



**YEAR UP FINANCIAL
SERVICES PARTNERSHIP
FINAL REPORT**

Prepared for:

The SkillWorks Funders Group

By:

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PARTNERSHIP OVERVIEW

Mission and Structure

Year Up Boston is the flagship affiliate of a national network of job training programs for disconnected young adults. It is a dual customer model that helps (a) young adults from low-income communities earn an industry-recognized credential in order to gain access to good entry-level jobs in the financial services industry; and (b) employers improve retention rates, diversify their labor force, and streamline entry-level requirements. SkillWorks funded the Year Up Financial Services Partnership (FSP) from 2009 through 2013 to help the organization expand career advancement, academic services, and supports, and to institutionalize these activities in its core program.

As part of the FSP, Year Up began to engage employers in a new way. Although Year Up had longstanding partnerships with many employers prior to SkillWorks, they were very individualized—between specific Year Up account managers and company representatives.

For FSP, Year Up created the Employer Champions Group (ECG), an employer advisory group that played a growing role over the life of the initiative as a means of sharing information among partners as well as advising Year Up. The original employer partners were State Street Corporation, Bank of New York Mellon, and Bank of America. Other financial institutions, including Boston Financial Data Services, New York Life, and Eaton Vance, became more involved over the course of the initiative. Although not a formal part of the FSP, community colleges developed into an increasingly important part of Year Up's strategy.

Services

Year Up's program involves a 21-week classroom training component and a 26-week professional internship with a major employer. Prior to receiving the SkillWorks grant, Year Up's model viewed job placement as the primary outcomes measure, with an emphasis on placement within four months of completing the internship and graduating from the program. Year Up offered limited services and supports for graduates during and after the placement phase. The SkillWorks funding augmented Year Up's core services in two ways: first, enhancing the classroom training component of Year Up's core program to better prepare students for long-term career advancement; and, second, expanding services to Year Up alumni.

- **Enhancements to classroom training.** Through the SkillWorks grant, Year Up incorporated activities such as basic skills training, tutoring, academic testing, and career and college readiness into the classroom training component. An important part of this work was piloting modifications to the classroom training to assess the feasibility of including college-preparatory math training and offering other services to help reduce developmental education needed for Year Up alumni to meet college-level requirements.

- **Expansion of career development services for Year Up alumni.** Year Up provided enhanced career coaching services, created mechanisms to increase alumni access to workplace professional development resources, and developed career pathway tools and college navigation services for Year Up interns and alumni. The career coach was a later addition to the portfolio of career development services, added in mid-2012. The career coach worked with alumni on a one-on-one basis and in small groups to help them navigate the workplace. The coach also provided guidance on long-term career plans, connected alumni to information and resources related to higher education goals, and helped them balance work with other aspects of their lives.

Year Up conducted research and analysis to inform and refine its practices. For instance, Year Up conducted career pathways studies and mapped pathways in several financial services companies. The mapping of entry- and mid-level career pathways was a first for some of the firms. The product of these studies focused employer attention on the processes and services needed to help Year Up alumni advance. The resulting career pathway toolkit became an integral part of the orientation information provided to interns and new hires and is used as a planning tool to supplement alumni career advancement portfolios.

Year Up also developed strategies to smooth the transition to college for Year Up graduates. Year Up worked with area colleges to develop agreements that would allow its graduates to earn college credits for Year Up training they received.

Participant Characteristics

Between the beginning of 2010 and the end of 2013, SkillWorks enrolled 522 Year Up participants. The following chart demonstrates that the demographic makeup of this group is a reflection of Year Up's focus on minority and low-income young adults. Roughly 80 percent of the enrollees were living in economically disadvantaged households, and over 90 percent were members of a racial or ethnic minority group. Most of the Year Up participants (over 80 percent) were born in the United States, and about half defined themselves as black or African-American.

In accordance with Year Up's targeted demographic, the average age of participants when they enrolled in SkillWorks services was just 21. In terms of education, virtually all of the participants had a high school diploma or GED (a Year Up entry requirement), but almost none had earned a college degree.

