

# Ramsey County Workforce Solutions

## Youth Employment Services Policy Brief

October 2021

### SUMMARY

#### Objectives

A set of recommendations useful in developing a new, one-time, competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) for Young Adult ("Youth") Employment Services. CultureBrokers will work with Bridgemakers and County staff to collect, deliver, and analyze information so the County can release the RFP on October 25, 2021.

#### Consultants

- CultureBrokers LLC, Lisa Tabor, [www.culturebrokers.com](http://www.culturebrokers.com)
- Bridgemakers, Cole Stevens and Esteban Castillo, [www.bridgemakersmn.org](http://www.bridgemakersmn.org)

#### Methodology

- Survey of Youth (132 responses)
- Two workshops (41 participants)

#### Suggested Questions for Upcoming RFPs

- How are/will you be accountable to the youth you serve?
- How are/will you be responsive to the youth you serve?
- How are/will you be nimble to their diverse and changing needs?
- How do you anticipate what youth will need?
- How do you involve youth in designing and improving your program(s)?
- How do you measure success? How will you report that to us?
- How are you able to personalize your offerings and/or accommodate special needs?
- How will you onboard and offboard youth entering and leaving your program(s)?
- How will you connect the youth you serve to other programs and services?
- Are you interested in partnering with other service providers to ensure the needs of youth are met with excellence?

#### Addenda

1. Workshop Details & Notes
2. Youth Survey Results

## SUMMARY

### Highlights

Several key themes emerged from the workshops, which give insight into ways the county and its program providers can better serve young people:

- Living Assistance: Young people want financial knowledge and management skills, as well as direct cash assistance and help with housing.
  - Technology: Young people need the most current equipment, software, and high-speed internet access sufficient to meet the ever-evolving demands of employers.
  - Personalization: Young people want individualized services that are directly relevant and suitable to their own unique needs, including Special Needs, and which may address intersectional issues. They want to be able to explore opportunities for following their interests and making them a reality, particularly through entrepreneurship or starting their own nonprofit.
  - Transition Support/Preparedness: Young people need support for transitions such as from youth to adulthood and job to career. In addition, they desire support for transitions from program to program, such as warm handoffs by program staff. They also need help in being prepared for situations such as interviewing.
  - Mentorship/Navigation: Young people want help in getting into programs as well as experienced adult guidance in an organizational setting to influence their personal and professional growth.
  - Reliability: Young people want to see accuracy, consistency, continuity, and sustainability in both the programs themselves as well as in the communications related to employment services.
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## SUMMARY

### What the County Might Do Itself

- Distribute RFPs to, and expand partnerships with, “non-traditional” community service partners that provide development and training, mentorships, exposure, and career pathways (like theatre companies, non-human service-oriented youth programs, business and industry associations, labor unions, etc.)
- 
- Establish wrap-around service that connects youth workforce program participants to other county-driven opportunities, services and resources, such as county job openings & volunteer positions, cash assistance, social services, housing stability, and more.
- Provide either an in-house or outsourced service to all youth-serving workforce programs the county contracts with to develop content and post consistently + often to the many social media platforms where youth communicate. The key here is having sufficient capacity and capability to be effective on social media and keep up with the various platforms. These activities should be results-oriented.
- Provide orientation & other supports to program providers/network/sharing good practices/analysing feedback and results of surveys

### What the County Might Ask Its Sub-Awardees/ Subcontractors to Do

- 
- Promote their county-contracted services on a wide variety of social media and in other places young people are at (school, church, etc.)
  - Empower young people to be their own advocates and get regular “voice of the customer” feedback and input.
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## SUMMARY

### Considerations

This research identifies potential needs and a possible disconnect between the level of youth awareness and concern relating to employment services combined with limited understanding of what is needed to be successful in becoming financially secure and building a career. Current community-based programming offered by Ramsey County seems to miss the mark in several big areas:

- Connecting with young people where they are at, in the ways they prefer, with the information that interests them.
- Offering knowledge and skills for money management and wealth-building.
- Providing sufficient technology resources and assistance to meet ever-evolving needs of employers.
- Connecting young people to other county services which could help them meet their immediate socioeconomic needs so they can focus on longer-term employment and career development.

There is a need to clarify and then own the county's role(s) in relation both to the youth it seeks to serve and the programs it is working with to serve them. For instance, under what circumstances and for what reasons will the county be:

- An outsourcer?
  - A direct service provider?
  - A convenor?
  - A manager?
  - A partner?
  - A supporter?
  - A challenger?
-

## ADDENDUM 1 – WORKSHOP DETAILS & NOTES

### Ramsey County Workforce Solutions: Youth Employment Services Workshops

Date	Time	Youth Registrations	Youth Attendees
September 27, 2021	5 – 6:30 PM	49	11
September 29, 2021	5 – 6:30 PM	50	30

Question 1. What struck you about the survey results shared earlier? Any aha's? What do those results tell you? What do they mean to you? How are those results the same or different to your own situation? Do you get similar benefits yourself participating in these employment and education programs? What gaps did you see/experience?

#### **Notetaker I**

- I wanted to see what this was about, and my mom likes me to get involved.
- Want to know about money management, how to invest, how to get started, what to do? What is bitcoin ATF, etc?
- Someone a little older who previously worked with WFS. Someone offering info from being in the process
- Wants to share insights and get other's perspective/experiences
- I had my first job this summer and I'm hoping there's other jobs available.
- Mentioned in chat: about money and management
- Someone affirmed the top four are their key needs
- Not everyone is aware of all the offerings.
- What do the results mean to you as a Ramsey County resident?
- I misunderstood the first question. These are the things I want to learn more about,
- I also feel like the money part is more important considering the credit cards
- I'm only 15 so I need training and on the job training so I can be ready for any job.
- mentorship and leadership skills:
- Foster kids, how did they prepare for adulthood? Who helps them?
- How do I learn how to get credit? How to get a loan? How to avoid debt?
- Answered survey based on myself/own needs. There are other needs the community would benefit from. Viewing the results reminded me that there are myriad needs and areas to expound upon, aside from my own, which are of equal importance.

