

Oakland Unite 2017–2018 Strategy Evaluation:

Life Coaching and Employment and Education Support for Youth at Risk of Violence

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Naihobe Gonzalez, Johanna Lacoé, Armando Yañez, Alicia Demers, Sarah Crissey, & Natalie Larkin

Submitted to:

Office of the City Administrator
1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza
3rd Floor
Oakland, CA 94612
Project Officer: Tonya Gilmore

Submitted by:

Mathematica
505 14th Street, Suite 800
Oakland, CA 94612-1475
Telephone: (510) 830-3700
Facsimile: (510) 830-3701
Project Director: Johanna Lacoé
Reference Number: 50358

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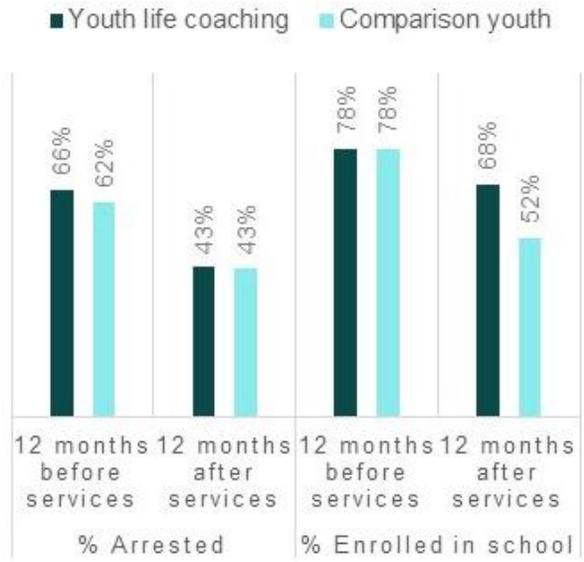


Oakland Unite Youth Services:

New insights on youth life coaching & youth employment and education support services

Youth life coaching

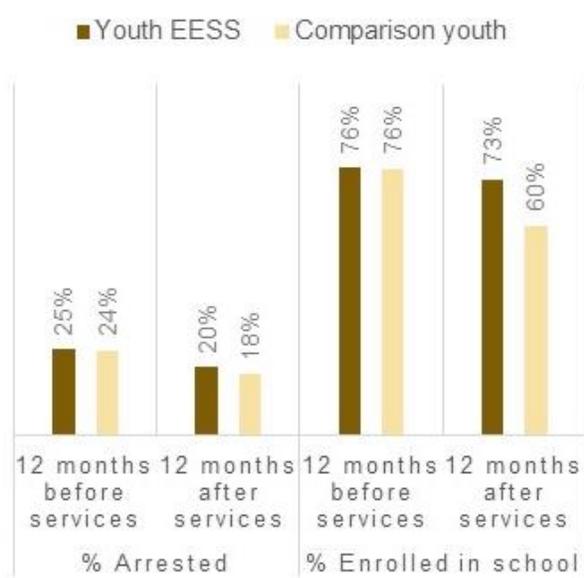
Aims to re-engage high-risk youth in school and help them reduce contact with the justice system



- Youth life coaching reduces school dropout and short-term arrests for violence, but has limited impact on 12-month arrest rates
- Most youth have histories of justice system contact and experiences with violence
- Room for improved collaboration between life coaching agencies and Probation Department
- High cost of living and job-related stress are challenges for agency staff
- Participation drops significantly after first month of life coaching services
- Need for a more unified approach to address substance use and mental health

Youth employment and education support services (EESS)

Aims to improve the economic self-sufficiency and career readiness of high-risk youth



- Youth EESS reduce school dropout, but have limited impact on 12-month arrest rates
- Many youth were disengaged from school and/or had contact with justice system before services
- Need for coordination between youth EESS and life coaching on referrals and substance use
- High staff turnover due in part to low salaries and other competitive options
- Program attrition in early months due in part to competing demands for youth time
- No standard youth EESS model and agencies offer a variety of programs and services

Arrest and enrollment outcomes are regression-adjusted from a propensity-score matching analysis of participants who received services between January 1, 2016 and May 30, 2017. See the report for full results, including additional outcome measures.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACOE	Alameda County Office of Education
ACPD	Alameda County Probation Department
BACR	Bay Area Community Resources
the City	the City of Oakland
CSEC	commercially sexually exploited children
CYO	Community & Youth Outreach
EBAC	East Bay Agency for Children
EBAYC	East Bay Asian Youth Center
EESS	employment and education support services
GED	general equivalency diploma
GPA	grade point average
JJC	Juvenile Justice Center
MISSEY	Motivating, Inspiring, Supporting & Serving Sexually Exploited Youth
OPD	Oakland Police Department
OUSD	Oakland Unified School District
PEPNet	Promising and Effective Practices Network
SSYI	Safe and Successful Youth Initiative
YAIP	New York Young Adult Internship Program
YEP	Youth Employment Partnership, Inc.

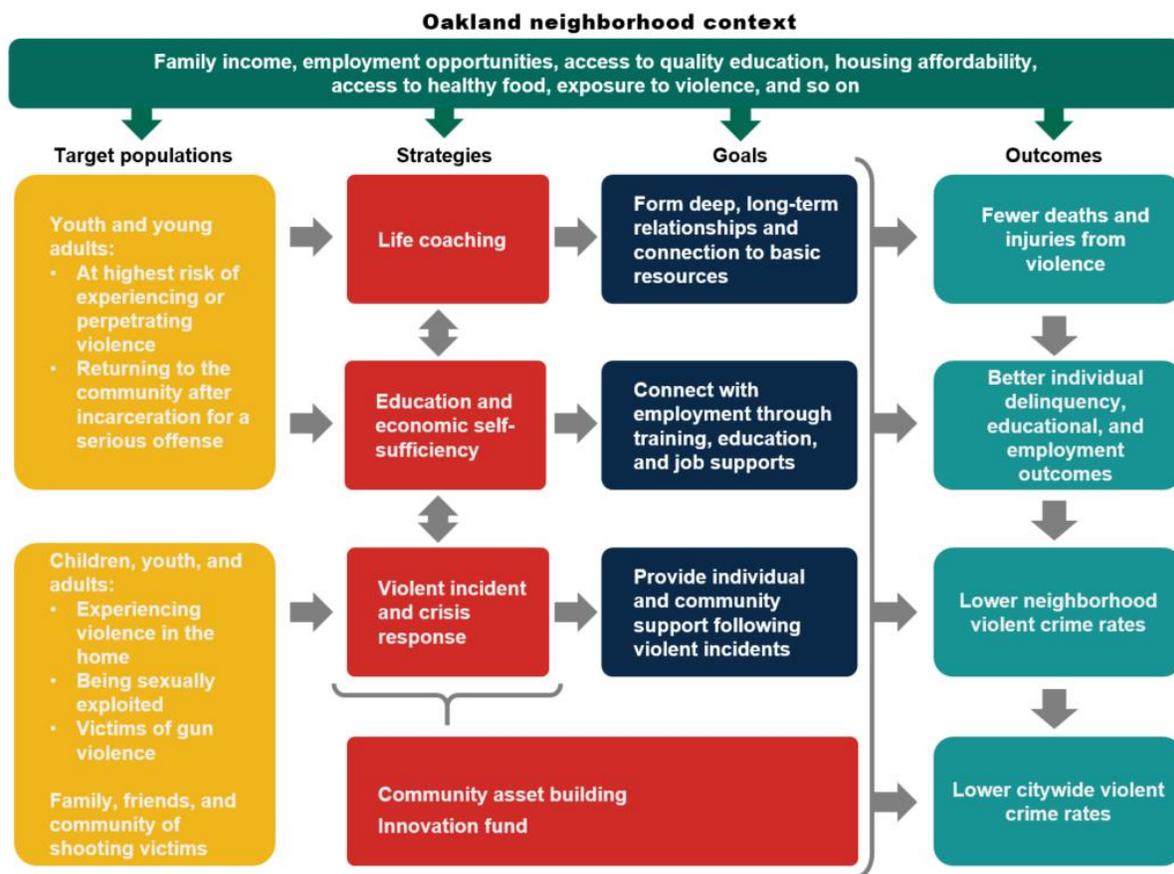
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I. INTRODUCTION

Background

Oakland Unite administers and supports grants to agencies offering community-based violence prevention programs in Oakland, California. The Violence Prevention and Public Safety Act of 2004, also known as Measure Y, raised funds for community-based violence prevention programs and policing and fire safety personnel through a parcel tax on Oakland property and a parking tax assessment. In 2014, Oakland residents voted to extend these levies for 10 years through Measure Z, which now raises about \$27 million annually, to focus efforts on specific types of serious violence, including gun violence, family violence, and sex trafficking. Measure Z funds violence prevention programs, police officers, fire services, and evaluation services. Forty percent of these funds are invested in community-based violence prevention programs through Oakland Unite, which is part of the City of Oakland (the City) Human Services Department.

Figure I.1. Conceptual model of Oakland Unite

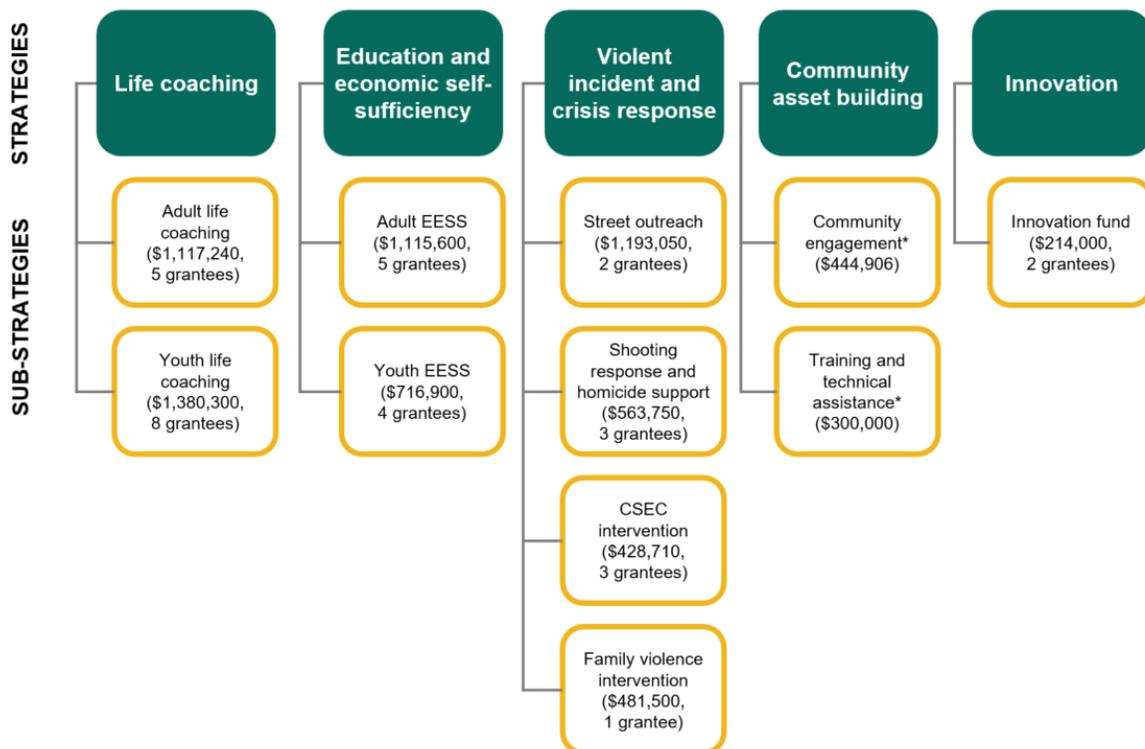


As part of this citywide effort to reduce violence, Oakland Unite aims to interrupt and prevent violence by focusing on the youth and young adults in Oakland who are at the highest risk of

direct exposure to violence, violent victimization, and active involvement in violence. Figure I.1 illustrates the relationship between Oakland’s neighborhood contexts, Oakland Unite strategies, and the outcomes Oakland Unite is designed to affect. The model highlights how neighborhood context, including communities’ exposure to violence and access to quality education, affordable housing, and employment opportunities affects the population served by Oakland Unite. The strategies employed thus focus on improving outcomes for those most disproportionately affected by these factors. Other parts of Measure Z, such as Ceasefire, crime reduction teams, community resource officers, and emergency response through the Oakland Fire Department, are outside of the purview of Oakland Unite and this evaluation, but play important roles in the city’s efforts to reduce violence.

Oakland Unite administers grants through a diverse set of strategies and sub-strategies to accomplish violence prevention and reduction. Every two to three years, Oakland Unite prepares a new spending plan based on community input and evaluation findings. Figure I.2 presents the five strategies (life coaching, education and economic self-sufficiency, violent incident and crisis response, and community asset building) and the 11 sub-strategies supported by Oakland Unite in the 2018–2019 fiscal year. A new 2019–2021 spending plan will refine the current strategies going forward.¹

Figure I.2. Oakland Unite funding amounts for fiscal year 2018–2019



¹ See <http://oaklandunite.org/blog/oakland-unite-spending-plan/> for more information.

*These sub-strategies are administered by the Human Services Department.

EESS = employment and education support services; CSEC = commercially sexually exploited children.

Under Measure Z, the City also funds an independent evaluation of Oakland Unite. The four-year evaluation conducted by Mathematica includes (1) annual strategy-level evaluations that assess the implementation and effectiveness of a selection of Oakland Unite strategies, (2) annual agency-level snapshots that summarize the work of each Oakland Unite agency, and (3) a comprehensive evaluation that will study the impact of select Oakland Unite programs on participant outcomes from 2016 to 2020.

In this 2017–2018 strategy evaluation, we present in-depth analyses of the two youth sub-strategies selected by the City as the focus of this report:

- *Youth life coaching* aims to reengage high-risk youth in school and reduce their engagement with the juvenile justice system. Life coaches work closely with youth to set goals, develop service plans, and connect them to other services.
- *Youth employment and education support services (EESS)* aims to strengthen the academic success and career readiness of youth at risk of violence by offering youth academic support and subsidized work experience.

In 2016–2017, the strategy evaluation focused on the life coaching and EESS sub-strategies for adults ([Gonzalez et al. 2017](#)). A key finding of that report was that participating in adult life coaching or adult EESS services decreased the likelihood of arrest for a violent offense in the six months after enrollment by 1 percentage point relative to a comparison group but had limited effects on other outcomes. In future years, other sub-strategies will be selected for in-depth analysis. Detailed information about the services provided by Oakland Unite agencies across all strategies is available in the 2016–2018 agency report ([Eslami et al. 2019](#)).

Overview of the report

The rest of this report is organized as follows: Chapter II provides an overview of the data collection and research methods, and discusses limitations. Chapter III presents the implementation and impact findings related to youth life coaching, and Chapter IV presents the findings related to youth EESS. Chapter V summarizes the key findings for each sub-strategy and provides suggested considerations for the future. A glossary of terms is presented at the end of the report. Appendix A includes additional information about data collection and processing, Appendix B describes the methodologies and results, and Appendix C includes a review of previous research and best practices for each sub-strategy.

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II. DATA, METHODS, AND LIMITATIONS

The strategy evaluation aims to assess the implementation of the youth life coaching and youth EESS sub-strategies and their impacts on relevant participant outcomes, including involvement with the juvenile justice system and engagement in school. Below we describe the data sources and analysis methods we used in the report, as well as potential limitations to our analyses.

Data sources

To learn about how the youth life coaching and EESS sub-strategies were implemented and assess their impacts on youth outcomes, we collected and analyzed qualitative and quantitative information about agencies and participants. Qualitative data collection included site visits and semistructured interviews at each agency funded by these sub-strategies, as well as a review of documents and materials provided by Oakland Unite and agency staff. In addition, we conducted a survey to gather information about Oakland Unite directly from a subset of participants. Finally, we collected multiple years of administrative data from various sources, as listed in Table II.1. Appendix A contains more-detailed descriptions of each data source.

Table II.1. Data sources

Data source	Description
Agency visits and semistructured interviews	During visits to each agency, the evaluation team conducted semistructured interviews with agency staff members, including managers and line staff. Visits took place in July and August 2017. Follow-up telephone interviews were then conducted in August and September 2018.
Review of documents and materials	The evaluation team reviewed materials provided by Oakland Unite staff as well as materials collected directly from agencies during the site visits, such as scopes of work, agency budgets, and intake forms.
Participant survey	General topics of the participant survey included satisfaction with services, thoughts about the future, and experiences with violence. The surveys were fielded at each agency during September and October 2018. Across all agencies, 63 youth life coaching participants and 46 youth employment and education support services participants took the survey.
Administrative data	The evaluation team collected school enrollment, attendance, behavior, and academic data from the Oakland Unified School District and Alameda County Office of Education; information on arrests, convictions, and dispositions from the Alameda County Probation Department; arrest and victimization incidents from the Oakland Police Department; and service and participant information from Oakland Unite's Cityspan database.

To link individuals across the multiple sources of administrative data, we used identifying information, including first and last name, date of birth, gender, and address. Oakland Unite participants had to provide consent before their identifying information could be shared with evaluators. For youth life coaching participants who enrolled between January 2016 and May 2017, the consent rate was 90 percent. The consent rate for youth EESS during the same period was 91 percent. Individuals who did not consent to share their personal information are included

in descriptive statistics about services received but excluded from any analyses of outcomes, which require linking participants to other administrative data.

Analysis methods

We used a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods to assess the implementation of each sub-strategy and its effect on participant outcomes in the 12-month period after beginning services. For the implementation analysis, we reviewed materials provided by Oakland Unite, analyzed interview responses within and across agencies in the same sub-strategy to highlight key themes, and summarized participant survey and administrative data about services and participants.

For the impact analysis of each sub-strategy, we identified a comparison group of individuals who were similar to participants in that sub-strategy but did not receive any Oakland Unite services. These individuals were drawn from data from the Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE), Alameda County Probation Department (ACPD), Oakland Police Department (OPD), and Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) data. To identify a similar comparison group, we used an approach known as propensity-score matching, which took into account individuals' demographics and prior juvenile justice, victimization, and educational histories based on the available administrative data. Propensity-score matching is a well-established approach for analyzing program impacts and has been found to approximate the results of experimental methods (Fortson et al. 2015; Gill et al. 2015).

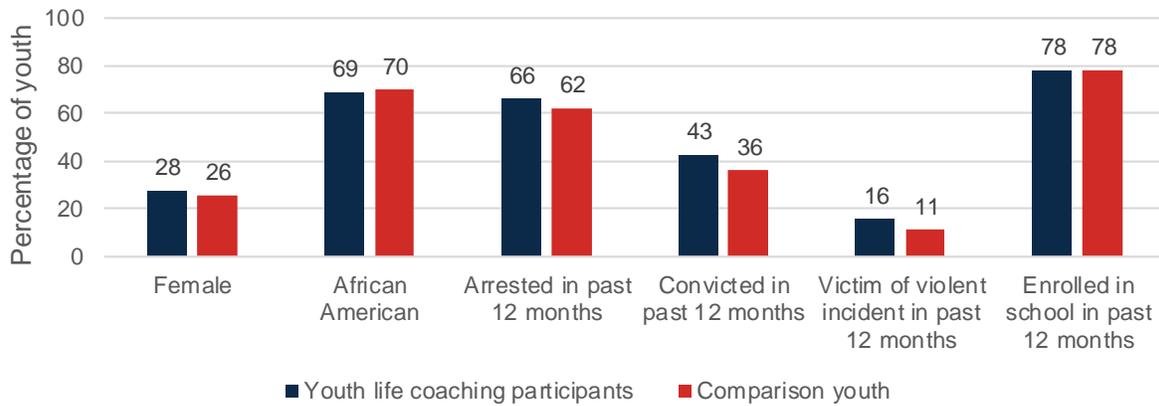
To be included in the impact analyses, participants had to (1) consent to share their personal information for evaluation, (2) receive services between January 2016 and May 2017, (3) meet a minimum service threshold (10 hours for youth life coaching and either 10 nonwork hours or 40 work hours for youth EESS), and (4) have recorded demographic data. After these restrictions were applied, there were 297 participants in youth life coaching and 209 participants in youth EESS available for matching. Of these, 260 youth life coaching participants were matched to an average of 16 comparison individuals each and 179 youth EESS participants received matches (19 each, on average).² A small number of participants did not receive matches because no comparison group members resembled them sufficiently.

After matching, participants and comparison youth had similar demographic characteristics and juvenile justice, victimization, and educational histories. Figures II.1 and II.2 compare selected baseline characteristics of Oakland Unite and comparison youth in the analysis sample after matching. In the regression analysis used to compare the two groups' outcomes, we also controlled for small remaining differences in individuals' characteristics and histories, taking into account the timing of their juvenile justice, victimization, and education experiences. Appendix B describes additional details about the sample and the matching and regression

² When examining chronic absence from school and school discipline after beginning Oakland Unite services, we further restricted the sample to youth who were enrolled in school in the outcome period and conducted a separate match for these subset of youth. See Appendix B for additional details.

methodology, and also presents additional data on the baseline characteristics of Oakland Unite participants and the comparison group.

