



Introducing Transportation Careers to Youth in NJ

Rutgers Employment Success Program

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RUTGERS—NEW BRUNSWICK
**Center for Advanced Infrastructure
and Transportation**
School of Engineering

Mission of our Program

- **Provide strengths-based case management & training by experienced staff to youth and emerging adults, using transportation and infrastructure careers to create employment opportunities and contribution to the surrounding community.**
- **Develop partnerships with employers and industry professionals, social service systems, and training partners including community colleges to implement job readiness and attainment in transportation industry related careers.**

Pre-apprenticeship in Auto Tech



BRIDGES, PACE, YTTW

BRIDGES to Employing Youth:

- **16-24 year olds impacted by the justice system (current or previous), not currently enrolled in school (with or without a high school diploma).**
- **Served over 350 young people in the past 5 years with 85% average benchmark attainment of employment or academic completion.**

PACE, YTTW:

- **16-24 year old HS students or graduates interested in heavy equipment operating or auto tech, committed to intensive training cycle and employment or apprenticeship.**
- **Recruited 80 participants, many entering the transportation sector with jobs in garages, warehouses, auto retail shops, and construction.**

Relationships with Community Colleges, Chambers of Commerce, employers including NJTransit, Autozone, and Trade Unions including Local 825, IAM-CREST, and ATU.



The Who

- Young people aged 16-26, mostly un- or under-employed
- Many of these youth and emerging adults were previously unengaged in career paths, or are first generation college students or candidates
- Motivated young people eager to contribute and develop their own pathways toward overcoming poverty and other challenges
- Supportive education and job/career opportunities increase positive behaviors and generate overall community involvement

Metrics count (86% overall attainment)

- In 2022 we enrolled 148, with 118 benchmarks achieved
- In 2023 we enrolled 139, with 125 benchmarks achieved
- In 2024 we enrolled 111, with 99 benchmarks achieved

Benchmarks included:

- **academic remediation/completion**
 - **Job attainment**
 - **Entering Apprenticeship or Pre-Apprenticeship**
- In 2024 we engaged an additional 200+ adults in job readiness and career exploration, with similar results

Laying the foundation



Hands-on experiences



Classroom learning

The Why



- With caring functional professional supports, youth and emerging adults demonstrate growth and success
- Programs that focus on youth vary in approach, funding, and focus—very few target transportation sector
- Workplace readiness strategies are localized and mostly regional, reflective of the communities served
- Helping youth explore transportation careers benefits them and us
- Providing job-specific training and certification increases the chance for long-term success for young people

Forklift Operator careers are expected to grow by 7% from 2020-2030

Case Management Activities

- **Meet with families at school, in their homes, or virtually**
- **Provide transportation options--bus passes, Uber giftcards**
- **Engage participants in job & career readiness activities**
 - **Resume writing**
 - **Practicing interview skills using mock interviews**
 - **Linking youth to potential jobs and internships**
 - **Attending job interviews**
- **Connect to Rutgers, Rowan, Community Colleges for training, internships, jobs, volunteering**
- **Referrals to community-based pro-social activities**

The How?



- **Determine funding for these programs, grants from NJDOL, OMH**
- **Partner with local training experts and employers, including Community Colleges, unions**
- **Provide targeted recruitment to identify youth with interests in the trades, partner with schools and local system partners**
- **Utilize CAIT program staff including credible messengers, to provide supports and training**

OSHA certified! Always Safety First



What we've learned

- 1-Individualized attention and planning crucial
- 2-Supports should culturally reflect participants
- 3-Credentials must be job opportunity specific, safety as a baseline helps employers trust
- 4-Infrastructure & transportation not usually the focus of youth work readiness
- 5-Training focus varies depending on location and available job/career options
- 6-Success is clearly defined—job retention and attainment, school and training engagement, increase in positive community contribution





THANK YOU

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