



RESEARCH REPORT

# Supporting Young Parents in NYC

## Implementation and Outcomes Study of the New York City Performance Partnership Pilot

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# Contents

<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Evaluation Abstract</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
The Challenge	1
The New York City Performance Partnership Pilot	2
Extended Length of Service	3
Child Care Navigators	3
P3 Waivers and Funding	4
Program Theory and Logic Model	4
<b>Study Overview</b>	<b>7</b>
Research Questions	7
Primary Research Questions	7
Secondary Research Questions	8
Exploratory, Implementation-Focused Research Questions	9
<b>Evaluation Design</b>	<b>10</b>
Study Design	10
Study Population	10
Data Collection	11
Qualitative Data	12
Quantitative Data	13
Analytic Sample	15
Methods	15
Quantitative	15
Qualitative	16
<b>Study Findings</b>	<b>17</b>
Inputs and Start-up Activities	17
Recruitment and Participant Characteristics	19
Recruitment	19
Participant Characteristics	20
Program Activities	21
Service Participation	22
Navigator Training and Service Provision	25
Extra Year of WIOA OSY Services	26

Experiences of the Program	27
Outputs and Outcomes	29
Skill Levels	29
Education and Training	30
Employment	32
Connection to Education or Employment	33
Child Care	34
<b>Discussion and Recommendations</b>	<b>35</b>
Recommendations	37
<b>Notes</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>About the Authors</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Statement of Independence</b>	<b>43</b>

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# Evaluation Abstract

This report presents findings from the implementation and outcomes evaluation of the Performance Partnership Pilot (P3) in New York City, an effort to enhance existing youth workforce services for young parents. The New York City Department of Youth and Community Development was the lead grantee for this effort, coordinating a collaborative of six city-level agencies to run the pilot demonstration for young parents. Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow (OBT) delivered the P3 services at two Brooklyn locations, Bushwick and Sunset Park, beginning in September 2017 extending as late as June 2019. The intervention enhanced existing Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Out-of-School Youth (OSY) services with an extended eligibility period—allowing participants to obtain services for up to two years, doubling the typical one-year eligibility period. Added support came from a child care navigator, who helped participants identify child care options, led parenting workshops, and offered additional supportive services.

The P3 waivers permitted some flexibility in funding and performance measures. WIOA and the Child Care and Development Block Grant both supported the program. Program monitoring was based on modified performance metrics: rather than reporting on median earnings, credential rate, and skill gains, the pilot reported on high school or industry-recognized credentials earned, employment after program exit, and skill gains. Program designers believed the revised performance measures aligned better with the needs of P3 participants, who did not have a high school credential at program entry.

Fifty young fathers and mothers (including expectant parents) between the ages of 17 and 24 who did not have a high school credential, had basic skill needs or other risk factors, were low income, and lived in New York City were eligible to participate. Participants underwent typical WIOA OSY screening. Participants were eligible for services for up to two years, but the average length of enrollment was seven months; enrollment length ranged from 20 days to just under two years.

The qualitative implementation study was informed by two rounds of site visits in June 2018 and May 2019, as well as phone interviews with city-level program planners and informants who were unavailable for in-person interviews. The research team interviewed leadership and representative frontline staff at OBT who were implementing components of the P3 program. The team also conducted focus groups with program participants at each site during each visit. The team continued discussions with P3 Collaborative and OBT staff until the development of this report.

The descriptive outcomes evaluation examined participants' education and employment outcomes after program exit to provide insights into implementation through qualitative field research.

Specifically, the outcomes study examined training completion, school status at exit, adult basic education/educational functioning level post test score, skill gains, post-exit education or training program enrollment, attainment of recognized credentials, and employment and employment retention after exit. The outcomes study followed all 50 P3 participants. The WIOA youth performance data system, the source of data for the outcomes study, tracked participants' education and employment outcomes for four quarters after program exit.

The research revealed that implementation was ultimately successful, though some adjustments were necessary. The research team found that the P3 program succeeded in providing and coordinating the anticipated inputs, though child care slots came from the New York City Department of Education's Living for the Young Family through Education centers rather than from the Administration for Children's Services, as originally intended. The P3 Collaborative appeared to have provided coherent leadership of the pilot, and the partners brought together nearly \$2 million in resources to support the program. Despite recruitment challenges partially generated by a strong local economy and a high minimum wage, the P3 sites succeeded in enrolling 50 participants, all of whom appear to have met basic program eligibility criteria. OBT hired two child care navigators, though staff turnover created complications at both service locations. Despite these challenges, all participants participated in at least one service, and nearly all participated in multiple services.

Many participants achieved desirable outputs and outcomes. Of the 41 participants program staff determined to have low basic skills, over half (51 percent) recorded skill gains during program enrollment, sometimes of two levels. Among all 50 participants, 41 (82 percent) attained some education or training credential, and 27 participants (54 percent) earned a high school equivalency credential. Participants earned these credentials quickly, within 3 to 15 months, but averaging a little under 8 months. In addition, over three-quarters of participants earned an occupational licensure, certificate, or certification, and a small number earned another type of recognized degree, diploma, or certificate. Staff believed these outcomes indicated program success.

Employment was less prevalent, with only 40 percent of participants employed in any of the four follow-up quarters and only about 25 percent employed in any given follow-up period. But over half of participants were employed, enrolled in a training program, or enrolled in a postsecondary educational program leading to a recognized credential at some point in the four follow-up quarters.

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# Introduction

This descriptive implementation and outcomes evaluation captures program experiences and participant outcomes from New York City's Performance Partnership Pilot (P3) to enhance existing youth workforce services for young parents. The demonstration described here served 50 young parents in Brooklyn for varying lengths of time from September 2017 to June 2019. The evaluation tracks these young people's education and employment outcomes for four quarters after exit and finds that they earned secondary and postsecondary educational credentials. Education, though, did not translate into large employment gains in the follow-up period. Because this study is descriptive, meaning it does not have a comparison group, it cannot reliably estimate what these participants would have achieved if they were not in the program, and thus cannot attribute these gains solely to program enrollment. The research team conducted two rounds of site visits and other qualitative data collection at the two service sites and with city-level leadership. This evaluation shares insights and lessons from this pilot that may inform future similar efforts.

## The Challenge

Early pregnancy and childbearing have been closely linked to a host of challenges that affect the well-being of mothers and their children. Teen mothers are more likely than older mothers to leave high school without graduating and have less educational attainment. They also experience greater difficulty obtaining and maintaining employment that provides adequate income to meet the needs of their families (Perper, Peterson, and Manlove 2010). Seven in 10 children living with a single mother are poor or low income, compared with less than one-third (32 percent) of children living in other family structures (Mather 2010). Many single-mother families depend on public assistance at some point in their lives, and they are more likely to experience poor nutrition, education, and health outcomes (Hoffman and Maynard 2008).

Education and earnings for men who become fathers during their teen years are also lower than for their counterparts. Compared with men who do not have children during their teen years, men who have a child with a teen mother tend to complete fewer years of education than other fathers, are less likely to gain a high school diploma or GED, and earn 10 to 15 percent less in income (Brein and Willis 1997; Hoffman 2006).

In New York City, the problem of early pregnancy and childbearing is acute. Though births by teens continue to decline in the city, 2017 still saw approximately 3,600 live births for female teens ages 15 to 19.<sup>1</sup> Poverty and teen pregnancy rates are correlated; New York City neighborhoods with poverty rates above 30 percent have a teen pregnancy rate of nearly 10 percent, triple that of neighborhoods in the city with a less than 10 percent poverty rate (Kaplan 2013). Other consequences of teenage childbirth include increased disconnection from school or employment, lower earnings potential, and worsened outcomes for their children, such as reduced cognitive development.<sup>2</sup>

Vulnerable young parents in New York City also experience food, job, and housing insecurity. The city has more than 40 public assistance programs, several of which directly address job training and placement, unemployment, and underemployment. But young parents receiving public assistance do not have enough comprehensive supports to advance their job skills and find permanent work.

Several approaches have been used to improve outcomes for opportunity youth and young parents in other programs. For example, grantees in the first two rounds of the Young Parents Demonstration program used either enhanced employment and training or mentoring to bolster employment and earnings for participants. Using unemployment insurance wage record data, Urban Institute researchers found that the Young Parents Demonstration intervention had a positive and statistically significant impact on the cumulative earnings of program participants through two years after random assignment when participant data were pooled across the grantees. These impacts faded over time and seemed to be primarily driven by large impacts on the youngest participants (ages 16 to 17) (Trutko et al. 2019). Other evaluations of programs aimed at opportunity youth, such as Job Corps and the ChalleNge initiative have found positive, albeit modest, impacts of services on participant employment (Millenky et al. 2011; Schochet, Burghardt, and Glazerman 2001).

## The New York City Performance Partnership Pilot

The federal P3 initiative was launched in 2014 following passage of the Consolidated Appropriations Act. This initiative “offer[s] a unique opportunity to test innovative, cost-effective, and outcome-focused strategies for improving results for disconnected youth.”<sup>3</sup> P3 allows grantees to blend multiple sources of funding into one source and develop new means of serving disconnected youth.<sup>4</sup> For this initiative, pilot sites can use funding from the US Department of Education, the US Department of Labor, the US Department of Health and Human Services, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, the US Department of Justice, the Corporation for National and Community Service,

and the Institute for Museum and Library Services. Additional flexibility is offered by the federal government to ease certain program requirements.<sup>5</sup>

New York City received a P3 grant as part of the third round of federal funding. The city's P3 program served young fathers and mothers between the ages of 17 and 24.<sup>6</sup> Each of these young parents was enrolled in the federally funded Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Out-of-School Youth (OSY) services to obtain high school equivalency credentials, vocational training, and further employment and educational opportunities. OSY services include education and training, postsecondary bridging, various support services, internship opportunities, and career services for up to one year.