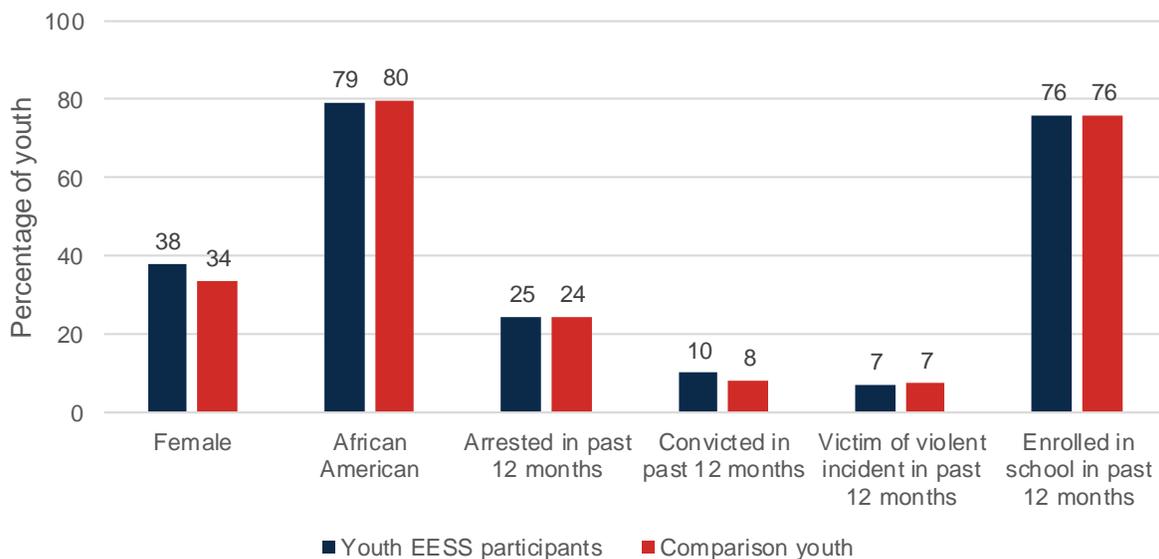
Figure II.1. Youth life coaching participants and comparison youth after matching



Source: Oakland Unite, ACOE, ACPD, OPD, and OUSD administrative data.

Note: The total sample is 4,138, including 260 youth life coaching participants. To be included in this analysis, participants needed to have at least 10 hours of services between January 1, 2016 and May 31, 2017, and have consented to share their data for evaluation. The school enrollment rate is based on youth who were under 18 years of age when they began services. None of the differences in the figure are statistically significant at the 5 percent level.

Figure II.2. Youth EESS participants and comparison youth after matching



Source: Oakland Unite, ACOE, ACPD, OPD, and OUSD administrative data.

Note: The total sample is 3,496, including 179 youth EESS participants. To be included in this analysis, participants needed to have at least 10 hours of nonwork services or 40 work hours between January 1, 2016 and May 31, 2017, and have consented to share their data for evaluation. The school enrollment rate is based on youth who were under 18 years of age when they began services. None of the differences in the figure are statistically significant at the 5 percent level.

After conducting the match, we analyzed outcomes in the 12-month period after participants began Oakland Unite services. Table II.2 lists the confirmatory and exploratory outcomes of the impact analyses that were determined before beginning the analyses.³ Participants began receiving services between January 2016 and May 2017 and therefore had different follow-up periods, ranging from February 2016–February 2017 to June 2017–June 2018.⁴ The follow-up period for the comparison individuals corresponded to the same follow-up period for the Oakland Unite participant they were matched to. We measured the impact of participating in Oakland Unite on these outcomes using regression analyses.

Table II.2. Outcomes examined in the 12 months after starting Oakland Unite services

Domain	Confirmatory outcomes	Exploratory outcomes
Arrests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Had an arrest for any offense in Alameda County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Had an arrest for an offense involving a gun in Alameda County Had an arrest for a violent offense in Alameda County
Recidivism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Had any delinquent finding or conviction in Alameda County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was sentenced to formal probation supervision in Alameda County Violated probation in Alameda County
Victimization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was a victim of any violent crime reported to OPD 	
School enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrolled in an OUSD or ACOE school 	
School attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If enrolled in school, was chronically absent (missed 10 percent or more of school days) 	
School discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If enrolled in school, had a recorded violent incident in school 	

OPD = Oakland Police Department; OUSD = Oakland United School District; ACOE = Alameda County Office of Education.

³ As an additional exploratory analysis, we examined short-term arrest, victimization, and recidivism outcomes in a 6-month, rather than 12-month, window after the start of services. The results of all exploratory analyses are reported in Appendix B.

⁴ Some people who received services in the early months of 2016 had begun participating in Oakland Unite in the previous year. However, we did not have information about services received before January 1, 2016 (the start of the Measure Z funding period) for this report.

Limitations

Although the data sources and methods used for this evaluation provided rich information about the youth life coaching and EESS sub-strategies, they have some limitations:

The impact results may reflect differences between participants and comparison individuals that were not captured in the available data, particularly for the youth life coaching strategy.

We matched Oakland Unite participants to similar comparison individuals using a large number of characteristics, but in any non-experimental analysis it is possible that some differences could remain. In particular, youth life coaching programs are designed to serve youth judged to be at greatest immediate risk for violence, which was difficult to account for in the analysis. Although they had similar rates of contact with law enforcement in the 12 months before starting services (Figure II.1), youth life coaching participants were more likely than comparison youth to be arrested, convicted, or be placed in juvenile hall in the period immediately preceding the start of services (see Table B.3 in Appendix B). As a result, the analysis might underestimate the impact of services on their outcomes.

The report could exclude educational, criminal justice, and victimization data not reported in the available sources. The available education data only included public, non-charter schools in OUSD and ACOE. Youth enrolled in other types of schools in Alameda County or beyond would be missing from these sources. Similarly, the report used criminal justice data reported by ACPD or OPD, which could exclude incidents outside of these jurisdictions (for example, arrests and court processing in neighboring cities). Finally, victimization data only reflected incidents reported to OPD, and frequently had incomplete personally identifiable information needed to link to other records.

The impact analyses were limited to participants who consented to have their information matched to other data sources. About 10 percent of participants in each sub-strategy did not consent to share their identifiable information. People who do not consent to participate in the evaluation may differ from those who do. For example, Oakland Unite data show that both youth life coaching and EESS participants who did not consent received fewer service hours, on average, than those who consented.

The participant and staff perspectives collected may not reflect the perspectives of all participants and staff. Participant surveys were conducted with a small convenience sample of participants who happened to be present or were selected by the agency. In addition, participants (as well as the staff who were interviewed) could have provided responses that they felt would reflect favorably upon themselves or their agencies. Although we informed participants and staff that their answers would be kept confidential, we cannot rule out this possibility.

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III. YOUTH LIFE COACHING

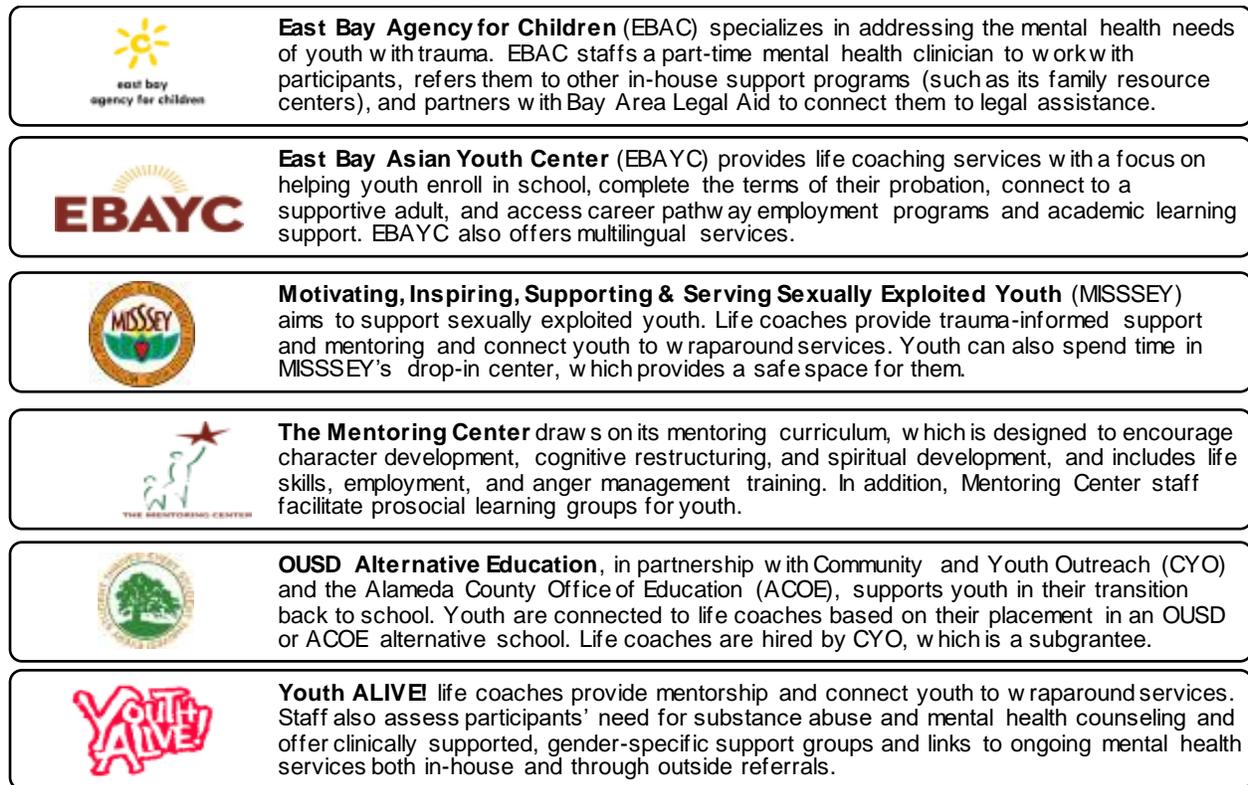
Overview of the youth life coaching sub-strategy

The youth life coaching sub-strategy aims to reengage high-risk youth in school and help them reduce or eliminate their contact with the juvenile justice system. This sub-strategy is a partnership among Oakland Unite, ACPD, OUSD, and Alameda County Health Care Services. The OUSD education services coordinator, along with Probation Department staff, refer youth who live in Oakland and are being released from the Alameda County Juvenile Justice Center (JJC) to agencies for life coaching services. The life coaching model is centered on building transformative relationships between youth and trained peer professionals with similar life experiences through high-frequency contacts and extended service periods of 12 to 18 months. Life coaches develop detailed life maps with participants and families that identify needs and strengths, guide connections to other services and supports, and use financial incentives to support positive action.

Oakland Unite currently funds six life coaching agencies, for a total annual grant award of \$1,380,000.⁵ The agencies that offer youth life coaching services are identified in Figure III.1. In this chapter, we present implementation and impact findings for this sub-strategy. A summary of related evidence-based programs and Oakland Unite recommended best practices for youth life coaching is available in Appendix C.

⁵ In addition to these six agencies, two partners that provide referral and placement coordination (Alameda County Juvenile Probation Department and OUSD Enrollment Coordinator) also receive funding. We did not interview the Probation Department.

Figure III.1. Youth life coaching agencies



Source: Documents provided by Oakland Unite, agency websites, and interviews with agency staff.

Note: The Alameda County Juvenile Probation Department and the OUSD enrollment coordinator provide referral and placement coordination. Because they do not provide direct services, they are not included in this figure.

Implementation findings

In this section, we discuss a number of key findings about how Oakland Unite agencies implemented the youth life coaching sub-strategy. These findings are summarized in Table III.1.

Table III.1. Summary of implementation findings for youth life coaching

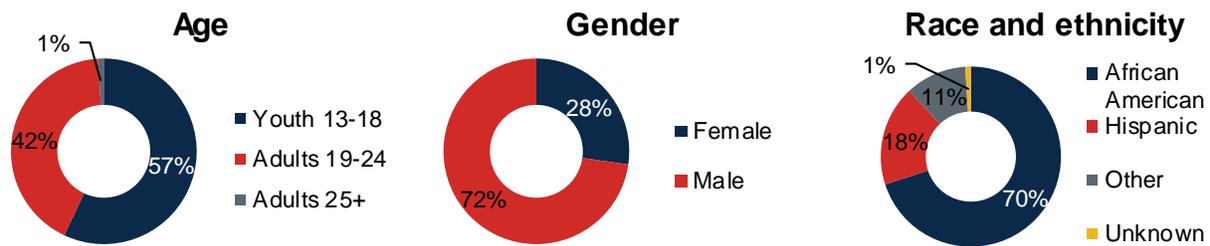
Category	Summary of implementation findings
Target population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth life coaching agencies primarily serve high-risk African American and Hispanic youth with high rates of contact with the juvenile justice system, direct or indirect exposure to violence, and low engagement with school. The youth life coaching sub-strategy expanded eligibility criteria to take a more preventive approach to reducing violence. Along with the expanded eligibility criteria, a task force headed by the Alameda County District Attorney's office helped agencies identify commercially sexually exploited children.
Collaboration and referrals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency staff report that having additional information from the Probation Department about youth when they are initially referred to life coaching services would improve the process.

Category	Summary of implementation findings
Materials and trainings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent communication between the enrollment coordinator and life coaching agencies helps ensure that youth are referred to the right agency and life coach. • Semimonthly case conferencing meetings organized by Oakland Unite help life coaches receive feedback on challenging cases and share knowledge and expertise. • Life coaches have found the tools and trainings offered by the Human Services Department useful, but identified some areas for improvement.
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most agencies have experienced staff turnover and report that it is difficult to identify and retain candidates with the right skills, training, and personal background for the position.
Participant satisfaction and retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants are expected to remain engaged for up to 18 months under the program model, but more than a quarter drop out in the first month. • Participants report high levels of satisfaction with life coaching services and hold positive outlooks for the future.
Service provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although Oakland Unite recommends caseloads of up to 15 participants, life coaches said they typically work with 10 to 12 cases at a time due to the intensity of program services. • Among the subset of youth who continue to engage in services over time, service intensity is typically 8 to 10 contacts per month.
Financial support and incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life coaches report that financial incentives help motivate youth, but incentive amounts are too low or run out too quickly for some participants.
Substance abuse and mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life coaches find it challenging to stop substance abuse and employ a harm reduction approach to address the problem. • Life coaches use their discretion to refer participants to counseling services when they do not feel equipped to address youth's trauma.
Family engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agencies connect parents and youth with children to other support services and help youth improve relationships with their families when this is a stated goal.

Source: Site visits, interviews with agency staff, and documents and administrative data provided by Oakland Unite.

Target population

Youth life coaching agencies primarily serve high-risk African American and Hispanic youth with high rates of contact with the juvenile justice system, direct or indirect exposure to violence, and low engagement with school. Figure III.2 describes key background characteristics of youth who enrolled in life coaching. Over two-thirds of participants were African American, and 18 percent were Hispanic. Seventy-two percent of participants were male. Notably, one agency that serves youth who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing commercial sexual exploitation primarily works with African American girls and young women. Although the majority of youth life coaching participants are in the 13- to 18-year-old target age range, 42 percent were older than 18 at the time of enrollment.

Figure III.2. Youth life coaching participant characteristics at enrollment

86% Arrested before receiving services

49% On formal probation supervision before receiving services

39% Reported being a victim of violence before receiving services

80% Enrolled in school in the year before receiving services

67% Chronically absent from school in the year before receiving services

36% Suspended from school in the year before receiving services

Source: Oakland Unite, ACOE, ACPD, OPD, and OUSD administrative data.

Note: Demographic information is based on 625 participants who received services between January 1, 2016 and December 31, 2018. Measures of arrest, victimization, and school engagement are based on the 87 percent of these participants who consented to share their identifying information for evaluation.

Most participants (86 percent) had been arrested before receiving services, and almost half were on formal probation supervision. In addition to having previous contact with the juvenile justice system, many participants had been directly or indirectly affected by violence. Thirty-nine percent were victims of violence or assault reported to OPD (39 percent). On the participant survey (not reported in the figure), almost half of youth life coaching respondents reported having lost a loved one to violence in the last year.

Among school-aged participants, many had limited engagement with school before starting services. Approximately 20 percent of school-aged participants were not enrolled in either OUSD or ACOE in the 12 months before starting services. Among those who were enrolled in school, 67 percent were chronically absent from school, and 36 percent had been suspended or expelled during that period. Their academic performance (not reported in the figure) was also low—youth life coaching participants who were enrolled in school had a GPA of 1.29 (of 4.0) in the most recent school year.

The youth life coaching sub-strategy expanded eligibility criteria to take a more preventive approach to reducing violence. Youth life coaching originally targeted youth who had been referred by the JJC Transition Center. However, as of July 2018, the sub-strategy has broadened the eligibility criteria to include youth who are at risk of engaging in or being victims of violence. The JJC and several life coaches stated that they broadened the eligibility criteria because the number of youth being detained decreased, yet each agency was still responsible for meeting enrollment targets. The Human Services Department confirmed that this change was implemented to address several factors, including a decrease in the number of eligible referrals

and the number of youth that life coaching agencies encountered who demonstrated risk factors but were not justice-involved.

Along with the expanded eligibility criteria, a task force headed by the Alameda County District Attorney’s office helped agencies identify CSEC. Identifying CSEC requires coordination across several partners, as criminal charges alone may not indicate whether youth are at risk of sexual exploitation. The SafetyNet Committee, a task force headed by the District Attorney’s Office, plays an important role in identifying CSEC and referring them for life coaching and other services. The committee convenes weekly and includes social workers, case managers, Oakland Unite life coaches, the JJC Transition Center enrollment coordinator, as well as District Attorney’s Office staff and public defenders. In addition to traditional referrals from the JJC Transition Center, the expanded eligibility criteria now allow MISSEY to receive referrals from other Oakland Unite agencies, such as Bay Area Women Against Rape, or from other organizations that attend the SafetyNet meetings, such as Bay Area Legal Aid.

Collaboration and referrals

Agency staff report that having additional information from the Probation Department about youth when they are initially referred to life coaching services would improve the process.

Previously, the Probation Department would inform the JJC Transition Center whether youth were at high, medium, or low risk of reoffending, either in writing or through a phone conversation. The detailed results of the risk assessment (including the score) were not shared. Most recently, the Probation Department no longer shares information from the assessment with the JJC Transition Center. Staff reported that a change to the Probation Department’s policies around data sharing has limited the flow of information to life coaching agencies.

After the initial referral, life coaches are supposed to contact the youth’s family within two days of receiving the referral. However, agencies shared that missing contact information in Oakland Unite’s database (Cityspan) makes this protocol difficult to follow. One program manager said, “If I go into Cityspan and look at the baseline information, there is only the youth name and date of birth—no address, nothing. So how do I know how to call this kid?” Similarly, when describing the challenges around contact information, a life coach at another agency shared that phone numbers are often incorrect, and addresses do not reflect where the youth live.

Additionally, staff reported challenges in contacting probation officers and receiving information from them that could help during the referral process. One life coach shared, “The attempt to contact probation officers is part of our protocol but much of the time there is no returned call.” Some of the agencies have established relationships with probation officers through personal connections and previous work experience. Agencies without such informal connections shared that they are focused on developing these relationships because greater involvement by the Probation Department helps life coaches make their initial contacts.

Frequent communication between the enrollment coordinator and life coaching agencies helps ensure that youth are referred to the right agency and life coach. Several factors determine the agency to which the JJC Transition Center refers youth, including geographic area, gender, safety concerns, race, language, gang/group affiliation, identification as CSEC, and other

specific needs. The JJC enrollment coordinator meets with all life coaches when they are first hired to learn about their background, language fluency, and other information useful for referral purposes. The enrollment coordinator then maintains frequent communication with all life coaches, checking in about once a week to discuss caseloads and learn whether life coaches are able to receive referrals.

Semimonthly case conferencing meetings organized by Oakland Unite help life coaches receive feedback on challenging cases and share knowledge and expertise. Semimonthly case conferencing meetings have helped agencies establish a tight-knit, supportive community. Several life coaches reported that staff across agencies share information, resources, and experiences during monthly case conferencing meetings, as well as informally in between meetings. One life coaching supervisor shared, “It is helpful to feel the sense of community through Oakland Unite between the [life coaching agencies] and Transition Center staff.” In particular, life coaches shared that the feedback they receive from their peers and the skills developed in trainings make the monthly case conferencing meetings a valuable opportunity.

Materials and trainings

Life coaches have found the tools and trainings offered by the Human Services Department useful, but identified some areas for improvement. Life coaches engage with youth to develop a life map within the first 30 days of services, which includes goals that youth work to address during their time with an agency. Most life coaches said this tool helps them plan services and measure participants’ progress. However, some mentioned that it is difficult to track youth’s outcomes related to their life map goals in Cityspan.

Life coaches found the all-day seminar—popularly referred to as the Oakland Unite Summit—as well as the trauma, burnout, and motivational interviewing trainings helpful. Life coaches shared that the Oakland Unite Summit in particular offered a macro-level perspective for Oakland Unite and the opportunity to connect with other agencies. However, life coaches noted that the times trainings are held tend to conflict with peak service hours, which are after school when youth are most vulnerable. Two life coaches shared that some presenters could have been more informative. Lastly, life coaches from one agency said that the trainings tend to focus on working with male youth and young adults only.

Staffing

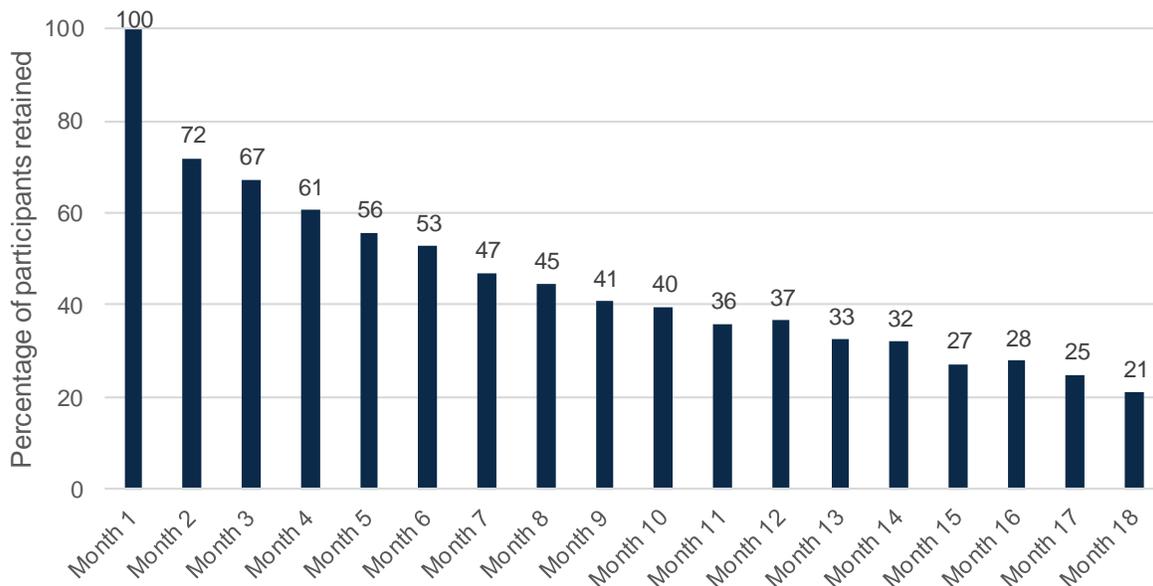
Most agencies have experienced staff turnover and report that it is difficult to identify and retain candidates with the right skills, training, and personal background for the position. All but one agency (EBAYC) reported challenges with staff turnover. One program manager shared that since receiving the grant, the agency had gone through three different life coaches, which affected the agency’s ability to meet grant deliverables and provide services to participants. The agencies attributed turnover to their inability to match the salaries offered by other organizations, the high cost of living in the Bay Area, and the stressful and dangerous nature of the life coaching position. Life coaches shared that they are frequently exposed to high-crime areas and work with youth to address difficult situations. One life coach shared that more “self-help” days

would allow the life coaches to manage burnout because they frequently work beyond their regular hours and on weekends.

