



# City of Seattle

Edward B. Murray, Mayor

## Office of Economic Development

Brian K. Surratt, Director

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### Memorandum

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**Date:** June 1, 2017

**To:** City of Seattle Councilmembers

**From:** Brian Surratt, Director, Office of Economic Development  
Nancy Yamamoto, Workforce Development Manager, OED  
Sasha Gourevitch, Youth Employment Development Advisor, OED

**CC:** Ben Noble, Director, City Budget Office  
Catherine Cornwall, City Budget Office  
Waslala Miranda, City Budget Office

**Subject:** Response to SLI 175-1-A-2 – Increasing City Internships for the Mayor’s Youth Employment Initiative (MYEI)

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City Council Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) 175-1-A-2 requested that the Office of Economic Development (OED) explore ways to increase the number of internships the City offers through the Mayor’s Youth Employment Initiative (MYEI).

#### Background

The Mayor’s Youth Employment Initiative (MYEI) seeks to connect more of Seattle’s youth to work experiences so that they can build the knowledge, connections and skills needed to be successful in today’s economy. The MYEI is particularly focused on creating more opportunities for low-income, disadvantaged youth who face high unemployment and limited exposure to career pathways. This focus on youth employment is one of the five pillars<sup>1</sup> of the Mayor’s Youth Opportunity Initiative which seeks to give every young person in Seattle access to opportunities and resources which allow them to thrive and successfully become an adult.

MYEI provides many young people with their first work experience and offers career exposure, exploration and skills necessary to set them on a positive trajectory. Seattle employers often expect a certain minimum skillset from their prospective employees that youth won’t gain without career experiences. A recent study by the Brookings Institute, “Youth Summer Jobs Program: Aligning Ends and Means” notes that summer jobs programs, and those explicitly tied to education, “develop the sense of agency, identity, and competencies

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<sup>1</sup> The Mayor’s Youth Opportunity Initiative (MYOI) is the City’s effort to align resources and strategy to ensure every young person in Seattle has access to opportunities and resources to thrive and successfully transition into adulthood. It is comprised of programs contributing to five pillars of youth success – Education, Positive Connections, Employment, Criminal Justice and Health.

necessary for adult success, [and that] young people need positive activities, coupled with strong, supportive and sustained relationships with adults.”

In 2015, Mayor Murray announced a major expansion of the City’s youth employment programs and a continuing commitment to grow employment/internship opportunities for youth. That year, the MYEI connected 2,000 internships, employment, and work-based learning opportunities to Seattle youth between the ages of 14 to 24. These consisted of multiple types of youth internships and career experiences including City-sponsored youth employment programs, private sector and non-profit sector youth employment programs.

In 2016, MYEI grew to 3,484 paid work experiences for young people. Of these, 2,123 youth received jobs skills and/or career readiness services from City of Seattle programs and a subset (1,528 or 72% of the interns) were hosted by City departments. Almost 60% of the City’s departments hosted youth from the Seattle Youth Employment Program (SYEP), which provides a supported summer internship experience for low-income youth. SYEP provides work readiness training, transportation and food support, and case management throughout the duration of the internship. The MYEI target in 2017 is 3,500.

In addition to SYEP, many departments support a diverse array of young people through internships and stipend programs that connect them with career exposure and exploration. Examples of these programs include the Parks Department’s Youth Career Training Program and Seattle Public Libraries’ Student Assistance Program. The remaining 1,361 youth were connected with youth employment programs of community partners (both private businesses and non-profits). See the attached chart of departments and programs that contribute to MYEI.

One of the key program design elements instituted last year was establishing employer facing resources (i.e. website, training, employer recruitment and staffing) to support public and private employers interested in hosting an intern. This year, in addition to continuing our engagement with private employers, we are exploring ways to increase the capacity of City departments to create more opportunities for young people. This response focuses on these efforts and the program improvements that are planned following recent assessments completed by the Office of Policy and Innovation (OPI) and the Brookings Institute.

### **Assessment Findings**

As we continue to grow MYEI, OED contracted with a Senior Researcher from the Brookings Institute to assess how the City’s program model compares to best practices around youth employment programs and offer recommendations for continuous improvement. Simultaneously, OPI was engaged to identify short and long-term improvements for the Initiative.

