



TeensWork Alachua: 2025

Year 4 Evaluation Results

Children's Trust of Alachua County

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Purpose Statement

This report evaluates Year 4 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 insights on the performance and successes of the program, as well as to highlight opportunities for future program improvements. 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.

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Executive Summary

TeensWork Alachua (TWA) 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 outcomes.

The primary purpose of this report is to compile results, provide insight into performance and successes in summer 2025 as well as highlight opportunities for improvement moving forward. Key findings are noted below:

Performance and Results:

- **125** work sites.
- **270** teens served.
- **11.8** hours of training received (on average).
- **35,972** hours of work clocked.
- **\$1,886** earned (on average).
- **133** hours worked (on average).
- **2.8** job coach support meetings with teens in-person (on average).
- **3.4** job coach visits received by each work-site location (on average).

Key Successes:

- **Increased** the number of **work sites**.
- **95%** of teens worked more than **100 hours**.
- Teens and work site supervisors report high **satisfaction** with the program.
- **83%** of teens demonstrated **gains** in **career readiness** knowledge.
- **88%** of teens demonstrated **gains** in **financial literacy**.
- **98%** of *teens* agreed they **gained valuable work skills**.
- **97%** of *employers* felt teens **gained valuable skills**.
- Greater than **95%** of youth demonstrated **growth** or **proficiency in skills** (i.e., accountability, communication, task completion, listening, appropriate dress, punctuality, and positive attitude) per their work supervisor.

Areas of Opportunity:

- Promote greater understanding of program expectations for teens and employers.
- Facilitate employers and youth matching prior to assignments to better align interests and aptitude with job placement.

- Enhance communication among site supervisors and program staff.
- Determine ways to serve more youth and expand program capacity.
- Initiate alumni impact surveys with TWA completers who were expected to graduate from high school this past summer to determine their transition to adulthood and lasting program impacts.

This report is respectfully submitted with the intention of driving improvements and better service to propel teens to excel in the 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 from 14 to 18 years old. The purpose of the program is to provide teenagers with training and job experience to explore career options, to gain skills, and to thrive in future employment. In 2025 program year, Goodwill Industries of North Florida was the local organization funded to collaboratively carry out this mission.

Why is youth employment important?

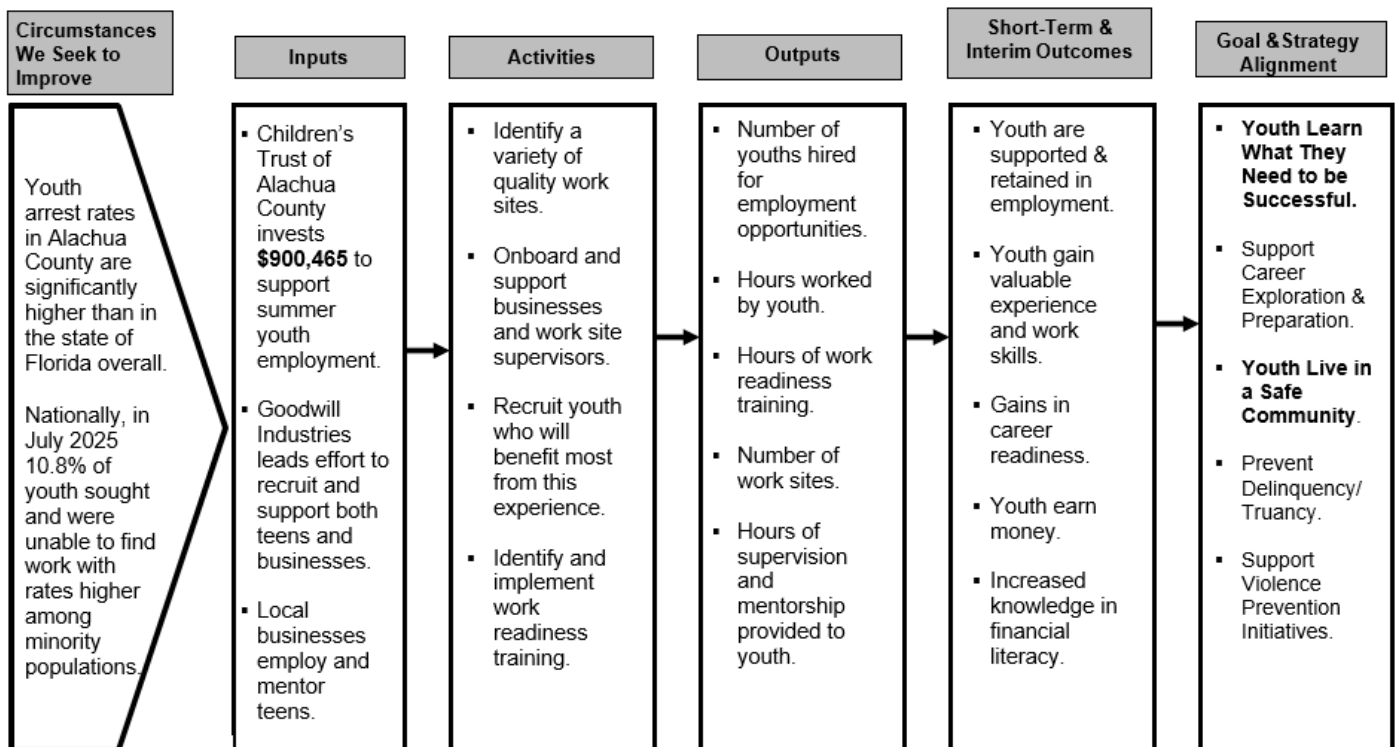
The benefits of summer youth employment programs are well-documented. Employment provides youth with meaningful experience and relationships with supportive adults. Research demonstrates a variety of positive outcomes, including improved self-esteem and confidence, skill and knowledge development, high school graduation rates, reduced criminal behavior and teen pregnancies among participants (Heller, 2021; Sachdev, 2011). Employment programs help youth develop job skills, gain an understanding of work norms and culture, career pathways, professional connections, and financial literacy through training with job coaches and worksite supervisors.

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

In July 2025, the youth unemployment rate stood at 10.8%, an increase from 9.8% in 2024 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2025). Unemployment is defined by those actively seeking but unable to find work. While there are obvious financial hardships associated with unemployment, negative psychological impacts have also been documented (Belle & Bullock, N.D.), especially for youth who are developing self-identity, self-worth, and fit in society. Obtaining a first job is a significant milestone to adulthood that many teens have trouble finding. TWA was designed to bridge the connection between youth and employers to aid their transition into a future career and adulthood.

The crime rate in Alachua County is also a significant concern. Youth arrest rates in Alachua County outpace the state of Florida (i.e., 30.7 vs. 22.3 arrests per 1,000 age 10 – 17 in FY2023-24) (Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, 2024). Without opportunities to contribute positively, teens may be more apt to pursue illegitimate options. Several randomized experimental studies demonstrated that summer youth employment programs help reduce criminal justice involvement of youth who participate (Heller, 2021).

TeensWork Alachua Logic Model



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

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



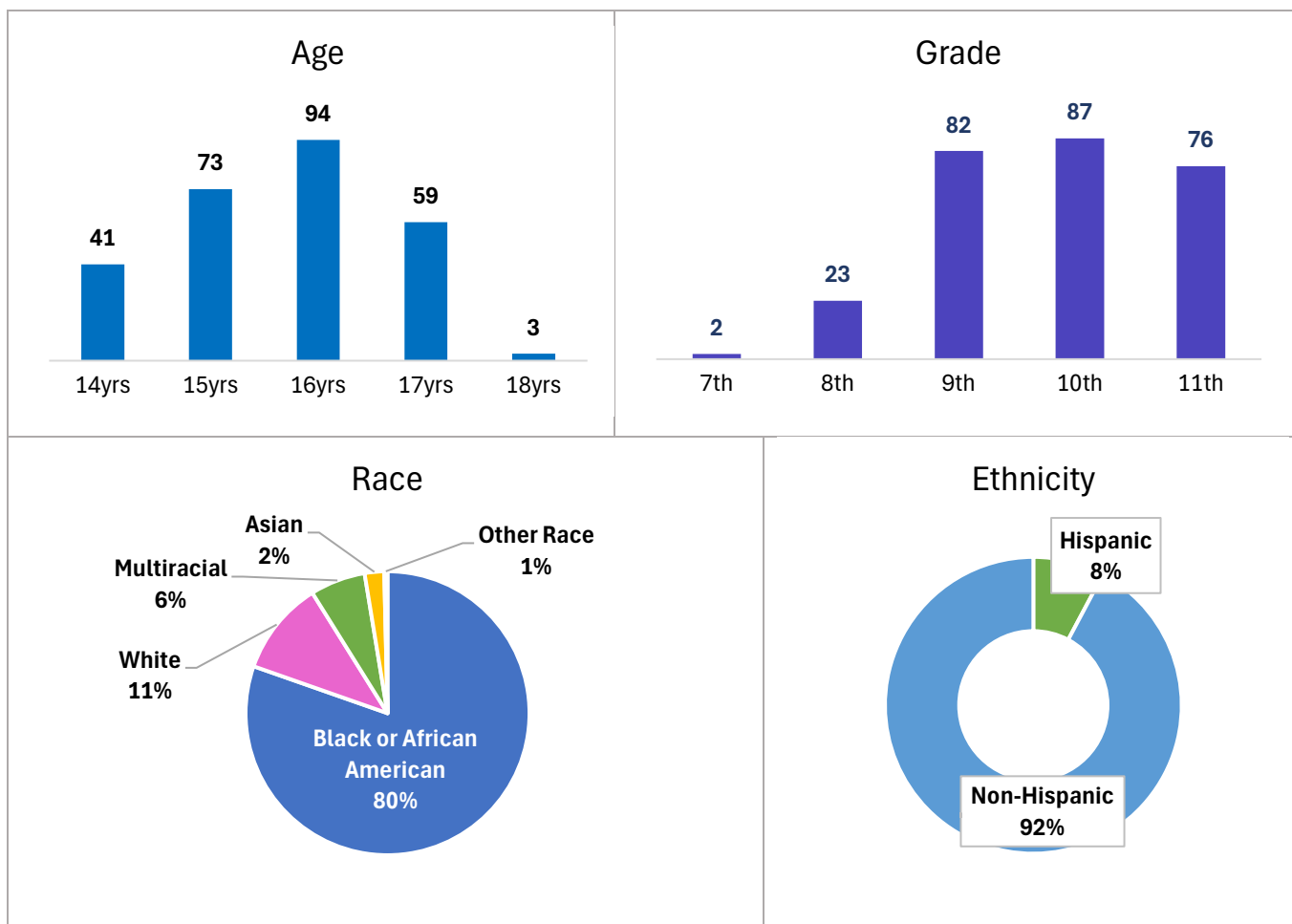
Establish a bank account and setup
direct deposit

