YOUTH JOBS

& CAREER PATHWAYS

Current experiences and future design opportunities
to better serve youth and employers in Baltimore

M.A. in Social Design Thesis 2017
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YOUTH JOBS & CAREER PATHWAYS:

Co-Designing Solutions

INTRODUCTION

As a new transplant to Baltimore I had a lot of questions about what it was like to be a young person here, so I set off to listen and learn as much as I could. With a particular interest in youth employment and training, I wanted to understand the key challenges and opportunities that exist within public programs and city services for youth. During interviews I heard about the transformational potential of summer jobs for some, but I also heard about unmet needs of young people, and the employers of those young people. These unmet needs resulted in unequal services and support for young people transitioning into adulthood.

Which led me to ask, **How might we reimagine short-term jobs to create long-term career pathways for youth?** My research was informed by the lived experience of youth, their families, and organizations in Baltimore, and the process identified opportunities to build a more accessible and equitable future for all young people here. Many young people in Baltimore are up against major personal and systemic obstacles to preparing for a career, but they also bring unique perspectives and skills to the workforce. This publication documents one effort to explore how to make the bridge between short-term jobs and long-term jobs easier to cross.

THE PROCESS

The purpose of this publication is to share the journey that I went on in pursuit of my MA in Social Design from the Maryland Institute College of Art and what I discovered in the process. The overview below is detailed in the following pages and more information about the social design process can be found in Appendix E.

> "I want to learn some responsibility and earn money so I don't always have to rely on my family. I just want to be able to prepare for what's ahead of me. I'm excited to start doing something new."
>
> –YouthWorks Applicant

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

A LIFE COURSE APPROACH

Leading researchers on youth focus on the critical transition to adulthood and key outcomes such as high school graduation and job placement. There is a growing body of research on "disconnected youth" (youth between ages 16-24 who are out of work and out of school) and the specific barriers they face, but it is important to consider multiple factors and milestones across a lifetime that can accumulate and affect critical life outcomes for all young people. The Life Course Approach encourages supporting youth holistically, responding to multiple needs and risk factors they may be experiencing.

> Early life events influence future decisions and outcomes, and there is a powerful connection between individual lives and the historical and socioeconomic context in which these lives unfold.

Early Risk Factors ▶

Early risk factors for youth dropping out of school and being out of work include:

- disciplinary difficulties in school and the resulting loss of instructional time;
- involvement with the juvenile justice system, incidences of school suspension and expulsion increase these chances;
- becoming a teen parent;
- being or becoming homeless;
- growing up in poverty; and
- parent's educational status

Cumulative Effects ▶

Many of the risk factors listed happen during the formative years before legal working age, but often continue into the critical adulthood transition years, 16-24. Youth are rarely experiencing just one risk factor, but rather a cumulative set of risk factors that affect their school and work readiness. In addition to the general risk factors profiled, which can complicate secondary school completion, I will also highlight specific challenges of finding work as a young person that emerged during a root cause analysis.

Employment Challenges

Specific challenges experienced by disconnected youth, or youth experiencing multiple risk factors, while seeking employment include:

- lack of connections and social capital;
- lack of qualifications or preparation;
- lack of knowledge or ability to navigate bureaucracy and paperwork;
- discriminatory hiring practices;
- job isn't worth it financially (financial requirements at home, or start-up costs of the job, such as transportation and cost of business casual clothes, make the salary not sufficient to cover costs and push youth to seek opportunities outside of the formal economy).

RISK FACTORS

Further considering the Life Course Approach, this socioecological levels of analysis is an abbreviated recap of the many personal, societal, and potential causal factors of school dropout and/or work disconnect that a youth may be experiencing.

Policy

unequal access to basic health care, aging out of foster care, standardized testing scores linked to school funding, under-resourced schools, school policing policy, disproportionate Baltimore City Schools investment in police rather than guidance counselors, Baltimore's history of racist policies, discriminatory policing and sentencing, youth policies and programs designed without youth

Community

drug availability, gangs, levels of educational attainment and employment of adults in neighborhood, racist policing, poverty, low civic engagement and social cohesion, neighborhood collective efficacy, jobs unavailable or inaccessible in neighborhoods

School & Service Delivery

educational tracking and ability grouping, poor teachers, lack of 21st century and employability skills, no career or guidance counseling, mis-diagnoses of IEPs, lack of passion projects, lack of quality preschools, school closure, districting, school segregation, lack of wrap around services, lack of case management, suspensions and expulsions, implicit bias in discipline, Golem Effect (low expectations), classroom management

Family and Peer Networks

lack of parental supervision, literacy & word gap in the home, changing homes frequently, homelessness, family conflict, abuse & neglect, maternal depression, generational poverty, peer rejection, familial relationship issues, bullying, racism, lack of acceptance for academic and prosocial behaviors

Individual

low self-efficacy, low self-esteem, lack of hope, experience of trauma, skills, beliefs and values, cognitive abilities

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

FOR POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

(or factors that can counteract risk factors)

Enabling Environments
Policy, economic opportunities

Service Delivery
Positive school environment, access & quality of services/wraparound services
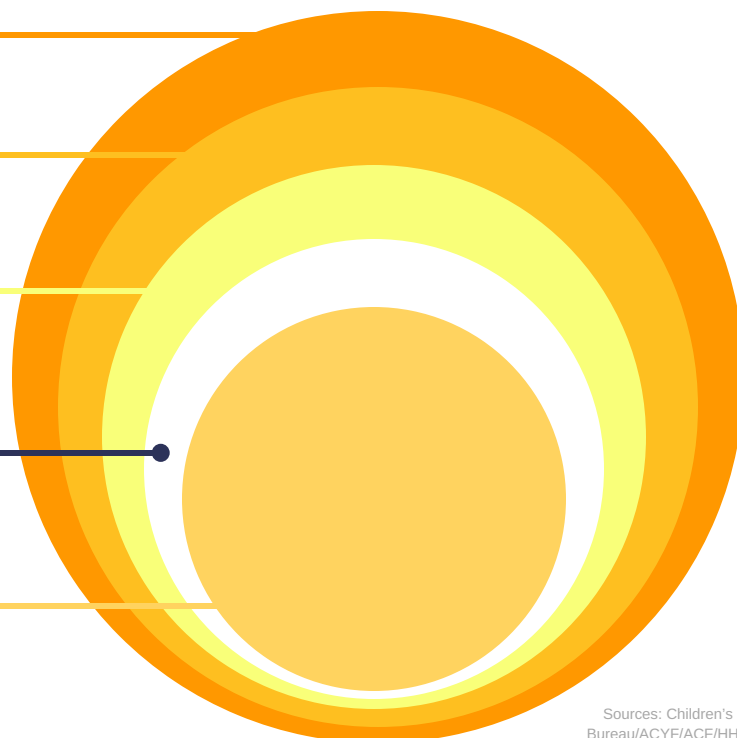
Community
Safe & quality environment, social cohesion & capital, collective efficacy

Family & Peer Networks
Resilient, nurturing & consistent caregiver(s), social connections

Individual
Development of social-emotional competencies & cognitive abilities, involvement in positive activities

Sources: Children's Bureau/ACYF/ACF/HHS

No Single Solution

The breadth of challenges that disconnected youth are facing suggest that they are not likely to be assisted by a single program, reform, or policy. This understanding pushed me to get specific about one area of working with youth for my thesis.

