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November 2014

Addressing Young Adults' Legal Barriers to Opportunities: An Evaluation of Youth Represent's Community Lawyering Model

SUBMITTED TO:
NYC Center for Economic Opportunity



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Addressing Young Adults' Legal Barriers to Opportunities: An Evaluation of Youth Represent's Community Lawyering Model

SUBMITTED TO:
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Foreword

The Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) is committed to evaluating the programs it funds and has contracted with Westat and Metis Associates in order to inform decision-making within CEO and the city agencies with whom they partner. Westat and Metis have developed a collaborative team approach in the planning, design, and implementation of various types of evaluations, including impact, outcome, and implementation studies. In some cases, staff from both Westat and Metis share responsibilities in implementing the study. In other cases, staff from either Westat or Metis is responsible for conducting the study. This study, addressing young adults' legal barriers to opportunity: an evaluation of Youth Represent's community lawyering model, was conducted by staff from Metis Associates.

Joy Zacharia and Artis Bergman are the co-authors of this report. Additional contributions were made by Sarah Griffin and Donna Tapper.

We would like to acknowledge the cooperation of Youth Represent staff including Laurie Parise, Alison Wilkey, Michael Pope, and Hanna Katz, for all of their assistance in reviewing instruments, identifying sample populations, distributing and collecting surveys, and providing *Salesforce* data. In addition, we would like to thank partner organization staff, and especially the young adults, that were interviewed as part of this evaluation. The feedback we received from the young adults was cogent and insightful.

We also appreciate the contribution of the staff of CEO, especially David Berman, who facilitated the relationship with Youth Represent, and Parker Krasney; both served as invaluable resources.

Executive Summary

Introduction

In March 2014, the NYC Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) selected the Westat/Metis evaluation team to assess whether the legal services provided by Youth Represent increase young adults' access to and outcomes for employment, education, housing and other cornerstones of stability, and if these services add value to the community partners' programs.

Youth Represent is a holistic youth defense and advocacy non-profit organization. The organization's mission is to ensure that young people affected by the criminal justice system are afforded every opportunity to reclaim lives of dignity, self-fulfillment, and engagement in their communities. Youth Represent provides services in two major areas: reentry and criminal representation. These services are provided to youth age 24 and under who are involved in the criminal justice system or who are experiencing legal problems because of past involvement in the criminal justice system. Youth Represent uses the knowledge from its direct representation to seek policy reform to reduce the number of youth affected by the criminal justice system and lessen the harm from that involvement.

Youth Represent has provided legal services since 2006 to young adults primarily through partnerships with select non-profits throughout New York City. Utilizing a community-lawyering approach, Youth Represent attorneys and staff, trained in youth engagement approaches, provide a breadth of services that include direct legal representation and advisement on issues that arise when the young adults pursue housing, education, and employment. Through this holistic model (for which the organization won an Innovative Nonprofit Award from CEO in 2013), Youth Represent staff currently provide legal representation and informational workshops for young adults, one-on-one reviews of young adults' Record of Arrest and Prosecution (RAP) sheets, and staff trainings for 16 community partner organizations. Youth Represent also provides legal representation for young adults through their community partnership.

In addition to working with young adults through the partner organizations, clients are referred from other organizations on an individual basis, as legal needs arise. Youth Represent also provides services to individuals who learn about the organization on their own.

The evaluation was conducted by Metis from March through August 2014 and was comprised of field data collection and an analysis of administrative data. Based on the scope of work identified by CEO and Youth Represent, the evaluation was designed to answer the following overarching questions:

- To what extent do the services provided through Youth Represent increase participating young adults' access to and outcomes for employment, education, housing and other cornerstones of stability?
- What can be learned about the types of community organizations that make good partners and about the cost of Youth Represent services?

- To what extent do the services provided through Youth Represent add value to the organization's community partners?

From April through June 2014, data were collected through a variety of methods. Data sources and methods included: young adults and staff at a sample of five partner organizations (survey, interviews, focus groups); staff at all partner organizations (survey); and administrative data provided by Youth Represent (covering the period from July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014). These data were analyzed and summarized to address the research questions.

Key Findings

Improving Knowledge of Legal Barriers and Legal Rights

Informational Workshops

- **Workshop participants reported increased knowledge about the criminal justice system, their legal barriers, and their rights.** Young adults left the informational workshops with a better understanding of their rights concerning employment, what to divulge when applying for a job, legal rights when confronted by police and how to avoid escalation during these interactions. Overall, 93 percent of respondents indicated that they know more about the barriers faced by someone with a criminal history because of the informational workshop they completed; 97 percent indicated that they know more about their own rights in the criminal justice system for the same reason.
- **Informational workshops were conducted in a manner that put the young adults at ease, facilitated the teaching of critical information about their legal rights, and developed their trust in Youth Represent as an organization.** This is particularly important because the trainings were usually the first opportunity that young adults had to meet and interact with the staff and attorneys from Youth Represent.
- **During workshops, Youth Represent also imparted important information about how young adults should interact with the police in a way that reduces the likelihood of escalation, while also providing young adults with a background on their legal rights when confronted by police.** Young adults consistently described learning realistic information that would allow them to avoid harassment and confrontational situations. Across partner organizations, interviewed young adults emphasized that they were taught to interact with the police in a calm manner and not to respond in ways that could be misinterpreted.

One-on-One RAP Sheet Reviews

- **One-on-one RAP sheet reviews with young adults were an essential component of the reentry services provided by Youth Represent to partner organizations.** For participating young adults, the experience increased their knowledge about their own criminal histories, prepared them to respond to questions about their criminal history from potential employers, helped identify and correct RAP sheet errors, and increased their confidence in navigating this element of the job

application process. Youth Represent attorneys use RAP sheets as a diagnostic tool for identifying further reentry barriers and as a necessary investigative tool in other areas of representation.

Staff Trainings and Advice Provided

- **Partner staff had a better understanding of their participants' legal barriers because of the training sessions, and guidance and advice, offered by Youth Represent.** Partner staff left the Youth Represent training with a much better idea of how their organization and Youth Represent can assist young adults. After the training, 63 percent of staff members indicated that their knowledge increased to a large extent with regard to how they can assist young adults with their legal barriers. An even larger proportion of staff (80%) reported that their understanding of how Youth Represent can assist their participants increased to a large extent as a result of their participation in the training. And, almost all partner staff (98%) reported that they know how and for what reasons to contact Youth Represent for support.

Legal Services Provided to Young Adults

Characteristics of Clients and Services Provided

- **In 2013–14, Youth Represent attorneys and staff worked on a total of 1,233 reentry and criminal legal services on behalf of 738 young adults.**¹ More than half of these young adults (58%) had more than one active case with Youth Represent. The majority of these individuals are male, Black or Black-Latino, and over the age of 18. Of all legal services provided, 85% were reentry and 15% were criminal.
- **Youth Represent performed reentry services concerning young adults' criminal records 962 times in 2013-14.**² The majority of these services (71%) entailed obtaining and reviewing young adults' RAP sheets. These reviews not only allowed clients to better understand their legal rights and potential employment barriers, they also served as a means for the Youth Represent attorneys to recognize other legal issues and were essential in informing their representation in other legal areas. Additional reentry services concerning young adults' criminal records included correcting errors on the RAP sheets (26% of services concerning records) and assisting clients with Certificates of Relief or early termination of probation (3% of services concerning records).
- **Apart from the records-related services, Youth Represent attorneys and staff worked on 271 unique legal services cases. Most frequently, these involved criminal cases (70%).** The next most prevalent area was reentry legal services (30%), which included employment (10%), family court (8%), education (5%), other topics (5%), and housing (2%).