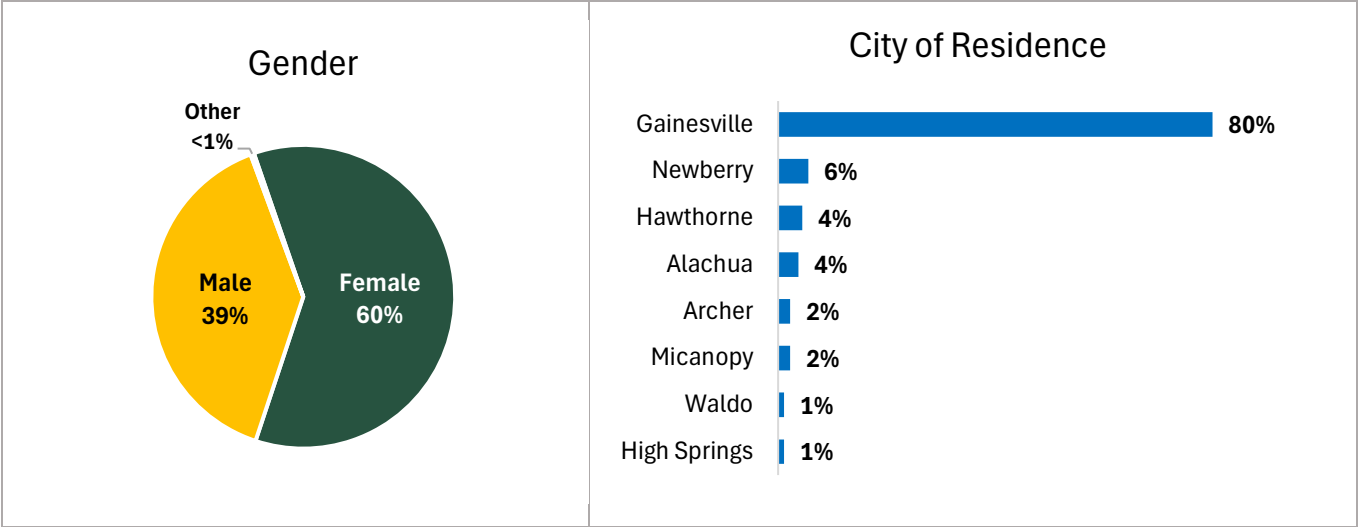
TWA recruits teens and local employers to participate in a 6–8-weeks summer employment for up to 25 hours per week. Prior to being placed at a work site, all youth are required to attend 8 hours of work readiness training. An additional 6 hours of training were offered weekly over the course of the summer. Training topics covered include career readiness, college and career pathways, workplace culture, résumé 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

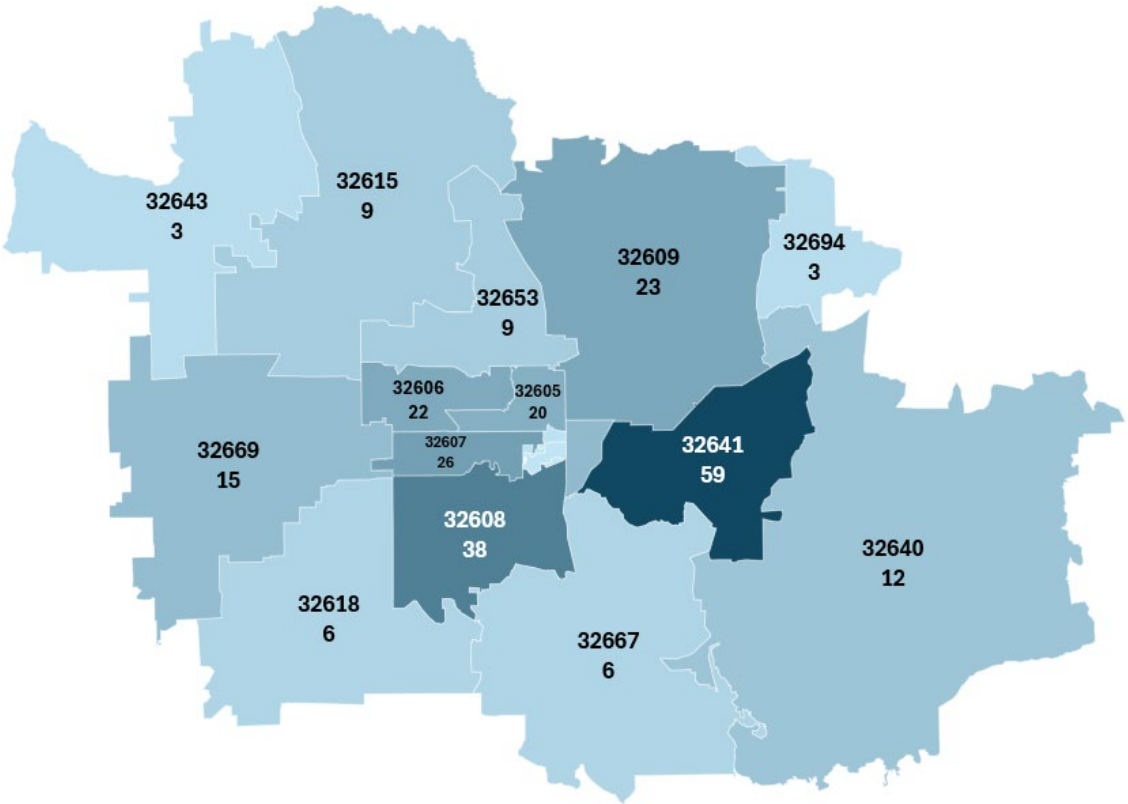
Who was served?

A total of 270 teens completed the onboarding process and were hired. The average age of youth participating was 15.7 years old. More than half of youth were 15 or 16 years old (62%) and were females (60%). Nine percent of youth were middle schoolers in the 2024-2025 school year and 91% were in high school. Most teens were Black or African American (80%), with eight percent identified as Hispanic or Latino. Majority of teens reside in Gainesville (80%).

