



# CASE STUDY

## INNOVATING UNDER PRESSURE: THE AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT 2009 Summer Youth Employment Initiative

### Detroit



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Detroit

## INTRODUCTION

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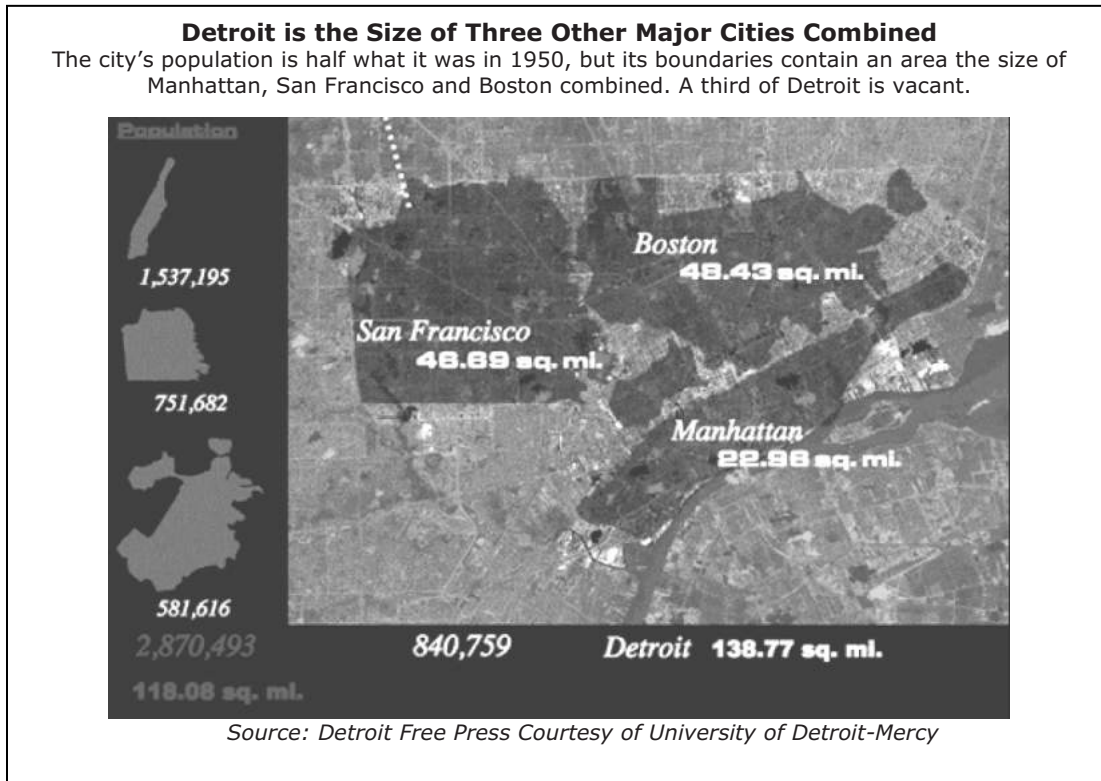
For Detroit, the ARRA SYEI represented a major influx of funds (over \$11 million) and a significant challenge: how to design and roll out a program in less than four months that could provide quality, meaningful summer work and learning experiences for 7,000 young people. While Detroit had maintained a modest public and privately funded summer jobs program serving about 2,500 young people over the years, the ARRA funding represented the first major infusion of Federal funding for summer jobs in over a decade. For the city's youth and workforce development leaders (i.e., the Detroit Workforce Development Department, Detroit Youth Employment Consortium, nonprofits, business, and philanthropy), summer 2009 called for a new way of doing business and ARRA provided the spark and grease to set up the infrastructure, partnerships, systems, and programs needed to deliver effective summer work experiences for the city's youth.

This case study is based on interviews and site visits conducted by staff from the Center for Youth and Communities at Brandeis University's Heller School for Social Policy and Management, primarily during two weeks in July 2009, as well as supplemental materials collected during and after the interview process. The case is organized in two parts: Part 1 provides an overview of the recessionary conditions in Detroit, both challenges and assets; Part 2 describes the Reinvestment and Recovery actions and innovations observed and explored by Brandeis researchers during two weeks in Detroit in summer 2009.

The Detroit SYEI was characterized by its use of ARRA funding as an instrument of change aligned with the broader youth and community development mission of a group of game changers in the city. Its approach built on and strengthened existing collaborations, and included a strong city-intermediary structure with philanthropic leadership and investment.

## PART I

### RECESSIONARY CONDITIONS: CHALLENGES AND ASSETS



#### Recessionary Challenges

Detroit's economic, political, social, and environmental conditions are grim. *Time* magazine's special report, "The Tragedy of Detroit" (October 2009), called it "a city on life support." Journalists chronicled the slide from "Motown to Notown" of what had been the "Arsenal of Democracy" and a "city of homeowners." Once the nation's 4<sup>th</sup> largest city, Detroit is now only 11<sup>th</sup> largest: the population has slipped from two million to 800,000. Reporters called the once "muscular" neighborhoods the "urban equivalent of a boxer's mouth – more gaps than teeth."<sup>23</sup>

There is the feel of a manmade ghost town across many of Detroit's 138 square miles. Metropolitan Detroit had the nation's highest foreclosure rate in 2007, up 68% from 2006. The number of vacant housing units has doubled to 200,000 during the decade.<sup>24</sup>

The recent population loss, due largely to corporate failures and domestic automakers' financial decline, is second only to New Orleans in Hurricane Katrina's aftermath. By nearly all measures, Detroit is a city under siege. It has the highest poverty rate (33.8%) of any large American city; nearly half of its children are poor.<sup>25</sup> Michigan has had the nation's highest state unemployment rate since 2006. In February 2009, Detroit had the highest

<sup>23</sup> *Time Magazine*, October 5, 2009.