Characteristics of Connecting Organizations

- **The large majority of young adults provided with legal representation (89%) were connected to Youth Represent by a partner organization.** Approximately half (21) of the 40

¹ These numbers exclude clients to whom Youth Represent gave legal advice.

² These 962 instances constitute 78% of the aforementioned 1,233 services undertaken in 2013–14.

connecting organizations were partner organizations and half (19) were non-partner organizations. Among the young adults who came to Youth Represent through a partner organization, 38 percent came from an organization that serves court-mandated young adults, 18 percent came from an organization partner that serves young adults with other criminal justice system involvement, and 34 percent were served by an organization without any criminal justice requirements for its participants.

Length of Active Legal Engagements

- **Youth Represent clients remained actively engaged in working with the organization's attorneys to address a single legal issue for an average of 47 days.** But, the length of time it takes to close a legal case was associated with the area of legal service; cases involving family court lasted approximately 110 days while cases involving criminal or educational issues lasted about 30 and 23 days, respectively. Only 11 percent of all cases ended because of attrition.

Legal Outcomes

- **Results for clients are overwhelmingly positive: 4 out of 5 legal cases were successfully resolved by Youth Represent.**³ These favorable findings were echoed by the unanimous positive feedback of young adults and partner staff who confirmed that Youth Represent attorneys have provided effective legal services in response to a breadth of situations, from immediate crises (e.g., arrest or ticketing) to complicated scenarios requiring extended involvement (e.g., identity theft, employer discrimination). **However, the extent to which a successful case outcome was achieved depends on the legal area.** Rates of success differed substantially among legal service areas. Youth Represent lawyers and staff were most successful when working to resolve cases involving education, such as the reinstatement of inappropriately suspended students (93% success rate) and the correction of a criminal records (87% success rate), and least successful with cases that involved family court (40% success rate).
- **Youth Represent staff and attorneys are efficient and responsive.** Another dimension of Youth Represent's effective resolution of legal cases is the relative speed in which cases were completed. And, for many of these young adults, representation from an attorney would not have occurred had it not been for Youth Represent.

³ Case outcomes were provided by Youth Represent. A "successful outcome" is defined as one that achieved a result that was better than the penalty/status quo the client was facing. An "unsuccessful outcome" is defined as one that either failed to achieve any results (e.g., a criminal record was not able to be corrected) or failed to achieve a result that was better than the status quo. In no instances, according to Youth Represent, are clients left worse off than they would be had they not received assistance. Finally, a "neutral outcome" is defined as one that includes a combination of "status quo" sustaining and positive elements. Client records for this analysis covered closed cases between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014.

Relationship with Young Adults

Quality of Interactions between Youth Represent and Young Adults

- **Youth Represent attorneys are reliable and trustworthy partners for young adults** and inspire trust in their clients even though some are initially wary of attorneys. In fact, the perception of Youth Represent attorneys as “relatable” is by and large the most important contributing factor in the inspiration of trust between clients and Youth Represent attorneys. Young adults interviewed were quick to describe the staff as individuals who were authentic, who could be trusted, and who understand their needs and the needs of the communities in which they live.

Young Adults' Expectations of Future Engagements with Youth Represent

- **Young adults served by partner organizations universally expressed a willingness to approach Youth Represent for help and guidance in the future.** They further indicated that they would approach Youth Represent under almost any circumstance where legal assistance was needed, but especially emphasized situations where they may need the immediate support of a lawyer (e.g., if stopped by the police or arrested).
- **Partner organization staff unanimously applauded Youth Represent's dedication to serving the legal needs of their participants, including providing individualized legal services to those young adults who approach Youth Represent's attorneys directly as well as through the recommendation of a staff member from a partner organization.** Partner staff indicated that Youth Represent staff seem dedicated to working one-on-one with young adults for as long as it takes for a legal case to be solved. For example, 86 percent of partner organizations *strongly agree* that the staff of Youth Represent provide a valuable service to young adults.

Relationship with Partner Organizations

Perceived Characteristics of a Good Community Partner

- **Youth Represent has served young adults with varied legal needs and is therefore equipped to partner with a wide variety of community organizations and city agencies.** Youth Represent is also equipped to partner with organizations that serve both younger and older youth.
- **Partnerships benefit from organizational buy-in as well as a capacity to facilitate the provision of Youth Represent's services.** According to Youth Represent staff, the most important criterion in a partner is buy-in from the organization's administration and staff through an “acknowledgment that their population has substantial legal issues and can benefit from” Youth Represent's services.

Average Costs per Client and Time Spent Providing Services to Community Partners

- **In a review of fiscal and client-level data, Youth Represent senior leadership estimated that the average annual cost of providing legal services for a client is \$707.53.**⁴ This estimate was derived by dividing Youth Represent's annual organizational budget by the number of clients served for the past four years and averaging the result.⁵ By grounding this estimate in four years of financial and program data, Youth Represent is accounting for the significant organizational growth that has occurred in recent years (with their organizational budget and clients served doubling between 2011 and 2014).
- **During an average week, 77 percent of staff time was spent working to resolve clients' legal cases. Close to half of the time (45%) was spent working in the office,** another 16 percent of time during an average week was spent on-site at community partner organizations. Time spent in transit accounted for 11 percent and 5 percent of the time was spent representing clients in court or at legal hearings. Finally, 23 percent of the time was spent on other tasks, including administrative tasks (13%) and entering information into a client database (10%).

Value to Community Partners

- **Community partners described the services provided by Youth Represent as valuable to their organization and supportive of their efforts to serve youth.** Across organizations, the partners praised Youth Represent staff for the information and support provided to both the organizations and the youth they serve. The majority of partner staff who completed a survey described their organization's partnership with Youth Represent as *extremely valuable* (80%) and indicated that Youth Represent supported their organization's efforts in serving youth *to a large extent* (83%).

Recommendations

- **Institutionalize the high-quality interpersonal relationships that exist between Youth Represent attorneys and the young adults and partner organizations they serve by documenting the approaches taken and embedding the strategies into the program model.** This will be particularly critical if Youth Represent chooses to expand programming by increasing staff, but is also a necessary step to prepare for any staff transitions that may occur. Findings indicate that the effectiveness of Youth Represent is derived to a large extent from the excellent interpersonal competencies of its staff. The attorneys providing services to partner organizations were lauded as authentic, approachable, and trustworthy. Their ability to put young adults at ease and immediately convey reliability was described as critical to the success of the services provided. These findings were extremely positive, but they also raise a potential risk for the organization,

⁴ Here, a "client" is defined as someone with whom Youth Represent met individually and through that meeting, have identified a legal need that could be addressed through Youth Represent's services. Participation in a workshop does not automatically make someone a client.

⁵ For 2014, Youth Represent projected the number of clients served based on their mid-year numbers. Excluding 2014 from the estimation would result in a cost estimate within \$10 of the total average cost.

insofar as the success of the program model depends on the specific personnel selected to work with partner staff and young adults.

