Nonprofits Revitalize New York’s Workforce

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GRANTS NEWSLETTER

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What it Takes to Provide Quality Education

Eve is a senior program officer at The Trust. She manages our education and human justice grantmaking.

The toughest assignment for city schools is the one our school system is given by the state’s constitution: to educate every child. In New York City, that means preparing more than 1 million students to meet their full potential—while taking into account profound differences in income, race, ethnicity, disability, and English proficiency.

The constitution, however, does not say how educators can accomplish the task or how to pay for it. It is no wonder the city has struggled for decades to educate students, particularly those with the greatest challenges.

The overall school system has made progress on attendance and graduation rates, but those successes gloss over the differences among schools.

In schools with high rates of poverty, students are more likely to have disabilities, speak a language other than English at home, or face homelessness. These schools tend to have the weakest outcomes and need additional resources. Across the city, Black and Latino children are far more likely to attend schools where the vast majority of students are in poverty.

The good news is that a Trust-supported battle over equitable school funding, which began in 1993, ended this past year. As a result of advocacy backed by The Trust and a partnership of foundations called the Donors’ Education Collaborative, housed at The Trust, the state agreed to add $1.2 billion to the budget of city schools over three years so students with greater needs can get the education they deserve.

The Trust recently modified the strategy it uses as a guide for its education grantmaking to focus on students who have been inadequately served. These grants are made possible by donors who provided legacy gifts to The Trust.

While insufficient funding is a problem in these high-need schools, money is not the sole issue. What happens in the classroom matters. To improve outcomes, The Trust’s new strategy has three main areas of focus.

1. Promote community organizing and advocacy to ensure parents and students are engaged in policy decisions.
2. Collect data that shows where the system is working and where it is not.
3. Expand opportunities for students who have been inadequately served due to issues such as race, poverty, disability, or English proficiency.

Because issues such as economic stability, racial justice, housing, and healthcare play large roles in academic outcomes, The Trust will continue to address these issues in our other grantmaking areas.

You can see the full strategy online by using the QR code to the right.
The Many Facets of Supporting Students

Our donors often support education. Many want to help the alma maters that shaped their lives. Others are interested in helping younger students prepare for college. If you would like to contribute to ensuring all young people in the city receive a quality education, you can give through public school parent associations and to nonprofits that work to improve public education. Volunteer opportunities to help students develop their literacy and academic skills are plentiful.

DIRECT SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS
Nonprofits work to improve the city’s schools in different ways. The Fund for Public Schools, for example, attracts private investments to fund pilot projects in the city’s public schools that, if successful, can be replicated systemwide. Teaching Matters trains public school teachers across the city and recently coached many through the transition to online learning. The city relies on more than 300 nonprofits to send arts educators into the public schools. The New York City Arts in Education Roundtable trained many of these teaching artists during the pandemic.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME
Other nonprofits focus on afterschool hours to bolster students’ skills and experiences, often in conjunction with the arts or sports.

Across the city, nonprofits use students’ love of sports and physical activity to teach them discipline and hard work, which can translate to academic success. The activities vary but the focus is the same: Rocking the Boat teaches Bronx high schoolers to build and operate boats, while Special Olympics New York works with students with disabilities. ExpandEd works with afterschool programs in several ways, including improving their reading instruction and promoting work-based learning programs.

BOOSTING EARLY EDUCATION
Studies have repeatedly proven the enormous benefits of starting children’s learning early in their lives. Many long-standing nonprofits focus on ensuring young children are ready for learning when they arrive at the door of their kindergarten classroom. The Parent-Child Home Program helps connect families with child care. And the Citizens’ Committee for Children is working with the Education Trust and the New York Early Childhood Professional Development Institute to advocate for a comprehensive, high-quality early child care and education system.

STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLBEING
The pandemic was particularly hard on teenagers’ emotional wellbeing. Groups like New York School-Based Health Foundation, which supports health services in school buildings; and Morningside Center for Teaching

Social Responsibility, which creates supportive school environments, are helping teens by providing trained adults to counsel them.

