

## **United Way of Greater Union County: Youth Corp Participant Focus Group**

**01/25/2023 1:00pm – 2:30pm**

**13 students participated in the focus group**

**Paloma Baez, Academic Coach**

The youth were asked a series of questions that focused on the following topics:

- Experience in the workforce
- Future aspirations
- The difference between traditional school versus Youth Corp
- Mental health, LGBTQ, and homeless services

With the help of Paloma Baez, who translated for the students who weren't comfortable speaking English, many slowly opened up about their experiences in educational settings, future plans and their needs to achieve success.

1. How do you define success?
  - Nice house
  - Money to fall back on
  - Accomplishing goals
  - A good job doing what you want to do
  - Being happy
2. What jobs are you familiar with or have worked in?
  - Restaurants
  - Fed Ex
  - Retail
3. What are your experiences in the work world?
  - Pay was too low to pay for rent
  - Living check to check
4. What are some of the careers you see yourself in?
  - Warehouse
  - Nursing
  - Information Technology
  - Flight Attendant
  - Cosmetology
  - Basketball Career
  - Funeral Services

- Social Work
- 5. Do you know how to get into that career?
  - Through school
- 6. What help do you need to get and keep a job?
  - Having employers give you the work experience they ask for when applying to jobs.
- 7. Do you know where to go to find help with getting a job?
  - Online
  - City hall
  - Library
  - Newspaper
  - One Stop
- 8. What are some of your supportive service needs?
  - Scholarships
  - Grants
  - Career exposure
  - Technology
  - Legal status assistance
  - Childcare
  - Health insurance
  - Help with home life
  - Help for their family
  - Flexible jobs
  - Transportation (Uber)
- 9. What are your experiences with various programs that are supposed to help you?
  - It's been ok
  - Need to have an adult that can help us navigate through life
- 10. Have you or someone close to you experienced homelessness?
  - No answer
- 11. What do you like/dislike about school?
  - Dislike
    - Uniforms
    - Not being able to express themselves
    - Schools need to understand more about what going on with students personal lives
    - Need to hire people who want to be there

- More activities
    - More travel opportunities
    - Teach more life skills: cooking, real estate, how to raise kids, manage money
    - Food was horrible
    - Boring
    - Too much fighting and smoking
  - Likes About Youth Corp
    - Small group
    - Transportation
    - Staff that listen
    - Friendly environment
12. How can schools prepare you for the future workforce?
- More college fairs
  - Career pathway fairs
  - Travel opportunities
  - Job site visits
  - Work experience
  - Internships
13. How can those in the LGBTQ community feel safe at home, school, and in the workplace?
- Schools need to make students feel protected
  - Let them be heard and really listen
  - Support them
14. Do you know where to go to find mental health services? Where?
- Mentors
  - Journaling
  - Therapist
  - Guidance counselors
  - Internet

**Other comments that were shared by the youth students**

- Many of the student agreed they would like to have a prom.
- Many students stated they would like to see more incentives offered, which would keep them motivated. Incentives include scholarships, driving lessons, help for their family (troubled sister), basketball lessons, dance classes, swimming classes, and IT lessons.
- Many students stated their main goal was to graduate and felt working would not allow them to focus on school work.

- Students mentioned using Uber more than public transportation was due to feeling unsafe waiting for and riding the bus.