#### **Notetaker II**

- Money and management to deal with credit cards and paying off bills and how to save money.
- I think about money and financial stuff there should be business ideas and how to invest in the most appropriate ways
- Some students are addicted to gambling and they struggle to overcome it. It would be great if they can be helped. One person offered that therapy can help.

### **Notetaker III**

- It seems everyone has similar needs
- Young people want more services towards their needs
- Youth want direct services like training and help with learning about money
- “it says to me that the services are not working as well as they could”
- “i’m plugged into services and yet there is nothing happening since i finished mt transition program” VR and HIRED
- “I did a internship with a work force solutions program that transferred to hired. of course all the confusion of the pandemic does not help”
- Follow up question from XXXXX: Did the WFS services help you- did you receive helpful services?
- “I’m not sure this group is for me as an Intellectual Disability person... but I am one of the ppl served. i wonder if this group is less about ID than other needs.”
- A lot of young people would like to learn about money mngt. How to save and everything involved with money and how to get the money to work for you, how to start your own business
- Got a summer job with a workforce program but nothing else happened (pandemic time also), program that they were in got defunded and service was transferred to HIRED, voc rehab counselor also changed in this time
- Many like to start a business but the option is off the table for someone with Intellectual Disability
- Hired wants to help her get the job she would love, very enthusiastic to help her but a very slow process though
- Right Track tries to help you with everything they can.

### **Notetaker IV**

- Learn about starting own business
- Shows that young people want services for needs and that services may not be working as well as they could
- Hard to find and navigate services in general
- Need or would like to learn about money management
- More information on what is available
- More responsive services to people with ID: 3 year transition program with VR, got a summer job in 2020 but jobs limited due to pandemic, good work experience but won’t transfer into real job, was in a WFS program and transferred to vendor with no experience with ID but counselor enthusiastic, staff changes with hand offs not just WF but also VR, jobs there but funding changes...trying to find job but entrepreneurship popular but not an option for the young participant
- Need more conversations about career paths and need info on financial aid

### **Notetaker V**

- When Bridgemakers does discussion, what comes up a lot is youth not knowing what resources they have access to. This felt accurate with the survey results. Youth often don’t know where to go to get access to these resources.

- When I was still in school the only option that was shown to me was the four year college life and that didn't fit me. I also had struggles with mental health so I can relate to what we are seeing.
- Thinking about only option was college and how intimidating. Got to college and realized it wasn't for me. Realized that doing academics wasn't for me.
- "money"
- Money can be a stressful topics. Budgeting. Having money for necessities. If money is an issue, it doesn't matter your age, it can impact other areas of your life.
- JAG (jobs for America's graduates) during senior year was super helpful. It took until senior year to have these conversations about money. It isn't fair when you have to worry about money. Not having money makes it harder to work and go to school.
- Didn't have first money management class until college and it was intimidating but it was really cool.
- The resources that are available to us people don't know about. People didn't learn about these opportunities until after high school. Its more apparent now being out of high school what programs are available. And it is sad that more students don't know about it, know what help they need or how to ask.
- Having a good mentor is part of having good support.
- "I think about money and financial stuff there should be business ideas and how to invest in the most appropriate ways my idea though"
- We need classes to teach about stocks and how to keep money and how to save. Home eco classes teaching how to live a healthy life, be smart with money. More classes on how to be a human instead of being so focused on test scores.

## **Notetaker VI**

- I am surprised by the results.
- Some resources/program are available through my school
- Advocating for youth to know their rights is important.
- I think according to survey their lack of mentorship making it hard for youth to have job of their choice. Others agreed!
- More training should be done for youth, such as understanding credit score. I guess that goes along with Money management, more mentorships and trainings on issues arising like technology. These should be offered both in school and outside of school.
- None of the youth are currently involved in any mentorship programs. They would like a mentor to:
  - Review my resume
  - LinkedIn profile
  - Interview prep

I think they should put more funds to technology to enable youth to get ideas and skills through the internet

## **Notetaker VII**

- For me, when I was in high school, I went to an alternative school with a Jobs for American Graduates class and JAG was very helpful. Going over taking out loans, credit cards, interest rates. It was eye opening realizing how little I had learned about it previously.

- “Am so excited with results”
- There are a lot of results, but students don’t know where to look. How do we help youth find the resources?
- “I noted emotional support has a low rate” – “yeah should have more”
- “The rate of training programs are presentable”
- “having a mentor is also low” “it should be higher”
- In my own experience I didn’t get a mentor until after high school and having a person who wants to help you succeed and hold you accountable. Someone outside of family who can guide you through your career choices.

### Notetaker VIII

- I was shocked at how training is the last one on the graph b
- what was the criteria used to list the programs
- i expect to learn about more ways to achieve employment goals
- am not surprised services top the list
- it is the responsibility we expect from the county
- they should market in twitter that is my opinion though
- information on services is over rated
- the results are standard
- it's a bit fair

Question 2. Why might people have answered the top four support services so high in helpfulness? What are the specific opportunities and needs in these areas?

- Information on services are available to me
- Having training programs that I want/need
- Learning about money and its management
- Direct access to other support services (cash, housing, transportation, etc.)

