

100,000 OPPORTUNITIES INITIATIVE

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LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: ASSESSING SUCCESS & CHARTING A PATH FORWARD

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Three and a half years after its formation, the [100,000 Opportunities Initiative](#)[™] ("100K") is at a pivotal moment in its history. 100K has assembled a broad coalition of private, public, and non-profit partners to raise the profile of "opportunity youth" (young people who are disconnected from employment or educational opportunities) as untapped assets and young talent. Most importantly, the program has reached its original goal of hiring and engaging 100,000 young adults two years ahead of schedule. Overall, the coalition member companies collectively have hired over 200,000 opportunity youth since the Initiative launched in 2015.

There is much to celebrate. And the key question now is: how do we build on the momentum and progress to date?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report looks at 100K's accomplishments and proposes options for the future direction of the Initiative.

To do this, 100K retained Panorama, an action tank working to solve global and local social issues. This independent review was funded by the Schultz Family Foundation on behalf of 100K to help the Initiative advance to its next phase.

Panorama's methodology included gathering background information and conducting interviews with many of the relevant stakeholders, including 100K staff, employer partners ("coalition members"), community partners, and thought leaders in workforce development to gather insights on 100K's progress to date and suggestions for charting its future. This work was conducted over several months, during which Panorama was able to gather candid and honest feedback by ensuring anonymity to interviewees. Panorama asked about the overarching vision and goal of the 100K program, along with specific questions about structure, metrics, and opportunities for improvement.

“100K has moved the needle by creating better coordination and partnerships, aligning services, actually reaching opportunity youth and understanding what their needs are, and advocating among system leaders to improve the system in a way that is responsive to youth needs.”

MEG GARLINGHOUSE,
HEAD OF SOCIAL IMPACT
AT LINKEDIN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



During these interviews, several key themes emerged, including:



100K quickly created a powerful movement that has brought national attention to the importance and value of hiring opportunity youth.



Both nationally, as well as in the communities where 100K has focused its efforts (“Demonstration Cities”), a first-of-its-kind network of employer and community partners is driving progress on this issue.



To build on this success, now is the optimal time to refine strategic goals, realign how partners work together, and retool the delivery of services, with the goal of continuing to expand the number of opportunity youth who are hired and retained by coalition members.

THE VISION & IMPACT

THE VISION & IMPACT

In the U.S. alone, there are approximately 4.6 million² young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 who are not working and not in school. These “opportunity youth” are a disconnected and thus hard-to-reach population. In terms of lost revenues and increased social services, it is estimated that the country would save \$93 billion annually (\$1.6 trillion over their lifetime) if it connected these talented young people to careers.³

At the same time, there are 6.9 million open jobs in the U.S. labor market.⁴ For employers looking to fill these jobs and vying for talent in a competitive economy, workers who are young and motivated are a vital and overlooked resource.

However, far too many young people are unaware of these opportunities, and even when they are aware, they often face barriers to pursuing and securing the jobs. The benefits of engaging this population are clear: “those who have been working or in school as teens and young adults earn \$31,000 more per year and are 45 percent more likely to own a home, 42 percent more likely to be employed, and 52 percent more likely to report excellent or good health than those who had been disconnected as young people.”⁵



4.6 MILLION

opportunity youth
in the United States ²



6.9 MILLION

open jobs in the
United States labor market ⁴

THE VISION & IMPACT

Launched in 2015, 100K is based on a vision of sparking a national employer movement that fully embraces opportunity youth, recognizing their untapped potential as workforce talent. Each partner involved in these efforts shares a commitment to helping youth connect with employers, develop job skills, and embark on a long-term pathway of success. The Initiative is designed to be a true win-win: employers connect with a new pipeline of talent and disconnected young people gain access to opportunity. As Howard and Sheri Schultz, the founders of the Schultz Family Foundation, noted in a New York Times opinion piece: “This is not charity. It solves a real business problem.” ⁶

Because of the efforts of 100K and the 55 national companies that have joined the coalition, over 200,000 young people have gotten a job. Equally important, structures have been put into place in communities to help young people access employment, and companies have made changes to their internal practices to better hire and support opportunity youth.

To accomplish this, 100K developed a strategy with three components:
COALITION MEMBERS, OPPORTUNITY FAIRS AND DIGITAL HIRING, AND DEMONSTRATION CITIES.