Participant satisfaction and retention

Participants are expected to remain engaged for 12 to 18 months under the program model, but more than a quarter drop out in the first month. According to Cityspan data, 72 percent of youth who begin receiving life coaching services return in the following month (Figure III.3). By the third month, one-third of youth have dropped out. Although participant retention continues to decline over time, the largest drop-off occurs between the first and second months. At 12 months, only 37 percent of youth continue to receive life coaching services. On average, youth engage with life coaching agencies for over 9 months, although this can include some inactive periods. Taking into account only months in which at least some services were received, the average length of active participation is 8 months.

Figure III.3. Youth life coaching participant retention over time



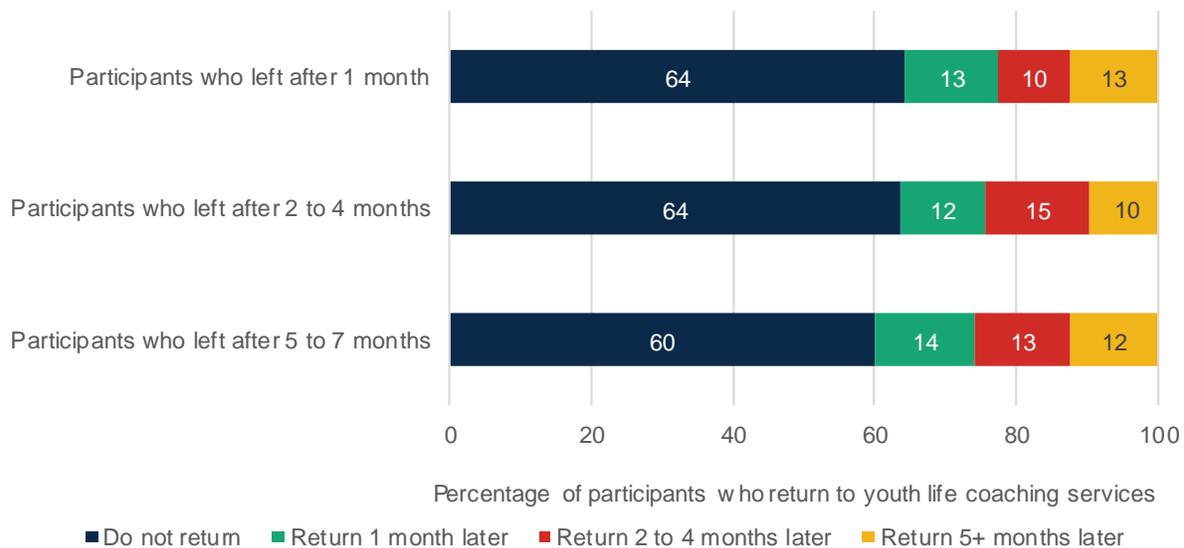
Source: Cityspan data.

Note: This figure is based on 417 participants who received services between January 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017, so that all participants could be tracked for at least 18 months, through December 31, 2018. The pattern of retention is very similar for youth who began receiving services more recently.

Service duration varies significantly across participants and can include multiple periods of active engagement for some. Life coaches explained that sometimes participants engage in services for a few months, drop off, and then reengage. This is apparent in the retention patterns in Figure III.3. In some months, such as month 12, retention increases slightly as more youth return to services than leave. About 30 percent of youth engage in services during multiple service periods, separated by one month or more of inactivity. Figure III.4 summarizes the percentage of youth who return for services after leaving life coaching early, depending on the

length of their first service period. Although 60 to 64 percent of these youth do not return for services, the other 36 to 40 percent of youth do return, typically within a few months of their first contact with life coaching.

Figure III.4. Percentage of youth life coaching participants who return after leaving services



Source: Cityspan data.

Note: This figure is based on 625 participants who received services between January 1, 2016 and December 31, 2018.

Life coaches said that some participants who are referred to life coaching are not ready for services and either drop out early during the process or take some time before fully engaging in services. Exit reasons were not tracked in Cityspan, but life coaches said that youth who drop out commonly have difficulty getting out of their comfort zones, have families move away from Oakland, or are incarcerated for violating the terms of their probation. Life coaches try to make contact with youth for up to 30 days after they have disengaged from life coaching services, but noted that they are not notified when youth are incarcerated, which makes it difficult for them to maintain contact when this occurs.

Participants report high levels of satisfaction with life coaching services and hold positive outlooks for the future. Ninety-four percent of surveyed participants indicated that they are satisfied with their life coaching agency, with two-thirds strongly agreeing that they were satisfied. Satisfaction was similarly high (above 90 percent) with the kinds of services offered, staff availability, and how the staff listen, understand, and treat participants with respect. More than three-quarters of life coaching survey respondents (87 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that their situation is better because of the Oakland Unite services.

Despite the number of challenges faced by life coaching participants, when asked what they thought their lives would be like one year in the future, the vast majority of respondents

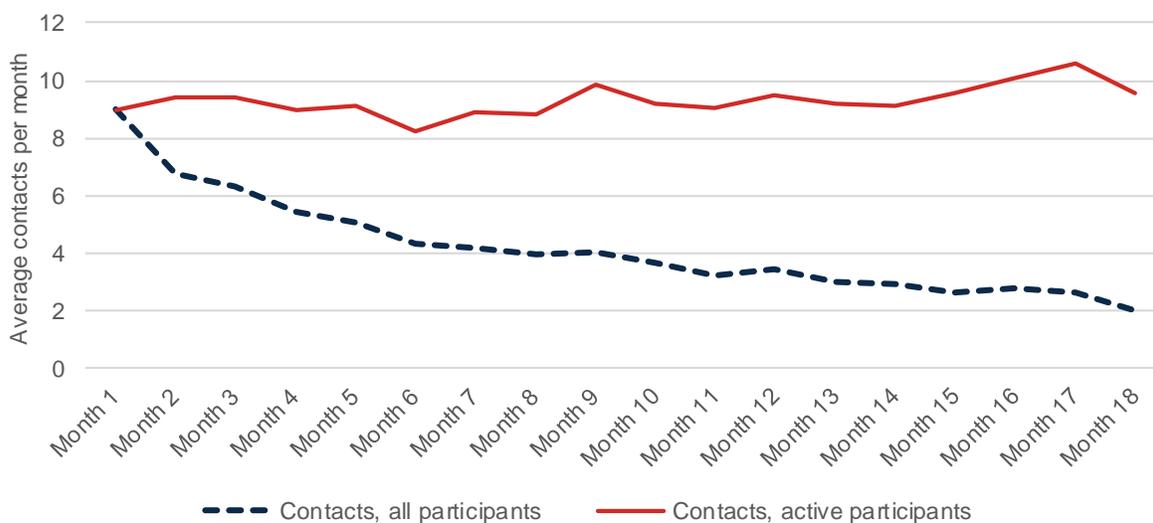
expressed positive outlooks. All survey respondents indicated that it was likely or very likely that they would have a safe place to live, avoid unwanted contact with the police, and be able to resolve conflicts without violence. At least 90 percent of respondents noted that they would likely or very likely finish their education, be more hopeful about life, be better able to deal with a crisis, avoid unhealthy drug or alcohol use, have a steady job, contribute to their community, have stronger relationships, and resolve their legal problems.

Service provision

Although Oakland Unite recommends caseloads of up to 15 participants, given the frequency of contacts required and the varying needs of program participants, most life coaches said that working with about 10 to 12 participants at a time was preferable to the recommended 15:1 ratio. However, some life coaches noted that their number of actual cases might reach up to 16 participants if they are currently managing some out of services. Staff reported that in addition to providing services, other tasks such as entering case notes and tracking data in Cityspan, conducting outreach, tracking down participants during the referral process, meeting with supervisors, and attending case conferencing meetings contribute to their overall workload.

Among the subset of youth who continue to engage in services over time, service intensity is typically 8 to 11 contacts per month. Figure III.5 depicts the service trajectory over time for all participants (in the dotted line) and for participants who continue to engage in services in that month (in the solid line). The decline in service intensity for all participants, as measured by the average number of contacts received in each month, reflects the attrition of youth from life coaching services as time progresses.

Figure III.5. Youth life coaching service intensity over time for all participants and active participants



Source: Cityspan data.

Note: This figure is based on 625 participants who received services between January 1, 2016, and June 30, 2017. Active participants are youth who continued to receive services in a given month.

Over the duration of their participation, the average participant receives a total of about 61 hours of case management and 7 hours of peer support counseling. However, because of the significant variation in the length of participation across participants, many youth receive varying amounts of service dosage. Overall, 26 percent of youth receive fewer than 10 hours of services, whereas 24 percent receive more than 100 hours.

Financial support and incentives

Life coaches reported that financial incentives help motivate youth, but also said that incentive amounts are too low or run out too quickly for some participants. While working on the life map, life coaches and participants review each step toward a goal and determine which steps to incentivize. One life coach said this process “helps kids build self-advocacy skills and talk about what they really want to have incentives for.” Other life coaches shared similar thoughts on incentives, with one life coach remarking that some youth “wouldn’t come if they didn’t get the incentives.” About 13 percent of the sub-strategy’s budget is allocated for participant financial support and incentives.

Life coaches also identified some challenges with incentives. First, the incentive amount is not sufficient for some youth. Some youth have told life coaches that they can earn more money on the streets than from the incentives. Other participants are motivated and work through their milestones quickly, which means they quickly max out on their incentives. Life coaches noted that some participants lose motivation and leave services when the incentives are exhausted. Some agencies try to find additional funds for youth by leveraging other funding streams or incentivizing youth to obtain employment. A different challenge is that undocumented participants cannot receive incentive checks, so life coaches find other ways to support them. Finally, a program manager suggested that agencies should provide a financial literacy component before allocating incentives.

Substance abuse and mental health

Life coaches find it challenging to stop substance abuse and employ a harm reduction approach to address the problem. Life coaches explained that it is important for participants to feel safe and not perceive that they are being judged for engaging in substance use or abuse. In particular, staff acknowledged that it is unlikely that youth will stop occasional use of marijuana, and generally find the harm reduction approach is appropriate for youth who are able to understand and mitigate the risks. Typically, the biggest challenge with the occasional use of marijuana relates to participants’ terms for probation. Although life coaches work with youth to develop a detox plan or encourage youth to at least stop using marijuana until they are off probation, some refuse or are unable to follow through with their plan. Youth who use other controlled substances such as heroin or demonstrate an addiction to a substance are referred to additional services, including outpatient treatment centers.

Life coaches use their discretion to refer participants to counseling services when they do not feel equipped to address youth’s trauma. Life coaches said they often mentor youth around how to cope with violence, working with them to prevent potential retaliation and referring them to mental health counseling services if necessary. For example, if youth were arrested for

possession of a firearm because they felt unsafe, life coaches may encourage those youth to avoid areas where they feel unsafe. If participants' experience with violence is more personal, such as having a parent who was shot or witnessing domestic violence, they may refer them to therapy and counseling or recommend a change to their living environment. Life coaches acknowledged that they do not always feel equipped to address youth's trauma.

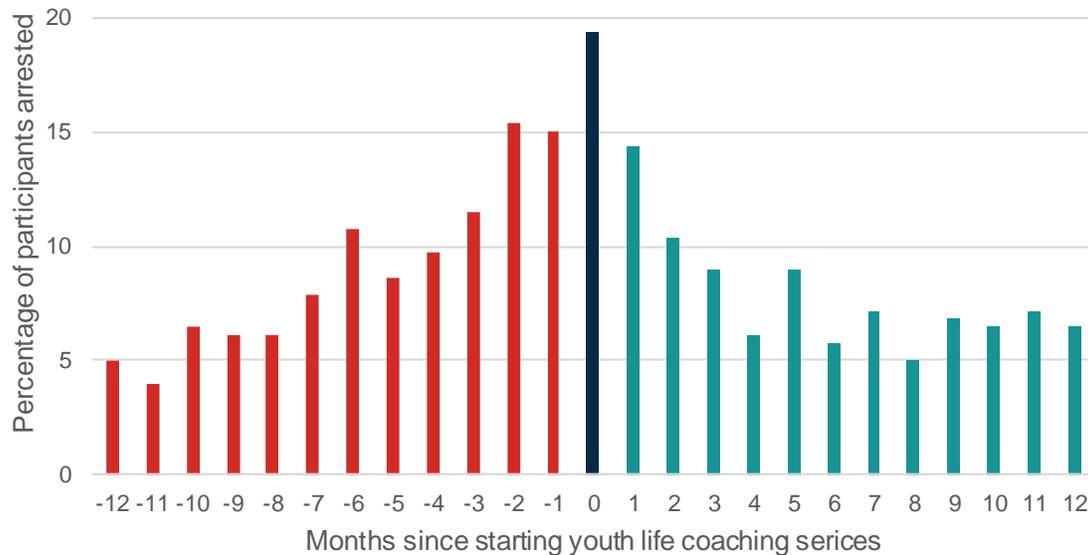
Family engagement

Agencies connect parents and youth with children to other support services and help youth improve relationships with their families when this is a stated goal. Life coaches from five of the agencies shared that they connect families to supportive services such as food banks, utility assistance, counseling around mental health or substance use, health care services, and legal services. Agencies also connect participants with children to public benefits and child care services, and one of the agencies allows youth to bring their children with them to life coaching meetings. Staff shared that about half of families are very involved and like to keep informed on their child's progress, but the other half are disengaged. Life coaches from two agencies shared that if youth are disrespectful toward family members, one of the life coaching goals may include improving relationships with family. However, they said this goal is not always appropriate and depends on the youth's family dynamics.

Impact findings

As described in Chapter II, we analyzed the impacts of participating in youth life coaching on outcomes in the 12-month period after participants began Oakland Unite services. Among participants included in the impact analysis, 66 percent were arrested in the 12 months before starting services, with a notable spike in arrest rates in the months just before beginning youth life coaching services (Figure III.6). This pattern is consistent with the youth life coaching model, which enrolls youth primarily through direct referrals from the juvenile justice system. In contrast, in the 12 months after starting services, 43 percent of participants were arrested. To assess whether this decline was a result of participating in youth life coaching, we matched youth life coaching participants to other Oakland youth with similar demographics and juvenile justice, victimization, and schooling histories and compared their outcomes in the same 12-month follow-up period.

Figure III.6. Participant arrest rates by month, before and after starting youth life coaching services

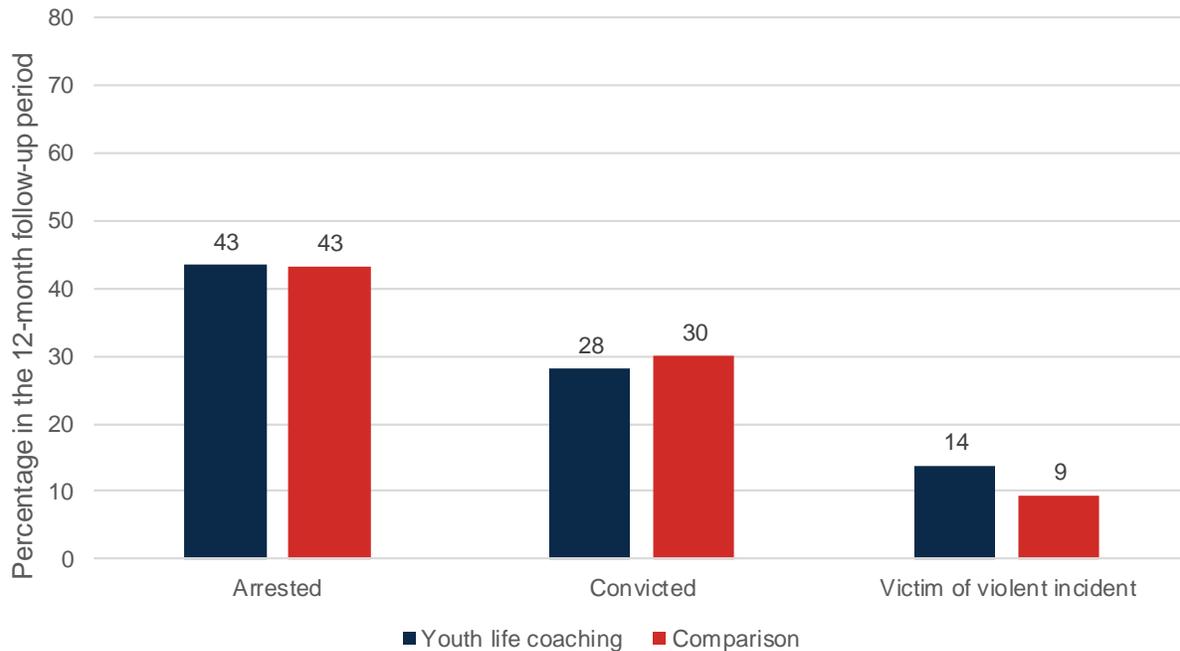


Source: Cityspan, OPD, and ACPD data.

Note: This figure is based on 260 youth life coaching participants who received services between January 1, 2016, and May 31, 2017, consented to share their information for evaluation, and were included in the impact analysis.

Youth life coaching participants had similar rates of contact with law enforcement as the comparison group in the 12 months after beginning services. During the 12-month follow-up period, 43 percent of youth life coaching participants were arrested, 28 percent were convicted for a new offense, and 14 percent were victims of a violent offense reported to OPD (Figure IV.7). These rates were similar for the matched comparison group over the same follow-up period (that is, none of the differences between the two groups was statistically significant). When we examined additional exploratory measures of contact with law enforcement during this period, including arrests involving a gun or violent offense and violations of probation, these rates were also similar for the comparison group (see Table B.5 in Appendix B).

Figure III.7. Impact of youth life coaching 12 months after enrollment on arrest, conviction, and victimization rates



Source: Oakland Unite, OPD, and ACPD administrative data.

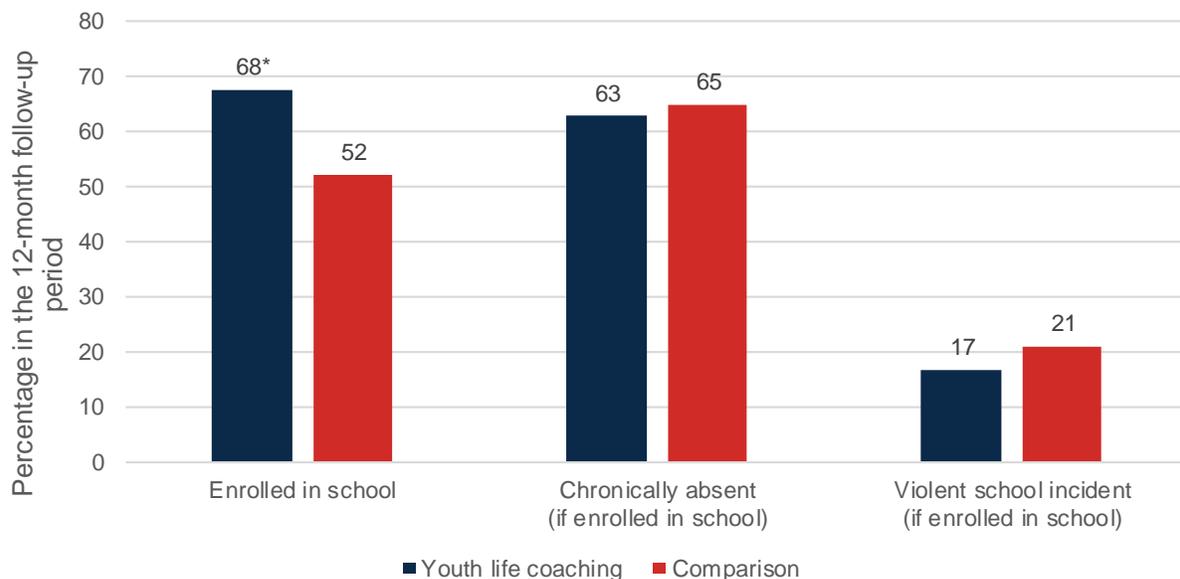
Note: The total sample is 4,138, including 260 youth life coaching participants. To be included in this analysis, participants needed to have at least 10 hours of services between January 1, 2016 and May 31, 2017, and have consented to share their data for evaluation. Comparison group rates were adjusted using ordinary least square regressions that account for remaining baseline differences between Oakland Unite participants and youth in the comparison group. None of the differences in outcomes in the figure are statistically significant at the 5 percent level.

