



2018

Opportunities for Youth Impact Report



Introducing Opportunities for Youth

In August 2013, *The Arizona Republic* published an article naming Metropolitan Phoenix as having the highest rate in the nation of opportunity youth (OY; i.e., youth ages 16-24 who are neither in school nor working), according to Measure of America's 2012 report on youth disconnection.¹ At the time, 1 in 5 youth ages 16-24 (or 18.8% of the youth population ages 16-24) was disconnected from work and school.

The OFY Team

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This article is what inspired Dr. Don Covey of Maricopa County Educational Service Agency (MCESA) to mobilize key players from the City of Phoenix Mayor's Office, local governmental workforce agencies, nonprofits, community colleges, and employers to develop a shared vision and common agenda for addressing this problem across Maricopa County. In 2015, the Opportunities for Youth (OFY) Initiative was created at MCESA, consisting of a Leadership Council (i.e., board of directors) and four Action Teams (i.e., work groups) committed to working as a countywide, cross-sectoral response to the high rate of OY. Tamela Franks was hired as the inaugural Executive Director of OFY. Guided by the five principles of the collective impact model², OFY became the backbone organization to support community partners, employers, and the youth themselves in developing and implementing career and educational pathway programs for OY.

¹Scott, E. (2013, August 21). *Phoenix area leads nation in idle youths*. Retrieved from <http://archive.azcentral.com/community/phoenix/articles/20130806no-jobsno-schoolno-direction.html>

²Kania, J., & Kramer, M. 2011. Collective impact. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 9(1), 36-41.

Over the next 3 years, OFY has focused on becoming the leader in opportunity youth-related work in Maricopa County, working to develop a common agenda that defines strategies for political advocacy, community engagement, and shared measurement. In 2017, OFY moved from MCESA to the Arizona State University College of Public Service and Community Solutions, a change that has amplified our ability to positively impact the lives of disconnected youth. Understanding the importance of our initiative to the community, the College formed the Center for Human Capital and Youth Development (CHCYD) under the leadership of Dr. Kristin Ferguson-Colvin. CHCYD is a hub through which faculty, researchers, students, community partners, youth, and policymakers can collaborate on research, practice, and policy initiatives to support the educational, career and life goals of Maricopa County Youth.



Since 2015, OFY's added value is that we are a **convener** of partners, a **facilitator** of countywide systems change, and a **connector** of employers and youth. In these roles, we rely on our constituencies of youth, service providers and employers to participate in and critique OFY's meetings, pathway programs, and hiring events. Since OFY does not directly serve youth, we acknowledge that our efforts are only as effective as they are meaningful to youth, community partners, and employers. Similarly, since OFY is currently funded by an array of 10 governmental, university, and philanthropic entities through December 31, 2018, we recognize that our efforts to grow and sustain OFY's momentum are only possible to the extent that we can continue to secure traditional and non-traditional funding commitments.



"The Opportunities for Youth Initiative is built on important premise: that community collaboration is the key to tackling our most daunting shared challenges. That makes it a natural fit with the College of Public Service and Community Solutions and we are proud to host OFY. Now, community partners work together with the OFY team, ASU students and faculty to create, support, implement and evaluate career and educational pathway programs for opportunity youth. Following this model, universities around the country could be an integral part of the solution to addressing youth disconnection. Our College is demonstrating this by leveraging its resources to be part of a collective solution to a shared problem: the unrealized potential of thousands of young people in our community. Together, we are positively influencing the way employers and society view opportunity youth and what they could contribute to our communities, economy and society. And the OFY partnership of community organizations, government agencies and our College is altering the way communities approach the issue of youth disconnection by valuing youth engagement and empowerment, collective impact, and thoughtful, analytically-informed action. The Leadership Council of OFY is grateful for the philanthropic support that has made this work possible. It truly is illuminating a pathway to a brighter future."

- Jonathan Koppell, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Public Service &
Community Solutions, Arizona State University



Impact Summary

OFY has had numerous accomplishments across four major focus areas outlined in this report: Youth Outreach, Engagement & Retention, Employer Engagement, Marketing & Communications, and Infrastructure Development.