### Notetaker I

- the need to get money to pay off bills
- Like XXXXX said I responded based on what I think I need to be successful.
- the places the kids/people who need them are. schools, internet, that sort of thing
- How do you become an entrepreneur?
- Feel like emotional support should be higher on the list, but people focus on money
- School never going to work out if you aren’t in right place mentally
- Health is physical and mental People do bad things...stressed, bullied, pushed over edge
- Market services in schools as early as possible. Also, social media. Make this discrete so not judged if its about mental health or something you don’t want others to know.
- Working on yourself/being healthy should not be stigmatized
- Comment that these top four survey items are intersectional. One requires others for success
- Needs to be maintenance of relationship beyond just a connection, especially for true mentorship



- What cash resources you have used or are lacking? No idea. The youth didn't know what cash resources are available.
- Families aren't being taken care of in the way that works for them. Don't know about programs or supports.
- P-EBT should always be a thing. Pandemic EBT

## **Notetaker II**

- Needs for services like job opportunities near us
- Credit card and money management
- The top four were the most important because of the economy during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Information on services, health services, and food are also important

## **Notetaker III**

- Money management
- "if you want to move out on your own... you really need to manage your money... to pay rent, buy food, clothing. how to take care of basic needs AND save"
- Must be prepared to move out
- "Needs vs Wants" young people need to understand this
- Want workshops and training on finances
- A lot of barriers to understanding resources- need first time home buyers' workshops
- "a pretty quiet group... sometimes it is VERY hard to know what you need."
- Want to be a Zumba instructor as a small business but needs to have a job while she is getting it started- From Lisa T "could run it on a YouTube channel"

## **Notetaker IV**

- Money mgmt. top because who doesn't want to know how to save and be good with money, make money work in favor, meet basic needs, pay rent, essential items/clothing; will help people move out on own but need to be prepared to know how to manage it
- Sometimes it is very hard to know what you need and then once you figure that out then how to access them and navigate them; what are the resources
- Workshops and trainings on financial literacy, home ownership, planning for unexpected expenses, etc.

## **Notetaker V**

- These are important to young people and that they don't have access to.
- "Needs for services like job opportunities near us"
- These four all really tie into each other. Instead of acknowledging that these are can all be solved together. Job, money management, food, are all one category. It is just living life.
- "Right now, due to the pandemic I think the top four were most important considering the economy right now"
- These were some of the things that were impacted the most during COVID. The pandemic made it so that issues that had been here for a long time could not be ignored anymore. It had it so that most people experienced them so couldn't be ignored.

- These are all basic needs and skills that we should all have but it is interesting that many youths don't have these skills to survive.
- It is frustrating that these classes are not already included.
- Resources should be presented every day.
- Sometimes when you are going through it, you don't know where to turn. Having spaces to allow youth to open and receive help.
- Access to knowing where your food comes from. Bringing the community together,

### **Notetaker VI**

- Fair compensation
- I think when you study and the same time you are taught about education programs about employment, it helps youth make decisions about their desire in field of work.
- time management and financial literacy like money management

### **Notetaker VII**

- "Technology support should be upheld since we are living in a technological times"
- "Job search needs more consideration" One problem I have for finding a job is that I don't have the technical skills so having more training would be helpful. I'm doing graphic design but I don't know how to use adobe but every job posting wants adobe. And the trainings are expensive. Also need a strong enough computer to run the programs quickly, and flawlessly. And the trainings and stuff. I've seen trainings at college but there is so many and they are expensive and add up. Learning about what the fastest pathway and required classes to cut out the noise.
- Maybe career support, somebody talking to you helping to narrow in on what you might be good at. Personality & skill assessments.
- Spinning wheels with Right Track Plus. Was expecting more support from the employer in the internship. Everyone in Right Track Plus has a mentor. She talked to her about concerns, doubts, it's nice but doesn't feel like it can solve the problems, specifically related to training. Internship is with a start-up.

### **Notetaker VIII**

- to meet up the job demand market
- so as to suit in the growing economy
- job search definitely requires more power,
- if there is lower there will be a growing economy
- i mean if leadership is good the economy will grow better
- better leadership
- more opportunities for fresh graduates
- internship programs

Question 3. *if not answered earlier:* How can we better communicate with you and your peers about the programs that are available?

### **Notetaker I**

- How can we better communicate with you and your peers about the programs that are available?

- through social media and posters
- social media IG, TikTok
- and adverts also
- Not everyone, even youth use social media.
- Marketing needs to improve, can't be about having to be in the right place at the right time,
- I get all my other information from my mom when she gets emails
- Email is the worst for of information sharing right now. Who checks it?
- All \$ available to us and our family, how to access services, how we'll use social media
- The most important thing would be mentorship, or someone dedicated to youth to maintain an ongoing dialog. A blessed person in life. In college now and never expected to be.

## **Notetaker II**

- Social media
- Facebook, Instagram, TikTok
- Websites
- Ads
- Phone number or Email

## **Notetaker III**

Didn't make it to question 3.

## **Notetaker IV**

Didn't make it to question 3.