PARENT AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT
Several nonprofits in the city work with the people most affected by the public schools to advocate for systemic change, including: Bell Voices’ Teens Take Charge program, which trains high school students to rally support among their peers and to present their case to school officials; the New York City Coalition for Educational Justice, which trains and organizes parents to push for educational issues that matter to them, such as creating curricula that reflect the city’s diverse cultures; and Advocates for Children, which has long fought for the rights of children with the greatest challenges.

BOLSTERING EDUCATION YOUR WAY
Our donors improve education in a number of ways. Need us to suggest an organization or help you create a giving strategy? Let our philanthropic advising team assist you. Email us at giving@nyct-cfi.org to discuss giving suggestions.

Photo by Carolina Kroon
The pandemic has caused sharper drops in employment in New York City than elsewhere in the nation, with approximately 440,000 jobs yet to be recovered. Many of the lost jobs were in the food, hospitality, and retail sectors, leaving those workers looking for alternatives to the jobs they used to rely on. Many have turned to one of the city’s 180 employment nonprofits that offer free training and job placement, but these agencies do not have the resources to handle New York’s worst jobs crisis in over 80 years and they must shift gears to meet the rapidly changing needs of the city’s labor market. The Trust is making grants to help nonprofits expand and adapt so they can train New Yorkers for in-demand, higher-paying jobs.

BUILDING A WORKFORCE TRAINING HUB
In 2020, The Trust supported a review of workforce education at City University of New York (CUNY) two-year colleges. One of the major recommendations from the review was the creation of a central employer hub for connecting students to in-demand workforce programs.

Now we’re giving a total of $1,653,000 to help the City University of New York, Eugenio María de Hostos Community College Foundation, and Fiorello H. LaGuardia Community College Foundation launch the NYC Accelerated Workforce Recovery Hub, which will demonstrate that CUNY’s continuing education programs can lead the way in workforce training as the city recovers from the pandemic. The Workforce Recovery Hub will benefit 3,000 students who will receive a combination of scholarships,
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PROVIDING IN-DEMAND JOBS IN TECHNOLOGY
The technology sector in New York is booming, yet it lacks skilled workers, making it a good field to lift young people into higher-paying careers. A Trust grant to Knowledge House will prepare low-income New Yorkers for new technology careers in areas such as data analysis, cybersecurity, and web design by offering accredited online courses. It also plans to reopen its Bronx office for in-person classes for vaccinated trainees. Seventy-five percent of its alumni have secured meaningful employment in the tech sector with starting salaries of more than $50,000.

PREPARING YOUNG PEOPLE FOR CAREERS IN WESTCHESTER AND ON LONG ISLAND
Employment prospects for young people worsened during the pandemic. Westchester Community Foundation gave a grant to The Guidance Center of Westchester to provide young people from New Rochelle, Mamaroneck, and Mount Vernon with classroom instruction and hands-on training to prepare them to earn industry-recognized certifications in high-demand fields, such as construction and energy auditing. The Center will coach young people on good workplace behaviors, connect them with jobs, and refer them to additional services.

High schools in low-income districts often don’t have the resources to meet the needs of students with learning or behavioral disabilities. This issue has been exacerbated by the pandemic, with these students facing significant challenges adapting to school closures and online learning. A recent Long Island Community Foundation grant to Abilities, Inc. - The Viscardi Center will provide academic support, career exposure, college awareness, and life skills training to 60 students with disabilities from Freeport, Westbury, and Brentwood high schools. In addition, the Center will provide students with virtual work site visits at local companies to learn more about job opportunities.

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Tenants Facing Eviction
Get Legal Help and Keep Their Homes

In November, former Mayor Bill de Blasio announced that the city’s program for ensuring low-income renters facing eviction can receive free legal help in Housing Court was both a success and ahead of schedule, calling it “a national model for increasing housing stability and preventing homelessness.”

In 2020, the mayor said, 100 percent of tenants with eviction cases on the court calendar had access to legal services and 71 percent had full representation, compared with 1 percent in 2013 before the program began.