The SkillWorks grants addressed the needs of two distinct participant groups, pre-employment participants and a much smaller group of older Year Up alumni. The 485 pre-employment participants enrolled in SkillWorks at the beginning of the internship phase of Year Up and had opportunities to access SkillWorks-funded services both before and after graduation and placement. Thirty-seven incumbent workers who had already graduated from Year Up and were working in the financial services sector made up the alumni group. On average, the members of this group had been with their employer for three years by the time they enrolled in SkillWorks and were making just over \$17/hour. Most were portfolio/fund administrators, portfolio/fund accountants, or IT support workers, and State Street Corporation employed 30 of the 37.

It is also worth mentioning that some Year Up alumni who never officially enrolled as SkillWorks participants still benefited directly from SkillWorks investments. This includes at least 40 students who met with a Year Up coach and at least 35 of the SkillWorks college navigator’s intensive clients (this coach was supported separately by SkillWorks). The statistics and figures in this report do not include any of these individuals.

YEAR UP DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS (AT SKILLWORKS ENROLLMENT)		
# of Participants Enrolled		522
Background	Average Age	21
	Living in Boston	60%
	Born Outside the U.S.	19%
	Reports English as Barrier to Advancement	7%
Race/Ethnicity	Hispanic/Latino	34%
	Non-Hispanic/Latino	
	Asian	5%
	Black/African-American	49%
	White	9%
	Other/two or more races	4%
Gender	Male	50%
	Female	50%
Highest Level of Educational Attainment	Associates Degree or Higher	1%
	Some College, no Degree	4%
	High School Diploma (or equivalent)	99%
Economic Status	Economically Disadvantaged ¹	79%

PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES

Program Completion and Job Placement Outcomes

Year Up’s historic strength is in working with students to help them successfully complete their six-month internship and then enter employment. As shown in the following table, their graduation and placement outcomes are indicators of this strength.

About 80 percent of the pre-employment participants completed their internship, and about 68 percent of the 388 graduates had job placements related to the training. The strong placement rate is notable given the social, economic, and educational barriers faced by the Year Up population as well as the overall state of the economy and the financial services sector during

¹ SkillWorks defined individuals as economically disadvantaged if they reported receiving certain public benefits (TANF, Food Stamps, SSI-Disability, unemployment benefits) or if their reported yearly family income fell below a minimum necessary level based on their family size.

the recession. In large part, the job quality was also high. The average starting wage was more than \$15.00/hour, in keeping with the expectation Year Up set for its employer partners.

Almost all of the recorded jobs were full-time. Overall, about 80 percent of those with job placements found employment in the financial services sector, but for the cohorts who enrolled during the second half of Phase II the rate was 93 percent.² More than half of the placements over the whole period were with State Street Corporation, Year Up’s most engaged employer partner, but many participants also obtained jobs at other financial institutions. These included Bank of America, Bank of New York Mellon, Boston Financial Data Services, Fidelity Investments, and JP Morgan Chase.

COMPLETION AND PLACEMENT OUTCOMES	
# pre-employment clients enrolled in SkillWorks	485
# completing internship	388
Completion rate	80.5%*
# of graduates placed	263
Placement rate	67.8%
Avg. starting wage	\$15.33
Avg. starting weekly hours	38.2
% placed in financial sector	79.8%
% placed within 6 months of completion	94.3%
*This rate excludes the January 2010 cohort, which had 100 percent completion due to enrolling in SkillWorks after graduation, and the January 2014 cohort, which had not graduated before the end of Phase II.	

Job Advancement Outcomes

Despite the significant progress Year Up has made in adopting a career advancement frame, its data collection systems do not yet adequately reflect that frame or provide the mechanism for accountability on the desired outcomes for *long-term graduate success* (LTGS). Once clients had a job placement, data collection was not as thorough or consistent. In fact, more than 60 percent of the 263 pre-employment clients placed in employment had no employment status update recorded after their initial placement. Year Up attempts to collect post-placement information via a client survey a year after graduation, but response rates are generally quite low. Year Up staff face challenges reaching participants, including changed email addresses and phone numbers.

