



2017 Update

Youth Employment Strategies



Youth Employment Strategy Update

Dozens of partners have contributed to the Youth Employment Strategy. The resulting broad dialogue identified four pivotal areas of effort that collectively play a vital role in supporting youth seeking employment in our community. Within each area, the Youth Employment Strategy focused on three broad demographics:

- all youth
- youth who are prepared and ready to work
- youth who need supports and assistance in getting ready to work.

Four Strategies:

- 1. Provide Mentoring:** Youth can benefit from experiences, connections and advice on how best to pursue employment opportunities. The practical preparation needed by youth is broad, ranging from understanding work culture and expectations, to connecting with others to discover and pursue opportunities, and how to skillfully manage their careers (personal finances, dress, job interviews etc.).
- 2. Make Employers Part of the Solution:** Even when youth are skilled, ready and able, they need job opportunities. Job structure, entry requirements, hiring practices and awareness of incentives for business are all points of interest.
- 3. Support an Early Start:** Helping youth to plan and prepare early for working life can have significant payoffs — for example, learning about potential jobs and careers that might be a good fit for their interests and skills; identifying sectors with good employment possibilities; and seeking insights from informed counsellors.
- 4. Help Develop Pre-employment Skills:** Most youth have many things to learn before they start their first job — and there are many ways to learn them: online, in “boot camps” and through youth employment programs and agency services.

The full Youth Employment Strategy (YES) report can be found at:
www.unitedwaykfla.ca/youth

1. Provide Mentoring

Goal: to support employment-seeking youth on many fronts, help youth overcome discouragement

Focus: Strategies for Youth Prepared & Ready with Education & Skills

1.1 - Networking for Mentoring and Entrée

Action: *Develop a plan to facilitate youth-friendly networking and mentoring*

Progress against goal:

1. The “Kickstart Your Career” program at St. Lawrence College will be offered in 2017 for a second year. This program, offered through the federal Youth Employment Strategy-Career Focus Stream, is designed to assist youth in obtaining career-related work experience to start a career through a first time employment opportunity in their chosen field. Youth under 30 years of age, not receiving Employment Insurance benefits and seeking full-time career-related employment are eligible for the program.

This program provides a financial incentive to employers to hire and help youth transition into the labour force and gain skills. Employers benefit by receiving a minimum 26 week full time subsidized placement for approximately 75% of the hourly wage.

2. KEYS hosted the Kingston Job Fair in March 2017 – over 1,500 attendees came through the doors to connect with the 50+ employers / exhibitors onsite. Many of the positions available were targeted to youth and/or students. All attendees were able to pre-register for further employment and training services. With support from the City of Kingston the fee for the space at Portsmouth Olympic Harbour was waived.

Focus: Strategies for Youth Preparing to Become Work Ready

1.2 - Mentoring on Workplace Culture

Action: *Develop tools to help youth learn the key personal skills, work habits and global competencies needed for jobs of the future*

Progress against goal:

1. KEYS Youth Job Connection Program provides 75-90 hours of intensive pre-employment skill development for at-risk youth, along with a supported job placement which includes workplace mentoring and service coordination.
 - 224 youth have been served through the program at KEYS since 2016
2. KEYS InSight Youth Mentoring Partnership helps youth learn about the world of work, potential career paths and the skills they will need. Eligible participants are between the ages of 16 and 24, with priority given to students in grades 11 & 12 who need a mentor to support them in making career decisions. The program offers training focussed on soft skill development and career pathway navigation.

3 different mentoring opportunities are available:

- i) Quick Connect: Established professionals or mature post-secondary students help to expand a young person's exposure to the world of work by committing to a face-to-face meeting, facilitating a tour of their workplace and explaining the career path related to their field of work.
 - o 40 youth under the age of 25 have been matched with one-to-one mentors and "quick connect" 1-3 hour mentoring sessions.
 - ii) One-to-one Mentoring: Positive professional role models share their expertise and experience one-to-one with a youth, over a five month period for an average of 1-2 hours per week.
 - iii) Group Mentoring Events: Mentors connect with small groups of young people, with an adult-to-youth ratio of no greater than one to four, during the two hour sessions.
 - o 35 mentors attended a speed mentoring event at the Kingston Frontenac Public Library, and representatives from a wide range of sectors participated.
3. ReStart Youth Job Connection: Summer Program is full and pre-employment training is complete.
- o 24 youth began work placements during the first week of July.