- **Continue to explore what constitutes an effective community partnership, with particular attention paid to identifying which particular elements of a partnership (e.g., scheduling, alignment of values) are most closely associated with positive program outcomes.** Through a process of internal reflection, Youth Represent should develop additional indicators of partnership quality that are sensitive enough to allow for further analysis. Additional indicators of partnership quality could include factors such as time and resources needed to collaborate with each organization. Subsequent analyses of effective community partnership should include a broader set of program outcomes, including non-legal outcomes such as impacts of trainings on participant behavior and achievement of personal goals (e.g., employment, education).
- **Continue to explore strategies for increasing the effectiveness of the staff trainings. Consider focusing on ways of improving the topical information about the New York State Court System and to legal issues pertaining to parents and families.** Based on the feedback of participating staff, additional recommendations include extending the length of the trainings, expanding the topics covered and using more specific examples, visual materials, and interactive elements. To strengthen the information provided on the court system, Youth Represent should consider separate trainings that include visits to court and/or opportunities to interact with court officers. Finally, consider further tailoring sessions to the particular needs of each partner organization (e.g., emphasizing certain topics that relate to that organization's programmatic focus or participants).
- **Continue to explore how the impact of Youth Represent's services on the alleviation of barriers to young adults' access to opportunities can be assessed.** The identification of a comparison population would allow for a more rigorous evaluation of program impact.
- **To facilitate future evaluation, Youth Represent should work with partner organizations to collect more comprehensive data on participant outcomes tied to trainings (both staff and young adult) and legal services.** To the extent possible, Youth Represent should include the annual receipt of information on observable impacts in their partnership agreements.

Introduction

Metis Associates' report, "Addressing Young Adults' Legal Barriers to Opportunities," presents findings from the evaluation of Youth Represent's community lawyering model. It examines whether legal services provided by Youth Represent increase young adults' access to and outcomes for employment, education, housing and other cornerstones of stability, and if these services add value to the community partners' programs. The report also offers recommendations for strengthening the practice of Youth Represent's community lawyering.

The mission of Youth Represent, a holistic youth defense and advocacy non-profit organization, is to provide legal representation to young adults age 24 and under in New York City who have been involved in the criminal justice system. Youth Represent provides services in two major areas: reentry and criminal representation. Using the knowledge from its direct representation, the organization also seeks policy reform to reduce the number of youth affected by the criminal justice system and lessen the harm from that involvement.

Youth Represent has provided legal services since 2006 to young adults primarily through partnerships with select non-profits throughout New York City as well as public agencies. Utilizing a community-lawyering approach, Youth Represent attorneys and staff, trained in youth engagement approaches, provide a breadth of services that include direct legal representation and advisement on issues that arise when the young adults pursue housing, education, and employment. Through this holistic model, for which the organization won an Innovative Nonprofit Award from the NYC Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) in 2013, Youth Represent staff currently provide informational workshops for young adults, one-on-one reviews of young adults' Record of Arrest and Prosecution (RAP) sheets, and trainings for staff of 16 community partner organizations. Youth Represent also provides legal representation for young adults connected through a community partnership. Current partnerships include:

- Phipps Neighborhoods (Bronx Justice Corps),
- Center for Community Alternatives (Brooklyn Justice Corps),
- Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services,
- Center for Court Innovation,
- CHOICES (Manhattan),
- Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation,
- United States District Court - Eastern District of NY (Special Options Services),
- Getting Out and Staying Out,
- Henry Street Settlement (Jobs Plus and other programs),
- Opportunities for Better Tomorrow,
- Safe Space/CASES (Queens Justice Corps),
- Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center,
- Y Roads Center (Central Queens YMCA),
- Year Up New York,
- NYC Department of Youth and Community Development, and
- NYC Department of Probation.

The evaluation was conducted by Metis from March through August 2014 and was comprised of field data collection and an analysis of administrative data. Based on the scope of work identified by CEO, which funded the study, and Youth Represent, the evaluation was designed to answer the following overarching questions:

- To what extent do the services provided through Youth Represent increase participating young adults' access to and outcomes for employment, education, housing and other cornerstones of stability?
- What can be learned about the types of community organizations that make good partners and about the cost of Youth Represent services?
- To what extent do the services provided through Youth Represent add value to the organization's community partners?

Youth Represent provides services to cohorts of young adults (clients) as part of the community partner's programming, following a process summarized in the textbox. Clients attend a "Know Your Rights" workshop conducted at the community organization where they meet Youth Represent staff, learn about the services they provide, and are introduced to information about the criminal laws of New York State.

Following the group workshop, Youth Represent attorneys and staff meet individually with members of the cohort. At these meetings, Youth Represent conducts a full intake in order to identify any legal barriers that the youth may face. Meetings usually also include taking the first steps to obtaining a copy of the RAP sheet. Once the RAP sheet is acquired from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), it is reviewed for errors and a draft criminal record summary is prepared. The RAP sheet serves as a diagnostic tool for the Youth Represent attorney to identify reentry legal needs of clients and is often a source of information necessary for quality legal representation. During a follow-up meeting the client receives a full copy and summary of their criminal record and is counseled on how to discuss criminal history for employment purposes.

Youth Represent also continues to provide additional legal services and identify new areas where legal representation is needed, including housing, employment and educational advocacy. Upcoming court appearances are also scheduled. Youth Represent attorneys make the necessary court appearances with clients and follow up once Youth Represent corrects any errors in the criminal record.

Services to young adults from non-partner organizations, which represent a smaller share of Youth Represent's services, begin with a referral email or phone call. An initial meeting with the young person takes place at the Youth Represent offices, and the referring staff member may or may not be present. The meeting, which includes a discussion and plan for handling specific legal needs, may also include the first

Youth Represent Community Partner Process	
Step 1:	Know Your Rights Workshop
Step 2:	Individual and Confidential Youth Intake to Identify Legal Needs
Step 3:	Request Criminal Record from NYS DCJS and Other States if Needed
Step 4:	Review Criminal Record for Errors and Draft Criminal History Summaries
Step 5:	Meet with Participants to Review Records and Initiate/Continue Legal Representation
Step 6:	Court Appearances and Follow-up

steps toward obtaining a copy of the RAP sheet. Clients who reach out to Youth Represent directly go through a similar process.

The evaluation was conducted from April through June 2014, with data collected through a variety of surveys, interviews, and focus groups. The surveys included: staff of all partner organizations; young adults who attended workshops during this time; young adults who participated in RAP sheet reviews and legal representation; sampled partner organization staff who attended a training workshop; and Youth Represent staff regarding the quality of the community partnerships and a breakdown of time spent on activities related to working with community partners. In addition, the evaluation activities included a group interview with Youth Represent staff, individual interviews with representatives of five of the partner organizations, and focus group interviews with young adults at these same organizations. Administrative data maintained by Youth Represent (using a *Salesforce* database) were also collected and covered the period from July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014. These data were reviewed, analyzed, and summarized to address the research questions.

Key Findings

Improving Knowledge of Legal Barriers and Legal Rights

Informational Workshops

Workshop participants reported increased knowledge about the criminal justice system, their legal barriers, and their rights. Young adults left the informational workshops with a better understanding of their rights concerning employment, what to divulge when applying for a job, legal rights when confronted by police and how to avoid escalation during these interactions. Overall, 93 percent of respondents indicated that they know more about the barriers faced by someone with a criminal history because of the informational workshop they completed; and 97 percent indicated that they know more about their own rights in the criminal justice system for the same reason.

Table 1 presents the percentage of young adults whose knowledge increased, stayed the same, or decreased, in each topic area, based on their self-reported ratings.⁶ Overall, the findings are very positive and show that the majority of participants (between 73 and 82 percent) indicated that their knowledge of each topic area increased due to their participation in the workshop.