The P3 program was offered to young parents enrolled in WIOA OSY services at two Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow (OBT) locations in Brooklyn: Bushwick and Sunset Park.<sup>7</sup> As part of the P3 enhancement, participants had access to three key services in addition to WIOA OSY:

1. Extending the length of OSY services from one to up to two years;
2. Providing a child care navigator who will link the children of participants to child care slots, provide parenting support, and deliver additional supportive services; and
3. Braiding federal funds and waivers from several sources of funding and changing the metrics of program measurement.

Each enhanced service is described in more detail below.

### **Extended Length of Service**

WIOA OSY provides up to one year of services for enrolled participants. P3 youth were eligible for an additional year of WIOA OSY services to obtain a high school equivalency or diploma, earn work credentials, participate in vocational training, and receive supportive services. This additional time allowed youth to gain more skills that would support their transition into employment and education. After this two-year period, P3 youth were eligible for one year of follow-up services, like all OSY participants.

### **Child Care Navigators**

A second program enhancement was the inclusion of two child care navigators, one at each program site. These navigators worked with young parents to enroll their children in subsidized child care slots

and provided other case management and supportive service navigation (e.g., housing, transportation, clothing). The navigator had lower caseloads than traditional WIOA case managers (25 youth per navigator versus a typical caseload of 40 to 60 youth per case manager), and they took on the responsibilities of a traditional WIOA case manager as well. Child care navigators focused only on the P3 participants and offered group workshops and individual home visits focused on parenting skills and early childhood development. By assisting parents in getting their children into child care and providing other support throughout their OSY enrollment period, the navigators helped remove barriers that young parents faced in completing their education and moving into the workforce.

### **P3 Waivers and Funding**

In addition to enhancing services, the P3 initiative braided funding from WIOA and the Child Care and Development Block Grant to serve participants.<sup>8</sup> These combined funds allowed the program to administer additional time in training and job placement services, along with child care placement and parental support services.

In addition, the P3 initiative received a waiver to collect different performance measures than those tracked by the federal WIOA program. Rather than report on median earnings, credential attainment, and skill gains, the pilot reported on earning high school or industry-recognized credentials, employment after program exit, and skill gains (US Department of Education 2017). Program designers believed the revised performance measures aligned better with the needs of the P3 participants, who often did not have a high school credential at program entry.

### **Program Theory and Logic Model**

Figure 1 displays the program logic model, which describes how inputs, activities, and outputs may lead to better in-program and post-program outcomes. The logic model is organized into five sections, as detailed below.

#### **INPUTS**

The first part of the logic model outlines background context and the organizational, financial, and human resources going into the program. The inputs are split into two overarching categories: federal and local. On the federal side, the inputs fall into three categories: funding through multiple sources (WIOA and the Child Care and Development Block Grant), waivers that allow funds to be braided with fewer restrictions, and technical assistance. On the local level, inputs are the program slots in the

WIOA OSY program and child care slots, up to one additional year of OSY service provision, the two child care navigators who supported the program, and the City organizations that led this initiative as the P3 Collaborative:

- Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD)
- Administration for Children’s Services (ACS)
- Department of Education (DOE), particularly the Living for the Young Family through Education (LYFE) child care centers and District 79 Pathways to Graduation
- Center for Youth Employment
- Mayor’s Office for Economic Opportunity
- Children’s Cabinet

## ACTIVITIES

The logic model outlines program activities, building the foundation participants need to succeed:

- OBT recruits participants into the P3 program to take part in the extended OSY eligibility period, child care navigation, and parenting workshops the child care navigators offer.
- OBT offers OSY services, including training, counseling, learning and internship opportunities, and employment services.
- OBT recruits and trains two child care navigators.
- Child care navigators provide services for P3 youth, including child care placement, case management, and workshops.

## OUTPUTS

The logic model describes the indicators that program activities were carried out successfully: 50 disconnected young people were enrolled in the program, those enrolled participated in the services, and child care navigators helped participants enroll their children in care and provided parenting workshops.

## OUTCOMES

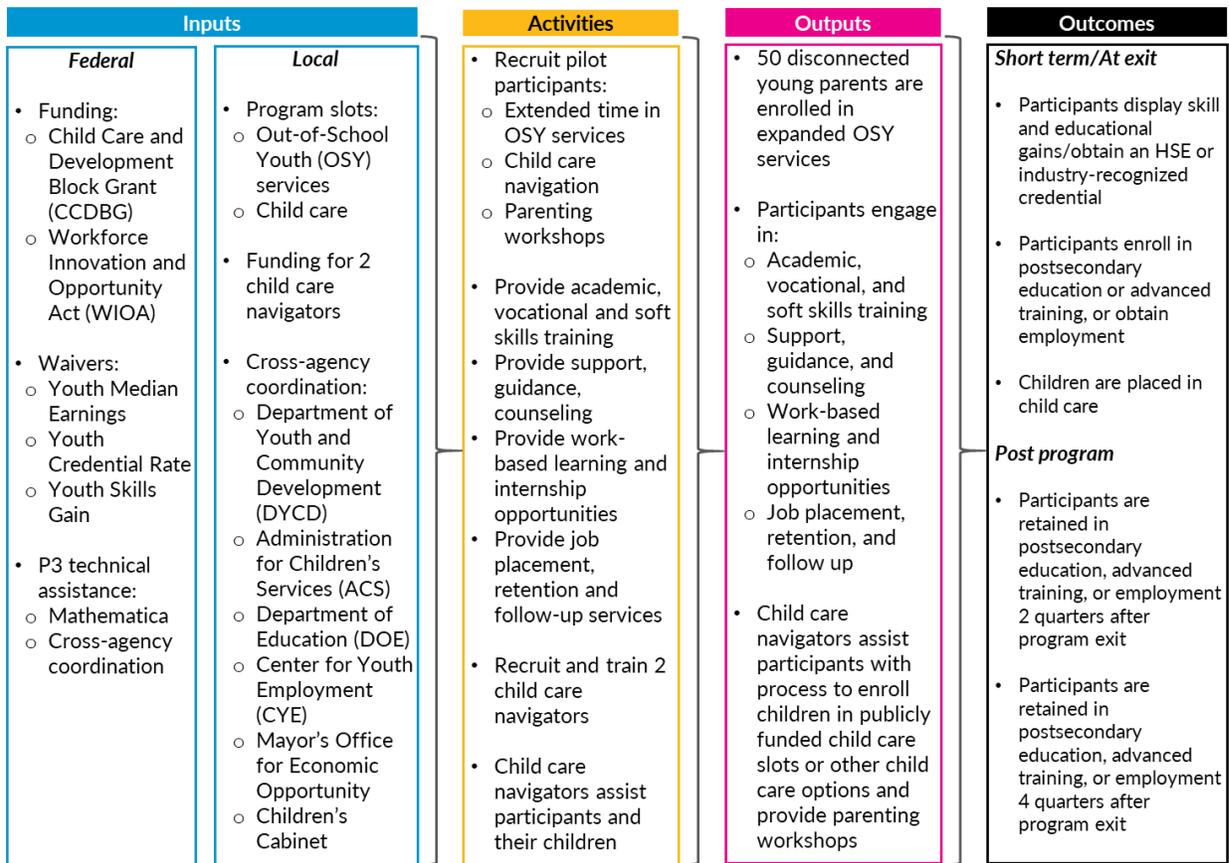
Last, the logic model summarizes what the program would hope to see from P3 participants upon successful completion, in the short term (at exit) and longer term (post program). The short-term outcomes include participants gaining skills, educational credentials, postsecondary education, and

work experience, as well as children being placed in child care. The post-program outcomes include retention in postsecondary education, advanced training, or employment two and four quarters after exit. The evaluation tracked these outcomes for one year following program exit.

### ASSUMPTIONS

Participants' success in achieving desired outcomes through P3 depends on three key assumptions: first, that child care slots are available and needed to promote young parents' success. Second, that more time in the program leads to improved outcomes. Finally, that more intensive navigation leads to improved outcomes. The Study Findings section of this report describes how the program was actually implemented relative to the program model and whether participants had higher levels of education or employment after they left the program relative to levels at intake.

**FIGURE 1**  
**New York City P3 Logic Model**



Assumptions: Child care slots are available | More time leads to improved outcomes | More intense navigation leads to improved outcomes

**Notes:** HSE = high school equivalency; P3 = Performance Partnership Pilot.

# Study Overview

This report shares findings from an implementation and outcomes study of New York City's P3 Grant-funded intervention for young parents. The implementation study examines P3 program implementation at two sites in Brooklyn, as informed by site visits, document review, phone calls, and attendance at annual convenings. Informants include staff implementing the pilot at both P3 sites, such as the child care navigators; program participants; and city-level administrators. The outcomes study uses data from the DYCD's WIOA youth program data tracking system to describe the characteristics, program activities, and outputs and outcomes for all 50 P3 participants.

## Research Questions

This analysis addresses three types of research questions: primary, secondary, and exploratory. The P3 Collaborative and research team discussed the research questions with the evaluation technical assistance provider. The primary research questions focus on outcomes for the 50 P3 youth after their participation in the program. The secondary research questions focus on program implementation, as well as how the young parents experienced service delivery and program participation. Finally, additional exploratory research questions relate to how services were delivered and what could have been done differently.

### Primary Research Questions

1a. In program and at exit:

- Did the participants gain skills and educational (specifically, did they attain measurable skill gains, high school equivalency credentials, or industry-recognized credentials)? If so, how much?
- What was the rate of children's placement in child care?
- What were the postsecondary education, advanced training, or employment outcomes (specifically, enrollment in postsecondary education, enrollment in advanced training, or employment)?

1b. Post program (up to one year after program exit): What were the participants' employment and educational retention outcomes (specifically, enrollment in postsecondary education, enrollment in advanced training, or employment two quarters and four quarters after program exit)?