## **Notetaker V**

- Through social media. Following school or organizations. Facebook, Instagram, TikTok. The popular channels and pages are not directed at youth. Website, adds, phone number. Social media is trying to sell you something.
- I don't know what resources are out there for support. Couldn't name any.
- One of the new and upcoming things is co-op housing. It is basically a way for people to come together and rent is a sliding scale, and you don't have a landlord. You own a portion of the house. Knows about four buildings under one organization. All of them are centered around community engagement and uplifting. Grow their own food. Being environmentally sustainable. Learned about it through a seminar because so many people were getting arrested at Line 3 protests and a speaker came in and told them about the work. Have just been doing the work for two years. Some of the houses are sustained from grants. Hearing from people in formal settings and then sharing out the resources to friends, co-workers, colleagues, etc. Someone could create their own coop housing for youth.
- When youth have had opportunities like this before to share, it tended to be in response to traumatic opportunities. Rare occasions. Do people want more opportunities to talk like this?
- Bridgemakers Event on October 16<sup>th</sup>! 😊

## Notetaker VI

- Did not get to the third question.

Notes From the full group (Not necessary, but if you hear anything you want to be sure is captured, feel free to note it here.

- Get your Twitter game up, Ramsey County! 😊
- Youth leadership – youth need a strong mentor to push them and help them build leadership skills! A trustworthy adult who isn't a parent is so important.
- Co-creating programs: leaders and young people, is a great way for young people to have a voice in influencing their government.
- Financial literacy – it's hard to understand credit scores, banking, and budgeting. These aren't taught in schools.
- Resources on how to start your own non-profit would be helpful. Useful resources aren't available online.

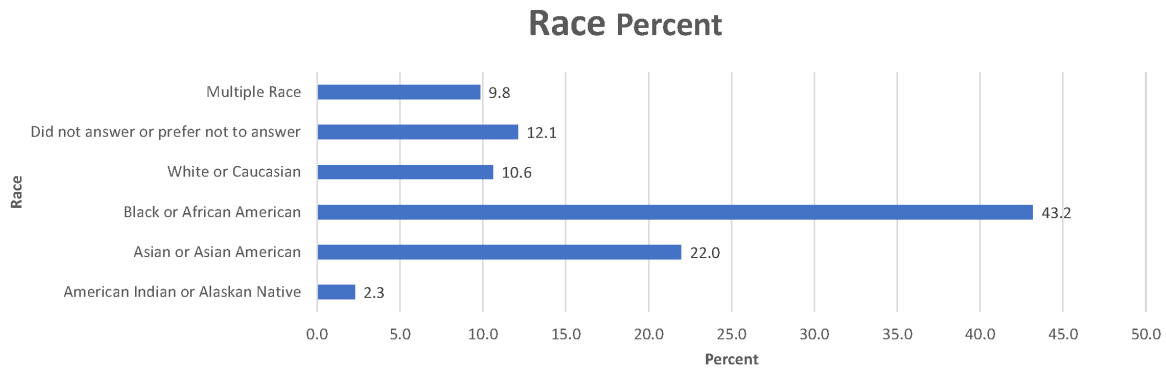
## Notetaker VII

- Mentor is more than instructor, teacher, supervisor but someone who is in your corner providing encouragement. Corner man. Plan out before hand, project, interview. Mentorship with Bridgemakers have built up the leadership. A trustworthy adult that isn't the young person's parent. Leadership plays into democracy. More opportunities to engage with local government provides opportunity for leadership development. Young people in these group are being leadership. Co creation. Young folks will be able to say that they lead the charge
- "Rewarding the ones who take their time to involve in mentorship program"
- Some young people interested in mentorship, some interested in financial literacy. - someone said YES
- Resources on how to start your own non-profit, business, etc. – "I second that". Cole elevated that. There are a lot of products to purchase.

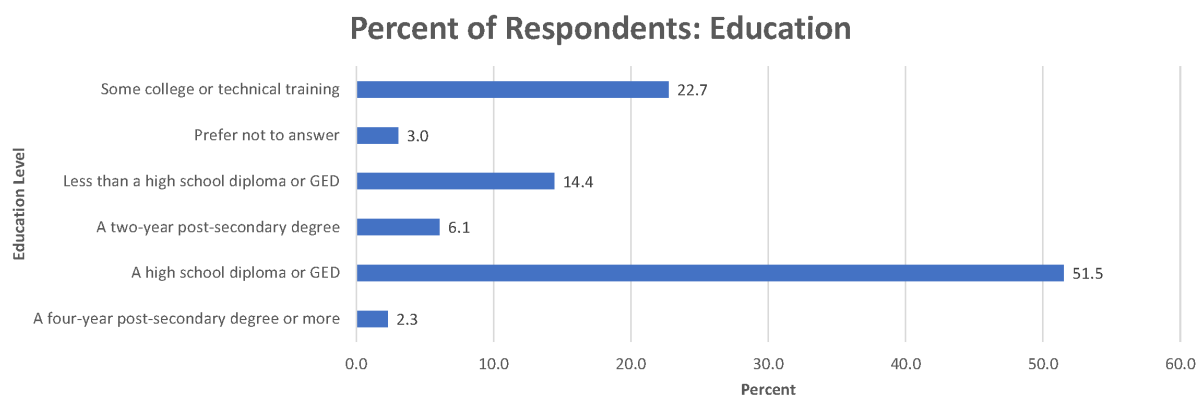
## Notetaker VIII

- I'll go for social media since 80% of the youths are on social media and they can access it comfortably
- the county should create social media platforms promote them through ads
- rewarding the ones who take their time to involve in mentorship program
- Social media!

