

## SPOTLIGHT ON LOCAL WORKFORCE INNOVATIONS

# Connecting Young Adults to High-Quality, In-Demand Jobs Despite Pandemic Hardships

Continuing to expand its proven program to create pathways to meaningful employment for low-income youth, the national nonprofit Year Up launched a new site in Charlotte, North Carolina in 2019, with generous support from Bank of America, The John M. Belk Endowment, and The Duke Endowment in partnership with Central Piedmont Community College and Leading on Opportunity, a nonprofit focused on improving economic mobility in Charlotte.

As the city continues to make strides in improving economic mobility, Year Up Charlotte will work to connect young adults in need of an opportunity with companies in need of their talent.

GERALD CHERTAVIAN  
*Year Up Founder and CEO*

Year Up is an award-winning, national 501(c)3 organization that provides talented and motivated young adults with the skills, experience, and support that will empower them to reach their potential through professional careers and higher education. Through a one-year, intensive training program, Year Up utilizes a high-support, high-expectations model that combines marketable job skills, stipends, coursework eligible for college credit, and corporate internships at more than 250 top companies.

Year Up Charlotte is the nonprofit's first site in North Carolina, and is active in 35 cities across the U.S. Young adults in the Charlotte program have access to the library, tutoring resources, and other services offered by Central Piedmont Community College, in addition to the services offered by Year Up. By partnering with Year Up Charlotte, Central Piedmont Community College offers students an accelerated pathway to careers in project management, software development, and cybersecurity.

Throughout the yearlong program, participants spend one semester taking technical and professional skills classes taught by Central Piedmont Community College and Year Up staff, dedicated to leadership learning and development. The students attend weekly training seminars that cover everything from soft skills, such as email etiquette, to technical skills like incident detection and data analysis. The second semester of the program is a six-month credit-bearing internship with corporations such as Bank of America, primarily in tech roles.

Year Up's focus is to bring talented, motivated young people the training and support needed to develop talent pipelines for communities. Year Up Charlotte's first cohort included 53 students who began classes in August 2019 and graduated in July 2020; the program will continue to grow to serve 120 young adults over the next year. The program received a grant from the Players Coalition in January 2019, in addition to funding from Bank of America, The John M. Belk Endowment, and The Duke Endowment, to support the program's expansion into Charlotte and help Year Up change perceptions of Opportunity Youth from social liabilities to economic assets.

## PROGRAM REVIEW:

# Bridging the Gap: From Joblessness to Employment for Charlotte Youths

### Expanding Criteria to Maximize Impact

Year Up is a connector bridging workforce talent to industry, and the program is dedicated to serving young adults persevering through hardships of the job market during the coronavirus pandemic. The program continues educating and training students virtually during this time. With an increased number of individuals struggling to find work attributed to the coronavirus pandemic, Year Up Charlotte has expanded its criteria.

### Program Highlights

- Year Up Charlotte targets young adults (ages 18-26) residing in the Greater Charlotte area.
- The program is offered at no cost to participants. Corporate partners investing in Year Up talent cover the majority of the program's operating costs, which is also supported by generous local philanthropic investments.
- Throughout the year, students earn college credits and have access to Central Piedmont's many services, including the college's library and tutoring resources, as well as additional Year Up services.
- Participants are provided a career pathway into one of three in-demand fields: cybersecurity, software development or project management support.
- Nationwide, 90% of Year Up graduates are employed or attending college within four months of completing Year Up, with average starting salaries of \$42,000/year.

### Program Contact

To learn more about Year Up Charlotte, including how to apply for the program, how to become a corporate partner or donor, or how to sign up as a volunteer, please visit [yearup.org](http://yearup.org).



### ► About the Series

Brought to you by the NCWorks Commission, the Spotlight on Local Workforce Innovations series showcases local innovations in collaborative, employer-led workforce development partnerships across our state. The series will highlight promising practices that can be replicated across North Carolina.

The NCWorks Commission is the state's Workforce Development Board. Led by a private sector chair, the 33-member, Governor-appointed commission includes representatives from the business community, heads of state workforce agencies, educators, and community leaders.

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