ReStart is also updating and expanding its curriculum for the pre-employment training component of the Youth Job Connection year round program.

In mid-July, ReStart began hosting Thursday night group mentoring sessions that are available to youth on a drop in basis.

4. ACFOMI Youth Job Connection and Youth Job Connection: Summer Programs - ACFOMI has provided one-on-one, tailored guidance for more than 50 youth to help them discover their long-term ambitions and to be successful in the short-term, alike.

1.3 - Promote and Build Financial Literacy

Action: *Promote and build financial literacy skills, starting in grades 7/8 with basic concepts (like calculating unit rates, working with percentages and fractions), that will be useful or needed later for budgeting, managing money, taxes and basic financial skills.*

Progress against goal:

1. Resolve Credit & Financial Counselling Services received a grant from Community Foundation Kingston & Area to provide the "Smart Start" Youth Financial Literacy Program to gain skills and information about earning, budgeting, saving and investing money. To date, the program has been delivered to youth at Girls Inc, Boys and Girls Club of Kingston & Area, Frontenac Secondary School, ReStart, West Unified Communications, and attendees of United Way's annual Youth Summit. A special workshop was also held for summer students employed with the Boys & Girls Club to discuss how to manage their first paycheques.
2. TD Financial Group volunteers delivered Financial Literacy workshops at RISE@one4nine to youth transitioning from homelessness, to help them with developing budgeting and financial management skills.
3. Resolve Credit & Financial Counselling Services received an additional grant from United Way through the Homelessness Partnering Strategy federal funding stream for a financial literacy pilot project specifically geared to individuals, including youth, who are at imminent risk of homelessness.

2. Make Employers Part of the Solution

Goal: to help youth find job opportunities, looking at job security, entry requirements, hiring practices and awareness of incentives for business.

Focus: Strategies for All Youth (Preparing & Currently Workplace Ready)

2.1 More Apprenticeships, Internships

Action: Establish more student-targeted opportunities for both paid and non-paid apprenticeships*, co-op placements and internships.

*Note: "Apprenticeships" is used here in a general sense, not necessarily as the term may be defined in ways specific to various grants of funding programs.

Progress against goal:

1. The Youth Employment and Workforce & In-migration Strategies were received and adopted by City Council. The City of Kingston has developed a formalized framework designed to attract and retain underemployed youth, leveraging their ability to play an active role in filling anticipated labour shortages across the Corporation. The City's Youth Employment initiative is divided into four components:
 - i) Institutional Programs: The City has an opportunity to access existing programming and infrastructure through partnerships with local post-secondary education institutions. Institutional Programs can be generally defined as paid internships that are structured under established external programs, with term lengths ranging anywhere from 8-to-16 months. These programs require employers to provide students with professional supervision and mentoring through positions designed to offer them the opportunity to test drive a potential career choice and make valuable business/industry contacts to build their professional network. As a starting point, the City has established a formal partnership with the Queen's Undergraduate Internship Program (QUIP), beginning with the launch of three City internships in September of this year. Further opportunities are being explored in partnership with Queen's University, St. Lawrence College and other local education institutions.

QUIP: <http://careers.queensu.ca/students/services-students/employment-programs/queens-undergraduate-internship-program-quip>

- ii) Recent Graduate Program: This program is aimed at onboarding talented, highly motivated youth who have earned a recognized degree, post-graduate certificate or diploma within two years of their projected start date. Successful applicants will be hired on a contract basis, for a preferred term length of 12 months with options to extend contracts or offer full-time employment (where appropriate) at the end of a successful tenure. The City's Recent Graduate Program will:
 - set an example for local public and private sectors by offering youth-targeted entry-level positions in Kingston, striving to retain talent otherwise bound for employment elsewhere
 - allow for the development of future talent in a means that is suited to the City's needs
 - onboard employees with high energy, unique insight, and a willingness to take on and assist with projects
 - The City of Kingston will launch its first recent grad commencing in May 2018

- iii) Special Projects: The presence of three major post-secondary education institutions in Kingston (Queen's University, St. Lawrence College and Royal Military College) and their strong, positive relationship with the City presents an opportunity to establish short-term experiential learning opportunities that provide wide-reaching benefits for both the City and students. These opportunities, termed Special Projects, will:
- provide experiential learning as part of a co-op or degree program at a recognized secondary or post-secondary institution
 - award academic credit for a successfully completed work-term
 - be short-term (one to four months) and unpaid

Requests for co-op opportunities would flow through the City's Human Resources and Organizational Development (HR&OD) department centered on a single project or series of projects. The intent is for positions to be mutually beneficial ensuring the best possible employment experience for the young person, as well as providing results for the City.