<sup>24</sup> Ben Rooney, *Rust and Sun Belt Cities Lead '07 Foreclosure*, CNN Money, Feb. 13, 2008.

<sup>25</sup> US Census Bureau, *American Community Survey*, 2007

unemployment rate (13.6%) of any large metro area; by June, it had risen to 15.3%.<sup>26</sup> In fall 2009, unemployment stood at 28.99% according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics; but at the White House Jobs Summit, Detroit's Mayor Bing suggested that the truth was even more disturbing: closer to 50% and in some spots up to 80%.

#### **Recessionary Challenges**

- High poverty
- Collapse of the automobile industry
- Highest foreclosure rate
- Highest unemployment rate
- Shrinking population
- Brain drain
- Racial disparities and divides
- Schools in receivership with many closing
- High violence
- Food insecurity and hunger
- Alarming increases in diet-related diseases
- Government in turmoil - three mayors in one year
- Indictments on City Council
- Budget deficits
- Vast geographic landscape

The "One D Scorecard," released during the Detroit Regional Chamber's<sup>27</sup> 2009 Annual Mackinac Policy Conference, offers another analysis of metropolitan Detroit conditions. Per capita income for a region once among the nation's richest has fallen to 29<sup>th</sup> among 54 metro areas. Young people are leaving Detroit: just 12% of the population is aged 25-34 (43<sup>rd</sup> in the nation). Less than 70% of residents have high school diplomas, leaving one-third of the population virtually unemployable given 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and knowledge demands. Finally, Detroit ranks second among metro areas in black/white segregation, and the gap in income and education attainment between blacks and whites is wide.<sup>28</sup>

With these challenges – despite the efforts of devoted teachers and administrators – a quality education is hard to come by. The Detroit Public Schools are in receivership. In summer 2009, officials initiated a massive downsizing to address a \$306 million deficit, and the plan called for closing 29 schools by fall 2009.

Six out of ten Detroit students were behind in reading before entering high school.<sup>29</sup> With only 37.5% of high school students graduating (compared to 75% nationally), Detroit has one of the lowest graduation rates in any large city.<sup>30</sup> The National Youth Risk Behavior Survey<sup>31</sup> results underscore the urgent need to transform the schools. For example:

- 11.4% of Detroit high school students did not attend school at least once in the 30 days prior to the survey due to safety concerns – more than double the national rate of 5.5%.
- 10.4% of high school students attempted suicide during the previous 12 months, compared to 6.8% nationwide.

In addition, the pull out of all major grocery stores from Detroit has exacerbated food insecurity and hunger. Many neighborhoods have been designated "food deserts" – areas

<sup>26</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, Unemployment Rates in Metropolitan Areas, 2010.

<sup>27</sup> The highly regarded Regional Chamber, chaired by Edsel B. Ford, was formed to foster collaboration among nonprofit organizations committed to Detroit's recovery.

<sup>28</sup> One D Scorecard, [www.onedscorecard.org](http://www.onedscorecard.org) (2009).

<sup>29</sup> Lee, J., Grigg, W., and Donahue, P. (2007). *The Nation's Report Card: Reading 2007* (NCES 2007-496). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC.

<sup>30</sup> Laird, J., DeBell, M., Kienzl, G., and Chapman, C. (2007). *Dropout Rates in the United States: 2005* (NCES 2007-059). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

<sup>31</sup> Center for Disease Control, National Youth Risk Survey (2007).



with no or distant food stores and limited access to fresh, nutritious food. Diet-related diseases such as obesity and diabetes are rising at alarming rates. In a 2007 report on the subject,<sup>32</sup> the author found that “the vast majority of places to purchase groceries in Detroit are fringe locations, such as convenience stores, liquor stores and gas stations. Unless access to healthy food greatly improves, Detroit residents will continue to have greater rates of premature illness and death from diet-related diseases, after controlling for other key factors.”

Further, Detroit has one of the nation’s highest murder rates, and seven out of ten murders go unsolved: “there have been more killings so far this year in Detroit than in New York City, and New York City has nearly ten times as many people.”<sup>33</sup>

Finally, the local government has been in turmoil – three mayors in one year and fraud and indictments on the City Council. As one leader said, “It’s not just the Mayor who changed; it’s also the staff up and down the city’s systems. This has made it hard to work together on the summer stimulus and a lot of projects.”

In short, the recessionary conditions in Detroit were, and are, daunting. Yet there are many innovative, talented, and skilled leaders who are passionate about “bringing Detroit back,” concentrating on schools, city government, and land use. Many of these leaders and managers told the Brandeis team, “These are the best of times and the worst of times” and “a crisis is a terrible thing to waste!”

### **Recessionary Assets**

How does Detroit address these seemingly intractable social and economic problems - especially under the lens of a skeptical public and intensive government monitoring? It starts and ends with Detroit’s great asset – its people.

The Brandeis team found a vibrant hidden infrastructure of vision, hope, pride – and a discipline of innovation – among a core group of game changers in Detroit. These leaders are on a mission - stimulated by the Skillman Foundation’s ten-year investment in Good Neighborhoods and Good Schools known as “Detroit Works for Kids” (see [www.skillman.org](http://www.skillman.org)) – to transform Detroit’s neighborhoods and “create conditions where all children are safe, healthy, well-educated and prepared for adulthood.” This is the story of how Detroiters used the ARRA as an instrument of change toward that broader mission. Ensuring and creating high quality summer jobs is part of the answer, but as many leaders said, “it’s also about big systems change and strategically re-engineering for a new economy and new opportunities in green jobs, healthcare and the creative arts.”

