

YouthBuild USA

# YouthBuild Work Experience

Bridging Young Adults to Employment and Economic Security

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## **YouthBuild Work Experience Bridging Young People to Employment and Economic Security**

### ***Introduction/Summary of the Problem***

Opportunity youth who enter YouthBuild want to see a real future for themselves, a future that contains meaningful growth experiences that they get through postsecondary education and advanced training and employment on a career pathway to that future. Many career pathways may sound enticing at first, i.e., health care workers save lives, however, many young people do not necessarily understand the more monotonous or grueling aspects of this career track such as long hours, risk of infection exposure, and heavy lifting of patients. Young people need exposure to the realities of jobs along with an aptitude for and interest in a career pathway to know what professional future they want. When the work-based learning and skill-building practice of YouthBuild culminates in a structured, professional work experience under an employer's supervision in a real-world setting, young people can better see the full range of possibilities a future career opportunity may have for them.

Helping young people prepare to engage in work and life as productive adults is a central challenge for any society. Yet, many young people in the United States find the path from education to employment and economic security in adulthood poorly marked or inaccessible. As a result, those from low-income and less-educated families have lower rates of high school graduation, college enrollment, and college completion. Moreover, once they enter the labor market, they have lower employment rates and wages. According to the [Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings Child Trends](#), 79 percent of disadvantaged adolescents are employed at age 29 and among those, 38 percent have high-quality jobs as measured by the job quality index. Their counterparts—29-year-olds from non-disadvantaged backgrounds—fare better: 90 percent are employed, and 48 percent of those have high-quality jobs.

Additionally, food and housing insecurity coupled with the lack of access to academic and professional opportunities create seemingly insurmountable challenges for opportunity youth. These factors result in many of them disappearing from the established academic and labor systems. The [YouthBuild pre-apprenticeship model](#), a best practice proven holistic youth development framework, is designed to offer the critical supportive services, secondary academic access, and work-based learning opportunities for opportunity youth by caring staff. In addition to YouthBuild's essential components, young people need an experiential venue that allows them to practice their emerging learning and skills in a professional capacity where they can explore their interest in a career pathway and hold themselves responsible to foundational professional demands in that field.

The [CBE's Life Sciences Education Department](#) notes in their paper entitled *A Summer Academic Research Experience for Disadvantaged Youth* that in addition to professional mentoring [or direction], young people need focused support “to remediate and/or fortify basic academic skills to be successful. In addition, [they] need to be actively coached in the development of professional skills, habits, and attitudes necessary for success in the workplace.”

The necessary next step for the DOL YouthBuild program is building a solid bridge to a personal and professional future for YouthBuild participants—a bridge built from a high-quality, structured work experience which takes place while in active programming prior to entering professional and/or postsecondary education or an equivalent placement and the follow-up year of support and retention in placement.

The purpose of this paper is to explain why quality work experiences matter, to define the attributes of quality work experiences for DOL YouthBuild participants, and to provide strategies and promising practices on how programs can connect with partners to provide quality work experiences for their participants.

## **THE VALUE OF A WORK EXPERIENCE IN THE YOUTHBUILD MODEL**

For YouthBuild participants, the key value of a high-quality work experience lies in its real-world, hands-on immersion in a career field. Participants get an immediate, tangible opportunity to learn general and specific career content and skills, and to practically apply what they have learned as part of their professional growth. A professional work experience provides participants with a chance to learn essential employability skills such as problem-solving, communication, and teamwork in real world settings above and beyond classroom and lab settings. Work experiences also improve on-ramps to employment for teens and young adults.

Regardless of whether their work experiences are short- or long-term, YouthBuild participants apply practical skills under employer supervision in the form of project-based learning and job duties at a professional job site. The goals for the work experience opportunity include ensuring understanding of the demands of the career pathway; and increasing the potential for youth participants to be hired, either by their work experience employer or another related employer partner, based on the demonstration of the participants' professional skills, attitude, and aptitude during the work experiences.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) emphasizes the value of work experiences, making consistent references to work experience and work-based learning throughout the Act. This emphasis is strongest for youth-serving programs, including YouthBuild, Job Corps, and the Youth Formula-funded program, which is required to expend a minimum of 20 percent of the program's funding on work experiences.