“We are changing the perception of CEOs and hiring managers about the nearly 5 million young Americans who are out of school, not working, and facing barriers to employment and success. If opportunity youth are given a chance, they will make your enterprise more successful”

JOHN KELLY,
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT
OF GLOBAL PUBLIC AFFAIRS &
SOCIAL IMPACT, STARBUCKS

THE VISION & IMPACT



COALITION MEMBERS

The coalition encouraged companies and philanthropies to join a learning community of like-minded employers interested in tapping the potential of opportunity youth to solve their workforce needs and gain access to employment tools and resources. By driving towards a shared goal, 100K has brought national corporate leaders around the table to discuss ways to make traction on the issues facing opportunity youth, while also finding ways to fill open jobs. Perhaps most impressive has been the ability to bring together a diverse collection of private sector leadership (including competitors within industries). This collaborative effort has created space for sharing best practices across human resource, corporate social responsibility, and diversity and inclusion functions nationally and in key cities. Coalition members connect monthly to learn from one another and push the Initiative forward. The coalition has also shared learnings at national convenings of HR and CSR leaders and created tool kits for companies and communities interested in building more support for hiring and retaining opportunity youth.

THE VISION & IMPACT

OPPORTUNITY FAIRS AND DIGITAL HIRING

At the core of the 100K Initiative is finding meaningful ways to connect opportunity youth and coalition members through catalytic events. Throughout its history, 100K has been able to use place-based and virtual “moments in time” to raise awareness among companies and young people about the value of these connections. The first “Opportunity Fair” took place in Chicago in August 2015, before expanding into other targeted cities over the following years.

The 100K Opportunity Fairs were able to break the mold of the traditional hiring fair model. These engagements brought together a variety of corporate, non-profit and government partners, playing to the specific needs of each location, while creating a buzz around securing a job. In addition to booths staffed by company representatives, wraparound on-site services were available at each event. These included educational resources, information and support regarding expungement, and mock interviews. Companies also provided interview clothing (including help to tie a necktie), make-overs, professional photos, and assistance to build out LinkedIn profiles.



For opportunity youth, it was a game changer to walk into a job fair designed to meet their needs and be able to engage face-to-face with company representatives that were often able to hire them that same day.

THE VISION & IMPACT

Because of the comprehensive nature of the fairs, up to 47% of participants at the fairs received job offers on the spot. This was a transformative opportunity for youth that had faced obstacles to employment, as well as a significant practice change for employers that traditionally had not offered on-the-spot hiring. The fairs also were vital in creating new connections that incentivized employers, community groups, and city leaders to work cross-functionally on long-term projects.

To build on these successes, some 100K corporate members and partners applied digital practices to turn the best elements of the 100K Opportunity Fairs into a nationally accessible platform, Joblaunch.org. Kicking off with the first National Youth Hiring Day in November 2018, this platform offers real-time supports, corporate partnerships, and the same direct hiring of the original fair, while scaling them digitally to a broader audience. The first event connected youth to more than 50,000 open positions.



UP TO 47%
OF PARTICIPANTS

at the fairs received
job offers on the spot

THE VISION & IMPACT

“*Breaking down barriers to employment for young people doesn’t just help with the individual workers – it benefits entire communities and the economy at large*”

TOM PEREZ,
FORMER U.S. SECRETARY OF LABOR

DEMONSTRATION CITIES

The 100K coalition focused its work in six cities – Chicago, Phoenix, Los Angeles, Seattle, Atlanta, and Dallas. These communities, collectively referred to as “Demonstration Cities,” were selected based on: (1) need, based on the footprint of coalition members and the need to fill entry-level jobs; (2) capacity, drawing on the business leaders and local philanthropies with an interest in opportunity youth; and (3) shared vision among public sector and non-profit leaders. As a Demonstration City, community leaders were able to join a robust learning community and share best practices across cities, as well as connect to coalition members.

The efforts in each Demonstration City launched with an Opportunity Fair that involved a broad, cross-sector group of stakeholders that tailored the 100K model to meet local needs. Key partnerships were forged in each city with the public sector, local employers, local philanthropy, community groups, and workforce investment boards. Each city also had its own coordinating entity to help support the work.