These assessments synthesized the lessons of our early experience implementing an expanded youth employment initiative with other municipal youth employment programs across the nation. (A summary of the findings and recommendations directly from the Brookings Institute are found in the attached table and are discussed below.) Comparing the experience of other cities, it is typical for public and subsidized internships to be at the core of youth employment initiatives. However, they also rely on private sector employers to grow their programs, provide funding and offer a breadth of career/industry experiences. Consequently, mature programs tend to be multi-sector and multi-tiered, with internships available in non-profit, public and private sector settings with varying levels of age, experience and skills required. The best practices found in other cities are aligned with the existing and planned practices for the City of Seattle.

Shared recommendations included:

- Improve youth preparation to better meet employer expectation and the scope of internship experiences we seek to cultivate through MYEI.
- Organize services based on distinct “tiers” of youth seeking internships, based on a combination of age and work-readiness.
- Continue to strengthen the participation and coordination among the City’s departments and agencies related to youth internships and programs.
- Establish comprehensive internal coordination structure for employment and youth development activities already existing within the City.
- Investment in both external and internal programs is equally important to grow MYEI

The MYEI team has a goal to increase youth employment, internship, and career exposure opportunities for more of Seattle’s youth and have internal and external strategies for growth. We are currently looking at the City’s internal youth employment and training programs to identify opportunities to expand. At the same time, our external efforts are comprised of all other efforts to grow host sites and advocate for community efforts to expand youth internships and employment opportunities, including potential connections with career and technical education students.

### **Applying Assessment Learning**

As the largest provider of internship and career experiences for youth in Seattle, the City of Seattle is committed to being a leader in the region as a model for developing its future workforce, creating entry-level positions and establishing clear employment pathways. In response to the recommendations made in the assessments, the MYEI leadership team (OED, SDHR, HSD and OPI) are exploring ways to increase the number of youth served while increasing the quality of the internship experience for both young people seeking employment opportunities and participating employers. In addition to increasing private sector participation, we are also looking to increase the capacity of City departments to create more opportunities for young people and to develop them into workers that employers across the region will want to hire. Current activities include:

**A) Departmental Assessment of Youth Employment Activities.** An inventory of all City of Seattle youth employment, internship and career readiness programs and the populations they target is currently underway. In addition to identifying best opportunities to expand these programs, this assessment will help us to build out opportunities along a youth development continuum. In addition to program data, OED has collected demographic, program and financial data which will allow us to track and set metrics across the initiative. OED completed a preliminary assessment of the City’s youth employment/career readiness programs in May, along with recommendations for growth.

- 21 programs provide employment and/or training programs for 14-24 year olds.
- Of these programs, at least 10 programs collect and report demographic data; on average, 48% of participants are female and 64% are youth of color. For comparison, in the first quarter of 2017, 46% of all youth who received a paycheck from the City are youth of color.
- 11 programs specifically recruit underrepresented and vulnerable populations, including but not limited to: youth of color, first generation, low-income, immigrants and refugees, youth with an Individualized Education Plan, and youth experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Ongoing department review and assessment of entry opportunities for youth will continue with the Employment Pathways Interdepartmental Team, as noted in the following section.

**B) Mayoral Directive for Full Department Participation.** On March 1<sup>st</sup>, Mayor Murray announced a new directive to all City departments to host at least one SYEP intern in 2017; this is the first directive aimed at increasing the number of youth interns at the City. This resulted in participation in MYEI by all Executive Departments in 2017, with 153 summer internships (an increase of 70 slots) hosted by City of Seattle Departments.

**C) Improve Youth Preparation.** HSD is implementing new youth preparation programs this year for young people who are to be placed in internships requiring a higher level of job readiness. These programs will offer additional hours of work readiness training for approximately 300 youth to develop a candidate pool of youth ready for higher-skilled internships. HSD is partnering with established youth-serving organizations Youth Care, Boys and Girls Club and Juma Ventures (“Doorways Partners”) to support youth preparation. As a consortium, these Doorway Partners are recruiting and training youth for these higher-skilled internships at nonprofits, public and private positions. An additional 390 youth will receive work readiness services training that will connect them with internships requiring only basic skills. This segmentation by skill level, age/maturity and youth readiness will support placement with developmentally appropriate internship opportunities. This has the added value of making it more likely that the matches between employer and youth are developmentally appropriate and lead to positive experiences for both.