The citywide expansion of the program was completed in 2021, a year early. Eighty-four percent of represented tenants were able to stay in their homes.

The quick success of this program is thanks, in part, to a grant from The Trust to New York Law School to train managers of the new attorneys hired to represent tenants. This past year, The Trust made a grant to the Right to Counsel NYC Coalition to advocate for expanding the eligibility requirements so more low-income tenants could participate.

Since 2014, the eviction prevention program has provided more than 500,000 New Yorkers with legal services in Housing Court.

Getting Out the Latino Vote

In the upcoming 2022 election, New Yorkers will have many important choices to make, including selecting all statewide elected officials, as well as state legislators and members of the U.S. House of Representatives. Voters also will have to contend with new election districts, and new rules for absentee voting. These changes will make getting out the vote a real challenge, and many people will need more information.

A Trust grant of $90,000 to Dominicanos USA will encourage voter registration, education, and engagement in the 2022 elections among young Dominican and other Latino New Yorkers. The group will recruit and train young adult civic ambassadors and conduct a bilingual voter outreach campaign with information about registration deadlines, early polling, absentee voting, candidate positions, and ballot measures. The ambassadors will run community outreach efforts, including a civic engagement program at high schools, in conjunction with Student Voter Registration Week. In addition, they will conduct outreach at community events, school assemblies, and citizenship swearing-in ceremonies.

**KEEPING IT LOCAL:** Grantee Dominicanos USA encourages Spanish-speaking New Yorkers to increase their civic engagement through voting and becoming more informed on local issues.
How the Pandemic Affected Older Adults

“During the first months of the pandemic, I continued to go to my office and there was no one on the streets. I wondered about the impact of the pandemic on older adults living at home in the neighborhood. I thought they might be fearful of mingling with family members, afraid to go to a health clinic, and unable to go to senior centers. While there was a lot of attention given to older adults in nursing homes, I thought it was important to determine how this other group was doing. Funded in part by a grant from The New York Community Trust, my colleagues and I created a citywide randomized telephone survey to determine how New Yorkers over 70 years old were faring, and if there were gaps in their services. Preliminary results were troubling. After interviewing more than 600 older New Yorkers, we found that many were in need of mental-health and other supports. More than two-thirds of the survey participants reported interacting a lot less with people. Fifty-eight percent reported feeling isolated. Almost 70 percent said the pandemic had created financial problems for them. Eighteen percent of the older adults were found to have symptoms of depression and a similar amount for anxiety. While the pandemic saw an increased use of telehealth and virtual social activities, a significant portion—22 percent—of the older adults we surveyed did not have access to the internet. While we shared our findings with the city’s Department for the Aging and other groups, we are continuing our investigations with the original respondents and a new cohort. With an additional grant from The Trust, we are launching a second survey to dig deeper into participants’ living situations and determine how those factors affected their mental health.

Our goal is to make sure that the critical needs of older New Yorkers are met, and that they are not forgotten as we continue to respond to the pandemic.”

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Dr. Wahaa El-Sadr is the founder and director of ICAP at Columbia University, a global health center which received Trust grants in 2020 and 2021 to study the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on older New Yorkers.
In 2021, U.S. border agents apprehended more than 130,000 young people traveling to the U.S. through Mexico without a parent or guardian. These immigrants are not entitled to an attorney at government expense under U.S. law, and without one, the odds are that after hearings, they will be sent back to the violence they fled. Safe Passage Project and other nonprofits have stepped up to provide this representation. The good news—90 percent of children the Project represents win their cases and the right to remain in the U.S.

But the victories can take a toll on these young people. To prepare their cases, lawyers must ask about terrible things that have happened to them and their loved ones.

“As immigration attorneys, we understand the legal process that our clients must traverse,” said Nicole Johnson, acting legal director at Safe Passage, “but we cannot truly understand what the system is like for the young people we represent. Because of this, it is important that we learn from these young people so that we can provide them with the services that they need.”

This grant is made with a gift from a donor-advised fund where the advisor gives us money each year to fund our competitive grants program.