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Workforce, Education, Training and Youth Development Committee

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Agency: [Cleveland City Council](#)

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Summary

- This was a meeting with Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU) about its summer youth employment programs. The organization is a nonprofit focused on workforce development.
- Summer program offers: Six weeks of work experience, up to 25 hours per week, \$13.50 per hour, employees can earn up to \$2,025.
- Responses to requests made for corporate investment have been mixed, according to Craig Dorn, president and CEO of Youth Opportunities Unlimited.

Follow-Up Questions

- What effort has the city made to recruit more corporate investment into Youth Opportunities Unlimited?
- How can the city use YOU as a pipeline to fill the outstanding vacancies in city departments?
- What is the “pending legislation,” and how does it impact funding these YOU programs?

Notes

Roll call and introductions were not included in the [livestream](#).

Committee members present:

- Jasmin Santana, chair (left the meeting early)
- Stephanie Howse-Jones, vice chair
- Deborah Gray
- Joe Jones
- Jenny Spencer
- Charles Slife
- Richard Starr

Others present:

Craig Dorn, president and CEO of Youth Opportunities Unlimited. (He shared a PowerPoint [presentation](#) with the committee)

Sonya Pryor-Jones, chief of Youth & Family Success, Cleveland

Eric Dillenbeck, director of Work Experience, YOU

Dorn presentation:

Applications for YOU's summer youth employment programs (SYEPs) open on Thursday, Feb. 1.

Numbers from 2023: Average of \$1,629 in wages earned per teen in YOU's employment programs, which feature 134 employer partners

2024 target enrollment for SYEPs: 1,500

Applications close May 1. Youth orientation starts June 1.

[Editor's note: [Applications](#) and [FAQs](#) are available in English and Spanish.]

SYEPs typically offer six weeks of work experience, up to 25 hours per week at \$13.50 per hour. You can earn up to \$2,025 for the summer.

YOU's four needs for 2024: 1) physical space, 2) access to participants' critical documents, 3) council members to identify/recruit employers in their wards, 4) funding to serve additional youth.

April 23 is an important date for them to know about all of their funding because that is when they start making eligibility appointments with applicants.

Dorn requested help from council to find physical space for seasonal offices and to help parents with obtaining birth certificates for students. Also, he asked council members to work with schools on issuing photo IDs for students.

For the first time, in 2023, YOU provided a year of coaching, mentoring, and resource support after the end of the summer program, Dorn said.

Conversation:

Chair Santana questioned the presenters about the 2023 budget. It was \$7 million (including money from Cuyahoga County), according to Dillenbeck.

Most of the money came from Cuyahoga County's Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) dollars (80%), Dorn said. The second largest group of funding came from the city, through the Mayor's Office of Prevention, Intervention and Opportunity for Youth and Young Adults (PIOYYA). YOU also gets some funding from the private sector.

Santana mentioned pending funding through [legislation](#) but added they would not be discussing it today.

Council Member Jones requested more details because he wanted to do "a deep dive" but said he doesn't have enough information. He said he wanted to know how much impact YOU has in neighborhoods. The information provided is just "A-B-C, 1-2-3," he said.

Dorn promised to provide more information to the committee by the end of the week.

In 2023, YOU SYEPs served 1,281 Cleveland teens out of 3,743 applicants. The main reasons why some applicants weren't served, according to Dorn: 1) funding, 2) found other work, 3) lost contact with the student.

The 2024 budget would be "roughly" the same, about \$7 million, Dillenbeck said.

Council Member Spencer requested flyers in English and Spanish for her newsletter. She asked further questions about expenses for staff, etc., and requested a breakdown (same as Jones). She also wants a list of employers and the types of jobs they offer.

A list can be provided of 400 employers but not broken down by ward, Dorn said.

Pryor-Jones explained that the pending legislation mentioned above has just been introduced to council and would provide funding up to \$1 million for YOU from the [General Fund](#).

Council Member Starr said he has established relationships with Dorn and Dillenbeck because he used to be a site manager. He would like YOU to do eligibility events in the community.

Dorn said they would be happy to coordinate with council members.

Starr requested clarification on the breakdown of YOU's budget.

Co-chair Howse-Jones interjected that the detailed budget and funding information would be provided through a follow-up communication from YOU.

Starr asked for follow up regarding how YOU is working with Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) and if the cost of getting birth certificates could be waived. The fee is from the state, he was told.

Howse-Jones said that they are working diligently to address the birth certificate issue.

Starr questioned the relationship between YOU and city departments for employment.

Dorn said his organization is currently working with Public Utilities and that the largest employment is through city rec centers and pools.

Starr mentioned the importance of lifeguards at the rec center in his ward. Also, he would like to have a student working with council members to learn civic engagement, etc.

Pryor-Jones said 11 new lifeguards were added to the city last year through their efforts with CMSD and YOU.

Howse-Jones said that the council members need to work with the council clerk's office to make sure that their council office is deemed a "suitable site."

Starr recommended the Word Church on East 55th Street for a physical location for YOU and offered to connect them.

Joe Jones established that Dorn had been involved with YOU and City Council since 1989 and that they do more than what is included in the presentation. He wanted to see more about YOU, saying the council doesn't have the full picture.

"You're not prepared" to explain what they do. He continued a line of questions that outlined all the programs and services that are provided to the county and Cleveland specifically. He advised them to bring back a full presentation:

“You should have such a superstar story...on your success. ... If I have to...pull it out of you, then I think you’re hiding something.”

Dorn said they had built the presentation in consultation with Santana and are willing to provide as much information as needed. They have many success stories to share, he said.

YOU was co-founded by the city in 1982 with an investment of \$500,000, Dorn said.

Council Member Slife asked for more clarification on the funding projections.

Council Member Gray asked if YOU follows the teens after the financial literacy training. She talked about a program that she helped facilitate along with Burten, Bell, Carr Development.

Howse-Jones recapped the meeting and inquired about the city’s push for the corporate sector for funds. Dorn: \$400,000 was raised last year. \$500,000 committed over the next two to three years from JP Morgan Chase (\$200,000) and KeyBank (\$300,000).

He said the experience of seeking corporate funding has been mixed.

Adjourned at 3:18 p.m.

1-30-2024 Meeting Agenda

<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/24388608-workforce-education-training-and-youth-development-committee-2024-01-30-agenda>

<https://www.clevelandcitycouncil.org/council/committees/workforce-education-training-youth-development>

Chair Jasmin Santana - Ward 14

<https://www.clevelandcitycouncil.org/council/council-members/ward-14>

Co-chair Stephanie Howse-Jones - Ward 7

<https://www.clevelandcitycouncil.org/council/council-members/ward-7>

Youth Opportunities Unlimited

<https://www.youcle.org/>

The Mayor's Office of Prevention, Intervention and Opportunity for Youth and Young Adults

<https://clevelandohio.gov/city-hall/office-mayor/pioyya>

Craig Dorn, YOU President and CEO interview

<https://www.youcle.org/newsroom/2021/8/ceos-you-should-know-iheart-radio>

What is TANF?

<https://www.hhs.gov/answers/programs-for-families-and-children/what-is-tanf/index.html>

Sonya Pryor-Jones

<https://mayor.clevelandohio.gov/news/mayor-bibb-announces-two-key-roles-administrative-chief-education-officer-and-chief-youth-and>

Legislation 82-2024

<https://cityofcleveland.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6483487&GUID=927655E8-5BD8-4C23-B134-FA677E4FA769&Options=ID|Text|&Search=82-2024>

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