Overall, 125 Year Up participants, including clients from pre-employment cohorts and the alumni cohort, reported a promotion, wage increase, or new job over the four-year SkillWorks grant. This group had an average net wage gain over that period of \$2.88/hour. There were 65 participants who received at least one raise, 51 participants who received at least one promotion, and 37 participants who started at least one new job.³

Among pre-employment participants, 94 of the 263 employed graduates reported promotions, new jobs, or raises.⁴ This group’s hourly wages grew by \$2.41/hour over the period during

² For the first two years of funding, SkillWorks participants included Year Up participants pursuing IT careers that led to placements outside of the financial sector.

³ A lateral job change is an important skill-building strategy within the financial services industry and Year Up recognizes this as part of its advancement strategy.

⁴ Participants did not report negative changes in employment, such as a job loss.

which Year Up collected data, a 16.3 percent increase. It is quite likely that there are more positive outcomes among the pre-employment program graduates that have gone unreported since follow-up reporting is relatively limited.

More is known about the alumni cohort due to more thorough tracking of this group. The alumni cohort performed better than the pre-employment cohorts did, with 31 out of the 37 alumni reporting a wage increase, new job, or promotion. These 31 alumni earned, on average, \$4.31/hour more at their last follow-up than they did at enrollment, a 26.7 percent increase. Eighteen of the alumni reported receiving some sort of promotion. The strong performance of the alumni cohort is likely in part due to the stage of their professional development.

Educational Outcomes

College preparation, especially math skills training, was the focus of several SkillWorks investments. The table shows that a very large proportion of the SkillWorks Year Up clients enrolled in college during Phase II after graduating (the pre-employment cohorts) or enrolling (the alumni cohort).

COLLEGE ENROLLMENT OF YEAR UP GRADUATES	
Cohort Group	# entering college since graduation
2010-2011	89
2012-2013	43
Alumni Cohort	10
Total	142

Other sets of interim outcomes suggest some Year Up graduates are better prepared for college as a result of the SkillWorks-funded pilots. In particular, Year Up's efforts to improve participants' math skills have shown some direct signs of success. At the start of the initiative, Year Up found that 95 percent of its students could not meet college-level math requirements, and more than two-thirds would require three developmental education classes to meet college admissions standards. In 2013, Year Up analyzed participant results from a math class embedded into its core curriculum and found that raw test scores of close to 90 percent of participants improved and 53 percent of students reduced their need for developmental education courses in math.

EMPLOYER BENEFIT

Over the course of the initiative, Year Up broadened its employer engagement focus from securing internship slots toward a deeper conversation about how career advancement is in everyone's interest. Through that deeper engagement, employers have noted a number of resulting benefits.

Year Up has become a more valued workforce development partner for FSP employers. The SkillWorks initiative also led employers to shift their mindset about Year Up. Prior to the launch of the FSP with SkillWorks' support, employers tended to think of Year Up in the context of their corporate social responsibility work and as a recipient of employers' community service largesse rather than as a valued workforce development partner. Year Up demonstrated that it could provide a pipeline of qualified workers, help employers reduce turnover, and provide high-quality support services that help workers advance to higher positions. A visible enhancement was the onsite service and ongoing support provided by the career coach. Employers perceived the coach as integral to retention and advancement strategies aimed at

non-traditional hires. Because the coach played a critical role in helping alumni address problems on the job as well as in their personal lives, employers credit him with helping them retain struggling employees who they might have terminated under different circumstances. State Street Corporation has assigned human resource staff to work with Year Up's career coach and to connect him to other departments and resources throughout the company.

Closer alignment between the goals of Year Up's internship team and LTGS has resulted in deeper relationships with employers that have resulted in more internship opportunities for Year Up participants as well as opportunities to convert graduates into permanent or contract employees. In another sign of the increasing service to employers, Year Up has deepened its partnership with State Street, offering professional development workshops that are open to any State Street employee.