Youth Employment

Various studies correlate youth connection and upward mobility with education and youth employment, among others. While I fervently believe the public education system needs major intervention, I knew that my limited thesis timeframe would make it difficult to make inroads at Baltimore City Public Schools. My previous experience and personal interest in workforce development led me to take a closer look at the youth employment programs available locally and nationally.

Summer Jobs

Many cities offer a city-managed summer jobs program and I was intrigued because of how widely and democratically available this city "service" is to youth. Due to their temporary nature, but important placement in youth developmental milestones, I was curious about the true impact, and potential impact, of summer jobs programs.

Which led me to ask, How might we reimagine short-term jobs to create long-term career pathways for youth?

YOUTHWORKS

8000 YOUTH

1000 WORKSITES

- city agencies
- anchor institutions
- nonprofits
- businesses

MANY SUPERVISORS

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

IN BALTIMORE

I wanted to learn what programs and interventions were addressing youth workforce development, and the truth is that Baltimore is saturated with youth-serving programs. Many nonprofits offer youth workforce development as one small piece of a larger organizational mission; far fewer are doing actual job placement. When you google "youth programs in Baltimore" you get 13,400,000 results. For a young person, this saturation can make it difficult to know where to start, unless one has a pre-existing relationship with an organization that offers this service.

> When you google "youth programs in Baltimore" it returns 13,400,000 search results in .52 seconds. Imagine being a young person trying to navigate where to start.

Youth Employment

There are robust youth-serving programs in Baltimore that also focus on paid employment, such as Urban Alliance and Cristo Rey Jesuit High School's Corporate Work Study model. However, both of these examples are exclusionary through the application process. The wraparound services they provide also indicate high human and financial resource investments. These high-touch, high-cost models are often difficult to grow because of increased funding needs and the difficulty of replicating services at scale. As a result, they reach a limited population. There are even more programs that aren't coordinating resources, which leaves high-need youth piecing together solutions across the city, or underserved.

Accessibility

Because of my primary interest in reaching all youth, but particularly those who were most difficult to reach, I was most interested in partnering with an organization that was accessible to all. An organization that served youth in Baltimore City regardless of their zip code, school enrollment status, or other qualifying factors. I was also curious to explore how the human-centered design process can work in city government.

YouthWorks Partnership

I found YouthWorks! Based in the Mayor's Office of Employment Development, YouthWorks offers paid five-week summer job placements in the public and private sector for all youth between the ages of 14–21 who are residents of Baltimore City and complete the enrollment process.

I formalized a partnership with YouthWorks in order to engage in a process that would serve Baltimore youth, but also focus on the strengths and constraints of YouthWorks, in order to design interventions that were feasible for my partner. YouthWorks' tagline is "Summer jobs launch careers," and I was interested in learning more about the challenges and successes of making that statement true for all youth.

CITY-RUN SUMMER JOBS PROGRAMS

IN THE UNITED STATES

Baltimore

Number of youth placed in jobs:

NYC 54,263
Chicago 24,679
Los Angeles 11,644
Washington 13,230
Boston 10,360
Philadelphia 8,813
Baltimore 8,137
San Francisco 7,937
Detroit 5,594

Hartford, CT 2,090
Pittsburgh 1,901
Cincinnati 776
Evanston, IL 550
Madison, WI 415
Charlottesville, VA 153
Erie County, PA 142
Missoula, MT 43
(Brookings, 2015)

SUMMER JOBS

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

Although a short time period, national research has shown summer jobs have the ability to make a big impact in the lives of youth. YouthWorks is a short five week placement. Many work sites I interviewed expressed an interest in more time with youth in order to really make an impact. Some employers are taking the issue into their own hands by writing grants to extend the program with college visits and final presentations, or in the best case scenario, hiring YouthWorks participants into positions at their organization or company.

National studies have found that summer jobs are influential for youth; they often continue to seek work in the same field as where they first work, affecting their future trajectory.

(Gelber, Isen & Kessler, 2015)

Violence Prevention

The historic focus of social science research has been on studying job placement as a remediation tool for youth with criminal records. These studies have had inconsistent results. In a 2014 study by Sara Heller of an eight-week summer jobs program in Chicago, her findings showed employment as a violence prevention tool. In a randomized controlled trial of 1634 disadvantaged high-school aged youth, those that participated in a summer jobs program experienced significantly reduced incidences of violence, largely after the program had ended.

Long-Term Trajectories

The Gelber Study using longitudinal data of past NYC summer jobs program participants found their job placements to be "sticky," participants continued to seek work in the same fields as where they first worked, influencing their future career trajectories. This could be for a variety of reasons, but it spoke to me about the importance of youth placement and experience at their summer job. Many youth I interviewed were still discovering their dream career, so a perfect match might be impossible. Therefore, I wanted to think strategically about summer jobs being meaningful even through an imperfect placement process.

Impact

I began exploring YouthWorks as a prevention strategy for youth disconnection, and while they do serve disconnected youth, I ultimately focused my research on the experience provided to all YouthWorks participants. When I learned of YouthWorks' recent program growth from 5000 to 8000 participants after the Baltimore Uprising in 2015, putting them on track to reach 1/3 of youth by the time they turn 21, I wanted to think more holistically about serving all Baltimore youth. The reach of the YouthWorks program during a critical moment of young people's lives gives it an enormous responsibility to positively engage youth during early work experiences.

99

PERSONALLY, I WOULD INVEST A LOT MORE IN TRANSFERABLE SKILLS. IF WE COULD GET THE YOUTHWORKERS TO ARTICULATE WHAT THEY'RE DOING AND HAVE THAT PROFESSIONAL DEMEANOR. BUT I DON'T KNOW IF 5 WEEKS IS GOING TO DO IT.

-YouthWorks worksite supervisor

NEEDFINDING

The way you collect data affects the type and quality of data you collect, especially with youth, so I used various design and user experience research methods. I wanted to include a wide range of perspectives and use deep, lived experience to inform the needfinding phase of my project.