**D) MYEI Website Improvements.** The MYEI website has been updated to host links to all the City of Seattle youth employment and training applications that are available online, making it easier for youth to find available opportunities.

**E) Coordination with the Employment Pathways Interdisciplinary Team.** The purpose of this IDT is to develop and implement a consistent citywide approach to City internships, youth employment, access, and job training that reduce barriers, especially for people of color, to regular employment at the City of Seattle. This IDT is co-chaired by OED and SDHR and launched in March 2017. The Department Assessment of Youth Employment Activities is linked to the IDT’s deliverable to identify and map City workforce training programs that provide career pathways, including green careers, from entry-level employment.

In conclusion, we anticipate the impact of this work to be an increase in the number and diversity of youth employment/internship opportunities available and streamlined access points.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide information on the City’s significant role in supporting youth employment.

**TABLE 1 Summary Chart**

**Comparison of Seattle MYEI to Other Cities’ Summer Youth Employment Best Practices—and Recommendations for Improvement by the Brookings Institute**

MYEI Improvement Priority	National Practice	Seattle Practice	Recommendations
<p><b>GOALS, GROWTH AND QUALITY:</b> How can growth and program quality be balanced and maintained?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many cities have grown their programs in past few years</li> <li>• Numerical stretch goals have motivated city agencies and teams, but methods for counting jobs vary and are not very reliable and have sometimes created ineffective incentives</li> <li>• Detroit and other cities are looking at non-numerical goals to build quality into program planning and emphasis (e.g., resumes; references; reviews)</li> <li>• Successful messaging to the public and stakeholders is simple, and focuses on <i>why</i> the city is investing in youth in the summer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Primarily focused on achieving numerical targets</li> <li>▪ Messaging across city agencies, non-profits, private employers, and the public is fragmented and misses opportunity for clarity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ OED and HSD should identify non-numerical goals such as requiring all youth to leave with a resume, reference and/or performance review</li> <li>▪ OED will provide greater clarity on common messaging to stakeholders to reinforce program goals and understanding of its value in the community</li> </ul>
<p><b>PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT: EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT</b> What program improvements can improve employer recruitment and participation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong programs have proactive mayoral involvement in recruiting private sector employers, with help from intermediaries, Chamber, workforce boards, industry associations</li> <li>• Boston’s Private Industry Council has three employer account managers focused on particular industry sectors to secure employer participation—they follow up on leads (from mayor, Chamber etc.) and walk employers through steps of creating successful placement</li> <li>• Philadelphia Youth Network contracts out management of CBO jobs but maintains direct management of the higher skill level internships in the private sector and positions subsidized by private employers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 2015 was first time Seattle implemented a formal strategy to reach out to the private sector</li> <li>▪ An employer intermediary was contracted to expand outreach to private sector and support private employers during the summer, as well as manage and grow nonprofit and government subsidized internship placements</li> <li>▪ In 2016, Seattle more than doubled its private sector commitments to MYEI, but numbers were still small</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase coordination between the Mayor’s Office and OED to reach out strategically to employers so intermediary is better able to “close” commitments</li> <li>▪ Employer intermediary should continue to expand its strategies to target sectors, work with Chamber and industry associations, and build trust in the employer community</li> <li>▪ Work with employers earlier in the year to build relationship of trust, clarify roles, and improve youth support on the job</li> </ul>

