NYC Youth CareerConnect
New York, New York

Program Model: Grades 11 – 14

Industry Focus: Engineering, Technology, Health Care and Media

Overview of the NYC Youth CareerConnect (YCC) Program

Through the collaboration of ten Career and Technical Education (CTE) Schools, four Early College and Career High Schools, and two District 79 programs, the NYC YCC program exposes students to learning that links school studies to future college and career pathways.

Program liaisons coordinate activities for: 11th-12th grades (CTE schools); 9th-14th grades (Early College and Career High Schools); and students under 21 who have been interrupted in their track to a high school diploma or equivalency and to employment or post-secondary schooling (District 79). Designated YCC schools/programs work with postsecondary and industry partners to ensure that students will earn a high school diploma, credits toward a college degree, and relevant industry experience in high-demand fields.

Activities expose students to career options in engineering, technology, health, and media. Learning is enhanced through small learning communities, industry site visits, internships, mentoring, and other professional interaction. A rigorous, no-cost, college-prep curriculum allows high school students to earn up to two years of college credits. Counselors also assist students with Free Application for Federal Student Aid completion to help them determine the most effective ways to finance postsecondary education.

In addition, students receive wrap-around services such as social/emotional counseling or transportation costs to remove barriers to participation. Upon program completion, students are given access to post-program services in an effort to provide continued support as they advance through their academic and professional journeys.

Program Highlight

The NYC YCC program leverages postsecondary and industry partners to link career exploration to coursework, enabling students to enhance the foundational skills needed to navigate the world of work and college. Through these partner relationships, YCC schools engage mentors, gain curricular feedback, and provide work-based learning opportunities to students for a fully integrated experience that promotes college and career readiness while in high school.

YCC students complete challenging engineering, technology, and design coursework and can demonstrate their value with these skills to employers. NYC YCC also facilitates small learning communities to enhance knowledge and technical skills via the New York University Tandon School of Engineering’s CrEST Apprenticeship, Silicon Harlem’s Tech Startup Accelerator Program, YCC #Entrepreneurship101 Series, New York on Tech’s Tech 360 Program, YCC College Planning Days, YCC College and Career Readiness Symposium, YCC College Visits, and YCC Teen STEAM Youth Con.
Students may also participate in paid or unpaid internships ranging from two weeks to one year and offered during summer or the school year. Students in internships attend training in work-readiness topics including professional behavior, mock interviews, effective communication, and conflict management.

As a result of implementing the Individualized Development Plan, the NYC YCC team created a mentoring manual to be shared with participating schools so that they may continue their mentoring practices.

**Success Story**

NYC YCC actively supports employer engagement in schools through trainings that lead to internships and employment and through competition-based activities incorporated into classroom projects. Competitions such as the REACT Advertising Competition and SkillsUSA:

- integrate work-readiness skills and academic knowledge into solving real-world industry challenges;
- engage entire classes in structured, project-based learning activities with upper-grade peer mentors;
- and allow interface with industry professionals who serve as judges at the final showcase.

Our students have won top prizes, recognition, and internships through these competitions. Students have also gained industry skills participating in NYU Tandon School of Engineering’s Center for K12 STEM Education’s CrEST Apprenticeship, which resulted in numerous offers of summer internships with partner companies and community-based organizations.

NYC YCC also engages historically underrepresented populations such as females and minorities. An outstanding student recently gained full-time employment after completing an internship. She was enrolled in the medical assistant program at Jamaica Hospital. In less than seven months, she earned her High School Equivalency after passing the Test Assessing Secondary Completion and the Certified Clinical Medical Assistant exams. She then received and accepted a job offer after interviewing with two medical offices.

Partnership with #BuiltByGirls introduced other female students to a network of professional women at top tech companies through the WAVE Advisor Program. Female participants in technology career pathways received mentorships, job shadowing and extensive career counseling.

**Community Impact**

YCC emphasized core elements – integrated academic and technical curriculum, work experience, post-secondary credits – that can be institutionalized at the school level to continue beyond the life of the grant.

Our program secured connections to more than 50 local employers and postsecondary partners. The collaborations expanded course offerings aligned with student interests and career pathways across all schools. Specifically, in the healthcare field, District 79 had a pre-existing partnership with a local area hospital, Jamaica Hospital, to offer dental assistant training. With the grant, schools expanded the work with this committed partner and created a medical assistant pathway that exposed students to an array of medical disciplines through learning and work experience.

In addition to curriculum, career days, breakfasts, and networking fairs resulted in students being recruited for internships and employment by partner organizations.

The YCC team will continue to work with schools to identify and implement protocols that will foster the cultivation of partnerships, the enhancement of institutional practices, and the improvement of academic and career counseling services to strengthen the quality of career pathway programs.

**NYC Youth CareerConnect**

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