Table 1: Reported Change in Knowledge, by Topic Area

Topic Area	Total N	Reported Change in Knowledge		
		Knowledge gain	No change in knowledge	Knowledge loss
Attorney/client privilege	110	73%	23%	5%
New York courts	126	77%	20%	3%
Police powers (to stop, to give summons, to arrest)	116	79%	21%	0%
The steps from being arrested to going to court	118	77%	21%	2%
How a criminal record can affect your job search	102	74%	23%	4%
How a criminal record can affect public housing	123	82%	17%	1%
What a “summons” or “pink ticket” is	101	79%	19%	2%
What a criminal “warrant” is	90	78%	21%	1%

Informational workshops were conducted in a manner that put the young adults at ease, facilitated the teaching of critical information about their legal rights, and developed their trust in Youth Represent as an organization. This is particularly important because the trainings were usually the first opportunity that young adults had to meet and interact with the staff and attorneys from Youth Represent. As such, the first impressions made by the Youth Represent staff as well as the quality of the workshops

⁶ The reporting of change in knowledge excludes those survey respondents who indicated that they “knew everything about” the topic prior to attending the workshop since they were unable to demonstrate knowledge gains.

themselves – independent of their effectiveness in imparting knowledge – were of critical importance. As one partner staff member described:

In the beginning no one trusts [the attorney from Youth Represent] because he is a white guy, blond hair, blue eyes and they all think that the cops sent him here. By the end of the workshop, they are all really into it and they do learn things. It gives them opportunities to ask questions and he gives them a chance to answer questions of their peers and the misinformation that these kids are fed everywhere, it's ridiculous. It's really an eye-opener. I even make new staff sit through it because I think it's really helpful.

Not only did the workshops foster participants' trust in Youth Represent, they also informed participating young adults of Youth Represent's mission. As a result, the vast majority (85%) of surveyed participants indicated that their knowledge of Youth Represent's purpose and services was higher after completing a workshop.

During workshops, Youth Represent also imparted important information about how young adults should interact with the police in a way that reduces the likelihood of escalation, while also providing young adults with a background on their legal rights when confronted by police. Young adults consistently described learning realistic information that would allow them to avoid harassment and confrontational situations. Across partner organizations, interviewed young adults emphasized that they were taught to interact with the police in a calm manner and not to respond in ways that could be misinterpreted. For some young adults, this was considered their most important lesson. One young adult, for example, discussed how “growing up in the neighborhood” meant, by default, experiencing unbidden questioning by the police, who were described as going out of their way to see how youth would react to their provocation. This young adult further explained that the Youth Represent workshops gave him the tools necessary to successfully respond to these situations:

Before I was in [the program sponsored by the partner organization], I was, I guess you can say the snazzy type. If I felt like [the police officer] be trying to disrespect me in any type of form, I would probably put my guard up and maybe it would seem like I was being disrespectful back. [The Youth Represent attorney] kinda gave me some techniques like just to keep calm, stay quiet, and you don't have to answer certain things that they say. You have the right to be silent for pretty much a lot of stuff.

One-on-One RAP Sheet Reviews

One-on-one RAP sheet reviews with young adults were an essential component of the reentry services provided by Youth Represent to partner organizations. For participating young adults, the experience increased their knowledge about their own criminal histories, prepared them to respond to questions about their criminal history from potential employers, helped identify and correct RAP sheet errors, and increased their confidence in navigating this element of the job application process. For example, after attending a RAP sheet review meeting, the large majority of surveyed young adults (85%) correctly reported that they should not reveal a sealed record to an employer if asked on a job application. And, almost all of the surveyed young adults indicated a high level of confidence in their ability to navigate this employment scenario, with 95 percent stating that they would be *sure* (22%) or *very sure* (73%) of themselves when answering this question on a job application. Youth Represent attorneys also use RAP

sheets as a diagnostic tool for identifying further reentry barriers and as a necessary investigative tool in other areas of representation.

Interviewed young adults almost unanimously reported learning when to share their criminal histories with prospective employers and how to effectively communicate this information when necessary. According to one young adult, “the best thing about when [the Youth Represent lawyer] talked to us is he gives us another format and way of talking during an [employer] interview when you have a conviction.” Another young adult explained, for example, that the lawyer he spoke to helped him write a letter that would contextualize the RAP sheet for those employers who might review it.

Staff Trainings and Advice Provided

Partner staff had a better understanding of their participants' legal barriers because of the training sessions, and guidance and advice, offered by Youth Represent. Partner staff left the Youth Represent training with a much better idea of how their organization and Youth Represent can assist young adults. As seen in Table 2, after the training, 63 percent of staff members indicated that their knowledge increased to a large extent with regard to how they can assist young adults with their legal barriers. An even larger proportion of staff (80%) reported that their understanding of how Youth Represent can assist their participants increased to a large extent as a result of their understanding in the training. And, almost all partner staff (98%) reported that they know how and for what reasons to contact Youth Represent for support. Each interviewed staff member also felt that the advice they received from the Youth Represent staff was very useful to understanding their participants' circumstances and how they might be of greater assistance to them.

Table 2: Reported Increase in Knowledge Areas after Participation in Youth Represent Staff Training

Area of Knowledge	Reported Extent to Which Knowledge Increased				
	N	Not at all	To some extent	To a large extent	Not applicable
Youth Represent's mission and services	51	0%	33%	67%	0%
The legal barriers faced by the youth that you serve	51	0%	31%	67%	2%
How Youth Represent can assist youth with their legal barriers	51	0%	18%	80%	2%
How you and your organization can assist youth with their legal barriers	51	2%	31%	63%	4%
Legal terminology (e.g., Felony, Misdemeanor, Violation, etc.)	51	8%	41%	49%	2%
New York Court System	51	6%	47%	39%	8%
Counseling youth to discuss their criminal records with potential employers	51	4%	33%	63%	0%
Identifying a participant's employment licensing barriers	50	4%	36%	60%	0%
Identifying a participant's barriers to public housing	51	2%	28%	71%	0%

Area of Knowledge	Reported Extent to Which Knowledge Increased				
	N	Not at all	To some extent	To a large extent	Not applicable
Identifying a participant's barriers to education	51	6%	47%	43%	4%
Identifying issues that young parents face (custody, child support, visitation, etc.)	51	20%	45%	31%	4%

After attending the staff training, community partner staff reported significant increases in knowledge and understanding of legal and other barriers that confront their participants as a result of having a criminal history. For partner organizations affiliated with Youth Represent, an informed understanding of participants' legal circumstances and barriers is key to the delivery of high quality program services. As such, the formal training provided by Youth Represent is beneficial for partner staff because it educates them on the potential challenges encountered by the young adults they serve.

The guidance and advice provided by Youth Represent staff outside of the training sessions is very helpful to partners in their efforts to serve their participants. Every partner staff member who was interviewed indicated that they had contacted Youth Represent for advice regarding youth issues. When asked about reaching out to Youth Represent, one staff member said, "Yes, I call Youth Represent ... to seek advice all the time. We have trainees who tell us that they get stopped [by police] for different reasons." Another staff person relies on Youth Represent as their primary source for legal information: "They are the go-to people that I reach out to." For these respondents, the guidance or advice they have sought from Youth Represent varied, but most often is related to counseling young adults for employment and how to explain their criminal history, confirming that a young adult's record is sealed, reviewing RAP sheets. Other matters that partner staff have consulted Youth Represent about include advice on how to deal with police, how to handle outstanding warrants, and youth who have court cases outside of New York City.

Nevertheless, there were some training topics that were covered less effectively than others: issues that young parents face, the New York Court System, and participants' barriers to education. The discussion of parenting issues, such as custody, child support, and visitation rights, was identified by training participants as the area where their knowledge did not increase as much as other areas. The extent to which partner staff reported an increase in knowledge about the New York Court System and young adults' barriers to education also suggests possible areas for improvement: for each of these, 47 percent of staff reported that their knowledge of these issues increased only *to some extent*. Survey feedback indicates that some participants found the presentation of information about the court system overly complicated. For example, one respondent described how the training was "very informational, but it got somewhat confusing when discussing the different types—summons, DATS, arrest, violations, CDs and how these are handled in court."

