass arts education center and member of the Newark Youth Workforce Collaborative. According to GlassRoots Executive Director Carol Losos, students will learn the skills and artistry of frameworking in addition to learning how a studio operates in this seven-week program.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Our LEAD Charter School, the state's only dropout recovery district, was approved by the [American Medical Certification Association](#) (AMCA) as a registered testing facility and approved to offer the national certification exams in Clinical Medical Assistant Certification, EKG Technician Certification, and Phlebotomy Technician Certification. Being recognized as an official testing center, LEAD further strengthens the postsecondary pathways for our young people.



POLICY ADVOCACY

In order to emerge as a leader in policy advocacy on issues that impact opportunity youth in New Jersey, NOYN has been developing a policy advocacy infrastructure by first focusing on building our base through establishing the [New Jersey Opportunity Youth Coalition](#) and fostering the leadership of our coalition members, consisting of Youth Policy Advisory Board (YPAB) members, leaders from community-based organizations serving opportunity youth throughout NJ and other opportunity youth from across the state.



SYSTEMS BUILDING

Awarded a grant from the [Summerfield Foundation](#) to support our Newark Youth Workforce Collaborative, a collective impact table of cross-sector youth-serving entities working to build a common agenda around Newark's youth workforce system and to strengthen the connections between organizations for solid career pathways. Additionally, funds will support research and reporting that is specific to the current rates of disconnection in Newark disaggregated by ward, informing our targeted expansion efforts through the Collaborative and laying the groundwork for the next 5 years.

STORY OF TRANSFORMATION HIGHLIGHT

When you think of Ny'Jae Williams, her bright smile and joyful presence come to mind before anything else. And nothing makes her smile more than the thought of cooking. Ny'Jae has dreamed of cooking professionally ever since she was a child—preparing salmon and steak dishes in her kitchen when other kids her age were playing video games or riding bikes. Now she is following her dream to become a chef and is doing so while giving back to her community.

Ny'Jae regained sight of herself and her passions once she found a school with the support she needed - LEAD Charter School. LEAD was a consistent presence on Ny'Jae's path both figuratively and literally—she lived a couple of blocks from the school and frequently walked past the Bergen Street campus. She saw the same banner and the same students on her daily walk. This prompted Ny'Jae to do some research and she soon realized that LEAD could truly help her.

Ny'Jae's influence on her community has expanded beyond LEAD Charter School. She is currently volunteering to create a healthy cooking series in partnership with the food bank on Tik Tok.

[Click here](#) to read more about Ny'Jae's story.



Ny'Jae Williams

2021 LEAD Charter School Graduate

POLICY ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS

Bill A398/S3080 [\[click to learn more\]](#)

Senate Bill 3080, which would establish the Youth Disconnection Prevention and Recovery Ombudsperson (YDPRO) in the Department of Education as well as the School Disconnection Prevention Task Force, passed unanimously through the New Jersey State Senate on March 20, 2023.

Re-engaging opportunity youth in the state of New Jersey will prevent them from encountering the detrimental impacts of disconnection; young people who disengage from school face barriers to social mobility. They have a decreased earning potential, increased unemployment rates, increased likelihood of incarceration and are more likely to experience poverty and to suffer from adverse health outcomes.

Bill S1553

Senate Bill S1553 has passed through both the full Senate and Assembly, and is now awaiting Governor Murphy's signature.

The bill permits teaching candidates who meet all criteria for a certificate of eligibility (CE) or a certificate of eligibility with advanced standing (CEAS), other than the requirement to meet certain minimum testing thresholds in either Praxis Core or Praxis II Subject Tests, to receive an alternative certificate of eligibility or alternative certificate of eligibility with advanced standing, as applicable. This bill increases access to the teaching profession, which is essential always but especially during the current teacher shortage.

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

22

policymakers and public sector stakeholders engaged with to influence policy changes for opportunity youth

100,000

young people throughout the state who have recently disconnected from school and employment will be impacted by the passing of bill A398/S3080.