Youth Outreach, Engagement & Retention

Focus Area Goal

Increase the number of opportunity youth in existing employment and educational pathway programs - developing new pathways in high-demand industries - and retaining youth on these pathways through support services

Accomplishments to Date

Helping Youth Secure a Pathway

In 2017, OFY's 12 Reengagement Centers outreached to ~6,000 OY, serving ~2,200 through support services. Of those youth, 78% were successfully connected to an educational or career pathway.

Monitoring Youth Retention

89% of the OY who obtained employment in 2017 were still employed at their 3-month follow-up. Similarly, 97.5% of those enrolled in a vocational training program were still engaged at 3 months.

Strengthening the Youth Referral Process

Implemented a priority referral system among 14 Reengagement Centers to optimize youth referrals youth between Centers.

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Employer Engagement

Focus Area Goal

Increase commitments from industry leaders to engage in OFY activities as well as to develop and implement employer-led career and educational pathway programs for opportunity youth

Accomplishments to Date

Connecting Employers & Youth

Across five hiring events in 2017-2018, OFY has engaged 75 employers and 1,506 youth, resulting in over 215 interviews and 93 job offers.

Implementing Manufacturing Pathway Program

Coordinated efforts with Arizona@Work, GateWay Community College, and employers to develop the Manufacturing Training Program.

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Marketing & Communications

Focus Area Goal

Enhance brand awareness and credibility for OFY and its partners and to increase outreach effectiveness and overall community relations through a data-driven and youth-inspired marketing strategy

Accomplishments to Date

Enhancing Youth Outreach

In July 2018, 48% of youth who attended an OFY job fair said they found out about it through social media.

Raising Awareness of OFY

OFY Marketing has begun developing a youth-inspired marketing strategy to publicize the OFY impact among youth, partners and the community.

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Infrastructure Development

Focus Area Goal

Conduct cross-sectoral systems changes across Maricopa County- broadening participation that leverages the expertise and resources of partnerships to increase career, educational, and life outcomes of opportunity youth

Accomplishments to Date

Collecting Data Using Shared Metrics

Instituted shared data-collection platform across 14 Reengagement Centers 15 educational institutions, and 20 Leadership Council organizations.

Implementing Systems Change

In April 2018, OFY convened 16 key officials to identify gaps in policies and services that hinder effective youth workforce outcomes, and developed a plan for addressing these gaps in serving OY in Maricopa County.

Supporting Partner Leadership

Offered ongoing support and training to chairs of four OFY Action Teams and Leadership Council to implement collective impact model.

Enhancing Youth Empowerment

Developed a youth-led Community Action Team and provided its members with political advocacy training.

Diversifying OFY's Funding Portfolio

Increased operating budget from \$75,224 in July 2017 to \$908,830 in July 2018 with support from a total of 10 local, state and federal funders.

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MEASURE OF AMERICA
of the Social Science Research Council

Opportunities for Youth is an “inspiring example of a network working together across a previously fractured system... where partners have built a comprehensive, cross-sectoral coalition to turn around their 2012 bottom-place metro area youth disconnection ranking.”

(2018 Youth Disconnect Report)

Progress Report

2017

Reengagement Centers implemented outreach efforts in 2017, as OFY did not gain an outreach team until March 2018. Our 12 Reengagement Centers successfully conducted outreach to ~6,000 OY.

2018

OFY hired eight full- and part-time Recruitment Specialists which make up the OFY Youth Outreach Team. This team is led by Youth Outreach Coordinator, Felix Moran. Their goal is to extend community outreach for services offered by each of the OFY Reengagement Centers. Drawing from our 2017 data, whereas it is commendable that our network of Reengagement Centers connected 78% of youth they served to an educational or career pathway, these centers only reach ~3% of Maricopa County's OY population. In an area as large as Maricopa County, where nearly 14% of the total youth population are OY, it is vital to devise more innovative approaches to youth outreach. We thus are focused on developing new ways (e.g., through social media) to connect with youth and bring awareness to the resources that OFY community partners offer.

Youth Outreach, Engagement, Retention & Advancement

The goal of Youth Outreach, Engagement, Retention & Advancement is to increase the number of opportunity youth in existing employment and educational pathway programs - developing new pathways in high-demand industries - and retaining youth on these pathways through support services.

