



2020-21 WorkforceReady Report

Reimagining Our Work in a Remote World

UNITE-LA supports youth with access to critical entry-level job preparation, training and work experience

through L.A. Youth at Work (LAYAW), which serves as a stepping stone to high-skill, high-wage employment. The proven and successful LAYAW program, begun in 1996, was built on working with students in person. The COVID-19 pandemic required us to reimagine our work to best serve youth in a virtual environment. In May 2020, UNITE-LA launched WorkforceReady, an innovative, virtual program, in partnership with the Cornerstone OnDemand Foundation. WorkforceReady consists of a six-week curriculum offering weekly online video or discussion-board activity-based modules. The learning pathways and course selections are designed to help youth develop the essential, non-technical soft skills that will promote their success in the workplace; curriculum content decisions were informed by UNITE-LA's partner employers.

Our first-year program included six cohorts, totaling 740 youth participants from UNITE-LA partner organizations and educational institutions. Below, we detail outcomes from the first year of our virtual program implementation, as well as valuable youth feedback and recommendations.

While we look forward to a world post COVID-19, UNITE-LA is proud of our promising results with the recent implementation of WorkforceReady. As you will see from the data provided here, WorkforceReady has allowed us to reach an even more diverse audience - both in terms of race/ethnicity and economic status - at a critical time for youth in vulnerable communities.

This work revealed to us that a post COVID-19 world will also challenge us to continue to be innovative and agile as we persist with UNITE-LA's mission to prepare the region's youth for high-skill, high-wage employment in a fulfilling career of choice, particularly for our underserved populations.



Overall

First-Year Outcomes

Youth participants showed a **44 percentage point increase** in self-rated perceived workplace skills and confidence between the pre- and post-surveys. Participants refers to completers (finished curriculum, passed customer service quiz and post-assessment) and partial completers (finished 50 percent or more of curriculum).

“UNITE-LA has developed a unique, impactful program grounded in a deep commitment to partnering with young people, employers and the community to develop a diverse, “work ready” local talent pipeline. We are proud to work with UNITE-LA to prepare the students in their program for long-term success in some of L.A.’s most demanding, but rewarding employment sectors.”

Julie Brandt, Executive Director,
Cornerstone OnDemand Foundation

88%

of participants rated their experience highly

92%

of participants would recommend the program to others

740

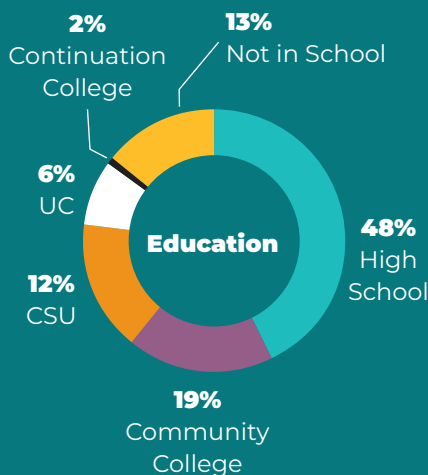
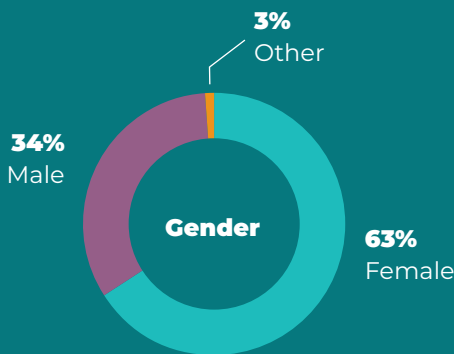
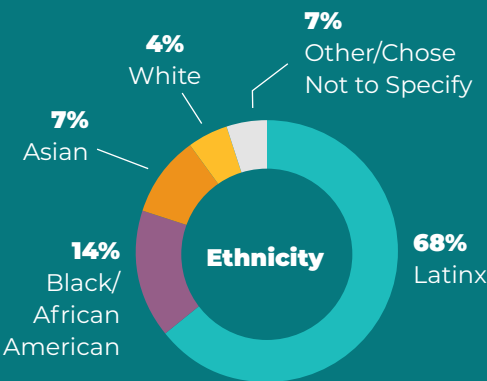
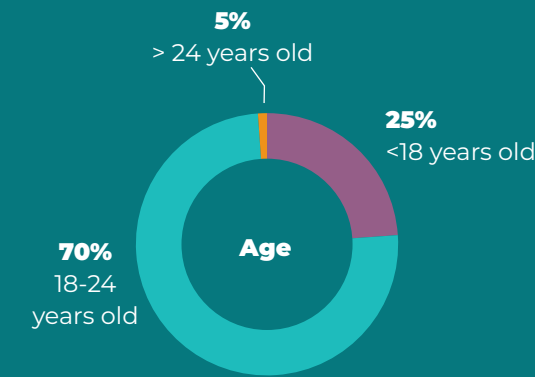
total number of participants