- iv) Summer Jobs: This well-established program within the City consistently employs approximately 165 youth each summer for non-career focused positions such as life guards, camp counselors, etc.

The City's framework will be shared as a best practice among local agencies and organizations.

2. Limestone District School Board and Algonquin Lakeshore Catholic District School Board, through funding from the Ministry of Education, are supporting local high school students to receive training and gain skills through employment opportunities over the summer. A total of 23 students from both school boards will have a summer job at Boys and Girls Club of Kingston & Area through this program. In addition, 21 Algonquin Lakeshore Catholic District School Board students will work directly for the school board at literacy and numeracy camp programs over the summer.
3. Cycle Kingston's Gear Up project, now in its second year in a pop-up bike shop at the Boys and Girls Club on Bagot Street, is an innovative social enterprise that operates over the summer with a focus on providing local youth with work experience. Youth learn bike repair skills, customer service, sales and depending on interest, may learn advanced skills such as marketing, small business development, etc. Bikes in varying condition are repaired and sold by the youth at an affordable price, usually for under \$100, with the funds going back into the program to offset operating costs.

In 2016, eight youth were employed and over 320 bikes were sold through the program. In 2017, with help from Canada Summer Jobs and ReStart, the Gear Up program will employ 5 youth, all of whom are high school age.

In addition, a partnership with Limestone District School Board helped high school students attending the Katarokwi Learning Centre alternative education program, who used Gear Up's equipment on loan, serving as the basis for a bike repair training elective.

Focus: Strategies for Youth Prepared & Ready with Education & Skills

2.2 - Barriers to Entry (large employers)

Action: Review hiring requirements for public sector / non-profit jobs and reduce unnecessary barriers (e.g. requiring 5 years of experience for entry level jobs.)

Progress against goal:

1. The City's HR department has reviewed and edited approximately 25 non-unionized job descriptions to reduce barriers to entry level positions. Experience requirements have been reduced where appropriate making these positions more accessible to youth. The City will continue to review positions in all departments to facilitate consistency across the board and provide future employment opportunities.