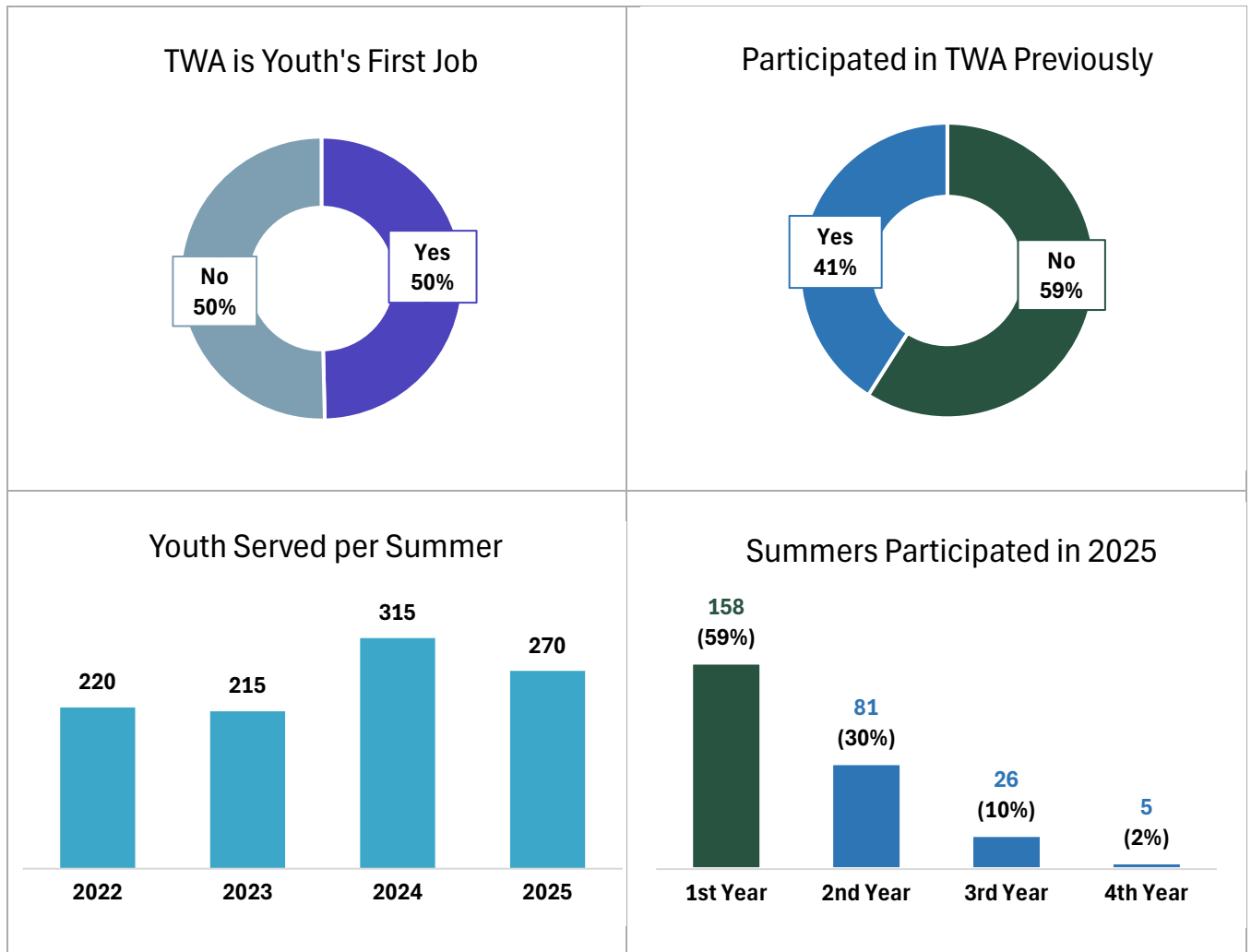




ZIP Code of Teens Served



Half of teens participating in summer 2025 indicated TWA was their first job experience. For 59% of youth it was their first summer participating in TWA. Among the 41% who were previous participants, 30% it was their 2nd summer, 10% it was their 3rd summer, and for 2% it was their 4th summer¹. There were five youths who participated in all four years of TWA. Over all four years of TWA summer programming, **748** individual teens have been served in total.



¹ These numbers do not add to 100% due to rounding. The more precise numbers are as follows: 58.5% - First Year (n=158); 41.5% - Previous Years (n=112) with 30.0% - 2nd Year, 9.6% - 3rd Year, and 1.9% - 4th Year).

Who were the employers?

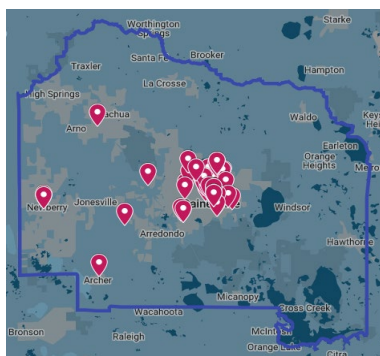
TeensWork Alachua is a collaboration among non-profit, government, and private businesses seeking to support youths' successful transition to adulthood. The TWA staff recruited, trained, and supported for-profit, non-profit, and public organizations to provide youth employment opportunities at 125 work sites. The number of work sites increased from 97 to 125 in summer 2025 with newly added sites in rural communities including Newberry, Micanopy, and Waldo.

Work Sites by City and ZIP Code

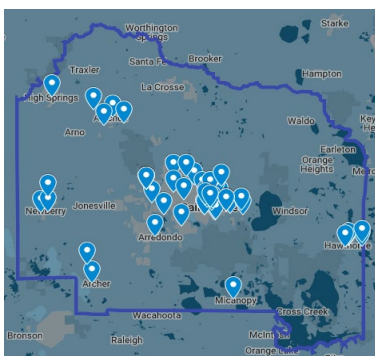
City and ZIP code	2022	2023	2024	2025
Alachua - 32615	1	4	7	8
Archer - 32618	1	3	3	3
Gainesville	37	43	78	95
32601	14	14	22	21
32605	4	3	7	5
32606	1	9	10	15
32607	-	1	6	6
32608	4	2	7	12
32609	10	4	17	18
32627	-	1	-	-
32641	4	9	8	15
32653	-	-	1	3
Hawthorne - 32640	-	7	5	7
High Springs - 32643	-	1	-	1
Micanopy - 32667	-	1	-	3
Newberry - 32669	3	3	4	7
Waldo - 32694	-	-	-	1
Grand Total	42	62	97	125

Location of TeensWork Alachua Work Sites

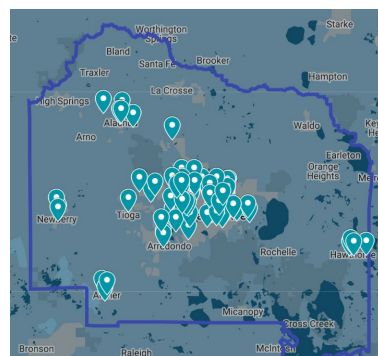
Summer 2022



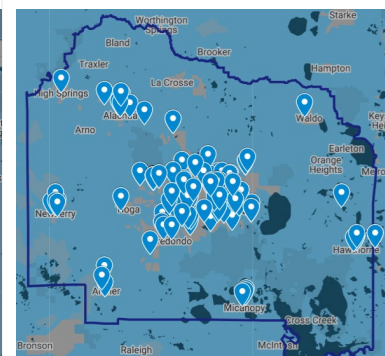
Summer 2023



Summer 2024

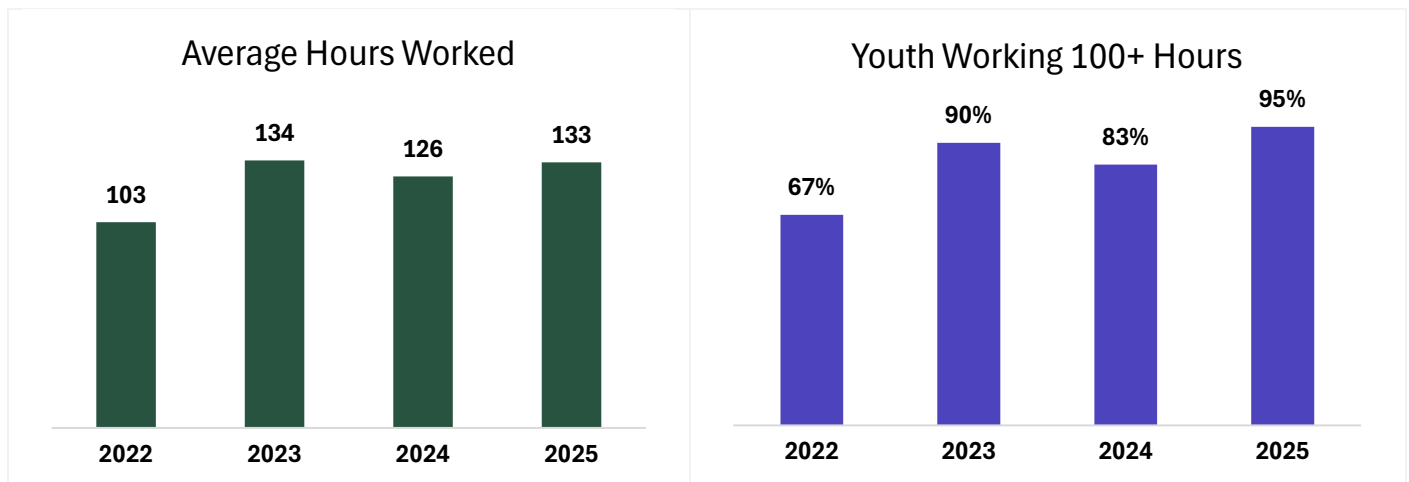


Summer 2025

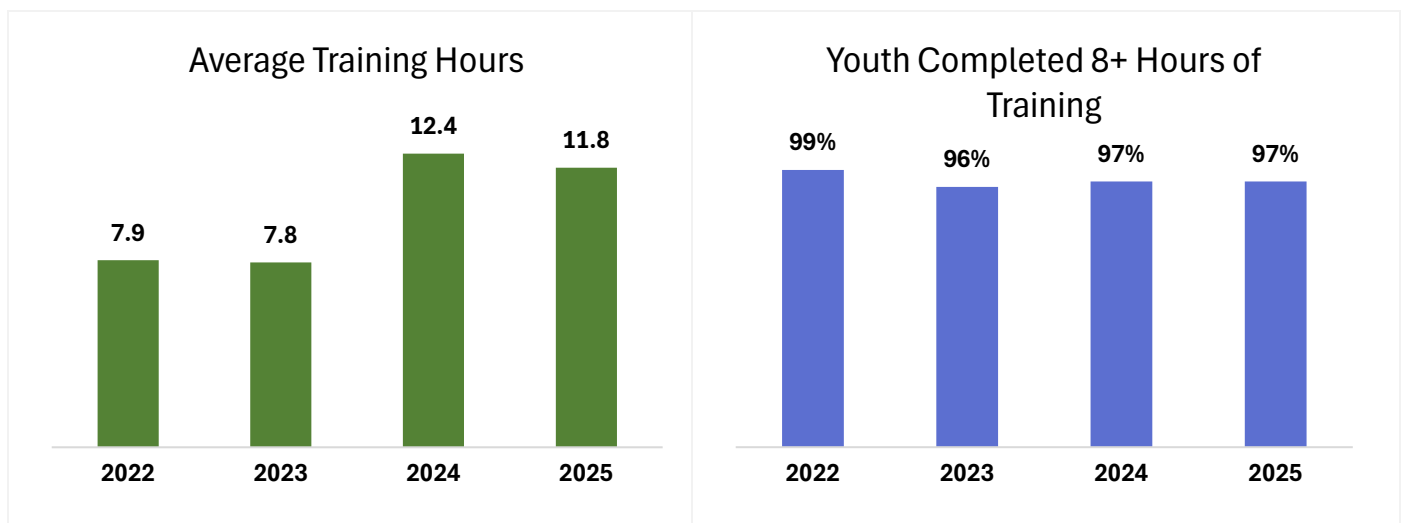


How much did youth participate?