Our Approach

By analyzing data from the Reengagement Centers for the 2017 year, OFY determined how youth were connected to educational and career pathways. This information was later used to project future annual outreach benchmarks and expected breakdown of selected pathway (Figure 1).



OFY's Youth Outreach Team has adopted a new approach to outreach, focusing on frequenting youth-specific locations and events. By meeting the youth where they are, we will increase the overall effectiveness of our outreach. Likewise, OFY Recruitment Specialists regularly engage groups of youth and service providers within other systems serving OY (i.e., child welfare, criminal justice, education, and housing/homelessness systems).

Moving Forward

OFY Outreach will increase the number of OY contacted through outreach by **10% each year** from 2019-2021, with a goal of connecting with 30,000 youth through outreach by the end of 2021.

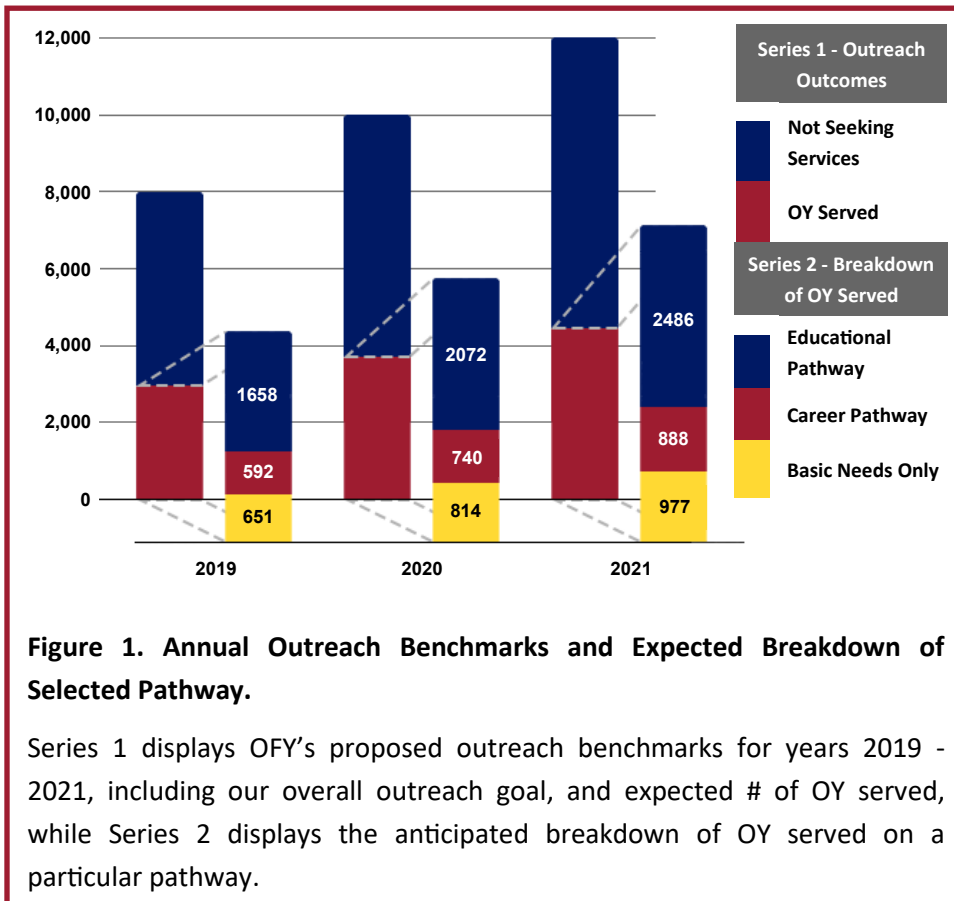


Figure 1. Annual Outreach Benchmarks and Expected Breakdown of Selected Pathway.

Series 1 displays OFY's proposed outreach benchmarks for years 2019 - 2021, including our overall outreach goal, and expected # of OY served, while Series 2 displays the anticipated breakdown of OY served on a particular pathway.

