

Who We Are: Year Up Identity Statement

Our Mission: Year Up’s mission is to close the Opportunity Divide by providing urban young adults with the skills, experiences and support that will empower them to reach their potential through professional careers and higher education

Our Vision: In the future, every urban young adult will have access to the education, experiences, and guidance required to realize his or her true potential.

Who We Serve: We serve students who have been systematically disconnected from the vast economic opportunities in the United States, resulting in limited access to education, financial stability, social capital, political power, and sufficient health services. Year Up addresses this Opportunity Divide – specifically, the historical barriers to education and professional work – experienced by under-served young adults. We recognize core drivers of this divide are race, ethnicity, national origin and socio-economic status and also fundamentally believe in the value cultural differences bring to individual potential and collective work.

How We Serve: We achieve our mission through and with our stakeholders—students & alumni, staff, and corporate & community partners. We engage our stakeholders by setting expectations, offering support, and delivering quality service with a commitment to diversity and cultural competency. In our work with students, we seek to level the playing field by providing an environment and viable path for urban young adults to achieve economic inclusion and self-sufficiency. Our approach is to hold our students accountable while providing them with a support network of peers, advisors, mentors, and other services. We also provide continued technical and professional skills along with social networking support to our alumni. In doing so, we empower our young adults to define their vision for the future.

As staff, we build and sustain the cultural competencies necessary to create an environment of support, empowerment and learning for our students and ourselves. We set high standards of service when supporting our students, peers, and external partners. We also model the courage of our convictions by striving to become an inclusive, collaborative organization that reflects multiple dimensions of diversity.

We serve our corporate partners by providing them with pre-trained, pre-screened interns that meet entry-level talent needs of the organization. We continue to provide “hands-on” support throughout the internship via continuing education, internship performance monitoring and coaching. In all our partnerships with corporations, community organizations, and other external groups, we model our values of diversity and cultural competency, challenge them to participate in creating pathways of opportunities for under-served young adults, and value them as partners in this larger movement of social change and economic justice.

Our Operating Principles: High Expectations, High Support, High Service, Cultural Competency

Why We Serve: Central to achieving our mission, by building a bridge to opportunity, Year Up believes:

- An Opportunity Divide exists in the U.S., and must be closed to achieve economic justice and to increase our global competitiveness as a nation.
 - The potential of young adults is unlimited; the right skills, experience and guidance will lead to professional careers and higher education
 - Every single person has value, worth and potential and deserves to be treated with respect.
 - Everyone has the right to equal educational & economic opportunity.
 - Creating equal opportunity means acknowledging unearned privilege, removing barriers to opportunity and also undoing the effects of exclusion and oppression.
 - Diverse and culturally aware groups increase value in educational and work settings by generating creative, effective, innovative, and inclusive thinking and action.
 - Partnerships with employers and community organizations are in the best long term interest of our students and the larger movement of social change and economic justice.
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Our Values: Respect & Value Others, Build Trust and Be Honest, Engage and Embrace Diversity, Be Accountable, Strive to Learn, Work Hard & Have Fun