Employers valued their participation in the ECG. The ECG provided a vehicle for collective engagement and demonstrated a new way for financial services employers to work with external partners and with each other. Although human resource specialists were well networked prior to the formation of the ECG, there was no forum for discussions that specifically addressed non-traditional hires and the role they can play in meeting companies' retention goals. Year Up used the ECG to explore critical issues related to retention and advancement, to provide a forum for companies to share best practices related to mentorship programs, and to provide on-site training for interns. Based on the success during the SkillWorks grant, the ECG has continued to meet despite the end of the grant.

SYSTEM OUTCOMES

Provider Outcomes

There is a general consensus among Year Up staff interviewed that the grant pushed the organization to be better. The overall quality of services (instructional and supports) offered to participants is higher now than at the start of the grant. Staff attribute higher program retention and graduation rates to some of these improvements. Year Up exposed participants to concepts of long-term career planning earlier in the program, and the college credits earned under the dual enrollment arrangement have greater currency because participants have clearly defined career and academic pathways. Year Up intentionally used SkillWorks funds to improve the organization's core offerings rather than supporting a separate line of work. Today, a number of those improvements are embedded in the institution, creating enduring changes in the institution.

 **Year Up has made lasting changes in multiple aspects of its service delivery to hone the organization's focus on long-term success for its alumni.**

Year Up adopted a number of approaches to encourage students and alumni to pursue higher education. The changes involved a mix of additions in the core classroom offering, changes in the professional development curriculum offered during internships, new tools for employers, and new agreements with colleges.

- **Modifications to the classroom curriculum.** The SkillWorks grant pushed Year Up to focus on building participants' math skills. Year Up tested a number of methods and has incorporated some services into its curriculum, including internal testing and tutoring. Year Up now administers the Accuplacer test in-house both at the beginning and at the completion of the classroom phase. It uses the scores, coupled with information about the cost of developmental education, to help students understand the importance of improving their basic skills.
- **Improvements to the professional development program.** Year Up improvements included modularizing the curriculum, adding a module with a bridge to college focus, aligning workshops with specific advancement topics, providing company-specific career pathways information, instituting a capstone project focused on long-term goals (including educational goals), and having interns develop career advancement portfolios to guide their progression. Year Up also expanded its college fair event into a more structured educational conference held during the internship phase. In addition, Year Up is developing pathway maps that include detailed information about postsecondary credentials and programs in the financial services and information technology sectors.
- **New resources for alumni at employers.** Using career portfolios and company-specific career pathway tools as guides, alumni can access a range of services that can help them advance, such as additional career and educational planning, counseling, mentors, topical workshops, and other activities.
- **Agreements with area colleges.** Year Up also negotiated agreements with area colleges to facilitate alumni transitions to college. In addition to its existing dual enrollment arrangement with Cambridge College, Year Up signed articulation agreements with area colleges. The focus is on aligning its program with defined pathways and stackable credentials, particularly with community colleges.

➔ **Year Up has better aligned its organizational culture, structure, and accountability mechanisms with the goals of long-term graduate success.**

The SkillWorks grant led to a range of organizational shifts at Year Up, including staffing changes, interdepartmental alignment, and revised outcomes measures. All of these efforts are the result of Year Up's recalibrated commitment to participants' LTGS—both a conceptual framework and an overarching result. This not only guided activities in Boston, but also influenced Year Up's national organization and affiliates.

- **Increased broad institutional buy-in to the framework of long-term graduate success.** To achieve the goals of the SkillWorks grant, Year Up created a specialized department focused on alumni advancement. Elevating the LTGS to departmental status signaled to the entire Year Up organization that the result was integral to its mission and provided the structure to begin coordinating functions across the organization. Internal studies undertaken through the grant helped underscore the linkages between basic skills, technical training, higher education, career pathways, and advancement. This reduced skepticism within parts of the organization about LTGS, particularly among staff of the instructional units of the organization. Although Year Up dismantled the LTGS

department at the end of the grant, the importance of the framework and goals remains embedded in the institution. Instructors and advisors routinely incorporated the concepts of college and career advancement into the curriculum and student engagement activities, and they were more knowledgeable about referral resources that could assist students.