## Secondary Research Questions

The secondary research questions focus on the three core elements that distinguish the P3 initiative from traditional OSY services: (1) one additional year of OSY services; (2) the child care placements and parenting support the navigators offered; and (3) braided federal funds and waivers. Additional questions not as easily classified are also separated into an additional category.

### ADDITIONAL YEAR OF OSY SERVICES

2a. How did participants use the additional year of OSY services and what specific activities did they participate in?

2b. What additional services or supports could P3 have offered?

### CHILD CARE AND PARENTAL SUPPORT OFFERED BY THE NAVIGATORS

2c. What specific services did the navigators provide how did services align with the training navigators received?

2d. Were navigators offered any additional or concurrent training as the program progressed and if so, how can it be improved?

2e. Did navigators change the manner in which services were provided?

2f. How did participants view the child care and parenting services offered to them?

### BRAIDED FEDERAL FUNDS AND WAIVERS

2g. Did braiding of program funding and changes in performance measures engendered by federal waivers create challenges in operating the program and measuring outcomes? Were there any opportunities?

### OTHER QUESTIONS

2h. How did the sites recruit their target population? What challenges did they face in reaching the target population? What techniques were the most effective?

2i. How well do P3 services address the needs of young parents beyond employment and training?

2j. What challenges do sites face in serving the participants?

2k. How did the navigators, instructors, retention specialists, and other staff continue to engage P3 youth to ensure take-up of services? How do staff address nonparticipation in activities or nonreceipt of services?

2l. Is participant feedback being incorporated into the program's structure and if so, how?

2m. Which additional social services did other organizations offer P3 youth? Should P3 have offered other services?

### **Exploratory, Implementation-Focused Research Questions**

3a. Did P3 youth receive and participate in the intended activities and services? What were the attendance rates?

3b. Were there differences in outcomes (in program or post program) by participant characteristics or program site?

3c. What additional desired in-program outcomes can be considered in future work? Were there unanticipated in-program outcomes that should be considered in future work?

3d. What additional desired post-program outcomes can be considered in future work? Were there unanticipated post-program outcomes that should be considered in future work?

3e. Was the P3 program able to gather sufficient inputs, such as funds, staff, and child care support, needed for implementation? If not, why not?

3f. In what ways were existing OSY services, such as work readiness and classroom training, used to encourage participants to take up P3-enhanced services, such as the support services the navigators provided?

3g. In what ways did P3 use the federal waivers to change any manner in which services were delivered?

3h. What specific efforts can be made to improve programs assisting opportunity youth?

3i. Could other sources of funding have been used to improve program service delivery?

# Evaluation Design

The implementation and outcomes study results in this report are descriptive. This research does not attribute changes in participant conditions directly to participation in the P3 program and services. But it does describe who the New York City P3 program served, what services P3 delivered and how, and participants' well-being at and after program exit relative to when they entered.

## Study Design

The implementation study documented program implementation of the P3 initiative at two sites in Brooklyn through site visits, document review, phone calls, and attendance at annual convenings. During site visits in June 2018 and May 2019, the team spoke with staff implementing the pilot at both P3 sites, including the child care navigators, to understand how the program operated on the ground. These site visits also included focus groups with program participants to understand their experiences with the program and gain insight on what could be changed or improved. In addition, the site visits gave the team an opportunity to assess fidelity to the program based on the logic model that underpins the pilot (figure 1).

The outcomes study provided descriptive information about the program outputs and outcomes for the 50 young parents in the P3 Initiative. The information came from New York City's CAPRICORN system, which tracks participant data for all WIOA youth services.

## Study Population

The population of interest for this evaluation are young fathers and mothers (including expectant parents) between the ages of 17 and 24 living in New York City. Each of these young parents used traditional WIOA OSY services to obtain high school equivalency credentials, vocational training, and further employment and educational opportunities. These young parents participated in their OSY services at two OBT locations in Brooklyn: Bushwick and Sunset Park. In addition to OSY services, each of these young parents participated in P3-enhanced services from child care navigators and had an additional year of WIOA OSY eligibility.

Young people in OSY services undergo extensive screening before enrollment, which limits generalizability of these findings to disconnected young parents overall. To be eligible for participation in the P3 program, youth must have had the following characteristics at enrollment:

- be pregnant or parenting (or the partner of a pregnant person)
- be under age 25 but have not attended school for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter
- have low income, as identified by zip code and verified by family income documentation
- have low (“deficient”) basic skills or be an English-language learner
- enroll in an OBT location at either Bushwick or Sunset Park
- fit within one of the following characteristics:
  - » did not complete high school
  - » is subject to the juvenile or adult justice system
  - » is homeless or runaway
  - » is in foster care; has aged out of the foster care system and is eligible for foster care youth assistance under Section 477, the Social Security Act; or is in out-of-home placement
  - » is an individual with a disability
  - » is a low-income person who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment

There is no comparison group for this study. It is solely descriptive.

To recruit WIOA OSY youth into the P3 program, child care navigators worked with program partners and directly reached out to existing WIOA OSY participants and potentially eligible community members. The details of recruitment and the characteristics of youth served in the program appear in the study findings section. The evaluation includes all P3 participants.

## Data Collection

Both qualitative and quantitative data inform this study.

## Qualitative Data

The evaluation team conducted two two-day site visits during the four-year evaluation period, one in June 2018 and one in May 2019. Key informant interviews, participant focus groups, and program observations were the primary sources of qualitative data. These provided a comprehensive picture of program features and participants' experiences. Two researchers experienced with and trained in qualitative research methods conducted each visit.

The evaluation team's goal during the site visits was to interview all key representatives—both leadership and representative frontline staff across the organization that had direct contact with participants and implemented components of the program. The team interviewed staff at each OBT location that worked with P3 participants and members of the P3 Collaborative responsible for overseeing the program's implementation, as well as each child care navigator. The team examined how the navigators helped young parents enroll their children in care, offered parenting workshops, supported participants throughout the program, and conducted in-home visits.

The evaluation team also conducted focus groups at each site during its first visit. The first focus group was at Bushwick with three active participants. The second focus group was at Sunset Park with four active participants. The focus groups lasted approximately 90 minutes each and provided insight into participants' goals for taking part in the program and their perspectives on the services they used.

After analyzing the interview data collected during the first site visit, the team continued discussions with the P3 Collaborative and OBT staff throughout the fall and winter of 2018 and 2019.

During the second site visit in May 2019, the evaluation team interviewed many of the same staff as the first site visit and new staff hired in the interim. The team sought to further understand how the program intended to provide services and to follow up once participants had exited. The team also sought retrospective perspectives from staff about how they believed the program had operated and what could have been done differently.

In addition to staff interviews, the team again conducted focus groups at both sites. At Bushwick, the team interviewed three participants: two who were active in the program and one who was not. The team also conducted a focus group with two participants at Sunset Park, both whom were no longer actively participating.

Because of the visit's time constraints, the team held follow-up interviews by phone with staff at both OBT locations as well as interviews with three additional P3 participants who were no longer active in the program.

## Quantitative Data

Quantitative data for this study came from DYCD's CAPRICORN data system, the performance tracking system for all WIOA youth programs. The data system tracks participant characteristics, program activities, outputs, and outcomes for up to a year following program exit. These data are kept in a consistent and clean format because they are routinely used for required federal and state reporting. The evaluation team received permission to access deidentified individual-level records for research purposes through a memorandum of understanding with New York City and with approval of the Urban Institute's institutional review board. The variables used in this analysis, as labeled in the WIOA data system, follow:

### DEFINITIONAL

- Unique identifier (not personally identifiable information)

### CHARACTERISTICS

- Date of birth
- Sex
- Individual with a disability
- Ethnicity: Hispanic/Latinx
- Race (multiple allowed): American Indian/Alaska Native; Asian; Black/African American; Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander; White
- Employment status at program entry
- Highest educational level completed at program entry
- School status at program entry
- Pregnant or parenting youth
- Foster care youth status at program entry
- Homeless participant or runaway youth at program entry

- Justice involved (WIOA “ex-offender status”) at program entry
- Low-income status at program entry
- Low levels of literacy at program entry (WIOA-defined “basic skills deficient”)
- Single parent at program entry
- Adult basic education/educational functioning level pretest score

#### PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

- Financial literacy services
- Training services (vocational, educational)
- Postsecondary education participation
- Educational achievement
- Alternative secondary school services
- Work experience opportunities
- Leadership development services
- Supportive services (community service, transportation assistance, child care assistance, housing assistance, reasonable accommodations for disabilities, health care referrals, assistance for uniforms or other work attire, school supplies assistance, payments of fees for employment- or training-related applications, tests, or certifications)
- Adult mentoring services
- Comprehensive guidance or counseling services
- Entrepreneurial skills training
- Labor market and employment information services
- Postsecondary transition and preparatory activities

#### OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

These indicators relate to research questions 1a and 1b.

- Training completion
- Post-exit education or training program enrollment

- Employment and employment retention after exit
- Attainment of recognized credentials
- Skill gains (secondary transcript, training milestone, skill progression)
- School status at exit
- Adult basic education/educational functioning level post test score

Nineteen participants' fourth-quarter follow-up period occurred during the shutdown from the COVID-19 pandemic, likely affecting their employment and education opportunities.

## Analytic Sample

The analytic sample includes 50 young mothers and fathers who participated in the P3-enhanced OSY services offered at two Brooklyn OBT locations; two child care navigators; WIOA case managers working at the participating centers; community organizations working with OBT to provide young parents with additional services and resources; and OBT and DYCD management and leadership staff.

## Methods

Both quantitative and qualitative analysis were employed in the evaluation.

### Quantitative

The quantitative analyses are descriptive. Binary variables are presented as percentages, in which the numerator is the number of youth with that characteristic and the denominator is the total number of youth for whom data were collected. Continuous variables are presented as means and standard deviations, and ranges are also included when they are informative.