## **ESTABLISHING WORK EXPERIENCE IN THE YOUTHBUILD CONSTRUCTION MODEL**

The traditional YouthBuild model includes a dedicated professional construction trainer/instructor and a required hands-on construction training component. Under the instruction of the YouthBuild construction trainer, youth participants experience hands-on, work-based learning first in a construction lab setting, before bringing those skills to actual housing sites, where they build and/or rehabilitate low-income housing. At a minimum, on the work experience site, youth participants learn job site safety; how to use hand and power tools; the

basics of construction (including but not limited to carpentry, framing, foundation, etc.); and aspects of the skilled trades, such as electrical; heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC); and plumbing.

Under the supervision of their YouthBuild construction trainer(s) and/or external construction partners, youth work directly on building these homes, getting on-site construction work experience while they are enrolled in YouthBuild. YouthBuild programs provide the on-site work experience element of the construction teaching and training component as follows:

1. Stand-alone YouthBuild programs that own and operate their own work sites, and/or
2. YouthBuild programs that operate or work with the operators of work sites owned by their parent/sponsoring agencies, and/or
3. YouthBuild programs that work on work sites owned and operated by external for-profit housing developers, and/or
4. YouthBuild programs that work with housing authorities and organizations such as Habitat for Humanity.

Regardless of the professional construction partner/employer supervising the work experience, the goal and outcome remain the same. The construction work experience provides hands-on, tactical application of developing skills for the young people, as well as potential union/employer opportunities to observe those same young people in action working on a job site. This becomes a “win/win” situation that can provide direct pathways into additional pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship placements in the construction trade—still set within the larger active programming education and training context of YouthBuild.

## **ESTABLISHING WORK EXPERIENCE IN THE YOUTHBUILD CONSTRUCTION PLUS MODEL**

YouthBuild first offered Construction Plus (C+), which expanded occupational skills training into in-demand industries beyond construction, as a training option in 2013. In addition to the construction training, the C+ model provides participants with core content classroom work, hands-on training, and a real-world work experience in other high-demand career pathways. Similar to the work experience work site options in the construction model, C+ work experiences also take place either at off-site work sites with partners, and/or provided in-house at a business of the YouthBuild grantee’s organization. An example of an off-site work experience for participants in the healthcare pathway includes studying for a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) certification and completing their work experience at a nursing home. An example of an in-house work experience for participants in the culinary pathway includes studying for a restaurant server certification at a YouthBuild program and completing their work experience at the YouthBuild programs’ parent agency’s café. In this case, the participant can gain work experience at the in-house business, in addition to any external partner options.

The DOL YouthBuild grant requires a construction trainer staff position that may be employed at the YouthBuild program or subcontracted out. However, the DOL YouthBuild grant does not require a C+ pathway trainer position and the variety of C+ pathways require professional

expertise outside the core YouthBuild model. Therefore, staff from an expert partner organization or subcontractor typically carries out the C+ trainer role. Less frequently, a YouthBuild program will have in-house YouthBuild staff with expertise or whom are able to quickly get the required expertise through professional certification. Further, YouthBuild programs may rely on their C+ pathway partner to supply the training and/or professional work site for work experience. Training and work experiences may be done in a mixed setting through a community college, where YouthBuild participants learn alongside an existing traditionally educated group of students.