Although partner staff who attended the Youth Represent training generally felt that the training was very good; some recommendations for improvement were offered. Most frequently recommended were to extend the length of the training, expand the topics covered, and use more specific examples, visual materials and handouts, and interactive elements. For example, some staff commented that the training would have been more beneficial if it was longer, noting that "The training seemed rushed" and "It went

pretty quick.” Others thought the training should provide more information, particularly regarding employment, the types of offenses, and useful advice they can pass on to participants. In addition, some staff suggested that future trainings should be tailored to the organization as some individuals are more knowledgeable than others. Other suggestions included the use of more examples and scenarios for practical understanding, visual materials, interactive elements including videos, the use of a PowerPoint presentation, and handouts with basic facts.

Legal Services Provided to Young Adults

Characteristics of Clients and Services Provided

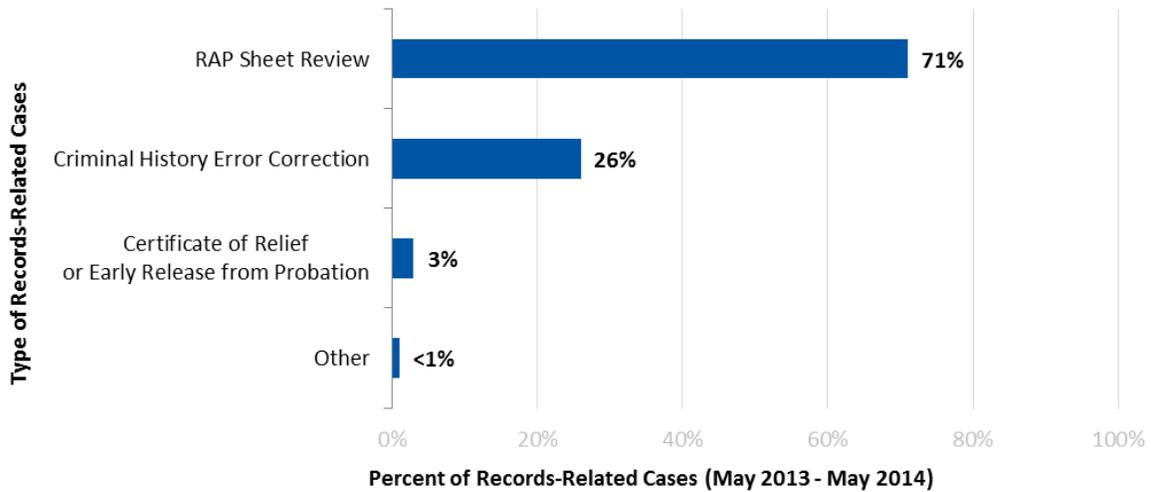
In 2013–14, Youth Represent attorneys and staff worked on a total of 1,233 reentry and criminal legal services on behalf of 738 young adults.⁷ More than half of these young adults (58%) had more than one active case with Youth Represent. The majority of these individuals are male (72%) and are Black or Black-Latino (77%). Most individuals (93%) are over the age of 18, with 55 percent between the ages of 18 and 21 and 38 percent between the ages of 22 and 27. In terms of housing, although more than half (59%) live in private homes, 28 percent of the clients live in a NYCHA development, 7 percent live in Section 8 subsidized housing, and 4 percent live in a shelter. Finally, only 12 percent are employed and 58 percent have not graduated from high school. Of all legal services provided, 85% were reentry and 15% were criminal.

Youth Represent performed reentry services concerning young adults' criminal records 962 times in 2013-14.⁸ The majority of these services (71%) entailed obtaining and reviewing young adults' RAP sheets. These reviews not only allowed a client to better understand their legal rights and potential employment barriers, they also served as a means for the Youth Represent attorneys to recognize other legal issues and were essential in informing their representation in other legal areas. Additional services concerning young adults' criminal records included correcting errors on the RAP sheets (26% of services concerning records) and assisting clients with Certificates of Relief or early termination of probation (3% of services concerning records). The breakdown of records-related services is presented in Figure 1.

⁷ These numbers exclude clients to whom Youth Represent gave legal advice.

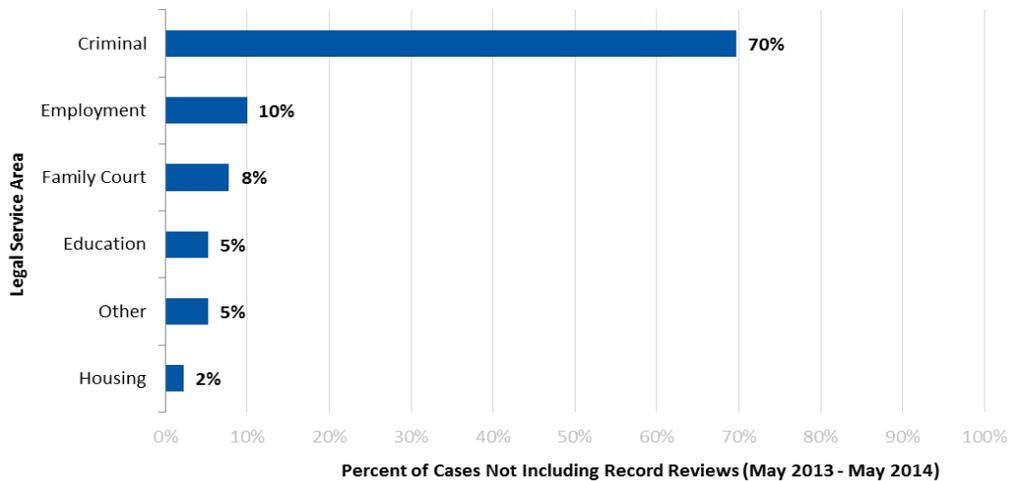
⁸ These 962 instances constitute 78% of the aforementioned 1,233 services undertaken in 2013–14.

Figure 1: Legal Services Provided for Records-Related Cases



Apart from the records-related services, Youth Represent attorneys and staff worked on 271 unique legal services cases. Most frequently, these involved criminal cases (70%). The next most prevalent area was reentry legal services (30%), which included employment (10%) family court (8%), education (5%), other topics (5%), and housing (2%). The areas of legal service cases are presented in Figure 2.

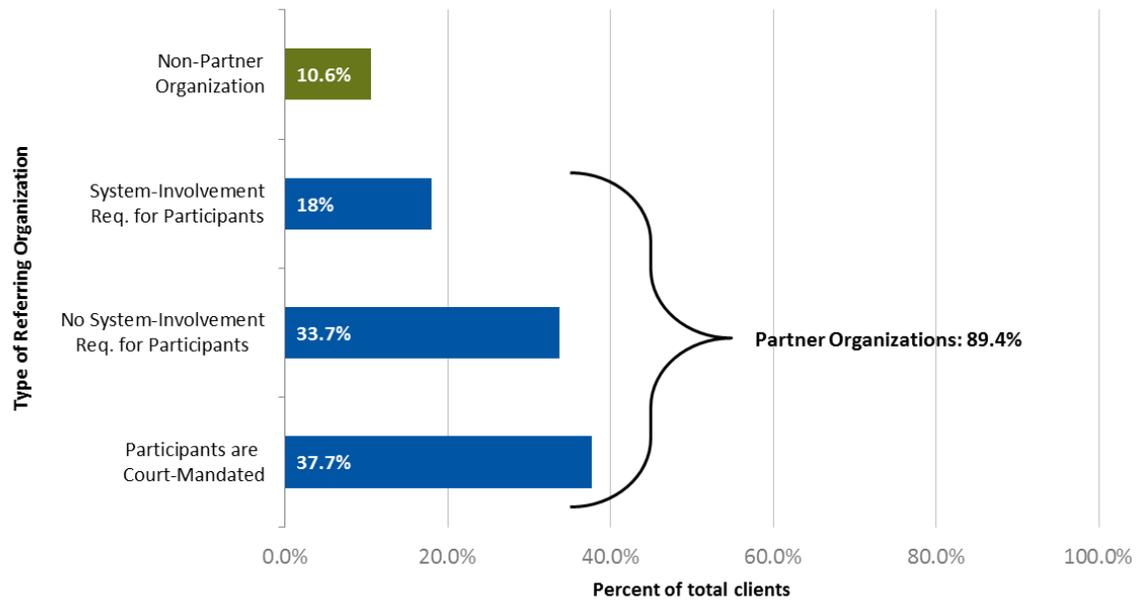
Figure 2: Cases by Legal Service Area, Excluding Records-Related Cases