However, youth life coaching participants were 3 percentage points less likely to be arrested for a violent offense in the six months after beginning services. As an additional exploratory analysis, we also examined all arrest, victimization, and recidivism outcomes during a shorter six-month follow-up period. During those first six months, approximately 3 percent of youth life coaching participants were arrested for a violent offense, compared to 6 percent of youth in the comparison group (the difference is statistically significant). Other short-term outcomes were similar between the two groups (see Table B.6 in Appendix B). These findings are comparable to the results of the adult life coaching analysis ([Gonzalez et al. 2017](#)), which found that participating in adult life coaching decreased the likelihood of arrest for a violent offense in the six months after enrollment by 1 percentage point, but had limited impacts on other outcomes.

School-aged life coaching participants were 16 percentage points more likely to be enrolled in school in the 12 months after starting services and had similar school attendance and discipline as the comparison group. In the 12 months after beginning services, 68 percent of school-aged life coaching participants were enrolled in an OUSD or ACOE school, compared to 52 percent of similar comparison youth (Figure IV.8). This 16-percentage-point difference between the two groups is statistically significant. In the 12 months prior, 78 percent of both life

coaching and comparison youth had been enrolled in school. Thus, although some life coaching youth who were under 18 when they began services dropped out of school in the 12 months after starting services, participating in life coaching led to a large reduction in their likelihood of dropping out. Among those who were enrolled in school in the outcome period, 63 percent of youth life coaching participants were chronically absent (defined as missing at least 10 percent of enrolled days for any reason) and 17 percent had a reported violent incident in school. Although there were no statistically significant differences between life coaching and comparison youth, these rates are substantially higher than the average. Among all high school students in OUSD and ACOE, 25 percent were chronically absent and 5 percent had a violent school incident in the most recent school year.

Figure III.8. Impact of youth life coaching 12 months after enrollment on school enrollment and engagement



Source: Oakland Unite, OUSD, and ACOE administrative data.

Note: The total sample for the school enrollment outcome is 4,138, including 260 youth life coaching participants. To be included in this analysis, participants needed to have at least 10 hours of services between January 1, 2016 and May 31, 2017, and have consented to share their data for evaluation. The school enrollment rate is based on youth who were under 18 years of age when they began services. To examine chronic absence and violent school incidents, the sample was restricted to 1,473 youth who were enrolled in school in the outcome period, which included 114 youth life coaching participants. Comparison group rates were adjusted using ordinary least square regressions that account for remaining baseline differences between Oakland Unite participants and youth in the comparison group.

*Impact is statistically significant at the 1 percent level.

Although we found limited impacts of participating in youth life coaching on contact with law enforcement, there are some caveats to this analysis. First, finding comparison youth who have not participated in Oakland Unite but have similar histories with the juvenile justice system as life coaching participants is inherently challenging. The majority of youth processed through the

JJC are referred to Oakland Unite life coaching services if they express interest. Further, youth life coaching participants begin services at a particularly high-risk period in their lives, as illustrated in the spike in arrest rates around the month of enrollment in services (Figure III.6). Youth in the comparison group did not experience a comparable spike in those months. Although we control for differences in the timing of prior arrests when comparing their outcomes, it is possible that youth life coaching participants represent a higher-risk population than the comparison group. Second, many of the youth who participate in this sub-strategy participate for a limited time and therefore receive much less than the intended service intensity. These findings reflect the average impact for all participants who received at least 10 hours of services, for outcomes measured starting in the first month after they began participating in life coaching. Third, some individuals in the comparison group may have received services from other organizations, including case management and referrals to support services from the Probation Department, which are not recorded in our available data. Future research, discussed in Chapter V, will further explore some of these limitations.

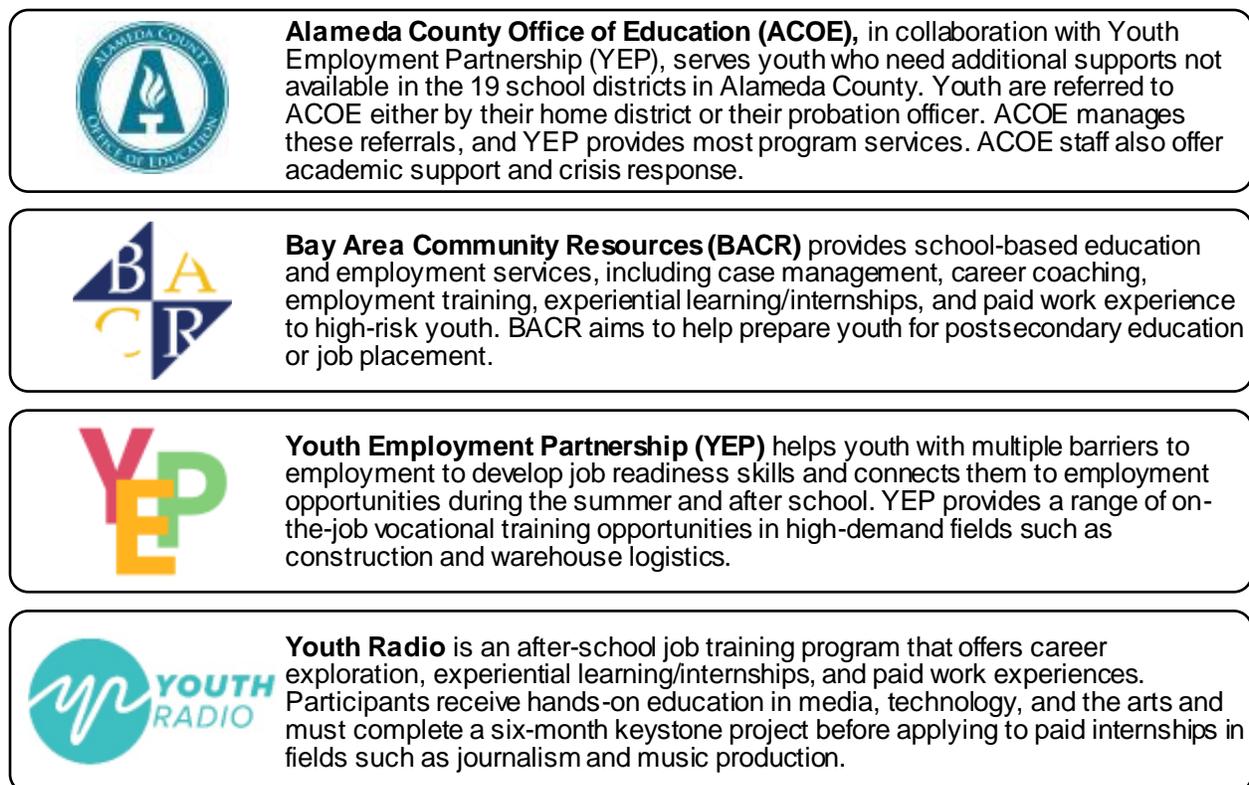
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IV. YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES

Overview of the youth EESS sub-strategy

The youth EESS sub-strategy seeks to improve the economic self-sufficiency and career readiness of high-risk youth through academic support, subsidized work experience, job training, and community service. Oakland Unite currently funds four agencies to provide services in youth EESS, for a total annual grant award of \$716,900. The agencies that offer youth EESS are identified in Figure IV.1. Each agency’s service model varies, but services usually begin with a vocational or life skills training component, which is followed by transitional employment. Most agencies also provide academic support and formal case management services. In this chapter, we present implementation and impact findings for this sub-strategy. A summary of related evidence-based programs and Oakland Unite recommended best practices for youth EESS is available in Appendix C.

Figure IV.1. Youth employment and education support agencies



Source: Documents provided by Oakland Unite, agency websites, and interviews with agency staff.

Implementation findings

In this section, we discuss a number of key findings about how Oakland Unite agencies implemented the youth life coaching sub-strategy. These findings are summarized in Table IV.1.

Table IV.1. Summary of implementation findings for youth EESS

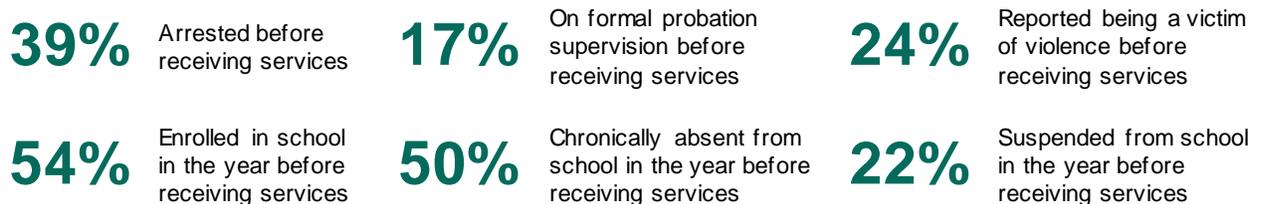
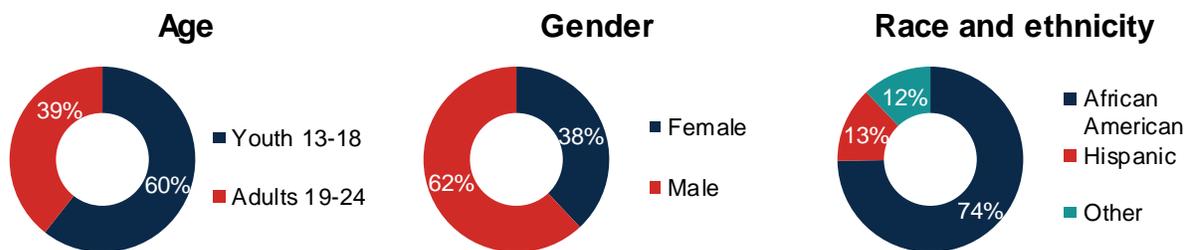
Category	Summary of implementation findings
Target population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth EESS agencies primarily serve African American and Hispanic youth who have low commitment to school and/or have been exposed to violence. Although agencies report that they target youth who meet at least five of the risk factors approved by Oakland Unite, only 33 percent of participants met this requirement.
Collaboration and referral networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although the Oakland Unite model intends for the majority of referrals to come from life coaches, agencies report that most of their referrals result from their own outreach efforts. Competition for youth's time and differences in approaches to serving youth have stifled collaboration between the youth EESS and youth life coaching sub-strategies.
Materials and trainings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although staff have found trainings provided by the Human Services Department to be helpful, senior staff recommend that future trainings be tailored to staff's experience level.
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agencies report that they cannot match salaries offered by other employers in the Bay Area, which they say has contributed to staff turnover.
Participant retention and satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By the third month of services, about one-third of participants have stopped receiving youth EESS services. Staff report that some youth obtain full-time employment before completing program requirements, but that early exits for positive outcomes are not easily reflected in Cityspan. Almost all survey respondents report being satisfied with the services provided by their EESS agency and holding positive outlooks for the future.
Service provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each agency addresses youths' needs for developing hard and soft skills, as well as non-skills-related barriers to employment. Agencies partner with employers and postsecondary institutions to offer youth meaningful work and education experiences. Participants receive varying amounts of work experience and services, reflecting differences both in retention and program models.
Financial support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth are connected to opportunities to earn income almost immediately, and may earn additional financial incentives after completing programmatic milestones.
Substance abuse and mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce agencies do not allow onto a job site youth who are under the influence, which staff say contributes to cultural differences between their programs and life coaching. To address trauma, substance use or abuse, and mental health issues, youth EESS agencies refer participants to other services.
Family engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aside from obtaining parental or guardian consent for youth to receive services, engaging family members is not a key element of the program models.

Target population

Youth EESS agencies primarily serve African American and Hispanic youth who have low commitment to school and/or have been exposed to violence. Figure IV.2 describes key baseline characteristics of youth who enroll in youth EESS services. Agencies in this sub-strategy serve a mix of male and female youth, most of whom are African American (74 percent) or Hispanic (13 percent). Although the sub-strategy targets youth who are ages 13 to 18, 39 percent of participants were older than 18 at the time of enrollment.

According to risk assessment data entered into Cityspan, 70 percent of youth demonstrated low commitment to school (not shown in the figure). Only 54 percent of school-aged EESS youth were enrolled in an OUSD or ACOE school in the 12 months before starting services. Among these students, 50 percent were chronically absent from school and 22 percent were suspended or expelled during that period. On average, youth EESS participants had a GPA of 1.55 (of 4.0) in the most recent school year (not shown in the figure).

Figure IV.2. Youth EESS participant characteristics at enrollment



Source: Oakland Unite, ACOE, ACPD, OPD, and OUSD administrative data.

Note: Demographic information is based on 503 participants who received services between January 1, 2016 and December 31, 2018. Measures of arrest, victimization, and school engagement are based on the 92 percent of these participants who consented to share their identifying information for evaluation.

A number of participants in youth EESS also had direct or indirect exposure to violence. Almost a quarter reported being a victim of violence to OPD before receiving services. Not shown in the figure, 59 percent reported at intake that they had a peer or family member who had been shot or seriously injured. Some youth also had previous contact with the juvenile justice system. Thirty-nine percent had been arrested, and 17 percent were on formal probation supervision before receiving services.

Although agencies report that they target youth who meet at least five of the risk factors approved by Oakland Unite, only 33 percent of participants met this requirement. Oakland Unite eligibility rules indicate that youth must meet at least 5 of 9 risk factors specified by the program. For each participant, agencies are required to assess these risk factors and enter that information into Cityspan. However, according to Cityspan data, only 33 percent of participants met 5 or more risk factors. On average, youth met a total of 3.5 risk factors. Staff at one agency suggested that Oakland Unite should include risk factors related to housing and food insecurity because these conditions could contribute to risky or violent behaviors.

Collaboration and referral networks

Although the Oakland Unite model intends for the majority of referrals to come from life coaches, agencies report that most of their referrals result from their own outreach efforts. Cityspan data show that about 23 percent of youth EESS participants also participated in life coaching, although the data do not indicate whether the participants were referred to youth EESS from life coaching. During agency interviews, two of the agencies shared that the majority of their referrals were from probation officers; one agency, which runs a school-based program, receives referrals directly from school sites. Agencies shared that they also engage in community outreach efforts to recruit youth. Most agencies have been so successful in recruiting participants that they have either paused recruiting efforts or created waiting lists. However, one agency reported a decrease in the number of referrals due to a drop in enrollment at ACOE schools, which is the population it serves.

Agencies said that they would like to collaborate more with other Oakland Unite strategies in serving youth and acknowledged that the City has responded to their concerns about cross-strategy collaboration. For example, the City has organized several meetings on the topic of how to increase collaboration across agencies, held a summit during the summer, and conducted a speed-dating-like event, all of which allowed agency staff to learn about each other's programs. Most of the agencies recommended that the City continue to conduct events that promote services available through other agencies.

Competition for youth's time and differences in approaches to serving youth have stifled collaboration between the youth EESS and life coaching sub-strategies. Agencies sometimes receive referrals from the Probation Department that do not already have a life coach. A program manager detailed that agency staff will attempt to refer these youth to life coaching agencies, but referrals are not always successful due to competing demands for youth's time: "There is a real breakdown in the conflicting deliverables category. If youth are in school all day, receive workforce training, and then have to log 16 hours of activities with their life coaches, there just is not enough time to do so." In addition to competing demands for service hours, staff said that differences between the youth EESS and life coaching approaches to serving youth, such as how to address substance use or abuse issues and tardiness to program services, have stifled collaboration. Despite noting these differences, youth EESS staff said that there is potential for the two sub-strategies to work together. For example, a program manager noted that life coaches have helped to de-escalate potentially violent situations at youth EESS sites, and that life coaches are instrumental in supporting youth through trauma.

Materials and trainings

Although staff have found trainings provided by the Human Services Department to be helpful, senior staff recommend that future trainings be tailored to staff's experience level.

Staff mentioned that the speed dating event and trainings around compassion fatigue and trauma have been particularly helpful. However, staff said that trainings could be improved if the City took into account the different educational and career levels of the staff across the youth EESS agencies. In particular, senior staff with previous training and experience in this area said many of the topics offered were already familiar to them after several years of working in the field. Therefore, tailoring trainings to newer versus more senior staff could provide a better overall experience.

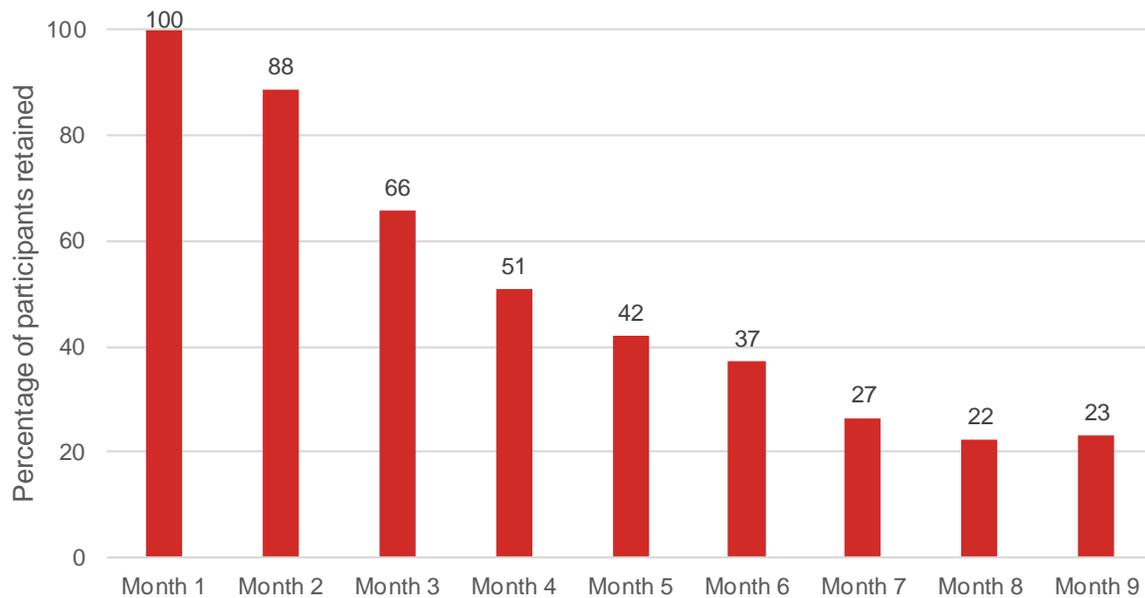
Staffing

Agencies report that they cannot match salaries offered by other employers in the Bay Area, which they say has contributed to staff turnover.

Agencies report that their staff are often sought by other employers in the Bay Area because of their skills. One agency in particular shared that although some of its staff stay for a while, their organization feels like a “farm system” for other government or nonprofit organizations. Staff from another agency shared that the short grant cycles contribute to staff turnover. To address staff turnover, agencies hire previous participants, promote internally, and engage in regular hiring activities (posting job openings, interviewing, and hiring). They also provide extensive trainings to those who may share a similar background with youth and are a good organizational fit but lack skills in another area. ACOE employs AmeriCorps members to tutor, but most only stay for a short period. Therefore, the agency hires more tutors than are needed in anticipation of attrition.

Participant retention and satisfaction

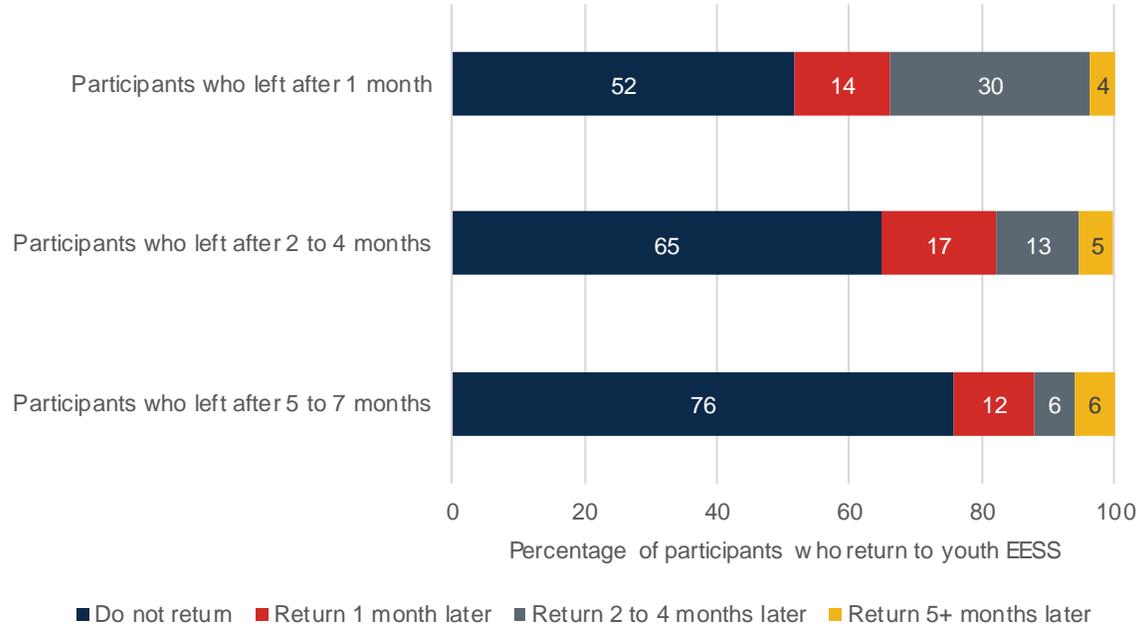
By the third month of services, about one-third of participants have stopped receiving youth EESS services. Figure IV.3 shows participant retention over time. Although participant retention declines consistently after the start of services, the largest drop off in participation occurs between the second and third months of services. On average, youth EESS participants engage with agencies for 5.5 months, although this can include some inactive periods. Taking into account only months where at least some services were received, the average length of active participation is 5 months.

Figure IV.3. Youth EESS participant retention over time

Source: Cityspan data.

Note: This figure is based on 373 participants who received services between January 1, 2016, and March 31, 2018 so that all participants could be tracked for at least 9 months, through December 31, 2018. The pattern of retention is very similar for youth who began receiving services more recently.

