

The City of Albany Poverty Reduction Initiative (CAPRI)

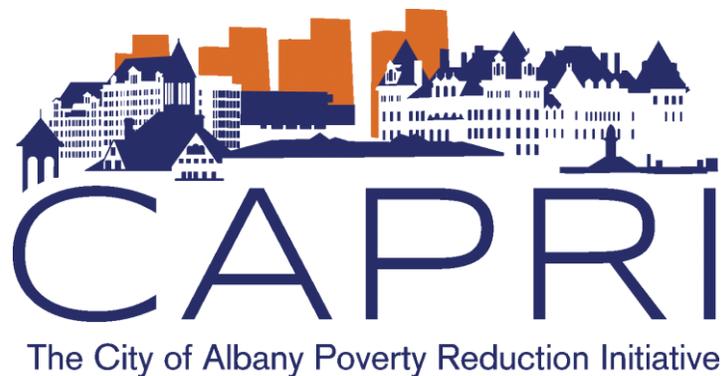
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# ENRICHMENT FRIDAY

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## *Youth Discussion Summaries*

July 28, 2017



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## Enrichment Friday Background

Enrichment Friday took place at the Schenectady County Community College Albany campus as part of the Albany Summer Youth Employment Program. Twenty-seven youth partook in this hour-long discussion on workforce development.

## What are important employment qualities?

The youth believed that potential employees should exude self-confidence and maturity. Other qualities included being a hard worker, being respectful, honest, clean/presentable, non-racist, patient, reliable/punctual, and flexible. These students also believed that employers would want to hire a productive individual who can stay on task and be a responsible manager of time. As an employee, these students understood that it is important for them to be a “team player” in order to get along with and respect their co-workers, while simultaneously understanding the role of their superior. As an employee, they stated that one should be well-rounded when it comes to specific skills and perhaps bilingual.

## What are the barriers to implementing the best practices in Albany?

Money, transportation, language, obtaining healthcare, education, age, family structure, and a lack of proper training were all common topics that arose during this portion of the conversation. One student stated that the employers are not necessarily reaching out to the youth who want their opinions heard. Instead, these willing youths are being assigned to jobs. One student explained that she would like her career field to be directly involved with children; however, the route to pursue that interest was not available for her.

Another student mentioned that we ourselves, as well as our mindset, may serve as a barrier to implementing practices in the City of Albany: “Individuals aren’t willing to open their minds to new information” when its necessary in order to receive knowledge concerning a specific field. Some group members believed that there is an unwillingness for services to participate with the children in the city.

## What are the gaps in current youth employment services?

Some of the recorded gaps in current youth employment services, per our discussion, are communication, a lack of after-school programs, transportation barriers, training programs, and poor advertisement of services. Many students agreed that they are not of age to work at most places of employment or they have a lack of experience that is necessary to qualify for those jobs. In effect, the work that is available is slim. One student expounded on this topic: “Not having the freedom to openly choose where we want to work. The options we have are based on who’s available, not our interests.” Other students requested that services offer mentorship-like programs that will assist them in road mapping their career goals as well as opportunities that fits around their summer school schedule.

## How do we better coordinate services?

The most agreed upon point that would serve as a solution to this issue revolved around community engagement. One solution included reaching out to Albany schools and the attending scholars. It was made clear through the responses that support providers should be intentional in terms of reaching out directly to the community and inquiring about their specific needs (ex. host informational meetings). It was also suggested that applications should be more detailed to accommodate the younger applicants. This would serve to broaden the job opportunities that are available for them while simultaneously making employment attainable.