### DEALING WITH MISSING VARIABLES

Few missing variables are used in this analysis. Where data are missing, results among those with available data and the percentage of cases with missing information are instead reported.

## Qualitative

The evaluation team took a thematic approach to the qualitative analysis. The research lead, who led both site visits and all other qualitative data collection, synthesized the findings in a detailed memorandum. The team shared and verified information from this memorandum with members of the P3 Collaborative, though the team only responded by correcting factual errors and putting in clarifications or context, without modifying substantive findings or insights.

# Study Findings

This section describes the inputs and start-up activities necessary to establish the P3 initiative. It then integrates a discussion of recruitment with a description of participant characteristics, describes participants' program experiences based on qualitative and program data, and characterizes the outputs and outcomes for participants who enrolled in P3 programming.

## Inputs and Start-up Activities

Research Questions:

- 3e. Was the P3 program able to gather sufficient inputs, such as funds, staff, and child care support, needed for implementation? If not, why not?
- 3g. In what ways did P3 use the federal waivers to change any manner in which services were delivered?
- 3i. Could other sources of funding have been used to improve program service delivery?

The P3 Collaborative formed and oversaw the P3 program, as described earlier in this report. Collaborative members noted that the impetus for the program emerged from discussions with the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Children's Cabinet, the Center for Youth Employment, and DYCD to find another program providing employment and training services for young parents, beyond those already existing. From there, the P3 Collaborative decided to support young parents through conversations with OBT about enhancing their WIOA OSY model. The focus on young parents represents a combination of Children's Cabinet priorities. The idea was not to create an entirely new program structure but to braid existing services to enhance opportunities for young parents.

The P3 Collaborative had been working together and with OBT for several years, which helped foster this initiative's development. One P3 Collaborative member highlighted how these partnerships and existing relationships were critical to ensure P3 could operate, stating, "Ten, fifteen years ago there didn't seem to be an ability to allow for the coordination of program services, but now there is something going on that's great. There's an acknowledgment that when dealing with a young person with multiple barriers, you really need to spend time with them and use multiple efforts."

The P3 Collaborative spoke of how agencies worked together to establish the program and that clear lines of responsibility helped foster the initiative. Crucial to program functioning was the work of the DYCD, which oversees WIOA OSY programming in NYC. DYCD helped handle the day-to-day management of this initiative, including monitoring and ~~contracting~~ with OBT.

The P3 initiative braided \$1,966,340 in WIOA and Child Care and Development Block Grant funds to serve participants. This total amount reflects funding available for P3 from 2017 to 2020. These combined funds allowed the program to administer training, job placement, child care, and parental support services for program participants. P3 also received in-kind contributions from child care providers.

The P3 Collaborative anticipated being able to use Community Services Block Grant funds to help support the pilot. The funds were cut in the first year of program implementation, though other sources provided sufficient funds to cover program costs. Collaborative members shared that they could have theoretically used City tax levy dollars—a flexible funding source—and may have been able to cover direct child care services. The P3 Collaborative did not pursue this funding source, however, because the goal was not to provide child care directly but instead to help young parents navigate care options already available in the public system (which exist but can be challenging to access).

Once the program was conceptualized and funded, interviewed OBT staff did not think it was difficult to establish the P3 initiative at the two OBT locations. Original preparations included hiring child care navigators and providing some additional training for staff, but the changes in Bushwick and Sunset Park were modest. One staff member said the program fit well into their OSY youth program. In fact, P3 participants were sometimes interspersed with non-P3 participants receiving similar services, such as studying for Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) exams (high school equivalency credentials). OBT partnered with DOE District 79 Pathways to Graduation to provide TASC instruction.

Child care provision was a central P3 support, but it was the most difficult aspect of program development. Originally, the program sought to work with ACS to provide participants with child care slots. However, these slots did not become available as expected because of changes to ACS service offerings and high barriers to entry for participants (long application timelines and extensive documentation requirements). P3 Collaborative and OBT staff were able to redirect and arrange for local LYFE centers, an initiative of the NYC DOE, to provide high-quality, low-cost child care for many participants' children. During the first site visits, staff noted how they had been able to work successfully with LYFE centers to ensure a seamless continuum of care for participants as the summer

was beginning; service gaps were initially a concern for the P3 program because LYFE did not previously provide summer services. One challenge was that LYFE centers follow the public school calendar, and thus observe more holidays and breaks than OBT.

## Recruitment and Participant Characteristics

Research Questions:

- 2h. How did the sites recruit their target population? What challenges did they face in reaching the target population? What techniques were the most effective?
- 3f. In what ways were existing OSY services, such as work readiness and classroom training, used to encourage participants to take up P3-enhanced services, such as the support services the navigators provided?

### Recruitment

P3 program staff and partners recruited participants in a variety of ways. Each of the two site navigators did presentations and conducted outreach to key partners, including ACS and the New York City Human Resources Administration. Numerous participants in focus groups were recruited through partner agencies, and found hand-off from their service providers to OBT to be easy. Existing OBT recruitment and outreach teams helped develop program fliers targeting the community. The centers were able to draw participants from other service offerings; a few focus group participants had been in OBT programs before becoming P3 participants. During the second round of site visits, staff noted that their recruitment goals had largely been met because early program participants generated positive word of mouth.

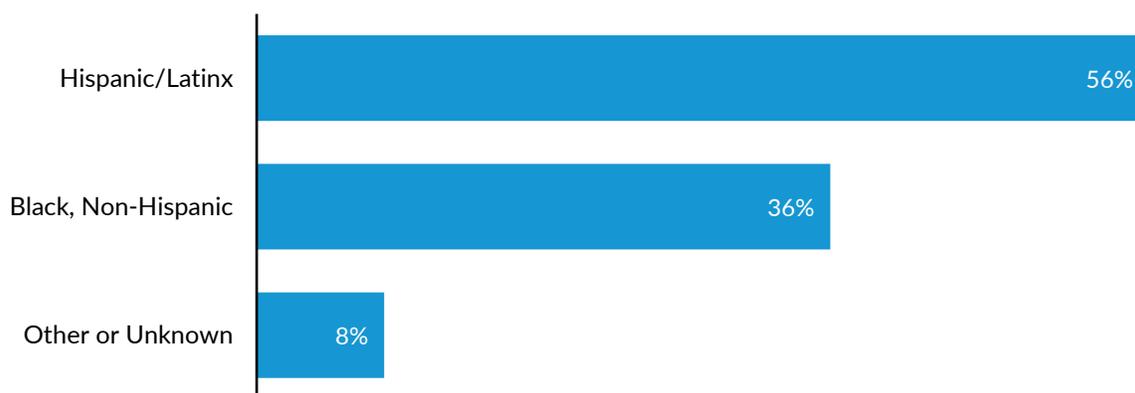
Recruitment of participants was one of the greatest challenges for the program. Initial participant recruitment went smoothly, but getting the program to the target of 50 enrollees was difficult. One staff member said that recruitment was somewhat undermined because early outreach emphasized “free child care” when in fact the child care was largely subsidized and often not totally free. Ultimately, the availability of free or subsidized care varied based on the age of the child and other factors out of OBT’s control; for example, few infant slots were available in Brooklyn at the time of P3 enrollment. Numerous potential participants came to OBT locations with the expectation that they could get free child care for entering the program; once they found out they could not, their interest waned. A P3 Collaborative member added that other potential participants declined when they

realized that accepting free or subsidized child care would trigger a review of their benefits from other city agencies, prompted through the City's linked data systems. Another factor may have been the strong economy and relatively high minimum wage in New York City at the time. P3 Collaborative members noted that recruitment into education, training, and employment programs was challenging during this period.

## Participant Characteristics

The full cohort of 50 participants was mostly female (88 percent) and represented various racial and ethnic groups. As summarized in figure 2, over half of participants (56 percent) were Hispanic/Latinx, and just over one-third (36 percent) were non-Hispanic Black/African American. Figure 3 shows that participants ranged from 17 to 24 years old at enrollment, with a median age of 21. On average, participants identified as non-Hispanic Black/African American were slightly more likely than participants identified with other races and ethnicities to be under 20 years old.<sup>9</sup> Fewer than three participants had a disability, three (6 percent) were identified as homeless or runaway youth, and fewer than three were in foster care at program entry. Three-quarters of participants (76 percent) were unmarried parents.

**FIGURE 2**  
**P3 Program Participants' Race and Ethnicity**



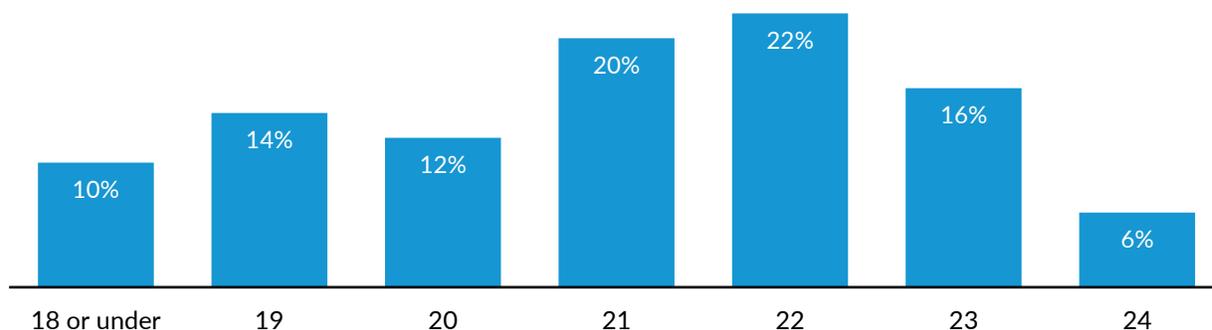
Source: New York City CAPRICORN data system.  
Note:  $n = 50$ .