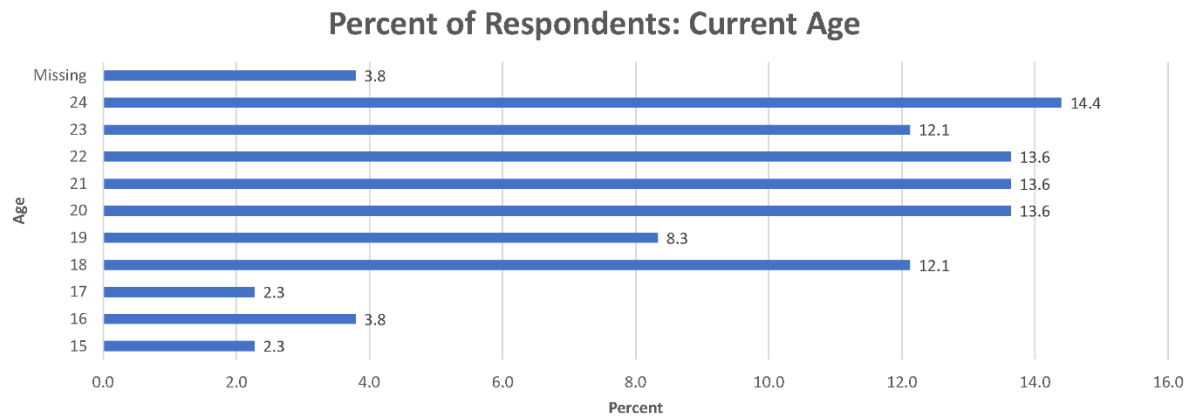
## ADDENDUM 2 – YOUTH SURVEY RESULTS



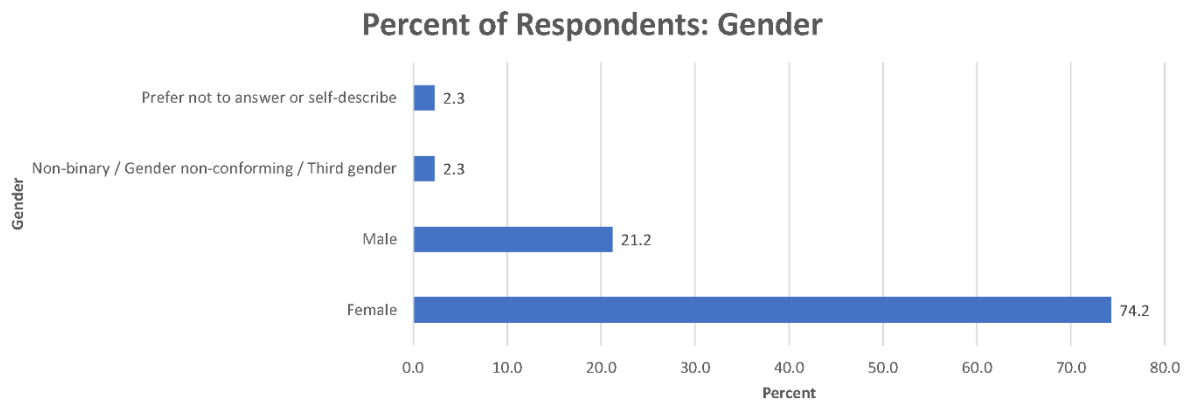
- N = 132
- Hispanic make up 11.4% (15)
- Pretty close alignment with populations served. White respondents are lower than expected whereas Asian is higher.



- N = 132

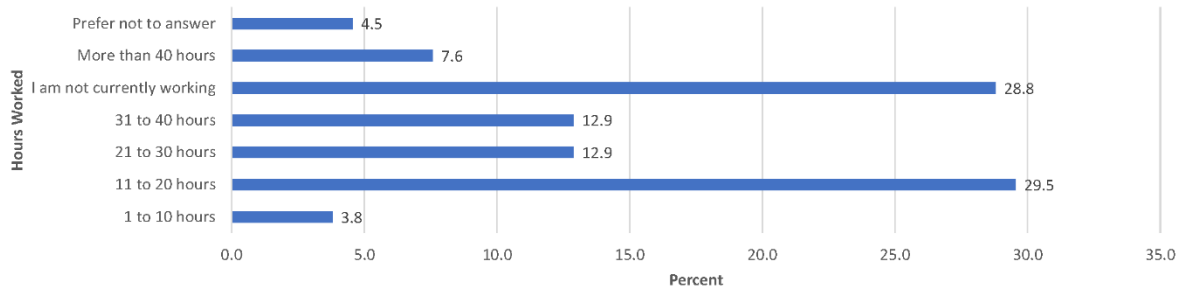


• N = 132



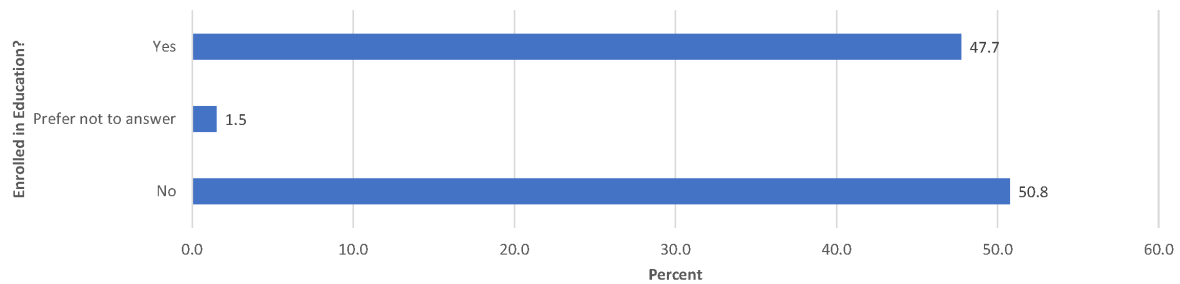
- N = 132
- MFIP is over 90% Female. (N = 44/132)