2.3 – Promote Strengths to Bring to the Workforce

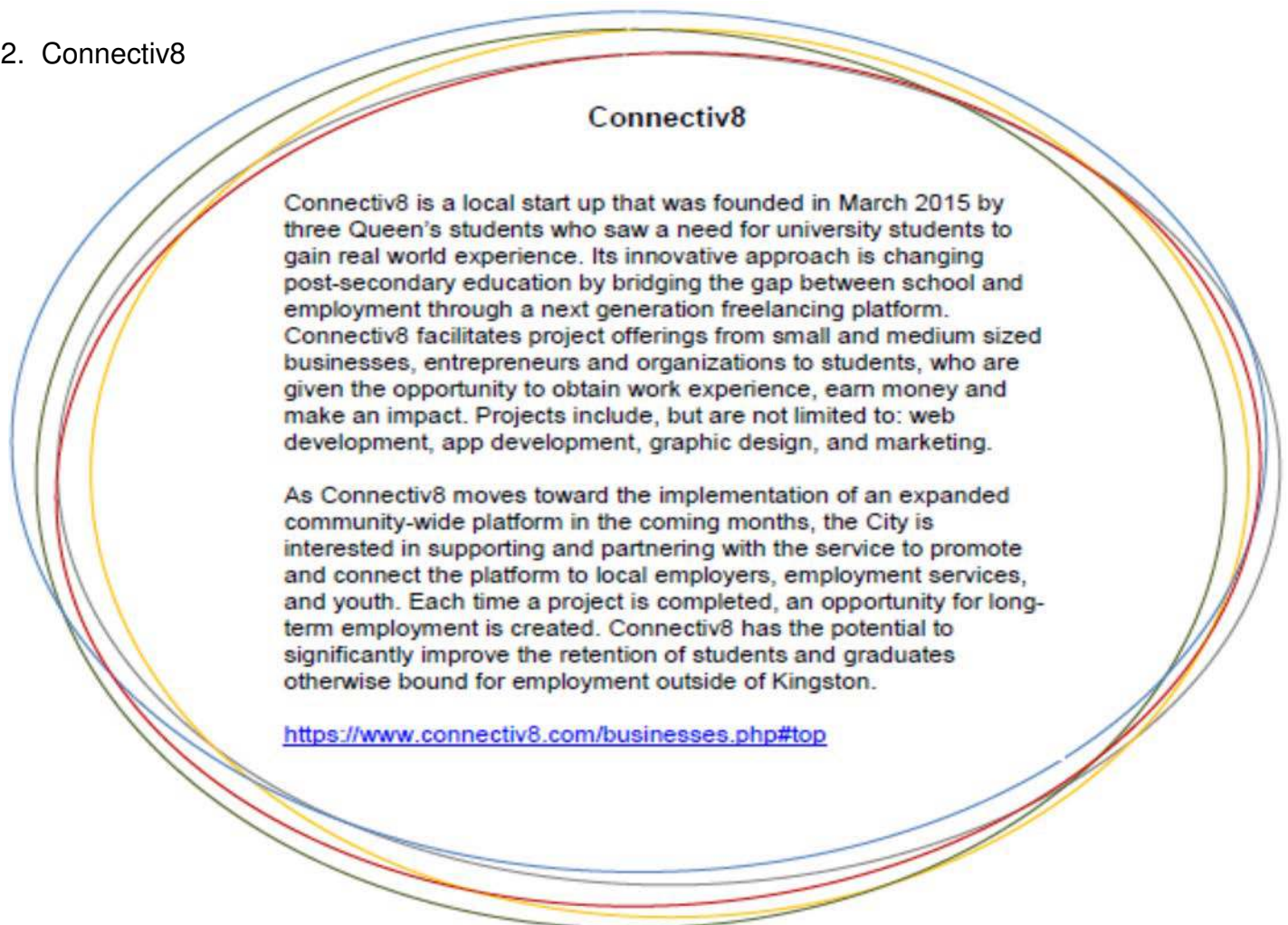
Action: help the private sector take advantage of new working methods in areas where youth have strengths (e.g. embracing technology/social media)

Progress against goal:

1. Employment and Career Services St. Lawrence has taken the lead on helping the private sector to review hiring methods for youth. A guide has been developed for employers looking to hire youth, focusing on the importance of employers recognizing the need to support development of "soft skills" on the job.

<http://slc-jobs.istormcms.com/files/Young-Workers-in-Your-Workplace-A-Guide-for-Business-Owners.pdf>

2. Connectiv8



3. Innovate Kingston is developing an information tool for employers (both members and anyone who needs it) to demonstrate new ways to both recruit and employ. There is discussion with other partners about implementing the tool and an education series about it.

Focus: Strategies for Youth Preparing to Become Work Ready

2.4 - Promote Employer Incentives

Action: increase employer awareness of the existing range / types of programs, tools, training/supports and incentives already available to assist them to hire youth who may not yet be as mature, ready and able to work as some of their peers. (Support is attached to specific youth participants)

Progress against goal:

1. Employment and Career Services St. Lawrence has invested in creating a new Business Development Advisor position working out of their 785 Midpark Drive location. The Business Development Advisor helps to uncover hidden job markets for youth and job seekers of all ages. They work closely with local employers to identify job opportunities with particular focus on helping those having difficulty entering the labour market for reasons such as lack of education, skills or experience. The Business Development Advisor also coordinates job fairs and educates employers on the many employment programs and services available to help them hire and train youth.
2. KEYS has hosted and participated in several employer engagement activities. A full time position has been dedicated to an Employer Liaison role that focusses on increasing access and knowledge of programs available to assist employers with hiring and training youth.

KEYS also participated in the first Business Bites (educational networking) event targeted at local growing businesses (30 employers).

3. ReStart's Job Developers are actively working with employers to foster and encourage a youth friendly work environment. Constant coaching and support to Employers is provided

A "Programs at a Glance" flyer has been created so that employers can see what programs are available to them in a simple and concise way

4. ACFOMI has been targeting employers willing to go the extra mile to train young employees and educate employers on the reasons behind the funding and how to accompany the trainees to ensure their success.

2.5 – Research Evidence to Guide Planning

Action: Research/develop evidence and proof-points to guide programs and communications: Ask businesses what they look for in employees: ask youth what would best help them become ready for work.

