



## JOB CAMP PROGRAM PROPOSAL

By: Youth Employment Services YES



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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Youth Employment Services YES is the leading provider of employment services and programs to vulnerable youth in the greater Toronto region. YES programs and services give unemployed young people ages 15-30, the opportunity to develop the skills necessary to secure and maintain employment.

YES is passionate in our belief that educated, employed, and engaged young people possess the power to solve the world's toughest problems. For young people with barriers to employment such as homelessness, a lack of formal education, a criminal record and drug abuse, overcoming these hurdles sometimes seems impossible. This is where YES steps in to support youth in conquering these barriers by providing programs and services at no cost to get their lives back on track.

Investing in vulnerable youth supports them to successfully transition into adulthood and lead resilient lives. Positive transitions into adulthood represent a critical time for transforming and breaking intergenerational cycles of poverty. It is a time when youth are able to expand their opportunities through education, skills training and personal development, ultimately laying the foundation for healthy lives.

The purpose of the proposed project, Job Camp, is to provide 150 at risk youth the opportunity to develop solid job seeking and life skills by participating in a two week intensive training module followed by working one on one with a job developer to secure employment. This project gives youth a chance to learn how to navigate the world of work and to positively contribute to the community as an adult. Youth learn essential information about resume writing, interviews, budgeting, personal money management, career options and goal setting. The goal of this program is help to develop at risk youth who are prepared to work and contribute to their community.

## **QUALIFICATIONS OF THE ORGANIZATION**

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YES is the largest and most experienced youth employment counselling centre in Canada. YES has an exemplary reputation for innovative and successful programs and services for young people with barriers to employment such as homelessness, a lack of formal education, a criminal record and drug abuse.

At YES, we provide young people with professional counselling and training to help them realize their full potential and get their lives back on track. Our training techniques have been so beneficial to our clients that we are used as a teaching model for other employment services across Canada. Not only was YES the first employment agency of its kind in Canada, it was the also the first to address and recognize that being out of work often is the result of factors beyond the control of our most vulnerable and disadvantaged youth such as lack of education and family support.

Out of school and out of work, many youth feel they are out of options and in the absence of alternatives turn to a life of crime, violence and gangs. Recent Statistics Canada

estimates suggest that 62,000<sup>1</sup> employable youth are out of school and work in Toronto. YES recognizes that these youth are particularly exposed to making bad decisions and may not have the skills necessary to help themselves find the work they urgently need.

Denied access to stable living conditions and other basic necessities many youth fail to complete high school and as a result have an incredibly difficult time securing employment. YES bridges that gap for youth to help them find employment and gain the skills they need to maintain it.

At YES our mentorship approach gets to the root of these issues and offers a range of solutions customized to meet the needs of each individual young person. Our programs range from one on one employment counseling to multi-week training programs to specialized programs dedicated to self-employment and entrepreneurship. We continuously develop and deliver programs for thousands of youth each year in several of Toronto's high-risk neighborhoods.

To do any less will cost more. High youth unemployment is more than young people not having jobs:

- It's about a long-term strain on our economy by not having youth participate and contribute to the workforce.
- It's about the rise in crime and violence by youth in our communities.
- It's about the decline in the standard of living for young people.

Last year YES helped 7,687 young people. Of those 33.4% were unemployed or out of school more than a year and 58% were out of school or work for more than 6 months. 24% had less than high school education. More than 27% received welfare, disability support or EI. Yet 82.3% of our youth had positive outcomes in jobs, training or education. Our client satisfaction rate was 97.7%.

## **Industry Leaders**

Internationally recognized as a Centre of Excellence in Youth Employment, YES leads the sector by providing programs designed to address the most critical issues facing today's youth. Modeled on the three themes of Employment, Empowerment and Entrepreneurship, YES helps young people to rebuild their lives and believe in a future filled with hope and opportunity.

- YES has 43 years of exceptional program management experience.
- Every program receives supervision with strict accountability and reporting metrics.
- Program managers at YES have come from the front lines working with youth.

Many youth will not have a chance without the specialized programming and support offered by YES- an agency that makes vulnerable and disadvantaged youth a priority. YES' long term goal is to strengthen our existing programs while introduce new programs and services that address the urgent needs of our young people.

