



TeensWork Alachua: 2024

Year 3 Evaluation Results

Children's Trust of Alachua County

Bonnie Wagner and Jordan Sutherland

October 2024

Purpose Statement

This report evaluates Year 3 of TeensWork Alachua – a summer youth employment program – funded by the Children's Trust of Alachua County.

The purpose of this report is to provide a compilation of results and insight on performance, successes, and to highlight opportunities for improvement and enhancing impact. The primary audience for this report is the Children's Trust staff, providers, the Trust Board, and partners who help support the implementation of services. After gaining insights from results presented, the objective is to take actions to strengthen services and outcomes for children and youth.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

Introduction

- Why is youth employment important?
- What is TeensWork Alachua?

Key Questions:

- Who was served?
- Who were the employers?
- How much did youth participate?
- How much support did youth receive from job coaches?
- Were youth satisfied with the program?
- Were employers satisfied with the program?
- What were other benefits and outcomes?
- How much did the program cost?

Conclusion

References

Executive Summary

TeensWork Alachua was introduced to provide a positive outlet for youth to explore and develop career aspirations and professional connections while simultaneously deterring youth from delinquent activity and negative influences.

The primary purpose of this report is to compile results, provide insight into performance, successes, and areas for improvement. Findings are highlighted below:

Performance and Results:

- 97 work sites.
- 315 teens applied & placed in a job.
- 12 hours of training received (on average).
- 38,220 hours of work clocked.
- \$1,605 earned (on average).
- 126 hours worked (on average).
- 2.0 job coach support provided to teens in person (on average).
- 3.4 job coach visits to work-site locations (on average).

Key Successes:

- Increased the number of work sites.
- Teens report high levels of satisfaction with the program.
- 94% of teens report they gained valuable work experience, preparation for future jobs, and skills that will benefit them in the future.
- 97% of employers agreed teens gained valuable skills.
- 8 teens were offered jobs from their TeensWork employers.

Areas for Improvement:

- Enhance job placement matching based on youth interest.
- Increase job coach support for teens.
- Better communication and more training with site supervisors

This report is respectfully submitted with the intention of driving improvements and better services to propel teens to excel in their future.

Introduction

In December 2021, the Children’s Trust of Alachua County facilitated a competitive procurement process to identify qualified organizations to recruit and support employers and teens (14-18yrs) to provide training and job experience to explore career options, build work readiness, skills, and ability to thrive in future employment. In 2024 program year, Goodwill Industries of North Florida was the local organization funded to collaboratively carry out this mission.

Why is youth employment important?

Benefits of summer youth employment programs are well-documented. Youth employment programs expose youth to meaningful employment experiences and supportive adult relationships. Research demonstrates a variety of positive outcomes, including improved self-esteem and confidence, skill and knowledge development, high school graduation rates, reduced criminal behavior and teen pregnancies among participants (Heller, 2021; Sachdev, 2011). Programs help youth develop job skills, gain an understanding of work norms and culture, career pathways, professional connections and financial literacy through training and one-on-one support received through job coaches and worksite supervisors.

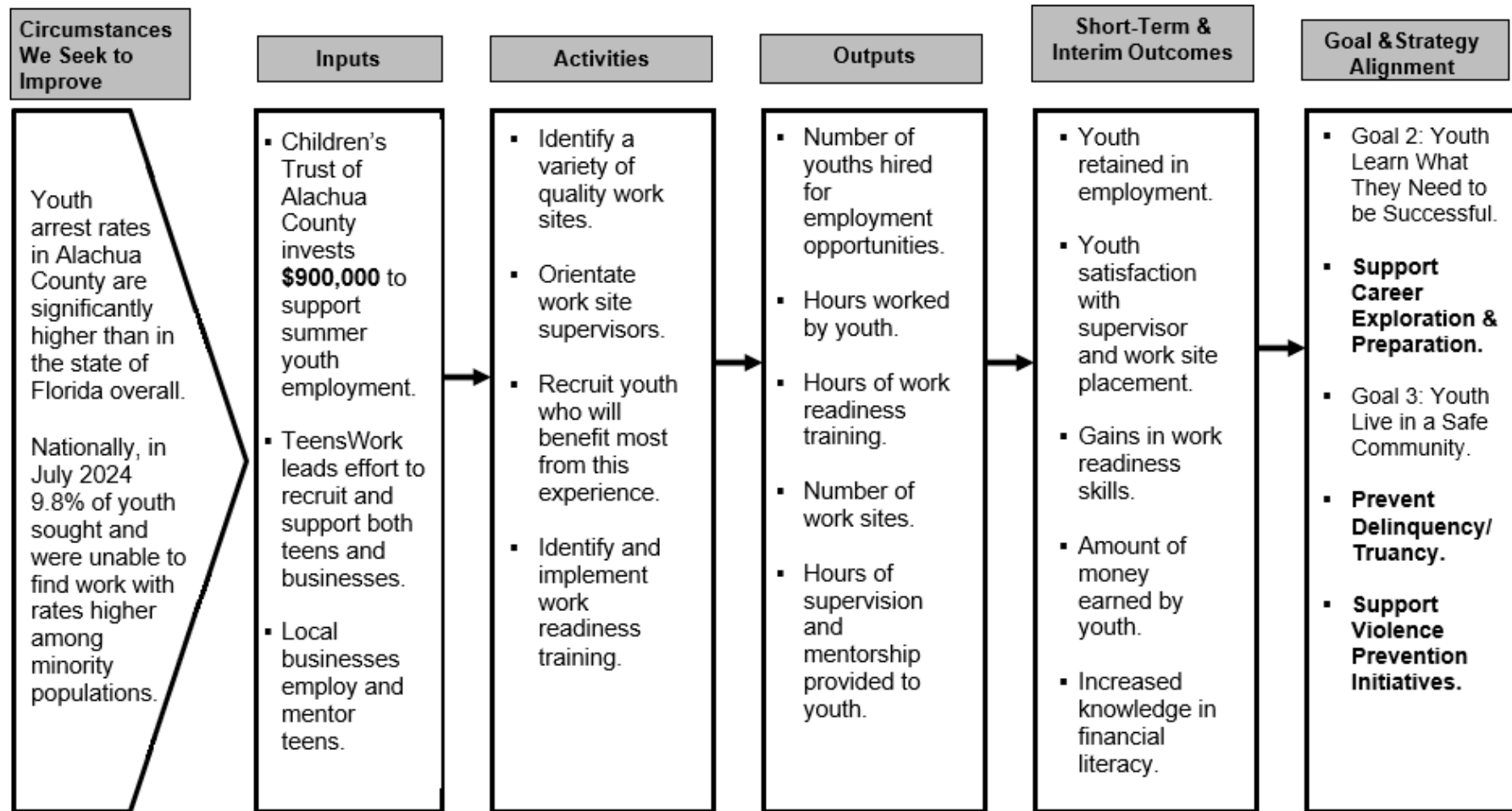
Businesses receive support to receive, manage, and pay youth workers. Businesses learn and can benefit from a young person’s perspective and ideas in the workplace setting. Businesses also have an important opportunity to help cultivate talent, give back to their community, and promote readiness in their future workforce.

In July 2024, the unemployment rate among young people stood at 9.8% percent (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024). Unemployment is defined by those actively seeking, but unable to find work. While there are obvious financial hardships associated with unemployment, negative psychological impacts of unemployment have also been demonstrated (Belle & Bullock, N.D.) and may be particularly profound for youth who are

developing their identity, sense of worth, and fit in society. Compared to last year, the youth unemployment rate was higher in July 2024 than July 2023 (9.8% vs. 8.7%) (U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024). Obtaining one's first job is a significant milestone to adulthood and teens face challenges in obtaining jobs. TeensWork is designed to help support the connection between youth and employers to create a building block for transitioning into a future career and adulthood.

Crime rates in Alachua County are a significant community concern and have consistently surpassed the state of Florida (Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, 2023). Youth arrest rates in Alachua County substantially outpace the state of Florida (36.2 versus 21.6 youth arrested per 1,000 for FY2022-23). Without legitimate opportunities to contribute, teens may be more likely to pursue illegitimate options. Several randomized experimental studies confirm summer youth employment programs reduce criminal justice involvement youth who participate compared to those who did not (Heller, 2021).

TeensWork Logic Model




Note: The definition of unemployment is those who are seeking but unable to find work.

Youth arrest rates in Alachua County outpace the state of Florida (36.2 versus 21.6 youth arrested per 1,000).






Data Source: Florida Department of Juvenile Justice – Delinquency Profile 2023

What is TeensWork Alachua?