THE VISION & IMPACT



CHICAGO

Committed to reducing the number of opportunity youth by 10,000 by the year 2020.



ATLANTA

Committed to connecting at least 10% of the entire region's opportunity youth population to the Initiative.

These include a diverse group of organizations such as Thrive Chicago, Arizona State University, the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, and Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas. With support from these organizations, each Demonstration City developed its own three-year goal to increase and ensure job readiness while meeting the demand for entry-level jobs. For example, Chicago committed to reducing the number of opportunity youth by 10,000 by the year 2020, while Atlanta committed to connecting at least 10% of the entire region's opportunity youth population to the Initiative.

Because of the effectiveness of this early strategy, 100K brought public attention to an untapped pool of eager and determined young employees that could help companies replenish their workforces. Pulling this talent off the sidelines was especially critical during a time of low unemployment. While employers and government leaders have mobilized around the issue of veterans hiring,⁷ those same commitments and supports around opportunity youth had previously lagged. The Initiative coalesced a coalition of diverse partners to help spur a national conversation about the issue of youth employment.⁸

THE VISION & IMPACT

Members of the coalition also worked systematically to identify barriers to hiring opportunity youth and piloted innovations to remove the barriers and ensure success.

For example, coalition members kick-started the creation of a joint application, supported the development of employment hubs tailored to the needs of opportunity youth in cities like Chicago and Phoenix, and piloted a mentorship initiative to improve retention of opportunity youth once hired.



THE VISION & IMPACT

Given these successes, many 100K coalition members and partners have taken their own proactive steps to make an impact. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

HIRING GOALS

A number of companies committed to specific hiring targets for opportunity youth.⁹

For example, **Starbucks** made a commitment to hire 100,000 opportunity youth by 2020, and also formed a Youth Leadership Council to inform its youth programming that has provided input on recruiting strategies and benefits.¹⁰

COMMON APPLICATION

Chipotle revamped its application processes after seeing how the previous, lengthy application posed a barrier for potential hires. The new simplified application is just five questions.

COLLABORATION

By collaborating with and convening employers in need of talent, **FedEx** created an employment pathways program to place individuals with unique barriers to employment in jobs.¹¹

RETENTION/SUPPORT

HMS Host created and piloted a new Engagement Training Program to help frontline managers better support their teams.¹²

As part of its efforts to retain more entry-level employees, **Walmart** developed a scheduling system to give workers more predictable and flexible scheduling options.¹³

In addition, with Walmart's education benefit, employees can earn a bachelor or associate degree for \$1/day to remove barriers to college enrollment and graduation.¹⁴

INVESTMENTS

J.C. Penney and the **J.C. Penney Communities Foundation** provided a number of grants to youth development and career readiness programs, including regional YMCAs.¹⁵

The **Schultz Family Foundation** invested in ten additional communities currently working on promising initiatives creating workforce pathways for opportunity youth.

THE VISION & IMPACT



The 100K Initiative has demonstrated that with the right investment and connection, employers can address critical hiring needs with a largely untapped pipeline of talent. And 100K offers its coalition – companies, local leaders, and community organizations – the opportunity to share best practices, work through common challenges, and learn from leading experts and researchers.

LOOKING AHEAD

LOOKING AHEAD

The importance of providing opportunity youth with their first job cannot be underestimated. In this respect, 100K has made an enormous impact in the lives of over 200,000 young people. Given that the Initiative has achieved – and surpassed – its original goal of hiring 100,000 opportunity youth, what’s next?

Drawing on interviews with stakeholders and Panorama expertise in workforce development issues, the following recommendations are offered on how best to scale and sustain these efforts across three areas:

- 1. BUILDING FOR SCALE**
 - 2. STRENGTHENING EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIPS**
 - 3. MEASURING IMPACT**
-

LOOKING AHEAD

1. BUILDING FOR SCALE

We know that job and resource fairs make a difference in connecting employers to new talent, and we know the impact they have on opportunity youth. To ensure that as many opportunity youth as possible secured jobs and companies were able to see the value of hiring opportunity youth, 100K focused on holding Opportunity Fairs in large cities. These fairs generated national and local press coverage and attracted influential companies eager to demonstrate their own leadership in this area. They also created positive energy around the issue of youth hiring and most importantly demonstrated what is possible.

