



Youth Empowerment Summer (YES) Initiative: Community Recovery through Innovation in Summer Youth Employment

ExpandED Schools seeks a one-time investment of \$2.9 million to augment \$72 million of public funds for Youth Empowerment Summer (“YES”), a youth summer employment program adapted to the virtual workplace.

The Coronavirus pandemic’s disproportionate impact on communities of color and the murder of George Floyd have laid bare persistent systemic inequities in our city and country. We feel tremendous urgency to address widening disparities for young people who have suffered from personal losses, economic instability, and countless lost hours of learning, play, and socialization during the spring. The potential harm to cognitive growth and mental health is profound. ExpandED, which is a leading advocate and partner with New York City and State in the youth development field, has spearheaded an effort to establish a program to engage youth for the summer in meaningful virtual work that will build workforce skills, confidence, and well-being. We have worked with our public partners to create a budget by restoring previously eliminated funding for the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP). Annually, SYEP provides 75,000 teens with paid summer jobs that introduce them to the workforce. Participants traditionally come from the same neighborhoods that have been especially impacted by Covid-19; 75% are from low income backgrounds and 64% are Black or Hispanic.

By marshalling a trisector coalition of nonprofit, industry, and government agencies, YES will put an estimated 40,000 digitally-rich work-based learning experiences on the table for young people in Summer 2020. Through 60-90 hour virtual internships, providing a stipend of \$700-\$1000, YES will:

- Prepare youth with the skills needed for work that is increasingly **remote** and **technology-driven**;
- Allow youth to earn industry credentials and high school credits for work-based experiences that keep them on track for graduation;
- Re-engage youth in cognitive development at a time when many have become disconnected from their education;
- Position youth as engines of recovery in their families and community by empowering them to earn income, and
- Enhance their mental health by engaging them in productive, confidence-building work.

With the \$2.9 million in private funds, ExpandED will fund 30-50 quality organizations across the City as an innovation hub for the design of scalable digital internships eligible for the pool of public funding. Models and training will be deployed to more than 100 city-contracted providers. Part of the private budget is allocated to monitoring and measuring the various programs to ensure quality control and to establish the organizations and designs that are most effective. Thus, YES will spur innovation that will make a lasting difference in the relevance of the City’s summer jobs program. Without private money, YES will not be able to achieve the success we imagine from the \$72 million in public funding.

Towards the \$2.9 million goal, ExpandED has already raised the first \$1.2 million in private investment from philanthropic and corporate institutions as well as New York City business leaders. From the public, \$22.6 million is secured from New York State from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, and we are finalizing efforts to restore an additional \$45.4 million in City funds.

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