### How many total hours are you currently working in a regular week (on average)?



• N = 132

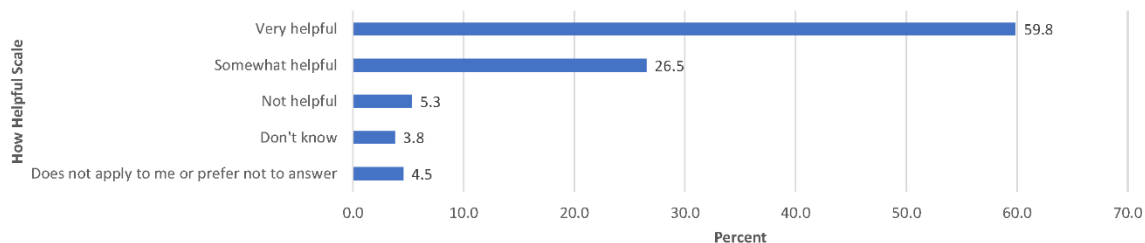
### Are you currently enrolled in an education program (such as school, college, training, certification, or apprenticeship)?



- N = 132
- Several commented mostly with the program or the school they are attending

Please tell us how helpful you would find each of these things for helping you to achieve your education and/or employment goals.

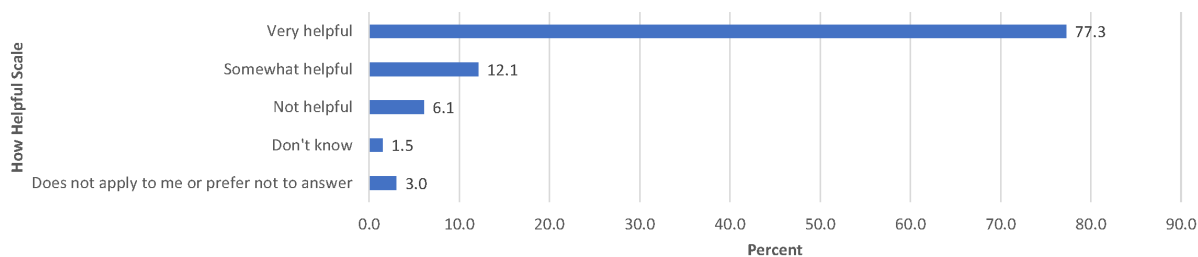
**Having a Mentor**



• N = 132

Please tell us how helpful you would find each of these things for helping you to achieve your education and/or employment goals.

**Learning about money and money management**

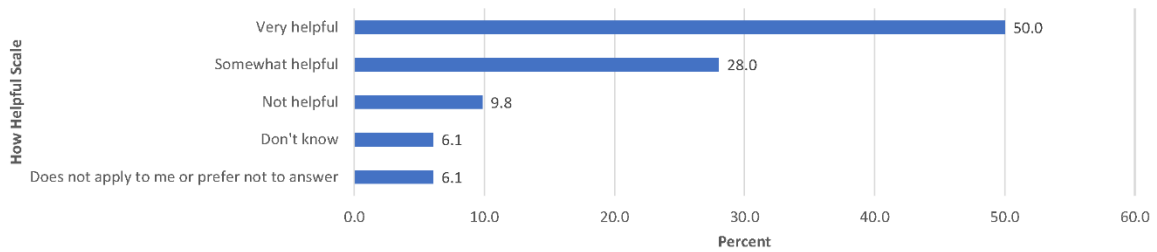


• N = 132



Please tell us how helpful you would find each of these things for helping you to achieve your education and/or employment goals.

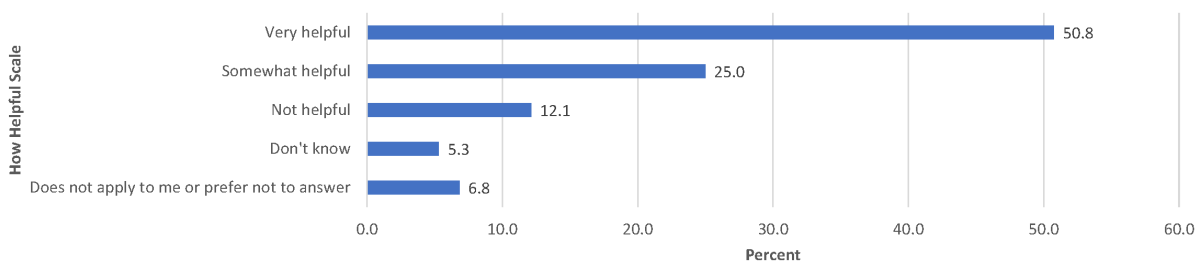
Enrolling in a training program



• N = 132

Please tell us how helpful you would find each of these things for helping you to achieve your education and/or employment goals.

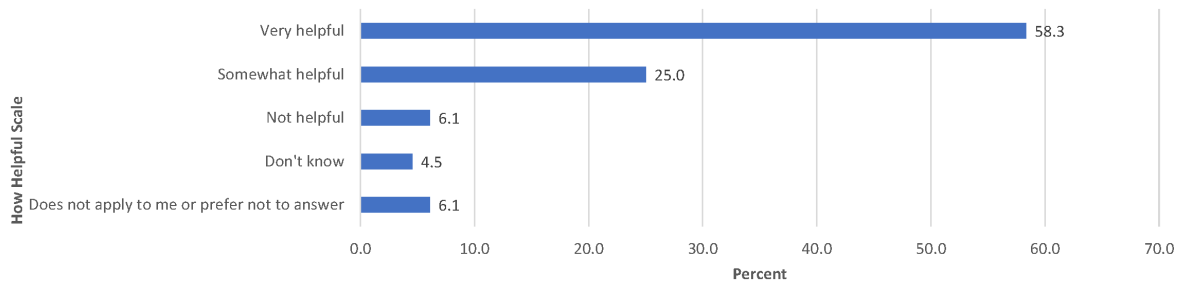
Receiving tutoring or study skills



• N = 132

Please tell us how helpful you would find each of these things for helping you to achieve your education and/or employment goals.