Program Design:



Program Model

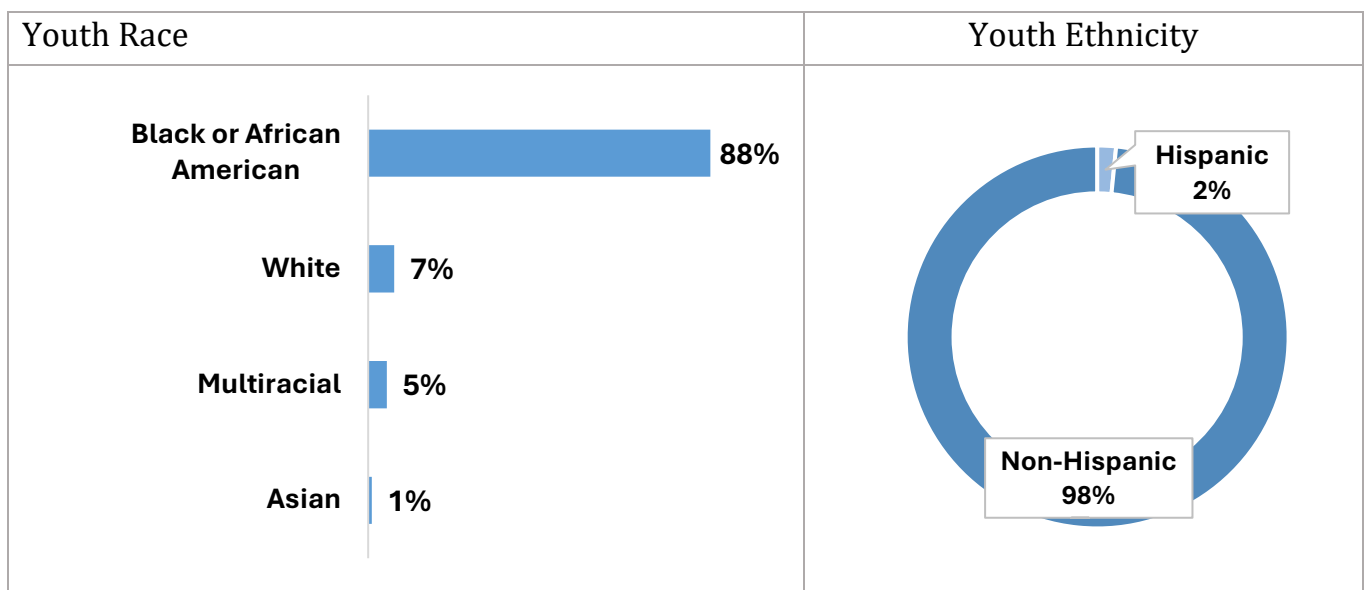
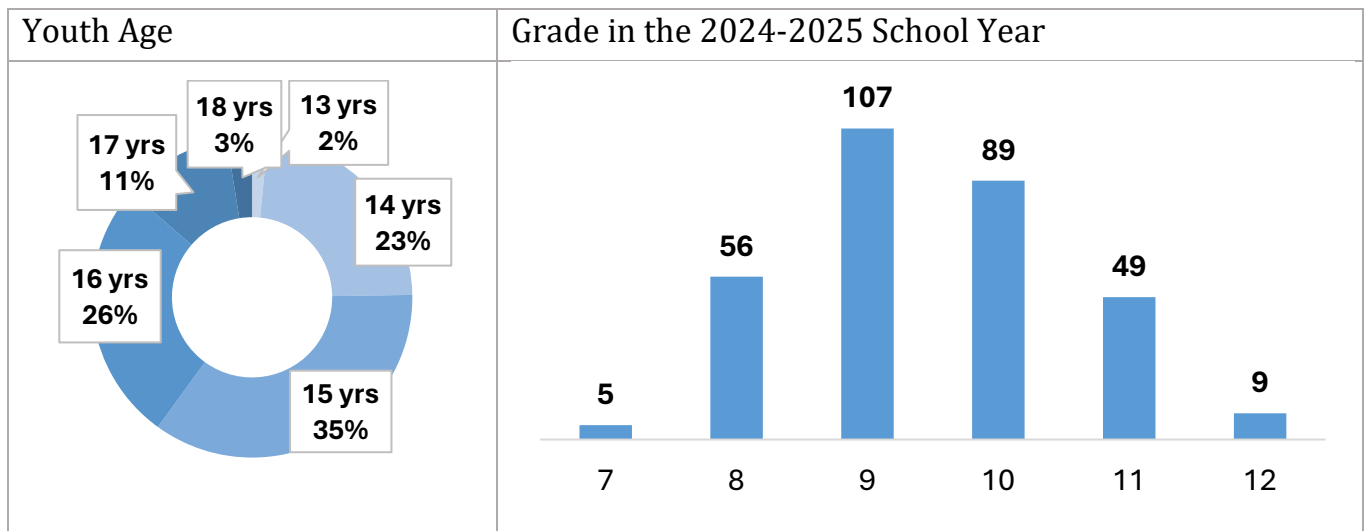
-  6 - 8 weeks of employment
-  Up to 25 hrs per week
-  14 hrs of work readiness training (inclusive of financial literacy)
-  Job coach support and mentoring
-  Establish a bank account and setup direct deposit

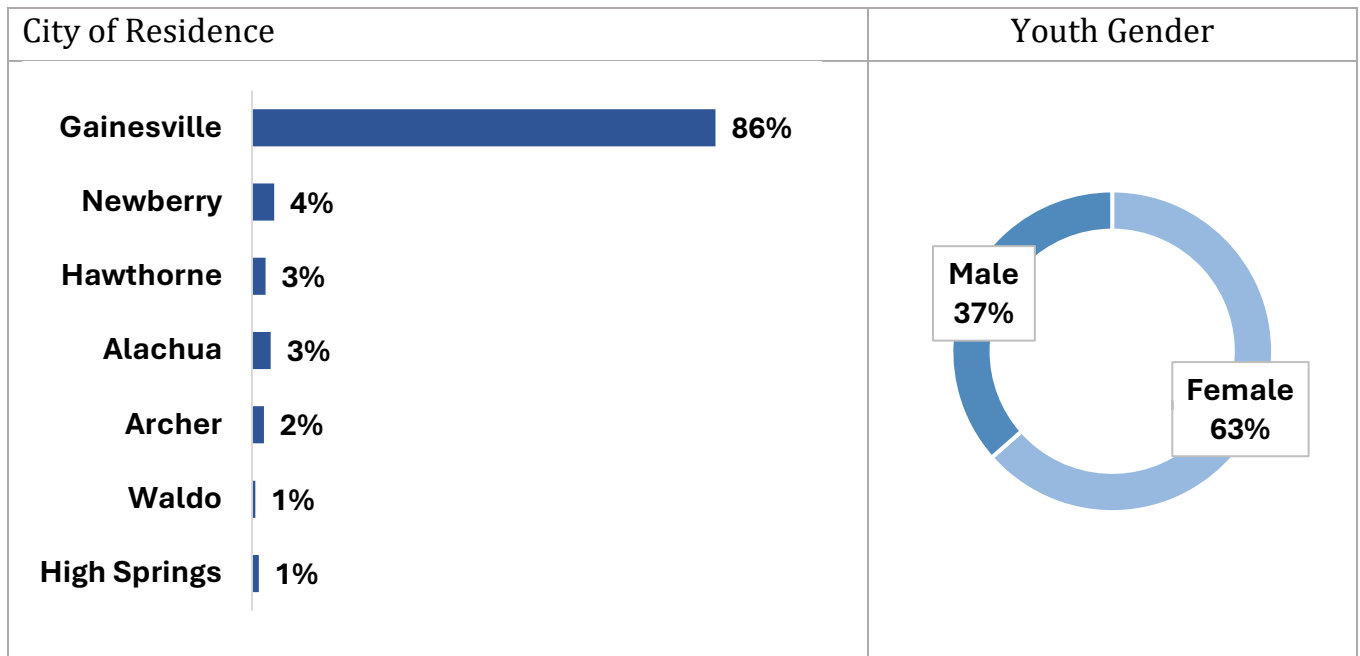
TeensWork recruited both teens and employers to participate in a 6–8-week summer employment experience for up to 25 hours per week. Prior to being placed at a work site, all youth are required to attend 8 hours of work readiness training. An additional 6 hours of training were to be completed over the course of the summer. Topics covered during the training included: career readiness, college and career pathways, workplace culture, resume writing, interview skills and mock interviews, adding value to the workplace, and financial literacy. Youth and employers are paired with a job coach to assist in the employment process, provide support, and be a liaison between the youth and employer. All teens were provided with the opportunity to establish a non-custodial bank account with VyStar Credit Union.

Key Questions:

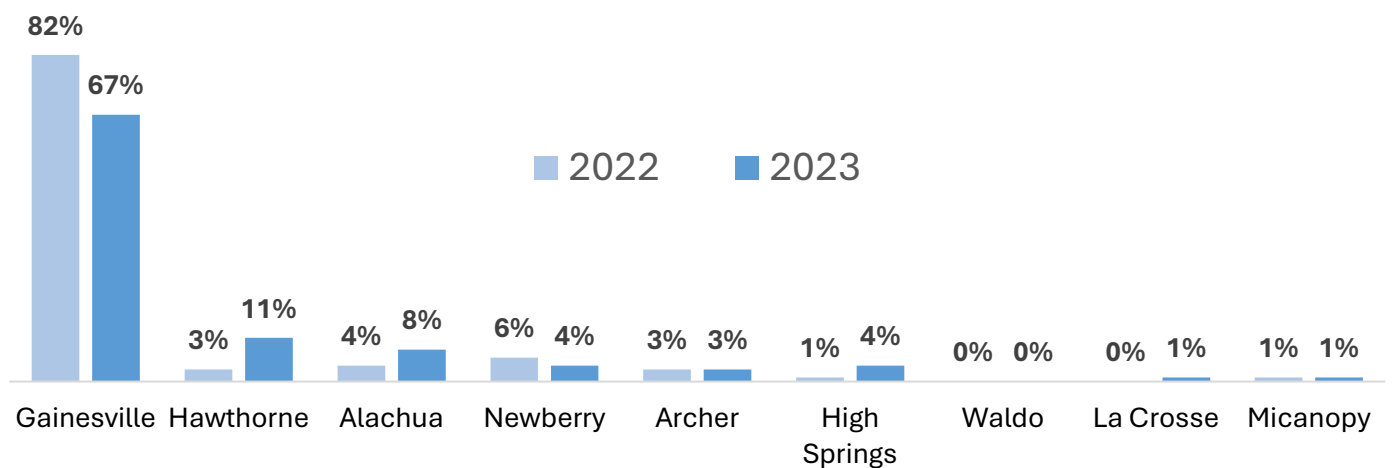
Who was served?