Percent

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FIGURE 3

P3 Program Participants' Age at Program Entry



Source: New York City CAPRICORN data system.

Note: n = 50.

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None of the 50 participants were enrolled in school at the time of program entry. None had a high school diploma or equivalent, though all had completed at least a year of secondary school, with the highest completed grade level ranging from 9th to 11th grade. Forty-one participants (82 percent) had low basic skill levels (called “deficient” by WIOA terminology). That is, they had English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level or that they were unable to compute, problem solve, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary for functioning in a job. In addition, all P3 participants were identified as having low-income status, and none were employed at the time of program entry. None were justice involved (“ex-offender status”) at program entry, and none were flagged as English-language learners.

## Program Activities

### Research Questions:

- 2a. How did participants use the additional year of OSY services and what specific activities did they participate in?
- 2c. What specific services did the navigators provide how did services align with the training navigators received?
- 2d. Were navigators offered any additional or concurrent training as the program progressed and if so, how can it be improved?
- 2e. Did navigators change the manner in which services were provided?
- 2f. How did participants view the child care and parenting services offered to them?

- 2i. How well do P3 services address the needs of young parents beyond employment and training?
- 2j. What challenges do sites face in serving the participants?
- 2k. How did the navigators, instructors, retention specialists, and other staff continue to engage P3 youth to ensure take-up of services? How do staff address nonparticipation in activities or nonreceipt of services?
- 2l. Is participant feedback being incorporated into the program's structure and if so, how?
- 2m. Which additional social services did other organizations offer P3 youth? Should P3 have offered other services?
- 3a. Did P3 youth receive and participate in the intended activities and services? What were the attendance rates?

## Service Participation

P3 participants engaged in base services through WIOA OSY programming. The staff described P3 participants having access to a menu of WIOA OSY services with multiple entry and exit points. An intensive eight-week foundation course that took place five days a week for six hours a day was standard, no matter what participants scored on their initial Test of Adult Basic Education skills exam. In addition to help preparing for their TASC high school equivalency exam, WIOA OSY offered participants access to Microsoft Office credentialing, soft skills training, interpersonal skills training, resume writing, and a suite of other services. These services, available to both P3 and non-P3 participants, were designed to help them acclimate to WIOA OSY programming and change their mindset about learning while getting them more comfortable working in a job.

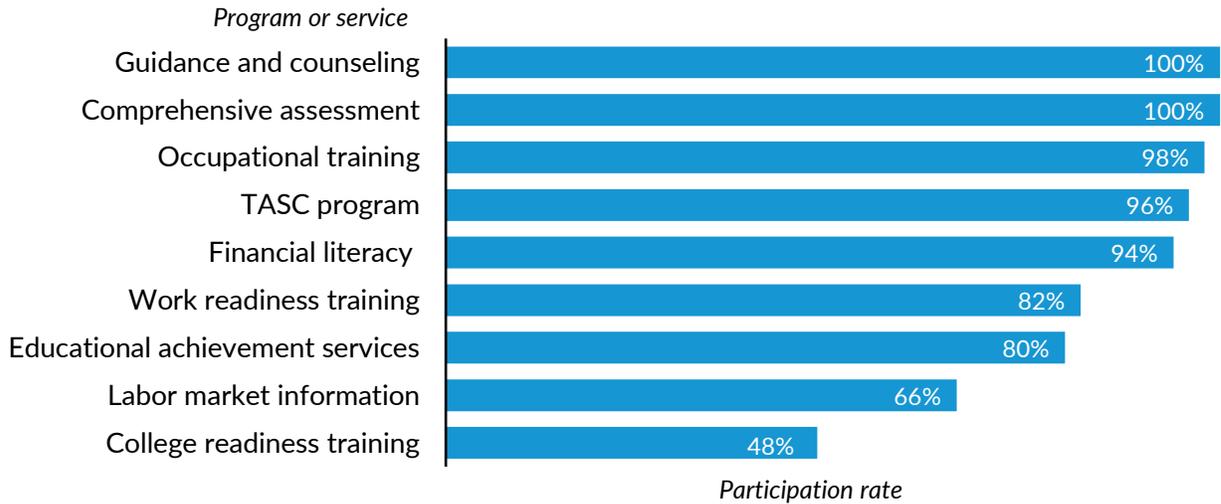
All participants participated in some level of service. In fact, all 50 participants engaged in between 4 and 11 services of the 12 offered. As summarized in figure 4, the program data recorded that

- 50 participants (100 percent) received guidance and counseling services,
- 50 participants (100 percent) received a comprehensive assessment,
- 49 participants (98 percent) received occupational skills training,
- 48 participants (96 percent) took part in high school equivalency programming or preparation,
- 47 participants (94 percent) completed financial literacy services,<sup>10</sup>
- 41 participants (82 percent) participated in work readiness skills training,

- 40 participants (80 percent) received services related to educational achievement, such as tutoring and study skills training,
- 33 participants (66 percent) participated in labor market information sessions,
- 24 participants (48 percent) received college readiness skills training, and
- Fewer than three participants participated in an adult mentoring program.

Participants may have completed some (or most) of these services through the foundation course, but it is not possible to discern from the data. The data also do not include information about service intensity, such as hours of services completed.

**FIGURE 4**  
**Service Participation during P3 Program Enrollment**



**Source:** New York City CAPRICORN data system.

**Notes:** *n* = 50. Participants could participate in more than one service. Not shown: Fewer than three participants received adult mentoring services. TASC = Test Assessing Secondary Completion (high school equivalency credentials).

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Participants completed a similar suite of services during the initial eight-week foundation course. Afterward, each participant chose their services and had greater freedom to customize their schedule.

Participants also had an opportunity to obtain a 100-hour internship with a local employer in sectors such as real estate, retail, or health care. The job coordinator worked with participants to find an internship each participant could be passionate about, explaining that it was a step in the right direction. The 26 P3 participants (52 percent) who obtained internships were paid \$13 per hour, the minimum wage in NYC at the time. Those who participated in focus groups seemed to enjoy the

internships, and employers spoke highly about the participants. Because many participants achieved their TASC credentials earlier than expected, and additional funds were available, four participants (8 percent) were able to get a second 100-hour internship in the second year of programming. Once the internships were completed, participants focused exclusively on obtaining their TASC credentials, coming to classes as frequently as they could.

Staff noted their connection to P3 participants and how they worked hard to help each succeed. Their navigator and other OBT staff assisted participants with their classes, internships, job searches, or other areas of their lives. Participants often reported becoming close with their classroom instructors, who provided support beyond teaching them the skills needed to obtain a certificate or pass a TASC exam.

#### **P3 ENHANCEMENT: CHILD CARE**

Participants received subsidized child care until they obtained their TASC credentials through the OBT partnership with District 79 Pathways to Graduation, part of the NYC DOE and connected to the LYFE centers. OBT worked with LYFE centers to extend P3 participants' child care eligibility as participants completed internships and engaged in other P3 services. According to P3 Collaborative members, P3 participants could also continue enrolling their children in LYFE centers after leaving the program if they joined a postsecondary education or training program.

Both staff and participants expressed high regard for LYFE center child care. Per P3 program data, 17 participants (34 percent) used publicly funded child care while enrolled in P3 services. P3 Collaborative members noted that other participants may have arranged family care or chosen different affordable or logistically convenient options that required less documentation and maintenance for continued eligibility. Collaborative members further clarified that this was consistent with the role of the child care navigators, which was not to guarantee enrollment in a LYFE center, but instead to help participants understand and assess their best options for care.

Some participants marveled at the low cost of child care services, although a few thought the cost would be entirely covered by the program and some ended up paying a modest amount. A P3 Collaborative member clarified that the amount each participant paid depended on the care provider and subsidy received.

#### **P3 ENHANCEMENT: CHILD CARE NAVIGATORS**

One key success was the close relationships participants developed with their navigators, especially during the first year of programming, before the original two navigators left their positions.

Participants expressed that they were extremely pleased with the initial navigators at both sites and developed close relationships that allowed them to flourish within the services. Staff members reported that having smaller caseloads than traditional OSY programs allowed navigators to get to know each participant well, and navigators had near-daily contact with some participants in the active phase of their programming.

In addition to helping participants find child care, the navigators offered parenting workshops. Multiple workshops were provided monthly, covering topics including how to deal with stress and taking care of children. The workshops allowed participants to learn from each other and helped them bond as they shared similar circumstances. The original intended curriculum was the Parents as Teachers curriculum, but the workshops ultimately used the Young Moms, Young Dads curriculum. The navigators said the switch made sense because it allowed participants greater flexibility and more input. OBT staff also noted that Young Moms, Young Dads was “targeted specifically with the needs of young parents, which was helpful to account for their youth development as young adults as well as current experience.”

P3 program data recorded that all 50 young people participated in guidance and counseling services, which may include navigation services but can also include other counseling, such as drug or alcohol abuse counseling. In addition, 31 participants (62 percent) received supportive services,<sup>11</sup> many of which would have been coordinated through their navigators.

## **Navigator Training and Service Provision**

A key element of P3 program implementation was ensuring that child care navigators had the correct skills and abilities to work with young parents. In interviews, staff indicated that they anticipated participants would be disconnected from education, employment, and many wraparound services. The staff also anticipated that participants would face internal barriers, including emotional, mental, and financial challenges.

OBT exerted considerable effort to train the staff. During their work with the P3 program, staff completed training on identifying and preventing child abuse; understanding participants’ different backgrounds; assessing participants’ skill levels and barriers, such as their mental health; and conducting parenting workshops. Program designers explained that child care navigators underwent two weeks of training before formally beginning their jobs because of the close relationships they were expected to develop with the participants and because they were newer to OBT.

The staff all spoke highly of their training and the level of communication, and they believed the training was effective in helping them perform their responsibilities. Staff believed training and communication helped reduce the time needed to acclimate to their new positions, though each noted that actually performing their respective jobs helped make them comfortable in their roles.