A YouthBuild staff member may need to assist with and/or co-facilitate C+ pathways-related hands-on training and instruction if a dedicated C+ trainer is not embedded on site. The YouthBuild staff member may need to reinforce or focus on supporting participants with increasing their literacy and numeracy skills since certain technical pathways (e.g., healthcare) require higher skill levels than YouthBuild participants typically possess upon entry into the YouthBuild program. A program may carry out the C+ component in one of two ways:

- 1) Have all participants successfully complete a baseline course or work experience in construction safety, hands-on building, and construction certification before those participants who desire to do a C+ career pathway track can move into that C+ pathway.
- 2) Allow participants to choose to enter either the construction or the C+ track from their initial enrollment in the YouthBuild program.

YouthBuild grantees offering approved C+ pathways must provide the same level of work-based learning and real-world work experiences to C+ participants that are available to participants in the core construction training model. As with construction training, grantees implementing C+ pathways must not limit hands-on training to the classroom but instead must offer meaningful, hands-on, real-world work experiences as part of the occupational skills component. YouthBuild programs may need to seek additional partners in their C+ field who can collectively provide a number of varied work experiences that support participant development of necessary technical and customer/client skills, rather than depend on one large company that will not or cannot carve out dedicated time for YouthBuild participants' work experiences.

## **ATTRIBUTES OF YOUTHBUILD QUALITY WORK EXPERIENCES**

YouthBuild programs need to commit to deep investments in the YouthBuild work experience, understanding that the success of these work experiences depends on youth development-focused collaboration between the program staff, its partners, and its participants. Addressing the professional demands and expectations of employers, while balancing them against the professional needs and newly acquired talents and skills of inexperienced YouthBuild participants, means YouthBuild staff need to take a strong lead in developing professional work experience opportunities for them. The following are essential components from the YouthBuild Quality Work Experiences Framework:

- focus on comprehensive youth and emerging adult development, including addressing problems encountered at work, how to work as part of a team, how to develop a strong work ethic, and other critical maturity and self-sufficiency skills;

- clear, detailed job description of duties, projects, tasks for the participant(s) that directly relate to an in-demand position or positions in the participant’s specific career pathway, advanced training in a career field, or professional first employment for those participants;
- participants learn and apply introductory and specialized technical skills not only required by that particular partner and work experience, but by other employers that find those skills valuable to career growth in that industry;
- lasts for an appropriate period of time as determined by the type of work experience, and number of hours expected for any associated credential, certification, or registered or other professional apprenticeship;
- supervised by approved career pathway professional partners (can be postsecondary, employer, or a combination of both); these same supervisory partners also provide participants with professional guidance and training related to how to learn and develop the technical skills to do the actual hands-on work, and mentoring where possible to understand the young person’s role, responsibility, and relationship to that work;
- takes place in a real-world work setting related to the career pathway or first job; and
- can lead to a career pathway placement with that partner, another partner in a similar field, or a next tier job from a first job placement (future building).

### **Challenges for YouthBuild Grantees and Professional Partners in Providing Quality Work Experiences for Participants**

YouthBuild grantees and their partners must be prepared to overcome ongoing challenges to create successful, quality work experience partnerships. DOL YouthBuild grantees encounter difficulties with leveraging industry partners who are both willing to offer work-based learning opportunities/experiences and who work within the comprehensive demands and schedule of the YouthBuild program for participants. Examples include understanding that participants are actively working towards completing their secondary education, vocational training, certification requirements, etc. and are often entering a real-world work environment for the first time.

YouthBuild programs need greater insight into the knowledge and requirements of industry standards to which their respective participants must adhere if they are to secure professional work experiences for those youth. YouthBuild participants may find the required high school or postsecondary level competencies in content, vocabulary, and technical skills challenging if they are entering YouthBuild with below high school level reading and math skills. Likewise, with career readiness, participants often lack any familiarity with entry-level work skills and competencies and so struggle with how to work and learn effectively in a professional/real-world work setting.