- **Changes in organizational structure.** Prior to this initiative, Year Up’s internship team did not have a strong investment in participants’ outcomes beyond internship placement. As part of the restructuring to support this initiative, Year Up added a career development staff person to the internship team to provide services to participants during the first year after graduation. It also made the internship team responsible for targeted retention rates for graduates placed in full-time jobs for one year. The result is better alignment of services for alumni and a shift in the internship team’s overall perspective on career advancement.
- **Changes in targeted outcomes.** Year Up made a number of changes in its targeted outcomes to better reflect its focus on long-term advancement for graduates. The organization extended its retention phase from four months to one year and set the retention rate target at 85 percent. In addition, Year Up established a target of having at least 40 percent of internships converted into permanent or contract jobs at the company hosting the intern, and an additional 10 percent converted to jobs in non-host companies. The conversion target drove organizational behavior, encouraging Year Up staff to build relationships with new departments at partner employers and deepen relationships within human resources and with diversity officers.

➡ **Year Up has increased its capacity to conduct policy advocacy.**

Over the course of the initiative, Year Up’s executive director became much more involved in workforce development policy advocacy, particularly the intersection between workforce and postsecondary education. Observers credit SkillWorks with pushing the organization in this direction. This shift has resulted in increased engagement with other workforce development stakeholders, broadened policy networks, and organized events on Capitol Hill and the State House involving Year Up students and alumni. The organization has also developed public awareness and policy advocacy campaigns to help close the “Opportunity Divide” faced by urban youth.

Year Up Boston’s interest in system change and public policy dovetailed with Year Up National’s “influence” agenda, which it expects local affiliates to help implement. SkillWorks’ system change framework provided Year Up Boston with the vehicle to do this work. Year Up played a leadership role in some of SkillWorks’ policy advocacy activities, including engagement in the Youth Pathways Day at the Massachusetts State House and advocacy around budget items related to youth career advancement. Year Up Boston also demonstrated the value of engaging employers to achieve public policy reforms and system change. Year Up National has adopted Boston’s ECG structure as a model for national engagement and for adoption by its affiliates.

Employer Outcomes

Year Up has increased awareness among its ECG members about important internal and external policy and systems issues that affect job opportunities for low-income workers. As a result, the evaluation found several changes among employers in terms of changing perceptions, practices, and policies that will support future opportunities for not only Year Up graduates but also for other non-traditional hires.

➔ **Employers are devoting additional resources to support Year Up interns and alumni.**

The SkillWorks experience has made companies much more inclined to identify internal resources that can support Year Up interns and alumni. New York Life, for example, now assigns each Year Up intern to a mentor, a relationship that continues if the intern is hired into a full-time position. The company also created an alumni support group that pairs Year Up alumni with interns. Boston Financial Data Services has also developed a mentoring program. Companies increasingly view these programs as key components to their retention strategies. Companies have also assigned volunteer tutors to work in Year Up's tutoring program.

In addition, State Street has deepened its services for Year Up graduates. State Street supported the creation of an alumni affinity group, known as the Year Up Affinity Network (YUAN), in response to the advocacy of two Year Up alumni who were also SkillWorks participants. Members have access to professional development and career advancement workshops and networking opportunities. YUAN is open to both Year Up interns and alumni and receives a budget and senior-level staff support from State Street.

➔ **Employers have increased their focus on career pathways for entry-level workers.**

State Street credits the career pathways tool with helping it become more strategic about its retention and advancement goals. Another company, New York Life, revised its job specifications as a result of the career pathway mapping exercise. In addition, Boston Financial Data Services created a new position for Year Up alumni that best matches the job requirements with alumni's skill sets and competencies. Year Up made a generic version of the career pathway map available to the public in hopes that more financial services firms will adopt it.