Youth were given the opportunity to work up to 150 hours within 6-8 weeks of the program. Youth clocked an average of 133 hours with 95% 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 issues.



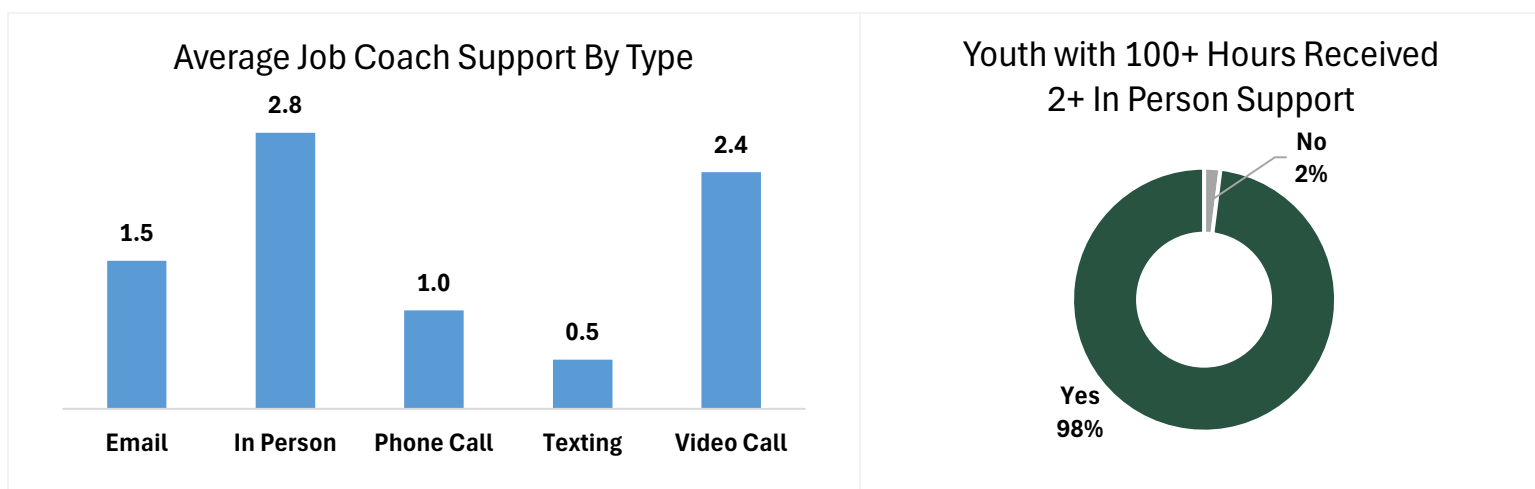
Additionally, youth were required to complete eight hours of pre-employment work readiness training and had the opportunity to receive an additional six hours of training over the course of the summer. Almost all youth (97%) completed the full 8 hours of pre-employment training.



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 coaches offer support and encouragement, help youth navigate problems, identify goals, and develop good work habits (e.g. arriving on time, communicating with employers, clocking in and out of work). They also check in with the work sites to make sure youth are meeting expectations and redirect youth as necessary.

Overall, youth received an average of 8.2 total contacts from the coaches. The most common methods were in-person meetings and video calls. The goal was for teens to receive at least two in-person job coach contacts during their program experience. Among all youth served, an average of 2.8 in-person contacts were received, with 95% of youth receiving two or more in-person meetings. Among youth who worked 100+ hours, 98% received two or more in-person support contacts.