Despite initial needs assessments, many participants had issues that went beyond what many OBT staff were initially trained for that were difficult for participants to overcome while going through the program. Problems included mental health barriers, domestic violence threats, low morale, and problems with emotional trauma and abuse. These issues led many participants not to have career or life goals before entering the program, although, as participant interviews highlight, staff were able to help young parents generate goals. OBT staff worked to improve their ability to notice these issues and to mitigate adverse effects on participants' performance, largely through emotional support and referrals to local agencies. Nevertheless, such issues represented a challenge beyond what the program could effectively address.

For reasons that were not explicitly clarified but that may relate to the difficulty of the role, the navigators at both sites left their respective positions relatively early in the program's operation—Sunset Park in spring 2018 and Bushwick in fall 2018. Staff at both sites noted that losing navigators disrupted services for participants, with the issues appearing to be greater in Sunset Park than in Bushwick. Onboarding navigators required a considerable amount of training, and it took months to replace the navigators at each location. Hiring new navigators was also complicated by the funding streams, which only allowed OBT to post the positions as temporary six-month appointments before DYCD approved ongoing funding for the P3 program, attracting a limited candidate pool. In Bushwick, OBT retention and counseling staff who had been working with the participants served as interim child care navigators and created a collaborative environment to support participants, and the transition was mostly seamless. At Sunset Park, a new navigator was brought on in fall 2018, but the training took several weeks. P3 Collaborative staff spoke of how losing navigators was an adverse event for the program, one that future iterations will try to prevent.

### **Extra Year of WIOA OSY Services**

Interviewees indicated that extending the program from one to two years with an additional year of follow-up was a major program improvement, for three reasons. First, it allowed the program to enroll some participants in the second year of programming rather than all in the first year, allowing the sites to hit their enrollment goals. (While staff wanted all participants to enroll early in the program to help

them achieve the full scope of OBT services, this proved more difficult than planned, as discussed previously.) Second, the extended timeline allowed for greater flexibility with enrollment scheduling. The WIOA OSY enrollment period for the program year ends on June 30. Under traditional WIOA programming, a participant would need to exit the program by September 30, even if they had enrolled in March or April, limiting the services they could obtain. The additional year meant that participants could not only complete more services, but also enroll in the program with less concern about the exit date. Third, extending the program allowed the numerous participants who had children while enrolled to take time off and focus on their newborns.

Staff perceived that the extra year of programming helped prepare participants to achieve positive outcomes in their future. Staff and participants said that their most active time in the program was the first five or six months, but this was different for each participant and how much time they needed to achieve certain outcomes, especially the amount of time needed to pass the TASC exam. Staff and participants at both OBT centers used the extra year not primarily for active services, but rather to prepare for success after the program's end. For some, success meant passing their TASC exam and therefore using the extra time to seek additional tutoring and academic support. For others, it meant meeting with staff to discuss enrollment in further education or internships. For most, this meant focusing on what employment they could obtain in the coming months that would provide an adequate wage for them and their families. For all, the extra year was a good way for participants to prepare for the future without feeling the pressure of the tight timeline of a traditional OSY program.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the recruitment challenges, program data demonstrate that the length of program participation varied widely. Enrollment ranged from 20 days to just under two years, with an average of seven months. The 11 participants (22 percent) enrolled for a year or more were less likely to get college readiness skills training (18 percent versus 56 percent of those enrolled less than a year,  $p < 0.05$ ) but more likely to get internships (100 percent versus 38 percent of those enrolled less than a year,  $p < 0.01$ ). Other services were not significantly different by length of enrollment, nor were the number of services completed.

## **Experiences of the Program**

Both staff and participants were pleased with the quality of services provided. On both site visits, OBT staff described how much they thought the P3 program was helping young parents and believed the enhancements were effective. The child care navigators were viewed as an integral part of the team, and they reportedly worked well with OBT staff to seamlessly support participants. As discussed, staff

also believed the extra year for the program was a real benefit for participants. Staff expressed amazement at how positive the outcomes had been considering how many difficulties participants faced before entering the program. One staff member noted, “When you look at all they face at home, the fact that they can come in here and succeed is just wonderful.”

While staff were positive about the program’s perceived effects, they did wish for more engagement from some participants. Numerous participants gave birth and had a lapse in program services, causing some to disengage from the program. Other staff opined that some participants lacked motivation, and while they were able to bolster it for most, staff perceived that some participants did not have the drive and dropped out of the program. P3 Collaborative members indicated that they relayed participant feedback to OBT staff after the first evaluation site visit so OBT could refine their service offerings and better engage participants.

Participants also seemed to have a positive experience with the P3 program. Participants in focus groups were pleased with the support they received from staff in linking them to critical services and child care, helping them attain their TASCs and other key credentials, and providing them with emotional support. Participants enjoyed the base services they participated in, including TASC preparation, and believed that the teachers did an excellent job in preparing them for their exam. They also liked their internship experiences and said that P3 was beneficial in helping them obtain employment after they left the program. One participant noted that at times, she “wanted to give up, but [staff] kept pushing me until I succeeded.” Another said that simply being at school “lifted my mood.”

Participants’ perceptions of their navigators were positive, especially the first two navigators at each site. One participant said that “everything positive that had happened [for her] was a result of this program, and especially [the navigator].” Participants reported that navigators helped them connect with crucial services, such as food and housing. Others stated that they found the navigator to be someone they could rely on to provide critical emotional support as they went through the program.

Sunset Park participants noted that losing the navigator reduced their connection to their OBT location’s services, although these participants were no longer in the “active” portion of the program. One participant noted that although she had not formally exited the program, she had not been contacted by an individual at Sunset Park for nearly 10 months as of May 2019. For her, the lack of contact was not a big issue because she was able to obtain employment, but she said others who were still navigating their futures had discussed this problem with her.

# Outputs and Outcomes

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## Research Questions:

- 1a. In program and at exit:
    - Did the participants gain skills and educational (specifically, did they attain measurable skill gains, high school equivalency credentials, or industry-recognized credentials)? If so, how much?
    - What was the rate of children's placement in child care?
    - What were the postsecondary education, advanced training, or employment outcomes (specifically, enrollment in postsecondary education, enrollment in advanced training, or employment)?
  - 1b. Post program (up to one year after program exit): What were the participants' employment and educational retention outcomes (specifically, enrollment in postsecondary education, enrollment in advanced training, or employment two quarters and four quarters after program exit)?
  - 3b. Were there differences in outcomes (in program or post program) by participant characteristics or program site?
- 

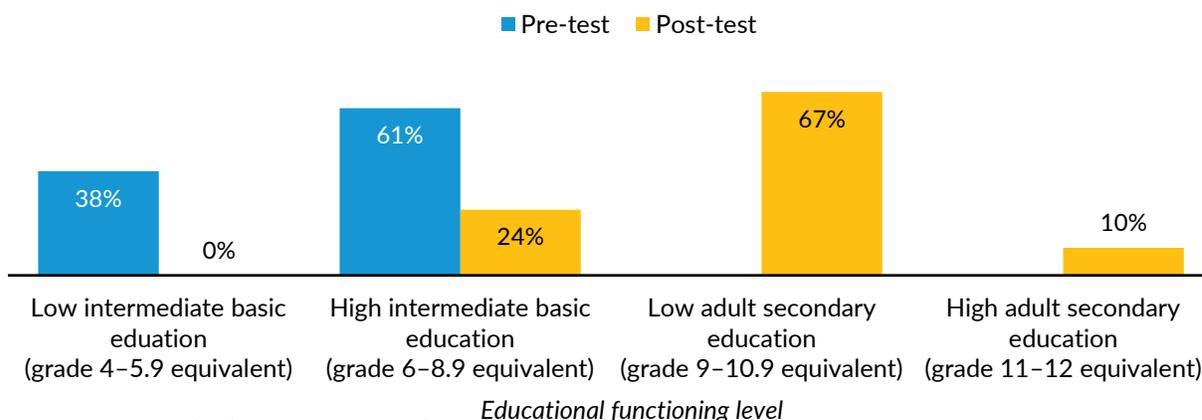
The outcomes study compares participants' skill levels, education, and employment at program exit and for up to four quarters after exit, relative to their status at program entry. The logic model also documents that the program intended to affect the rate of children placed in child care, but that measure is not tracked in the city's data system. Qualitative information about child care access after program exit is instead reported. As noted in the Evaluation Design section, 19 participants' fourth-quarter follow-up period occurred during the shutdown from the COVID-19 pandemic, likely affecting their employment and education opportunities.

## Skill Levels

At program entry, 41 P3 participants (82 percent) were identified as having "deficient" skill levels, meaning they functioned below the 9th grade-equivalent skill level. Over half of P3 participants labeled as having deficient basic skills saw growth in their skill levels: 21 of 41 (51 percent) had a recorded skill gain on a basic skills assessment.<sup>12</sup> The evaluation only has detailed score data for participants who started out as "deficient" and who experienced gains, summarized in figure 5. Of those who saw gains, eight began at a low intermediate basic education skill level (equivalent grades 4.0–5.9). Five moved up one skill level (to a grade 6.0–8.9 equivalent), and three moved up two skill levels (to a grade 9.0–10.9 equivalent). The other 13 began at the high intermediate basic education

skill level (equivalent grade level 6.0–8.9).<sup>13</sup> Of those who started at the slightly higher level, fewer than three moved up two levels (to a grade 11–12 equivalent), and the remainder moved up one level.

**FIGURE 5**  
**Educational Functioning Level Pre- and Post-Test Scores for Participants Considered “Skill Deficient” at Entry Who Experienced a Skill Gain**



Source: New York City CAPRICORN data system.

Note:  $n = 21$ .