Significant partner challenges include mistakenly assuming that a YouthBuild program is providing them with fully trained young adults ready to enter immediate employment with those partners. Or employers may believe the opposite: that the YouthBuild program is offering unskilled, ill-prepared young people who need excessive supervision and training. YouthBuild programs do well to approach potential employer partners with a cohesive and comprehensive

presentation that provides details on the present and future return on investment for those employers interested in providing work experiences for participants.

Additional challenges to establishing quality work experiences include complicated issues such as liability concerns around working with patients (i.e., healthcare), or how to use delicate/dangerous machinery (i.e., manufacturing). In career pathways where liability concerns can pose roadblocks to getting participants hands-on relevant work experiences, YouthBuild programs should not settle for “tag along, job shadow only” type work experiences where the young person does not get the opportunity to do meaningful hands-on work related to their career pathway position. At the same time, the pandemic has increased employers urgent need for properly trained workers in safety protocols so YouthBuild programs must get participants proficient with basic health and safety training as a prerequisite to any professional work experience. Pre-pandemic if, for instance, a hospital partner insisted that work experiences with healthcare track participants remained at the front desk greeter level at a hospital, the YouthBuild program could have explored other options such as partnering with a community health clinic where participants could have supervised, safety-approved contact with patients performing blood pressure checks and other vitals or receive certification in becoming a Community Healthcare Worker.

Now, as nearly all career pathways have had to adapt and change their way of doing business due to COVID-19, YouthBuild grantees have a perfect opportunity to demonstrate flexibility and adaptability with their participant work experiences. For example, a YouthBuild program in Staten Island had been offering a C+ pathway in retail. When COVID-19 hit, rather wait for the traditional retail employers to reopen, the program shifted their C+ pathway to creating work experiences with a local service employer to learn 3-D printing of protective materials which participants first produced and then made into health and safety approved protective gear for first responders.

As COVID-19 shelter in place restrictions shift from in-person to remote work, this also requires industries to pivot their research, production, and services. The hands-on work experiences both in-person and online real-world environments offered to participants by YouthBuild and its partners highlight an essential professional role YouthBuild participants can play in helping to shape the immediate futures of industries even as they are shaping their own futures.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GUIDING THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MEANINGFUL WORK EXPERIENCES FOR DOL YOUTHBUILD PARTICIPANTS AND PARTNERS**

*Each of the following elements of a YouthBuild Work Experience contain core recommendations for success. They are distilled from technical assistance work carried out with the YouthBuild grantees, emerging practices at YouthBuild work experience work sites, and seven years of developing the integration of the core YouthBuild model with the DOL YouthBuild Pre-Apprenticeship framework.*

1. **Work Experience Timing and Timeframe:** While there is no minimum time mandated for the YouthBuild work experience, DOL YouthBuild grantees have established work experiences that typically last for as little as one month to as long as ten months, with the length of any given work experience day averaging between four and six hours. Postsecondary education and employer partners frequently dictate the work experience timeframe based on their institution/business needs. These partners and the YouthBuild program staff must negotiate the timing and timeframe of the key components of the work experience including initial training, new knowledge and content application, practicum hours, duties, supervision, clarifying whether or not the partner is considering the young person for a placement after the work experience, and other considerations.
2. **Work Experience Location:** YouthBuild work experiences must take place at a professional job site location under real-world job conditions, ideally related to the participant's chosen Construction or C+ industry career pathway.
3. **Work Experience Supervision:** Staff from the work experience providing employers should supervised the YouthBuild participants in their work experiences. YouthBuild staff can offer support to the partners in these supervisory roles, but cannot be the primary supervisors of the participants during their work experiences. YouthBuild staff's appropriate role is one of support and case conferencing to help the young adults to navigate their work experiences.
4. **Work Experience Job Description:** All work experiences should have clear and appropriate duties/scopes of work in the approved pathway for the participants. These duties should be written as a formal work experience job description, ideally with the input and approval of all parties: the professional partners, the YouthBuild staff, and the YouthBuild participants.
5. **Work Experience Schedule:** All work experiences should follow a consistent schedule with set hours and days. Whether in alignment with a Registered Apprenticeship model or as part of a proposed professional placement, the training and skill development should follow a progression plan so that participants can adjust to increasing workload and associated technical skills development.

