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## **Boston City Council Committee on Ways and Means**

*Dockets #0588-0596 FY21 Budget  
Youth Engagement and Employment  
Working Session: Tuesday, April 28, 2020, 11:00 a.m.  
Hearing: Thursday, May 7, 2020, 4:00 p.m.*

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The following is a collection of questions that were asked by the Committee regarding the FY21 budget for the Youth Engagement and Employment at the Working Session on Tuesday, April 28, 2020 at 11:00 a.m.

Recording here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QT8G6cS3-pg&t=1s>

The Administration is requested to respond to all questions in one of three ways:

1. Verbally at the hearing on Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, at 4PM.
2. For factual questions, through written responses supplied prior to May 7<sup>th</sup>, including budget book page numbers or other references where appropriate.
3. By deferring to a specific scheduled departmental budget hearing.

Please annotate and return this information request before May 7<sup>th</sup>, indicating how each question will be answered.

### **Youth Engagement and Employment Budget Questions**

#### **Councilor Kim Janey, President asked:**

- Update on the grants for youth summer jobs position.
  - How many positions are we looking to fill?

<b>YEE Response</b>			
<b>Youth Job Providers</b>	<b>Total Investment</b>	<b># of Jobs</b>	<b># of Projected Jobs for 2020</b>
<b>Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD)</b>	<b>\$2 Million</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>600</b>



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<b>City of Boston - Youth Engagement &amp; Employment (SuccessLink)</b>	<b>\$6.6 Million</b>	<b>3,300</b>	<b>2,000</b>
<b>John Hancock MLK Scholars</b>	<b>\$1.2 Million</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>300</b>
<b>Private Industry Council</b>	<b>\$6.5 Million</b>	<b>3,300</b>	<b>2,400</b>
<b>YOU</b>	<b>\$250,000</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6.6 Million</b>	<b>8,100</b>	<b>5,400</b>

- What will these positions look like in light of COVID-19?

YEE Response			
Additional SuccessLink Partnerships and Programming in light of COVID-19			Standard SuccessLink Summer Programming and Partnerships
City Department Jobs*	Virtual Work Options	College Courses (credit bearing)	
Parks & Recreation Department + Public Works  Peer to Peer COVID-19 Campaign (graphic design, public service)	Boston Public Health Commission  Google IT Certificate  Year UP Grads for Life (work readiness)  Northeastern Praxtera (project based learning)	Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology  Urban College Boston	Community Based Organizations (120 Committed Partners)  YouthWorks - Signal Success Curriculum  EverFi - Financial Literacy  One Love - Healthy Relationships  Bunker Hill Community College Learn + Earn
We are looking to create < 1,500 new job opportunities for youth to fill the gap the # of planned jobs vs. # of projected jobs (see chart above)			
* There has been an ask of all city departments whether they can host any summer jobs for youth. Conversations are still happening with city departments around capacity, alignment and resources needed to provide jobs.			



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#### **Councilor Julia Mejia asked:**

- Update on the Mayor's Youth Council

#### **YEE Response**

The remainder of MYC programming for the school year 2019-2020 was cancelled due to COVID-19 as of March 2020. The recruitment, interview, and selection process for the school-year 2020-2021 is currently delayed due to the inability to engage young people in-person. The application is now rolling to allow for interested youth to continue applying while we formalize a virtual recruitment and selection process.

MYC members across 8 committees were in the middle of preparing for their end of the program committee projects - which were more like community events. Projects and events were cancelled. MYC members have shifted some of their effort to support with a peer-to-peer campaign during COVID-19.

YEE is working to design a virtual recruitment process and MYC programming for school-year 2020-2021 (if needed).

- Are there opportunities for YEE to partner with other agencies to fill positions that are hard to fill?
  - How can we create a virtual space for young people during COVID and beyond?
  - How can we build infrastructure for young people who already are living in the virtual world?

#### **YEE Response**

Yes - Youth Jobs are a collective effort. So there is involvement with other youth job agencies such as; ABCD, PIC, MLK Scholars, and YOU.

Virtual Space - Great question. We know our young people have been living in the virtual world prior to our current COVID-19 experience. So it has always been important to create virtual space to engage and meet youth in spaces they frequent. As of today, that need is magnified.

YEE can brainstorm ideas around what it would take for the city to build a virtual space for young people and think of it from a feasibility lens. We are in discussions with a company about a platform that we feel could be a great space to help young people build personal and professional



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skills, receive support with career development, navigate employment and educational opportunities, etc. This is part of our Customer Relation Management (CRM) system IT request. We are awaiting approval of this request from the city.

- Update on the Mayor's Youth Capital Budget participatory process.
  - Is that still active and how are young people engaged in the decision-making process?

#### **YEE Response**

Yes - the YLC Participatory Budgeting program is still an active initiative.

The YLC program for the school-year 2019-2020 finished up in early March. YEE has started working with the city departments on implementation plans of the 2020 winning projects and revisiting the status of past projects.