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada 2006 Census, <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/>

## THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

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All across the city Toronto's labour market seems to be slowly picking up, with one crucial exception – young people.

Youth tend to be the hardest and first hit when a recession strikes, and the last to recover. As of August the current unemployment rate for Canadians aged 15-24 was 17.2%<sup>2</sup>

The pre-recession unemployment rate for youth was roughly 11%. Since the start of the recession the unemployment rate for youth has remained around 15-17% according to Statistics Canada<sup>3</sup>. With actual unemployment rates among young people predicted to be much higher as Statistics Canada data doesn't factor in youth in unpaid positions, a growing trend in many industries, or people who have simply given up looking for work.

As new concerns rise about the recovery from the recession, YES knows that that the crisis is far from over for the young people of our city.

YES is also seeing a new trend – university and college graduates who are finding challenges breaking into the labour market even with a degree. Add the pressure of repaying large student debt within six months of graduation and one can quickly see how serious the problem of youth unemployment really is.

Employers who do typically hire young people, such as retail, tourism and business support services, have yet to bounce back from the hit of the last recession. These employers are currently faced with lower consumer spending and a shaky global economy. With these uncertainties, businesses are still very reluctant to hire.

"It comes down to the fact that students are last on the list in terms of hiring", Says Alex Koustas, economist at Scotiabank. "Businesses don't feel they have the luxury to hire a student given the state of the economy."<sup>4</sup>

The longer youth are unemployed the higher the risk of sustained long term damage is done to their emerging careers. According to the Certified General Accountants Association of Canada, 13 weeks of unemployment can reduce next-year wages by 3.4 per cent for a full-time worker while a six-month unemployment spell can hurt your income for as long as four years after.<sup>5</sup>

Not only are the careers of young people at stake but also their well being. Youth who are not working or in education without an income are more likely to become involved in illegal and street activity. The 2011 Toronto Community Vital signs report has suggested that root cause for the recent U.K. riots were its high rate of youth unemployment.<sup>6</sup> Investment in youth employment programs like the ones that YES provides are instrumental in getting our young people successfully into the workforce and can prevent heavy costs to our economy and our communities.

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<sup>2</sup> The Toronto Star – *Young, Educated and unemployed*, Vanessa Lu. October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> The Toronto Star – *Job Market Recovery Leaves Young People Behind*, Madhavi Acharya-Torn Yew. July 28, 2011

<sup>4</sup> The Toronto Star – *Job Market Recovery Leaves Young People Behind*, Madhavi Acharya-Torn Yew. July 28, 2011

<sup>5</sup> The Globe and Mail – *Youth Mired in Joblessness Facing Steeper Climb Out*, Rita Trichur. June 20, 2011

<sup>6</sup> Toronto Community Foundation, Vital Signs 2011 – <http://www.tcf.ca/vitalinitiatives/vitalsigns.html>

## JOB CAMP PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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Job Camp is one of YES' flagship programs as our primary program focusing on at-risk and vulnerable youth of Toronto.

It is better to have youth employed and contributing to the economy than paying the higher costs of employment insurance, welfare, incarceration and other social assistance programs. By empowering and finding work for the most at-risk, disadvantaged and in some cases street youth of Toronto, Job Camp creates a safer environment for these youth and the community of Toronto. Many of these youth, some living in shelters, walking the streets, selling drugs or engaging in the sex trade, will enter the workforce and better their lives, creating a safer Toronto for everyone.

Job Camp is an on-going full-time, 2 week program for disadvantaged and vulnerable youth ages 15-30. The program consists of 2 weeks of intense employability and life skills training after which successful program participants will work with a YES job Developer to find employment in an area they have shown interest in. In addition to the pre-employment training and job placement, Job Camp participants also receive a small mock wage, nutritional support and a transportation allowance.

The two-week Job Camp model is perfect for the needs of the target group we serve. Structured to accommodate all types of personalities and learning styles, the program allows for group work, one-to-one assistance from counsellors and supported independent work.

The length of the program is also beneficial to clients in that more structure and support is available for clients with issues such as literacy, housing and income support.