To accomplish this goal, OFY Outreach will:

- Develop a strategic approach to outreach, informed by OFY data
- Provide additional training for OFY Recruitment Specialists, helping them to better understand the OY population and employ evidence-based outreach approaches
- Engage former OY in leadership opportunities such as the Maricopa County Community Action Team to instill networking and political advocacy skills
- Identify successful OY to engage in the OFY Leadership Council thus integrating youth voice into our decision-making processes



"As a prior opportunity youth, this work is important to me. I personally know the struggles that these youth are going through, and I know how powerful it can be to have someone connect with you in that moment, show you respect, and care about where you are headed in life."

- Felix Moran
Youth Outreach Coordinator
Opportunities for Youth



"When I started going to school at ACYR, I never even realized what I was missing- I was always getting in trouble. My teacher Doc started mentoring me and motivated me to try my best. I ended up being the valedictorian at graduation."

- Carlos Alvarez
High School Graduate
Arizona Center for Youth Resources

Progress Report

2017

OFY organized four job fairs, which engaged 62 employers and 1,391 youth, and resulted in 169 on-the-spot interviews and 61 job offers. Following the transition of OFY from MCESA to ASU in July 2017, employer engagement consisted of communicating with our local 100K corporate partners and working to better understand their workforce strengths and challenges. This feedback served as our foundation in the development of our Employer Engagement Specialist position.

2018

In May 2018, OFY developed the Employer Engagement Specialist role, which is responsible for assessing pre-existing programs and partnerships, and working to develop those resources into long-term career pathways for youth.

By the end of 2018, we expect to increase business partnerships from 16 to 32 members, develop a career pathway partnership (the Manufacturing Training Program), launch the Career Connections Action Team with a founding membership of six industry leaders, hold a "State of Employment" information session, and implement two 100K Opportunity Hiring Fairs connecting youth with employers.

Employer Engagement

The goal of Employer Engagement is to increase commitments from industry leaders to engage in OFY activities as well as to develop and implement employer-led career and educational pathway programs for opportunity youth.

Our Approach

The OFY Employer Engagement Specialist will focus on recruiting business partners, use industry-specific knowledge to understand businesses' needs, and develop partnerships that are mutually beneficial to both business and the youth. They will concentrate on developing three career pathway program types - direct hire opportunities, on-the-job training, and post-vocational/technical training employment opportunities.

Using survey research, the Employer Engagement Specialist is better able to understand youths' employment skills, preferences, and degree of career readiness. Similarly, they will regularly inquire with employers about their workforce recruitment, retention, and advancement needs to develop employer-responsive career pathway programs.



Additionally, the Employer Engagement Specialist will develop hiring events aimed at connecting employers with OY and showcasing the talents youth have to offer. He incorporates OFY Reengagement Center partners into these hiring events to integrate the support services available for youth, which also are beneficial to employers.

Moving Forward

OFY Business Engagement will increase participation among business partners by **25% each year** from 2019-2021.

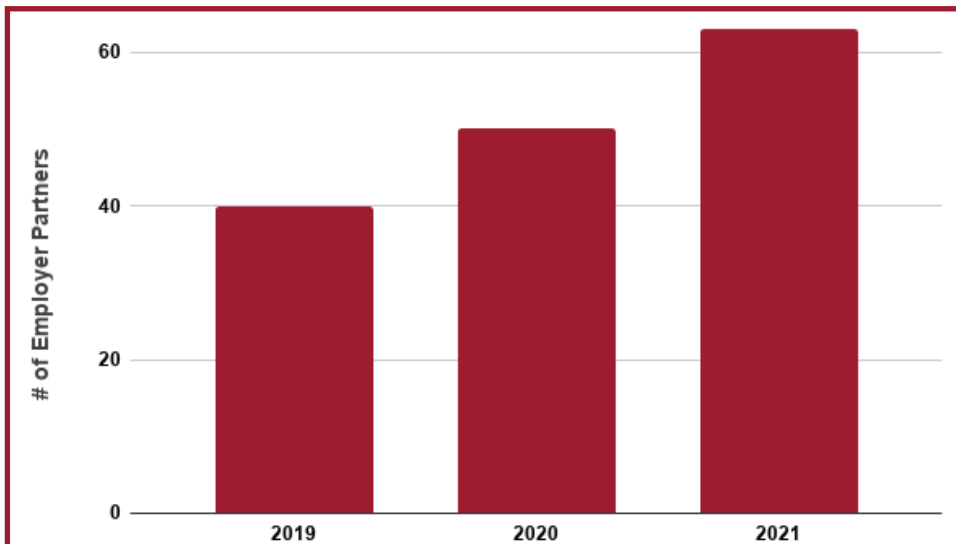


Figure 2. Annual Increase in OFY Employer Partners.