A total of 315 teens were on-boarded and placed for employment opportunities. The average age of youth participating was 15.3 years old. More than half of youth were 14 or 15 years old (58%). Nineteen percent of youth were middle schoolers in the 2024-2025 school year and 81% high school students, with highest participation among 9th graders. Most teens in the program were Black or African American (88%). Two percent of youth were Hispanic. More than half of participants were female (63%).





Compared to last year, participants are comparable in age with an average age of 15.2 in 2023 and 15.3 in 2024. Program participants were less diverse ethnic and racially as compared to last year with more Black or African American (82% to 88%) youth, less Multiracial (7% to 5%), Asian (3% to <1%), Hispanic (6% to 2%), and the same percent of White (7%) youth. In 2024, the program served more Gainesville participants (from 67% in 2023 to 86% in 2024) and less representation in rural areas; in particular, Hawthorne (11% to 3%) and Alachua (8% to 3%).



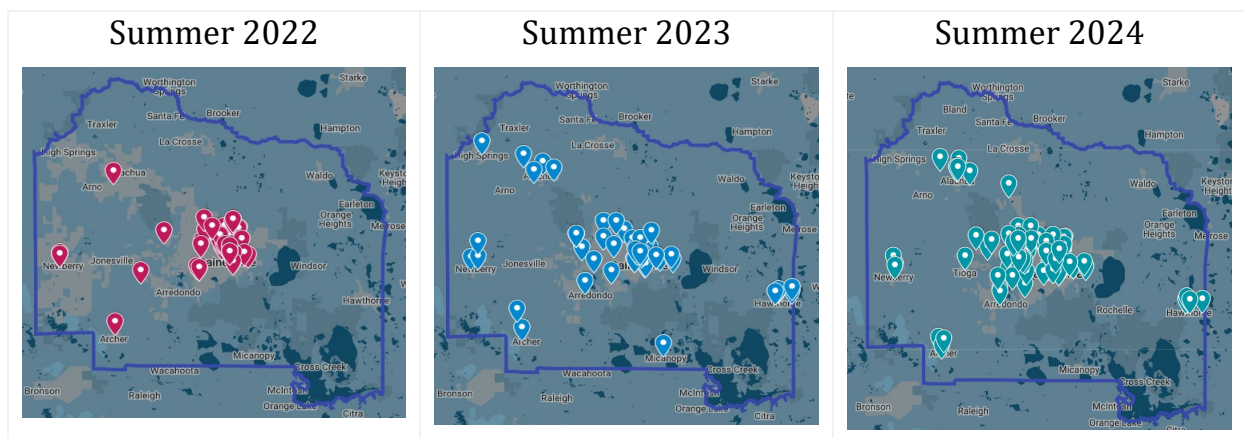
Who were the employers?

TeensWork Alachua is a collaboration of non-profit, government, and private businesses seeking to support youths' successful transition to adulthood. TeensWork staff recruited, trained, and supported 85 for-profit, non-profit, and public organizations to provide youth employment opportunities at 97 work sites. The number of work sites increased from 62 to 97 in summer 2024 and added new work sites in rural communities including Alachua and Newberry.

Work Sites by City and ZIP Code

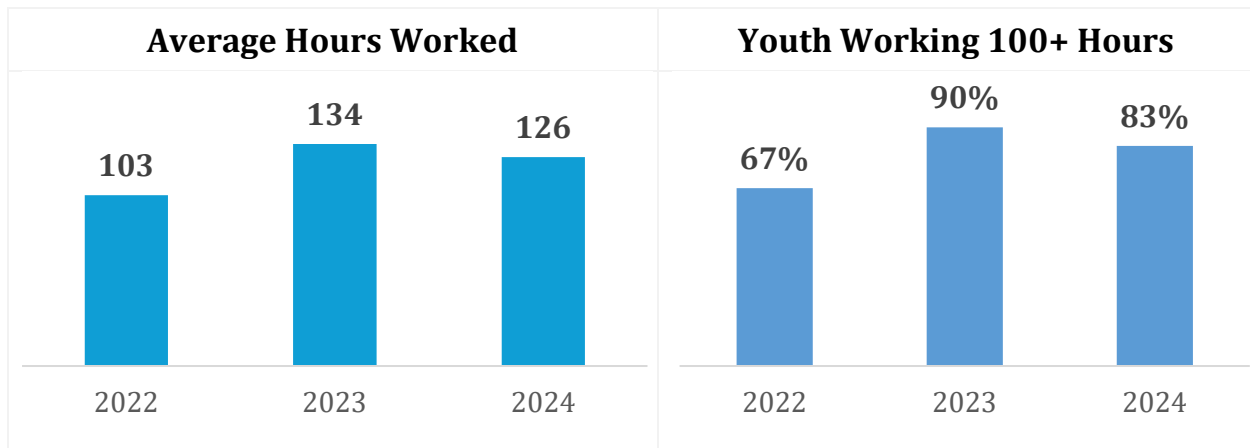
City and ZIP code	2022	2023	2024
Alachua - 32615	1	4	7
Archer - 32618	1	3	3
Gainesville	37	43	78
32601	14	14	22
32605	4	3	7
32606	1	9	10
32607	-	1	6
32608	4	2	7
32609	10	4	17
32627	-	1	-
32641	4	9	8
32653	-	-	1
Hawthorne - 32640	-	7	5
High Springs - 32643	-	1	-
Micanopy - 32667	-	1	-
Newberry - 32669	3	3	4
Grand Total	42	62	97

Location of TeensWork Work Sites

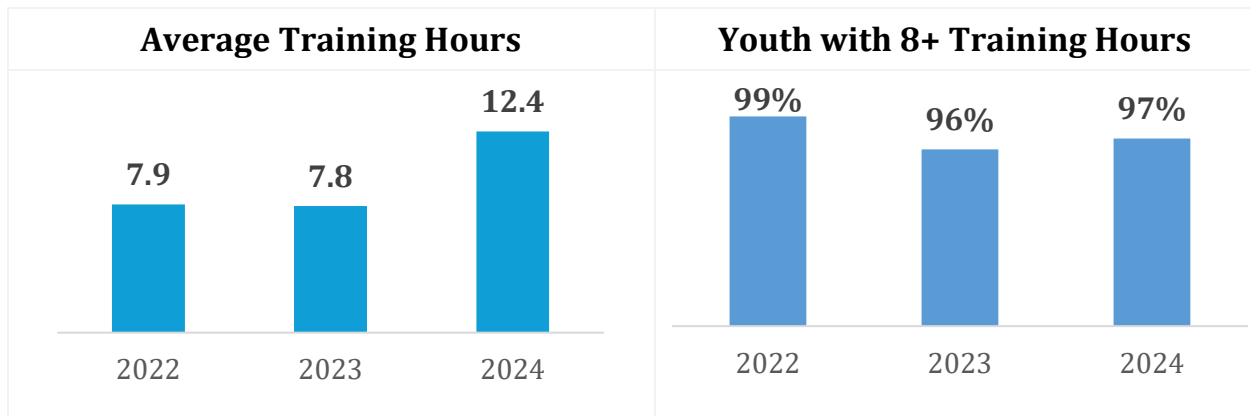


How much did youth participate?

Youth were given the opportunity to work up to 150 hours within 6-8 weeks of the program. Youth who worked clocked an average of 126 hours with 83% working at least 100 hours over the summer. The most common reason for youth not retaining employment was due to transportation, family/personal, and work performance issues¹.



Additionally, in 2024 youth were required to complete eight hours of pre-employment work readiness training and to receive an additional six hours of work readiness over the course of the summer. Almost all youth completed the full 8 hours of pre-employment training.