Service duration varies significantly across participants and can include multiple periods of active engagement for some. Thirty-two percent of youth engage in services during multiple service periods, defined as service periods separated by one or more months of inactivity. Figure IV.4 summarizes the percentage of youth who return to EESS after leaving services. Among youth who leave services after one month, 52 percent do not return to EESS. The remaining 48 percent typically return after a few months (usually 2 to 4 months later). A smaller proportion of youth who initially participate in EESS for 2 to 4 months return for services (35 percent), whereas a quarter of youth who initially participate for 5 to 7 months come back.

Figure IV.4. Percentage of youth EESS participants who return after leaving services

Source: Cityspan data.

Note: This figure is based on 503 participants who received services between January 1, 2016, and December 31, 2018.

Multiple staff noted that the abundance of available services and activities for youth in the area made it difficult to keep some participants engaged. Youth are often tied to many different systems, including the Probation Department, life coaching, school, and other support services outside of Oakland Unite. In addition to those obligations, youth sometimes want to work and participate in after-school or sports activities. Staff also shared that their geographic locations present some challenges to maintaining engagement because they may be difficult for youth to reach or may be considered unsafe. Staff at one agency also noted that the sub-strategy as a whole lacks bilingual services, which could be helpful in engaging non-English speaking youth.

Staff report that some youth obtain full-time employment before completing program requirements, but that early exits for positive outcomes are not easily reflected in Cityspan.

Two agencies shared that some of the youth who engage in services but do not complete the work experience component have obtained employment elsewhere. This phenomenon is both a success and a challenge for agencies. At times, the minimum wage and number of hours youth are allowed to work each week are not enough to meet their financial needs, and youth who are parents or whose families need additional income may leave the program to obtain employment in retail or fast food, where they can work more hours at the same wages and therefore earn more money. On the positive side, agencies report that some youth demonstrate during the work experience component that they are ready to enter the workforce and obtain employment elsewhere. Although agencies consider this readiness for work a success, they note that it is reflected as youth not completing their required hours in Cityspan.

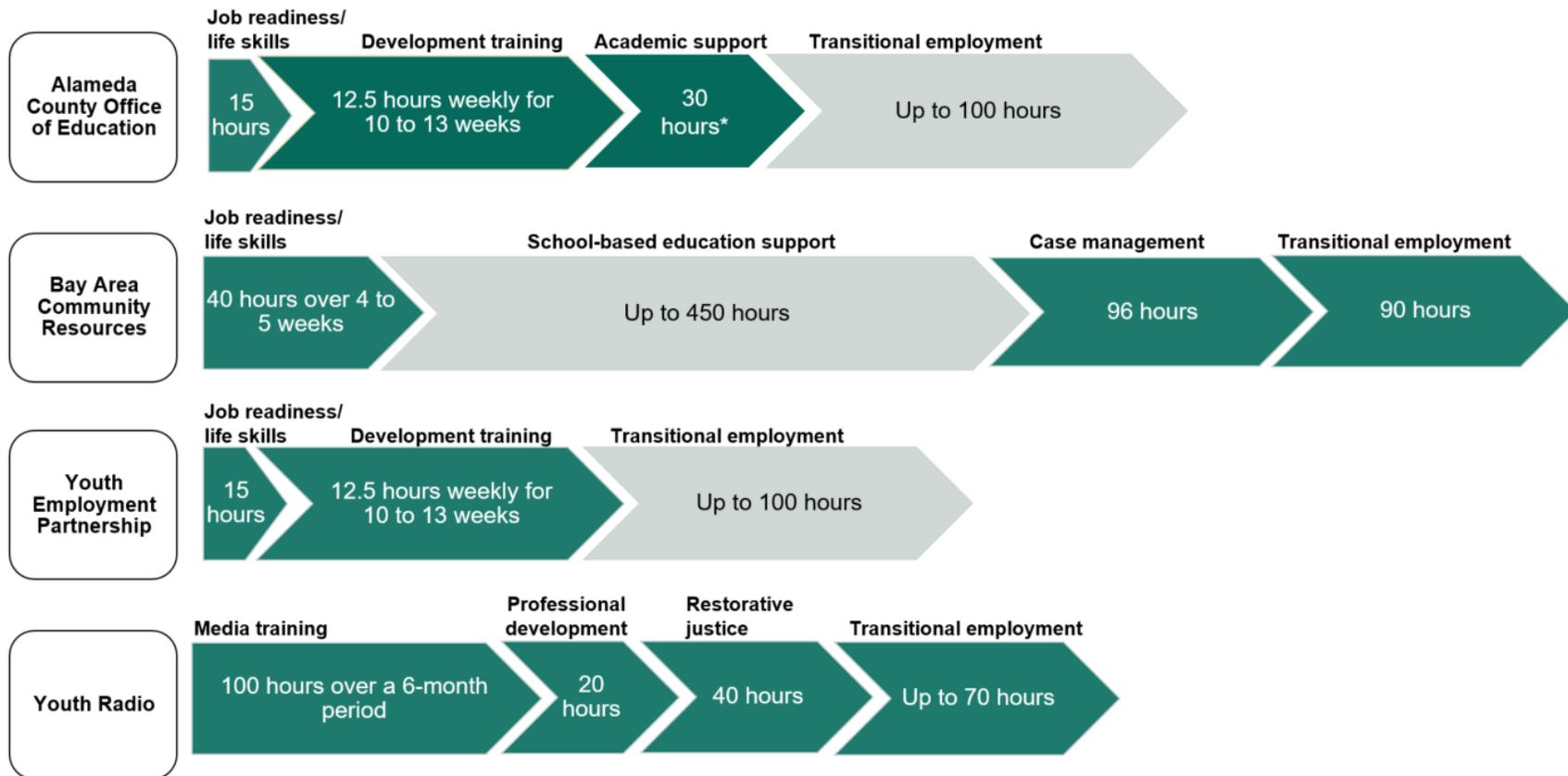
Almost all survey respondents report being satisfied with the services provided by their EESS agency and holding positive outlooks for the future. About 90 percent of EESS participants who responded to the survey reported being satisfied with their agency, with 48 percent strongly agreeing that they were satisfied. The level of satisfaction was similar for many of the specific topics asked about in the participant survey, including the kinds of services offered, staff availability, and how the staff listen and show respect to participants. About three-quarters of participants think that their situation is better because of the Oakland Unite services they've received, with 35 percent strongly agreeing with that statement. When asked about what they thought their lives would be like one year in the future, at least 90 percent of youth EESS participants thought it was likely or very likely they would have a safe place to live, a steady job, and be more hopeful about their lives. At least 90 percent also thought it was likely or very likely that they would be able to avoid unwanted contact with the police and avoid unhealthy drug or alcohol use, whereas more than 80 percent thought it was likely or very likely they would finish their education within the next year.

Service provision

Each agency addresses youths' needs for developing hard and soft skills, as well as non-skills-related barriers to employment. The intake process varies across agencies, but it typically includes assessments of risk, educational needs, and job readiness, all of which are used to individualize program services. Program services usually begin with a vocational or life skills training component, and participants have the opportunity to engage in transitional employment as well as other service offerings after completing this phase. Most agencies also provide academic support as well as formal case management services to address other barriers to employment, such as transportation, legal, and health care needs. The length of time and content of each of these components can vary widely based on program requirements (Figure IV.5).

Agencies partner with employers and postsecondary institutions to offer meaningful work and education experiences to youth. Agencies are responsive to youth's interests when developing employer partnerships. For example, at one agency, youth expressed an interest in entrepreneurship, so the program developed a partnership with Beast Mode clothing, where youth are exposed to how a small business operates and work on developing customer service skills. Agencies also collaborate with postsecondary institutions where youth are connected to educational and vocational training opportunities. If youth are interested, they are also connected to career technical education and vocational schools where they can enroll to obtain other certifications. Agencies said they prioritize programs that may lead to careers in in-demand and growth industries.

Figure IV.5. Length and dosage of youth EESS program services



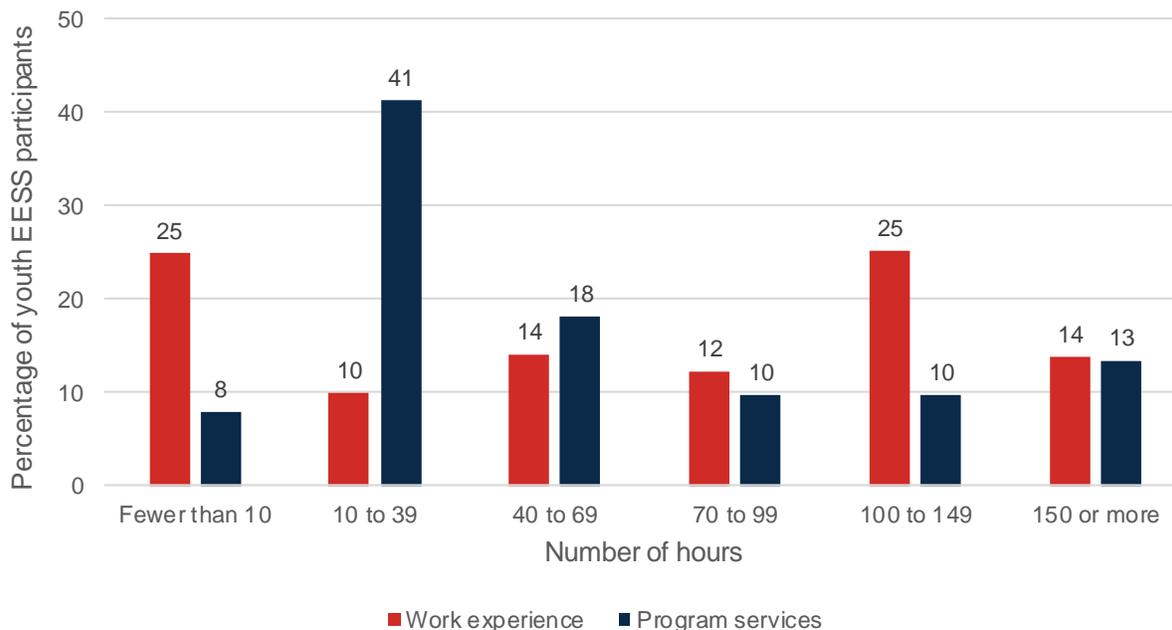
Source: Grantee documents provided by City of Oakland, site visits, and agency interviews.

Note: Program components shaded in green are required for program completion.

* ACOE academic support hours do not include regular academic support provided during the school day.

Participants receive varying amounts of work experience and services, reflecting differences both in retention and program models. Figure IV.6 illustrates the total number of work experience and service hours that participants receive, which can vary widely. One-quarter of participants completed fewer than 10 hours of work experience. On average, participants who completed fewer than 10 hours of work experience received 74 hours of nonwork services (which includes vocational and preemployment training and case management) over approximately three months. This disparity suggests that a number of participants complete the training component but not the work experience component. In contrast, 51 percent of participants completed at least 70 hours of work experience, which is the minimum number of work experience hours offered by any of the agencies. On average, these participants received 72 hours of nonwork services but engaged with agencies for a longer period—just over seven months. Agencies may provide youth with up to 100 hours of paid work experience, although one agency shared that work experience hours are flexible.

Figure IV.6. Total youth EESS work and service hours received



Source: Cityspan data.

Note: This figure is based on 503 participants who received services between January 1, 2016 and December 31, 2018.

Service hours vary across agencies depending on the agency's model. For example, participants at BACR receive a high number of case management hours—108 hours, on average, compared to 8 hours in the other three agencies—because BACR requires youth to complete at least 96 hours of case management. Conversely, BACR does not require job skills or vocational training for program completion, so its participants receive less than 1 hour of training, on average, compared to 21 hours in the other three agencies. Youth Radio also differs from other agencies by requiring 100 hours of job skills or vocational training. In addition to differences in service

models across agencies, the total number of service hours participants receive also varies due to the length of time they engage with services.

Financial support

Youth are connected to opportunities to earn income almost immediately, and they may earn additional financial incentives after completing programmatic milestones. About 30 percent of the youth EESS budget is allocated to participant wages, financial support, and incentives. During their transitional work experience, youth receive paid stipends at the City’s minimum wage and are paid every two weeks. Youth are allowed to work up to 100 transitional work experience hours, although agencies shared that this is not a hard cap, and some youth will work more hours and earn more wages. On average, youth complete about 80 hours of individual and group work experience, thus leaving funds available for youth who need to work more hours. The average wages per participant ranged from \$941 to \$2,441 across the four agencies, based only on funding from Oakland Unite.

Each agency also provides youth the opportunity to earn additional paid incentives for achieving program milestones such as attendance, completing their trainings, and obtaining their high school diploma or a credential/certificate. For example, one agency helps participants set goals and action steps for achieving those goals; for each action step the youth complete, they earn an incentive. Another agency follows a similar incentive structure but deducts from the total potential incentive earned for excessive tardiness or absences and any behavioral problems. Generally, agencies find the incentives helpful for keeping youth engaged in programming. Across the four agencies, the average financial support or incentive awarded to youth ranged from \$268 to \$477, based only on funding from Oakland Unite. Some agencies are able to leverage other funding streams.

Substance use and mental health

Workforce agencies do not allow onto a job site youth who are under the influence, which staff say contributes to cultural differences between their programs and life coaching. Youth EESS agencies employ a behavior modification strategy, which is unlike the harm reduction approach used by life coaches. Youth EESS staff said that youth cannot come to work late, smelling of marijuana, or under the influence, and that youth are turned away until the issue is corrected. Youth sometimes share with their life coach that they were turned away, and their life coach may then call the youth EESS agency to advocate on behalf of the youth. Youth EESS staff acknowledged that marijuana in particular is challenging to address because it is now legal in California. Youth EESS staff said they try to instill the point that a real job will not tolerate this behavior, but noted that life coaches do not always agree with youth being turned away from services. Staff suggested that Oakland Unite should help foster a complementary, rather than conflicting, dynamic between the two sub-strategies.

To address trauma, substance use or abuse, and mental health issues, youth EESS agencies refer participants to other services. Several youth EESS staff stated that their sub-strategy does not directly address trauma and that many of their participants demonstrate significant trauma as well as the need for more intensive case management. Although all of the agencies provide some

case management services, they typically refer youth to other agencies for supportive services around substance use and mental health. As noted above, youth EESS agencies also connect youth who have experienced trauma to life coaching.

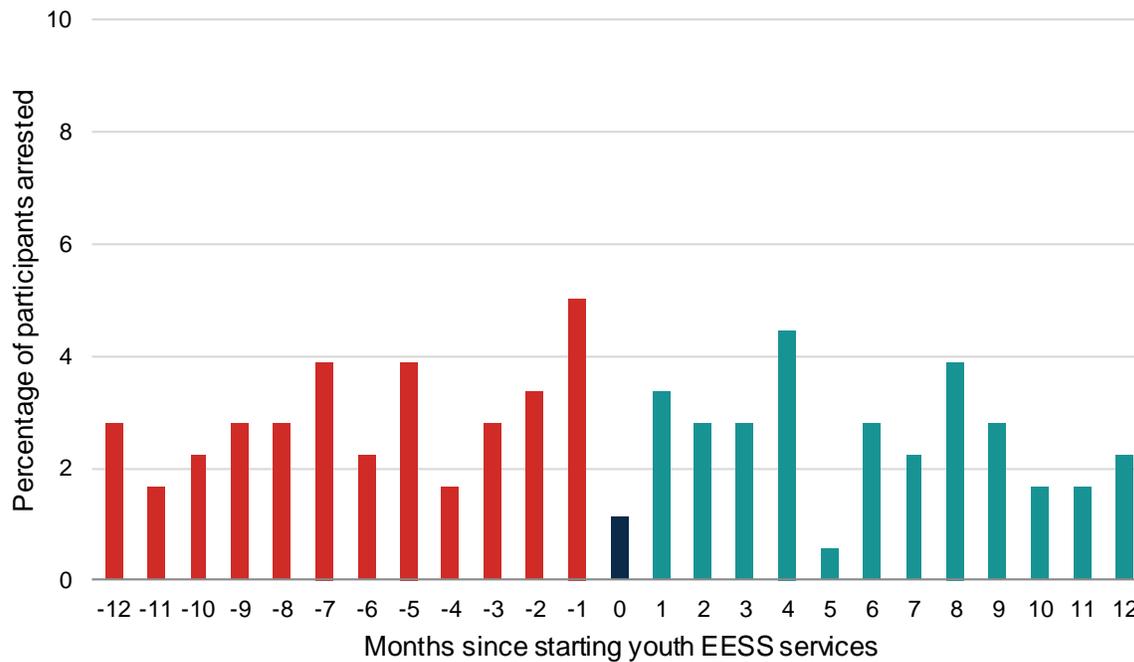
Family engagement

Aside from obtaining parental or guardian consent for youth to receive services, engaging family members is not a key element of the program models. Staff reported that not all parents are receptive to programming. One agency said that some parents perceive the programs as invasive, whereas another agency shared that some parents do not see the value in the services they provide. Aside from contacting parents to obtain their consent, the agencies do not typically engage families in programming. One agency shared that engaging with families is difficult because some parents are not involved at all and others may be too involved.

Impact findings

As described in Chapter II, we analyzed the effects of participating in youth EESS on outcomes in the 12-month period after participants began Oakland Unite services. Among youth included in the impact analysis, 25 percent were arrested in the 12 months before starting services, compared to 20 percent in the 12 months after starting services. Unlike in the youth life coaching sub-strategy, there is no clear pattern of arrests in the period surrounding the start of youth EESS services (Figure IV.7). This is expected, because referrals to youth EESS do not generally come directly from the JJC. To assess whether there was an impact from participating in youth EESS, we matched participants to other Oakland youth with similar demographics and juvenile justice, victimization, and schooling histories and compared their outcomes in the same 12-month follow-up period.

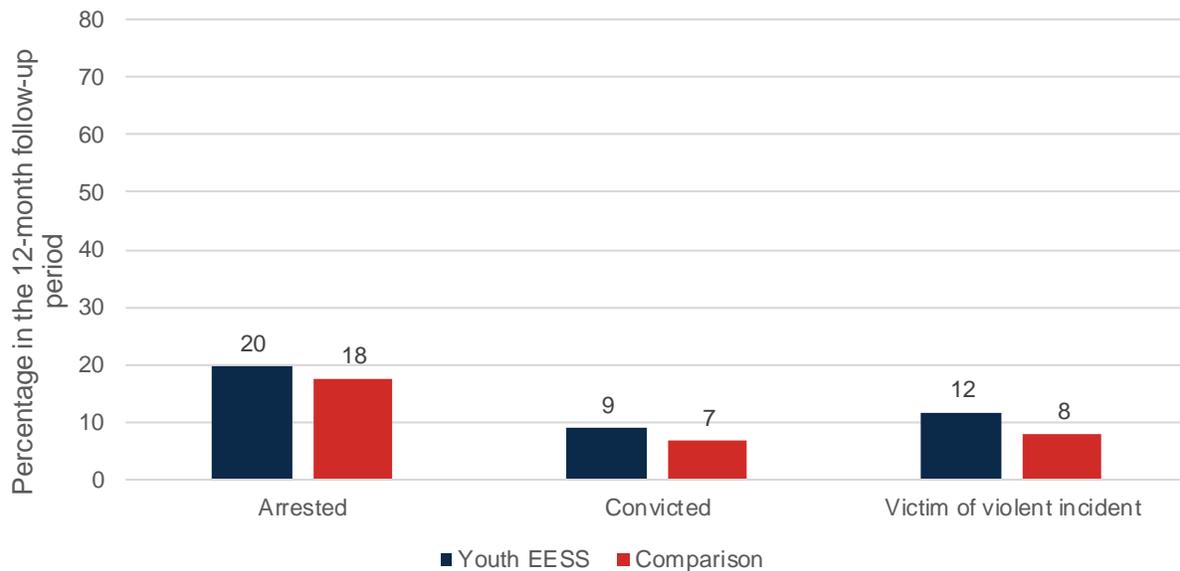
Figure IV.7. Participant arrest rates by month, before and after starting youth EESS services



Source: Cityspan, OPD, and ACPD data.

Note: This figure is based on 179 youth EESS participants who received services between January 1, 2016, and May 31, 2017, consented to share their information for evaluation, and were included in the impact analysis.

Youth EESS participants had similar rates of contact with law enforcement as the comparison group in the 12 months after beginning services. During this period, 20 percent of youth EESS participants were arrested, 9 percent were convicted for a new offense, and 12 percent were victims of a violent offense reported to OPD (Figure IV.8). These rates were similar for the matched comparison group over the same follow-up period (that is, none of the differences between the two groups were statistically significant). When we examined additional exploratory measures of contact with law enforcement, including arrests involving a gun or violent offense and violations of probation, and shorter-term outcomes during a six-month follow-up period, these rates were also similar for the comparison group. Appendix B includes more detailed results, including all exploratory outcomes. Overall, we found no impact of participating in youth EESS programs on the likelihood of coming into contact with law enforcement in either the short or medium term after beginning services.

Figure IV.8. Impact of youth EESS 12 months after enrollment on arrest, conviction, and victimization rates

Source: Oakland Unite, OPD, and ACPD administrative data.

