

PROJECT PREPARE

YOUTH GUIDANCE

ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS

For more than 25 years, Youth Guidance's Project Prepare® has been providing Chicago Public School (CPS) students with learning opportunities designed to develop current and future career interests. The support offered through Project Prepare has ensured that inner-city youth are empowered with the key life skills and resources necessary to successfully transition into high school, and move on to the post-secondary education or employment opportunity of their choice.

Curriculum

Project Prepare helps students develop hard and soft life skills focused on college and career readiness. Most participants are between the ages of 15-19. Students enter the program through referral and meet with highly-skilled Career Specialists on a bi-weekly basis. Each school year, Project Prepare successfully places students with job opportunities.

Safeguarding graduation is a primary focus for program staff. In 2018-2019, 52 CPS students and postgraduates in participated in Project Prepare. All maintained their enrollment in school, while the average dropout rate for students in the same CPS schools was 6%. Research further revealed that 93% of participants graduated from high school on time.

Loop Discovery Search

Since 1989, Youth Guidance has also included the Loop Discovery Search as a part of Project Prepare. The activity has educated more than 1,200 inner-city youth on the Chicago "Loop" business district. Student teams are sent on a clue-by-clue search throughout the downtown area to collect information from landmarks, maps, building directories, street signs, and library shelves. The project helps develop important workforce skills including teamwork, critical thinking, time management, decision making, conflict management, and navigation. If you would like to sponsor this event, email Zeck: jzeckhauser@youth-guidance.org



Program Partners

Youth Workforce Development is supported by the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership, Chicago Department of Family and Support Services, Chicago Park District, Chicago Public Schools, Illinois Department of Human Services, Episcopal Charities, WGN Radio Neediest Kids Fund, the PNC Foundation, Year Up, Genesys Works, Worsak & Vihon LLP, the TJX Foundation, Carnicerias Jimenez, Mark Hanson State Farm, Roeser's Bakery, and the Youth Guidance Associate Board.

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Youth Guidance's workforce development programs seek to empower youth to become socially and economically self-sufficient. Project Prepare, in particular, incorporates a series of individual and group components to help youth succeed, including:

- Case Management;
- Career and Post-Secondary Counseling;
- Job Readiness Training;
- Job Placement Services;
- College Application and Transition Seminars
- Ongoing Job Coaching for Employed.



Out-of-School Services

In 2017, Youth Guidance launched its workforce development program called Project Prepare Blue. This program builds upon its proven in-school programming to serve 45 out-of-school and underemployed youth. Individual and group-based career exploration, job readiness training and other supports take place in a community-based setting. Staff facilitates placement into employment and advanced training and/or college that will lead to work and education retention, skills gains, credential attainment, and increased earnings.



Samantha was in a new school, new neighborhood, and new community. She was struggling to adjust. This, in turn, affected her attendance record and academic performance. When she joined Project Prepare, she says it challenged her to have an open mind. She was inspired by her counselor, who by his commitment to his students, showed her the value of success academically, vocationally, and personally. Gaining a vast array of career readiness skills, Samantha applied her newfound work ethic to school, raising her D's and F's to A's and B's. After high school, Samantha will be a first-generation college student majoring in social work with the hopes of helping future youth like herself. Youth Guidance invests in the future of young men and women by supporting their transition from high school to responsible adulthood. Our workforce development programs support students like Samantha, exposing them to a wide spectrum of future possibilities and giving them tangible skills to achieve their long-term goals.*

**Name changed for confidentiality.*