### A Job Camp Youth Profile

- **73%** Are 24 years old or under
- **67%** Have been out of work for 6 months
- **100%** Have no income or rely on government subsidies
- **75%** Have only completed a grade 12 education
- **72%** Have stability issues
- **74%** Don't have a complete resume



## KEY ATTRIBUTES OF JOB CAMP

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Understanding the myriad of elements that are involved in employment preparation and placement, Job Camp also offers a nutrition program, a small stipend (mock wage), and transportation to interviews and job-appropriate clothing, for youth who face these barriers to finding employment.

## **TRANSPORTATION SUPPORT**

YES provides public transit tickets to youth who otherwise would not have the means to attend interviews and their first weeks of employment. In advance of the trip, youth must formally request TTC tickets from their Career Counsellors, outlining the need and purpose of each ride. Upon successfully finding employment, YES continues to support the youth with TTC tickets until their first pay-check is received and they are able to cover their own transportation costs.

## **MEALS FOR YOUTH**

Meals for Youth help build a healthy foundation for youth for whom poor health, inadequate nutrition and hunger are all too often the norm. A nutritious breakfast and lunch give these youth the energy they need to be a success in their job search and beyond. YES understands priorities. The youth we serve are vulnerable. The time a young person spends at our resource centre or attending our free seminars is time not spent finding a meal.

## **JOB CAMP PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

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The goals of the project are to provide youth with experiences in the area of job search and life skills through resume writing, planning, budgeting, time management, communication, team building, documentation, and group presentation.

The objectives of the project is to reduce youth unemployment and enhance economic development in Toronto by assisting 150 multi-barriered unemployed youth to acquire employability skills in order to be successful in finding and maintaining employment. The project will focus on youth who need assistance to overcome employment barriers.

## **PROGRAM METHODS AND ACTIVITIES**

Our Job Camp program provides individualized and group support and assesses the type of opportunities that best suit each participant. The Case Manager will assess employability skills, needs, issues and employment goals of each Job Camp participant and guide them while they work through a tailored employment action plan and develop their employability skills. Participants will benefit from this holistic approach and from the on-going support to successfully complete activities leading to obtaining and maintaining employment.

Job Camp provides a welcoming place where youth with barriers can feel comfortable and see a future for themselves through improves life skills and self-esteem. We assist participants to clarify goals, identify their strengths and access job opportunities, educational options, training programs and/or other community resources.

## Program Topics include:

| Job Search Skills                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Life Skills                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Writing Effective Resumes</li> <li>▪ Cover Letters</li> <li>▪ Hidden Job Market &amp; Networking</li> <li>▪ Cold Calls</li> <li>▪ Interview Skills, Mock Interviews</li> <li>▪ Application Forms</li> <li>▪ Labour Market Trends</li> <li>▪ References</li> <li>▪ Thank You Letters</li> <li>▪ Basic Computer Training</li> <li>▪ Employment Maintenance</li> <li>▪ Employment Standards- Know Your Rights</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Health and Safety (WSIB)</li> <li>▪ Effective Communication</li> <li>▪ Team Building Activities</li> <li>▪ Goal Setting / Time Management</li> <li>▪ First Day of Work</li> <li>▪ Budgeting / Money Management</li> <li>▪ Anger Management</li> <li>▪ Domestic Violence / Human Rights</li> <li>▪ Influencing UP</li> </ul> |

## Level of Participation by Youth

- 2 week time commitment, full time attendance during workshop training (simulating employment hours)
- Additional ongoing training and any necessary follow-up, as required
- Youth participate and contribute to feedback and evaluation activities of the program
- YES provides a meal program for at-risk youth. Youth take responsibility for prep & cleanup of meals.

These activities have been selected because they offer the best learning environment for disadvantaged youth. Job Camp participants benefit from group based employability workshops. This structure helps them to develop their social skills along with helping them learn to work in a group environment. The small group size also allows for more individual support and means less strain on our staffing resources. Participants also benefit from the daily routine of these groups as they start to get used a workplace like environment and schedule.