#### **Recessionary Assets: Hope, Pride, Discipline, and Resilience**

Hidden infrastructure including:

- Mission-driven and results-oriented leadership, systems thinking, and entrepreneurial spirit
- Established and expanding partnerships between philanthropy, city and state government, business, and nonprofits
- Commitment to research-based best practice in programs and management
- Institutional memory regarding large scale summer programs
- Culture of learning and continuous quality improvement

<sup>32</sup> Mari Gallagher Research & Consulting Group (2007). Examining the Impact of Food Deserts on Public Health in Detroit. Chicago, IL.

<sup>33</sup> Hargreaves, S. Stopping Detroit’s Brain Drain, [www.cnnmoney.com](http://www.cnnmoney.com) September 21, 2009

## **PART II REINVESTMENT AND RECOVERY ACTIONS AND INNOVATIONS: LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP**

It was clear that for the SYEI to succeed, Detroit would need to capitalize on its existing strengths, including:

- The ability to draw upon an array of positive partnerships with individuals, businesses, and nonprofits.
- Strong working relationships with the Detroit Workforce Development Department and the State of Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth.
- Public and nonprofit professionals who not only have hope, pride, and discipline but also possess institutional memory of the large USDOL SYEPs of a decade ago.
- A history of strategizing and planning effective youth development programs.
- A cadre of passionate Detroiters who come to the table when asked. Indeed, there is a culture of “coming to the table.” (Yet, as numerous people pointed out, “The trick is to keep people at the table.”)

The ARRA was a catalyst for a turnabout in Detroit’s approach to workforce development. Not only did it make Federal money available for youth employment; it also presented opportunities for new ways of doing workforce development in the city.

### **Laying the groundwork: the Detroit Youth Employment Consortium**

In the spring and summer of 2009, the Detroit Youth Employment Consortium (YEC) members served as chief strategists and guides for the implementation of the ARRA SYEI. In support of SYEI, the Skillman Foundation granted up to \$500,000 toward implementation. YEC arose in 2008, when the Skillman Foundation funded a summer jobs pilot, largely in response to consistent messages from youth that they wanted to work and were frustrated by the prospect of reaching adulthood without ever having a regular job. The pilot programs, under the auspices of the Youth Development Commission (YDC) working with local nonprofits, provided 300 jobs. The Foundation convened the partners to share experiences and best practices. The group formed a learning community, persuaded the City of Detroit and Michigan’s Department of Labor and Economic Growth to participate and commit resources, crafted the mission, generated recommendations, and established itself as the YEC.

#### **Detroit Youth Employment Consortium (YEC)**

- Initiated by The Skillman Foundation in 2008, YEC is a cross-sector partnership committed to expanding summer and year-round employment opportunities for Detroit youth ages 14-18.
- Mission: “To develop a public-private partnership that expands sustainable high-quality youth employment opportunities in the city of Detroit that promote positive youth development (i.e., connect youth to employment exploration, encourage and support persistence and secondary education attainment).”
- Members include City Connect Detroit, Brightmoor Alliance, Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation, Greening of Detroit, Latino Family Services, Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion, Prevailing Community Development Corporation, Student Conservation Association, Youth Development Commission, Detroit Community Initiative, Mt. Vernon Missionary Baptist Church, National Community Development Institute, The Skillman Foundation, University of Michigan School of Social Work Good Neighborhood Technical Assistance Center, Youth Development Commission, JPMorgan Chase, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Knight Foundation, Mott Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, Department of Labor and Economic Growth, State of Michigan, Workforce Development Department, City of Detroit, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Michigan, Compuware, Johnson Controls Inc., Lear Corporation, Bank of America, DTE Energy.

### **Detroit Youth Development Commission (YDC)**

The Skillman Foundation formed Detroit's Youth Development Commission (YDC) in 1995 to address recreational activities for youth during out-of-school hours. Over time, its role expanded to include youth development initiatives such as youth employment and summer work. Skillman funded YDC's *Work Opportunities for Youth* program for nine years, during which it served 1,000 to 2,000 youth each summer, offering classroom-based employability skills training through numerous community-based organizations.

The YDC did not operate summer jobs programs for three years; then, in 2008, the Skillman Foundation granted \$300,000 to the YDC as fiduciary to pilot youth employment programs in six neighborhoods. YDC subcontracted with local organizations to provide public and private sector jobs at about 60 sites for about 300 youth.

For the 2009 SYEI, the YDC became the operational subcontractor/partner (City Connect Detroit was the lead intermediary/coordinator). YDC was responsible for the day-to-day operation of youth certification, assessment, and orientation; identifying, contracting with, monitoring, and providing technical assistance to many worksites; providing youth development training and education; collecting timesheets, processing payroll, and distributing paychecks; managing program data; providing support and follow-up; and conducting some aspects of program evaluation and continuous quality improvement.

This groundwork ultimately led to a new way of doing business: strong city-intermediary collaboration with philanthropic leadership and investment. The Detroit Workforce Development Department (DWDD) selected City Connect Detroit to serve as SYEI Coordinator. According to one city leader, "They have a reputation for getting things done." City Connect proposed working in partnership with the YDC and the YEC, which provided strategic vision and resources. The state had to approve the Consortium approach and there was a readiness among state leadership to try this new way of doing business for summer youth employment. This collaborative structure was created in a matter of weeks, demonstrating an adaptive capacity<sup>34</sup> rarely seen among government, philanthropy, and nonprofits. A philosophy that "partnerships are a must" drives the complex but functional management structure.

As Exhibit 1 illustrates, City Connect submitted a proposal in response to an April 2009 DWDD RFP for a program

administrator to manage all aspects of a summer work program. (After nearly 20 years of contracting with the private, for-profit *Career Works* to carry out employment-related programs, DWDD briefly ran the youth employment program before issuing the RFP.) City Connect, an intermediary organization dedicated to partnership and collaboration, emerged as the most appropriate lead agency/program administrator. Its senior staff are steeped in partnership development and their work culture reflects that. For example, "relationship management" within and across organizations is a formal function and competency in job descriptions and performance reviews. Meantime, the number of youth to be served had risen to 7,000 as more funds had become available but the turnaround time for the RFP was only 11 days! City Connect marshaled the forces of numerous organizations and groups, and responded with a winning proposal.