Progress against goal:

1. The June 2017, Ontario Chamber of Commerce report, titled "Talent in Transition: Addressing the Skills Mismatch in Ontario", outlines a strategy that unites government and industry to work collaboratively to ensure that all regions across Ontario have access to the skilled workforce required to compete in the global economy. In working together on the recommendations presented in this report, Government and industry can:
 - Improve the transition from school to the workplace (through the expansion of experiential learning opportunities).
 - Improve the labour market outcomes (achieved through Employment Ontario programs).
 - Develop a modernized apprenticeship system (reflective of the current business climate and focused on the integration of young people into the trades).

- Kingston EcDev has created a Business Retention and Expansion survey that can be adapted to include a youth focus.

2.6 – Opportunities for Ontario Works Youth

Action: Develop employment placement opportunities with not-for-profit sector for youth receiving Ontario Works support.

Progress against goal:

- A new pilot project has been launched geared to providing 6-month paid internship placements for youth who would otherwise be in receipt of Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program benefits. Two placement opportunities have been created to date with Big Brothers Big Sisters and the United Way. Both have been very successful in assisting youth to gain recent employment experience, practical skills and increasing their employability. One placement resulted in the youth going on to attend a post-secondary education program, and the other youth being provided the opportunity to continue their position through an employment grant.

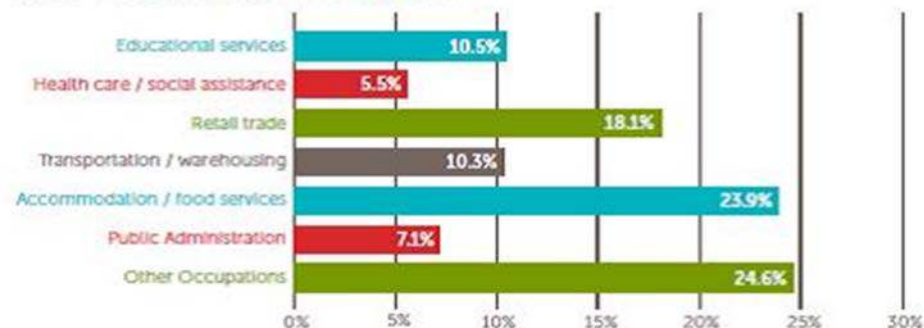
Outcomes of the initiative are being evaluated to produce baseline data to support the sustainability of the program. There are definite benefits for everyone involved in this program and expansion will be continued for a second year. The second year of the pilot will focus on developing internships in fields where Ontario Works participants have been funded for skills training, such as Personal Support Worker and Office Administration. The goal will be to provide recently trained youth with the opportunity to utilize their skills while gaining valuable paid work experience and references.

Where Do They Work?

Almost 24% of employed youth work in accommodation and food services, 18% in retail, and 10% in transportation and warehousing.

While public administration occupations represent 13% of all employment in Kingston, only 7% of youth work in that sector.

% of Youth Who Work In...



"Other Occupations" includes a variety of different occupations!

Youth work in a wide variety of occupations including construction, educational services, arts/culture, recreation, health care and social assistance, waste management, finance, insurance, real estate and professional, scientific and technical services.

3. Support an Early Start

Goal: to help youth plan and prepare early for working life.

Focus: Strategies for All Youth (Preparing & Currently Workplace Ready)

3.1 – Analysis of Jobs of the Future

Action: Analyse and share data on trends, changes, gaps and emerging opportunities in the labour market (e.g. trades sector) and develop resources to inform youth on the forecasts of jobs that will need to be filled in the future.

Progress against goal:

1. MyBlueprint is a tool for Intermediate and Secondary schools to support students in documenting their learning in education and career/life planning in a web-based portfolio or Individual Pathway Plan. At Limestone District School Board and Algonquin Lakeshore Catholic District School Board, a MyBlueprint account is provided to all students from grades 7-12, giving them access to current and relevant tools and resources for education and career/life exploration and planning. It also allows students to record their Individual Pathways Plan.

Both Limestone District School Board and Algonquin Lakeshore Catholic District School Board are working to ensure that all students log in to their “My Blueprint” account early and regularly to begin planning for post-secondary education and employment. There is a community living page within the portal to connect students to local resources that could potentially centralize information and allow for improved accessibility and information provision for youth.