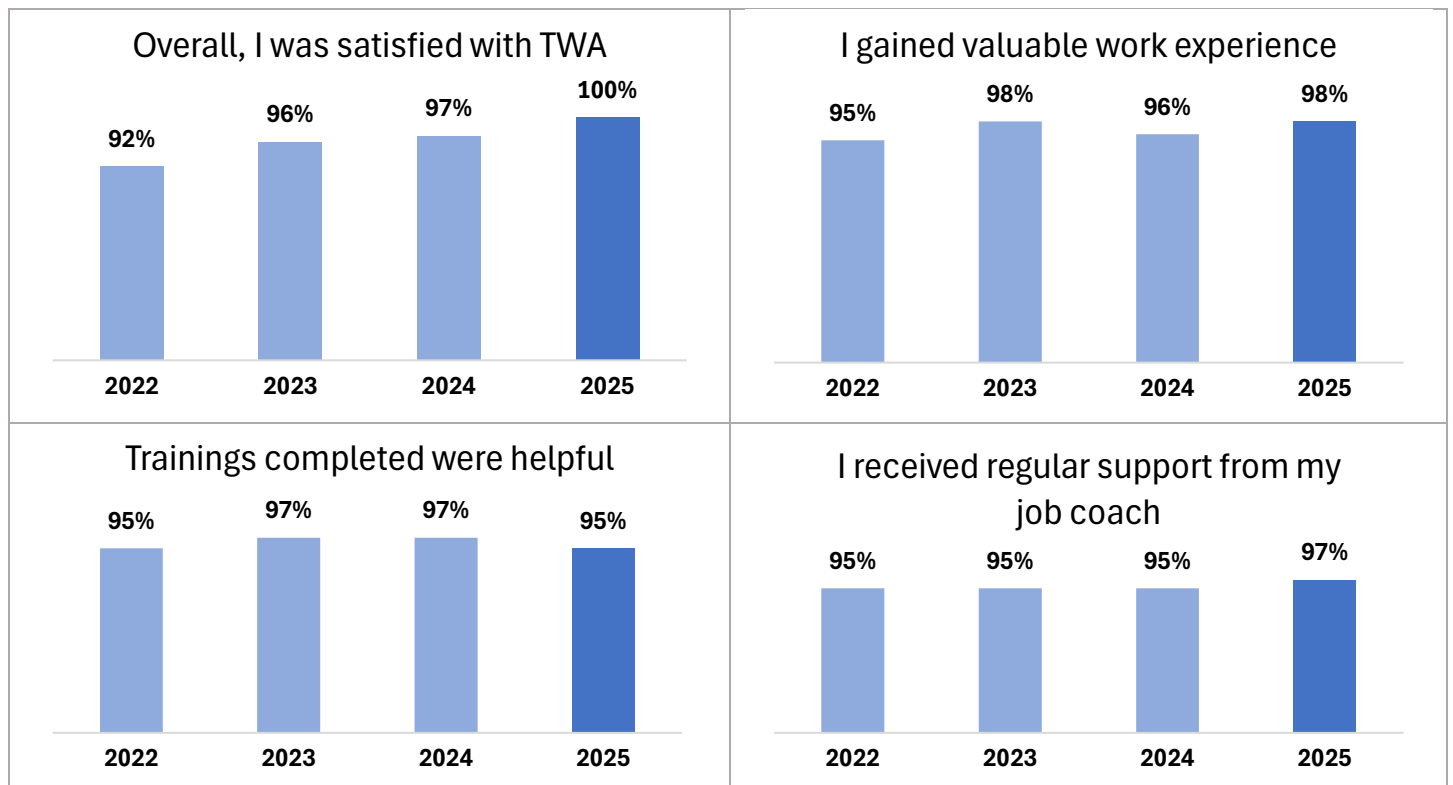


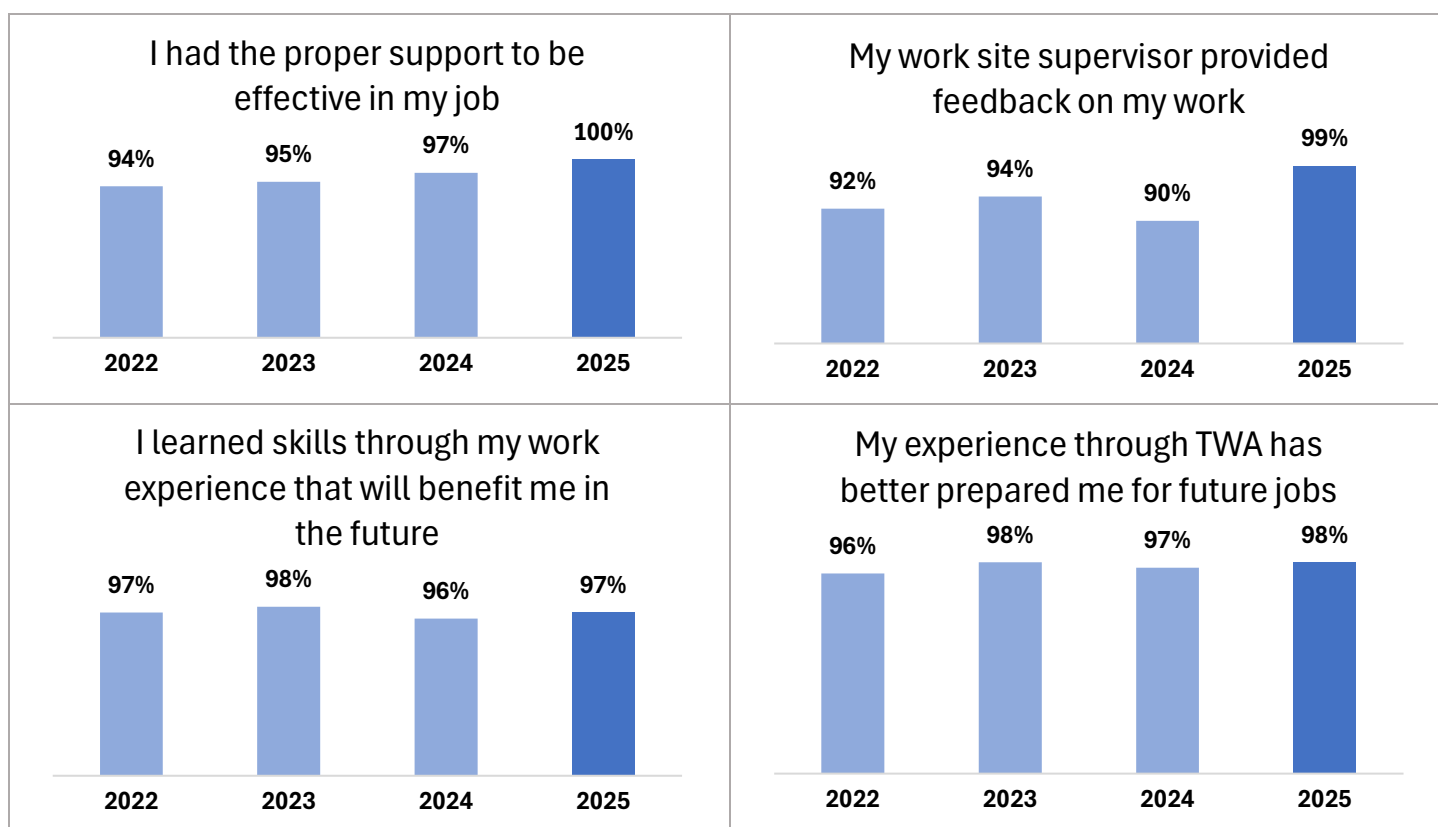
Job coaches also support the employers. First, the coaches will initiate work-site safety check and initial in-person meeting to determine whether a business is a good candidate to be a host site. Upon confirmation, job coaches complete an on-boarding process with the business, which includes training on program expectations and how to support teens. They also provide periodic visits to make sure teens are meeting expectations and resolve any issues. Work sites received an average of 3.4 visits from their assigned coach, with 90% of work sites receiving 3 or more visits. Of the 125 participating work sites, 4 sites did not remain active for the entirety of the summer. The remaining 121 active work sites received an average of 3.5 coach visits, with 91% receiving 3 or more visits.

Were youth satisfied with the program?

Teens were asked to complete a brief satisfaction survey at program completion. The survey asks youth about their experience and suggestions on how to improve the program. In total, 114 responses were received from participating youth.

Overall, teens reported very high satisfaction. Nearly all youth felt skills learned through their work experience will benefit them in the future (97%). Youth expressed higher agreement with the following items compared to previous years: overall satisfaction (100%), valuable experience (98%), job coach support (97%), site supervisor feedback (99%), support to be effective at their job (100%), and felt prepared for future jobs (98%). The item with the lowest agreement was regarding the helpfulness of trainings (95%).





Teens were also asked a few open-ended questions:

- **Why did you choose the program?**

The most common reason included wanting to get work experience and finding TWA as a good opportunity for teens just starting out. Many were also motivated to make their own money so they could help their families or save for things like school clothes or a new laptop. Some teens joined to explore specific career fields (e.g., fire rescue, art camp, science/labs, teaching), while others wanted to see if they could handle a job or what kind of work they might enjoy long-term. Many of them wanted to improve on skills such as communication, networking, time management, independence, and résumé building. Other reasons include: positive TWA experience in the past; recommendations from friends, siblings, or schools; to avoid being unproductive in the summer; and to meet new people and make meaningful connections.

- **“I chose to participate because I wanted to work with the Traveling Art Camp, and I also wanted to get a job so I could save some money. Another reason I applied for the program was to get some early experience and develop skills I will need to get and keep a job in the future.”**



- **“I chose to participate in TeensWork Alachua to learn more about the field of work I wanted to go in. Coming back every year is a big opportunity and I will forever be blessed.”**

- **“I chose to participate in TeensWork Alachua because I wanted to gain real work experience and learn new skills that will help me in the future. I knew this program would give me the opportunity to explore different career paths, build my resume, and grow as a person. I was also excited to be part of something positive in my community and to meet other teens who are also motivated to work and learn. This experience is helping me become more independent and responsible, and I’m proud to be a part of it.”**



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

The most prevalent impact teens noted was gaining real-world work experience and building professional connections and skills. Many teens noted valuable work skills that they learned such as communication, teamwork, leadership, professionalism, and

gaining certifications. Not only that, but teens also gained personal growth in social and networking skills; being disciplined, independent, responsible, and motivated. Many teens expressed learning more about finance skills such as saving, budgeting, spending, and banking.

- **“The TeensWork program has helped me to learn skills that will help me in the future, such as money management, professionalism, and especially communication. I was also able to save money for the future!”**
- **“The ability to work together with others, realizing that I can work a job and do it well.”**
- **“I learned a lot and gained a lot of experience in fire rescue. I got certified in CPR and Stop the Bleed, and I learned how to properly use an AED and Narcan.”**
- **“The TeensWork Alachua program has had a big impact on me. It taught me responsibility, how to manage my time, and how to communicate better in a work environment. I gained confidence in myself by learning new skills and completing tasks on my own. The program helped me see what it’s like to have a job and made me more prepared for the real world. It also showed me the importance of teamwork, being on time, and staying focused. Overall, it helped me grow both personally and professionally.”**



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

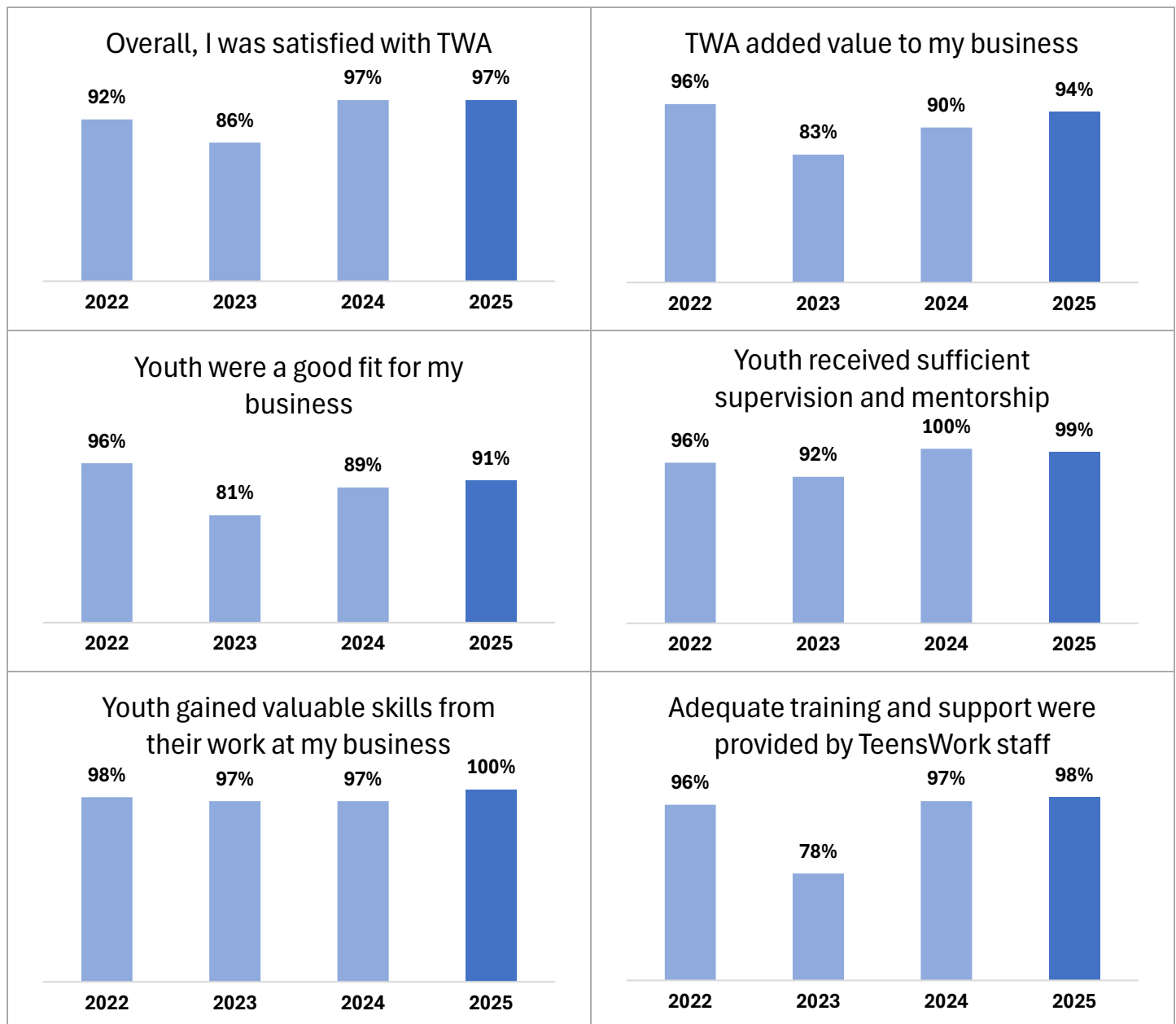
Not many teens provided feedback, suggestions, or concerns about the program. Some teens and parents of teens expressed that they want the opportunity to decide which job they were assigned to better aligned with their interests. A few youth felt the workshops were not engaging or helpful.