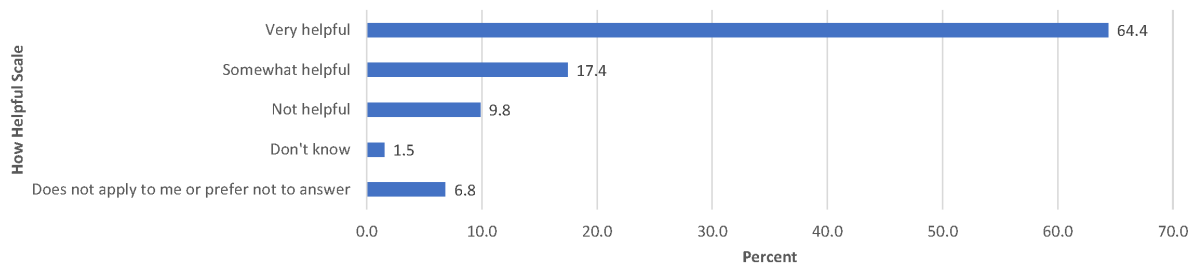
**Developing leadership skills**



• N = 132

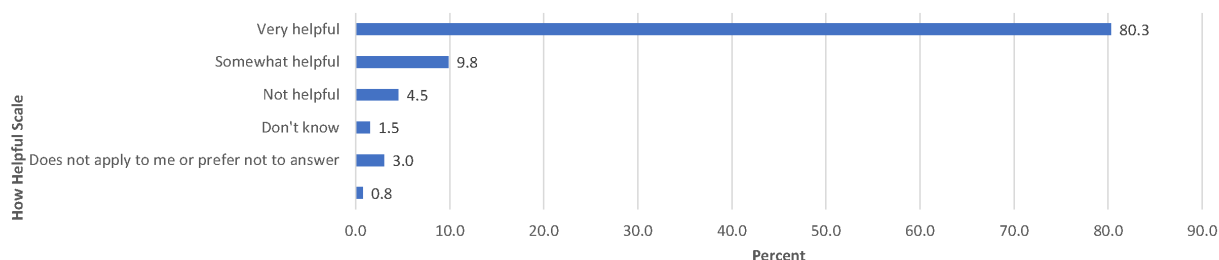
Please tell us how helpful you would find each of these things for helping you to achieve your education and/or employment goals.

**Learning skills to start and operate my own business**



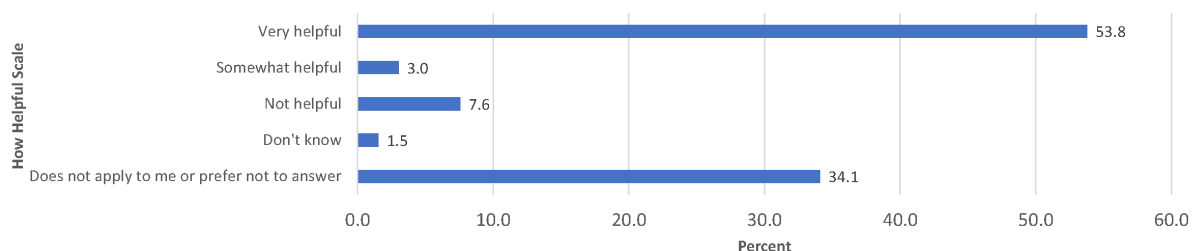
• N = 132

**Please tell us how helpful you would find each of these things for helping you to achieve your education and/or employment goals.**  
**Having information on what services and supports are available to me**



• N = 132

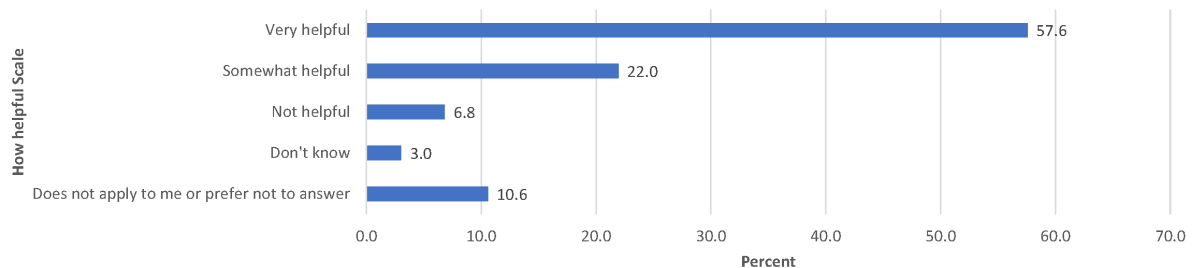
**Please tell us how helpful you would find each of these things for helping you to achieve your education and/or employment goals.**  
**Completing my high school degree or GED**



• N = 132

Please tell us how helpful you would find each of these things for helping you to achieve your education and/or employment goals.