Detroit's SYEI management and leadership structure was distinctive (compared to that of many other cities) in that it was overseen and managed by a nonprofit intermediary organization that brokered strategic partnerships to accomplish the goals. Further, they did so with a regional economic focus in three areas: green jobs, healthcare, and creative arts.

<sup>34</sup> Adaptive capacity is an organization's ability to ask, listen, reflect, and adapt in a changing environment. C. W. Letts, W. P. Ryan, and A. Grossman (1999). *High Performance Nonprofit Organizations* (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York).



Even with this high level of collaboration, Detroit’s operational capacity was “pushed and challenged,” as one stakeholder noted. However, City Connect’s expressed philosophy was, “Keep your eyes on the prize, and know that mistakes are learning opportunities.” This sense of mission, drive, and commitment to excellence and continuous improvement were expressed during interviews with Detroit people at all levels.

**Exhibit 1**  
**Creating a New Way of Doing Business:**  
**Strong City-Intermediary Collaboration with Philanthropic Leadership and Investment**

*"City Connect Detroit, in partnership with the Detroit Youth Employment Consortium, the Skillman Foundation and Youth Development Commission, presented a successful proposal to the Detroit Workforce Development Department to become Coordinator of the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP)."-Board Report 10/20/09, City Connect Detroit*

**Roles and Responsibilities of Partners**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Role/Responsibility</b>
<b>Detroit Youth Employment Consortium</b> (Co-created and supported by The Skillman Foundation; endorsed by city and state workforce leaders)	Convene cross-sector consortium focused on strategic development of year-round youth employment opportunities.
<b>Detroit Workforce Development Department</b>	Overall program monitoring to ensure city, state, and Federal compliance, accountability, and transparency.
<b>City Connect Detroit</b>	Provide SYEP leadership/direction. Monitor program performance/quality. Develop private sector worksites (#50+). Manage innovative partnerships (#13+).
<b>Youth Development Commission</b>	Implement WIA/SYEP 10 Key Elements* for Youth Programs and provide quality training and guidance for youth development approach.
<b>University of Michigan – School of Social Work</b> , Good Neighborhoods Technical Assistance Center	Conduct program evaluation with youth and employers

\*As established by the Department of Labor (DOL) Training and Employment Guidance letter (TEGL) 14-08. Key elements include incorporating age appropriate activities and establishing work readiness goals, conducting meaningful work experiences, establishing positive worksites, integrating work and classroom-based learning activities, connecting to registered apprenticeships, linking academic and occupational learning, supporting older/out-of-school youth during non-summer months, focusing on youth most in need, conducting twelve-month follow-up, and incorporating green work experiences. ETA provided flexibility through ARRA on, for example, follow-up services, assessment, and academic learning linked to summer employment.

### **City Connect Detroit**

*"They have a reputation for getting things done."*

**Mission:** To help metropolitan Detroit nonprofits and governments obtain increased national funding and to facilitate collaborations among nonprofits, governments, businesses, grantmakers, and others.

Embedded amidst an array of partnerships, City Connect was the summer 2009 SYEI coordinator and responsible for program management. City Connect manager-leaders demonstrated a mission-focused, results-oriented approach and a commitment to research-based best practices and continuous improvement as they provided leadership direction, monitored program performance, developed private-sector worksites, and managed innovative partnerships.

**History:** In 1998, the Skillman Foundation and other public and nonprofit leaders formed a planning group to address chronic under-funding of Detroit area human service programs by the Federal government. Among the major reasons for this problem are the following:

- A need for greater understanding and trust among local nonprofit organizations, foundations, and city departments.
- A comparative lack of cross-sector collaborations.
- A need for available, timely information about Federal and national foundation funding opportunities.
- A perception that southeast Michigan's nonprofit organizations lack organizational capacity to successfully compete for funding at the national level.

(See [www.cityconnectdetroit.org](http://www.cityconnectdetroit.org))

City Connect Detroit was created in 2001 to address those challenges. Its purpose is to help groups advance important community issues by using data, connecting with others, and advancing collective strategic approaches. A board was formed to oversee the organization; a highly experienced CEO and small staff were hired. City Connect received a start-up grant with a five-year goal of raising \$25 million. It brought in more than twice that much in half the time expected. City Connect has helped form more than thirty collaborative partnerships that focus on many issues, including youth development and youth employment.

Using established relationships and a skilled staff, City Connect led Detroit's capacity to develop the collaborative relationships to move the Detroit SYEP forward rapidly.

Technical challenges, however, were around every corner. Like others in 2009, Detroit confronted dilemmas with eligibility and certification requirements, financial management systems/ payroll, cash flow, and job matching. Examples of these challenges, and Detroit's responses, follow.

*"Ramping up to serve 7,000 kids is not without incident."*

### **Certification and Eligibility: From Confusion to Innovation**

Outreach to young people started in winter 2009. The Detroit Workforce Development Department (DWDD) organized "Super Saturdays" and used its One Stop Centers, schools, churches, and other locations to recruit and distribute pre-applications. The City Council issued announcements. Pre-applications were to be turned in at One Stop Centers. "Everyone was knocking on the door, hoping for a chance to work."

Pre-applications were intended as a statement of interest in participating in the SYEI. DWDD's receipt of a pre-application was to trigger a letter telling the applicant to attend a

certification appointment and be tested using TABE<sup>35</sup> reading/math assessments. More than 25,000 youth completed pre-applications; however, some youth and families misinterpreted the pre-application as the whole application process. As a result, the SYEI staff needed to reach out to many applicants and their families to explain the full process.