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Those who experienced a skill gain were significantly older than those who did not: the average age of 21.6 versus 20.5 ( $p < 0.05$ ). They were less likely to be Black/African American: 19 percent of those who experienced a skill gain were Black/African American, compared with 48 percent of those who did not experience a skill gain ( $p < 0.05$ ). This might be because Black/African-American participants were somewhat younger on average than other P3 participants, though it could also relate to something about the delivery of basic skill remediation services or differences by service location (which is not specified in the data).<sup>14</sup> There were no significant differences by enrollment date, or for other racial and ethnic identifications.

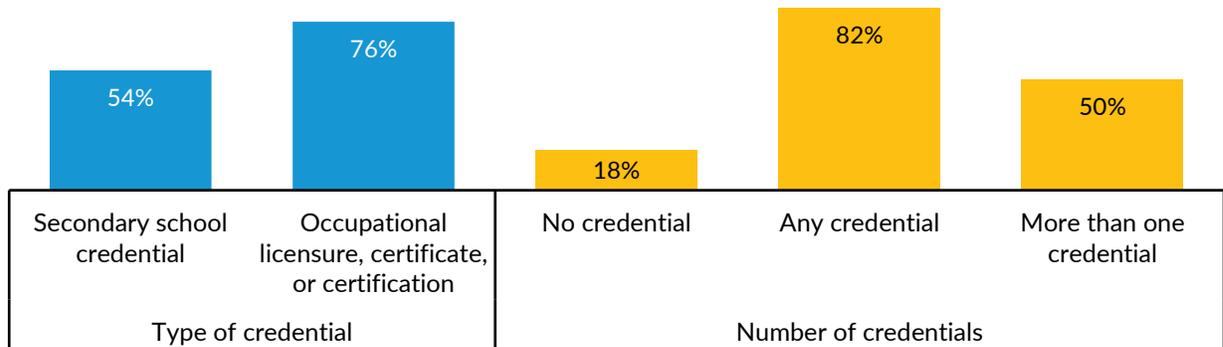
## Education and Training

Participants had completed between 9th and 11th grade at program entry. None had graduated from high school and none were enrolled in school at P3 entry. As displayed in figure 6, by the end of the one-year follow-up period, 41 participants (82 percent) had earned some type of educational or training credential, and half had earned multiple credentials:

- 27 participants (54 percent) earned a secondary school credential, or equivalent.

- » 25 participants who earned a secondary school credential also earned another credential; that is, 50 percent of P3 participants earned at least two credentials.
- 38 participants (76 percent) earned at least one occupational licensure, certificate, or certification.
- Fewer than three earned another type of recognized degree, diploma, or certificate (not shown in figure).
- Nine participants (18 percent) did not earn any credentials.

**FIGURE 6**  
**P3 Participants' Educational and Occupational Credential Attainment**



**Source:** New York City CAPRICORN data system.

**Notes:** *n* = 50. Not shown: fewer than three participants earned another type of recognized credential.

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In addition, six participants (12 percent) were enrolled in postsecondary education at some point during the P3 program, two quarters after program exit, or four quarters after program exit. Three (6 percent) were still enrolled as of the latest follow-up observation.

The 27 participants who earned secondary school credentials took a little under eight months on average to earn their TASC credentials, with a range from 3 to 15 months. OBT and P3 Collaborative staff were pleasantly surprised by how quickly many participants achieved their TASC credentials, thereby freeing them for additional supports provided by the OBT locations. Staff perceived that P3 participants' TASC attainment rates were double that of similar populations not receiving this enhancement; in actuality, the P3 rate was about 1.7 times the citywide high school equivalency credential attainment rate in OSY programs during the 2018–19 school year.<sup>15</sup> Staff found this perceived success to be especially notable, given that they observed many participants having children during the program or coming in with more barriers than anticipated. Staff and program designers

believed that this positive outcome spoke to the success of the program's enhancements. Initial intake screening, though, may have identified young people who were particularly motivated to succeed.

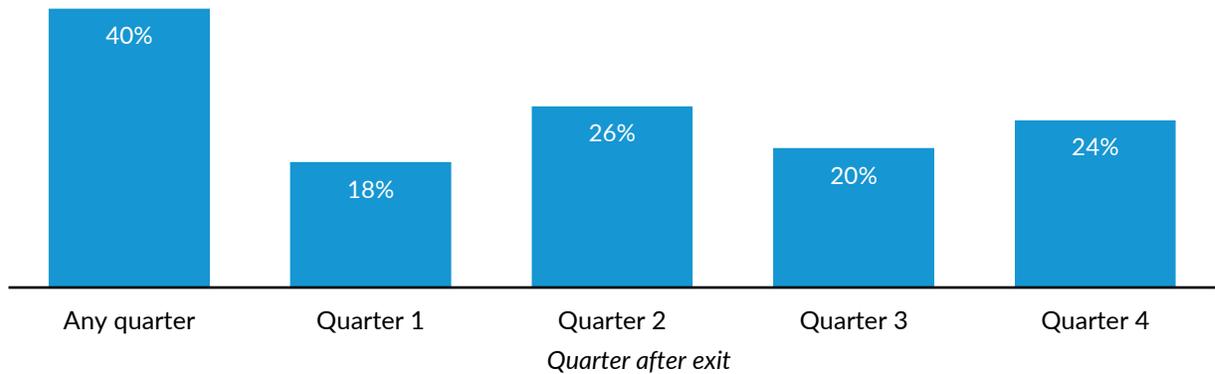
There were no significant differences in the age, sex, race or ethnicity, or enrollment date of those who earned a secondary credential and those who did not or in those who earned an occupational licensure, certificate, or certification and those who did not.

## Employment

All 50 P3 participants were unemployed at program entry, but 20 participants (40 percent) were recorded in the data as employed in at least one of the four quarters after exit. However, the employment rates varied. As summarized in figure 7, 9 participants (18 percent) were employed in the first quarter after exit, 13 participants (26 percent) were employed in the second quarter after exit, 10 participants (20 percent) were employed in the third quarter after exit, and 12 participants (24 percent) were employed in the fourth quarter after exit. Six participants (12 percent) retained employment in the fourth quarter after exit with the same employer as they had in the second quarter after exit. Occupations included security guards, cashiers, hotel/motel desk clerks, education administrators, and insurance sales agents.<sup>16</sup> It is important to note that for 32 percent of participants, the fourth quarter after exit follow-up period took place during the COVID-19 shutdown.

Those who were employed at any point after exit entered the P3 program significantly earlier, by about three months on average ( $p < 0.05$ ). Those employed were more likely to be Black/African American: 55 percent of those observed as employed were identified in the data as Black/African American, compared with 23 percent of those not employed ( $p < 0.05$ ). There were no significant differences in being employed at any point after exit by age or sex.

**FIGURE 7**  
**P3 Participant Employment after Exit**



**Source:** New York City CAPRICORN data system.  
**Notes:** *n* = 50.

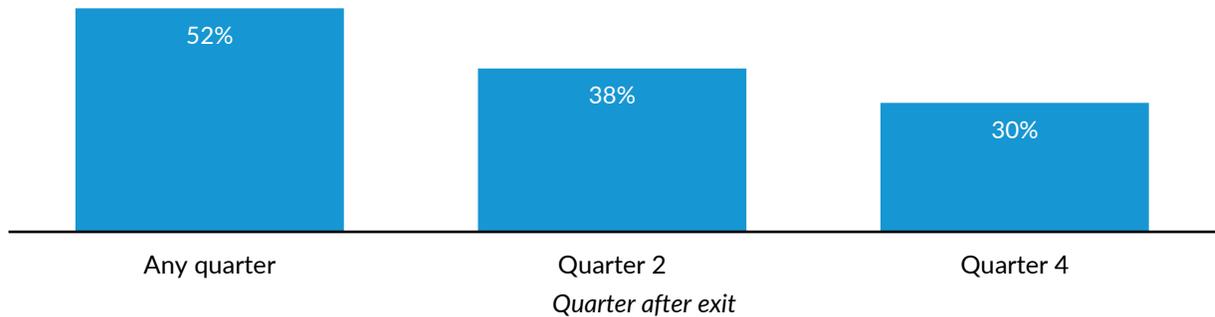
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### Connection to Education or Employment

After exiting the P3 program, 26 participants (52 percent) were at some point in the four follow-up quarters employed, enrolled in a training program, or enrolled in a postsecondary educational program leading to a recognized credential (“connected”). However, only 19 participants (38 percent) were employed or in education or training in the second quarter after program exit, and only 15 participants (30 percent) in the fourth quarter after exit. Employment rates were inconsistent in each quarter after exit, fluctuating around 20 percent of participants, though 20 participants (40 percent) were employed in at least one of the four quarters after they left the program. Figure 8 summarizes participant connection in the second and fourth quarters after exit (the only two quarters when this measure was recorded).

FIGURE 8

**P3 Participant Connection (Employment or Education) after Exit**



**Source:** New York City CAPRICORN data system.

**Notes:**  $n = 50$ . “Connection” indicates that a participant was either employed or enrolled in a training or postsecondary program. Data on connection were not available in quarters 2 and 4.

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There were no significant differences in the age, sex, race or ethnicity, or enrollment date of those who were connected with employment, education, or training at some point after program exit and those who were not.

## Child Care

Staff reported that participants’ access to high-quality, low-cost child care decreased as program participation ended. The access participants had during the P3 program was difficult to transfer once they exited. Follow-up data do not track this measure.

Staff indicated that participants attending CUNY had access to affordable child care, and P3 Collaborative members indicated that LYFE centers could continue to provide care to those entering postsecondary education or training. But participants entering the workforce with children under age 4 found access much more difficult. P3 Collaborative members noted that for low-income working parents to get child care subsidies through the Human Resources Administration, they must first work for 30 days, which is difficult to manage without child care. Lack of affordable child care after the program ended was a challenge for many participants as they sought to build on the skills and educational gains they made. This may explain the modest employment outcomes—it is difficult to work and retain a job without reliable and affordable child care. Several staff and participants recommended better child care provision after the program, although the city government would need to find additional resources to support it.