Characteristics of Connecting Organizations

The large majority of young adults provided with legal representation (89%) were connected to Youth Represent by a partner organization. Approximately half (21) of the 40 connecting organizations were partner organizations and half (19) were non-partner organizations. Among the young adults who came to Youth Represent through a partner organization, 38 percent came from an organization that serves court-mandated young adults, 18 percent came from an organization partner that serves young adults with other criminal justice system involvement, and 34 percent were served by an organization without any criminal justice requirements for its participants. This breakdown of clients is illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Percentage of Clients by Type of Organization



Length of Active Legal Engagements

Youth Represent clients remained actively engaged in working with the organization's attorneys to address a single legal issue for an average of 47 days. But, the length of time it takes to close a legal case was associated with the area of legal service; cases involving family court lasted approximately 110 days while cases involving criminal or educational issues lasted about 30 and 23 days, respectively. Only 11 percent of all cases ended because of attrition. Generally, it took slightly longer to close a client case for a partner organization (49 days) than for clients who engage Youth Represents' services directly or through a non-partner organization (35 days). But, no differences were found when case length was examined by type of client. For example, organizations serving court-mandated individuals (50 days on average), participants with involvement in the criminal justice system (48 days on average), and organizations serving any young adult (48 days on average), all had a duration of between 48 and 50 days. These results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Length of Case Engagement, by Type of Organization

Organization		N	Length of Case Engagement in Days			
			Mean	Median	Max	Minimum
Partner		732	48.8	37	309	<1
Partner by Type of Client	All participants are court-mandated	328	50.6	37	297	<1
	Participants must have criminal justice involvement	143	47.5	39	309	<1
	No requirement for criminal justice involvement	261	47.3	37	229	<1
Non-partner		89	35.0	36	220	<1
All Cases		821	47.3	37	309	<1

Overall, 11 percent of cases ended as a result of attrition, defined as an instance where a client stops responding to Youth Represents' attempts to communicate, fails to appear for a scheduled appointment, or otherwise ends their relationship with Youth Represent.⁹ Client attrition was found to be slightly higher among cases initiated through a partner organization (12% attrition rate) compared to cases initiated through a non-partner organization (8%). This means that young adults who were participants of a partner organization were actually less likely than young adults referred by non-partner organizations to remain involved in their legal cases. However, the process for a youth to successfully complete intake requires more steps when the youth is being referred by a non-partner organization, including scheduling and making an appointment at Youth Represent's office. In addition, differences were found between types of partner organizations, with the highest attrition rate (15%) among organizations where participants are required to have had involvement in the criminal justice system.

Attrition rates vary widely by legal service area, however this is likely due the differing levels of client involvement necessary for a case to be resolved; for example, the correction of a record requires fewer in-person appointments than a case involving family court. Overall, the lowest attrition rate was for cases involving the correction of criminal records, where only 11 percent of cases ended unsuccessfully due to attrition. Table 4 presents the attrition rate for each of the seven service areas where results can be reported.

Table 4: Case Attrition, by Legal Service Area

Legal Service Area	N	Percentage of Cases Ended Due to Attrition	
		N	%
Criminal	171	23	14%
Education	14	0	0%
Employment	18	1	6%
Family Court	16	5	31%
Housing ^a	3	-	-
Records	716	76	11%
Other	13	4	31%
All Cases	951	109	12%

^a Results for populations of less than 10 are not reported.

⁹ Note, however, that this rate is case-specific, that is, a client who had one case closed due to attrition may have another case that remains open. (For example, a client may miss a critical court date, thereby ending one case through attrition while remaining in touch with a Youth Represent attorney about another legal case that requires fewer face-to-face appointments.) Or, the same legal issue may be addressed again through a new case, if a client returns.

Legal Outcomes

Client-level results are overwhelmingly positive: 4 out of 5 legal cases were successfully resolved by Youth Represent.¹⁰ These favorable findings were echoed by the unanimous positive feedback of young adults and partner staff who confirmed that Youth Represent attorneys have provided effective legal services in response to a breadth of situations, from immediate crises (e.g., arrest or ticketing) to complicated scenarios requiring extended involvement (e.g., identity theft, employer discrimination).

Table 5 presents outcomes for the 1,005 cases that were closed between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014, in total and disaggregated by type of organization.

Table 5: Case Outcomes, by Type of Organization

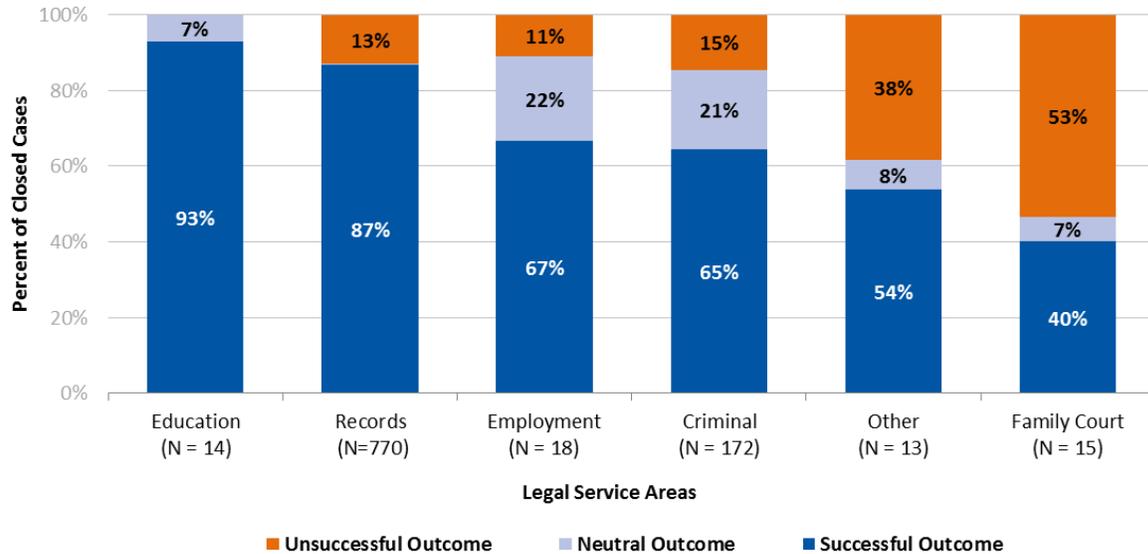
Organization Type		N	Resolution of Legal Case		
			Successful	Neutral	Unsuccessful
Partner Organizations		901	82%	4%	14%
Partner Organizations by Types of Clients Served	All participants are court-mandated	392	81%	6%	13%
	Participants must have criminal justice involvement	182	80%	1%	19%
	No requirement for criminal justice involvement	327	83%	5%	12%
Non-partner Organizations		104	81%	7%	13%
All Cases		1,005	81%	5%	14%

However, the extent to which a successful case outcome was achieved depends on the legal area.