RESEARCH METHODS:

- 30 hours of interviews with YouthWorks staff, past YouthWorks participants, applicants for summer 2017, and YouthWorks worksite supervisors, to understand their challenges and successes during the program (see appendices A, B, and C)
- Interviews with ten non-YouthWorks organizations and companies to understand their perceived challenges to signing on as a work site
- Youth survey about goals and career development
- YouthWorks communication audit
- Adult employment journey mapping about first jobs, dream jobs, and the journey in between
- Youth Employment best practice literature review

IN-CONTEXT IMMERSION:

- Observation at YouthWorks certification appointments (youth interviews for program participation)
- Observation of nonprofit-led training for adult volunteers to serve as assistants for youth applying to YouthWorks
- YouthWorks worksite visits (observations conducted at sites that serve youth all year-round)
- Participation in the Global Service Jam in Washington, DC from February 17-19, 2017, where my team focused on answering the question, "How might we design pathways for young people to move from survival to advancement?"

RESEARCH

LEARNING FROM LIVED EXPERIENCE

30 HOURS of semi-structured interviews completed with youth, worksite supervisors, and potential employers

25 YOUTH reached through one-on-one interviews, a focus group, and surveys

18 WORK SITE SUPERVISORS who had previous experience working with YouthWorks reached through one-on-one interviews

15 CAREER PATH JOURNEY MAPS created by young adults tracking milestones and influences between first jobs and the first job they loved

6 YOUTHWORKS & MOED STAFF reached through one-on-one interviews

242 IDEAS generated during an ideation session with youth, YouthWorks staff, and worksites

YOUTHWORKS STAKEHOLDERS

MOTIVATIONS & PAIN POINTS

YOUTHWORKS

- ✔ accessible jobs for all Baltimore youth
- ✔ logistics management
- ⚡ staff bandwidth
- ⚡ technology integrated systems

YOUTH

- ✔ hands-on learning
- ✔ earning money
- ✔ good co-workers
- ⚡ transportation
- ⚡ year-round opportunity

WORKSITES

- ✔ workforce development
- ⚡ program preparation
- ⚡ program systems & reporting

✔ = goals or motivations

⚡ = pain points

ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS

WHAT I HEARD

In order to give people the space to speak freely during one-on-one interviews, I told them I would include direct quotes in my research, but not directly credit it to them. This is a summary of the common themes I heard emerge during interviews.

> Youth employee experience and connections to future pathways depended entirely on worksite placement and supervisor

YouthWorks Staff

When I talked to YouthWorks staff, I saw a team dedicated to the belief that summer jobs launch careers. In their day-to-day they are focused on the systems and processes that make YouthWorks run: managing applications, coordinating host sites, and getting youth paid, but they are constrained by staff bandwidth.

Youth

When I talked to youth, I heard common desires for the YouthWorks that focused on their job experience: the work they wanted to do and the relationships they would build. The experience was the work and the people. A 15 year old told me that to her, a good boss was "fair and logical." Although certainly influencers on the youth experience, when I asked youth specifically about the systems-- the website, the interview process, getting paid, youth often offered no critique. They were forgiving of the systems, and focused on the experience.

Worksites

For worksites, their experience depended on the systems. Supervisors saw YouthWorks as an investment in developing the workforce of the future, not necessarily just for their organization or company, but for the City of Baltimore.

Worksites work hard to build positive experiences for YouthWorks participants: writing grants to include college visits, offer college credit, or write professional development curriculum. Worksites told me about YouthWorkers boosting their team's morale each summer, but reminded me that summer jobs are not business as usual.

As a complex and multi-stakeholder program, I also heard from worksites who felt poorly prepared to respond well to youth training needs, or stressed by how paper and time-intensive the YouthWorks reporting tasks are. Many worksites wanted to build positive experiences for youth, but were often stretched beyond their core competencies and bandwidth as an organization.

Many worksites said it was these things that took away from valuable mentorship time with students.

The quality of the YouthWorks program, or the success of a youth summer job in Baltimore for a young person, depends on the worksite supervisor. At the end of the summer if youth have a resume and contact for a reference, whether they understand networking and social capital, and whether they received training that helps them understand how their skills can be applied elsewhere, depends on their worksites and supervisors. As keepers of the youth experience I decided to focus much of my research on worksites.

"

IF I'M MISSING $100 OUT OF MY PAYCHECK I'M PRESSED ABOUT IT AS AN ADULT. FOR A KID THAT COULD BE SNEAKER AND CELL PHONE MONEY, THAT COULD BE HELPING MOM PAY THE RENT MONEY. THERE'S A LOT AT STAKE THERE.

-YouthWorks Worksite Supervisor

INSIGHTS

The next step in my process was making sense of it all. Insights are what emerge at the end of the synthesis process. I collected everything I heard during interviews (primarily as direct quotes), information from surveys and the focus group, and my original research, and I turned each observation into a data point.

ARRIVING TO INSIGHTS

1. I took all of the observations that I had amassed and began to cluster them into common activities or patterns of behavior. This is called a theme.
2. I attached a title, or explanation, to each cluster, from the user's point of view. For example, one of my biggest clusters of observations became the theme, "Needing youth to have more training," written from the perspective of YouthWorks worksite supervisors.
3. Then I read through the entire cluster of observations to build my insights.
4. Finally, I narrowed down the list to five key insights for ease of understanding.

WHAT ARE INSIGHTS?

- Insights describe something from your research that is surprising or remarkable.
- Insights can be a reason behind a problem, a surprise, or describe an irrational tension.

INSIGHT 1:

Without an agreed upon YouthWorks framework and standards, there is no guarantee of quality.

WHAT I HEARD:

- It's a challenge for worksites to develop a flexible youth work plan, to break it into age-appropriate tasks, and to have training available to support youth work.
- There's a youth desire for more hands-on training, as well as a desire for more trained youth from worksites (and wanting access to a curriculum to help make it happen).
- A Brandeis Center for Youth and Communities Guide says, "Youth development programs and educational training events without real work experience is a recipe for failure, and so is work experience isolated from education and youth development principles."

"There's room to flesh out more soft skills development, career exploration, those things that could standardize the experience for all kids. Whether you're working in a lab, moving boxes, or shadowing the CEO, you're still getting the same level of career exploration and transferable skills." *-Worksite Supervisor*

How might we develop a common youth experience that is responsive to the needs of 1000 work sites?

YouthWorks worksites lose valuable time, and are stretched beyond their core competencies, because there are no official channels for resource sharing.

WHAT I HEARD:

- YouthWorks is demanding on staff bandwidth for program preparation and management.
- Many supervisors are not relieved of other job duties when summer youth employees are added to their job responsibilities.
- Many worksites viewed their challenges as unique, when in actuality they were being experienced citywide (for example training, curriculum development, heat plans).
- With growth in summer youth jobs programs there is a lot to be learned from building and sharing knowledge, both across worksites within the city, and across programs nationally, to avoid reinventing the wheel.

