

Since DYCD assumed responsibility for the City's Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) in 2003, many changes have been implemented to improve quality and make the program more accessible and efficient.

**Introduced web-based enrollment & timekeeping system.** DYCD's online system decentralized the application intake, enrollment and timekeeping processes. SYEP providers now conduct these activities at their locations and send the data electronically to DYCD. Prior to this system, the City committed as many as 300 workers to conducting centralized enrollment and timekeeping activities. DYCD now hires fewer seasonal staff and transfers the administrative savings back into direct services.

**Added online participant & worksite application system.** DYCD introduced the online application in 2006. Since then, approximately 75% of applications have been submitted online. The online system allows youth to access the application from any internet-connected computer at home or their local school, library, community center or SYEP provider. Applicants can also check their application status online and receive confirmations and notices of acceptance via email.

**Created debit card payment system.** SYEP participants are paid every two weeks through direct deposit to an SYEP-issued debit card. Cards can be used to access funds at bank ATMs, make store purchases and transfer funds to a personal bank account. Compared to the previous paper check payment process, the debit card process has resulted in fewer payroll errors, lower administrative costs, elimination of check-cashing fees, and improved security because participants do not carry cash.

**Increased private sector job placements.** SYEP jobs were traditionally in non-profit organizations and government agencies. In 2004, DYCD made a commitment to diversifying job placements and providing participants with enhanced job experiences. The agency's goal was that at least 10% of worksites would be in the private sector. By the summer of 2009, approximately 30% of worksites were in the private sector, comprised primarily of retail locations, medical and law offices, and small businesses.

**Incorporated education component.** All SYEP participants are required to attend 10% of the program hours for educational workshops that complement their summer work experience. Topics include work readiness, financial literacy, career exploration, health education, and college and post-secondary educational opportunities.

**Increased services to youth with disabilities and vulnerable youth.** While all 69 CBOs may provide services to youth with disabilities, more than 20 SYEP providers have specific experience and assist with worksite placements. The number of youth with disabilities participating in SYEP increased from 1,000 in 2004 to 3,812 in 2009. In 2009, 5 SYEP providers were contracted to provide employment and support services to vulnerable youth (foster care, homeless/runaway and court involved). In 2009, over 1,000 youth were served by these vulnerable youth SYEP providers.

In 2009, the New York City Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) provided 52,255 youth, aged 14 through 24, seven weeks of paid employment during July and August at 8,688 sites throughout the city. Worksites were developed and monitored by the community-based organizations (CBOs) contracted with DYCD to operate SYEP.

### **Application Process**

The SYEP application period typically begins in April and ends by mid-May. Since DYCD introduced an online application process in 2006, approximately 75% of applications are submitted via DYCD's website. Youth can also obtain a paper application at schools, libraries, elected officials' offices, or any one of the 69 CBOs that DYCD contracts with to develop worksites, enroll participants and provide orientation and education services. On the application, youth must specify one of the 69 CBOs as their "home base". For participants that are selected for SYEP, the respective CBO is responsible for enrollment, finding worksites, tracking hours worked, and monitoring progress throughout the summer. Most young people select providers that are located in their neighborhoods, but there is no prohibition against selecting a provider outside of the neighborhood or borough where the youth resides.

### **Enrollment and Job Placement**

Following the application deadline, DYCD conducts computerized lotteries to select applicants. Lotteries are continuous and run until all available positions are filled. Youth who are selected are contacted by the SYEP CBO they identified on the application as their "home base" and instructed to bring in documents verifying their age, address, work eligibility and household income. The applications are not complete until documentation is provided to the CBO. Once applications are complete, participants are placed at worksites by their CBO.

### **Program Monitoring and Payroll**

The CBOs monitor all worksites weekly and track the work hours for each young person they have enrolled and placed at a worksite. CBOs report timesheet data to DYCD via the SYEP Online payroll system. SYEP youth are paid by a third-party vendor every two weeks via direct deposit to SYEP-issued debit cards. Debit cards can be used at bank ATMs, stores and online retailers. Participants also can transfer funds to personal bank accounts.

### **Educational Component**

All SYEP participants are required to attend 10% of the program hours in educational workshops over the course of the seven-week program. SYEP CBOs administer the educational workshops and are given a standardized education curriculum developed by DYCD. Topics include work readiness, financial literacy, career exploration, health education, and college and post-secondary educational opportunities.