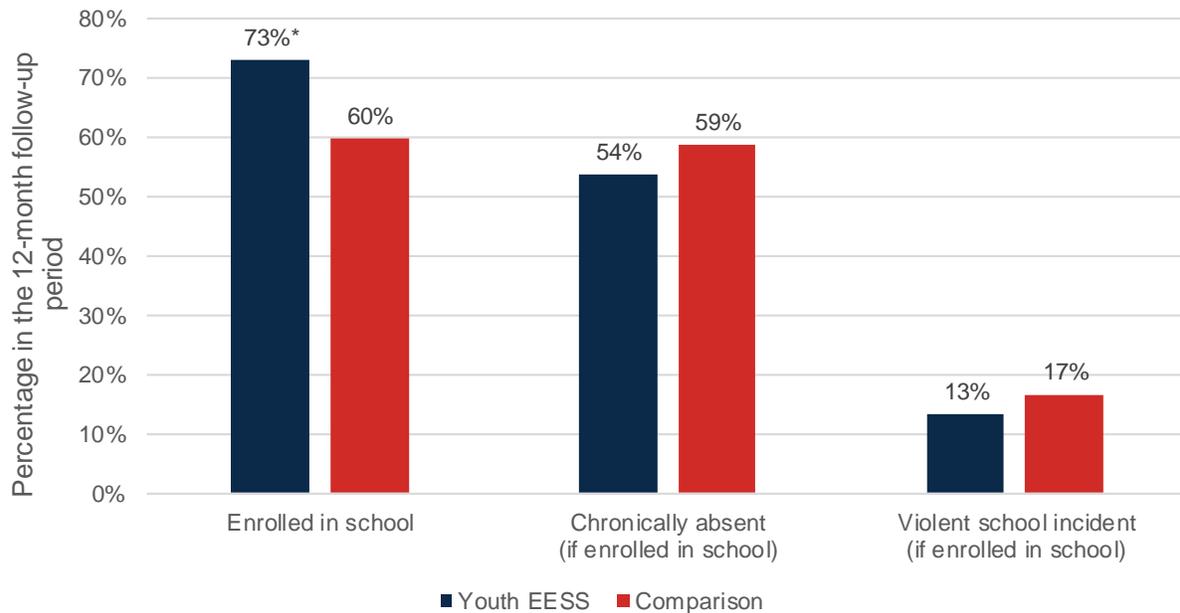
Note: The total sample is 3,496, including 179 youth EESS participants. To be included in this analysis, participants needed to have at least 10 hours of nonwork services or 40 work hours between January 1, 2016 and May 31, 2017, and have consented to share their data for evaluation. Comparison group rates were adjusted using ordinary least square regressions that account for remaining baseline differences between Oakland Unite participants and youth in the comparison group. None of the differences in outcomes in the figure are statistically significant at the 5 percent level.

School-aged EESS participants were 13 percentage points more likely to be enrolled in school in the 12 months after starting services, and had similar school attendance and discipline as the comparison group. In the 12 months after beginning services, 73 percent of EESS participants who were under 18 when they began services were enrolled in an OUSD or ACOE school, compared to 60 percent of similar comparison youth (Figure IV.9). This 13-percentage-point difference is statistically significant.⁶ In the prior 12 months, approximately 76 percent of both EESS and comparison youth had been enrolled in school. Thus, compared to youth in the comparison group, few EESS youth dropped out of school during this period. Among those who were enrolled in school in the outcome period, 54 percent of youth EESS participants were chronically absent (defined as missing at least 10 percent of enrolled days for any reason) and 13 percent had a reported violent incident in school. Although there were no statistically significant differences between youth EESS participants and comparison youth, these rates are substantially

⁶ Among all youth, including those who were 18 and older at the time of starting services, the difference in school enrollment rates between EESS and comparison youth is 18 percentage points (see Table B.5 in Appendix B). This larger difference suggests that participating in EESS also helps older youth stay in school.

higher than the average. Among all high school students in OUSD and ACOE, 25 percent were chronically absent and 5 percent had a violent school incident in the most recent school year.

Figure IV.9. Impact of youth EESS 12 months after enrollment on school enrollment, attendance, and discipline



Source: Oakland Unite, OUSD, and ACOE administrative data.

Note: The total sample for the school enrollment outcome is 3,496, including 179 youth EESS participants. To be included in this analysis, participants needed to have at least 10 hours of nonwork services or 40 work hours between January 1, 2016 and May 31, 2017, and have consented to share their data for evaluation. The school enrollment rate is based on youth who were under 18 years of age when they began services. To examine chronic absence and violent school incidents, the sample was restricted to 2,656 youth who were enrolled in school in the outcome period, which included 113 youth EESS participants. Comparison group rates were adjusted using ordinary least square regressions that account for remaining baseline differences between Oakland Unite participants and youth in the comparison group.

*Impact is statistically significant at the 1 percent level.

Although we found limited impacts of participating in youth EESS on contact with law enforcement, there are some caveats to this analysis. First, many of the youth who participate in this sub-strategy do not complete the program requirements. These findings reflect the average impact for all participants who completed at least 40 hours of work experience or received at least 10 hours of services, for outcomes measured starting in the first month after they began participating in youth EESS. Second, as with any non-experimental analysis, it is possible that there could be differences between the two groups that we could not account for using the available data. Namely, some of the individuals in the comparison group could have received similar services from other organizations outside of Oakland Unite. However, relative to the youth life coaching analysis, we were able to identify a comparison group for youth EESS participants that had very similar histories of contact with law enforcement.

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V. CONCLUSION

This report describes the services provided by youth life coaching and youth EESS agencies funded through Oakland Unite. In summary, we offer the following key findings:

Youth life coaching key findings

Youth life coaching participants have histories of justice system involvement and experiences with violence. Youth life coaching agencies primarily serve high-risk African American and Hispanic youth with high rates of contact with the juvenile justice system, direct or indirect exposure to violence, and low engagement with school. The life coaching agencies have had success identifying youth for services through close communication with the JJC Transition Center, collaboration with the Alameda County District Attorney’s Office (particularly for identifying CSEC), and most recently, expanded eligibility criteria.

There is a need for improved collaboration between youth life coaching agencies and the Probation Department. Agencies could benefit from improved communication and data sharing with the Alameda County Probation Department. Agency staff reported that a change to the Probation Department’s policies around data sharing has limited the flow of information to life coaching agencies. Giving agencies access to youth’s contact and risk assessment information and increasing communication between agency staff and probation officers could improve the referral process and the effectiveness of service provision.

High cost of living and job-related stress are challenges for agency staff. Most life coaching agencies have experienced staff turnover and report that it is difficult to identify and retain candidates with the right skills, training, and personal background for the position. Agency staff attributed turnover to their inability to match the salaries offered by other organizations, the high cost of living in the Bay Area, and the stressful and dangerous nature of the job. Although staff said they found the burnout training offered by Oakland Unite to be helpful, additional support and time for self-care could help staff cope with burnout.

Many participants leave life coaching services after the first month. Life coaching participants are expected to remain engaged for 12 to 18 months under the program model, but more than a quarter drop out in the first month. At 12 months, only 37 percent of youth continue to receive life coaching services. Attrition is the primary reason why a large number of youth do not receive the intended service dosage. Efforts to increase youth engagement should be focused on the first month, when the largest share of youth leave services.

There is a need for a more unified approach to substance use and abuse. Life coaches find it challenging to stop substance abuse and employ a harm reduction approach to address the problem, which can create tension with other stakeholders in youth’s lives, such as probation officers or EESS agency staff. Life coaches also sometimes feel unequipped to address youth’s more serious trauma and use their discretion to refer participants to therapy or counseling services. Youth-serving strategies may consider developing a more coordinated approach to meeting youth’s substance abuse and mental health needs.

Youth life coaching participants were significantly more likely to be enrolled in school but had similar rates of arrest, conviction, and victimization in the 12 months after starting services as a similar comparison group of youth. Participating in life coaching prevented school dropout. It also reduced the likelihood of arrests for a violent offense, but only in the six months after starting services. Over a longer 12-month follow-up period, participating in life coaching had little impact on contact with law enforcement. Further, life coaching participants who were enrolled in school had high rates of chronic absence and violent school incidents. These findings could partly reflect that youth who participate in life coaching begin services at a particularly high-risk period in their lives (which makes it difficult to match them to a comparable set of youth) and that many do not receive the intended amount of services due to high rates of attrition.

Youth EESS key findings

Many youth EESS participants have disengaged from school, and about 40 percent have had contact with the justice system. Although youth EESS agencies serve a high-risk population, they face fewer challenges than the youth served by life coaching. For instance, youth EESS participants were half as likely to have been arrested before enrollment as youth life coaching participants. Both groups had high chronic absence rates and suspension rates at school, but a greater proportion of youth life coaching participants faced these challenges. Although agencies report that they target youth who meet at least five of the risk factors approved by Oakland Unite, only 33 percent of participants met this requirement, according to Cityspan data.

There is a need for greater coordination between the youth EESS and life coaching sub-strategies around referrals and their approaches to substance abuse. Although the Oakland Unite model intends for the majority of youth EESS referrals to come from life coaches, youth EESS agencies report that most of their referrals have resulted from their own outreach efforts. About one-quarter of youth EESS participants also participated in youth life coaching. Youth EESS agencies have been successful in recruiting participants from other sources, but these youth are not as high risk as life coaching participants. Improved coordination and communication may also help alleviate the tension between the life coaching and EESS approaches to substance abuse and harm reduction.

Because there is no standard youth EESS model, agencies offer a variety of services and programs. Although service models vary across agencies, each agency provides support for hard and soft skill development and addresses individual barriers to employment. Variation across the agencies results in a wider range of service options for youth in Oakland. However, without a standard youth EESS model and clear program requirements, defining successful completion of a youth EESS program can be difficult.

A competitive market for youth EESS staff drives staff turnover. Agencies report that their staff are often sought by other employers in the Bay Area because of their skills, contributing to staff turnover. Staff develop valuable skills and receive on-the-job training at youth EESS agencies, but the agencies cannot always match the salaries offered to their staff by other employers in the

Bay Area, including government employers. To improve staff retention, agencies try to hire former participants, promote internal candidates, and engage in regular hiring cycles.

Youth participation drops between the second and third month of services. Challenges with participant engagement and retention include competing demands on youths' time, including other activities and programs. Staff also report that some participants stop attending the program because they have successfully met their goals—either reenrolling in school or finding a job. Other participants return to the program later on. Although family engagement is not an integral part of the youth EESS agencies' services, agencies might consider ways in which working with families may help improve youth retention and engagement.

Youth EESS participants were significantly more likely to be enrolled in school, but their rates of arrest, conviction, and victimization in the 12 months after starting services were comparable to those of a similar comparison group of youth. Participating in EESS prevented school dropout but had little impact on contact with law enforcement in the short or medium term. Further, youth EESS participants who were enrolled in school had high rates of chronic absence and violent school incidents. These results reflect the average impacts across all participants, which include youth who engaged in services for a short period of time and then disengaged as well as those who completed all program requirements.

Programmatic considerations

Based on these findings, we offer some possible considerations for continuing to improve program services in these sub-strategies:

- 1. Make the first month of youth life coaching more intensive and comprehensive.** The high rate of rearrest among life coaching participants highlights not only the fact that youth life coaching agencies are serving the most high-risk youth in Oakland, but also that serving this population is particularly challenging. Oakland Unite should consider how to bolster initial service delivery to participants in the first weeks of program participation to improve participant engagement beyond the first month and reduce the rate of rearrest. Approaches may include much more intensive contact in the first weeks, a high level of coordination with justice system stakeholders involved in the youth's life (including probation officers and lawyers), and setting very short-term goals with youth to identify their strengths and help them avoid situations that may lead to violence.
- 2. Focus on improving participant connections to school.** Although youth in both strategies are enrolling in school at higher rates than similar youth who did not participate in Oakland Unite, both life coaching and EESS participants continue to have high chronic absence rates following participation in the programs. Addressing barriers to school success is a primary area for Oakland Unite to focus on to strengthen the protective bond between youth and school, help them avoid police contact and delinquent activity during school hours, and support youth to reach the goals they have for their futures. To do this, Oakland Unite could consider convening a working group of youth involved in life coaching, EESS, and/or CSEC to ask about their transition back to school, the barriers they face, and ideas they have to improve their school experiences and those of their peers.

3. **Update data systems to reflect the possible successful exits from programs and reasons for program exits.** As Cityspan is refined, Oakland Unite might consider adding additional fields to record reasons for program exit, as well as reasons that participants come back, and making these fields required. Agencies could also benefit from being able to track participants' progress over time in achieving key milestones. Further, including functionality within the database to allow tracking of participants across agencies would allow Oakland Unite to better understand referrals and sorting across agencies. This information may shed light on primary drivers of attrition for both youth life coaching and EESS agencies.
4. **Amplify efforts to engage trusted members of participants' families and social circles.** Although family members and friends are not a focus of current agency services, Oakland Unite could consider asking agencies to engage these key supports in participants' lives to encourage positive messages and choices and improve participant retention and engagement. Focus groups with family members that will be held this summer as part of the evaluation could offer an opportunity to hear from them about how best to engage families in service provision.
5. **Support agencies to address staff turnover and burnout.** Oakland Unite already offers many opportunities for staff to gather, learn together, and share best practices and challenges. The City could consider ways these training and meeting activities could be strengthened to further support community building among agency staff and provide them with additional benefits to being a part of Oakland Unite. In addition, the City could provide guidance to agencies about pay scales for government and nongovernment employees so agencies can identify areas where they may need to increase compensation to retain employees.

Areas for future research

There are several areas for additional research and analysis that could support the City in understanding and improving program effectiveness in the coming years. The following areas of inquiry will be explored in the upcoming comprehensive evaluation, focused on youth and adult life coaching:

- Explore how impacts may vary for youth who participate in life coaching for longer periods of time or participate in multiple Oakland Unite services.
- Explore measures of socio-emotional function for life coaching participants relative to participants in other strategies to learn whether short-term changes in socio-emotional skills are associated with longer-term changes in other outcomes, such as arrest or victimization.
- Take a deeper dive into the challenges youth life coaching participants face in the months surrounding enrollment, including legal issues, contact with law enforcement, detention in the juvenile justice center, and disengagement from school, and the time trends in their key outcomes.

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GLOSSARY

Case management: Individual service coordination helping people access multiple health care, social work, disability insurance, employment, and law services.

Dosage: The length or frequency of service contacts, such as the number of service hours.

Experimental: A research design that compares outcomes between a program group and a group not participating in the program, where group status is determined by random chance (for example, by a coin flip).

Life coaching: A process for empowering individuals to gain greater awareness of their choices, set goals, and cultivate strong connections to others.

Qualitative research: A research method relying on interviews, focus groups, and observations to draw conclusions about a research question.

Quantitative research: A research method relying on analysis of numeric data, including administrative or survey data, to draw conclusions about a research question.

Quasi-experimental: A research design that compares outcomes between a program group and a group not participating in the program, where group status is not determined by random chance.

Recidivism: A measure of repeat involvement in the criminal or juvenile justice system, such as rearrest, reconviction, or reincarceration.

Risk assessment: A systematic process of evaluating the potential risks that may be involved in an activity or a decision, often used in the criminal and juvenile justice system to assess risk of failure to appear in court or risk of reoffense.

Statistically significant: A description of a quantitative result meaning the likelihood that a relationship between two variables, such as participation in a program and arrest rates, is due to something other than random chance.

Strategies: The primary approaches to violence prevention employed by Oakland Unite, including (1) life coaching, (2) education and economic self-sufficiency, (3) violent incident and crisis response, (4) community asset building, and (5) innovation fund.

Sub-strategies: The specific approaches to violence prevention within the primary strategies. For instance, within the violent incident and crisis response strategy, agencies are funded under five sub-strategies to address distinct sources of violent victimization, exposure, and perpetration: street outreach, shooting response, homicide support network, commercially sexually exploited children intervention, and family violence intervention.

Transitional employment: An employment-based model that provides short-term subsidized employment for individuals to build their experience and skills.

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Appendix A:

Data sources

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This report is based on a mix of qualitative and quantitative analyses of multiple data sources. We discuss both the qualitative and administrative data sources in detail below. All data collection procedures were reviewed and approved by the Health Media Lab Institutional Review Board.

QUALITATIVE DATA

The qualitative component of this report included primary data collection through a participant survey, site visits and interviews with agency staff, and a review of materials provided by Oakland Unite and collected during site visits.

Survey data

The purpose of the survey data collection was to gather information about Oakland Unite directly from strategy participants. The general topics of study included experiences and satisfaction with services, importance of agency characteristics, thoughts about the future, experiences with violence, and demographic characteristics. Before the survey was administered, it was pretested with former Oakland Unite participants in two strategies. The pretest focused on whether respondents understood the questions, whether anything was difficult to answer, and the time required to complete. Based on this pretest, the survey was revised and a final version was translated into Spanish.

Table A.1. Participant survey summary

Sub-strategy	Number of agencies	Number of completed surveys
Youth life coaching	6	63
Youth EESS	4	46

The surveys were fielded with participants at each agency during September and October 2018. Survey administration was typically conducted on two back-to-back days where any Oakland Unite participant who visited that agency on one of the days was asked to complete a survey. Due to the differences in services provided and the number of participants at each agency, some sites delayed the start of data collection or included additional days. Nearly all surveys were conducted using a paper copy of the survey, with 5 percent of respondents electing to use a web version. The survey took approximately 5 minutes to complete. No identifying information was included on the survey, so all responses were anonymous. In total, 109 participants completed a survey across the 10 agencies providing services in the focal strategies (see Table A.1 for survey counts by sub-strategy). Because the number of surveys varied by agency, the responses were weighted proportional to the number of completed surveys at each agency. This means that each agency contributed equally to the sub-strategy averages regardless of the number of participants who completed a survey.

Site visits and interviews

The purpose of the site visits and interviews was to gather information about Oakland Unite strategy implementation from agency staff. The general topics of study included participant engagement, program implementation, program progress and tracking, collaboration networks, and successes and challenges. Site visits took place in July and August 2017 and were followed by telephone interviews in August 2018. During each visit, Mathematica staff conducted semistructured interviews with grantee staff members, including managers and line staff. In total, we conducted 48 interviews at the 10 agencies providing services in the focal strategies, plus the JJC Transition Center (see Table A.2 for interview counts by sub-strategy).

Table A.2. Site visit and interview summary

Sub-strategy	Site visits conducted	Director or program manager interviews	Frontline staff interviews
Youth life coaching	7	15	15
Youth EESS	4	8	10

At each site, we interviewed site directors and/or managers for approximately 45 to 60 minutes. These interviews focused on topics such as defining and reaching the program’s target population, program performance measures, and staffing. We also conducted interviews with frontline staff members at each site. These interviews were typically 30 to 45 minutes and focused on participant engagement, service provision, and program data. For agencies with grants across multiple strategies, we interviewed frontline staff members for each of the strategies.

The interview protocols varied depending on the Oakland Unite sub-strategy. Interviews at all agencies included a set of topics, with questions varying depending on which type of respondent was interviewed. The protocol also included targeted questions about the focal strategies, which asked about best practices specific to each sub-strategy and additional details about services and outcomes. The youth life coaching protocol included questions about implementing the life coaching model, staff workload, and client communication. The youth EESS protocol focused on skills assessment and development, as well as engagement with local employers and schools.

The interviews were semistructured, meaning the evaluation team asked the same questions during each interview, but responses were open-ended and the interviewer had flexibility to probe for details or clarification in the responses. During the site visits, a notetaker recorded responses in a standardized template, which linked the responses to specific interview questions and to broader topics for analysis. The evaluation team analyzed responses across interviewees within the site and across agencies within the same sub-strategy. The goal was to highlight key themes about the implementation of the sub-strategy, as well as identify similarities and differences between agencies.

In addition to the site visits, the evaluation team reviewed materials provided by Oakland Unite staff and collected directly from agencies during the site visits. The documents included the scope of work statement, agency budgets, quarterly reports, and intake forms. We used this information to better understand the types of services offered by each agency, as well as their benchmarks and performance measures.

Although the qualitative data provided a rich source of information about the agencies and the Oakland Unite program, this evaluation approach has some limitations. In particular, the participant surveys were done with a convenience sample of clients who happened to be on-site, or with clients specifically selected for participation by the agency, so their responses may not reflect the experiences of all clients. As with all data from interviews, particularly those including sensitive topics, there is also a potential for social desirability bias, where staff may provide responses that reflect favorably upon themselves. Although we specifically informed each interviewee that their answers would be kept confidential and that there would be no impact on their employment or the agency’s participation in Oakland Unite, respondents may still have felt that negative responses could have repercussions. We designed our site visit procedures to minimize the potential for this bias, including interviewing in private spaces and emphasizing the confidential nature of the research in the consent language, but we cannot rule out the effect of these factors in the results.

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

The quantitative analyses in this report used administrative data from Oakland Unite, OPD, ACPD, OUSD, and ACOE that were linked together (Table A.3).

Table A.3. Administrative data sources

Data source	Total number of individual records retrieved	Date range
Alameda County Office of Education	1,492	August 1, 2014 to June 30, 2018
Alameda County Probation Department	23,377	January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2018
Oakland Unite Cityspan data	8,631	January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2018
Oakland Police Department arrest incidents	76,630	January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2018
Oakland Police Department victimization incidents	392,680	January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2018
Oakland Unified School District	82,028	August 1, 2010 to June 30, 2018

Oakland Unite data

All Oakland Unite agencies are required to maintain administrative records in a common database managed by Cityspan. Agencies use the database to record service contacts and hours, milestones reached, incentives received, referral sources, and demographic and risk information

about each participant. The data extract we received from Cityspan included participants who received services between January 1, 2016, and December 31, 2018. Although some individuals may have begun participating in Oakland Unite in the prior year, we did not have information about services received before January 1, 2016.

Between January 1, 2016, and December 31, 2018, about 90 percent of participants in each sub-strategy consented to share their personal information for evaluation purposes (see Table A.4).⁷ Accordingly, Cityspan did not provide names, dates of birth, or addresses for participants who did not consent. Although nonconsenting participants are included in most descriptive statistics about Oakland Unite, they are excluded from any analyses of outcomes, because the analyses require identifying information so participants can be linked to outside records.

Table A.4. Participant consent rates by sub-strategy

Sub-strategy	Number of participants	Consent rate (%)
Youth EESS	503	92
Youth life coaching	625	87

Source: Oakland Unite administrative data, based on participants who received services between January 1, 2016, and December 31, 2018.

