Youth Guidance’s Workforce Development programs ensure that youth from under-resourced communities are empowered with the key life skills and resources necessary to connect to meaningful employment or postsecondary opportunities aligned with their interests, skills, and goals. By participating in our programs, youth experience decreased barriers to success in the workforce and increased confidence in their professional identity and career goals. This year, we will serve more than 225 youth from across Chicago.

**Project Prepare®**

For more than 30 years, Project Prepare has helped students focus on the development of current and future career interests. The program, offered to juniors and seniors at three Chicago high schools, pairs youth with Career Specialists who guide them through individualized career exploration activities and coach them on developing job readiness skills. Youth also participate in visits to employers and job readiness boot camps. Each year, students take part in a "Loop Discovery Search." The annual activity has educated more than 1,200 youth on Chicago’s "Loop" business district. Student teams search downtown to collect information from landmarks, maps, street signs, and library shelves. The project helps develop important workforce skills including teamwork, critical thinking, time and conflict management, and decision making.

**@Work**

@Work is a specially designed year-long program for high school students who have successfully progressed through Youth Guidance’s BAM or WOW programs. The 15 lesson curriculum builds off of the BAM and WOW core values to empower youth to build and deepen relationships that impact their postsecondary success. In addition to weekly groups, youth participate in career exploration events with corporate partners to practice their skills and network and receiving coaching on various job readiness topics from a skilled @Work Specialist.

**Project Prepare Blue**

Launched in 2016, Project Prepare Blue addresses the unique needs of out of school and unemployed young adults in Chicago, specifically those who have graduated from high school and need ongoing support to develop and implement a postsecondary plan. Youth participate in an intensive two-week professional development training then receive one year of coaching, placement, and retention assistance from their Career Specialist. In 2020, Youth Guidance expanded its out-of-school programming to serve young adults in south suburban Cook County.
Post-Secondary and Workforce Opportunities

Youth Guidance provides placement and retention support to participants for a wide variety of college and career opportunities through our network of partners. These opportunities include paid internships, job, and enrollment into college access and career training programs such as Genesys Works, Year Up, Chicago Scholars, and One Million Degrees. Youth Guidance is grateful for the support of our diverse employer network including: Chicago Transit Authority, Hilco Global, Rush MedSTEM, State Farm Insurance, Target, and TJX Companies.

To learn more about our programs or join our employer network, please contact ywdinfo@youth-guidance.org

Part of our workforce programming is made possible through a grant provided by the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership which serves as the region’s primary administrator of federal employment and training funds. Sound fiscal stewardship is their highest priority. The Partnership also collaborates with local businesses, economic development agencies, municipal organizations and educational institutions in pursuit of innovative programs and strategic initiatives created to meet current or future business demands.