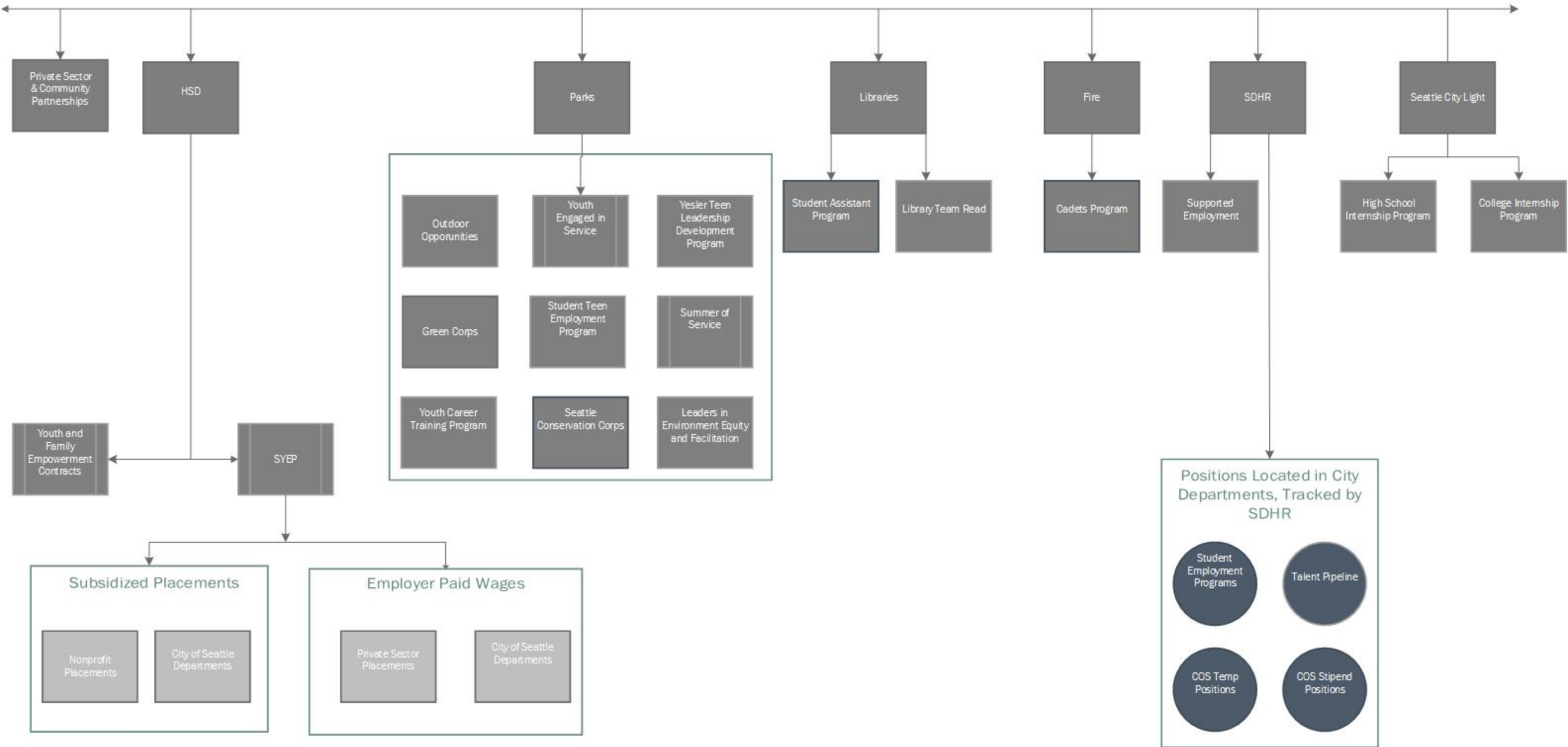
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Philadelphia, Detroit and several other cities have created handbooks/playbooks to simplify employer participation and guide their relationship with youth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For 2017, base funding for intermediary has been integrated into city budget</li> </ul>	
<p><b>PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT: YOUTH PREPARATION</b></p> <p>What program improvements can improve youth work-readiness?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boston’s Private Industry Council staffs 16 counselors to prepares HS students over 9 months for all private sector placements</li> <li>Miami connects students receiving preparation in high school Career and Technical Education programs to summer internships, as do Chicago and Los Angeles</li> <li>New York City and Philadelphia target more intensive job preparation training to youth who could be ready for private sector jobs</li> <li>Cities are reaching out to public schools and to community-based organizations that work with youth year-round to compensate for short window to reach youth in the summer: San Diego offers high school students in high-poverty zip codes externships during winter &amp; spring breaks; Hartford is building out a school-year effort to generate internships for all public school 11<sup>th</sup> graders by 2020</li> <li>A few cities, including NYC, are also cutting back on summer orientation and preparation hours for certain populations, in order to target resources to improve the quality of the match</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth participate in a four-hour orientation – combination of work-readiness preparation and internship paperwork</li> <li>Few students enroll in year-round youth internships after summer; (under 50); no systematic linkage between summer and other youth programs throughout the year</li> <li>Two new programs are planned for 2017 to address work-readiness challenges: SYEP Plus; Doorways.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MYEI should acknowledge and continue to build out from the particular needs for three or four distinct “tiers” of youth looking for summer jobs, based on a combination of age and work-readiness.</li> <li>Doorways and SYEP Plus are solutions that build from the best of other cities’ experiences and should be priorities for quality implementation in 2017.</li> <li>Seattle should reach out to the public schools, particularly to Career and Technical Education programs, to help more young people explore careers and become prepared to succeed in summer employment.</li> </ul>