"YouthWorks is more work. It does feel intensive: prep time before, prep time after, we try and provide industry panels, and then there's tracking lessons learned afterward."

-Worksite Supervisor

How might we facilitate connections that ensure collaboration amongst work sites?

INSIGHT 3:

Youth and worksites are interested in managing their YouthWorks experience with technology, but YouthWorks doesn't provide any options.

WHAT I HEARD:

- Every worksite supervisor requested more technology options for YouthWorks, both for youth, as well as tools for the supervisor managing the experience.
- Many supervisors commented on how well-liked the online modules in financial literacy were by youth and saw an opportunity to expand and include career-planning, structured reflection, and others.
- A recent Brookings study says, "The most forward-looking summer jobs programs are betting on more streamlined and flexible information systems to manage program files and records, shifting away from more labor-intensive manual record keeping" (Ross & Kazis, 2016).

"I like how they include feedback, 'hey congrats you got accepted and this is your interview date.' They keep reminding you. But trying to access the website is kind of all over the place. I wish they had everything in one place."

-Youth Applicant

How might we make managing the YouthWorks experience feel like a cross-country road trip with Google Maps?

INSIGHT 4:

Despite widespread name recognition of YouthWorks, many people don't understand what the program is or does.

WHAT I HEARD:

- Many prospective employers that I interviewed didn't understand YouthWorks or worried they didn't have the specialized staff capacity to manage youth employees.
- Many current worksite supervisors couldn't properly articulate the difference between Hire One Youth and YouthWorks.
- Additionally, the all-hands-on deck rush to recruit worksites before every summer causes strain on other program components and potentially could be alleviated through clarifying messaging and improving the YouthWorks brand in Baltimore.

"To me, YouthWorks is like CivicWorks, I know it exists in Baltimore, but I have no idea what it does. They should let potential employers know what the heck it is."

-Baltimore-based Business Owner

How might we sign a new YouthWorks partnership with every organization and business in the city?

INSIGHT 5:

Worksites want to provide more services to their youth employees, but they lack the resources to do so.

WHAT I HEARD:

- YouthWorks reaches youth during a short, but critical time period, and many worksites expressed their concern over their inability to support all of their youth employee's needs.
- YouthWorks and worksite partners need to reframe their role as one part of a larger city wide, year-round strategy to link youth to other educational, employment, and community resources, and then build the partnerships to make it happen.

"Questions like, 'Hey, did you eat? How is your family?' I mean we can't be case management, but..."

-Worksite Supervisor

How might we build partnerships that embed services and resources into the YouthWorks system?

"

IT'D BE GREAT IF THERE WAS A YOUTHWORKS-WIDE THEME EACH YEAR, SO EVERY DISTINCT PLACEMENT HAS A COMMON COMPONENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURE OF HOW TO INTEGRATE THE THEME. MAYBE THERE'S A DELIVERABLE AT THE END OF THE 5 WEEKS? BUT IT'S UNIVERSAL AND ALL OF THE KIDS CAN WRAP THEIR ARMS AROUND IT.

-Previous YouthWorks Worksite Supervisor

IDEATION

Since ideation is one of the most generative phases of the human-centered design process, I wanted to come back together with YouthWorks users and stakeholders to brainstorm potential solutions for the challenges we had identified. Ideation focuses on coming up with a large quantity of ideas, versus exploring the feasibility of each one as it is generated. I prioritized having a diverse set of voices around the table to inspire cross-pollination of ideas.

THE HOW:

- I used the insights generated during the previous phase to create "How might we?" questions.
- How might we questions are open-ended and serve as the springboard for generating ideas related to growth and opportunities.
- How might we questions are intentionally aspirational, which can make people feel uncomfortable if they think an idea would never be possible due to budgets or internal policy.
- An established ideation rule is suspending judgment of your own ideas and others, which helps create an atmosphere that generated ideas for new solutions or systems all together, versus just fixing what already exists.

BRAINSTORMING PROMPTS

FOR RAPID IDEATION

Brainstorming Questions

- How might we develop a common youth experience that is responsive to the needs of 1000 worksites?
- How might we facilitate connections that ensure collaboration amongst worksites?
- How might we build an experience where all YouthWorks alumni are ready for Hire One Youth by age 16?
- How might we make managing the YouthWorks experience feel like a cross-country road trip with Google Maps?
- How might we sign a new YouthWorks partnership with every organization and business in the city?
- How might we help students explore careers beyond their YouthWorks placement?

Host Your Own Brainstorm

- Use this same methodology on challenges you're facing within your organization-- related to YouthWorks or not!
- Read George Aye's "Make Anything Better in an Hour: How to Run a Public Brainstorm" (http://bit.ly/ayebrainstorm)
- Visit Appendix D to read the agenda from that day

IDEATION SESSION

INSIGHTS TO ACTION

The ideation session was held on Friday, April 28th at the Center for Social Design at MICA. Sixteen representatives of YouthWorks staff, YouthWorks worksite supervisors, and youth were in attendance (see appendix).

Brainstorm Process

1. Draw an idea in response to a how might we question and label it.
2. Share it out loud with your group (don't judge ideas; building on ideas is encouraged).
3. Repeat for 5 minutes.
4. Do it again with a new how might we question.

Voting on Top Ideas

After each brainstorm I collected all of the ideas generated, and with the help of my classmates we sorted them into broad categories. At the end of the session all participants had the opportunity to browse all of the ideas generated and received 3 green stickers to cast votes for the specific ideas they liked the best.

Categories of Ideas that Emerged

- online systems, data collection & technology
- institutionalizing protocols
- capacity building for worksites
- connecting worksites to other worksites
- mentorship
- data collection & analytics
- partnership building
- incentives programs
- specific skill training, curriculum & orientation
- youth readiness
- shared resources
- promotions & media
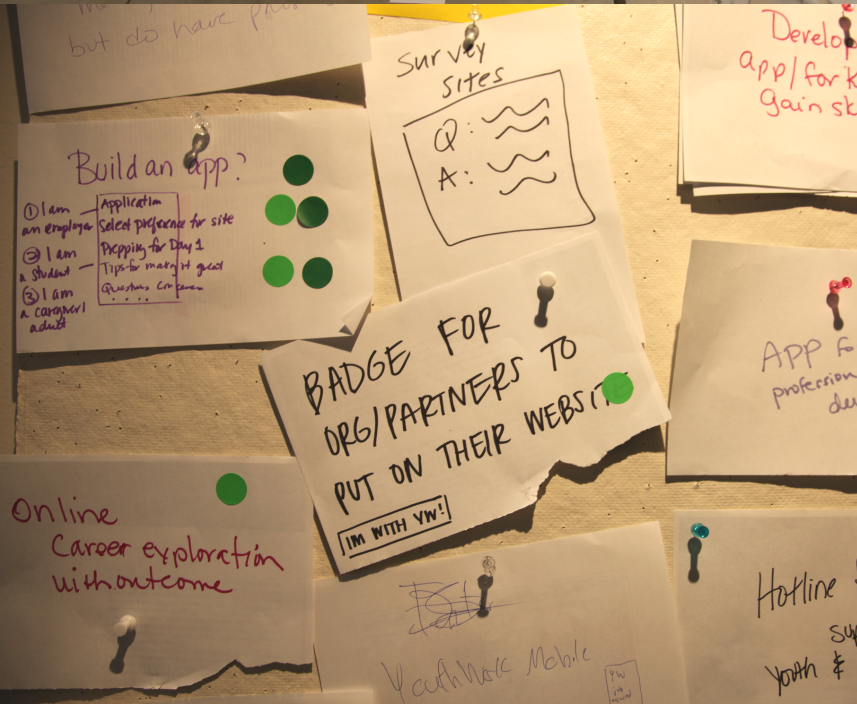
TOP IDEAS