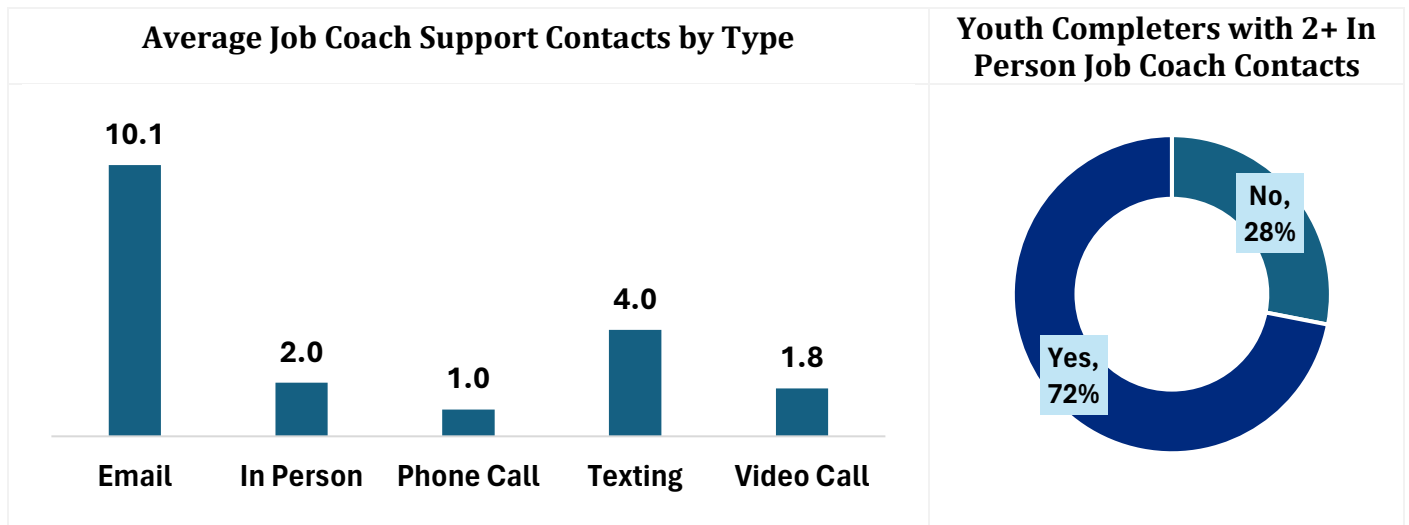


¹ There were 12 youth who received pre-employment training, on-boarding, and were placed in a job, but did not complete any work hours at their placement.

How much support did youth receive from job coaches?

Each youth is paired with a job coach that they communicate with on a weekly basis. The job coaches offer support and encouragement and help youth problem solve when needed. Job coaches help youth identify goals they would like to work toward during employment, develop good work habits such as arriving on time, communicating with their employers, and clocking in and out of work. Job coaches also check in on the businesses to make sure that youth are meeting expectations and to help redirect youth as necessary.

Overall, youth received an average of 18.8 contacts from their job coach. The most prevalent type of job coach contact was emails and texting. We sought for teens to receive at least two in-person job coach contacts over the course of the program. Youth hired received an average of 2.0 in-person job coach support meetings. Among youth completing program², 72% received two or more in-person support contacts.



Job coaches also offer support to the employers. This starts with an initial work-site safety check and determining whether a business is a good fit to be a host site for teens. Upon confirmation, job coaches complete an on-boarding process with businesses, which includes providing training on program expectations and how to support teens. Job coaches provide periodic visits to work sites to make sure youth are meeting expectations and

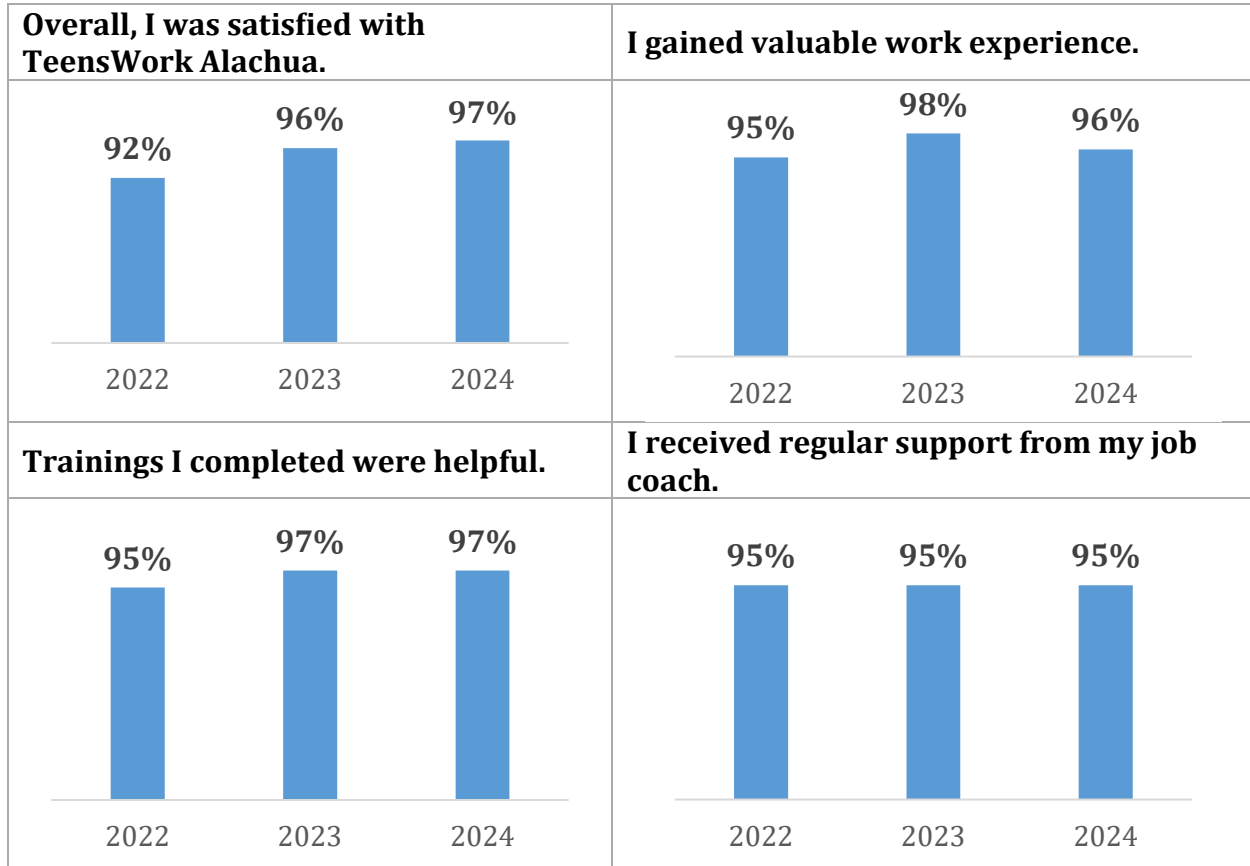
² In order to be considered complete youth must clock at least 100 hours at their job placement.

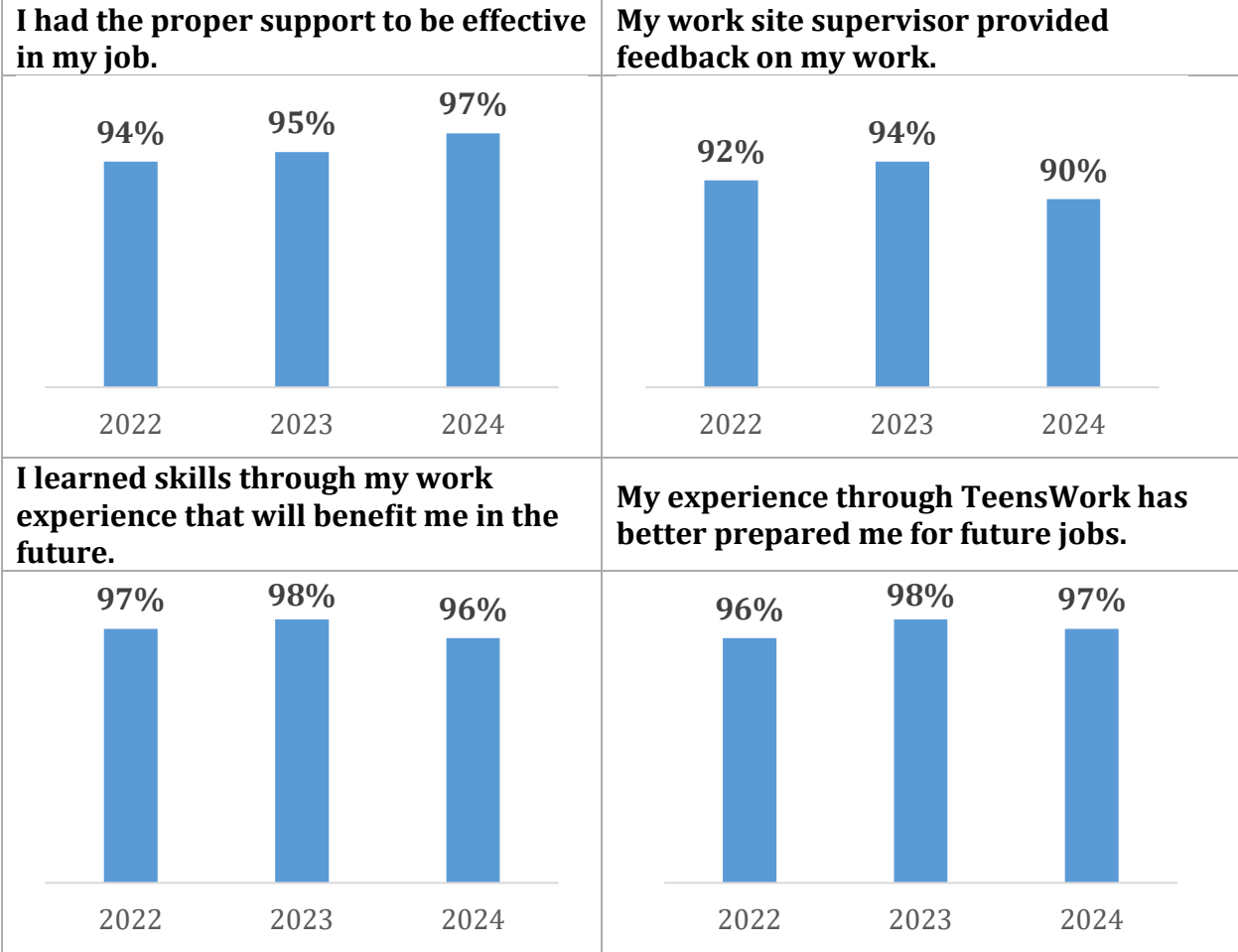
resolve issues. Work sites employing teens received an average of 3.4 visits from their assigned job coach, 96 percent of work sites received 3 or more visits.