- **“The work field he was placed in had no direct relation to his chosen career path. He was placed in an office sorting papers. Yet he is engaged in public service (fire/EMS) in school. Another participant not involved in any sort of program for public service was placed with a fire department. I feel that the job placement could have been a bit closer to his actual interests and current involvement.”**
- **“The worksite was great. I got along with my coworkers very well and would love to go back again next year. The only suggestion I would have is for Job Coaches to be more interactive with the interns and more responsive.”**

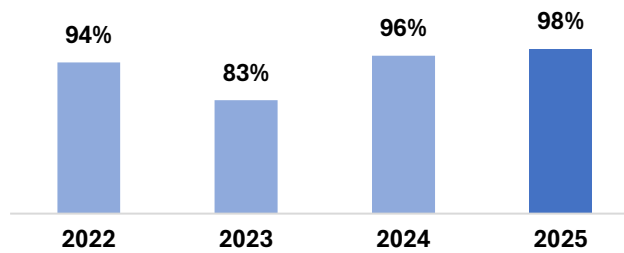
Were employers satisfied with the program?

At the end of the program, work site supervisors were encouraged to complete a satisfaction survey. In total, 96 responses were received.

Overall, employers agreed that youth received adequate mentorship (99%) and gained valuable skills (100%) from their TeensWork experience. Compared to last year, there was higher satisfaction among employers in all other areas aside from overall satisfaction, which stayed the same as last year (97%).



Communication with TeensWork staff was satisfactory



Employers were also asked:

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

The most common reason why employers participated in TWA was because they wanted to support the development of local teens. Employers wanted to mentor teens, prepare them for the future, help teens cultivate skills like confidence, responsibility, work ethics, professionalism, career pathways. Many see TWA as a way to give back to the community and to support a local initiative to help youth reach their potential and be supported in doing so. Teens help businesses with tasks that free up full-time staff or bring additional helping hands, providing mutual benefits to both sides. Other reasons for participation include: positive past experience with TWA, recommendations by supervisors or human resources, to recruit potential future employees, and to provide safe and enriching environments for teens during the summer.

- **“To allow youth to gain real-world experience, learn important job skills, and start building a strong foundation for their future. I was also excited about the opportunity to work with students in my community, helping each to explore different career paths. Programs like this don’t just provide a paycheck, they provide purpose, confidence, and valuable connections for today’s youth.”**
- **“Summer interns are of great benefit to our Company as they learn to use laboratory instrumentation and provide measured lab data for some research projects that we then present at technical conferences in the fall**

each year. These interns free up our permanent staff to do work for our commercial clients. This is a big plus for us.”

- **“I want to mentor and create a positive work environment because I believe in uplifting youth through guidance, encouragement, and respect. A supportive space helps teens build confidence, grow professionally, and feel valued.”**
- **“We chose to participate in TeensWork Alachua because we believe in helping to cultivate our youth. This age group is driven and hardworking. They are the future. We want to help them reach their potential and serve as a role model for others.”**

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

Employers provided many positive impacts that the program had on TWA youth. They mentioned that teens got first-hand exposure to professional environments, learning professionalism (e.g., being punctual, following instructions, navigating workplace expectations), gaining mentorship and professional connections, building their résumé, developing job skills (e.g., time management, leadership, communication, customer service) and life skills (e.g., accountability, financial literacy, workplace etiquettes). Employers noticed that teens were growing more confident and mature over the course of the summer and praised many teens for their positive attitudes and eagerness to work.

- **“I am very impressed with TeensWork, how they are taught to apply, check in, arrive on time, have meetings to check in, and perfect manners, with eagerness to work.”**
- **“TeensWork had a powerful impact on participating youth by giving them their first real taste of responsibility and independence. It helped build confidence, develop essential job skills, and better understand what it**

takes to succeed in a professional environment. My interns were introduced to career interests, learned how to communicate effectively, and gained mentors who guided them throughout the program. Beyond job readiness, TeensWork helped young people feel seen, valued, and empowered to contribute to their community.”

- **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. For example, employers want to interview candidates beforehand to clarify duties, expectations, interests, readiness, and fit for the business. Several employers noted issues with teens accountability such as attendance, phone usage, lack of interests, or lack of motivation. Some supervisors expressed that they did not receive adequate communication and check-in regarding teens’ starting dates, changes in schedules, hands-on support, or too much communication outside of work hours. Employers also suggested more training and workshops (e.g., customer service, teamwork, work ethic), more business options, and offer the program year-round.

- **“It would be nice before interns started working with us, if we knew their schedule and availability and interests. So, we can adjust our supervisors' schedule accordingly to support them better.”**
- **“I feel that their schedules changed often. Communication is key when it comes to being on the same page scheduling wise.”**
- **“We appreciate the program and its mission. Continued communication between program coordinators and host sites will help ensure expectations are aligned and participants get the most out of their experience.”**

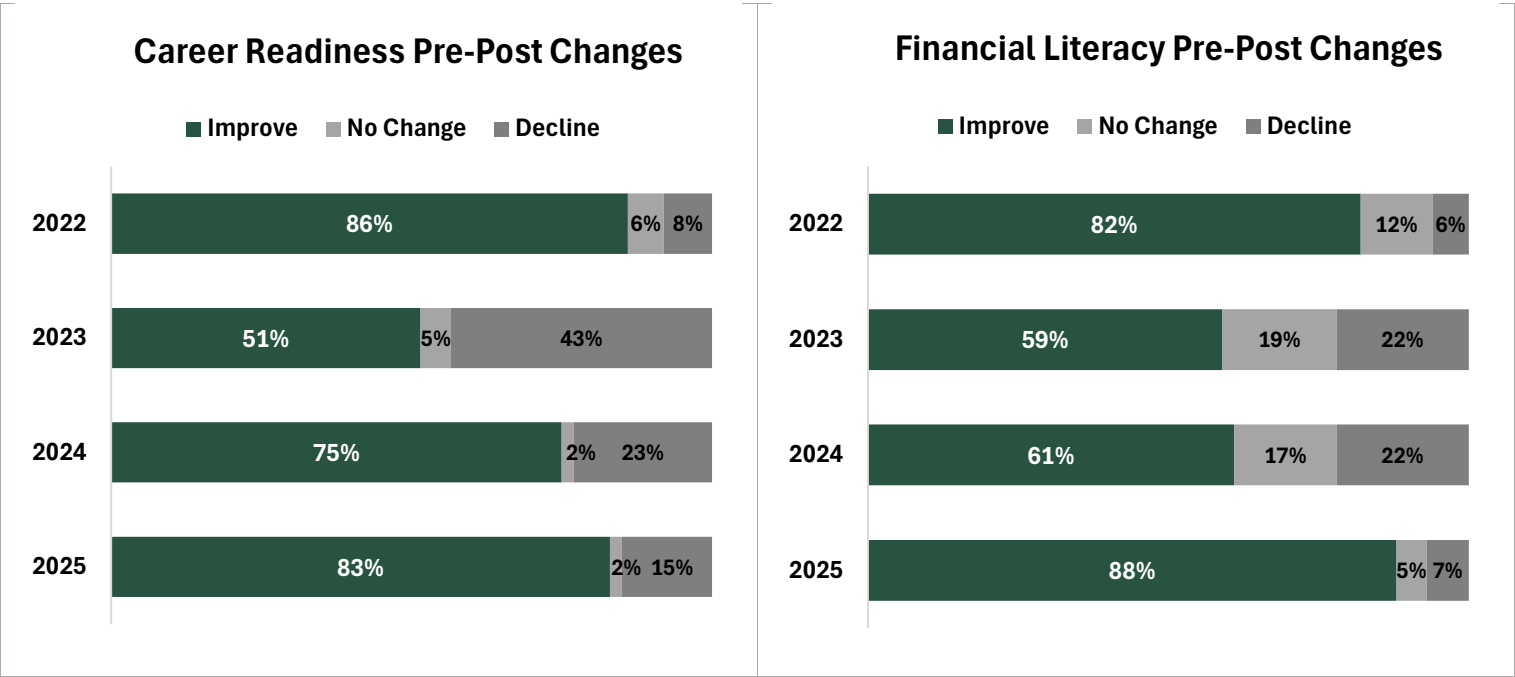
- **“The program could be even more impactful by offering year-round job opportunities specifically for high school juniors and seniors. This would allow students to build on the skills they develop during the summer, maintain consistent income, and continue exploring career paths throughout the school year. Long-term engagement could also strengthen their sense of responsibility, time management, and connection to the community.”**
- **“The program would benefit from more comprehensive pre-placement preparation for youth participants, especially around expectations related to workplace behavior, communication, and accountability. Additionally, regular check-ins between the program coordinator and host site—especially during the first few weeks—could help address concerns early and better support both the youth and the employer. A clear outline of permissible behaviors (e.g., phone use, headphones, etc.) would also be helpful for both parties.”**

What were other benefits and outcomes?