10 YLC capital project proposals were developed | 5 projects made it onto the 2020 YLC ballot

Engagement & Outreach staff and MYC/YLC members collected over a staggering 7,000 votes from various public high schools and community organizations across Boston.

3 YLC Projects received \$333,000 in funding to be further designed and implemented.

- Plant the City - City Department Partner:
- Heat for Success - City Department Partner: Boston Public Schools
- Boston Shelter - City Department Partner: BPHC / Woods Mullen Shelter

The YLC Program was re-designed into a two year program to increase program awareness, engagement and project implementation. The two-year program was also designed to better align with the City of Boston capital budget process and timeline.

- 2019-2020 - Program Year
- 2020-2021 - Project Implementation Year

- What types of year-round youth employment exist?

#### **YEE Response**



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YEE manages the SuccessLink School-Year Employment program. The program is a condensed version of the SuccessLink Summer Employment program.

We partnered with 124 community based organizations to offer workforce development experiences to youth during the 2019-2020 school-year employment program.

- Hired 755 youth who participated in the 2019-2020 SuccessLink school-year employment program. This is a remarkable feat, and the highest number of jobs the department has provided to youth during the school-year in over 5 years

- Are there ways to expand youth opportunities in the City to help these young people amplify their voices and skill set?

### **YEE Response**

Yes, one of YEEs core service areas is youth voice. Over the past couple of years our youth voice efforts have fallen into the civic engagement program buckets with the Mayor's Youth Council and Youth Lead the Change.

YEE has also partnered with the City of Boston Black Employee Network (BEN) to host an event called Dream Chasers during Black History Month. Dream Chasers has given youth the platform to express their voice and talents through arts (spoken word, rap, singing, dancing, etc). This event has also featured a panel of professionals who share their stories and passion of chasing their dream and navigating their own individual path to be in the professional positions they hold. Youth dialogue is created in this dynamic space as well.

We do agree that we can play a larger role in working alongside other partners to create more opportunities for the voices of young people to be elevated.

- Are there ways to engage youths in the neighborhood in needed COVID-related work – more than just cleaning projects, real meaningful work over the summer?

### **YEE Response**

I am not sure if this is asking for a specific type of COVID-related work.



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Every year, YEE partners with nearly 200 community based organizations in the City of Boston to run SuccessLink - an employment program that runs during the school year from November to April and during the summer for 6 weeks in July and August. Our priority is to partner with organizations who will provide meaningful employment opportunities in many different fields -- STEM, community organizing, education, visual arts, theater, etc. As we look to summer 2020, we hope to support our current partner organizations with shifting their programming online while also building additional partnerships to ensure that we are able to continue offering youth engaging and meaningful opportunities.

Yes, Summer Youth Jobs are open to all young people across the neighborhoods of Boston. In-person engagement has been a strong tool to connect young people to these opportunities. YEE has turned to virtual engagement efforts through social media, text messages, emails, and newsletter to share opportunities with youth.

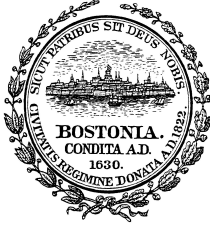
We can think of other efforts that involve partnering with ONS to engage specific populations and neighborhoods.

### **Councilor Kenzie Bok, Chair asked:**

- *(Repeated from BCYF)* I'm encouraged by the additional monies the Administration put in the budget for violence disruption, but a lot of these programs are impacted by the COVID-19 situation – the in-person work they focus on may not be possible, yet the need is still there. How will we repurpose these funds to address the violence we're already seeing in our neighborhoods?

### **BCYF Response Needed Here**

- There are 3,330 summer jobs that are funded partly by the City, private and State sources. My concern is around state funding and the City's ability to step up to keep these jobs for our youth. The youth summer jobs program must not be cancelled – we have to figure out a way for young people to have the opportunity to work to support themselves and their families, even if the jobs are constrained as never before. So, we need to be creative in that space.
  - What are your current plans on that front?



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Goal: The City of Boston is working to create a contingency plan that will help provide context and parameters to allow for a modified summer youth employment program with maximum job opportunities.

### Focus Areas

- Youth Employment Partner Survey
- Youth Employment Guidelines During COVID-19
- Menu of Virtual and Remote Work Opportunities
- Allowable Physical Work Opportunities (if stay-at-home orders are lifted by July 2020).

### **Update (see numbers above):**

Preliminary Plans: Continuing to work on a contingency plan and modified summer job experience for young people. Looking at a combination of summer options: Virtual Work, College Courses, Certificate Opportunities, Skill and Competency Building, etc.

Assessing Partner Commitment: We are following up on the partner survey that was administered mid-April to assess the current commitment level of our employment partners. We are also in discussions with several city departments to increase their commitment to creating employment opportunities for youth this summer. Parks and Public Works is stepping up to support an effort around beautification and cleaning projects.

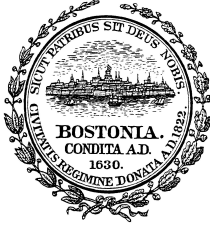
YouthWorks Implementation: We realize a plan to administer the Signal Success curriculum remotely must be completely developed with unknown public health decisions.