Were youth satisfied with the program?

At the end of the program, teens were asked to complete a brief satisfaction survey to learn their perception of the program, how it was helpful, and ways to improve. Survey completion rates are important because larger participation yields more representative, valid, and meaningful results. Overall, 117 responses were received, which represents 39% completion rate. This is a decline compared to last year’s completion rate of 60%.

Like last year, teens report very high levels of satisfaction with the program. Most teens agreed they gained **valuable work experience, preparation for future jobs, and skills that will benefit them in the future** (94%). Teens rated satisfaction in all areas similar to last year.





Teens were also asked:

- Why did you choose the program?**

While there were a variety of reasons why teens chose to participate in TeensWork, the most common included wanting to get work experience and found this opportunity a good fit as it was for teens just starting out. Making money and keeping busy were also key drivers and several teens noted specifically that they were looking to earn money to buy school clothes, supplies, and shoes. Some teens indicated their motivation for TeensWork was at the suggestion of a parent or other trusted adult who told them they should participate. Many youth also expressed intrinsic motivation, seeking to gain work skills to better prepare themselves for their future career and adulthood.

- **What impact has the TeensWork program had on you?**

The most prevalent impact teens noted was in gaining work experience, work skills, and building professional connections and social skills. Youth responded that they learned how an “*actual job works*” and gaining experience on “*how to be on a job and work*”. A number youth expressed this was their first work experience. In many responses youth noted it helped them to build valuable work skills. Some skills mentioned included: communication, social skills, teamwork, professionalism, responsibility, problem-solving, time management. Many teens also noted increased financial literacy – how to save, budgeting, banking, the value of money, etc.

- **Please list any further feedback, suggestions, or concerns.**

Not as many teens responded with feedback, suggestions, or concerns, but among those that did, the most common qualitative theme for feedback/suggestions was they want the opportunity to decide which job they are assigned to. Some respondents indicated that next year they wanted to remain at the same site, while others wanted a different opportunity, and that they would like more of say in choosing their employment assignment. Many teens mentioned they had a positive experience and would like the program to be longer in duration and/or offer more hours per week. Recognition and praise were expressed regarding the support offered by the job coaches by several teens.

The most prevalent qualitative themes using emergent coding are displayed:

Why Chosen?	#	Program Impact	#	Feedback	#
Work Experience	57	Work Skills	45	Very Satisfied	10
Money	34	Future Preparation	18	Work Site Disappointment	5
Learning Experience/Skills	19	Work Experience	14	Poor Job Coach Communication	4
Future Preparation	17	Personal Growth	13	Program Could be Better	2
Recommendation	11	Financial Literacy	12	Amazing Coach	2

Quotes from TeensWork teens:

Why did you choose the program?

- “It’s a safe and easy place for me to work.”
- “To help me get a sense on what a job is and what I should expect of having a job.”
- “I wanted to gain more diverse work experience and learn how to best save the money that I earn.”



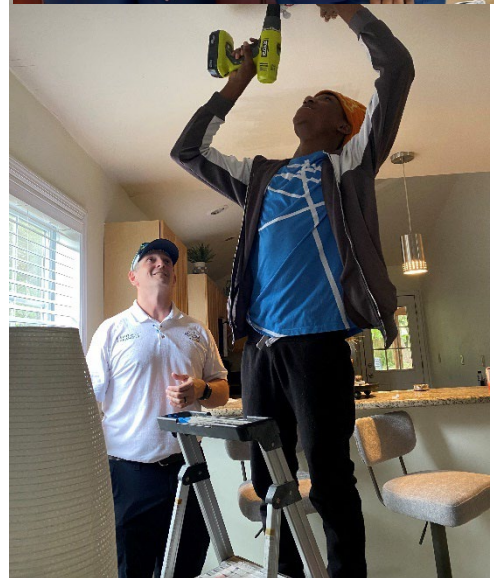
What impact has TeensWork had on you?

- “It was amazing, I was able to gain community service hours, a child-care certificate, connections, and more.”
- “It retaught prime principles for going into the business world and pushed me to be the best employee I could be.”
- “The TeensWork program has significantly boosted my confidence and provided me with practical skills that I can use in future job.”



Feedback, suggestions, or concerns.

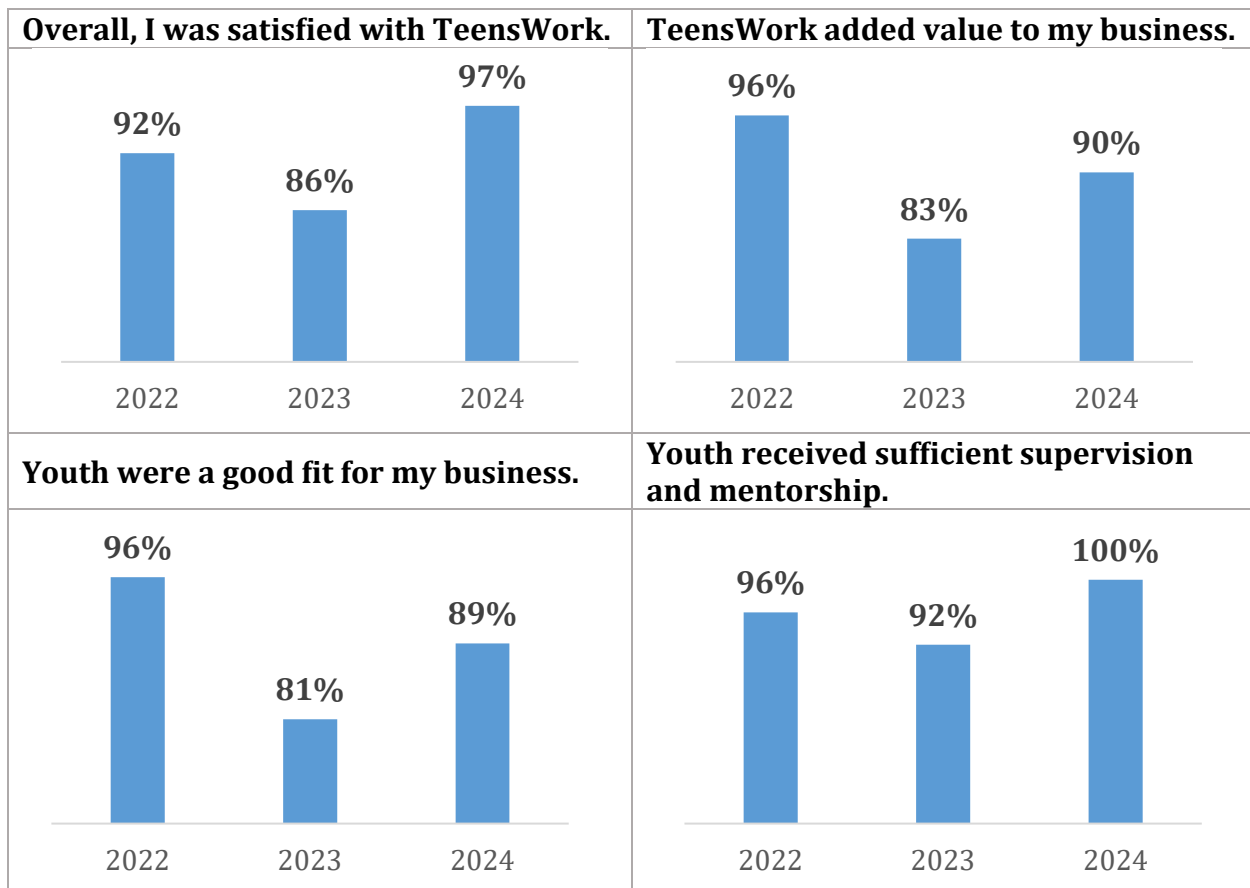
- “I would like more involvement in my job, because they don’t always have things for us to do.”
- “I think that the weekly meetings could be more helpful if they had content geared for people of varying job experiences.”
- “I just want to thank all of you for giving me the chance to work. It was an amazing 6 weeks.”