➔ **Employers express increased attention to diversity and non-traditional hires.**

Working in partnership with Year Up required employers to think differently about diversity and those they identify as "non-traditional talent"—in this case, low-income urban youth, many of whom are racial/ethnic minorities. Employers point to their increased willingness to consider low-income young adults, out-of-school/out-of-work jobseekers, and other non-traditional workers as a clear shift in policy and practices. Interviews suggest more State Street departments are recognizing the advantages that trainees from organizations like Year Up have over traditional hires that have four-year degrees. Although State Street was heading in this direction prior to its involvement in SkillWorks, the grant enabled Year Up to be much more proactive in helping the company rethink its entry-level requirements and supports for non-

traditional talent. By the end of the grant period, several employers talked about making diversity and non-traditional hires the “new normal.”

➔ **Employers express stronger interest in sector collaboration.**

Several firms acknowledged a willingness to explore further industry-wide partnerships and to collaborate on identifying advancement opportunities across firms. There is also more openness to partnering with other external organizations. The SkillWorks experience has led State Street, for example, to begin working with community colleges and community-based nonprofit training providers for the first time. Although Year Up was not able to facilitate formal partnerships between its ECG members and higher education partners, it generated a stronger appreciation among companies for issues related to increasing basic skills, developing other industry-recognized and stackable credentials, and articulating college courses to industry standards.

➔ **Employer engagement in workforce policy advocacy has advanced, but is still limited.**

Year Up also recruited employers to become more involved in its policy advocacy work. State Street, for example, has engaged both legislative and public policy officials as well as worked with other workforce development stakeholders on policy issues. However, while ECG members have supported Year Up’s policy and system change agenda, the group lacks the involvement of high-level company officials who have the clout to make or influence change in areas such as tuition advancement, the use of background checks, and other barriers that affect non-traditional workers’ hiring and advancement opportunities.

CONCLUSION

Year Up succeeded in placing career advancement and higher education front and center in its organizational mission and influenced its national organization and affiliates to do likewise. Its students and alumni receive this message early and often and have access to a range of resources to help them navigate company and college environments. The SkillWorks grant allowed Year Up to devote sufficient organizational resources to revise its goals and strategies, retool its curriculum, convene employers, expand its partnerships, and test innovative approaches that are designed to help graduates achieve long-term career objectives. Year Up shifted the outcome measure from a short-term placement frame to long-term graduate success, developed a number of services to be delivered at various stages of the training and internship phases, and committed to working closely with graduates to provide multi-year services as dictated by alumni career aspirations and advancement opportunities. Key accomplishments related to these efforts include expanded post-placement services and strategies to address the advancement challenges of alumni and the development of stronger bridges for alumni to postsecondary pathways.

Sustainability

Career advancement will remain an overarching objective for Year Up. It has embedded long-term graduate success into its core program, restructured its organizational divisions to coordinate around this goal, developed a suite of services for alumni and employers, and

positioned itself as a strong advocate of policy changes that benefit jobseekers with limited opportunities. This section examines the sustainability of key components of Year Up's SkillWorks-supported strategy.

- **Employer Champions Group.** Employers expect the networks formed through the ECG to endure past the SkillWorks grant, and point to the need to include representatives from other divisions, especially diversity officers (who typically report to company presidents and could leverage high-level corporate engagement). Year Up expects to expand the ECG beyond the immediate financial service partners in the SkillWorks grant. Year Up also plans to extend the ECG model to other sectors where it has concentrations of interns and alumni.
- **Math Basic Skills.** Despite the improved math skills demonstrated in the pilot math class, Year Up decided not to fully implement math classes as part of the core curriculum. Year Up was not convinced that the inclusion of the math class raised student achievement to the point at which they could bypass developmental math at the community college. Furthermore, Year Up did not see substantial increases in postsecondary education enrollment that also might have justified the incorporation of the math class into all learning communities and the hiring of additional instructors. Year Up expects to continue other activities that build math skills, including administering the Accuplacer test in-house and providing math tutoring.
- **Career Coaching.** Despite the limited reach of the one-on-one coaching model in terms of the number of people whom each coach can serve, the overwhelming consensus among Year Up staff, interns, alumni, and employers is that the workplace-based model makes a qualitative difference in the performance and aspirations of participants and contributes to employers' retention targets. However, without SkillWorks funding, it is unlikely that Year Up can sustain the program as currently conceived. It expects to retool the approach in order to serve more alumni, including the possibility of career coaching becoming a service for which employers are willing to pay. In addition, Year Up is leveraging more resources from its employer partners, such as using mentoring as an ancillary strategy and pairing employees with Year Up alumni.
- **Mid-Career Alumni.** Despite its intention to work with older, mid-career alumni, Year Up faced challenges in developing a successful model to serve that population. The rollout of Year Up National's innovative approach to serve mid-career alumni in the form of a subsidiary for-profit and recruitment firm will most likely sustain the goal of serving this population.
- **YUPRO.** Year Up has launched Year Up Professional Resources (YUPRO) in Boston and the Bay Area in 2014, with the fees paid by employers going to fund other Year Up programs.