[The Youth Career Connect Employer Workforce Report](#) from August 2019 highlights implementation findings from Youth Center Connect employer and workforce agency partnerships that point to five practices key to developing and maintaining employer partnerships for strong work experiences for youth that can lead to career pathway placement:

- establish a dedicated partner liaison to develop and maintain employer and workforce agency partnerships;
- regularly engage partners through advisory boards or other avenues for eliciting partner input and by establishing clear roles for partners within the program;
- anticipate and problem-solve for barriers to internships and mentoring beyond recruiting enough employer partners;

- motivate employers with a pipeline of skilled workers; and
- utilize workforce agency partners to identify local economic and labor market conditions, establish employer partnerships, and provide work readiness training and career counseling.

Designing and implementing a quality YouthBuild work experience must include strong, detailed planning, an understanding of the benefits of work experience to a program’s participants and partners, and an ability to establish immediate and ongoing benchmarks for quality. As the pandemic continues, YouthBuild has the perfect opportunity to offer essential work experiences leading to high demand placement in participants’ chosen career pathways. These practice and immersion opportunities for participants help them decide whether they want to continue professional work in this field, or whether they want to explore work experience in a different career pathway. In all cases, work experience serves as a crucial entry into a significant first employment and onto a path from education to employment and economic security in adulthood which is now well marked and accessible.

## **Emerging Practices of Quality Work Experiences from the YouthBuild Field**

### **1. Work Experience Highlight: Apartment Maintenance Young Adult Development in Action, Inc./YouthBuild Louisville, Louisville, KY**

YouthBuild Louisville participants enter their work experience in apartment maintenance in the LDG Development managed by Winterwood, which also provides participant supervision. These work experiences last from two to six weeks at 40 hours per week, and have continued to be offered during the pandemic. Their specific work experience duties include job shadowing property technicians or supervisors, drywall replacement, residential plumbing, commercial plumbing, basic electrical tasks, flooring repair and replacement, and cabinetry. Participants can then use their training and work experience to support entry into electrical or plumbing apprentice positions.

These YouthBuild work experiences have resulted in placement opportunities with Winterwood and other property management companies in facilities maintenance and repair with prospects for advancement and continued growth into specific trades, such as electrical or plumbing. Winterwood takes an active role in the work experience and placement process by reviewing curriculum to ensure alignment with industry needs, facilitating curriculum content, providing work experience placement and supervision, and identifying placement openings.

### **2. Work Experience Highlight: Construction Project REBUILD, Inc. /Greater Stark County YouthBuild, Canton, OH**

Project REBUILD, Inc. has created a for-profit construction company, PR Futures, that provides pre-requisite approved participants with work experiences as Carpenter’s Helpers on different residential work sites for which PR Futures is the contractor. Construction work has continued

during the pandemic and participants work from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, over an established timeframe determined by the particular residential contract job.

Specific work experience duties include:

- Building maintenance
- Window and door installation
- Porch and/or deck repairs or installation
- Painting
- Flooring repairs or installation
- Roof repairs or replacement
- Landscaping

These work experiences can lead to entry into carpenters, laborers, cement masons, or bricklayers Registered Apprenticeship programs. Placement opportunities for participants include PR Futures or hire into partner construction companies or with subcontractors and entrepreneurship opportunities to create a participant's own business. Participants are supervised by PR Futures Construction staff.

### **3. Work Experience Highlight: Information Technology (IT) Portland YouthBuilders, Portland, OR**

Portland YouthBuilders offers work experiences to participants in IT for computer network support specialist, computer user support specialist, network and computer system administrator, engineering technician, electro-mechanical technician, robotics technician, and web developer roles.

