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# Summer Youth Employment Program

## New York, NY, United States

America's largest youth employment and skills-building  
summer program

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### Summary

SYEP offers people ages 14 to 24 minimum-wage, entry-level jobs with public and private employers across the city, and educational workshops on work readiness, financial literacy, career exploration, postsecondary (college) education, and personal health. The program lasts six to seven weeks in July and August, and offers up to 25 hours of paid work and educational services each week. From 2004 to 2012, SYEP dedicated at least 10 percent of paid program time to educational services for all participants. Starting in 2013, participants of different ages have received different services: 14 and 15-year-olds can participate in up to 20 hours each week, 5 of which are to be in educational workshops, while older participants can work up to 25 hours a week and receive educational services only during a mandatory orientation (1).

### Rationale

Employment and career development opportunities for NYC youth.

### Defining Principles

Public investment in employment, career development, and networking opportunities for young people, especially those from marginalized backgrounds (2)(3).

### Dates of Operation

1963 – present (4)(5)

### Number of Program Participants

100,000 in 2022 (6).

### Person-days of Employment

6 weeks of part-time employment per year.

### Criteria for Participation

NYC resident between the ages of 14-25.

### Pay and Benefits

Minimum wage - \$15 per hour.



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## Financing

State and City government funded due to federal budget cuts in early 2000s (7). The program had a budget of USD 168.25 million in 2022 (8).

## Implementation

Service providers place youths in positions at public agencies, nonprofits, and for-profit businesses. Partner organizations usually repeat participation across years (9).

## Types of Work

Entry-level positions with non-profits, private companies, public education, city government services (10).

## Notable Features

Sub-programs prioritize employment of youth living in low-income neighborhoods and subsidized housing.

## Challenges

Due to the mix of City, State, and Federal funds, the budget has fluctuated significantly year by year: "SYEP's final funding commitment is often not known until weeks before the program begins, affecting the providers' ability to plan services," (11) There are usually many more applicants than there are positions and many appointments with workplaces are made by word-of-mouth (12). One small instance of corruption was identified when a worksite coordinator and his assistant stole USD 20,000 by hiring ghost employees in 2018 - this was quickly caught and the DA charged them with grand larceny and fraud in 2021 (13).

## Program Website

<https://www.nyc.gov/site/dycd/services/jobs-internships/summer-youth-employment-program-syep.page>



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### Citations

- (1) Erin Jacobs Valentine, Chloe Anderson, Farhana Hossain, Rebecca Unterman. (April, 2017). An Introduction to the World of Work: A Study of the Implementation and Impacts of New York City's Summer Youth Employment Program. ES-2, ES-3. <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/evaluation/pdf/SYEP-Full-Report.pdf>
- (2) Erin Jacobs Valentine, Chloe Anderson, Farhana Hossain, Rebecca Unterman. (April, 2017). An Introduction to the World of Work: A Study of the Implementation and Impacts of New York City's Summer Youth Employment Program. MDRC.
- (3) NYC Department of Youth & Community Development. (2022). Summer Youth Employment Program 2022 Annual Report. MDRC. <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/dycd/downloads/pdf/2022SYEPAnnualReport.pdf>
- (4) Erin Jacobs Valentine, Chloe Anderson, Farhana Hossain, Rebecca Unterman. (April, 2017). An Introduction to the World of Work: A Study of the Implementation and Impacts of New York City's Summer Youth Employment Program. MDRC.
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- (6) NYC Department of Youth & Community Development. (2022). Summer Youth Employment Program 2022 Annual Report. MDRC.
- (7) Erin Jacobs Valentine, Chloe Anderson, Farhana Hossain, Rebecca Unterman. (April, 2017). An Introduction to the World of Work: A Study of the Implementation and Impacts of New York City's Summer Youth Employment Program. MDRC.
- (8) Gray, Sandra. (May 10, 2023). Report to the Committee on Finance and the Committee on Youth Services on the Fiscal 2024 Executive Plan. Department of Youth and Community Development. New York City Council Finance Division Briefing Paper. Page 4. <https://council.nyc.gov/budget/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2023/05/DYCD-1.pdf>
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- (11) Erin Jacobs Valentine, Chloe Anderson, Farhana Hossain, Rebecca Unterman. (April, 2017). An Introduction to the World of Work: A Study of the Implementation and Impacts of New York City's Summer Youth Employment Program. MDRC.
- (12) Erin Jacobs Valentine, Chloe Anderson, Farhana Hossain, Rebecca Unterman. (April, 2017). An Introduction to the World of Work: A Study of the Implementation and Impacts of New York City's Summer Youth Employment Program. MDRC.
- (13) Queens County District Attorney. (October 20, 2021). Two Queens Residents Charged With Stealing Thousands of Dollars Intended for NYC's Summer Youth Program. <https://queensda.org/two-queens-residents-charged-with-stealing-thousands-of-dollars-intended-for-nycs-summer-youth-program/#:~:text=Queens%20District%20Attorney%20Melinda%20Katz,of%20dollars%20intended%20for%20youth>



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