

# Streets to Pathways Career Initiative (SPCI)

***In 2016/17 SPCI Placed 154 Youth in Subsidized Employment and Then 45 of Those in Unsubsidized Private Sector Jobs***



Alternative  
Schools Network  
Creating Futures  
Every Day

The Alternative Schools Network (ASN) is a membership organization of 22 comprehensive, small (150-250 students), community based schools that work with high-risk, older high school dropouts to re-enroll them back into school, to build their educational and life skills, to graduate them and help them successfully transition to college, employment and/or training.

The ASN supports a wide range of programming in its member schools in partnership with the Youth Connection Charter School (YCCS) to provide education, support/trauma services and professional development and policy initiatives to support and expand opportunities for youth who have dropped out of school.

The ASN, with funding from the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), has developed the Streets to Pathways Career Initiative (SPCI). This program, which supports 160 re-enrolled dropouts from 8 participating member schools across the city, provides job readiness, employment preparation, and job placement to strengthen employment and life skills.

## Vision

In keeping with the education and employment vision of the ASN, the vision of SPCI is to develop a generation of urban youth that are confident, prepared, and highly successful in navigating the employment landscape as they transition to post-secondary education and self-directed career paths.



## Mission

The SPCI, as an IDHS Community Youth Employment Program provider, supports high-risk youth who have been reengaged in education and are now preparing to transition beyond their high school experience and into the world of work. The program provides support of a full time mentor, job readiness and career education, industry-recognized training and certification, and subsidized work experience through diverse business partners. SPCI students gain and strengthen the skills that will increase their success in finding, securing, and sustaining meaningful career opportunities. In this way, the re-enrolled students will be best equipped to move beyond the severely limiting conditions of poverty, violence, and incarceration that plague many in our urban neighborhoods.

## History

Although SPCI is a pilot program within ASN for the 16-17 school year, we are proud to have already involved 160 students network-wide. With 8 participating school sites - and with a strong partnership with the Youth Connection Charter School (YCCS) to provide job readiness, certification, and employment internships - SPCI hit the ground running. With ongoing funding support, the program hopes to expand in the next school year to include additional sites within the ASN.

## Program Highlights

- Dedicated full time mentors at each participating school site who facilitate services designed to help participants move beyond barriers to employment. Mentors manage coordination of enrollment and worksite partnerships, and facilitate

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job-readiness training, participant case management, and delivery of supportive services.

- Use of online Illinois Worknet and Illinois Pathways activities engage participants in unified job readiness modules, work readiness assessments, and on-line tools for resume-building and career planning.
- Job readiness training and certification via YCCS supports students for easier transitions into nationally recognized career clusters. (Certifications include Food Handling, National Retail Customer Service, National Retail Pharmacy, OSHA Fork lift, OSHA Safety, PERC Security Guard, Fast Lane Automotive)
- Supportive employment opportunities for participating youth provide on-the-job experience, improved work habits, and supervised coaching. For the 2016-17 program, two tracks are offered, one providing 12 hours

per week and one providing 15 hours per week. Employment opportunities continue for 4 months, with a program goal to transition participants to unsubsidized employment after a successful work experience.

## Who is eligible?

To be eligible for the SPCI program, you must meet the following criteria:

- Be between the ages of 16 and 24 years of age
- Be enrolled in one of the eight participating school sites
- Be a resident of Illinois
- Possess a barrier to employment

## Participating Schools and Agencies:

- Youth Connection Charter School
- Association House High School

- CCA Academy
- Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School
- Houston Pathway Leadership Academy
- Innovations High School
- McKinley Lakeside Leadership Academy
- Sullivan House Alternative High School
- Truman Middle College

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