AS VOTED BY PARTICIPANTS
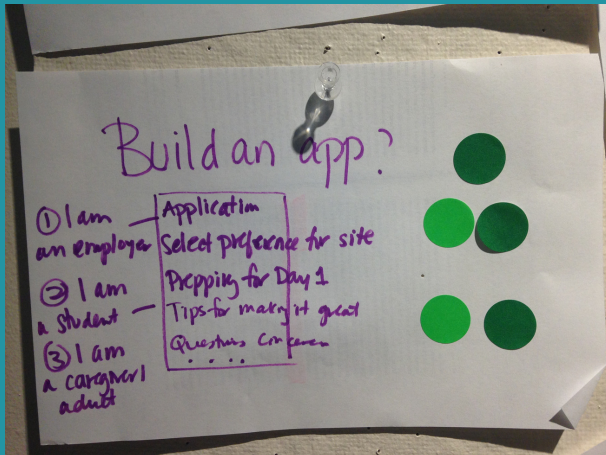
1. Mobile Application

This idea showed up in multiple formats on the wall and always got a few votes, so in total votes it was the clear winner. Everyone discussed an app with different components, so one group prototyped an example, which will be shared on the next page.
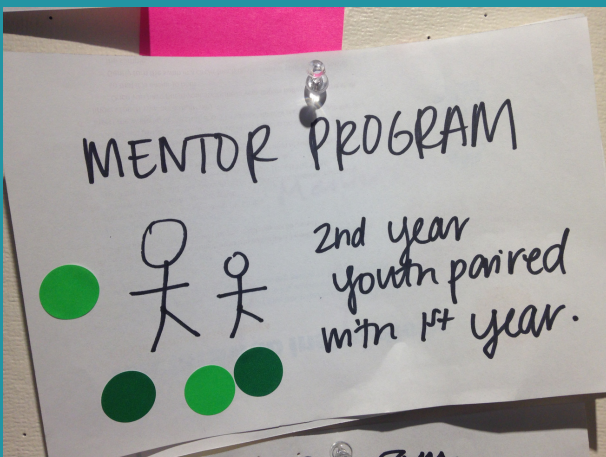

2. Mentor Program

Pairing a second year youth employee with someone who's participating in YouthWorks or at a particular worksite for the first time. This could be seen as a pipeline development tool, or an assigned and paid position that provides mentorship to multiple site employees.
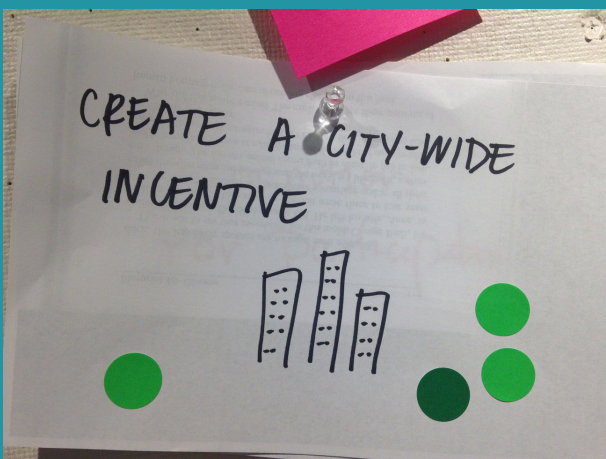
3. City-Wide Incentive Program

During the ideation session there were multiple discussions about how to build wider participation in YouthWorks by organizations and businesses in Baltimore. This idea was less clearly defined than the others, but could take many shapes to encourage and reward participation as a YouthWorks worksite.

F O R   T H E   F U T U R E
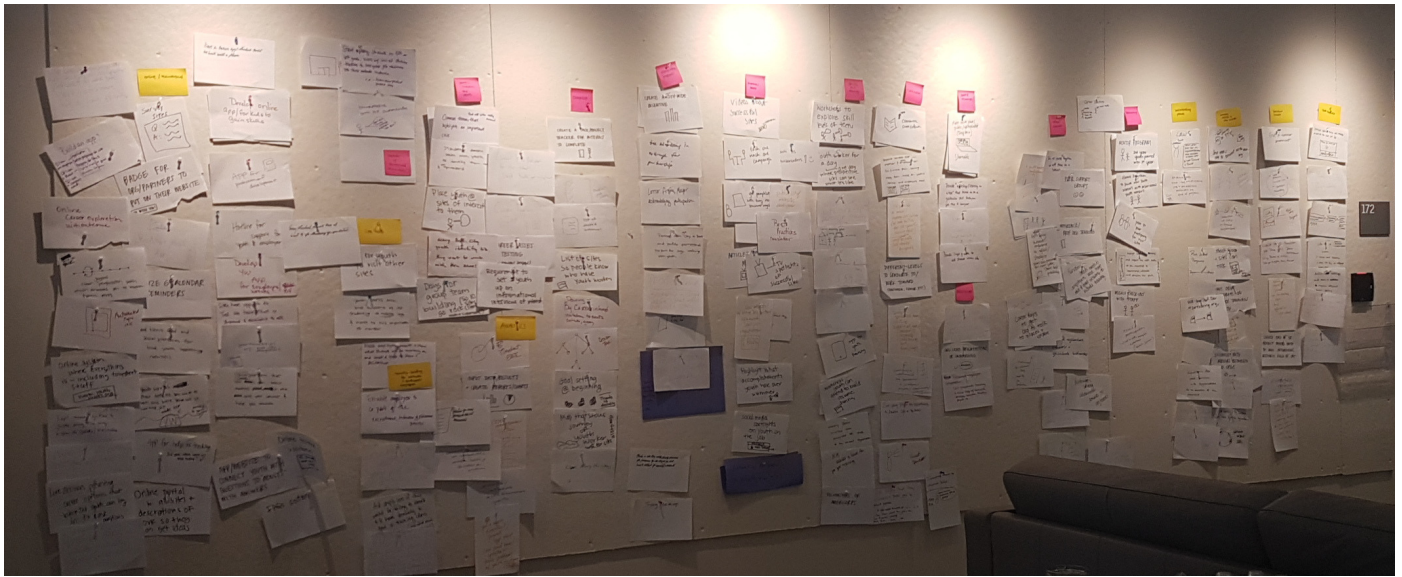
Ideas that received at least one vote