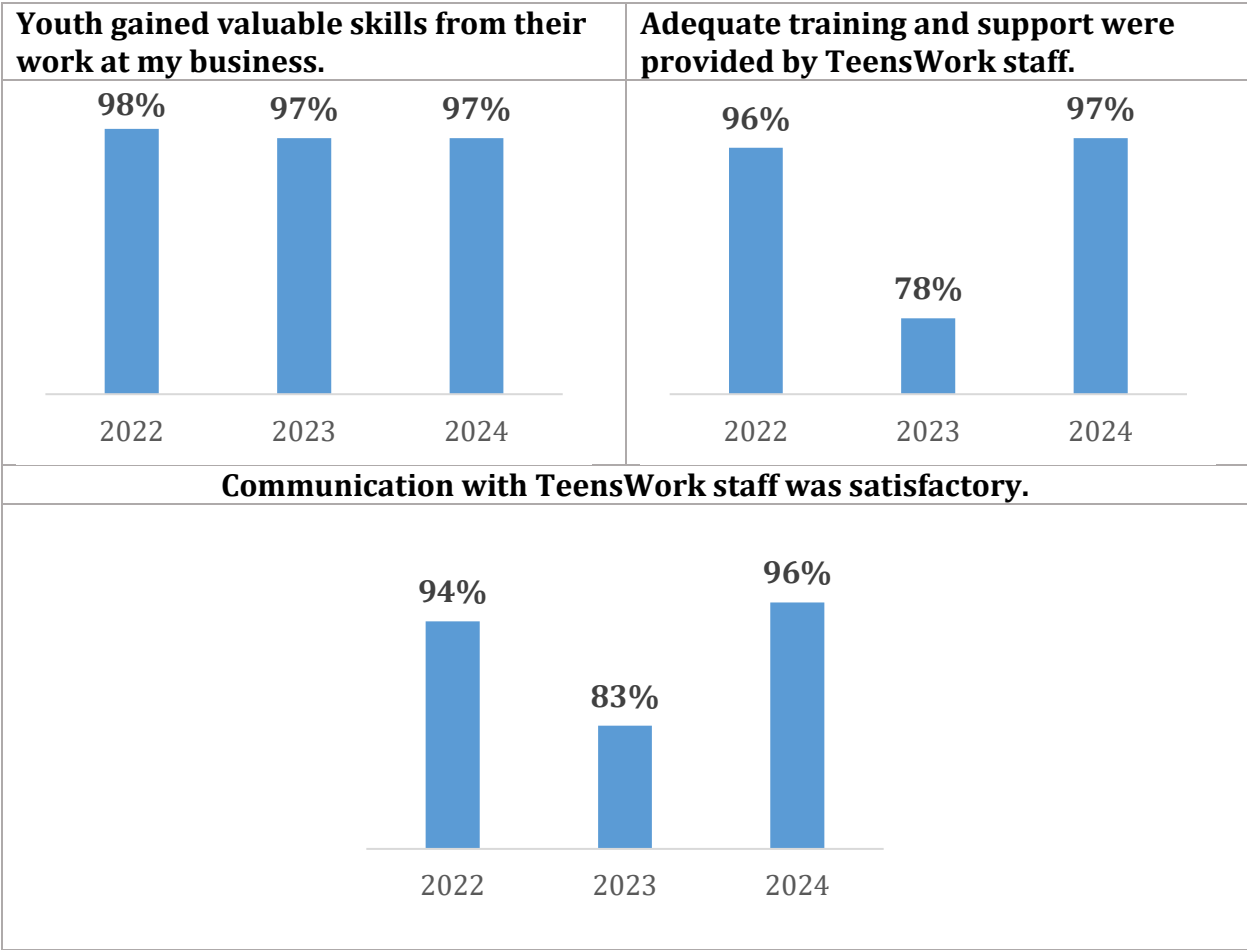


Were employers satisfied with the program?

At the end of the program, work site supervisors were encouraged to complete a satisfaction survey to learn their perception of the program and ways to improve. Overall, 72 responses were received with a 74% completion rate. This represents an increase from last year's completion rate of 58%.

Overall, among the employers that did respond agreed that youth did receive **adequate mentorship** (100%) as well as **gaining valuable skills** (97%) from their TeensWork experience. Compared to last year, there was higher satisfaction among employers in all items except for one which had the same satisfaction rate. The lowest level of satisfaction was youth being a good fit for their business (89%) and that TeensWork added value to their business (90%).





Employers were also asked:

→ **Why did you choose to participate?**

The most common reason employers cited for choosing to participate in TeensWork was that they wanted to help young people. Related to this was helping prepare youth for the future, giving them work experience, skills, and industry exposure. Several employers mentioned being motivated by wanting to keep kids safe, off the streets, or in a safe environment during the summer. Some employers also shared the need for extra staffing provided by the program.

→ **Please share a TeensWork success story.**

Prevalent success story themes included teens excelling in their job function, completing important tasks, or experiencing growth in knowledge and skills over the course of the summer. Employers shared successes in youth gaining career perspective,

industry exposure, and understanding of how a business runs. Several businesses noted their teens were helpful and the synergy between giving and receiving efforts, knowledge, and ideas for a mutual benefit.

Please list any further feedback, suggestions, or concerns.

Feedback on communication, which involved programmatic expectations, wanting more information on their TeensWork employees, and managing youth accountability were areas employers noted for improvement. Several employers noted issues with teens accountability (e.g., attendance, following rules, phone use) and that some teens did not take their employment experience seriously and lacked motivation. Like the teens, employers wanted the opportunity to interview and choose teens who would be a good fit for their business. Along with that some suggested having earlier training and involving employers in them. There were several responses noted that they thought the program was great and hope to see it continued.

The most prevalent qualitative themes using emergent coding are displayed:

Why Chosen?	#	Suggestions	#
Help Teens	45	Better Communication	6
Help Their Business	12	Programming After Summer	4
Participated Last Year	5	Set Expectations	4
Organized by Superior	5	More Trainings/Workshops	4
Try New Experience	3	Better Placement	3
Feedback	#	Impact	#
Very Satisfied	9	Gained Skills	28
Better Communication	5	Work Experience	26
Phone Use	3	Future Preparation	14
Better Placement	2	Earn Money/Learn Financial Responsibility	8
		Personal Growth	7

Quotes from TeensWork employers:

Why did you choose to participate?

- **“To give our young people a safe place to work and grow.”**
- **“We love helping our youth learn job skills and helping them be proud of the work they accomplish.”**
- **“I saw it as an opportunity to give back to the youth in the community, share knowledge about my business and field, and also obtain support in my small business.”**

Please share a TeensWork success story.

- **“One of our returning TWA students, [Teen], is interning with State Representative, Yvonne Hinson. [Teen] is a bright student with future goals of becoming a judge and working in local politics, and is doing great with [their] internship! Representative Hinson recently had the following to say about [Teen]: “We are all so impressed with [Teen’s] skills and intelligence. [They have] drafted an outline for three possible initiatives as well as drafted one possible bill. In fact two of the initiatives are strong enough for bills and one may be submitted for a possible HUD Grant. [They are] keeping us on our toes to provide enough work for her because of [their] tremendous skill set.”**

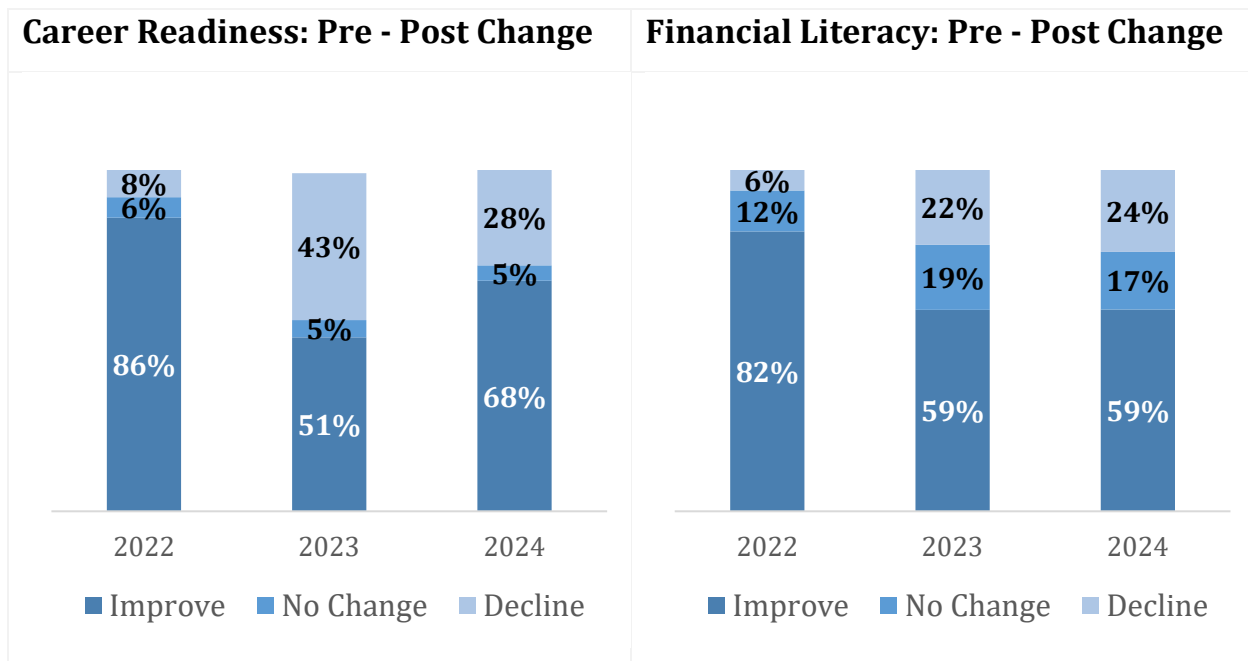
Please list any further feedback, suggestions, or concerns.