<p><b>STRENGTHENING INFRASTRUCTURE: PLANNING, STAFFING</b> What structure, coordination, and staffing changes can improve planning and ensure continuous improvement?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Some cities—Boston, Philadelphia, New York, Los Angeles—have created or strengthened intermediary organizations to improve program coordination and focus</li> <li>▪ In some cities, the intermediary works only with employers; in others, the intermediary—a WIB, city agency, other entity—coordinates the entire summer effort</li> </ul> <p>Methods for tracking jobs each summer vary greatly and are not very reliable; but cities try to use the same methodology each year for deciding what jobs to include in the “count”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ OED is responsible for overall coordination; HSD for youth preparation; SDHR for tracking jobs and participants—but coordination needs to be strengthened and roles clarified</li> <li>▪ OED has hired a new full-time coordinator for 2017</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The City should continue to invest in strengthening the participation of, and coordination among, its departments and agencies related to the delivery and reporting of summer employment and MYEI activities</li> <li>▪ The City should continue to support its employer intermediary, so that employers develop greater trust and become more comfortable with their responsibilities</li> </ul>
<p><b>STRENGTHENING INFRASTRUCTURE: TECHNOLOGY</b> What technological innovations can support scale and improve quality?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ San Diego has an impressive management information system that allows for real time data tracking and monitoring and job matching; youth access via mobile device and instant messaging</li> <li>▪ Detroit has purchased its online management information, application, and tracking system from Philadelphia Youth Network—with technical assistance for getting the most out of the system</li> <li>▪ Baltimore is following the lead of some other cities in piloting electronic pay cards to replace pay checks for summer participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Summer youth employer outreach and matching was first automated in 2016 using the employer intermediary’s web-enabled system allowing employers to register internship and youth counselors to find internships</li> <li>▪ Seattle does not have a centralized youth online application process</li> <li>▪ Limited ability to track youth during the summer and after</li> <li>▪ Traditional paycheck system is in use; pay card pilot planned for 2017 for SYEP Plus youth.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City should explore whether to invest in online application/enrollment portal and explore pay cards to improve system power, flexibility and reduce manual labor investment</li> <li>▪ City should explore trade-offs involved in developing its own online system or buying and adapting a system from another city that has already implemented one</li> </ul>

<p><b>STABLE AND DIVERSIFIED FUNDING BASE</b>  What options are there for more adequate funding?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Los Angeles, Baltimore, and Philadelphia tap Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds for a segment of their summer job enrollees</li> <li>▪ Detroit used Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds when city bankruptcy constrained general fund use</li> <li>▪ Federal funding under the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires at least 20 percent of youth formula funds be used to support work experiences</li> <li>▪ Boston’s career specialists in the schools are funded primarily through an allocation from the school district and a state career development fund</li> <li>▪ Boston partners with John Hancock, which provides about \$1 million to fund 600 Summer Scholars employed in community-based organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Seattle relies on local funds and philanthropic investments</li> <li>▪ Seattle receives minimal WIOA dollars for MYEI, does not tap TANF or CDBG</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ OED and the Mayor’s Office should be more strategic, visible and active in making large asks to employers and private funders</li> <li>▪ OED and HSD should explore potential of TANF funding for youth from low-income families</li> <li>▪ Intermediary and OED should reach out to philanthropies in the region focused on employment opportunities for older opportunity youth</li> <li>▪ Intermediary and OED can assess whether local employer might establish a branded program like John Hancock Summer Scholars</li> </ul>
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# Mayor's Youth Employment Initiative



Individual Program



Non-program positions