OPD data

OPD provided data on arrests and victimization incidents that occurred between January 1, 2006, and December 31, 2018. The arrest data included information about each arrest incident, including its location, statute code, and Uniform Crime Reporting statute category code, as well as information about the arrestee, including name, date of birth, address, and demographics. The victimization data included similar information for each incident involving a victim of a crime. We used the Uniform Crime Reporting statute categories and statute codes to determine each arrest or victimization incident's type. For example, we classified incidents by whether they involved a gun or other weapon, public order, property, drugs, a violent offense, or a violation of probation. For victimization incidents, we also identified a broader category of violent incidents, including whether they involved homicide, rape, robbery, assault, offenses against the family and children, prostitution, or sex offenses. For arrest or victimization incidents with multiple offenses, we used the most serious offense to determine the severity.

ACPD data

ACPD provided data on state and local Criminal Offender Record Information for individuals age 13 and older served through the Juvenile Division between 2010 and 2019, and records for

⁷ For the impact analysis, we restricted participants to those who received services between January 2016 and May 2017 so that we could examine all outcomes during a 12-month follow-up period (the last available schooling data ended in June 2018). These participants had consent rates similar to those in the longer service period: 91 for youth EESS and 90 percent for youth life coaching

individuals age 18 to 40 served through the Adult Division, including realigned populations, also between 2010 and 2019. The Juvenile Division data files included arrest date and arrested offenses, sustained offenses, disposition, and facility information. These files included juveniles arrested throughout Alameda County, including the City of Oakland. The Adult Division file included only information on sustained offenses for individuals who were on formal probation. The ACPD data was matched to the other data sources using first and last name, date of birth, race and ethnicity, and gender. Mathematica conducted the match on-site at ACPD and removed identifying information from the matched file before conducting the analysis.

OUSD data

OUSD provided data on all individuals enrolled in the district at any point between August 1, 2010, and June 30, 2018. For each academic year, the data included information about the student's school, days enrolled, days absent, days suspended, and academic performance. In addition, the data contained demographic and identifying information about each student.

ACOE data

ACOE provided data on all individuals enrolled in the county's community schools at any point between August 1, 2014, and June 30, 2018. For each academic year, the data included information about the student's days enrolled, days absent, days suspended, and academic performance. In addition, the data contained demographic and identifying information about each student.

Data matching

To conduct the analyses, we needed to link individuals within and across data sets. To conduct these matches, we used an algorithm to assign individuals a unique identifier both within and across data sets. The algorithm used consenting individuals' identifying information, including their first and last name, date of birth, gender, and address, to perform matches. All of these data points did not have to be available or match exactly for records to be matched. Instead, the algorithm was designed to take into account the likelihood that two or more records represented the same person, even if there were minor differences across records (such as in the spelling of names). The algorithm placed the most weight on name and date of birth but also used gender and address, if available. These weights were carefully calibrated to avoid erroneous matches while still allowing flexibility.

There were 9,700 unique Cityspan IDs in the Oakland Unite data. The matching algorithm identified 8,631 individuals, which reflects that a number of people received services from more than one Oakland Unite agency. However, this number may still overcount the unique individuals served by Oakland Unite, because we were only able to identify participants who received services from more than one agency if they consented to sharing their identifying information for evaluation. Of the 8,631 individuals identified in the Oakland Unite data, we matched 1,780 records to OPD arrest data, 1,627 to OPD victimization data, 1,625 to ACPD

data, 1,319 to OUSD data, and 273 to ACOE data; 4,074 did not consent to share their identifying information with evaluators and thus could not be linked to other records.

Data security

Mathematica exercises due care to protect all data provided for this evaluation from unauthorized physical and electronic access. Per our current data-sharing agreements, we do not share identifiable data with Oakland Unite or any other entity. All data are stored in an encrypted project-specific folder in a secure server. Access to this folder is restricted to authorized users through access control lists that require approval from the evaluation's project director. Only staff members needed to complete the evaluation objectives were granted access to the restricted data folder: three researchers (including the project director) and a lead programmer. These staff members have all completed data security training and background checks and are up to date on Mathematica's data storage and security policies.

Appendix B:

Methods and results

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In this appendix, we describe the sample selection, matching, and analysis steps for the impact analyses and present the impact estimates that form the basis of the results summarized in the main text.

Sample selection

We applied a number of sample selection criteria to the Oakland Unite data before matching participants to comparison individuals. First, we restricted the sample to Oakland Unite participants who began receiving services by May 2017 because we wished to examine outcomes in a 12-month follow-up window and outcome data were consistently available only through June 2018 at the time we began the analyses. We then excluded participants who did not consent to share their personally identifiable information for evaluation purposes. Consent rates were 90 percent for both youth life coaching and EESS. We also required participants to meet a minimum service threshold to be included in the analyses. For participants in youth life coaching, the service threshold was 10 hours. Participants in youth EESS needed to have at least 10 hours of nonwork services *or* 40 work hours. Oakland Unite participants also had to have demographic information in order to be matched.

After these restrictions were applied, there were 297 participants in youth life coaching and 209 participants in youth EESS available for matching. For the analyses of school attendance and discipline outcomes specifically, participants further had to be enrolled in school in the outcome period. Under this additional restriction, 195 participants in youth life coaching and 141 participants in youth EESS were available to be matched. Table B.1 describes how each restriction affected the sample sizes, where each row includes a new restriction added to the previous restriction(s) listed.

Table B.1. Summary of Oakland Unite sample size restrictions for the outcomes analyses

	Youth life coaching	Youth EESS
(1) Number of youth who received services by May 2017	411	241
(2) Those in (1) who consented to share data for evaluation	371	218
(3) Those in (1) and (2) who met the minimum service hour threshold	299	209
(4) Those in (1) through (3) who had demographic data (that is, those available for matching)	297	195
(5) Those in (1) through (4) who were enrolled in school in the outcome period (that is, those available for matching for the analysis of schooling outcomes)	195	141

Source: Oakland Unite, ACOE, ACPD, OPD, and OUSD administrative data.

We also applied some criteria to the potential comparison group, drawn from OPD, ACPD, ACOE, and OUSD data, before conducting the matching. First, comparison individuals could not participate in any Oakland Unite sub-strategy during the period available in the Cityspan data

(January 1, 2016, to May 31, 2017). We then restricted the age range of comparison individuals to overlap with the age range of Oakland Unite participants in the relevant sub-strategy. We also restricted the potential comparison group to individuals residing in Oakland to increase the likelihood that any future outcomes would occur in Oakland and thus appear in the available data. In addition, we removed a small number of individuals who were arrested or convicted for homicide or rape in the months leading up to the service window, because they were likely to be incarcerated during the follow-up period. As with Oakland Unite participants, comparison individuals had to have demographic information recorded to be matched.

After these restrictions were applied, there were 29,816 potential comparison individuals for the youth life coaching analysis and 28,138 potential comparison individuals for the youth EESS analysis. For the analyses of school attendance and discipline outcomes, comparison youth also had to be enrolled in school in the outcome period. Under this additional restriction, 16,346 potential comparison individuals were available for the youth life coaching analyses of school attendance and discipline. For the youth EESS analyses of these outcomes, 13,528 potential comparison individuals were available to be matched.

Matching

We matched Oakland Unite participants in each sub-strategy to similar comparison individuals using an approach known as propensity-score matching. For each sub-strategy, we estimated a propensity score for each eligible Oakland Unite participant and comparison individual using a logistic regression model. This propensity score indicates an individual's likelihood of participating in a particular Oakland Unite sub-strategy given his or her gender, ethnicity, age, area of residence, and prior educational and juvenile justice histories before participation in Oakland Unite. Due to the wide range of start dates (spanning 17 months) and the fact that some youth are referred to Oakland Unite shortly after an arrest or other incident, we divided participants into three groups of time frames based on their service start dates, with each time frame being five or six months.⁸ We then generated three sets of covariates for each potential comparison member that measured their baseline data relative to each of these start windows. To find matches with similar patterns of behavior over time, we matched on juvenile justice and education history data in the previous 3, 6, and 12 months from the start month of each window, as well as baseline data before the 12-month baseline period. We then estimated propensity scores separately for each group. Table B.2 lists the variables used to estimate the propensity scores.

⁸ Ideally we would have liked to match Oakland Unite youth separately by each start month to identify comparison youth with the most similar patterns of behavior around the exact same time period. However, monthly sample sizes were too small to reliably predict program participation.

Table B.2. Baseline variables used in the propensity-score models

-
- Demographics (gender, race/ethnicity, age)
 - Area of residence (east Oakland, west Oakland, central Oakland, other)
 - Indicators of whether the individual had been arrested, convicted, incarcerated, in juvenile hall, or monitored with a GPS or electronic tracking device at any time before the start of Oakland Unite services, as well as in the 3, 6, and 12 months before the start of services. Arrests and convictions were counted both overall and by type of offense (felony, misdemeanor, gun, violent, violation of probation, and other offenses)
 - Categories of the number of arrests, convictions, and times in juvenile hall in the 3, 6, and 12 months before the start of Oakland Unite services
 - Indicators of whether the individual had been a victim of any crime or a violent crime specifically any time before the start of Oakland Unite services, as well as in the 3, 6, and 12 months before the start of services
 - Categories of the number of times the individual had been a victim of any crime in the 12 months before the start of Oakland Unite services
 - Indicators of whether the individual was enrolled in OUSD or ACOE before 2015 and in the year before the start of Oakland Unite services, as well as whether they were enrolled in an alternative school during these periods
 - School attendance rate before 2015 and in the year before the start of Oakland Unite services (if enrolled in school)^a
 - Indicators of whether the individual was chronically absent, suspended, involved in a school discipline incident, involved in a violent school incident, or had a GPA below 2.0 before 2015 and in the year before the start of Oakland Unite services (if enrolled in school)^a
 - Categories of the number of school discipline incidents in the 12 months before the start of Oakland Unite services^a
 - Interactions of whether the individual was African American and various demographic, justice, and education variables
-

Note: The covariates used to estimate the propensity scores were generally the same for all groups and sub-strategies. However, in some instances we modified this list and constructed different interactions to achieve better matching results.

^a For individuals who were not enrolled in school during the baseline periods, we imputed all education-related baseline data to zero and controlled for an enrollment indicator in the matching.

After estimating these propensity scores, we matched each Oakland Unite participant with up to 20 comparison individuals for youth life coaching and up to 25 comparison individuals for youth EESS who had similar propensity scores within a given threshold, or radius, of the Oakland Unite participant's propensity score. After conducting the match, we recalculated baseline measures for each participant and all of his or her matched comparison individuals to align with that participant's start month (rather than the longer start window used in the matching). Using these realigned data, we then combined all participants and their matches and reassessed the quality of the baseline match for the combined treatment and comparison groups.

A small number of Oakland Unite participants did not resemble any comparison individuals closely enough and therefore were not matched. Of the 297 participants in the youth life coaching sample, 260 were matched to an average of 18 comparison individuals each. In youth

EESS, 179 out of 195 participants received matches (19 each, on average).⁹ We matched comparison individuals to Oakland Unite participants with replacement, meaning that the same comparison individual could be matched to more than one Oakland Unite participant. Table B.3 presents summary statistics showing how well Oakland Unite participants were matched to comparison individuals on baseline characteristics. On average, comparison individuals were not significantly different from Oakland Unite participants in either sub-strategy on most of the baseline characteristics used in the analyses. However, youth in the life coaching sub-strategy were more likely than the matched comparison group to have contact with law enforcement in the 3 and 6 months before the start of services. Unfortunately, we were unable to identify a comparison group for the youth life coaching sub-strategy that had the same juvenile justice experiences in that exact time period. Thus, we control for the timing of youth’s juvenile justice histories in the regression model described below.

Table B.3. Baseline characteristics of matched Oakland Unite participants and comparison youth

	Youth life coaching	Matched comparison	Youth EESS	Matched comparison
Total number of arrests 3 months before OU (mean)	0.72**	0.47	13.4	13.6
Any arrest 3 months before OU (%)	44.2**	29.8	10.6	10.4
Any gun offenses 3 months before OU (%)	17.7*	10.2	3.9	2.7
Any violent offenses 3 months before OU (%)	10.8	7.0	2.2	1.6
Any new conviction 3 months before OU (%)	25.8**	15.6	3.9	3.6
Any probation 3 months before OU (%)	20.8**	10.4	1.7	2.2
Any violation of probation 3 months before OU (%)	16.9**	8.0	2.2	2.2
Ever a victim of violent incident 3 months before OU (%)	7.3	3.8	3.9	2.4
Any juvenile hall 3 months before OU (%)	35.0**	20.4	6.1	6.5
Total number of arrests 6 months before OU (mean)	0.9	0.7	0.2	0.2
Any arrest 6 months before OU (%)	51.2	43.2	15.6	14.0
Any gun offenses 6 months before OU (%)	20.4	15.4	6.7	3.7

⁹ Fifty-nine percent of youth life coaching participants received the maximum number of allowable matches (25), whereas about one quarter matched with 10 or fewer comparison individuals. Meanwhile, 90 percent of youth EESS participants matched with the maximum number of allowable matches (20), whereas the remaining 10 percent matched with between 1 and 13 comparison individuals.

	Youth life coaching	Matched comparison	Youth EESS	Matched comparison
Any violent offenses 6 months before OU (%)	11.5	9.9	3.9	2.3
Any new conviction 6 months before OU (%)	29.2	22.0	5.0	4.8
Any probation 6 months before OU (%)	25.4**	14.4	5.0	3.1
Any violation of probation 6 months before OU (%)	20.0**	10.8	2.2	2.7
Ever a victim of violent incident 6 months before OU (%)	9.6	6.1	5.0	3.9
Any stay in juvenile hall 6 months before OU (%)	39.2*	28.3	7.8	9.6
Total number of arrests 12 months before OU (mean)	1.4	1.3	0.4	0.4
Any arrest 12 months before OU (%)	66.2	62.4	24.6	24.4
Any gun offenses 12 months before OU (%)	29.6	26.3	9.5	9.2
Any violent offenses 12 months before OU (%)	15.0	15.8	5.0	4.6
Any new conviction 12 months before OU (%)	42.7	36.0	10.1	8.3
Any probation 12 months before OU (%)	32.3	26.3	8.9	7.1
Any violation of probation 12 months before OU (%)	25.0	18.9	3.4	3.6
Ever a victim of violent incident 12 months before OU (%)	15.8	11.3	7.3	7.4
Any stay in juvenile hall 12 months before OU (%)	50.8	43.7	13.4	16.0
Total number of arrests before OU (mean)	2.9	3.1	1.1	1.1
Any arrest any time before OU (%)	84.6	82.2	46.4	46.5
Any gun offenses any time before OU (%)	45.0	42.4	17.3	18.1
Any violent offenses any time before OU (%)	25.4	25.6	8.9	8.8
Any new conviction any time before OU (%)	55.8	50.0	20.7	21.6
Any probation any time before OU (%)	43.8	41.5	16.2	18.2
Any violation of probation any time before OU (%)	33.8	30.0	8.9	6.6
Ever a victim of violent incident any time before OU (%)	40.4	37.9	26.3	26.5
Any stay juvenile hall any time before OU (%)	60.0	52.7	22.9	24.4

	Youth life coaching	Matched comparison	Youth EESS	Matched comparison
Enrolled in OUSD or ACOE 12 months before OU (%)	77.3	73.6	74.9	72.5
Enrolled in an alternative school 12 months before OU (%)	8.8	11.1	5.6	7.0
Chronically absent in the 12 months before OU (%)	40.1	40.7	13.6	20.8
Any violent school incidents 12 months before OU (%)	15.8	14.5	10.1	10.5
Female (%)	27.7	25.6	38.0	33.6
White (%)	0.4	0.8	1.1	0.7
African American (%)	68.8	69.8	79.3	79.8
Asian or Pacific Islander (%)	4.2	3.6	1.7	2.1
Hispanic (%)	20.8	21.4	11.7	12.3
Other race/ethnicity (%)	5.8	4.4	6.1	4.8
Age (mean)	15.6	15.7	15.9	15.9
Resides in west Oakland (%)	23.1	21.6	21.2	20.7
Resides in central Oakland (%)	25.8	26.0	25.7	24.8
Resides in east Oakland (%)	47.3	48.2	44.1	46.8
Other area of residence (%)	3.8	4.1	8.9	7.7
Number of individuals	260	3,878	179	3,317

Source: Oakland Unite, ACOE, ACPD, OPD, and OUSD administrative data.

*Difference is statistically significant at the 5 percent level.

**Difference is statistically significant at the 1 percent level.

To analyze school attendance and discipline outcomes, we repeated the process described above on a subset of treatment and comparison youth who were enrolled in school in the 12-month outcome period. To account for additional educational background characteristics, we also matched on student's grade in the baseline year, free and reduced-priced school lunch recipient status, special education status, English language learner status, total credits earned in the baseline year, whether the student transferred schools in the past, and whether the student was behind the expected grade level for his or her age. The summary statistics for this match are presented in Table B.4. Of the 195 participants in the youth life coaching sample who were enrolled in school in the outcome period, 114 were matched to an average of 15 comparison

individuals each. For youth EESS, 113 out of 141 participants received matches (23 each, on average).¹⁰

Table B.4. Baseline characteristics of matched Oakland Unite participants and comparison youth, for those enrolled in school in the outcome period

	Youth life coaching	Matched comparison	Youth EESS	Matched comparison
Enrolled in OUSD or ACOE 12 months before OU (%)	89.9	86.9	89.3	88.7
Enrolled in an alternative school 12 months before OU (%)	3.7	6.3	4.5	5.0
Attendance rate 12 months before OU (mean)	87.3	86.0	94.2	94.1
Chronically absent in the 12 months before OU (%)	35.7	39.6	13.2	15.4
Any violent school incidents 12 months before OU (%)	22.0	24.4	13.4	14.9
Any school incidents 12 months before OU (%)	45.0	42.0	38.4	39.6
Any suspensions 12 months before OU (%)	25.7	19.7	17.9	17.3
GPA 12 months before OU (mean)	1.3	1.4	1.6	1.6
GPA less than 2.0 12 months before OU (%)	85.7	81.3	74.7	76.6
Transferred or left school 12 months before OU (%)	75.2	68.9	51.4	50.1
Ever special education (%)	35.8	37.4	24.1	24.7
English language learner before 2015 (%)	13.8	12.2	11.6	12.2
Behind expected grade level (%)	6.4	5.0	6.3	6.7
Ever free or reduced price lunch recipient (%)	92.7*	83.6	92.9	93.1
Any arrest 12 months before OU (%)	54.1	50.4	24.1	23.5
Any new conviction 12 months before OU (%)	33.0	30.1	8.9	9.8
Ever a victim of a violent incident 12 months before OU (%)	18.3	12.1	8.0	10.5
Female (%)	22.9	19.8	36.6	36.3
African American (%)	70.6	71.8	77.7	75.3

¹⁰ We matched each Oakland Unite participant enrolled in school with up to 25 comparison individuals for youth life coaching and 30 comparison individuals for youth EESS who were also enrolled in school in the outcome period.

	Youth life coaching	Matched comparison	Youth EESS	Matched comparison
Asian or Pacific Islander (%)	0.9	1.2	1.8	2.1
Hispanic (%)	23.9	20.7	14.3	15.7
Other race/ethnicity (%)	4.6	6.3	6.3	6.7
Age (mean)	15.2	15.5	15.6	15.8
Resides in west Oakland (%)	21.1	21.3	21.4	21.7
Resides in central Oakland (%)	23.9	29.0	21.4	20.9
Resides in east Oakland (%)	50.5	46.0	50.0	50.8
Other area of residence (%)	4.6	3.7	7.1	6.6
Number of individuals	109	1,263	112	2,409

Source: Oakland Unite, ACOE, ACPD, OPD, and OUSD administrative data.

*Difference is statistically significant at the 5 percent level.

Impact model

After conducting the match, we analyzed outcomes in the 12-month period after participants began Oakland Unite services. Participants began receiving services between January 2016 and May 2017 and therefore had different follow-up periods. Follow-up periods ranged from February 2016–January 2017 (for youth who began services in January 2016) through June 2017–May 2018 (for youth who began services in May 2017).¹¹ The follow-up periods of comparison individuals corresponded to the same follow-up periods of the Oakland Unite participants to which they were matched. In these follow-up periods, we determined whether individuals had any of the outcomes listed in Table II.2 in the main text. With input from the Human Services Department, we classified outcomes as either confirmatory—indicating the main outcomes used to assess these sub-strategies’ effectiveness—or exploratory, indicating additional outcomes that could shed light on these main impacts. As an additional exploratory analysis, we examined short-term arrest, victimization, and recidivism outcomes in a 6-month, rather than 12-month, window after the start of services, following the same procedure as described below for 12-month outcomes.

To measure the impacts of participating in youth life coaching and youth EESS on these outcomes, we estimated an ordinary least squares regression model that accounted for any remaining differences between Oakland Unite and comparison individuals in their juvenile justice and educational histories and other baseline characteristics:

¹¹ Some youth who received services in the early months of 2016 had begun participating in Oakland Unite in the previous year. However, we did not have information about services received before January 1, 2016 for this report.

$$(B1) \quad y_i = \alpha + X_i\beta + \delta T_i + \varepsilon_i,$$

where y_i is a 12-month outcome; X_i is a vector of baseline characteristics for individual i accounting for their demographic, educational, and juvenile justice histories that takes into account the timing of incidents relative to the start of services¹²; T_i is the treatment status, indicating whether individual i participated in the Oakland Unite sub-strategy of interest; ε_i is a random error term that reflects the influence of unobserved factors on the outcome; and δ and β are parameters or vectors of parameters to be estimated, with δ representing the impact of participating in Oakland Unite. We used a weighting scheme in which each Oakland Unite participant had a weight of one, and the total weight of each participant's matched comparison individuals also summed to one. To accomplish this, each comparison individual had a weight inverse to the number of other comparison individuals matched to the same Oakland Unite participant. The standard errors were clustered at the individual level to account for the fact that the same comparison individual could appear multiple times in the data depending on the number of Oakland Unite participants to which they were matched.