In June 2009, City Connect and the YDC began handling certification, with DWDD in an oversight role. This transition, while challenging, was largely successful. City Connect organized a rapid response team to accelerate the certification process, instituting an “all hands on deck” approach (and hiring additional hands). By the end of the SYEI, City Connect reported 7,047 certified placements.

### Top Technical Challenges

- Eligibility/certification
- Financial management systems/payroll
- Cash flow
- Job matching

### Detroit’s Payroll Management Response:

#### “Mistakes Represent Learning Opportunities”

A problem arose during Detroit’s first payroll: 534 out of 2,614 youth who were expecting paychecks were not paid on time. Some checks were not issued because timesheets were submitted after deadline. Others were not issued because some agencies were working with kids who had “always been eligible before,” and who they “knew” would

be eligible again in 2009; these agencies put young people to work without completing the certification process and submitted timesheets for them. Thus, timesheets were submitted for uncertified youth; but due to the checks and balances, no paychecks were issued.

A team of manager-leaders from City Connect and the YDC began troubleshooting immediately, working through the weekend to tackle the problem. They received 331 complaints on payday, and had resolved 221 of them by the end of that day. They analyzed how and why problems occurred and came up with solutions. They implemented a rapid certification process, provided additional training to site monitors and field reps regarding certification and payroll procedures, and improved information flow. They informed agencies that if agency-created problems occurred on the second round of paychecks, the agencies would be responsible for paying the youth from their own funds. They created an ad hoc payroll team to conduct quality assurance to reduce the chances that problems would recur. It worked! By the end of the program, they had issued more than 23,000 checks totaling \$7,569,748.

### Cash Flow Innovation

When the authorization for the summer program came in May, City Connect and other organizations had to move forward based upon verbal commitments – without contracts signed or money flowing. Meanwhile, staff, supervisors, and administrators, had to be hired, trained, and paid.

*“Money helps, but people solve problems...but money helps!”*

The cash flow dilemma was largely addressed through the availability of a flexible fund from the Skillman Foundation and a line of credit with a financial institution. The Skillman Foundation established what became known as “a vault” with several hundred thousand dollars to address cash flow dilemmas and support potentially ineligible youth. Manager-leaders also called this the “safety/penalty box fund.” Interviewees remarked time and time

<sup>35</sup> The Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) is a series of assessments used by a range of employers and educators to help identify test takers’ levels of competency, educational goals, learning styles, etc.

again that “we could not have done this without Skillman.” As one said, “Their support allowed us to be nimble and take some necessary risks.” This proved to be an essential factor of success, given the complexity and timing of the contracts and certification process and the need to be audit-proof. With multiple funding streams, multiple entities were monitoring the SYEI (Federal, state, city, et al.), paperwork was time-consuming. From a management and leadership perspective the problems were ultimately worked out, but the funding lag left some damaged feelings in neighborhood programs that will need to be repaired. The leadership team will develop a financial management model to prevent this in future programs.

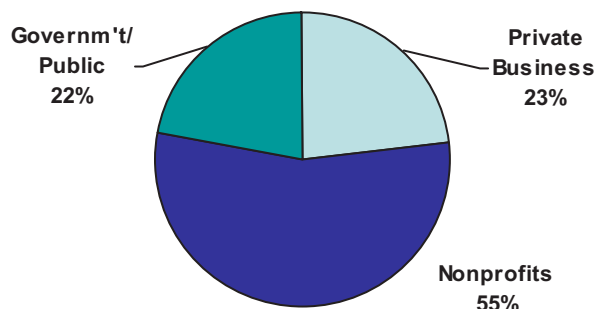
### Job Matching/Worksite Development

Developing more than 7,000 meaningful jobs that are connected to youths’ interests, respond to regional industries, and are within acceptable travel distances posed a challenge.

During the certification process, youth wrote job preferences on their applications. Early in the summer, YDC did its best to match youth with jobs that had some connection to their stated preferences. As the summer progressed and the number of youth enrolled grew, interest-driven job matching became more challenging.

Because Detroit’s public transportation is underdeveloped, geography played a governing role in deciding where to place youth.

Figure 1. Job Matching Percentages



MIS Demographics (As of 1/19/10)	
Older Youth	1,303
Younger Youth	4,670
Out-of-School	1,113
In-School	4,840
5% Ineligible	119
Male	2,810
Female	3,163
White American	74
African American	5,893
American Indian/Alaskan	24
Asian	4
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	4
Hispanic/Latino	89
Disabled	129

YDC attempted to place young people in jobs within their home zip codes; when this was not possible, the goal was at least to provide a job on each youth’s side of the city/downtown.

There were also instances in which employers wanted only older youth or youth with specific skills; in other cases, agencies wanted “only their own kids.” To the extent possible, YDC attempted to fulfill these requests.

Though the majority of youth were younger, in-school youth, more than 1,300 were older youth who needed jobs. Some were desperate and “just want any job.” Others had more specific interests.

In the end, City Connect Detroit and YDC developed 242 worksites, 57 of them in the private sector (which exceeded their internal goal of 50). See Figure 1 for a breakdown of types of worksites.

## Youth Work Readiness Orientation and Training

All youth enrolled in Detroit's SYEI participated in what the SYEI dubbed the "COOL" program – a series of four-hour training, learning enrichment, and occasionally tutorial sessions led by YDC teachers that covered work readiness topics such as:

- Getting and keeping a job
- Getting ready for the world of work
- Life skills
- Understanding finances
- Green careers
- Leadership skills

This training, held at six sites, typically served 25 youth per session. Youth who enrolled at the beginning of the summer attended weekly *COOL Fridays* sessions, and worked Mondays through Thursdays. As the summer advanced, this schedule became unmanageable given the large number of youth involved. YDC adjusted by front-loading the program: newly enrolled youth attended the entire set of *COOL* sessions in their first week (five days), then moved into their jobs five days per week.