In this next phase, there needs to be an examination of whether the current model is the most targeted or cost-effective way to produce meaningful employment experiences. Alternative approaches have included smaller

hiring fairs designed around specific neighborhoods or industries and greater use of digital hiring platforms. With regard to this latter option, JobLaunch.org has the potential to act as the connection between national and local organizations and priorities. Additionally, greater use of an online portal can help with the dissemination of information and tools for both employers and employees and lead to more efficient ways of collecting data.

“We are at an inflection point – the hiring fairs were never meant to be an ongoing hub to connect supply and demand in a place”

COALITION MEMBER

LOOKING AHEAD

We recognize the gap in today's labor market between open jobs and the skills of young people who are ready to start working. As such, the overall quality of the work experience should be enhanced by offering more employment opportunities to youth that provide in-demand skills, lead to credentials, or have the potential for upward mobility. For all positions, employers should define a core set of skills that an employee would attain within a reasonable amount of time to facilitate a transition into higher-pay jobs. More resources also could be devoted to addressing transportation, child care, and mentorship barriers that often hinder opportunity youth from succeeding in the workplace or pursuing apprenticeships or training at higher education institutions.

To increase the likelihood that a young person will succeed in a job, there needs to be greater support to employers and employees. Employers need to ensure an appropriate support structure is in place to address the potential challenges of retaining opportunity youth. Likewise, young people may need to be mentored or coached both in advance of starting a job, during onboarding, and later, as the employee considers other job or training options.



LOOKING AHEAD

In its first phase of community investments, 100K partnered with a wide variety of organizations to lead the ongoing work locally, testing various approaches.

Going forward, 100K is poised to develop and share best practices across geographies, as well as define the most important elements of a Demonstration City. More attention should be given to employment hubs that align young people early in their careers with supports and jobs that promote long-term development.



LOOKING AHEAD

2. STRENGTHENING EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIPS

By galvanizing the private sector, 100K brought together a group of diverse employers to hire and train youth into their first jobs, while also beginning to address long-term issues like retention, quality jobs, wraparound support, benefits, and career pathways.

As the Initiative looks for ways to continue to leverage employer engagement and as companies assess their own objectives for involvement, there is an opportunity to refine expectations so employers are more engaged for the long-term. Given the positive response to this Initiative from corporate leadership, 100K should develop a more robust set of employer expectations and make a stronger case for employer participation.

To achieve the most value out of membership, these new employer expectations should include:

- Commitment to hire and develop entry-level talent from the opportunity youth pool
- Actively engaging in the employer coalition
- Implementing company-wide practices and policies around hiring, retention, career growth, support systems, and data collection
- Utilizing consistent metrics to track results around hiring, retention, career growth, and support systems
- Engaging in conversations around best practices for hiring and supporting opportunity youth, and piloting innovative strategies.

LOOKING AHEAD

To encourage employers to make such commitments, 100K must clearly articulate a compelling value proposition that might include:

- Brand recognition as a company committed to engaging young people
- A platform on which to share individual company success stories
- Membership in a learning community for hiring and retention
- Data about the ROI of hiring opportunity youth

Beyond resetting employer expectations, 100K should look to diversify the types and sizes of employers. The kinds of jobs offered to an opportunity youth should include a wider mix of industries, particularly those with entry-level jobs projected to grow in the future, such as technology, healthcare and energy. This would enhance the future success of both young people and companies seeking to fill jobs.

To attract and develop relations with a wider group of organizations committed to youth employment, a re-examination of non-profit and philanthropic partners would be valuable. There is a breadth of organizations working in the opportunity youth ecosystem, many of whom would be eager to partner with 100K given the strong brand value of the Initiative.

In order to better align around partner outcomes, this is an opportune moment to ensure the structure and resources within 100K are sufficient for maximum impact. By increasing staffing and resources, 100K can expand its service offerings. Consideration also needs to be given to creating a more permanent infrastructure for the Initiative.

LOOKING AHEAD

3. MEASURING IMPACT

While 100K produced meaningful change over its first few years, there needs to be better ways to measure the effectiveness of the Initiative. Systemic data collection has proven challenging: companies are hesitant to share individual level data due to privacy concerns; opportunity youth are more difficult to pinpoint in HR systems than a defined population like veterans; non-profits working with opportunity youth often do not have the data systems to meaningfully track the young people with whom they interact; and youth are less likely to use systems like LinkedIn that facilitate tracking and are less likely to respond to questionnaires or surveys.