Results

Table B.5 presents the impact estimates for each sub-strategy and 12-month outcome in percentage point units. As discussed in the main text, youth life coaching and youth EESS participants were significantly more likely to be enrolled in school in the 12 months after starting services, but had rates of arrest, conviction, and victimization comparable to those of a similar comparison group of youth during this follow-up period. (The impact estimates presented in the main text were rounded to whole numbers.) The impact estimates for other 12-month outcomes were small and not statistically significant in either sub-strategy. Similarly, most of the impacts on 6-month outcomes (presented in Table B.6) were not statistically significant, with the exception of a reduction in the likelihood of arrests for violent offenses for youth life coaching.

¹² To better account for the timing of juvenile justice incidents in the months leading up to the start month, we additionally controlled for incidents that occurred in the 12 months before the start month by dividing them into 3-month windows.

Table B.5. Impacts of Oakland Unite in the 12 months after enrollment (percentage points)

Impact of Oakland Unite on the probability of:	Youth life coaching		Youth EESS	
	Impact	Sample size	Impact	Sample size
Confirmatory outcomes				
An arrest for any offense in Alameda County	0.3 (3.5)	4,138	2.3 (2.9)	3,496
Any delinquent finding or conviction in Alameda County	-1.9 (3.1)	4,138	2.3 (2.0)	3,496
Being a victim of any violent crime reported to OPD	4.4 (2.5)	4,138	3.8 (2.5)	3,496
Enrolling in an OUSD or ACOE school	16.5** (3.6)	4,138	17.7** (3.3)	3,496
Enrolling in an OUSD or ACOE school, school-aged youth only	15.4** (4.0)	3,263	13.2** (3.5)	2,764
If enrolled in school, being chronically absent	-2.2 (5.2)	1,274	-5.1 (5.0)	2,229
If enrolled in school, having a recorded violent school incident	-4.4 (3.6)	1,275	-3.3 (3.1)	2,231
Exploratory outcomes				
An arrest for an offense involving a gun in Alameda County	2.5 (2.7)	4,138	1.7 (2.3)	3,496
An arrest for a violent offense in Alameda County	-2.8 (2.1)	4,138	0.1 (1.5)	3,496
Being sentenced to formal probation supervision in Alameda County	1.7 (3.1)	4,138	0.9 (1.7)	3,496
Violating probation in Alameda County	0.2 (2.8)	4,138	2.1 (1.5)	3,496

Source: Oakland Unite, ACOE, ACPD, OPD, and OUSD administrative data.

Note: The sample sizes include the total number of Oakland Unite participants and matched comparison youth. Standard errors appear below the impact estimates in parentheses. Impacts and standard errors are presented in percentage points. A negative number indicates that Oakland Unite participants had a lower rate than the comparison group.

**Impact is statistically significant at the 1 percent level.

Table B.6. Impacts of Oakland Unite in the 6 months after enrollment (percentage points)

Impact of Oakland Unite on the probability of:	Youth life coaching		Youth EESS	
	Impact	Sample size	Impact	Sample size
Confirmatory outcomes				
An arrest for any offense in Alameda County	1.3 (3.2)	4,138	1.0 (2.6)	3,496
Any delinquent finding or conviction in Alameda County	-3.0 (2.6)	4,138	0.0 (1.4)	3,496
Being a victim of any violent crime reported to OPD	2.1 (1.5)	4,138	0.4* (2.0)	3,496
If enrolled in school, having a recorded violent school incident	0.8 (2.0)	1,275	-2.4 (1.3)	2,231
Exploratory outcomes				
An arrest for an offense involving a gun in Alameda County	1.1 (2.2)	4,138	0.7 (1.9)	3,496
An arrest for a violent offense in Alameda County	-3.3* (1.6)	4,138	-0.2 (1.2)	3,496
Being sentenced to formal probation supervision in Alameda County	2.0 (2.8)	4,138	-1.0 (1.0)	3,496
Violating probation in Alameda County	-0.3 (2.5)	4,138	-0.6 (1.1)	3,496

Source: Oakland Unite, ACOE, ACPD, OPD, and OUSD administrative data.

Note: The sample sizes include the total number of Oakland Unite participants and matched comparison youth. Standard errors appear below the impact estimates in parentheses. Impacts and standard errors are presented in percentage points. A negative number indicates that Oakland Unite participants had a lower rate than the comparison group.

*Impact is statistically significant at the 5 percent level.

To illustrate these impacts relative to the matched comparison group in the report, we calculated the percentage of Oakland Unite participants with each outcome and then subtracted the impact estimates from this rate to obtain a counterfactual rate for the comparison group. These regression-adjusted rates are presented in Figures III.7 and III.8 for youth life coaching and Figures IV.8 and IV.9 for youth EESS in the main text.

To check the sensitivity of the results to our choice of a linear probability (ordinary least squares) model, we also estimated a logistic regression model. A logistic regression models a linear relationship between the log of the odds of the outcome and the dependent variables, whereas an ordinary least squares regression models a linear relationship between the probability of the outcome and the dependent variables. The results (not shown) were consistent with those obtained from the linear probability model.

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Appendix C:

Evidence-based programs and best practices

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YOUTH LIFE COACHING

Although many different types of programs target youth who have been involved in the juvenile justice system, these programs tend to have minimal impact on recidivism. In a meta-analysis of 22 studies of reentry and aftercare programs for juvenile and young adult offenders, James et al. (2013) examined experimental and quasi-experimental evaluations of therapeutically oriented programs that included skills training, counseling, and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). Overall, these programs achieved small reductions in recidivism (as measured by rearrests or reconvications), although impacts varied across programs. More-effective programs were implemented at an individual rather than group level, were more intensive in terms of number of contacts per month although not necessarily longer in duration, and were targeted toward older youth and those at the highest risk of recidivism.¹³

A number of community-based programs targeting youth at risk of involvement in violence have been effective. An example is Roca, a Massachusetts-based program that works with high-risk men ages 17 to 24. Roca staff provide intensive case management, a CBT-based curriculum, and education and employment support through stage-based programming over a four-year period (Baldwin et al. 2018). In the first six months, staff focus on building meaningful, trusting relationships with participants. In the next 18 months, staff increase the dosage of programming and focus on building the skills and competencies participants need to meet their goals. In the last two years, staff follow up with participants and offer support in critical moments. Relative to a comparison group of system-involved young men, Roca participants demonstrated a 65 percent reduction in recidivism (Schiraldi et al. 2015).

Another successful community-based program is the Safe and Successful Youth Initiative (SSYI), which operates in 11 cities in Massachusetts. SSYI serves male youth ages 14 to 24 at risk of being involved in firearms violence, based on local police data.¹⁴ Street outreach workers engage these young men and use a comprehensive case management approach to assess their needs and connect them to other supports, including education, employment, and intensive supervision. Quasi-experimental studies of SSYI found that the program reduced violence both at the individual level and citywide. Participants were 58 percent less likely to be incarcerated in the two years after starting services than a matched comparison group (Petrosino et al. 2014). In addition, the program decreased the number of victims of violence ages 14 to 24 by about five victims per month per 100,000 residents, compared to other cities in Massachusetts with similar previous trends in violent crime that did not receive SSYI funding (Bradham et al. 2014).

¹³ The authors of the meta-analysis categorized the risk levels of the study samples using the available sample characteristics, including age of first arrest, number of prior offenses, proportion ethnic minority, gang involvement, and drug abuse.

¹⁴ Youth were deemed to be at risk if they met one or more of the following characteristics: committed a violent crime using a gun or knife, was victimized by violent crime and prone to retaliation, or was a known gang member.

In Chicago, the Becoming a Man curriculum, which incorporates many elements of CBT, as well as role playing and experiential activities, has been administered in school and detention center settings to youth at risk of experiencing or participating in violence. Experimental studies of these interventions found large decreases in arrests and recidivism for participants (Heller, Pollack, et al. 2017).

Juvenile mentoring is another common type of program for high-risk youth, although evidence about its effectiveness is mixed. One meta-analysis of 46 experimental or quasi-experimental studies of youth mentoring programs found that, overall, these programs reduced delinquency, aggression, and drug use and improved academic performance (Tolan et al. 2014). However, impacts varied across programs and were greater when mentors actively advocated for their mentee through the multiple systems and situations they needed to navigate, and paired this advocacy with emotional support and trust building. Other research has yielded less definitive results. An evaluation of six mentoring programs in Ohio that targeted juvenile offenders either on parole or probation found no significant differences in recidivism rates for participants (Duriez et al. 2017). Another meta-analysis found that there was not sufficient evidence to determine the effectiveness of mentoring on delinquency-related outcomes (Eddy and Schumer 2016).

The Arches Transformative Mentoring program, which is administered by the New York City Department of Probation, is an example of a promising mentoring intervention for justice-involved youth. Arches provides group mentoring to youth ages 16 to 24 who are on probation using an interactive journaling curriculum based on CBT principles and delivered by mentors with backgrounds similar to those of the youth in the program. Participants typically take 6 to 12 months to complete the program. Compared to a matched comparison group, Arches participants were less likely to have a felony reconviction within 12 months (1.8 to 5.9 percent) and 24 months (6.2 to 14.3 percent) of beginning probation (Lynch et al. 2018). The program was particularly successful for participants age 17 and younger, and had limited impacts on rearrests and reconvictions for any offense.

These and other studies have identified a number of best practices for programs serving high-risk and justice-involved youth.

Target youth at highest risk and assess their risk and needs before beginning programming.

Several studies and policy briefs have concurred that programs have the most success when they target youth at highest risk (James et al. 2013; Howell and Lipsey 2012; Campie et al. 2013, Jannetta and Okeke 2017; Landenberger and Lipsey 2005). The National Institute of Corrections, Crime, and Justice’s Integrated Model for Implementation of Evidence-Based Policy recommended that programs use risk and needs assessments to tailor their services and determine the necessary dosage of treatment (Guevera and Solomon 2009).

Integrate CBT and other behavioral approaches, as well as mental health and substance abuse treatment.

Several meta-analyses have identified cognitive behavioral programs as a particularly effective intervention for reducing the recidivism of juvenile and adult offenders (Pearson et al. 2002; Wilson et al. 2005; Landenberger and Lipsey 2005). Strategies related particularly to anger

management and interpersonal conflict have demonstrated the strongest results (Landenberger and Lipsey 2005). The Council of State Governments Justice Center (2017) recommends both CBT and substance use and mental health treatment as best practices for reducing recidivism among young adults in the justice system because substance use and mental health conditions often emerge during this stage of development.

Hire individuals with a range of expertise and backgrounds and provide them with necessary training. Many successful programs—such as SSYI, CureViolence, Roca, and Arches—rely on staff who are local to the community or share similar backgrounds as the youth they serve to break down barriers with participants. Baldwin et al. (2018) found that successful programs do not need staff members to be highly educated. For example, Roca adapted its CBT intervention so that it could be delivered by paraprofessionals and provided them with the necessary training. Other training topics that could help staff deliver services include youth development and trauma-informed approaches (Council of State Governments Justice Center 2017).

Involve family members or other caring adults in youth’s lives in service provision. The Justice Department’s survey of programs serving justice-involved youth found that involving families is central to program success (Hayek 2016). In cases where a program is unable to engage with family members, either because the parent or guardian is absent or the relationship is dysfunctional, the program tries to connect youth with another caring adult who is committed to their success. Some evidence-based programs for justice-involved youth, such as Functional Family Therapy, focus specifically on repairing both individual behavior and familial relations (Henggeler and Schoenwald 2011).

Coordinate and collaborate with other providers working with youth. Programs should facilitate coordination and collaboration across other agencies, benefit providers, and government entities (Campie 2013; Council of State Governments Justice Center 2015; Jannetta and Okeke 2017). Many high-risk youth must navigate multiple systems and services, including those from which they are transitioning due to their age. Helping consolidate and smooth this complex and often fragmented network of services can be beneficial to participants. Partner organizations can also work together to share information and data.

Best practices recommended by the City of Oakland

Consistent with the evidence base, the City requires that agencies funded by Oakland Unite employ a defined set of best practices in their service delivery. The City’s defined best practices for the life coaching strategy are detailed in Table C.1.

Table C.1. Oakland Unite best practices for youth life coaching

Category	Recommended best practices
Shared experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life coaches share similar life experience or are otherwise intimately connected to the communities from which participants are drawn.
Dosage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services are intensive, with low caseloads (15:1), high-frequency contacts, and service periods of 12 to 18 months, adapted on the basis of risk.
Outreach and flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent, persistent efforts are made to engage referred participants in services, including home visits and follow-up with those who have refused services, to reoffer support. Life coaches are responsive and strive to offer flexible availability to meet participants' emergency needs.
Family involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coaches get to know the families and loved ones of participants and involve them in planning and service provision.
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services include the use of an assessment tool (ideally one that is validated) or method to determine risks, particularly around violence, strengths, and needs of participants.
Focus on safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services respond to immediate safety concerns and risks for violence by connecting to conflict mediation, discussing harm reduction, securing temporary emergency relocation services, etc.
Planning and follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services include a comprehensive, individualized service plan based upon assessment information, developed in partnership with the participant and in coordination with other involved parties. Services include regular follow-up guided by the service plan that is jointly reviewed and updated.
Linkage and advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants and family members are referred to appropriate services to address identified needs, such as education, employment, mental health, substance use, legal aid, housing, and transportation. Coaches intercede on behalf of participants and their family members to ensure services are equitable and appropriate.
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coaches maintain organized case files and consistent, high quality documentation of case notes and milestones in a database, according to shared standards of practice.

Source: Oakland Unite January through June 2018 funding cycle request for proposals.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION SUPPORT

Research on the effectiveness of youth employment and education support programs has yielded mixed results. A review of the research literature on youth vocational training and employment programs by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2010) concluded that most of the programs evaluated had either negligible or mixed success, improving some but not all relevant outcomes for youth. However, the review also noted that much of the existing research is not rigorous or examines outcomes in follow-up periods that may be too short. Some of the best-known studies in this field, which overcome both of these limitations, are of Job Corps and YouthBuild, two nationwide programs for young adults ages 16 to 24 who are disconnected from school and work.¹⁵ These programs showed positive effects, particularly in the area of education and training. Their impacts on employment, earnings, and criminal justice involvement were smaller and less consistent.

Job Corps provides remedial education, GED preparation, vocational training, job placement assistance, and other supports such as health care and meals, and most participants live on-site during the program. Participants typically receive more than 1,000 hours of education and training over eight months. Job Corps improved educational attainment, employment, and earnings and reduced criminal activity over a four-year follow-up period (Schochet et al. 2008). Participants were 21 percentage points more likely to obtain a GED certificate and 31 percentage points more likely to obtain a vocational, technical, or trade certificate than the control group. Also, the Job Corps program increased employment rates by 2 percentage points, but gains in earnings faded over time. Compared to the control group, participants were less likely to be arrested (29 to 33 percent), convicted (22 to 25 percent), and incarcerated (16 to 18 percent). These reductions were largest in the first year after random assignment and for less serious crimes. Although Job Corps was generally effective, the impacts were considered small relative to the cost per participant, which was about \$16,500 in 1995.

YouthBuild provides participants vocational training (usually in the area of construction), educational services, leadership development, and other supports such as case management, life-skills training, and stipends. Youth typically participate for 6 to 12 months. YouthBuild improved educational attainment, but the program had limited effects on other outcomes (Miller et al. 2016). Thirty months after random assignment, YouthBuild participants were 14 percentage points more likely to earn a GED, 2 percentage points more likely to receive a trade license or training certificate, and had slightly higher earnings than the control group. However, there was no difference in program participants' employment, arrest, or conviction rates. The study also examined measures of youth development and attitudes, and found that YouthBuild increased civic engagement but had no effect on measures such as self-esteem, self-confidence, feelings about the future, and feelings of social support.

¹⁵ About 27 percent of Job Corps and 25 percent of YouthBuild participants reported being arrested before starting the programs (Schochet et al. 2008; Miller et al. 2016). In contrast, 32 percent of Oakland Unite youth EESS participants had been arrested by OPD at baseline.

Many employment and education support programs for high-risk youth tend to be local and less intensive than Job Corps and YouthBuild. Rigorous evaluations of these programs are not widespread, but existing research tends to find mixed results (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention 2010). One example of a promising local program is in King County, Washington, where juvenile offenders with moderate to high risk of reoffending received education and employment training. The program, which cost about \$2,800 per participant in 2012, offered a total of 150 work hours, job readiness training, job placement services, and support reenrolling in school or obtaining a GED. On average, youth participated for 6 months. Relative to a matched comparison group, the program reduced recidivism rates in the 18 months after program start by 12 percentage points (39 percent to 51 percent), as measured by any misdemeanor or felony conviction (Washington State Institute for Public Policy 2015). There were no differences in felony or violent felony convictions.

Positive effects of employment and education programs can fade over longer follow-up periods. This phenomenon is illustrated by an evaluation of the New York Young Adult Internship Program (YAIP), which offers subsidized employment and support to youth ages 16 to 24 who are disconnected from school and work (Cummings et al. 2018).¹⁶ A randomized study found that after one year, YAIP more than doubled earnings and increased employment by almost 30 percentage points. However, those benefits did not persist over time. After 30 months, there was no difference in the education, employment, or earnings outcomes of participants compared to the control group. YAIP cost \$5,431 per participant in 2016, and offered a 10- to 12-week paid internship, job-readiness training, individual counseling and case management, and follow-up services. Summer youth employment programs, which provide short-term summer jobs to high school students, are available in many cities across the country. An experimental evaluation of summer jobs program in Chicago, which included a job for 8 weeks at minimum wage, a mentor, and some elements of CBT, found large differences in arrests for violent crimes between treatment and control group members in the first year following the program (Heller, Pollack, et al. 2017). However, the difference in violent arrests did not persist into the second year following the program, and the study found no differences in total arrests or arrests for property, drug, or other crimes, and no difference in employment.

A number of best practices has emerged for education and employment programs, though few have been rigorously evaluated. Many of these best practices align with those recommended by Oakland Unite.

Provide comprehensive, coordinated wraparound services to better serve high-risk youth. The State Council of Governments Justice Center (2017) concluded that programs with a narrow focus, such as employment and education only, are less likely to improve outcomes for justice-involved young adults, who tend to have multiple needs for support. Programs should be encouraged to provide wraparound services beyond their focus on vocational training and job placement, and to prioritize collaboration between the stakeholders surrounding each participant

¹⁶ About 26 percent of YAIP participants had been arrested before starting the program.

(Task Force on Employment and Training for Court-Involved Youth 2000; Christman et al. 2016).

Take a long-term approach to services. The Promising and Effective Practices Network (PEPNet), a group that identified promising initiatives in connecting juvenile offenders to education and employment, found that successful programs included at least 12 months of support (O’Sullivan et al. 2001). The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2010) also found that short-term summer career development programs had few positive outcomes for youth.

Uphold participant accountability, but be prepared to deal with setbacks. O’Sullivan et al. (2001) reported that promising PEPNet programs upheld high expectations surrounding attendance, drug testing, and other benchmarks, promoting positive youth development while stressing young people’s strengths and assets. However, programs should also be prepared to deal with challenges, barriers, and relapses that may arise (Schiraldi et al. 2015). In particular, participants should be allowed to exit and return as needed if they are not yet ready to fully engage in programming (Council of State Governments Justice Center 2017).

Develop strategic partnerships with employers. Greater success is found when there are established partnerships with employers that ensure a positive work experience for participants (O’Sullivan et al. 2001). In particular, the National Employment Law Project (Christman et al. 2016) found that partnerships with smaller- to mid-sized community-based employers are more successful than those with larger companies that are less likely to hold a stake in the surrounding area. Social enterprises can also allow young people to gain work experience while embedded in a supportive, community-based environment (Hayek 2016). Finally, programs can take advantage of government contracts, local industry partnerships, and other initiatives to increase access to subsidized employment for participants (Christman et al. 2016).

Tailor job and school placements to participants’ characteristics and needs. Given the at-risk nature of the populations served, programs should carefully address the issue of participants’ criminal records and focus on the training they have received when working with potential employment partners (Juvenile Sanctions Center 2005). A focus on strategic placement is essential in the realm of education as well because success is more likely when placement into schools is not automatic and programs take into account each participant’s background and needs (National Juvenile Justice Network 2016).

Offer financial incentives to participants to promote success. The Juvenile Sanctions Center (2005) recognizes incentives and subsidies for participants are central to promoting job retention. In one model, programs set up so-called trust accounts for participants, paying them to stay in the program but deferring that payment until they have obtained and retained employment for a specific period. In an environmental scan of programs serving justice-involved young adults, Hayek (2016) also found that incentives can be useful for motivating participants.

Best practices recommended by the City of Oakland

Consistent with the evidence base, the City requires that agencies funded by Oakland Unite employ a defined set of best practices in their service delivery. The City’s defined best practices for the employment and education support strategy are detailed in Table C.2.

Table C.2. Oakland Unite best practices recommended for youth EESS

Category	Recommended best practices
Participant engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop deep levels of participant engagement through consistent relationship-building and mentoring that focus on pro-work behaviors and attitudes.
Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess job readiness needs and barriers and develop job placements that anticipate challenges and obstacles to employment.
Connections with Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop connections with employers and use those connections to leverage resources such as training, wages, and operational needs.
Academic Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support academic development (through program design or formal partnerships) and ensure work activities do not conflict with school.
Job readiness training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote job readiness, including motivation, soft skills, and hard skills. Address non-skill-related barriers to employment, including with other community-based programs to provide access to concrete supports. Help clients increase their social capital through participation in social activities where working people congregate.
Employment services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer transitional job placement, which is usually temporary, subsidized, income- and skill-generating, and often combined with other financial incentives. Offer learning work environments, such as internships or on-the-job experience. Focus on finding and retaining employment, including career planning, job coaching, connecting to work opportunities, and development of retention plans.
Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incentivize educational attainment and provide funds to support job readiness and retention (travel, attire, tools, and certification).
Follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide comprehensive follow-up with participants, families, and employers to address any issues quickly and celebrate success.

Source: Oakland Unite, January through June 2018 funding cycle request for proposals.

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