## Meaningful Work Experience

Despite the SYEI's rapid implementation, Detroit managed to offer many young people an array of meaningful experiences (see Appendix 1). The Brandeis team asked worksite and program supervisors to define meaningful work experience. A sampling of their responses follows:

### Exhibit 2 Youth Programs Best Practice Criteria

- Meaningful work
- Relationship with competent, caring adults (high quality staff and worksite supervisors)
- Youth development principles in place for positive developmental settings
- Opportunity to combine work and learning and acquire marketable skills
- Age and stage appropriate placements and tasks
- Evidence of partnerships / coordination for "system of supports and opportunities"

- "Not just a paycheck"
- "Broadens and deepens thinking about self and others"
- "Creates a growing confidence and belief and pride in self"
- "Motivates you to succeed in schooling, gives a sense of possibility"
- "Infuses all aspects of an industry into the experience"
- "Combines work and learning with projects and active academics"
- "Exposes kids to new career options and the skills they need to make a living"
- "Inspires kids to do something with their lives"

Both youth development and integrated work and learning strategies had traction in Detroit and were observed in programs and placements that included junior police cadets, environmental stewardship, urban gardening, journalism, participatory action research, pharmacology and the Arts. Based on research conducted on summer and year-round youth programs, the Brandeis team created a short list of best practice criteria (see Exhibit 2).

At the worksites visited – which employed approximately one-third of the total youth served in summer 2009 – most of the sites met these criteria. For example, worksite supervisors were top-rate. Supervisors saw youth's value and potential, recognized the role of work in youth development and transition to adulthood, and endeavored to make young people's summer experiences meaningful.



## Highlights from Summer Evaluation Findings

Results of employer and youth employee exit surveys<sup>36</sup> support the Brandeis researchers' perception that Detroit youth and employers had a positive experience. Among employers, 110 responded to the survey (a 64.7% completion rate); 1,416 youth responded (a 20% completion rate).

Employers who responded to the survey were very positive about the program:

- 99% would participate in the program again; 98% would encourage other organizations to participate.
- 70% said the Detroit SYEI can be improved next year by "starting the program earlier in the summer" while 53% said by "making a year-round employment program."

Employers also said that their worksites helped prepare youth for future employment by building and providing experience with employment skills and by offering exposure to possible career choices. They also said that their worksites help prepare youth academically by reinforcing the importance of an education, and by connecting youth to higher education and educational resources.

*"Look at the kids – this is where the diamonds are."*

Among youth respondents:

- 84% felt safe and respected by adults.
- 74% said that there was an adult they felt comfortable talking to; staff challenged them to do their best; and they had a chance to help people in the community.
- 72% said that they felt like their opinion mattered.
- 73% reported that the program changed their ideas about the future, most frequently reporting that they now have more confidence about whatever they do (37%) and think they can get a better job (34%).
- 70% learned to work with others as a team.
- 47% learned how to act at work.
- 46% said that the program helped them decide what kind of job they liked.
- 35% said it helped them understand the qualifications needed for their dream job and prepare for a job interview.
- 40% said it raised their expectations of themselves.
- 30% said it helped them decide to stay in school.
- 88% said that they made new friends.
- 76% would recommend the program to others.
- 35% reported that they gave the money they earned to their family.

When asked what job they wanted in ten years, the youth<sup>37</sup> listed the following:

**Nurse:** Pediatric nurse, psychiatric nurse, neonatal nurse, and certified nurse midwife

**Doctor:** Pediatrician, OB-GYN, eye doctor, urologist, cardiologist, army doctor, surgeon, anesthesiologist, neurosurgeon, pediatric surgeon, neonatal surgeon, medical examiner, holistic doctor, sports medicine physician, and radiologist

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<sup>36</sup>Shanks, T. and McGee, K. (2010). *Detroit Summer Youth Employment Program: Results of Employer and Youth Employee Exit Surveys*. University of Michigan – School of Social Work, Good Neighborhoods Technical Assistance Center.

<sup>37</sup>1,141 out of 1,416 respondents completed this item for a response rate of 80.6%.

**Lawyer:** Business law, corporate attorney, defense attorney, district attorney, prosecution attorney, and criminal justice lawyer for juvenile delinquencies

**Entrepreneur or shop owner:** Catering, chef owning my own restaurant, massage, spa, production company, salon, barbershop, daycare, and adult care

**Engineer:** Electrical, computer, mechanical, automotive, civil, and chemical

**Sports:** Basketball (NBA, WNBA), baseball (MLB), boxing, football, UFC and mixed martial arts, and bowling

**Corporate:** Business manager, business man/woman, business administration, CEO, Financial advisor, business consulting, marketing, banking, and marketing

**Arts:** Design art, cartoonist, graphic novelists, computer animation, choreographer, dancer, dancing with Alvin Alley, teaching dance, music producer, Mariachi with a Master's degree, rapper, R&B and rap artist, singer, and music/sound engineer

**Law enforcement:** SWAT team, homicide detective, and K-9 officer

**Teacher:** Pre-school teacher, high school teacher, music teacher, English teacher, and special education teacher

The findings suggest that summer work and learning opportunities can play an important role in youth development and future work and career aspirations.

The program worksites defined in Appendix 1 represent placements for about one third of youth workers. All seven represent promising and best practice worthy of future investment and replication. Appendix 2 illustrates the strategic alignment between Detroit's recessionary conditions and the recovery and reinvestment actions taken by the leadership team.