Business Partners will be recruited based on their industry expertise, and ability to positively impact youth in a career pathway. Youth interest will also play a role in the recruitment strategy for business partners.

In addition to increasing employer partners, OFY Employer Engagement will:

- Increase career pathway program partners by 1 per year
- Develop and maintain a post-vocational training employer pool of 10 employers per training program
- Develop a Career Connections Action Team with an increased membership base of 2 individuals per year
- Host 6-8 100K Opportunity Hiring Fairs
- Host 4 State of Employment information sessions to connect employers with Reengagement Centers



"When we invest in opportunity youth we invest in our employee retention and overall better results. They give back what you give them, and with the right guidance they can be your best employees."

- Carissa Grapes
General Manager
Starbucks



"Before I started working at Starbucks, I had been homeless for almost 2 years. I got my first promotion after just nine months, and realized that I was in charge of my own success, and could grow as fast as I wanted."

- Aubrey Brookover
Former OY
Starbucks Work training

Progress Report

2017

An OFY marketing strategy did not exist until the end of 2017. At this time marketing efforts were limited to project specific flyers and handouts.

2018

In June 2018 Marketing Specialist, Ricky Duran joined the OFY team. Coming from a corporate marketing background in renewable energies, he understands the importance of audience-specific marketing and has been focusing on developing the OFY brand. Since his arrival, he has finalized the OFY Initiative's logo and has begun implementing a marketing strategy that complements ongoing outreach efforts.

By the end of the year, marketing expects to optimize the OFY website, complete three success story videos, develop the first edition of the OFY Annual Impact Report and develop an assortment of audience-specific marketing materials.

Marketing & Communications

The goal of Marketing & Communications is to enhance brand awareness and credibility for OFY and its partners and to increase outreach effectiveness and overall community relations through a data-driven and youth-inspired marketing strategy.

Our Approach

Currently, marketing is developing the foundational assets to successfully promote our efforts across various outlets. This includes optimizing the OFY website, building our social media platform, and developing audience-specific marketing materials aimed at engaging OFY's diverse audience base. We use a targeted marketing strategy to segment our audience into various groups (e.g., youth, partners, the general public), and communicate with each group using content that is most relevant to them. Potential partners are targeted with marketing materials aimed at developing their interest in the OFY Initiative. Youth are targeted with information on the opportunities OFY has to offer whereas the general public is sent information and announcements pertaining to OFY efforts and the resulting success stories.



We take pride in being a youth-centered organization, incorporating their voice wherever we can. By listening to their ideas and concerns, we are able to develop youth-focused marketing that is engaging and relevant. Youth-focused campaigns are shared with our Youth Community Action Team, and their feedback is taken into consideration when finalizing marketing materials.

Going Forward

As we develop OFY's foundational resources and assets we are able to increase production of informative resources, therefore increasing brand awareness. This will be done by public interaction through conferences, engagement using multimedia assets, popular articles and publications, and though the acquisition of additional resources and support resulting from stakeholder-specific development materials. From 2019-2021 marketing expects to increase organization marketing assets in the following ways:

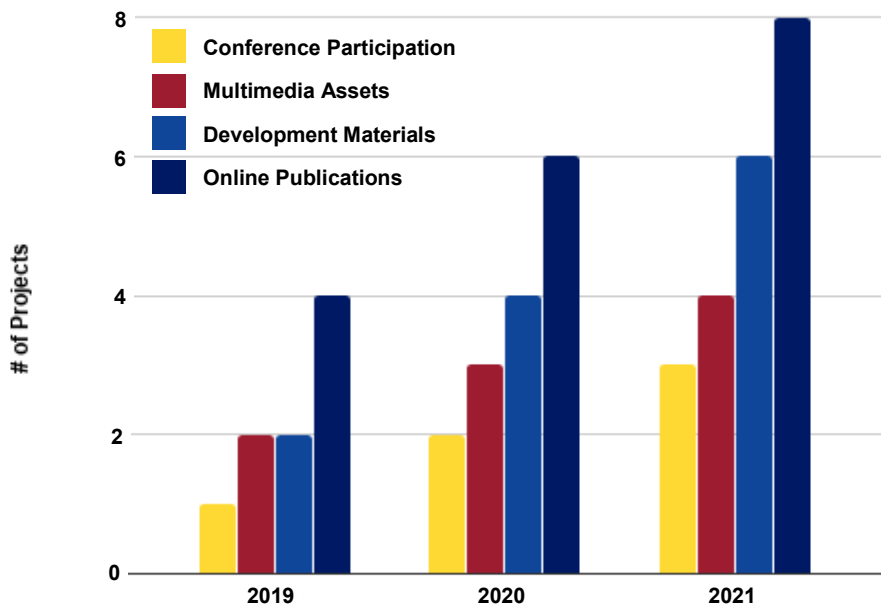


Figure 3. Annual Increase Marketing and Developmental Resources.

Multimedia assets refers to video and photographic assets, developmental materials are projects aimed at increasing organizational resources and support, and publications refer to online articles, PSAs and other written content aimed at informing the public of OFY accomplishments and opportunities.

In addition to the development of informative resources, marketing expects to increase online engagement by 15% each year, from 15,000 website and social media visitors in 2019 to 20,000 visitors by 2021. To accomplish this goal OFY Marketing will:

- Utilize and expand our pre-existing network of OY, OFY Recruitment Specialists, and Community Action Team (CAT) members
- Optimize digital platforms (website / social media) to maximize marketing reach across various communities
- Develop audience-specific marketing
- Utilize efficient paid advertising in digital outreach efforts to reach OY who are not yet connected



"At OFY, I feel like my work matters. I am excited to have an opportunity where I can be a part of helping these youth change their lives. Young people live so much of their lives in the digital world, so digital marketing is the way to connect with them- It's the way to help them find their "Pathway to a Brighter Future!"

- Ricky Duran
Marketing Specialist
Opportunities for Youth



"Creative expression is the voice of the youth. Having a chance to be a part of OFY's logo design process was a great opportunity to express myself creatively and be a part of something that people will see everyday!"

- Tobi Jibowu
Youth Participant
OFY Logo Design Committee

Progress Report

2017

Under the leadership of Tamela Franks, the OFY Initiative transitioned from MCESA to the ASU College of Public Service & Community Solutions in 2017. OFY staff were active in reaching out personally to the 25 active Leadership Council partners following the transition to learn about their contributions to OFY and the history of the initiative. By December 2017, about 30 of the 50 Leadership Council members remained active in the initiative (i.e., attending bimonthly meetings, participating on Action Teams, and engaging with overall OFY services and resources).

2018

OFY Executive Director, James Hoyt & CHCYD Director Kristin Ferguson-Colvin have been working to develop overall operations through the building of partnerships and sustainable funding sources.

By the end of 2018, OFY expects to increase Leadership Council membership from 25 to 32, Reengagement Center Partnerships from 12 to 16, and Educational Momentum Partnerships from 19 to 30. Additionally, we are working to secure a total of eight funding sources to fund our efforts.

Infrastructure Development

The goal of Infrastructure Development is to conduct cross-sectoral systems changes across Maricopa County- broadening participation that leverages the expertise and resources of partnerships to increase career, educational, and life outcomes of opportunity youth.

Our Approach

The OFY Administrative Team is working to develop OFY's cross-sectoral infrastructure, which consists of a Leadership Council, Action Teams and the Backbone Staff. The work of the Leadership Council is imperative to providing strategic vision for and oversight of the OFY Initiative. This includes the development of a common agenda that defines strategies for political advocacy, community engagement, and shared measurement.



In addition to the Leadership Council, OFY has four Action Teams: Educational Momentum, Reengagement Centers, Career Connections, and Youth Leadership & Empowerment. OFY Action Teams are comprised of professionals and youth leaders in each of these areas, with support from OFY staff. These teams convene to examine the issues affecting OY and develop strategic solutions. Action Team co-chairs meet bi-monthly with the Leadership Council to identify and implement solutions to support OY in reengaging in educational and career pathways.