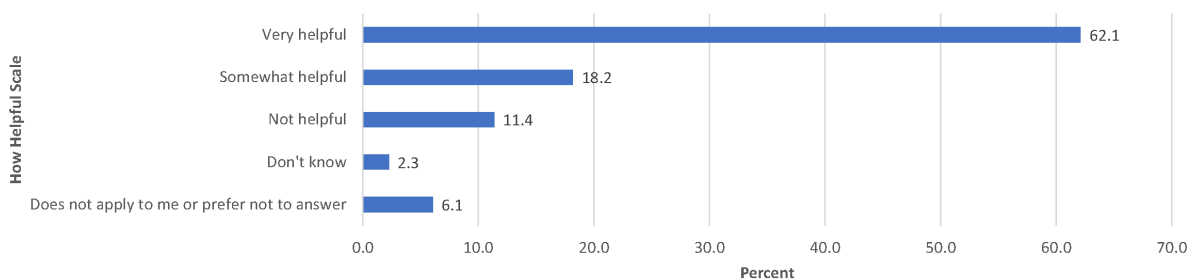
Having job search assistance and support



• N = 132

Please tell us how helpful you would find each of these things for helping you to achieve your education and/or employment goals.

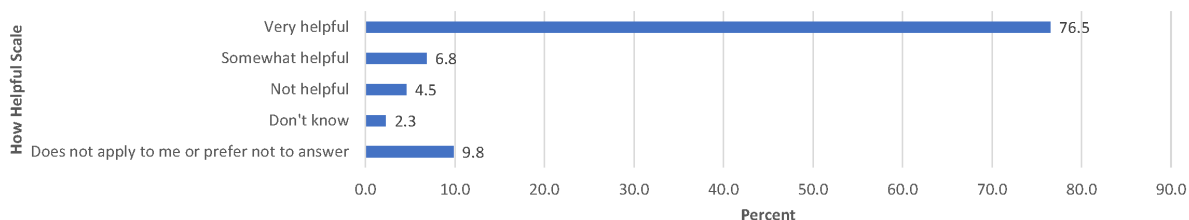
Having technology support (internet, computer, training, etc.)



• N = 132

Please tell us how helpful you would find each of these things for helping you to achieve your education and/or employment goals.

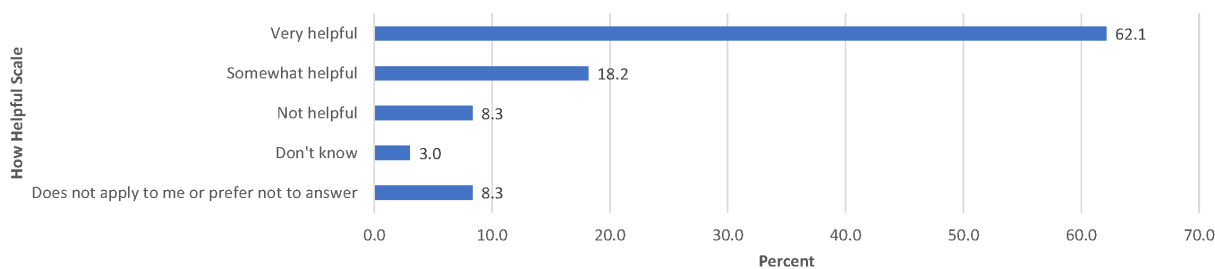
**Having direct access to support services (housing, food, cash, transportation, childcare, clothing)**



• N = 132

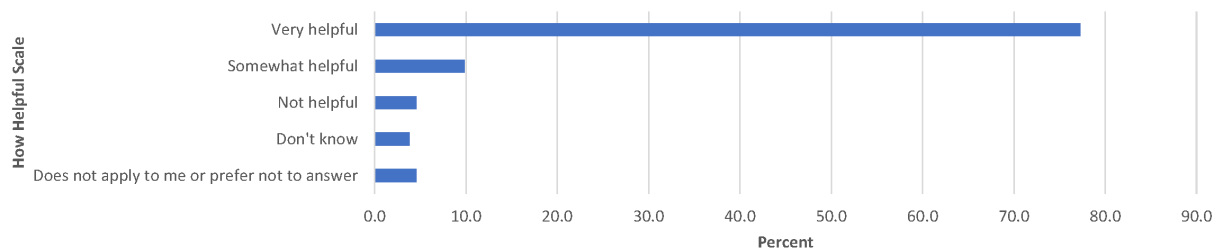
Please tell us how helpful you would find each of these things for helping you to achieve your education and/or employment goals.

**Having emotional support**



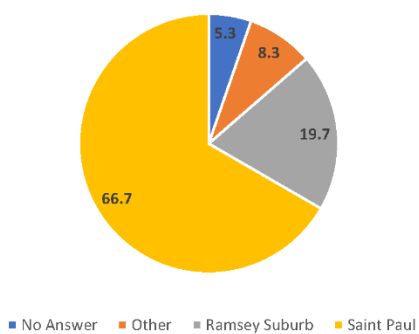
• N = 132

Please tell us how helpful you would find each of these things for helping you to achieve your education and/or employment goals.  
Having the training programs I want/need



• N = 132

City Percent



• N = 132

<b>Opportunities interested in</b>	
Nursing/healthcare	32
Computer Science/IT	12
Psychology	5
barber schooling / beauty	5
Own business	5
Child care/early childhood	5
Art	5
Long term investment-scholarship or tuition	3
Retail	3
Flexible to spend more time with kids	3
Sales/Marketing	3
Teacher	3
Photography	2
Business and Digital Arts	2
Any opportunity	2
Green jobs	2
Not sure I can work	2
Trade apprentice	2
Social Justice	2
Public Service	2

What else would you like us to know?	
Appreciative	4
More support services	3
Internship opportunity or like their current internship	3
Did not like ULEAD transitioning	3
Train before placing (especially healthcare)	2
Increase mentorship	1
Improve communication	1
Childcare needs	1
Can't get a job (criminal record)	1
Access to scholarships	1