81

youth placed in virtual summer youth internships



Characteristics of Participants



Youth Subpopulations:

87%

Low Income

39%

First-Generation College Students

13%

Foster/Former Foster Youth

8%

LGBTQIA

8%

First-Generation Immigrants

6%

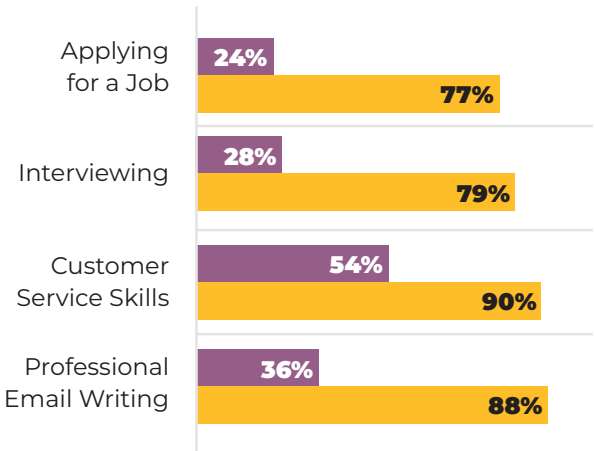
Justice Involved

6%

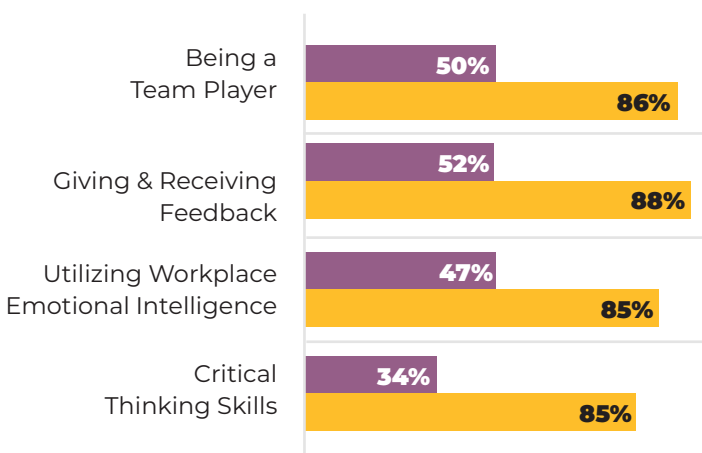
Home-Insecure/ Homeless

Pre-Survey Post-Survey

High Confidence as It Relates To:



High Perceived Ability as It Relates To:



Youth Took Courses from Four Learning Pathways:



“ApplicationReady”
Skills to apply for a job



“InterviewReady”
Skills needed for an interview



“JobReady”
Skills for an entry-level job



“CareerReady”
Skills needed to advance in a career

Key Benefits Identified by Youth:

- Curriculum was self-paced and included short, relevant videos and knowledge assessments at the end of videos
- Many aspects of curriculum are not taught in other places: specifically courses related to negotiation, emails, productivity and career development plans
- Opportunities to connect and practice their skills learned throughout the curriculum via discussion boards
- Many lessons about managing their time and deadlines, broadly applied to their school and other domains (beyond workplace readiness)

In their Own Words:



From my past work experiences, I have gained knowledge on many skills and feel

that all that was provided was enough to enrich my skills even more. It also serves as a refresher for me as some skills I haven't practiced recently. I really liked that, aside from the tasks assigned, we were able to choose other ones to help us with our future job choices and interests.”