The flexibility of the Job Camp program means we can meet a wide range of client needs and it's not a 'one size fits all' approach. This means we can tailor the program depending of client goals and skill level so we can focus on where the participant has the most need.

## Job Camp Participants Selected Based on the Following Criteria:

- Younger than 30 years of age
- Individual has been out of work for 6 months or more
- Has a history of poor work retention
- Lack relevant, credible work experience in Canada
- Have been ineffective in their own job searching
- Has no source of income or is reliant on social assistance
- Language skills are a barrier to employment
- Persons living with a disability



## Staffing of Program

2 full-time staff dedicated staff– a Career Counsellor and a Job Developer. Both have University degrees and experience working with youth with barriers and have the ability to relate to at-risk youth. They also have career counsellor qualifications, experience in assessment, case management, group facilitation and matching.

Oversight for the project is provided by the Vice President of Programs, Margaret Douglas who reports to the President of YES, Nancy Schaefer.

## PROGRAM BENEFIT AND IMPACT

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- Increased employability of severely vulnerable clients who face multiple barriers.
- Improved life skills and self-perception of clients who are accustomed to disadvantage and hardship.
- A place where vulnerable youth can learn in a safe and fun environment.
- Getting at-risk youth off the street, out of trouble and out of harm's way.
- Training and supporting youth to become productive, contributing members of the community.
- Enabling and empowering at-risk youth to see a future for themselves and understanding there is a place for them in society.
- More confident and knowledgeable youth equipped with techniques to find work
- Life skills last a lifetime.
- Resume writing, networking, cold calling, interviews, hygiene, working as a team, communication.

## Evaluation Plan

YES has developed a state of the art database that tracks numerous indicators of success including, but not limited to:

1. Client profile surveys
2. Job placement details (employer, job title, wage rate)
3. Training and education results
4. Client satisfaction surveys

**Evaluation methods includes:** Monthly reporting on project objectives, number of youth participants, their profile, results, and financial reporting.

*Before I came to Job Camp, I had quit school and had been searching for a job for almost a year. I applied to many jobs with no success. I began to feel the pressure and started losing sleep and stressing out over the situation I was in. Job Camp also helped me to narrow down my choices of where I would like to work and what I would like to do at work. I love to build things; eventually with the help of the Job Camp job developer I had an interview for a sales position at a local hardware store and got the job. I have been working in the hardware store now for over 8 months and I still love my job. It has helped me to learn more about myself and possible career paths I would like to pursue.*

*I still keep in touch with the Job Camp staff and I am thankful that I attended the Job Camp program as I have found direction and no longer feel the stress that kept me up every night.*

**- Kevin, Job Camp Participant**



## ABOUT YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SERVICES YES

### MISSION STATEMENT

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Youth Employment Services YES believes that employment is empowerment and the cornerstone of safe and healthy communities. YES leads the Canadian youth sector with innovative programs that empower disadvantaged and vulnerable youth to become self-sufficient contributing members of society

### WHAT WE DO

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For the past 43 years YES has been providing young people with professional counselling and training to help them realize their potential and get back on track. The youth we serve face significant barriers to employment like homelessness, poverty, lack of education, criminal records, mental health issues and addiction. At YES our approach drills down to the root of these issues and offers youth a range of customizable solutions in order to meet their needs. Our professional counsellors work one-on-one to help those most in need to imagine and create a life filled with opportunity.

Our training techniques have been so beneficial to our clients that we are used as a model for other employment services across Canada. We are regularly asked by all levels of government to host international delegations from around the world to share our extensive knowledge of effective practices addressing youth unemployment.

We continuously develop and deliver programs to over 10,000 youth each year in several of Toronto's high-risk and priority neighbourhoods.

Since our inception in 1968, YES has helped over 110,000 young people.

We proudly boast an **81%** success rate helping youth find employment or return to school.



### AWARDS & RECOGNITION

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- Proud Recipient of the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities' Awards
- Minister's Award for Service Delivery Innovation
- Minister's Gold Award for Service Delivery Excellence
- Minister's Silver Award for Service Delivery Excellence
- The National Service Award from The Rotary Club of Toronto - Power of Rotary Awards
- Mayor's Community Safety Award – City of Toronto