OFY is comprised of 18 full- and part-time staff who were selected for their experience and enthusiasm in making a difference in the lives of OY. The diversity of the OFY staff mirrors that of the OY community we serve, with many of them being former OY themselves— successfully overcoming their own barriers and returning to their communities to help others do the same.

Going Forward

From 2019-2021, the OFY Administrative Team will:

- Strengthen existing relationships with partners and explore ways to continually meet the growing need for OY service providers
- Identify and recruit new partners whose organizations serve target populations who are overrepresented in the OY demographic (e.g., foster youth, Native American Youth, LGBTQ youth, justice-involved youth)
- Advocate on behalf of OY regarding punitive policies that have long-term effects on their future (education, criminal justice, etc.)
- Increase funder investments by 50% in 2021 and devise new self-sustaining funding strategies



"It is great to see key players coming together for the benefit of these youth. The commitment of our partners really enables us to have a significant impact on systems changes and help to make a meaningful difference in the lives of opportunity youth across Maricopa County."

- James Hoyt

Executive Director
Opportunities for Youth



"Being able to participate in Leadership Council meetings like this and to be able to have a voice in what happens here is exciting. I love being able to help people and make a difference in the lives of youth like me."

- Abby Meza

Youth Participant
Maricopa County Community
Action Team

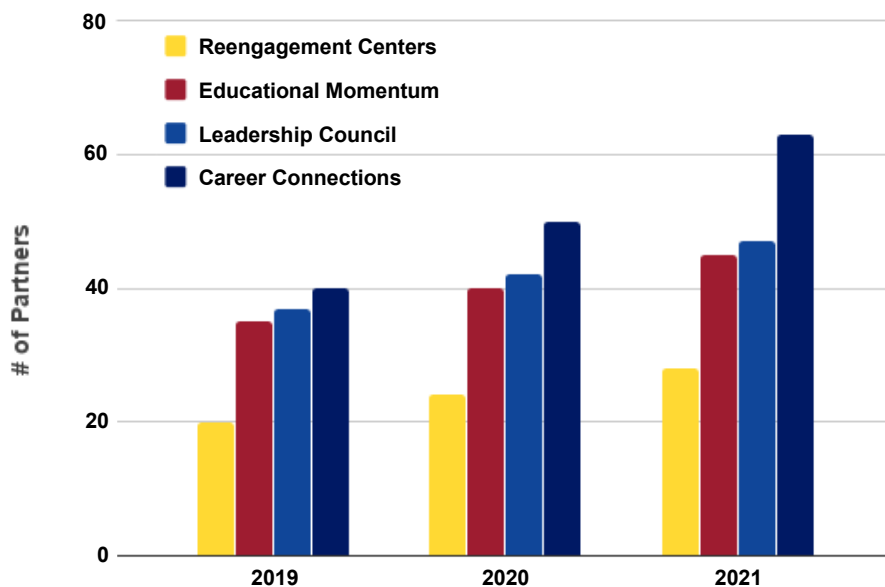


Figure 4. Annual Increase in OFY Partnerships.

We expect Career Connections to grow more rapidly, as it is OFY's newest Action Team. Although, we are expecting to see a steady increase in membership for all other Action Teams.



City of Phoenix

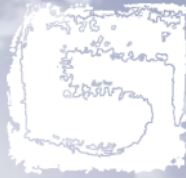


Together We Are Building the



Literacy Volunteers
OF MARICOPA COUNTY, INC.

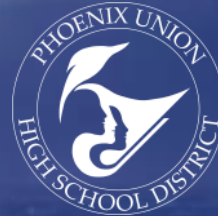




funders'
collaborative
on youth
organizing



**Opportunity
Youth United**



Pathways to a Brighter Future



**NEIGHBORHOOD
MINISTRIES**



Maricopa County
**REGIONAL
School District**
A Legacy of Changing Outcomes for Youth





*Supporting opportunity youth in the pursuit of education,
career and personal development by connecting them with the
fundamental resources for success*

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