Youth Hiring: Finalizing remote hiring process to begin getting youth hired for partner employers who have committed to continuing summer jobs partnership.

Next Steps: Continuing to work on resources and supports to move planning forward.

- What can we do to recruit new employers whose businesses may be remote and thus still operating to host a youth summer job, given that some traditional employer partners may be shut down?

**YEE Response**



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YEE is open to working with community based organizations within the City of Boston who have the capacity to host youth this summer. For private sector employers, we may need to share those partnership opportunities with PIC.

- What can we do to create high-quality activities for students from home this summer? I saw the great guide that YEE put together of online resources – but seems like we need more for the summer ahead.
  - Could we have a program this summer where we delivered different materials each week to thousands of youth across the city for a creative art or engineering challenge? Some tangible activity (clay sculpting, drawing, building models, etc.) combined with online platforms to share approaches seems compelling. We should think about how to do something to scale and build a sense of momentum and excitement around it.

### **YEE Response**

Yes, this is a great idea.

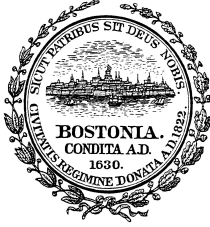
- YEE should connect with BCYF to discuss whether this is an initiative that could live with BCYF.
- YEE could also pool the resources that are available among CBOs that focus on STEM and the Arts.

### **BCYF Response Needed Here**

- Could the city host some virtual tournaments, like a battle of virtual bands, a Mayor's Cup of Overwatch or Fortnite, etc.?

### **YEE Response**





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Yes, The Mayor's Office of Public Safety has launched both a Rap Battle and a NBK2K tournament to engage youth during this time.

The idea around a Fortnite tournament has come up in other community discussions. I'm sure we can explore this further in collaboration with other city departments and community-based organizations.

- What are we doing to think about for-credit programs that our youth could take this summer?

### **YEE Response**

YEE has partnered with Bunker Hill Community College for the past three summers to run Learn + Earn - a program designed to allow about 25 youth to earn 3 college credits over the course of our summer employment program.

This year we are looking to expand out for-credit partnerships to include Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology and Urban College of Boston.

- Could we create a pilot program to train youth in Virtual Reality equipment use and programming, thereby helping them get ahead in a new field?

### **BCYF Response Needed Here**

- Could we create new opportunities for small groups of youth to do sustained outdoor activities together this summer – a camping trip, a stay on the Harbor Islands, a residential basketball camp – as a way to provide something safe yet intensive?

### **BCYF Response Needed Here**

**Councilor Michael Flaherty asked:**



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- (Repeated from BCYF) What will happen to summer jobs, the youth organizations, and what will these programs look like during this pandemic?

**YEE Response**

The Mayor is committed to still providing summer jobs for young people during the summer of 2020.  
Youth organizations that have the capacity to still support youth with a modified summer jobs experience will continue as SuccessLink summer job partners.

YEE Response			
Additional SuccessLink Partnerships and Programming in light of COVID-19			Standard SuccessLink Summer Programming and Partnerships
City Department Jobs*	Virtual Work Options	College Courses (credit bearing)	
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- How are we going to engage our youths in light of violence and the opioid epidemic?

**BCYF Response Needed Here**



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- What is the summer job plan and what is BCYF's vision in this pandemic and how can the City Council and our local youth programming non-profit partners assist in this effort?

### **YEE Response**

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Youth Hiring: Finalizing remote hiring process to begin getting youth hired for partner employers who have committed to continuing summer jobs partnership.

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### **Councilor Annissa Essaibi-George asked:**

- Update on the Mayor's Youth Council.



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- Update on the Youth Capital Budget Participatory process.

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- *(Repeated from BCYF)* Update on the street outreach program (SOAR)?

### BCYF Response Needed Here

- Update on the Boston Civic Academy program, which is an 8 week summer civic engagement program.
  - Are we still moving ahead with this?
  - What will the application process look like?
  - What will be the criteria used to determine who gets to participate?

### YEE Response

Yes, we are still moving forward with the planning for the Boston Youth Civics Academy

#### Next Steps

Working to finalize the Policy Development MEMO Proposal: Two members of our team are currently working on the fiscal implications of the program. We are hoping to finalize over the next month.

#### Staff Transition

Review: Chief Joyce Linehan and Chief Marty Martinez to review proposal.

#### **Summer Program Model (Summer 2021)**

Population: Non MYC and BSAC youth who are interested in becoming civically involved. Have not specified the number of participants.

Location: Location of program will determine volume as space will be required for research, study and project learning.

Application: Application process will follow MYC application model. Online application, references from educators, interview process, selection. Full details are still being discussed.



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- Update on summer jobs.
  - Are we going online for this process?

#### **YEE Response**

Yes, we are planning for both online virtual options and in-person job opportunities guided by public health guidelines.