online systems, data collection & technology: build an app for employers, students, and adults, online career exploration, online system where everything is included: including timesheet stuff, develop YouthWorks app for employees/worksites/H1Y, improve matching system to place youth at sites of interest to them

institutionalizing protocols: enable employees to be part of the recruitment, interview & placement process, different levels of program to graduate to/work toward (freshman, senior, etc.), create a task/project tracker for interns to complete

specific skill training, curriculum & orientation: end of summer research project on field of interest with an informational interview, hire trainers dedicated to training youth, responsive curriculum that employer & youth employee can pick and choose their learning chunks from based on youth's interest and employer's need, workshops to explore skill levels of teens, common curriculum

youth readiness: career fair, work site rotation/visit days, job shadow

shared resources: make work plans public/upload

connecting worksites to other worksites: connection of sites in same neighborhoods, offer fall & spring YouthWorks conference to reflect & strategize plans for next year & share best practices

mentorship: peer-to-peer mentoring for new work sites, mentor program that pairs a 2nd year youth with a 1st year, 2nd year or upper-level participant returns as a site assistant

partnership building: expand positions year round

incentives programs: one pager attached to tax bill, create a city-wide incentive for YouthWorks participation

promotions & media: YouthWorks badge for partners to put on their website, social media spotlights on youth on the job, each one reach one campaign to recruit new employers

PROTOTYPES

BY PARTICIPANTS

What's a prototype?

Prototyping means building out an idea to test assumptions. It is a great way to get fast feedback, and sometimes fail fast, in order to build things that actually work for people. A prototype can be for a physical product, marketing, space and environments, interactions, behaviors, or roles & responsibilities.

Mobile Work Site

One team prototyped a mobile unit where different companies could set up a satellite office in the physical unit for a week, and then travel to different schools in Baltimore. The group wanted to respond to the need for youth to explore different career options, but recognized the limited capacity to match youth to internships in every field they are interested in. This would allow youth to tour a workplace, shadow employees, and companies to host workshops and build relationships with youth during a shorter commitment than YouthWorks.

Youth Career Fair

One team prototyped a career fair that was set up by sector to allow youth to explore potential YouthWorks worksites, but also to learn about different sectors they could build a career in. They wanted the career fair to improve job placement and career exploration before the start of the YouthWorks placement.

YOUTHWORKS MOBILE APPLICATION

VARIOUS PROTOTYPES

Two groups prototyped a mobile app that would help manage the youth experience during YouthWorks. One group prototyped a platform for use by both youth and worksite supervisors.
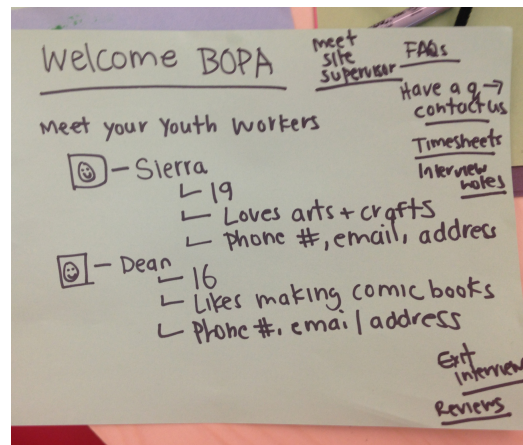
DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

This section profiles potential design opportunities that emerged as a result of my research and the collective ideation and prototyping sessions. The ideas fall along a spectrum of quick wins, which would be easier to implement, up to systems changes, which can be thought of as multi-year, multi-partner, large budget goals. If any of these ideas move forward they should be tested and iterated on, according to user needs.

QUICK WINS

While the Mayor's Office of Employment Development and YouthWorks have the opportunity to build to systems-level change in the employment ecosystem of Baltimore, there are also quicker ways to respond to youth and worksite needs for the summer of 2017.

Shared Resource Bank

As easy as making a shared Google Drive or Dropbox folder, allowing worksites to share resources they've created and access other resources will ease a common stress. Additionally, some great resources already exist that can be shared, such as WorkReady Philadelphia's toolkit: pyncinc.org/toolkit

Improved Communications

A larger re-branding strategy would be ideal for YouthWorks, but the organization can start small by hosting a YouthWorks worker to manage their social media presence during the summer. Other small actions, such as having worksite supervisors collect photos and one success story from their site (something many are already doing) can provide YouthWorks with communications and outreach content all year round.

Site Assistants

During interviews I heard about the need for an extra set of hands and help, particularly at outdoor sites. This could serve as an advancement opportunity for multi-year YouthWorks participants, as well as an easy way to create more job opportunities at the same site.
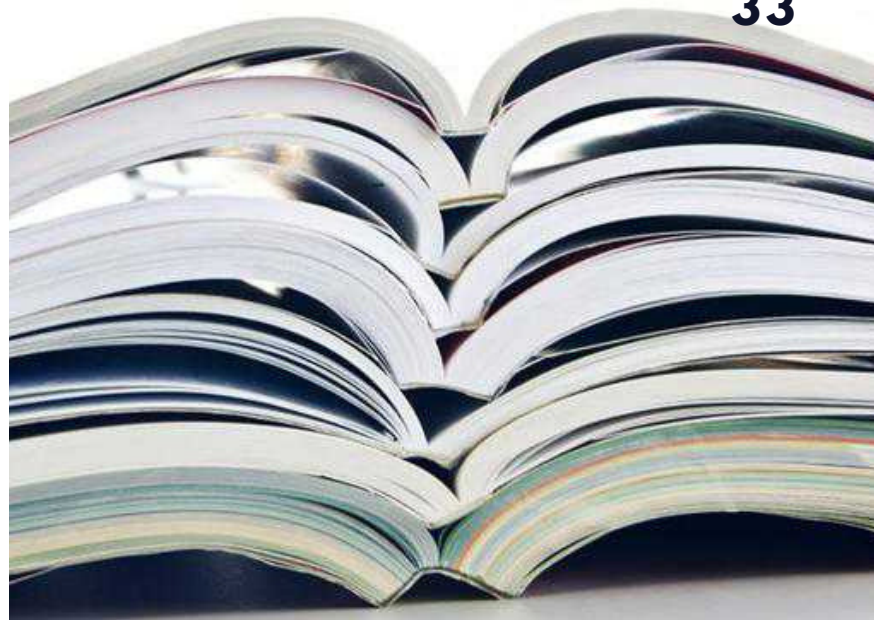
PILOT PROJECT

Based upon insights gathered from interviews with youth, worksites, and staff, as well as an initial ideation and prototyping session, we've identified a specific design challenge around youth training and pathway planning. With generous support from MICA's Launching Artists in Baltimore award, I will work in close collaboration with YouthWorks staff and a group of youth co-designers this summer to explore potential solutions to this challenge. The final prototypes from this process can then be implemented on a small-scale to evaluate their impact and future potential for full-scale implementation.