# Discussion and Recommendations

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## Research Questions:

- 2b. What additional services or supports could P3 have offered?
  - 2g. Did braiding of program funding and changes in performance measures engendered by federal waivers create challenges in operating the program and measuring outcomes? Were there any opportunities?
  - 3c. What additional desired in-program outcomes can be considered in future work? Were there unanticipated in-program outcomes that should be considered in future work?
  - 3d. What additional desired post-program outcomes can be considered in future work? Were there unanticipated post-program outcomes that should be considered in future work?
  - 3h. What specific efforts can be made to improve programs assisting opportunity youth?
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Per the program logic model (figure 1), the P3 program combined federal resources—including funding, performance measure waivers, and technical assistance—with local resources—including program slots, more funding, and cross-agency coordination—to serve young parents in New York City. The program intended to recruit 50 participants into three program enhancements on top of traditional WIOA OSY services: extended time, child care navigation, and parenting workshops. Two child care navigators provided these services. The goal was to increase skill gains and credential attainment, postsecondary education and training enrollment, and employment rates, with longer-term outcomes of education, training, and employment retention up to four quarters after program exit.

The evaluation found that P3 succeeded in providing and coordinating the anticipated inputs, though child care slots came from LYFE centers rather than from ACS as originally intended. The P3 Collaborative appeared to have provided coherent leadership of the pilot, and the partners brought together nearly \$2 million in resources to support the program. In addition, both the P3 Collaborative and OBT staff believed that the extension of an additional year to meet outcome measures for WIOA OSY programs alleviated some pressures associated with regular performance reporting.

In administering the program, the two P3 sites in Bushwick and Sunset Park succeeded in enrolling a total of 50 participants, all of whom appear to have met the basic criteria of program eligibility: pregnant or parenting (or with a pregnant partner), age 17 to 24, without a high school credential, with basic skill needs or other risk factors, and with low income. One area where P3 Collaborative staff noted that they needed to improve operations was recruitment and enrollment. Staff continuously

mentioned concerns that slower-than-expected P3 recruitment led to participants enrolling too late to engage with fully enhanced services.

OBT hired two child care navigators, though there were challenges with turnover at both service locations, and the Bushwick location did not replace the navigator once she left, instead changing to a team staffing approach to serve P3 participants. Despite enrollment and staffing challenges, all participants completed at least one service, and nearly all completed multiple services.

Many participants achieved desirable outputs and outcomes. Of the 41 participants program staff determined to have low basic skills, over half (51 percent) recorded skill gains during program enrollment, sometimes of two levels. Among all 50 participants, 41 (82 percent) attained some education or training credential, and 27 participants (54 percent) earned a high school equivalency credential. Participants earned these credentials quickly, within 3 to 15 months, but averaging a little under 8 months. In addition, over three-quarters of participants earned an occupational licensure, certificate, or certification, and a small number earned another type of recognized degree, diploma, or certificate. Staff believed these outcomes indicated program success. A forthcoming brief summarizing program impacts will provide additional information about how P3 participation affected youth outcomes.

Employment was less prevalent, with only 40 percent of participants employed in any of the four follow-up quarters and only about 25 percent employed in any given follow-up period. But over half of participants were employed, enrolled in a training program, or enrolled in a postsecondary educational program leading to a recognized credential at some point in the four follow-up quarters.

It would be useful to follow participants for longer to understand how they fared. In the time observed, only 12 percent of participants were with the same employer from the second to the fourth quarter after exit (though it is unclear if these transitions were for positive reasons or not). Three of the six participants observed to have enrolled in postsecondary education were still enrolled as of the fourth quarter after exit. These are the only longer-term outcome measures specified in the logic model and tracked in the data.

P3 Collaborative members have been largely positive about the program. Collaborative staff were impressed by how motivated the young people were, even though they did not anticipate they would be enrolling pregnant youth. For them, the TASC and credential attainment rate—which were substantially higher than the city average—is a testament to the program’s efficacy. In general, they believe the model is effective for young parents. The P3 Collaborative is considering advancing this

model to justice-involved, homeless, and foster care youth, though additional enhancements may be needed to address the shortage of child care for these populations and in New York City as a whole.

## Recommendations

Summarized below are some recommendations that emerged from this research, which New York City or others might consider as they design and implement related interventions:

- **Child care:** Challenges in accessing publicly funded child care include complex application processes, long application timelines, extensive documentation requirements, limited infant slots, unanticipated out-of-pocket costs, frequent holidays and breaks in DOE programs, loss of access to some programs with status changes (e.g., after completing TASC credentials), burdensome recertification requirements, and limited availability for low-income working parents (who reportedly face a waiting period after beginning employment that may not be feasible without reliable child care). These challenges constrain access to public child care support, which can curtail young parents' educational and employment growth.
- **Funding:** Cuts to and challenges accessing the Community Services Block Grant excluded one anticipated funding source that might have otherwise supported the P3 program. Other flexible funding sources (e.g., City tax levy funds) might be explored to cover costs other funding streams restrict or to fill gaps in authorization from core funding streams (e.g., to anticipate a longer tenure in navigator job descriptions).
- **Partnerships:** Building on existing relationships where possible, with clear lines of responsibility, seems to smooth implementation, even when challenges arise.
- **Program length:** Allowing youth to engage in services for longer reportedly reduced pressure on staff and participants, gave more opportunity for participants to meet milestones even if they experienced unanticipated disruptions (e.g., childbirth), and allowed for better post-program planning. Programs might consider routinely offering longer guaranteed service windows.
- **Participant recruitment:** Advertising regarding key program components (e.g., cost of child care) should be clear so participants know what to expect. Recruitment may be challenging during a strong economy, but positive program experiences help word-of-mouth recruitment.
- **Caseloads:** Low caseloads reportedly help staff and participants build meaningful relationships and help staff work with participants through unanticipated challenges.

- **Meeting participants where they are:** Staff found that curricula used for young parents should be appropriate for youth, given their developmental stage and life experiences. In addition, internships and other work experience opportunities that are of interest to participants and clearly help them move toward their goals may help build momentum toward positive outcomes.
- **Staff turnover:** Staff turnover is common in direct-service programs, but succession planning for key staff—perhaps with cross-training or job shadowing—can help organizations smooth transitions, shorten onboarding time, and maintain connection with participants. Though the reason for turnover was not specified in this study, staff members may need more personal supports as they help participants navigate complex and traumatizing situations that go beyond the staff members' training.
- **Data:** Tracking family or household composition (and changes), child care receipt (during and after programming), dosage of services (e.g., hours), service location, details about credentials received, and additional well-being measures after program exit would provide more valuable insights into program experiences and effectiveness for different types of participants.

# Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Authors' calculations of the New York City teen birth rate are based on data from "Vital Statistics of New York State, 2017," New York State Department of Health, Table 1a and Table 8, revised August 2019, accessed July 6, 2020, [https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/vital\\_statistics/2017/](https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/vital_statistics/2017/).
- <sup>2</sup> For consequences of teenage childbirth, please see Hoffman (2006); Treschan and Parrot (2013); and "Teen Pregnancy Prevention," National Conference of State Legislatures, October 11, 2018, accessed July 6, 2020, <http://www.ncsl.org/research/health/teen-pregnancy-prevention.aspx>.
- <sup>3</sup> "P3 Fact Sheet," Youth.gov, accessed July 6, 2020, <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/reconnecting-youth/performance-partnership-pilots/fact-sheet>.
- <sup>4</sup> The federal statute defines disconnected youth as individuals between the ages of 14 and 24 who are low income and either homeless, in foster care, involved in the juvenile justice system, unemployed, or not enrolled in or at risk of dropping out of an educational institution.
- <sup>5</sup> "P3 Fact Sheet."
- <sup>6</sup> Expectant parents were also eligible for P3 services, but for simplicity the service population is here referred to as "young parents."
- <sup>7</sup> Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow is a nonprofit service provider contracted by the New York City government to deliver Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Out-of-School Youth services at multiple locations across the city.
- <sup>8</sup> This total amount reflects funding available for P3 from 2017–2020.
- <sup>9</sup> Because of cell size restrictions that protect participant confidentiality, detailed race by age cannot be reported.
- <sup>10</sup> Financial literacy services include services that help recipients with creating budgets, initiating checking and savings accounts at banks, applying for and managing loans and credit cards, learning about credit reports and credit scores, and detecting identity theft.
- <sup>11</sup> Support services for youth participants include links to community services; assistance with transportation; assistance with child care and dependent care; assistance with housing; needs-related payments; assistance with educational testing; reasonable accommodations for youth with disabilities; referrals to health care; assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work-related tools, including such items as eyeglasses and protective eye gear; assistance with books, fees, school supplies, and other necessary items for students enrolled in postsecondary education classes; and payments and fees for employment and training-related applications, tests, and certifications.
- <sup>12</sup> The data only record post-test outcomes for those who experienced gains. Adult basic skill gains are measured periodically, often after a specified number of instructional hours, so outcomes may reflect gains participants made while still enrolled in other program services. Therefore, the post-test date is not necessarily aligned with the date of program exit.
- <sup>13</sup> Where participants had multiple pre-test assessments recorded, the evaluation team used the lowest level.
- <sup>14</sup> Data on service location were not available at the time of this report, meaning the evaluation team could not answer the research question about the differences in outcomes by program site.
- <sup>15</sup> According to the *Pathways to Graduation: Citywide Second Quarter Report, 2018–19 SY Summary* (shared by a P3 Collaborative member), 31 percent of OSY Pathways to Graduation participants earned a high school equivalency in the 2018–19 school year.

<sup>16</sup> Occupations were only recorded in the second and fourth quarter after exit, and employer retention was only recorded in the fourth quarter after exit.

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