Participants perform extensive work experiences that benefit the community and directly connect with four IT focus areas: information technology, coding, cyber security, and mechatronics. Work experiences include refurbishment of computers for public schools and low-income residents; creating websites, videos, and desktop publishing products for non-profits; teaching basic computer and cyber security classes to seniors, community members at libraries, and clients of the American Job Center; and serving as volunteer docents weekly at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry educating visitors about technology exhibits.

Partners providing these work experiences and their supervision include Free Geek, Multnomah Public Library, Worksystems American Job Center, Northwest Housing Alternatives, Home Forward, MetroEast Community Media, and Hollywood and Gresham Senior Centers.

Additional partnerships include one of the largest online platforms for learning to code: Treehouse. Through Treehouse, participants gain three months of paid work experience in coding and those who complete successfully are offered employment with an average annual starting salary of \$50k.

#### **4. Work Experience Highlight: Culinary Community Teamwork, Inc./YouthBuild Lowell, Lowell, MA**

YouthBuild Lowell was one of the pilot sites in the [National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation](#) (NRAEF) Restaurant Ready initiative and offers the NRAEF ServSafe manager certification to participants. Work experiences include participants preparing, cooking, catering, serving, and clearing for local events with community partners, including the Senior Dances and Veteran’s Lunches, all of which take place at the Senior Center.

Events take place regularly throughout the year during the day and evening hours averaging 4 to 8 hours from start to finish. Additional catering work experiences include catering and supporting the [Working Cities Lowell Initiative’s](#) “Chopped Dinners” where meals are prepared and served to the Acre neighborhood community.

Other employer partner supervised work experiences for participants include two restaurants owned and operated by Stone’s Hospitality; Two Chefs Catering; the food service department of the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Lowell; and Enterprise Bank.

#### **5. Work Experience Highlight: Logistics Riverside County Office of Education/Riverside YouthBuild, Riverside, CA**

Riverside YouthBuild offers the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council’s Certified Logistics Associate and Logistics Technician credentials. The roughly 125 hours of work experience offered to participants in this Logistics track take place at the FALLAS Distribution Warehouse in Perris, CA, working with products, moving orders, managing inventory, and using the required machinery to perform tasks.

Since the pandemic, participants have been working at the Community Pantry where participants have exposure to see logistics on a large scale within the organization and can volunteer for hands-on work experience. The program continues to have seven to eight participants working at the Community Pantry who work five days a week and five hours a day from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm.

The YouthBuild program is working on developing a new work experience and placement partnership with Decker’s, a business that manufactures UGGs and other shoes, as a logistics work site for participants. The goal is for the company to hire 7 to 8 participants after completing a training period. The YouthBuild program staff will also be on site during the training. Other placement opportunities following these work experiences include shipping and receiving, warehousing, transportation, supply chain operations and others including FALLAS Distribution Warehouse who serve 325 stores.

#### **6. Work Experience Highlight: Healthcare Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission (EOC) Local Conservation Corps/YouthBuild Fresno, Fresno, CA**

Participants completing the Certified Registered Central Service Technician engage in 400 hours of work experience and internships with the Valley Children's Hospital, Community Medical Centers, and Fresno Surgical Center, working to support labs and operating rooms.

Placement opportunities as sterile processing technicians (SPT) with those same employer partners are available for all participants who successfully complete their 400 work experience hours and receive their certifications.

Since COVID, the partner institution offering the SPT course has moved this training to an online platform to facilitate a remote class. The work site for both construction and the SPT program have been unavailable due to the COVID-19 shut down. The program is waiting for the phased re-opening and seems to believe more opportunities will become available. Hospitals and nursing homes are a challenge to access for the SPT work experience, however, openings for these jobs have increased due to the COVID healthcare crisis. Health institutions are actively working to determine how to safely engage interns to fill this employment need. The program does have access to a variety of job shadows, and possible work experience opportunities through their parent organization the EOC. This includes a credit union and a transit center, among others. Given the current pandemic challenges, youth are encouraged to explore these potential opportunities to gain immediate work experience even if it is not in the direct field of training.