Some of the changes may have a ripple effect beyond Boston. As the flagship affiliate of the Year Up National organization, Year Up Boston was able to use FSP to demonstrate new operational models, modes of employer engagement, and programs and services for Year Up National and its affiliates. Year Up Boston demonstrated the importance of long-term graduate

success to Year Up National, which has incorporated the concept into its five-year strategic plan and endorsed the creation of ECG among its affiliates.

Lessons Learned

For the field:

- ➔ **Reorienting the goals of an organization takes more than program modifications; it takes a culture shift.**

Year Up has a long and successful history as a pre-employment program. Changing the organization's focus to graduates' long-term success required more than adding a class or hiring a coach. All departments of the organization needed to embrace the goal and embed the focus through a myriad of changes, big and small, to achieve lasting system change. Changes in organizational structure, measures of accountability, and partner relationships all evolved toward the desired end of LTGS. Even with all the progress to date, Year Up's methods for tracking LTGS show that it needs to do yet more work to complete the culture shift to a career and educational advancement focus.

- ➔ **A focus on long-term advancement requires deeper partnerships with employers.**

To support alumni on their long-term career goals requires a different type of relationship with employers. Year Up could not assure long-term graduate success through contact with participants only during the classroom and internship components that make up the core of its service. Year Up needed to work more closely with employers in order to provide resources to and have ongoing contact with alumni. Rather than seeing employers as internship hosts, Year Up needed to work with them as partners supporting alumni on their career pathway. Year Up had to deepen its understanding of the career pathways within the financial service companies, work with human resources to support alumni retention and advancement within the companies, and gain access to worksites to deliver direct services to alumni. Through the deeper employer engagement, Year Up elevated its status among employer partners and developed a number of workplace products and services that are potential revenue generators for the organization.

For funders:

- ➔ **Grant funding aimed at organizational system changes such as those pursued by Year Up can make it more difficult to attribute specific participant outcomes to the funding, but can lead to enduring changes that can be sustained beyond the life of the grant.**

It is difficult to measure the success of SkillWorks' support of Year Up in terms of participant outcomes. Other than a small group of mid-career alumni that the grant specifically targeted, the rest of the participants through FSP enrolled in Year Up's core pre-employment program, making it impossible to parse the value of the SkillWorks' intervention from that of the longstanding pre-employment program. The intention of SkillWorks' support was to embed changes in the program that would lead to long-term advancement for these participants. The impact of those changes on their long-term success will likely be seen beyond the tenure of

SkillWorks' support. However, the focus on organizational system change appears to have reaped lasting changes in the organizational structure, a number of which are not dependent on continued philanthropic funding to maintain.

 **Active grantmaker engagement can accelerate progress.**

The type of change envisioned by Year Up and supported by SkillWorks can be difficult to achieve. The momentum of the existing program, initial staff resistance, competing priorities, and multiple organizational restructurings all posed barriers to change. Over the five-year SkillWorks grant period, Year Up struggled at times to meet a number of the grant conditions, such as forming and utilizing the employer partnership, making changes to the program's core curriculum, and implementing a system change agenda. To keep Year Up focused on its articulated goals required the attention and prodding of SkillWorks staff and the engagement of SkillWorks funders. It appears unlikely that a more passive style of grantmaking could have achieved the results that Year Up was ultimately able to produce.