- **“If you all hold a sort of open house for the youth, maybe the potential employers could setup a table where the kids themselves could visit different types of job opportunities.”**
- **“I believe the leadership is great with TeensWork. More interview time in the future just to make sure that the participants have a strong interest.”**

What were other benefits and outcomes?

Career Readiness & Financial Literacy

A pre and post Career Readiness assessment³ was completed to gain insight on specific areas, such as job seeking, resume writing, good work habits, human resources, college/career options, and financial literacy. For summer 2024, there were 154 teens who completed both a pre and post assessment. In comparison to last year, completion increased from 34% in 2023 (74/215) to 49% this summer (154/315). This assessment was administered at the beginning and again at the end of the program. Overall, 68% of teens demonstrated pre-post gains in career readiness and 59% in financial literacy. This is an increase in career readiness from last year (51%), but comparable to last year's financial literacy gains (59%).



Several changes were made to the assessment tool by the program staff. Some of the changes included the wording of items, decreasing from 28 to 20 items; modifying response options from a 5-point to a 4-point scale as follows:

³ [FLEX Forms: Forms List \(samis.io\)](https://samis.io)

Summer 2023	Summer 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strongly Disagree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I'm not sure.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Disagree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I have a sense.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Neutral 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I have a good grasp.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I feel very confident.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strongly Agree 	

Last year’s assessment seemed greatly impacted by social desirability bias, which is where survey respondents feel pressure to indicate what they believe is the “right answer”. Program staff indicated that teens may have believed that if they appeared to be more knowledgeable on their pre survey that they would get a better job. To minimize social desirability bias this year, the assessment stated at the top: **“You are not being graded. It's ok if there is something you don't know yet.”** Another factor that may have influenced results is “experience limitation”, which is a phenomenon, whereby youth “didn’t know what they didn’t know” at pre and then knowledge limitations are recognized more at post. Survey fatigue is also another an important consideration for any evaluation, where teens may have “completed” the survey but not taken the time to carefully read and report their true experience.

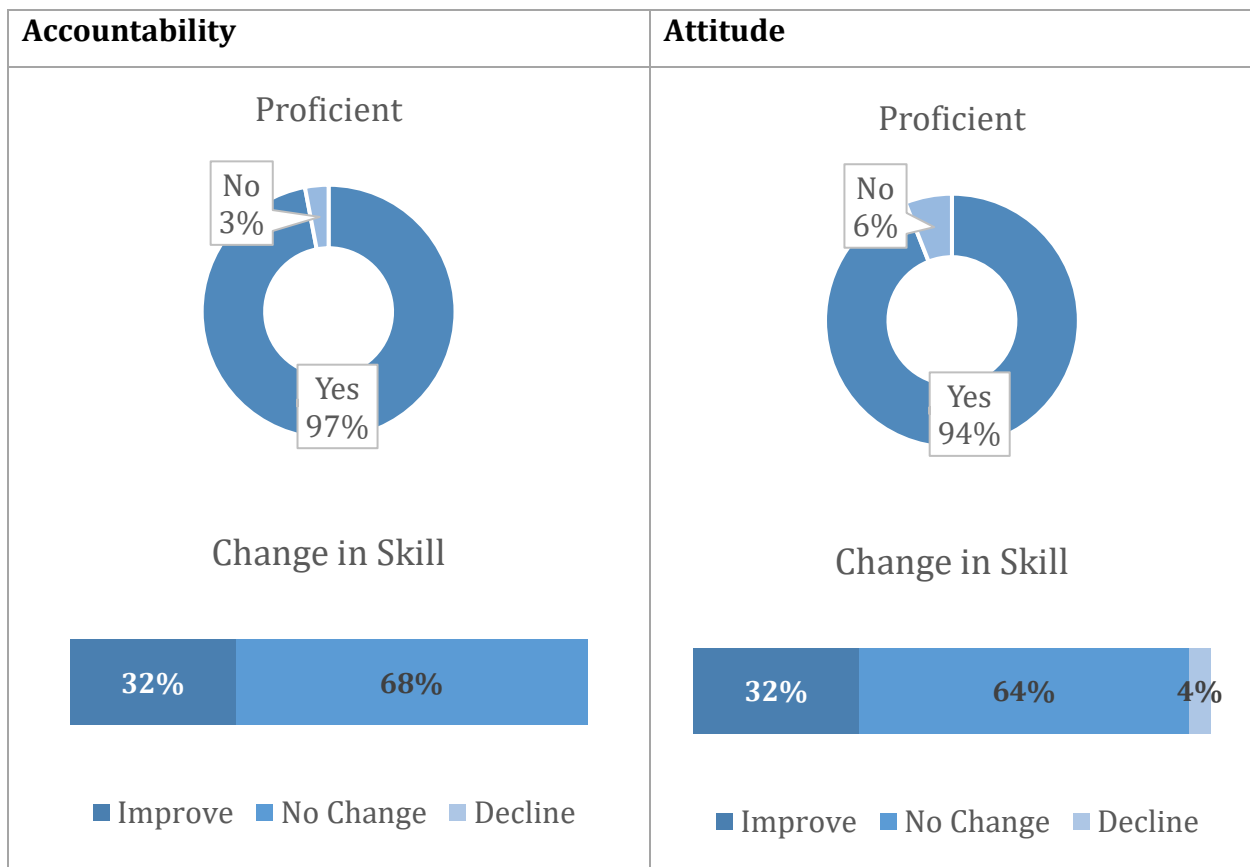
Gain Work Skills

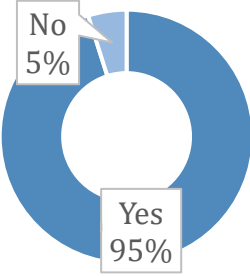

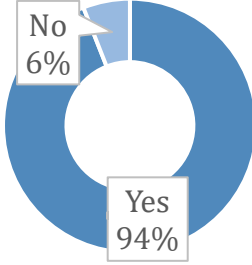

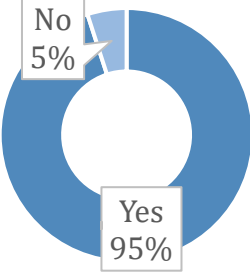

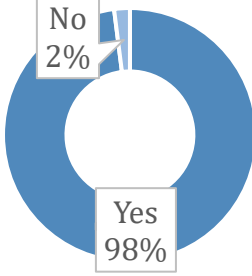

Both teens and employers had the opportunity to indicate work skills gained retrospectively via the satisfaction survey. Nearly all employers felt teens gained valuable skills from their work experience at their business (97%). Similarly, 96% of teens agreed that they learned skills through their work experience that will benefit them in the future. This was a key reason why teens choose to be involved in the

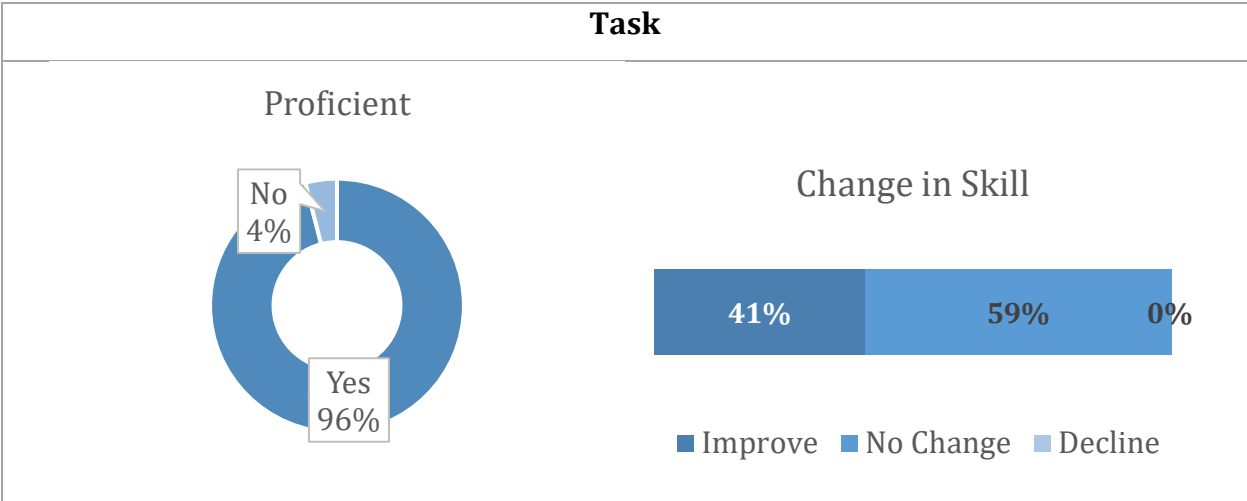


program was to gain work experience and skills and TeensWork delivered.