2. The Employer One Survey is in its first phase for Kingston. There have been 161 completed surveys to date in order to provide up-to-date information about who is hiring in Kingston. The launch will begin in October with a focus on the County of Frontenac. Collection of labour market info through Kingston is Hiring.
3. The Magnet software program from Ryerson University is rolling out in Eastern Ontario and there is a new post-secondary portal for Eastern Ontario.
4. The Ministry of Education’s renewed vision, Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario, recognizes that students “will benefit from a wide array of opportunities both inside and outside of school that are compelling and contribute to their success”. This vision is strategically aligned with the direction of the Ontario Business Education Partnership (OBEP) and its members across Ontario now more than ever. OBEP strives to assist in moving this agenda onward and ensuring students across Ontario have the best connections to their communities through a range of opportunities. Locally, KEYS is a member of the OBEP with the executive director serving as President of OBEP.
5. KEYS is also represented on the Ontario Council for Experiential Learning (formally the Provincial Partnership Council - PPC), a volunteer body with members from the private, public and voluntary sectors, created to foster Early Learning, recognize businesses with the Ontario Employer designation and the Ontario Champion awards, and advise government. The work of the PPC is supported by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

3.2 – Highlight Transferable Skills

Action: Help youth acquire and highlight their transferable skills (i.e. skills, work and practical experience that may be valuable in the workplace gained through volunteering & involvement in the community)

Progress against goal:

1. The 3rd annual Youth Summit was held on April 7th with approximately 80 youth participating from local high schools and youth serving organizations. The event is led by the United Way Youth Council, who play a vital role in ensuring the voice of youth is always at the forefront of our community's collective impact work. This year's five interactive learning workshops included: Wheel of Fortune – financial literacy (Resolve Credit & Financial Counselling Services); What's Keeping You Stuck - problem solving (ReStart); KEYS to Communication – communication skills for the workplace and beyond (KEYS); Toilet Paper Game – conflict resolution (Youth Diversion) and Just Say "Know" – substance use (Kairos).
2. Social Enterprise for Youth

Social Enterprise

Kingston has over 2,400 youth who are disconnected from the current systems that are believed to be necessary to support their success.

United Way and the City of Kingston have been working with a number of community partners on collective impact related to youth workforce development and food access.

As part of these initiatives, community organizations are working with the City and United Way to explore the potential for a **social enterprise** venture, for youth ages 16-24, with a particular focus on NEET youth (those not engaged in education, employment or training).

This targeted focus aligns with the Provincial "Collective Impact for Disconnected Youth" initiative, designed to work with local communities to co-develop solutions that address challenges faced by "NEET youth. We are one of 5 pilot communities to work with the province to address issues that are causing youth to fall through the cracks.

The social enterprise concept fits with existing priorities and joint initiatives of the City and United Way related to a community Youth Employment Strategy and a Food Access Plan.

Additionally, the City of Kingston has developed a "Workforce and In-migration Strategy" and United Way has been working on a collective impact initiative to develop and implement a plan to end youth homelessness in Kingston and area.

3.3 – Forum for Guidance Counselors

Action: Create an annual forum to provide guidance counsellors and others that advise youth (including coaches, families, etc.) with up-to-date, relevant assessments of workforce opportunities, gaps and barriers to employment.

Progress against goal:

1. Following the success of the first information session in 2016, in April 2017, the 2nd annual information session was held with educators from the Limestone District School Board and Algonquin Lakeshore Catholic District School Board, providing information about resources available to youth at-risk.

The session provided educators an overview of the youth employment strategy that is currently being implemented in collaboration with several community partners, along with resources and services available to them.

Based on their suggestions, the United Way has since developed a resource that provides information and contact numbers for these programs. www.unitedwaykfla.ca/youth

Focus: Strategies for Youth Prepared & Ready with Education & Skills

3.4 - Help Students Learn About Opportunities

Action: Broaden students' knowledge of various types of labour market opportunities that can flow from education programs.

1. Queen's University has developed "Major Maps", which are year-by-year guides for each program to help students (whether already enrolled at university, or considering university options) to discover opportunities to build experience, get involved in the community, and explore potential career paths.