Having an online program allowed me to go at my pace. I had many unexpected things come up and

had there been a synchronous class, I would have missed a lot of classes. I feel much more confident in being able to land a job I truly desire. I learned so many new skills and improved in ones I thought I was really good at.



I loved the clear, manageable tasks, as well as the pacing. It was very fluid for a beginner.

I would recommend it since it is very well suited to someone with little to no experience in how a workspace environment functions.”

Courses Identified as Most Helpful by Youth:

#1

Professional Email Communication

#2

Understanding the Interview Process and Practicing the Follow-up

#3

Prioritize Your Most Important Work

#4

Actively Contribute in Everyday Collaborations

#5

Start Things Off Right with Your Manager and Identify Mentors at Work

#6

How to Manage Stress in the Workplace

#7

What Unconscious Bias Looks Like At Work

#8

Create a Career Development Plan and Professional Profile/Network on LinkedIn



WorkforceReady has been an important tool available to the high school students in USC Viterbi School of Engineering's summer research program. The students rave that WorkforceReady provides comprehensive and extremely useful knowledge ... There are many sites and programs that offer help with resumes, but WorkforceReady goes beyond the generic information to help students recognize the many ways to make a good impression during an interview ... Students also appreciate the certificate upon completion, and we encourage our students to add their certificate to their LinkedIn profiles. USC's Summer High School Intensive in Next-Generation Engineering (SHINE) is grateful to UNITE LA for making this beneficial program available to our students.”

Katie Mills, Co-Director, K-12 STEM Center at USC Viterbi School of Engineering

Highlights from Kaiser Permanente's Partnership Pilot Program



UNITE-LA also held a separate pilot in partnership with Kaiser Permanente Summer Youth Employment Program participants, where WorkforceReady served as a complement to the five to six week summer program designed to expose and prepare high school youth for health care careers. This section highlights the outcomes of Kaiser's 109 program participants' experiences.

86

completers

15

participants in post-program focus groups

89%

of participants rated their experience in the pilot program highly

90%

of participants cited improved perceptions/confidence in their ability to perform in the workplace

88%

of participants would highly recommend the program to friends and colleagues

WorkforceReady Key Benefits:

- Short, relevant videos and knowledge assessment quizzes
- Easy to navigate online platform on mobile device (no connectivity issues)
- Opportunities to connect and practice learnings/skills through discussion boards
- Lessons about managing their time and deadlines - applicable across work and non-work activities, including school
- Many aspects of curriculum are not taught in other places (e.g., around emails, handling rejection, interviewing, productivity, working well virtually in a team setting, career development plans)

Summer Youth Employment Program Key Benefits:

- Expanded their understanding of careers in health care
- Motivated by inspirational and realistic stories from speakers
- Presenters of color provided relevance and preparation for their continued educational journeys
- Provided knowledge on community health needs and challenges, especially in lower-income communities; inspired students to be agents of change
- Inspired even greater commitment to a career in health care
- Helped prepare and motivate them for college

What Youth Said About Kaiser Permanente's Overall Summer Youth Employment Program Experience:

"I'm really shy and get nervous, and this program taught me to be confident. At first I was timid and reserved, but it improved my personality."

"I like how it was formatted."

"What I absorbed the most was the professional email etiquette. It really helped me to write a proper email."

"It helps young people to know what to expect in the workforce."

“ UNITE-LA and Kaiser Permanente Southern California's shared commitment to ensuring a diverse, inclusive health care workforce are ideally aligned. Our partnership with the WorkforceReady program is a valued component of our commitment to providing local high school students with an engaging introduction to the universe of health care careers – as well as practical preparation skills. Our curricula reinforces students' in-class learnings by focusing on skills such as professional communication and appearance, resumes, and interviewing. We're thrilled that more than 88 percent of students said they would recommend it to a friend.”

Rachel Sandoval, Director, Equity, Inclusion & Diversity, Kaiser Permanente Southern California

Thank you to our WorkforceReady and Workforce Development funders



We are grateful for the support of our WorkforceReady partners

Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science	LA Promise Fund
First Place for Youth	New Earth
Health Workforce Initiative/AltaMed	ScholarMatch
Kaiser Permanente	STEM Advantage
	Upward Bound
	USC Viterbi School of Engineering