## **7. Work Experience Highlight: Manufacturing** **Ulster YouthBuild, LLC/Ulster YouthBuild, Ulster/Kingston, NY**

Ulster YouthBuild offers both the Certified Production Technician and Manufacturing Technician credentials. Manufacturing employer partners including Fala Technologies and others provide participants with work experiences in entry-level quality control technician, shipping and receiving clerk, production technician, inventory control specialist, front end specialist, and back end specialist.

Additionally, manufacturing employer partners provide workshops during the first 12 weeks of the program to provide an introductory overview of the manufacturing business and to connect what participants are learning in the education component to what they will experience in a manufacturing work experience. In partnership with the Hudson Valley Manufacturing Council of Industry, Ulster YouthBuild places C+ manufacturing participants into 18-week, hands-on work experiences at manufacturing work sites for 693 hours of hands-on work experience. These work experiences provide rigorous, hands-on workplace practice with the goal of preparing participants for future industry hiring and placement into a New York State-certified Industrial Manufacturing Apprenticeship program.

Placement opportunities for participants who complete the hands-on manufacturing work experience with any of the employer partners and who are deemed eligible (after rigorous readiness assessments) may enter an Industrial Manufacturing Technician apprenticeship or a Certified Production Technician apprenticeship with Fala Technologies and other partners.

## **8. Work Experience Highlight: Retail**

## **YouthBuild Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA**

YouthBuild Philadelphia begins their participants' pipeline into a retail career pathway with City Center employer partner Old Navy's "This Way Ahead" internships working with the public fulfilling merchandise needs and managing bills of sale. With the support of the program, one of YouthBuild Philadelphia's participants was able to continue working at the Old Navy brick and mortar clothing retailer, that closed due to the pandemic, as one of only a few full-time staff to fulfill online orders. After doing extremely well with the "This Way Ahead" internship last summer, the young person was offered full-time employment. He has worked full-time at the Old Navy store in Center City ever since and receives rave reviews from his supervisor and co-workers for his time management and cheerful disposition.

## **9. Work Experience Highlight: Municipality Public Work YouthBuild McLean County, Normal, IL**

YouthBuild McLean County participants enter paid internships with Normal, IL's Municipality and Public Works career pathway upon meeting YouthBuild and employer partner's academic and training requirements. Participants work 40 hours per week in that department from May-August and are paid \$10 per hour for the duration of their internships.

Examples of the types of municipality work experiences provided include the following:

### Treatment Plant Intern:

- Assists in collecting and recording data; starting, stopping, and adjusting chemical feed equipment, filters, and pumping equipment for proper operation; and maintaining quality control of the public water supply.
- Assisting with weekly well checks and monthly well testing, changing well motor oil, assisting with slacker and clarifier clean out and maintenance, generator preventive maintenance, building tuck-pointing, servicing various types of equipment, painting projects, assisting with installation of hose pump, and pH meter installation.

### Engineering Intern:

- Assists Utility Permit Technician in performing JULIE (one-call utility locating coordination service) related duties to prevent accidental interruption of service and reviewing right-of-way permit requests; transportation-related requests; or work within/on town-owned rights-of-way, easements, or properties.
- Assists Traffic Technician with traffic studies, creating and maintaining various traffic inventories and records. Conducts some civil engineering assignments, such as field survey work or inspecting general construction and engineering maintenance projects for contractor compliance.

Placement opportunities with the Municipality of Normal include preferred placement for YouthBuild graduates upon successful completion of their internship into six-month, temporary, seasonal positions within the different departments. From there, those participants are eligible to

move to permanent to hire positions subsequently, pending job availability and performance. The City of Normal staff select the YouthBuild graduates to participate in the internship program and monitor the performance and progress of the participants, completing evaluations and maintaining close communication with the YouthBuild Career Coordinator.