16

organizations and stakeholders from across the state of New Jersey have joined in NJ OY Coalition



LOOKING FORWARD

WHAT'S NEXT FOR NOYN

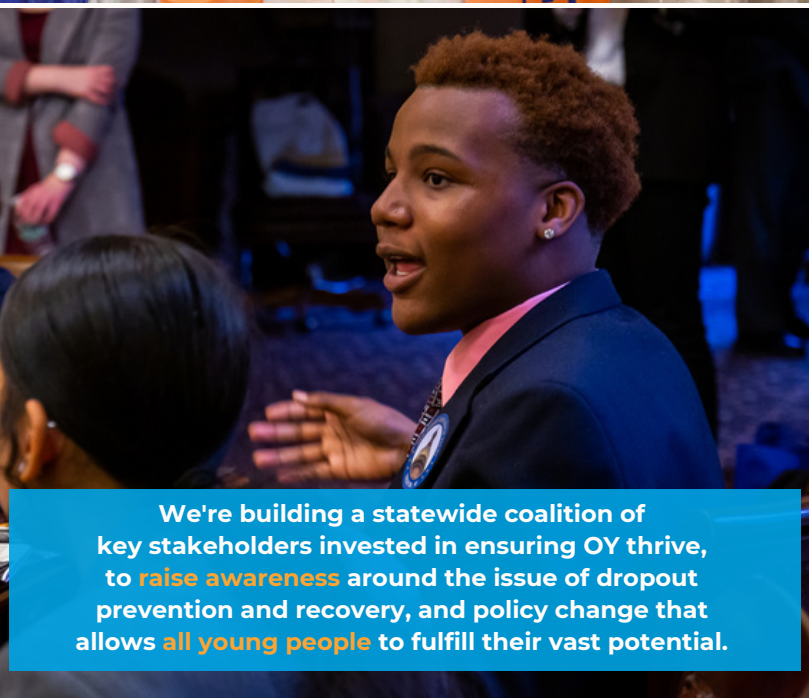
As we prepare for the 2023-24 school year, NOYN continues to scale and set the stage for education, workforce development, policy advocacy and systems building for opportunity youth throughout the state of New Jersey.



We're fostering a space for our young people to receive the tools and resources necessary for **self-transformation**, in turn enabling them to **transform their families and communities**.



We're growing our **partnerships** with organizations that align with our mission -- such as the **Cepreghy Foundation** and **Summerfield Foundation** -- to increase access to tools and resources for our young people.



We're building a statewide coalition of key stakeholders invested in ensuring OY thrive, to **raise awareness** around the issue of dropout prevention and recovery, and policy change that allows **all young people** to fulfill their vast potential.



We're building our internal infrastructure to operate as an **intermediary**, providing back-office **support** to schools and programs in instruction, workforce development, finance, fund development, and communications.

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT

NOYN and our partners recognize that our young people face unique challenges, that barriers vary by neighborhood and block, and that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to addressing them. With this in mind, we have developed a program model that seeks to address the unique barriers faced by our young people, while also building their capacity to address those issues themselves -- **your support is what makes this possible.**

Here's how you can take action:

1

Stay Connected

Follow us on our social media platforms and share our posts + stories.



[OYN_Newark](#)



[oyn_newark](#)



[NewarkOYN](#)



[Newark
Opportunity
Youth Network](#)

2

Stay Engaged

Engage with opportunity youth throughout your community + connect them to us.



Learn more [here](#).



Apply here to get a high school diploma or GED and an industry-recognized credential

3

Stay Committed

Donate to NOYN, contributing to funds that will support education, workforce development, policy advocacy, and systems building.



Make a pledge to OY [here](#).



Learn more about us and our approach [here](#).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Through our partnerships, we are able to reach youth who may not otherwise have access to our services. Through this expanded network, we're able to better serve the young people of Newark by providing them with opportunities beyond our walls.



WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF OPPORTUNITY YOUTH