As presented in Figure 4, rates of success differed substantially between legal service areas. Youth Represent lawyers and staff were most successful when working to resolve cases involving education, such as the reinstatement of inappropriately suspended students (93% success rate) and the correction of a criminal records (87% success rate), and least successful with cases that involved family court (40% success rate).

¹⁰ Case outcomes were provided by Youth Represent. A “successful outcome” is defined as one that achieved a result that was better than the penalty/status quo the client was facing. An “unsuccessful outcome” is defined as one that either failed to achieve any results (e.g., a criminal record was not able to be corrected) or failed to achieve a result that was better than the status quo. In no instances, according to Youth Represent, are clients left worse off than they would be had they not received assistance. Finally, a “neutral outcome” is defined as one that includes a combination of “status quo” sustaining and positive elements. Client records for this analysis covered closed cases between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014.

Figure 4: Case Outcomes by Legal Service Area



Youth Represent staff and attorneys are efficient and responsive. Another dimension of Youth Represent's effective resolution of legal cases is the relative speed in which cases were completed. And, for many of these young adults, representation from an attorney would not have occurred had it not been for Youth Represent.

Across partner organizations, staff described the work of Youth Represent as efficient and responsive. This is particularly important for several reasons. First, the legal cases being worked on by Youth Represent attorneys are often those that are preventing young adults from moving forwards in their employment, educational, or life trajectories. Because of the efficient resolution of their legal barriers, young adults are more likely to remain on track and get the most out of the programs in which they are participating. This is most evident where Youth Represent helps correct the criminal records of individuals. For example, if a young adult is to begin applying for employment once upon graduation from a job readiness program, it is important that records are corrected while they are preparing to apply, not after they have begun to apply to jobs, when rejections could become an obstacle that derails their commitment and progress.

The efficient closure of legal cases is also important because the resolution of legal cases can require considerable involvement from the young adults themselves, which imperils their other commitments. Therefore, the speed in which Youth Represent can resolve a case has considerable impact on young adults' lives.

Relationship with Young Adults

Quality of Interactions between Youth Represent and Young Adults

Youth Represent attorneys are reliable and trustworthy partners for young adults and inspire trust in their clients even though some are initially wary of attorneys. In fact, the perception of Youth Represent

attorneys as “relatable” is by and large the most important contributing factor in the inspiration of trust between clients and Youth Represent attorneys. Young adults interviewed were quick to describe the staff as individuals who were authentic, who could be trusted, and who understand their needs and the needs of the communities in which they live.

According to the perspectives of the young adults and partner staff, young adults can rely on the attorneys for their professional services and trust them to provide quality legal assistance and counsel. These findings are presented in Table 6 (opinions of partner organization staff) and Table 7 (opinions of young adults).¹¹

Table 6: Youth Represent Staff as Viewed by Partner Organization Staff

Youth Represent Staff	N	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
...are reliable partners for the youth that they serve.	41	10%	0%	10%	81%
...are reliable partners for you and your program staff.	41	7%	0%	12%	81%
...are trusted by the youth that they serve.	42	10%	0%	17%	74%
Promptly respond to the youth's questions and communications.	41	10%	0%	24%	66%
...conduct proper research before responding to the youth's questions.	40	10%	0%	13%	76%
...provide a valuable service for youth.	42	10%	0%	5%	86%

Table 7: Youth Represent Staff as Viewed by Young Adults

Youth Represent Staff	N	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel comfortable talking about my criminal history with the Youth Represent staff.	45	7%	0%	27%	67%
When I contact someone from Youth Represent with a question, I know they will get back to me quickly.	45	4%	0%	51%	44%
I feel supported by the Youth Represent staff.	45	4%	2%	24%	69%
I trust the Youth Represent staff.	45	4%	0%	27%	69%
I feel comfortable talking about my criminal history with the Youth Represent staff.	45	7%	0%	27%	67%

Overall, findings indicate that the success of Youth Represent is derived in large part from the quality of its staff. Feedback from young adults and partner staff solidify the conclusion that the services provided by Youth Represent would not be as impactful if it was not for the extremely high quality of the interactions. The excellent rapport that the attorneys have developed with the young adults may also be

¹¹ While 10 percent of respondents indicated that they *strongly disagreed* with the survey statements, it is our belief that this does not necessarily represent a meaningful portion of the surveyed population. These responses represent four respondents, each from a different organization. Therefore, each represents a minority opinion within their own organization as well. Finally, in each case, positive comments made in response to qualitative questions indicate that they each generally hold Youth Represent in high esteem.

interpreted as one of the reasons why 86 percent of partner organizations *strongly agree* that the staff of Youth Represent provide a valuable service to young adults. The legal advice and guidance provided during the initial workshops and one-on-one meetings might not have the same impact without the ability for the attorneys to almost immediately put young adults at ease. The high quality of these interactions also increase the likelihood that the information provided is trusted. And, the high quality also increases the likelihood that young adults' broader perceptions of the legal system will change, leading them to reach out to Youth Represent for assistance when needed and to recognize that they can obtain help in overcoming employment and other opportunity-related barriers.

Young Adults' Expectations of Future Engagements with Youth Represent

Young adults served by partner organizations universally expressed a willingness to approach Youth Represent for help and guidance in the future. They further indicated that they would approach Youth Represent under almost any circumstance where legal assistance was needed, but especially emphasized situations where they may need the immediate support of a lawyer (e.g., if stopped by the police or arrested). Interviewed young adults unanimously indicated that the legal services provided through Youth Represent were of higher legal quality than those they would receive elsewhere.

Partner organization staff unanimously applauded Youth Represent's dedication to serving the legal needs of their participants, including providing individualized legal services to those young adults who approach Youth Represent's attorneys directly as well as through the recommendation of a staff member from a partner organization. Partner staff indicated that Youth Represent staff seem dedicated to working one-on-one with young adults for as long as it takes for a legal case to be solved. For example, 86 percent of partner organizations *strongly agree* that the staff of Youth Represent provide a valuable service to young adults.

Furthermore, more than one staff member described how Youth Represent exceeded their expectations regarding the scope of services they would provide to participants in the initial workshops, RAP sheet reviews, and other legal services, commenting that they never felt limited in the number of those young adults they could subsequently recommend for individualized legal services or guidance.¹²

Relationship with Partner Organizations

Perceived Characteristics of a Good Community Partner

Youth Represent has served young adults with varied legal needs and is therefore equipped to partner with a wide variety of community organizations and city agencies. Interviewed Youth Represent staff suggest that their program model is “flexible” and “non-compartmentalized” which allows

¹² Some interviewed staff did acknowledge limits—specified in their contracts with Youth Represent—to the number of young adults included in workshops and provided with RAP sheet reviews. These staff, however, found these limits sensible and discussed them only in the context of wishing for more funding to increase the number and or frequency of workshops they could receive.

them to work with young adults that have varied needs. Feedback from partnership staff support this claim, noting that Youth Represent is able to meet the needs of their organization by modifying the content of their workshops to match the specific legal challenges that their participants may face.