Co-Designing Career Pathways will partner with the YouthWorks summer jobs program of the Mayor's Office of Employment Development to engage young people in the social design process as a method for improving program outcomes and career success. Through initial research conducted as part of my thesis project I have identified the need for for youth to be able to explore career pathways beyond their specific job placement, as well as the burden that each partner organization takes on to develop training modules that support their YouthWorks employees. There is an opportunity for youth to lead the design of a support tool, or app, that will guide their work experience. It may provide training in transferable skills, career exploration, professional development and reflection, based upon the specific desires and needs of young people in Baltimore.
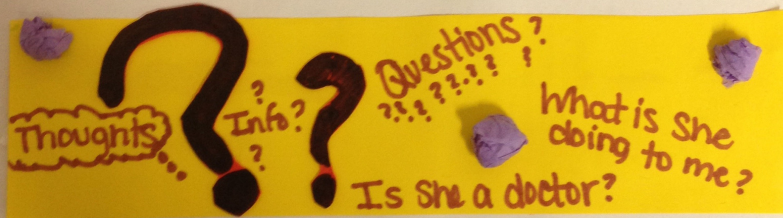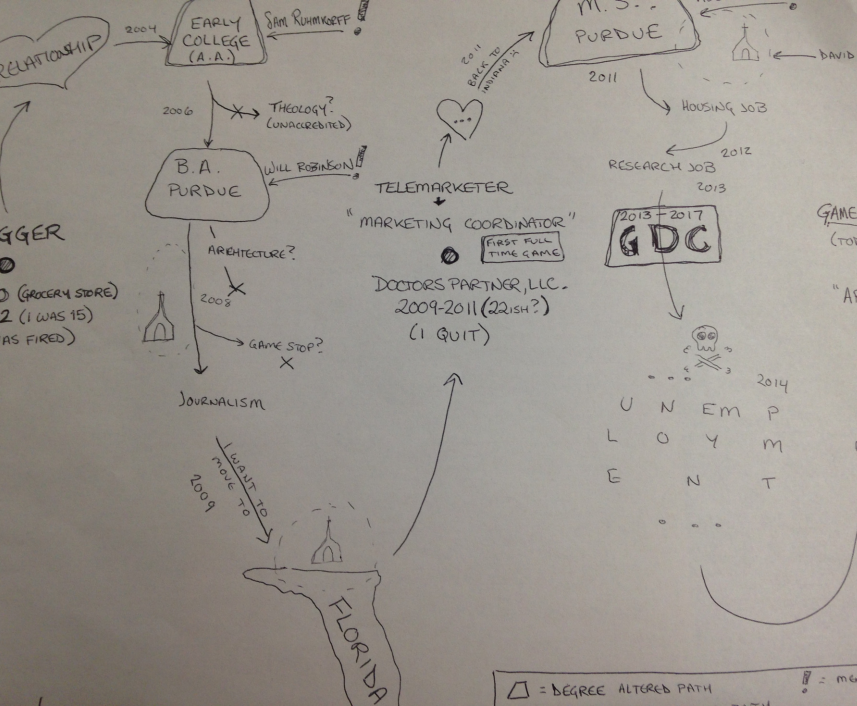
SYSTEMS CHANGE

PLAYING THE LONG GAME

YouthWorks is uniquely positioned to work towards best-in-class youth training and employment opportunities in Baltimore because of the large reach of the program. At the same time, if quality is sacrificed for quantity of youth served, there will be diminishing returns on investment in the program. Youth who experience multiple de-motivating events during a summer job, and who are also living with other risk factors, may ultimately have the same outcomes as youth who don't participate.

"The easiest goal for a program to set is an increase in the number of youth served. It can be readily described and measured. Politically, it can galvanize support and action. However, tallying jobs provides no information on whether the program is helping young people become more successful in the labor market, reducing violence, or improving academic outcomes." (Brookings)

Models to Consider

- San Diego has a CONNECT2Careers portal that tracks young people, their participation in real time, and allows them to search for job openings. San Diego plans to keep the portal running all year round to maintain the youth service and support beyond the summer job placement.
- San Francisco piloted a suite of financial literacy services in 2011. The MyPath Savings program utilized a peer-to-peer education model, provided access to a savings account in the youth's name, development of savings goals, a direct deposit option, and a savings match.
- WorkReady Philadelphia incorporates project-based learning by hiring seasonal "contextual learning specialists" to help worksites create learning experiences out of, or related to, the youth's work experience.
- With MHA Labs the Chicago City of Learning initiative awards digital badges based on work competencies and employer performance reviews. These badges then form a digital portfolio of work experience youth have completed or goals they have achieved, to which they can refer future employers.
- The Chicago One Summer Plus program targets youth with extensive school absences or involvement in the juvenile justice system. Although the program costs more per participant (about $3,000), due to the cost of mentors trained in trauma-informed care and conflict resolution, the program is seeing positive results.

(source: Brookings' Aligning Ends and Means Report)

ULTIMATE GOAL:

ALL BALTIMORE YOUTH ARE CONNECTED TO THE EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCES NECESSARY TO FULLY DEVELOP THEIR SENSE OF AGENCY, IDENTITY, AND COMPETENCIES, IN ORDER TO DEFINE THEIR OWN VERSION OF SUCCESS,

AND ACHIEVE IT.

Worksite Interviewees

University of Maryland: Camille Patterson & Kim Mathis;
Veolia North America: Pam Clark;
Code in the Schools: Amy Kim & Cliff Weaver;
Wide Angle Youth Media: Maura Dwyer & Becky Slogeris;
Academy for College and Career Exploration: William Moeller;
Fund for Educational Excellence: Carrie Finkelstein;
Campaign for Grade Level Reading (formerly City Schools): Angelique Jessup;
Inspiration Factory: Derek Lindsey;
Living Classrooms & SouthEast Youth Collaborative: Maritza Dominguez;
Paul's Place: Rebecca Donovan & Clare Elliot;
Whitlock Farm: Isabel Andreasian;
Baltimore Office of Promotion & the Arts/Art@Work: Maggie Villegas;
Baltimore City Public Schools: Otilio Baez & Nikole Divito

YouthWorks Worksite Interview Protocol

Interviews were semi-structured and therefore included a mix of these questions and other ones that emerged during each conversation. Conversations happened in person and lasted for around one hour on average. Conversations were recorded in order to pull direct quotes for observations.