Career Readiness & Financial Literacy

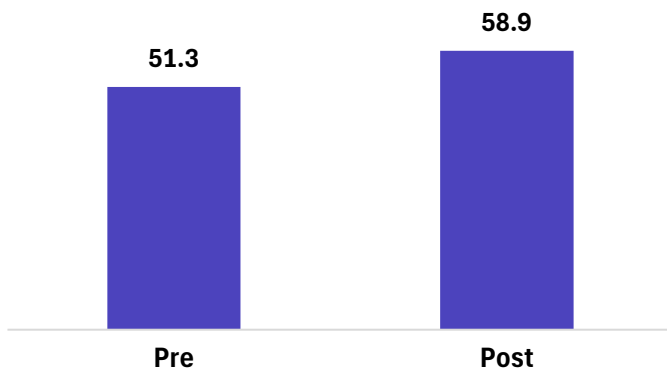
A pre and post assessment was completed to learn whether teens achieved knowledge gains in career readiness & financial literacy. Career readiness included items asking youth how knowledgeable they felt in areas such as job seeking, résumé writing, self-management, interpersonal skills, college/career exploration. For financial literacy youth were quizzed in finance topics such as taxes, banking, and budgeting. In 2025, tool used was revamped, utilizing financial literacy items from the Economic Awareness Council, from which the trainings received by teens were based. This tool consists of 14 items on career readiness and 16 items on financial literacy.

In total, 177 teens completed both pre and post assessments. In 2025, 83% of teens demonstrated pre-post gains in career readiness and 88% in financial literacy, a significant increase from last year’s career readiness (75%) and financial literacy (61%) gains.

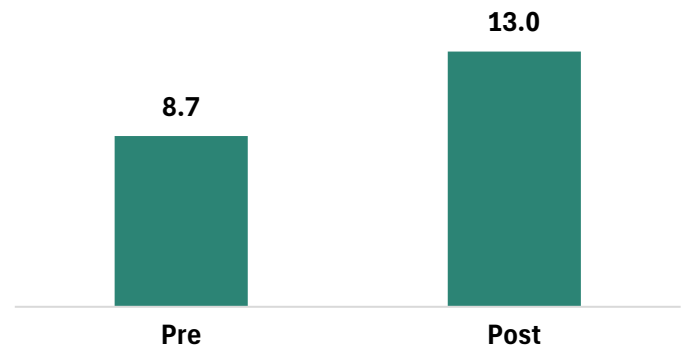


The average career readiness score increased by 15% from 51.3 to 58.9 with 70 as the possible maximum score. The average financial literacy score increased by 50% from 8.7 to 13.0 with 16 as the maximum possible score.

Average Career Readiness Score



Average Financial Literacy Score



Work Skills

The post-program satisfaction survey indicated all employers felt teens gained

valuable skills from work experience at their business (100%). Similarly, 98% of teens agreed that they learned skills through work experience that will benefit them in the future. In addition to the satisfaction survey, work site supervisors were to complete end of program assessment to give input on skill growth areas of each youth: punctuality,



appropriate dress, respectful communication, receives direction, attitude management, accountability, task completion, and overall progress. In summer 2025, 157 responses were received.

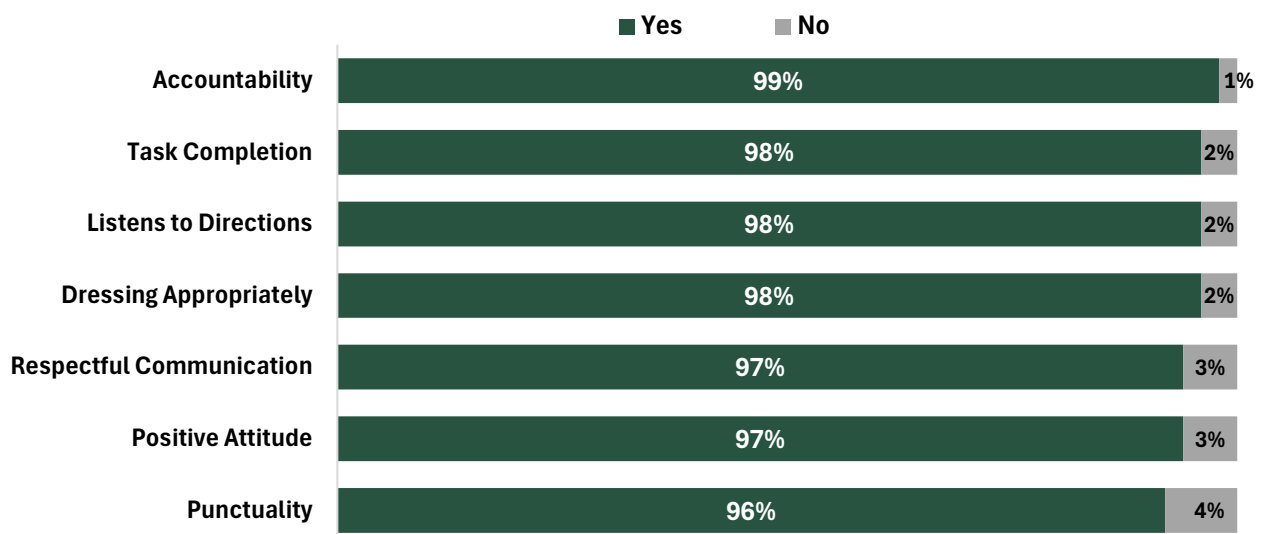
Overall, work site supervisors reported that teens demonstrated high proficiency on all skills, with the highest proficiency for accountability (99%), task completion, listening,

and dress (98%). Greater than 95% of youth demonstrated growth or proficiency in work skills (i.e., accountability, communication, task completion, listening, appropriate dress, punctuality, and positive attitude) according to their supervisor. They also found that some youth demonstrated the most improvements in skills such as task completion (42%), listening (41%), and punctuality (36%). Most supervisors reported growth and improvement in youth's work skills (81%). Some supervisors who indicated there had not been growth observed in specific skills or overall noted that the youth came in with strong work skills, which may be related to long-term engagement of some youth and the pre-employment training and support. Among the youth for which were assessed, 36% had their supervisor indicated they planned to hire them. Many other supervisors expressed that they would like to hire youth but are unable to due to organizational constraints (e.g., budget, lack of position, time of operation) or credentials needed for a permanent position (e.g., degree required, age).