## Final Words

*"Hope is the difference between success and failure in Detroit."*

During summer 2009, Detroit innovated under pressure and combated obstacles with social and intellectual capital, material assets, and the political will, skills, and strategy to seize this opportunity to make Detroit work for kids. The leaders who were interviewed said, "We are not done" and "we need year-round youth work and learning opportunities and we are planning for that now." Many noted with hope, "We have a strong Mayor now." Mayor Bing – a businessman and former Detroit Pistons star - took over in May 2009 before winning a full term election in November 2009. According to *Time* (October 2009, "The Chief Executive"), the new Mayor will "impose his own financial discipline and entrepreneurial sense on city government." Newly invigorated political leadership coupled with an aggressive school reform movement and determined leaders in philanthropy, nonprofits, business, and state government may keep this fast-moving train on track.

*"Detroit is an example of resiliency tied to hope."*

One Foundation leader said, *"In spite of the many challenges – City Council problems, mayoral turnover, people hesitant to invest in Detroit, the unraveling of the corporate sector, the feeling of being under siege – we pulled this off!"*

## DETROIT APPENDIX 1

Organization	Program Strategy	Sample Worksite Experiences	Highlights
<b>Management and Leadership</b>			
<p>Detroit Youth Employment Consortium/  Detroit Workforce Development Department/  City Connect Detroit/  Youth Development Coalition/  University of Michigan – School of Social Work, Good Neighborhoods Technical Assistance Center</p>	<p>Creating a new way of doing business: Strong city-intermediary collaboration with philanthropic leadership and investment</p> <p><i>"City Connect Detroit, in partnership with the Detroit Youth Employment Consortium, the Skillman Foundation and Youth Development Commission, presented a successful proposal to the Detroit Workforce Development Department to become Coordinator of the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP)." – Board Report 10/20/09, City Connect Detroit</i></p>	<p>Convene cross-sector consortium focused on strategic development of year-round youth employment opportunities.</p> <p>Overall program monitoring to ensure city, state, and Federal compliance, accountability, and transparency.</p> <p>Provide SYEP leadership/direction. Monitor program performance/quality. Develop private sector worksites (#50+). Manage innovative partnerships (#13+).</p> <p>Implement WIA/SYEP 10 Key Elements for Youth Programs and provide quality training and guidance for youth development approach.</p> <p>Conduct program evaluation with youth and employers.</p>	<p>The innovative collaboration approach (a brand new way of doing business) was created in a matter of months and grew out of the mission of the newly formed Youth Employment Consortium: <i>"To develop a public-private partnership that expands sustainable, high quality youth employment opportunities in the city of Detroit that promote positive youth development."</i></p>
<b>Education Partners and Worksites</b>			
<p>CVS Caremark Workforce Initiative/  CVS Corporation</p>	<p>CVS Caremark provided young people with summer pharmacy internships that exposed them to careers in pharmacy and other healthcare professions. 90 youth were placed in 39 stores in the Detroit metro area. Prior to their internships, young people received a week of training at a CVS Regional Learning</p>	<p>CVS Pharmacy Assistants at 39 "Pharmacies of Promise."</p>	<p>This innovative public-private collaboration combined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meaningful work.</li> <li>▪ Relationships with competent, caring adults.</li> <li>▪ Opportunities to combine work and learning and acquire marketable skills.</li> <li>▪ Significant use of a broad array of SCANS skills and competencies.</li> </ul>

*Center for Youth and Communities, The Heller School for Social Policy and Management*

Organization	Program Strategy	Sample Worksite Experiences	Highlights
	Center. Following the summer, interns attended a week-long educational session at the Wayne State University College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Significant exposure to the rigors of a private-sector workplace.</li> </ul> <p>One supervisory pharmacist said, "<i>Look carefully. This is where the diamonds are – the young people working here.</i>"</p>
Youth Engaged In Community Research/  University of Michigan	Using community asset surveys and focus groups, 60 young people collected data in their neighborhoods to explore how safe, healthy, educated, and prepared for adulthood local youth were. Prior to data gathering, youth participated in role plays to help them get people to respond to their surveys. Youth generated the questions they would ask during focus groups. They compiled what they heard/learned during focus groups, and conducted basic asset mapping. As a culminating event, youth gave a presentation to the Michigan Governor's Council.	University of Michigan participatory action research (PAR) in six Detroit neighborhoods.	This university-sponsored initiative engaged young people in participatory community research that incorporated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Youth development and youth research principles.</li> <li>▪ A superb vehicle for youth voices to be heard.</li> <li>▪ Opportunities for youth to give back to their communities -- "<i>You live in your neighborhood; you keep hearing others talk about your neighborhood; this is your chance to get reliable data and help shape your neighborhood.</i>"</li> </ul>
Detroit Junior Police Cadet Program/  Detroit Police Department	Detroit's Junior Cadet Program provided 1500+ youth with opportunities to give back to their communities, and helped improve relationships among youth and police officers.	<p><i>The Senior Citizen Escort Program</i> After training in working with elders, Cadets provided companionship, played games, and exercised with seniors; helped with eating and letter writing; helped with travel to appointments or shopping; ran errands for seniors; and patrolled senior-oriented buildings and grounds.</p> <p><i>The School/Community Patrols</i> Cadets patrolled parks to enhance safety; served as escorts and companions in parks and at bus stops;</p>	This 34-year-old program combined: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meaningful work and community service.</li> <li>▪ Relationships with competent, caring adults.</li> <li>▪ Youth development principles.</li> <li>▪ Youth participation in creating safe places for themselves and others.</li> </ul> <p>A broad array of subjects in which youth were trained: maturity at work, dress habits, goal setting, life skills, social skills, time management, HIV/ AIDS education, drug/tobacco education, human</p>