Solutions to measuring impact must acknowledge these barriers while developing more innovative approaches to measuring impact. These may include:

- Tapping into the capacity of national non-profits like JobLaunch.org to aggregate individual tracking approaches at local non-profits
- Partnering with researchers familiar with youth data collection to develop reliable sampling methodologies to better estimate the impact of the work
- Identifying means to track more systemic impacts as 100K continues to build a national movement around opportunity youth employment

LOOKING AHEAD

“*The Five Guys themselves were the same age as the youth this initiative is looking to reach. Once we heard about the 100K Initiative, it was a perfect match to start participating*”

REPRESENTATIVE, FIVE GUYS

Additionally, more research is needed to understand the optimal length of time for an opportunity youth to gain a long-term benefit from a job. In the interviews conducted by Panorama, many participants noted that they look to retention – rather than hiring alone – to ensure they are getting meaningful value out of their engagement with 100K. Some of the employer interviewees noted that between 60 and 90 days is the ideal time frame for a company to retain an entry-level worker without negative financial impact. Far less is understood regarding the ideal time frame that a youth must stay in a job in order to reap the long-term benefits of employment progression and job stability.

As part of better understanding outcomes and culling useful data points, 100K should consider conducting research to answer several questions: What is the optimal length of time for employment to best benefit both the employer and employee? What are the most significant barriers to employment for opportunity youth? What are the most valuable benefits for both employers and employees as companies devise meaningful strategies around opportunity youth? What is the best type of job for different categories of opportunity youth, the most effective support structure, and the optimal pathways for long-term employment success?

CONCLUSION

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Over its short life, the 100,000 Opportunities Initiative has achieved tangible results that are unrivaled by other efforts. By building on its existing partnerships and adjusting its operating model to address potential challenges, the Initiative will be well-positioned for continued success in the future.

In executing the future vision for the Initiative, Panorama recommends focusing on the following:

- Continuing to innovate the job fair model
- Ensuring best practice sharing across 100K stakeholders
- Reframing the value proposition for membership and employer expectations
- Re-examining which employer partners can provide the best job experiences and contribute to the 100K ecosystem
- Updating the Initiative structure and increasing resources
- Developing robust data measurement system
- Expanding performance indicators to include retention and longer-term outcomes

CONCLUSION

Given 100K's success to date, these recommendations can ensure continued and even greater impact for opportunity youth. We look forward to working with 100K on the implementation of these recommendations.

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ABOUT PANORAMA



PANORAMA

[Panorama](#) is an action tank dedicated to solving local and global problems through audacious thinking and bold action. We bring together diverse perspectives to spark new ideas that create change. We partner with ambitious leaders to strengthen their organizations and achieve their goals, and we initiate projects when we see gaps that need to be filled. Working with our partners, we raise awareness and drive progress on global priorities to maximize the impact of the initiatives we support.

Panorama is a team of strategists, advocates, campaigners, analysts, storytellers, resource mobilizers, and organizational designers with deep experience in foundations, non-governmental organizations, private companies, and public institutions. We are all inspired by a life-long commitment to improve the world.

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CORPORATE COALITION

100K CORPORATE COALITION

Starbucks	Taco Bell	Greyston Bakery	Microsoft
Schultz Family Foundation	Ulta Beauty	Walgreens	Potbelly Sandwich Shop
Chipotle	Walmart	Safeway/Albertson	Premiera Blue Cross
CVS Health	Yum! Brands	Sprinkles Cupcakes	Prudential Financial
Delaware North	Cintas	Toms	Red Robin
FedEx Express	Hilton WorldWide	MBKA	Sweetgreen
FedEx Ground	Hyatt	Rockefeller Foundation	Swiss Post
FedEx Freight	MOD Pizza	LinkedIn	Villa
Five Guys	Papa John's	Accenture	Cause Consulting
HMS Host	Pizza Hut	Best Buy	Ernst & Young
JCPenney	Republic Services	Under Armour	Tableau
Macy's	Target	Alaska Airlines	JPMorgan Chase & Co
Nordstrom	T-Mobile	Leisure Care	Lyft
Savers	Domino's Pizza	Mars	

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