In addition, Youth Represent staff exhibit a high level of organizational self-awareness and are able to acknowledge legal areas in which their services are less useful. In particular, staff noted that they have less capacity to assist in advocacy around school transfers (helping students and families advocate for transfers between New York City public schools) and are hesitant about providing legal assistance around immigration law because there are organizations already doing “excellent work” in this area (although staff are being trained on immigration law to increase their familiarity). At the same time, however, because of the overall breadth of services that Youth Represent is able to provide, it is unclear that these are limiting factors. And, one Youth Represent staff member further explained that their lack of capacity to work in immigration law is less relevant because by working mostly with employment-focused organizations that verify work eligibility, undocumented immigrants are often precluded.

Partnerships benefit from organizational buy-in as well as a capacity to facilitate the provision of Youth Represent's services. According to Youth Represent staff, the most important criterion in a partner are buy-in from the organization's administration and staff through an “acknowledgment that their population has substantial legal issues and can benefit from” Youth Represent's services. Organizations that have a developed relationship with their own participants, which Youth Represent can use to reach out to the young adults, is also very important (e.g., organizations that work with participants for at least a month and have daily scheduled programming). When asked about the characteristics that make their organization a good fit for Youth Represent's services, partner staff identified these same qualities, and also noted the importance of having space to host private one-one-one meetings, the convenience of their location, and the capacity to work closely with Youth Represent.

Average Costs per Client and Time Spent Providing Services to Community Partners

In a review of fiscal and client-level data, Youth Represent senior leadership estimated that the average annual cost of providing legal services for a client is \$707.53.¹³ This estimate was derived by dividing Youth Represent's annual organizational budget by the number of clients served for the past four years and averaging the result.¹⁴ By grounding this estimate in four years of financial and program data, Youth Represent is accounting for the significant organizational growth that has occurred in recent years (with their organizational budget and clients served doubling between 2011 and 2014).

During an average week, 77 percent of staff time was spent working to resolve clients' legal cases. Close to half of the time (45%) was spent working in the office, another 16 percent of time during an average week was spent on-site at community partner organizations, time spent in transit accounted for 11

¹³ Here, a “client” is defined as someone with whom Youth Represent met individually and through that meeting, have identified a legal need that could be addressed through Youth Represent's services. Participation in a workshop does not automatically make someone a client.

¹⁴ For 2014, Youth Represent projected the number of clients served based on their mid-year numbers. Excluding 2014 from the estimation would result in a cost estimate within \$10 of the total average cost.

percent, and 5 percent of the time was spent representing clients in court or at legal hearings. Finally, 23 percent of the time was spent on other tasks, including administrative tasks (13%) and entering information into a client database (10%). These findings are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Allocation of Community Lawyering Time across Activities in an Average Week by an Average Employee (Inclusive of Attorneys and Non-Attorney Staff)

Activity	Hours Spent	Percent of Total Time Spent
Representing client(s) in court/hearing(s)	1.28	5%
Entering case or client information into Salesforce	2.46	10%
Traveling to and from community partners, courts, or hearings	2.91	11%
Administrative tasks related to community partner work	3.28	13%
On-site at community partner(s) conducting "Know Your Rights" trainings, client intake, client meetings, meeting with community partner staff?	4.16	16%
Working on cases (e.g. this includes client-related phone calls, research, writing, investigation, rap sheets etc.)	11.41	45%
All Community Lawyering Activities	25.5	100%

Value to Community Partners

Community partners described the services provided by Youth Represent as valuable to their organization and supportive of their efforts to serve youth. Across organizations, the partners praised Youth Represent staff for the information and support provided to both the organizations and the youth they serve. The majority of partner staff who completed a survey described their organization's partnership with Youth Represent as *extremely valuable* (80%) and indicated that Youth Represent supported their organization's efforts in serving youth *to a large extent* (83%). The services identified by surveyed partners as *extremely valuable* to their organizations included one-on-one RAP sheet sessions (88%), criminal legal services (83%) and employment legal services (78%). The perceived value of these and other services are presented in Table 9.

Table 9: Perceived Value of Services Provided by Youth Represent

Service Area	N	Perceived Value			
		Not at all valuable	Somewhat valuable	Valuable	Extremely valuable
One-on-One RAP sessions	41	2%	0%	10%	88%
Criminal legal services	42	2%	2%	12%	83%
Employment legal services	40	3%	0%	20%	78%
Informational workshops for youth	42	2%	5%	21%	71%
Housing legal services	39	3%	8%	21%	70%
Child support/custody/other family legal services	41	2%	5%	24%	69%
Educational legal services	39	3%	5%	31%	62%
On-site staff trainings	35	3%	0%	49%	49%

Conclusion

Utilizing a community-lawyering approach, Youth Represent has provided legal services to young adults throughout New York City, primarily through partner organizations. Services provided to young adults included direct legal representation and advisement on issues that arise when the young adults pursue housing, education, and employment. When exploring whether these services have had a positive impact on young adults' outcomes and if the services add value to the community partners' programs, it was clear through surveys and interviews that trusting relationships—between Youth Represent attorneys and young adult participants—are critically important. Youth Represents' ability to put young adults at ease and immediately convey reliability was described as critical to the success of the services provided. Findings throughout this evaluation report indicate that the effectiveness of Youth Represent is derived to a large extent from the excellent interpersonal competencies of its staff. The attorneys providing services to partner organizations were lauded as authentic, approachable, and trustworthy. These data, coupled with positive client-level outcome data, further substantiate that Youth Represent is providing effective services and is considered valuable by community partners through the provision of information and support to the organizations and the youth they serve.

Recommendations

1. **Institutionalize the high-quality interpersonal relationships that exist between Youth Represent attorneys and the young adults and partner organizations they serve by documenting the approaches taken and embedding the strategies into the program model.** This will be particularly critical if Youth Represent chooses to expand programming by increasing staff, but is also a necessary step to prepare for any staff transitions that may occur. Findings indicate that the effectiveness of Youth Represent is derived to a large extent from the excellent interpersonal competencies of its staff. The attorneys providing services to partner organizations were lauded as authentic, approachable, and trustworthy. Their ability to put young adults at ease and immediately convey reliability was described as critical to the success of the services provided. These findings were extremely positive, but they also raise a potential risk for the organization, insofar as the success of the program model depends on the specific personnel selected to work with partner staff and young adults.
2. **Continue to explore what constitutes an effective community partnership, with particular attention paid to identifying which particular elements of a partnership (e.g., scheduling, alignment of values) are most closely associated with positive program outcomes.** Through a process of internal reflection, Youth Represent should develop additional indicators of partnership quality that are sensitive enough to allow for further analysis. Additional indicators of partnership quality could include factors such as time and resources needed to collaborate with each organization. Subsequent analyses of effective community partnership should include a broader set of program outcomes, including non-legal outcomes such as impacts of trainings on participant behavior and achievement of personal goals (e.g., employment, education).

3. **Continue to explore strategies for increasing the effectiveness of the staff trainings. Consider focusing on ways of improving the topical information about the New York State Court System and to legal issues pertaining to parents and families.** Based on the feedback of participating staff, additional recommendations include extending the length of the trainings, expanding the topics covered and using more specific examples, visual materials, and interactive elements. To strengthen the information provided on the court system, Youth Represent should consider separate trainings that include visits to court and/or opportunities to interact with court officers. Finally, consider further tailoring sessions to the particular needs of each partner organization (e.g., emphasizing certain topics that relate to that organization's programmatic focus or participants).
4. **Continue to explore how the impact of Youth Represent's services on the alleviation of barriers to young adults' access to opportunities can be assessed.** The identification of a comparison population would allow for a more rigorous evaluation of program impact.
5. **To facilitate future evaluation, Youth Represent should work with partner organizations to collect more comprehensive data on participant outcomes tied to trainings (both staff and young adult) and legal services.** To the extent possible, Youth Represent should include the annual receipt of information on observable impacts in their partnership agreements.