Organization	Program Strategy	Sample Worksite Experiences	Highlights
		provided additional supervision for community groups and nursery schools using park facilities; and assisted stranded motorists. In school buildings, Cadets patrolled hallways, grounds, and perimeters to assure safety; helped with summer program activities; and performed clerical work.	relations, conflict resolution, leadership skills, budgeting and bank accounts, and first aid/CPR.
Communities in Schools	<p><i>Young Detroiter Magazine</i> is a youth-run monthly publication with a mission to "broaden the education of metro area teens through journalism and special programs that create unique opportunities through media." Organized to mimic a real publishing business, over 20 youth were grouped into working departments: management, public relations, marketing, journalism, and internet. The resulting magazine is of professional quality: photographs and graphics mix with articles designed to appeal to youth and at times to convey important messages.</p>	<i>Community in Schools Home to Young Detroiter Magazine.</i>	<p>This excellent example of high quality project-based learning combined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Youth involvement in many aspects of the publishing business.</li> <li>▪ Meaningful work.</li> <li>▪ Relationships with competent, caring adults.</li> <li>▪ Opportunity to combine work and learning and acquire marketable skills for "green jobs."</li> <li>▪ Youth development principles.</li> <li>▪ Significant use of SCANS skills and competencies, and other important academic, employability, and life skills.</li> </ul>
<p>Conservation Leadership Corps/  Johnson Controls, the Student Conservation Association and The Greening of Detroit</p>	110 youth were engaged in a variety of hands-on environmental stewardship/conservation experiences. They also received assistance with job readiness and interview skill development; resume writing, and personal financial management.	<i>Johnson Controls, the Student Conservation Association and The Greening of Detroit</i> Student supervised "green" activities such as tree planting, landscaping, native planting, new trail development and maintenance, native timber bench construction, removing invasive species, repairing damaged and eroded areas, and constructing a greenhouse for an elementary school outdoor classroom.	<p>This innovative, public-private, "green jobs" program combined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meaningful work.</li> <li>▪ Relationships with competent, caring adults.</li> <li>▪ Opportunities to combine work and learning and acquire marketable skills for "green jobs."</li> <li>▪ Evidence of partnerships/coordination for "systems of supports and opportunities."</li> </ul>



Organization	Program Strategy	Sample Worksite Experiences	Highlights
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Youth development principles.</li> <li>▪ Opportunities for youth to give back to their communities.</li> </ul>
DFarm/ Detroit Black Food Security Network	DFarm is a 2-acre model urban farm responding to the lack of supermarkets in Detroit. It grows green produce for sale at farmers' markets, and addresses in its small way the lack of access to fresh produce in many communities.	<i>DFarm/ Detroit Black Food Security Network</i> Ten youth cultivated and raised fresh produce, pulled/cut/ weighed/trimmed produce for sale, sold produce at market, and learned where fresh produce comes from, conditions to grow it, and what it takes to create it. This project addresses the "food desert" epidemic in Detroit.	For the city youth involved, this "green jobs" program proved to be an extraordinarily enlightening experience that combined: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Exposure to and participation in sustainable urban farming and healthy nutrition.</li> <li>▪ Meaningful work.</li> <li>▪ Relationships with competent, caring adults.</li> <li>▪ Opportunities to combine work and learning and acquire marketable skills.</li> <li>▪ Opportunities for youth to give back to their communities.</li> </ul>
The Arts Place	100 young people developed their talents by interacting with and learning from successful artists across a number of disciplines.	<i>Community Center</i> Each youth participated in 120 hours of skill-building and employability training in one or two of the following: vocal music, instrumental music, dance, drama, set design, costume design, photography, theater management, and/or visual arts. Youth developed portfolios, demonstrated skills through a production, performance or gallery showcase, and applied realistic strategies to locate employment opportunities and develop career paths.	The entire work experience and training culminates in a public performance that utilizes the new skills of all arts teams.  This exciting culture and arts program represents a powerful example of experiential learning through work with competent, caring practicing artists and opportunities to develop creatively with peers and enhance self-expression.

## DETROIT APPENDIX 2

### Summary of Key Challenges and Innovations, Summer 2009, Detroit

Challenge – Recessionary Conditions	Recovery and Reinvestment Actions and Innovation Examples
<p>Need for new way of doing business/effective and efficient infrastructure</p> <p>Limited youth employment opportunities</p>	<p>Anticipated need for increased youth employment as part of broader youth and community development mission (i.e., neighborhoods where kids are safe, healthy, well-educated, and prepared for adulthood). Created Youth Employment Consortium.</p> <p>Built on existing and new partnerships and created collaborative approach committed to results, best practice, and continuous quality improvement. Addressed common technical challenges with rapid response teams, creative “COOL” days program, and focus on enduring partnerships.</p>
<p>Address shifting demographics and extreme recessionary conditions:</p> <p>e.g.: Food insecurity + hunger + diet related diseases and vacant land →</p> <p>e.g.: Rising need for healthcare professionals →</p> <p>e.g.: Increasing crime/violence→</p> <p>Build on youth interest and tax credit for creative industry→</p> <p>Reconnect and empower youth with positive, useful education experience →</p>	<p>Align summer job focus with youth development principles and new regional economies: green jobs, healthcare, creative arts.</p> <p>The “Greening of Detroit,” Conservation Leadership Corps; D-Farm Urban Gardens and Detroit Black Food Security Network.</p> <p>CVS Caremark Work Force Initiative.</p> <p>Detroit Junior Police Cadet Program.</p> <p>The Arts Place, training for young artists and performers.</p> <p>Youth Engaged in Community Research (University of Michigan); Young Detroiter Magazine.</p>
<p>Employ 7,000 youth in meaningful work experience and do so “quickly and wisely” with “transparency and accountability.”</p>	<p>“WE DID IT!”</p>