Major Maps - for undergraduate programs: careers.queensu.ca/majormaps

Grad Maps (new in Fall 2016) – for masters and doctoral programs: careers.queensu.ca/gradmaps

2. The Ontario Centre for Workforce Innovation (OCWI) is committed to fostering a more skilled, resilient and productive Ontario workforce. A key partner in their mandate is the Employment Ontario (EO) network. In December 2016, OCWI initiated a series of conversations with EO providers, asking them to share their perspectives on, and experiences with, service delivery. Service providers indicated a need for more flexible and intensive youth employment programs that are better aligned with the individual needs of youth. As a result, the OCWI wants to work with Youth Job Connection (YJC) providers, and other youth-focused providers, to test the impact of a specialized transitional jobs model for vulnerable youth with complex needs.

<http://www.ocwi-coie.ca/youth-transitional-jobs/>

4. Help Develop Pre-employment Skills

Goal: to help youth before they start their first job.

Focus: Strategies for All Youth (Preparing & Currently Workplace Ready)

4.1 – Coordinate Pre-employment Initiatives

Action: *Work together to coordinate a collaborative and sustainable series of pre-employment initiatives*

Progress:

1. KEYS and ReStart assist youth with completing interest and skills inventories and self-assessments to help them make career and training decisions. Both offer programs for youth to help them achieve long-term employment, meaningful careers and success in their future working lives. They have worked together to streamline youth programs with a commitment to the same timelines, referrals, processes.
 - i) KEYS offers dedicated workshops for students and youth on Tuesday evenings, throughout the year. From May to September targeted workshops for youth are offered on both soft skills (interview, communication, conflict resolution), as well as mandatory industry specific certifications.

They are delivering more workshops in high schools, and encouraging grade 10-11 students to think ahead early regarding how to target their summer job experiences to complement their future employment goals. Spring programs focused on connecting youth with their first summer jobs. Youth employment programs are run through Employment Ontario funding, and KEYS has placed over 200 youth in employment opportunities through a variety of programs.
 - ii) ReStart held a Youth Job Posting Fair on April 27th targeted to youth. Some employers had online applications to take pressure off of applicants (“Job shopping”)
2. ReStart’s Youth Job Link program is currently recruiting youth who are looking for their first job.

They have also revamped their resource centre to better appeal to youth, including the installation of charging stations and tablets.
3. ACFOMI worked in partnership with low-income housing providers to deliver pre-employment training to youth who depend mostly on income through Ontario Works. The workshops were delivered on-site to in order to provide greater access to the program. Pre-employment workshops focus equally on job attainment and career-orientation, ensuring that youth have what they need to determine their own paths later in life.
4. Employment and Career Services St. Lawrence offered evening “Resume Writing Services” during May and June for all student job seekers at their 785 Midpark Drive location.
5. Employment and Career Services St. Lawrence also offers the Youth Job Link program to assist youth with finding their first job. Outreach to local high schools during April and May helped raise awareness about this program and also helped students kick off their summer job search activities.

All four Employment Ontario agencies offer targeted workshops specific to students for summer employment.

Focus: Strategies for Youth Prepared & Ready with Education & Skills

4.2 – Engaging With Start-ups, Youth Centres

Action: Further develop opportunities for youth to learn skills by engaging with social enterprises, entrepreneurship centres, or youth programs/centres.

Progress against goal:

1. Kingston EcDev offers student entrepreneurship grants, and a speaker series related to entrepreneurship. They are currently in conversation with Limestone District School board to develop mentorship/entrepreneurship partnerships for high school students.
2. Kingston EcDev launched the 2017 Summer Company Program on April 1st. This program provides support, coaching and mentoring to full-time students aged 15-29 who want to run their own business during the summer. Students who qualify are eligible for a start-up grant of up to \$1,500, as well as, a \$1,500 grant after successfully completing the program. Kingston has 35 spots for 2017 and 44 students have already registered. Program participants will be selected by a selection committee based on the strength of their business plan.



Thank You to the Task Force Members & Many Other Contributors:

Many people have been involved in implementing these strategies to help youth find work, build meaningful careers and contribute to a productive economy. The list below identifies formal participants in the process; our thanks also go out to all others who have contributed in some way.

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Correctional Service of Canada

Innovate Kingston & Dress for Success

Kingston Chamber of Commerce

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Providence Care

RBC

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Peter Bertelsen

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Voices, Opportunities & Choices Employment Club (VOCEC)



poverty
reduction initiative



United Way
Kingston, Frontenac
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