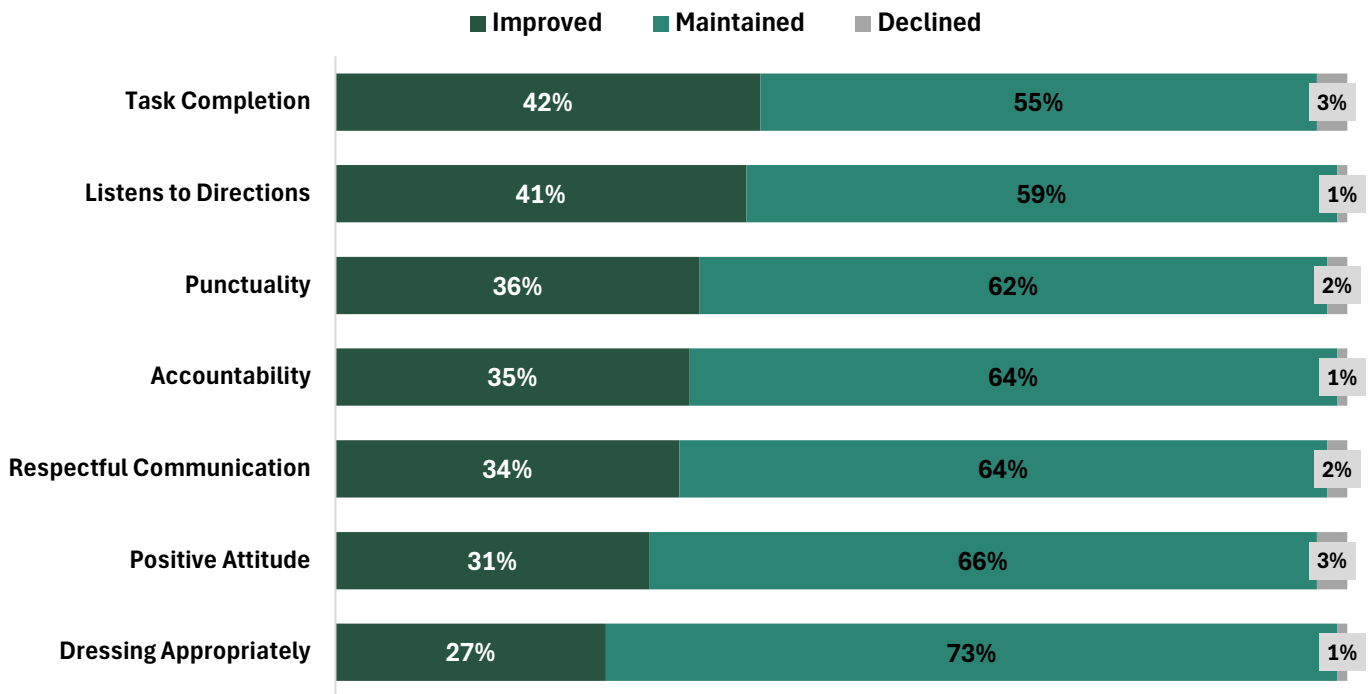


Supervisor's Assessment of Work Skills

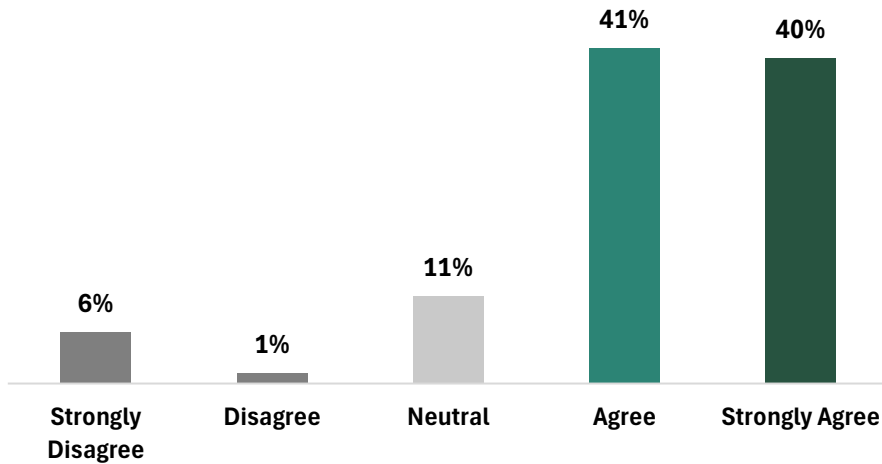
Youth Demonstrates Proficiency by Skill



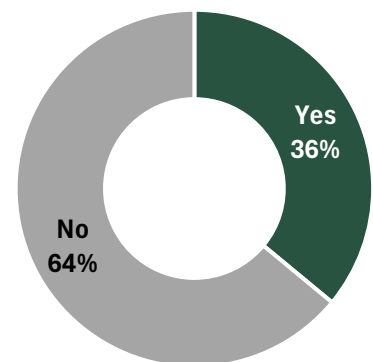
Proficiency Changes over the Program



Growth & Improvement in Youth's Work Skills

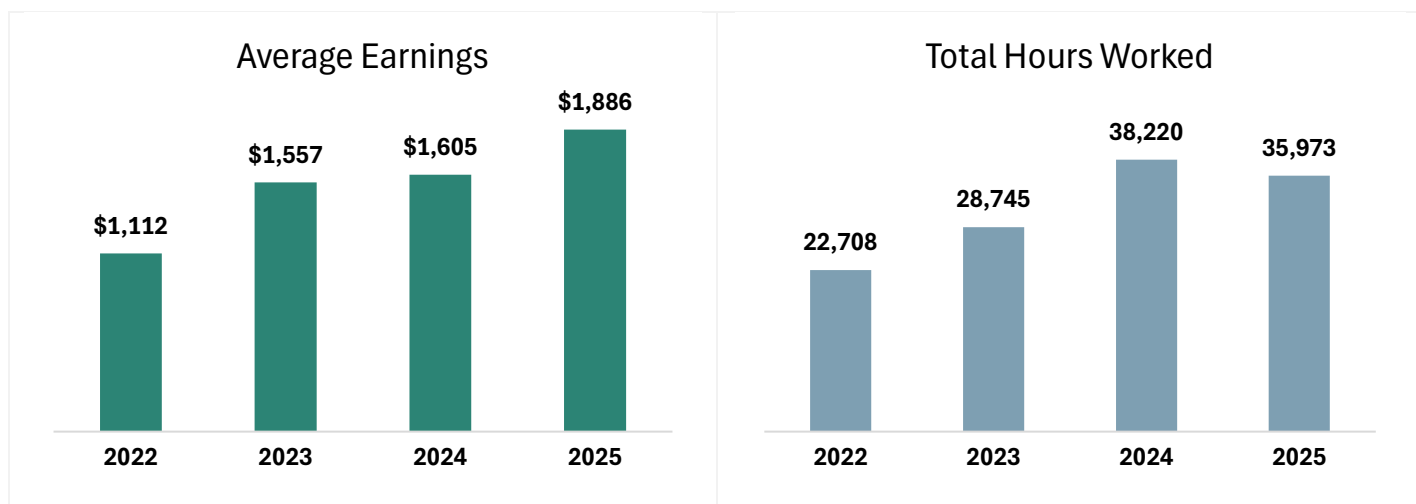


Plan to Hire Youth



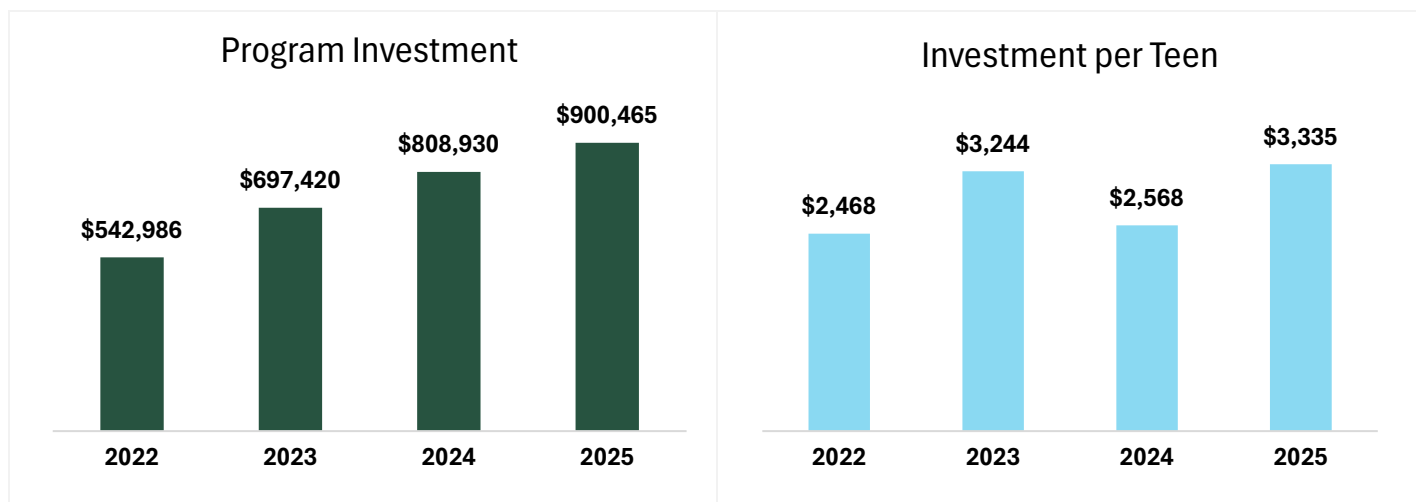
Community Investment

TWA allows, in many cases, teens to earn their first paycheck and become a member of the Alachua County labor force. Youth earned an average of **\$1,886** through their TWA summer employment. Earnings reflect the total work hours and training hours times \$13 (minimum wage in summer 2025). Businesses received **35,973** of TWA teen work hours. The average earnings have grown each year due to annual increases in minimum wage².



How much was invested in programming?

In 2025 the Trust invested **\$900,465** dollars in the TWA summer youth employment program. Compared to last year, the program expenditure increased by **11%**. The investment per teen was **\$3,335** in summer 2025.



² The state minimum wage is set to increase each year as follows: \$10.00 on 9/30/2021, \$11.00 on 9/30/2022, \$12.00 on 9/30/2023, \$13.00 on 9/30/2024, \$14.00 on 9/30/2025; and \$15.00 on 9/30/2026. [Florida Amendment 2, \\$15 Minimum Wage Initiative \(2020\)](#)

Conclusion

In 2025, TeensWork Alachua served 270 teens in 125 work sites. A key motivator for teens participating was to gain work experience, earn money, and to learn skills that would prepare them for the future. These expectations were met with nearly all teens agreeing that TWA provided valuable work experience, prepared them for future jobs, and average earnings of \$1,886 per teen. Furthermore, 100% of teens felt that they had the proper support to be effective in their job.

On average, teens worked 133 of 150 possible hours, with 95% of teens working 100 hours or more. Nearly all teens participated in eight hours of pre-employment work readiness training and many also took advantage of additional weekly training offered over the course of the summer. Teens received an average of 8.2 job coach support contacts. Among teens surveyed 97% reported receiving regular support from their job coach. Teens also received coaching and guidance from both their work site supervisor.

Both teens and employers report high levels of satisfaction with the program. Notable program successes included gains in career readiness, financial literacy, and work skills among teens served. Nearly all teens reported that they learned skills that benefit them in the future and they gained valuable work experience. Some teens detailed how their TeensWork experience taught them responsibility, communication skills, prepared them for the “real world” and helped them gain confidence.

Specific successes include:

- Expansion from 97 to 125 work sites, including more rural sites.
- 83% of teens demonstrated knowledge gains in their career readiness.
- 88% of teens demonstrated gains in financial literacy.
- 97% of employers felt teens gained valuable skills.
- Greater than 95% of youth demonstrated growth or proficiency in work skills (i.e., accountability, communication, task completion, listening, appropriate dress, punctuality, and positive attitude) according to their supervisor.
- 35,972 hours of work completed in the community.

Areas of opportunity include:

- Promote greater understanding of program expectations for teens and employers.
- Facilitate employers and youth matching prior to assignments to better align interests and aptitude with job placement.
- Enhance communication among site supervisors and program staff.
- Determine ways to serve more youth and expand program capacity.
- Initiate alumni impact surveys with TWA completers who were expected to graduate from high school this past summer to determine their transition to adulthood and lasting program impacts.

Overall, TWA received many successes and positive experience from teens and businesses. With these insights and improvements already underway we hope to see even greater successes for teens in summer 2026.

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