- Does your company have YouthWorks employees? Just Hire One Youth?
- What does a successful YouthWorks/Hire One experience look like to you?
- What is your overall company strategy?
- Why is hiring YouthWorks/Hire One employees part of your strategy?
- What made your company decide to first sign up to host a youth employee?
- What does the hiring/placing process for YouthWorks youth look like at your company?
- What are some of the challenges of having a YouthWorks employee?
- How does this role influence the aspirations of Baltimore youth?
- How does hosting a YouthWorks employee influence your staff?
- If there is one thing that would make your YouthWorks experience easier, what would it be?
- Is there something else that YouthWorks needs to do in order to ensure a positive experience for our youth?
- How many YouthWorks cycles have you had as a company?
- Is there anything else you want to add?
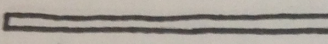
APPENDIX B

Youth Interviews

Interviews were semi-structured and therefore included a mix of these questions and other ones that emerged during my conversations with youth at the YouthWorks Certification Session on February 16, 2017; visits to Wide Angle Youth Media after school program and the Baltimore City Health Department's Youth Advisory Council.

- What is your name?
- What is your age?
- Why did you decide to apply for a YouthWorks job?
- What would be your ideal summer job?
- What's your dream job?
- Have you participated in YouthWorks before?
- What was the best part about your last YouthWorks placement?
- What did you like least about your last YouthWorks job?
- What do you want to get out of your YouthWorks placement?
- If you had the opportunity would you want it to turn into a year-round job?
- What makes a job good?
- What makes a job bad?
- What do you think about the current YouthWorks process?

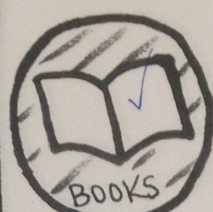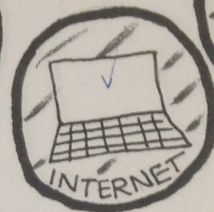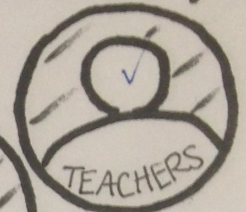Youth Survey Example:

Video Game Designer
PS4
Thats horrible

WHAT'S YOUR DREAM CAREER?

HOW SURE ARE YOU?

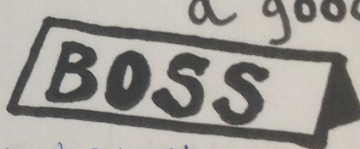0% ————————X 100%
(MARK an X)

what's your dream summer job? going to another state to do graphic design

WOULD YOU WANT YOUR SUMMER JOB TO TURN INTO A YEAR-ROUND JOB?

Maybe :·

WHERE DO YOU FIND INFO ABOUT POSSIBLE CAREERS?

BOOKS

INTERNET

TEACHERS

SOMEWHERE ELSE? _____

what makes a good BOSS

IM not sure :·

HOW OLD ARE YOU? __16__

HAVE YOU DONE YOUTHWORKS BEFORE? __Yeah__

HOW MANY SUMMERS? __1__

ANYTHING ELSE I SHOULD KNOW?

# APPENDIX D

Ideation Session, April 28, 2017 from 12-2pm

1. Welcome and introductions (10 minutes)
-Share your very first job with the group

2. Back Story of Social Design Thesis and YouthWorks partnership (5 minutes)

3. Intro to brainstorming (5 minutes)
-Thinking Open/Closed
Prompt: How do children think? How do adults think?

4. Rules for brainstorming (5 minutes)
-No judgment
-Build on each other's ideas. Yes, and...
-Blue Sky/Big dream space
-Everyone draws!

5. Warm up: How might we use this brick? (2 minutes)

6. Brainstorm (30 minutes total, 5 minutes for each how might we question)

7. Prototyping: think with your hands (10 minutes)

8. Sticky dot voting (3 votes each)

9. Conclusion: Thank you and explanation of next steps and follow-up.

APPENDIX E

Social Design Process

The MICA Center for Social Design utilizes a human-centered and collaborative process to understand and define social problems, identify opportunities and generate ideas, and make tools that support positive change. Our goal is to shift relationships between people and people, and people and institutions. Our process includes multiple interwoven phases:

human centered approach:
understand and define
social problems

\+

collaborative approach:
identify opportunities
and generate ideas

\+

design driven approach:
take action to support
positive social change

SOCIAL
PROBLEMS

TRANSLATE &
FRAME

RESEARCH

SYNTHESIZE

IDEATE

PROTOTYPE

TEST &
IMPLEMENT
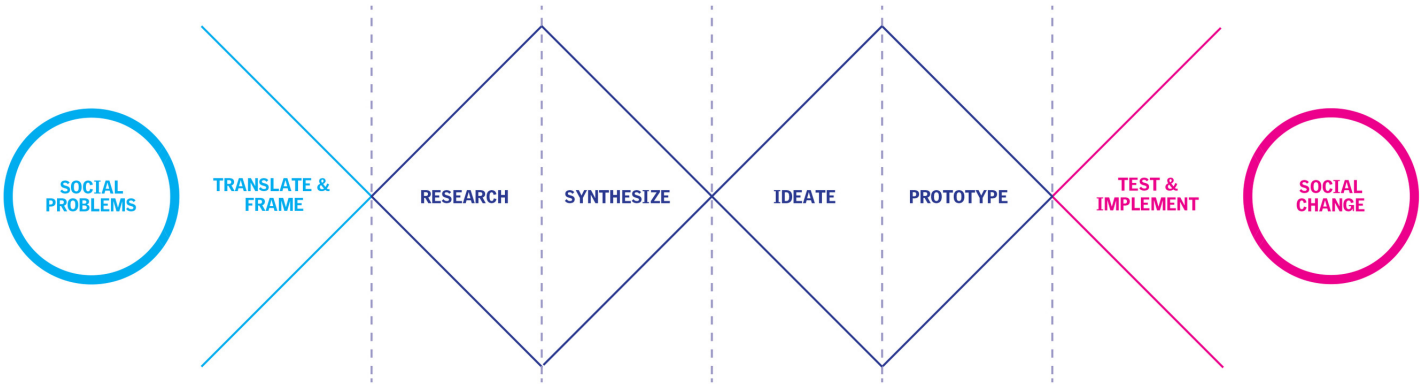
SOCIAL
CHANGE

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PHOTO CREDIT

All photos of YouthWorks participants are courtesy of Baltimore Office of Promotion & the Arts, specifically their Art@Work program, which they run in conjunction with other community organizations. Special thank you to photographers Nate Larson and Michaela Caudill.