In addition to the satisfaction survey, work site supervisors were to complete end of program assessment on each youth for them to give input on growth in – punctuality, appropriate dress, communication, receives direction, attitude management, accountability, task completion, and overall progress. This assessment was introduced in 2023 and not part of the 2022 evaluation. However, not enough matched responses were received to allow for representative results in 2023 (n<10). In 2024, 143/315 responses were collected (45%).

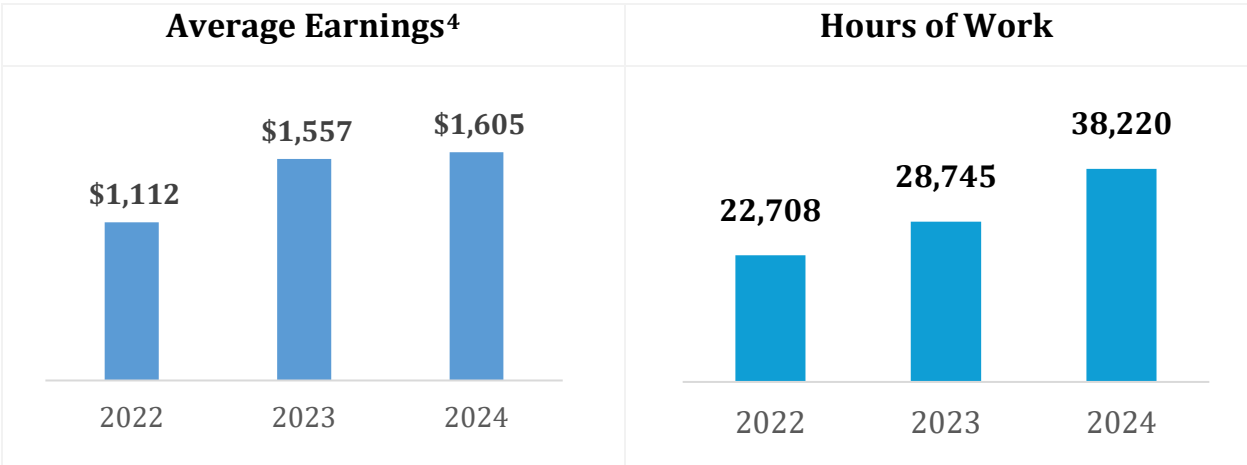


Dress	Punctuality
<p style="text-align: center;">Proficient</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Change in Skill</p>  <p style="text-align: center;"> ■ Improve ■ No Change ■ Decline </p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Proficient</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Change in Skill</p>  <p style="text-align: center;"> ■ Improve ■ No Change ■ Decline </p>
Listen	Respect
<p style="text-align: center;">Proficient</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Change in Skill</p>  <p style="text-align: center;"> ■ Improve ■ No Change ■ Decline </p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Proficient</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Change in Skill</p>  <p style="text-align: center;"> ■ Improve ■ No Change ■ Decline </p>



Community Investment

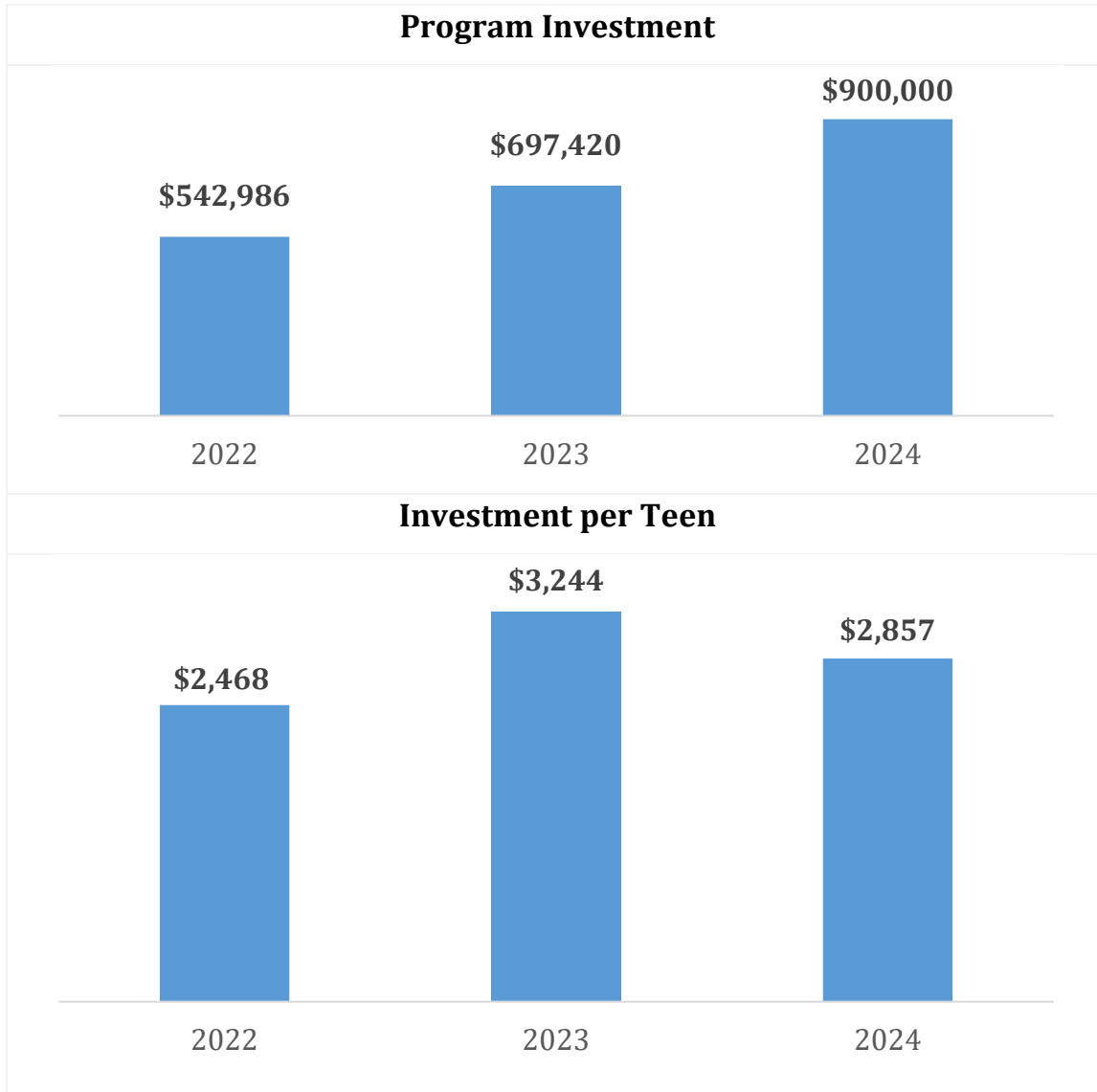
Another benefit of the program is that it allows youth to earn their first paycheck and become a member of the Alachua County labor force. Youth earned an average of **\$1,605** over the course of the summer. Businesses gained **38,220** hours of work clocked by TeensWork teens. The average earnings and the hours of work both demonstrate growth and improvement from Year 1.



⁴ Earnings includes hours worked and training hours

How much was invested in programming?

The Trust allocated **\$900,000** dollars for TeensWork Alachua. Compared to last year the program expenditures increased by 29%. The investment per teen is \$2,857.



Conclusion

TeensWork served 315 teens in 2024. A key motivator for participating teens was to gain work experience, earn money, and to have a supported experience where they would learn skills and prepare for the future. These expectations were met with 94% of teens reporting they gained valuable work experience, preparation for future jobs, and skills that will benefit them in the future. Moreover, teens earned an average of \$1,605 over the course of the summer.

On average teens worked 126 of 150 possible hours with 83% of teens working 100 hours or more. There was a small decline in hours worked and program retention from the previous year. Nearly all teens participated in eight hours of work readiness training and received an average of eighteen job coach support contacts.

Other notable successes include:

- Expansion of from 62 to 97 work sites, including a few more rural sites.
- 97% of teens were satisfied with the program overall.
- 38,220 hours of work clocked.
- 8 teens were offered jobs from their TeensWork employers.

Areas of improvement moving forward include:

- More job coach support for teens and employers.
- Start earlier and provide more training for teens and employers.
- Teens wanted to have more choice in their job assignments.
- Communication with the site supervisors.

Overall, there were many successes, and some very important lessons learned. With these insights and improvements already underway we hope to see even greater successes for teens in summer 2025.

References

Belle, D. and Bullock, H. (N.D.) The Psychological Consequences of Unemployment. Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues. Accessed from: <https://www.spssi.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.viewpage&pageid=1457>

Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. (2023). Delinquency Profile Dashboard. Access from: <https://www.djj.state.fl.us/research/reports-and-data/interactive-data-reports/delinquency-profile/delinquency-profile-dashboard>

Harvard Graduate School of Education. (2011). Pathways to prosperity: Meeting the challenge of preparing young Americans for the 21st century. Boston, MA. <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:4740480>

Heller, Sara. (2021). When Scale and Replication Work: Learning from Summer Youth Employment Experiments. National Bureau of Economic Research.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2024, August 20). Employment and Unemployment Among Youth Summary. Accessed from: <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/youth.nr0.htm>

Sachdev, N. (2011). Summer Youth Employment Program Evaluation Report. Department of Employment Services Government of the District of Columbia.