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BTI Whitepaper

November 2024

# UPON REFLECTION:

DFW Opportunity Youth  
Community of Practice Year One



# Credits/Contributions

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Upon Reflection -DFW Opportunity Youth Community of Practice Year One

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Thank you to the team at OWL Research Partners for their support in the development of this whitepaper.

This report was made possible through funding by Walmart. The findings, conclusions and recommendations presented in this report are those of Big Thought alone, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Walmart.

## DFW Opportunity Youth COP Member Organizations

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| All Stars Project                        | Dallas County Juvenile Department      | Rockteen Youth Foundation                 |
| Big Brothers Big Sisters                 | Equus Workforce                        | Sam’s Club                                |
| Big Thought                              | Excellence By Design Education Center  | Tarrant County Youth Advocate Program     |
| Child Poverty Action Lab                 | Fit and Faithful Living                | TD Jakes Foundation                       |
| CodeStream Studios, LLC                  | Fossil Group                           | The Prison Fellowship                     |
| Communities Foundation of Texas          | Junior Achievement of Dallas           | The Wright Cause Urban Youth Conservation |
| Communities In Schools Dallas            | Keeping Families Connected             | TLT- Tomorrow’s Leaders Today, Inc        |
| Creative Arts Center of Dallas           | Lone Star Justice Alliance             | Unity Mental Health Services              |
| Dallas College                           | Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute | Year Up                                   |
| Dallas Community Fellowship, Inc. (DCFI) | Nomi Network                           | Young Leaders Strong City                 |
|  | Project Still I Rise Inc.              | Youth Guidance.                           |
|  | RBIJ                                   |   |



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# Introduction

Launched in 2023, Big Thought’s **DFW Opportunity Youth Community of Practice** (OY COP) initiative is aimed at supporting “Opportunity Youth” - young people between the ages of 16 and 24 that are neither in school nor in the workforce - by creating an ecosystem of organizations, community partners, and leaders well equipped to support their needs and provide experiences that will enable them to thrive. Currently, nearly 5 million or one in nine young people in the U.S. are considered Opportunity Youth<sup>1</sup>, representing a growing demographic of young people who can be supported and mobilized for better outcomes. To date, the OY COP has built significant momentum, expanding locally and exploring avenues nationally to bring resources to more youth in more communities.<sup>1</sup> OY COP participating organizations are already making an impact in our community, and through this partnership, collectively we can elevate the underlying issues impacting our young people, work towards more collaborative solutions, and share the stories of positive impact emerging.

Opportunity Youth face a steep climb - access to high quality educational opportunities, career options with growth opportunities, or finding a path that leads to economic stability - however, improving their situation does not have to be hard. Greater awareness of the surrounding factors and potential solutions is critical. The truth is, no one is too far removed from Opportunity Youth, and simple acts of mentorship, coaching and connection can make all the difference. This whitepaper explains how Big Thought’s OY COP initiative is leading the charge on behalf of and with Opportunity Youth, with a collective approach inclusive of education, workforce, and community touch points.

*“This issue will be solved by individuals coming together around a common purpose to support these young people and to stick with them. This work is not a sprint. It’s definitely a marathon because we really are helping young people up a steep climb. But it’s not hard to do if you just have an investment of some time for a young person in this situation, it can make a world of difference in their trajectory in life.”*

- Kristina Cola, Senior Director of Learning Systems at Big Thought and Leader of Opportunity Youth Community of Practice



# Executive Summary

## Background

In 2023, Big Thought launched a new initiative to convene organizations to better build community infrastructure and support Opportunity Youth in North Texas and beyond. Focused on empowering the most historically and currently marginalized youth, including Black and Brown and justice-involved Opportunity Youth, The DFW Opportunity Youth Community of Practice (OY COP) brought together 33 North Texas organizational actively focused on providing deflection and diversion programming for Opportunity Youth, defined as young people ages 16 to 24 disconnected from school and/or the workforce. Aiming to improve outcomes by fostering collaboration among like-

minded organizations working to prevent juvenile justice system involvement, long-term stagnation in life outcomes, further justice-involvement in adulthood, and economic precarity, Big Thought’s guiding question for this effort is: *“How can a collaborative COP, comprised of largely Black/Brown led and Black/Brown serving organizations focused on the disproportionate number of Black and Brown young people affected by disconnection and the Juvenile Justice system, transform practice, deepen impact, catalyze change, promote economic mobility and growth more broadly through dissemination of learnings?”*

## Program Objectives

Within the framing of Big Thought’s previously noted guiding question, the formal project objectives shaping the effort are as follows:

- Break down silos and align with community-based efforts to support incarcerated and formerly incarcerated youth, and identify successful areas of practice, sharing knowledge, and fostering collaboration.

- Elevate and expand the community’s content expertise on preventing juvenile justice system involvement and recidivism, with the goal of improving outcomes for youth.<sup>ii</sup>

Longer term, the COP aims to serve as a resource for policymakers and juvenile justice advocates nationwide, including building a shared identity and foundation for national best practices.<sup>iii</sup>



## Core Elements

Commonly, a Community of Practice creates a system of collective exploration and reflection with a stakeholder community that shares a common concern or passion. A COP affords regular and consistent interactions that facilitate sharing, learning and improving what the stakeholders do and how they do it. In the case of Big Thought’s OY COP, this is accomplished via carefully curated monthly sessions led by Opportunity Youth practitioners; knowledge sharing among stakeholders with tenured experience working with this population; and hearing directly from youth themselves.<sup>iv</sup>

Another vital component of the OY COP is evaluating the experience and effectiveness of the OY COP. Through a partnership with Southern Methodist University’s Center of Research & Evaluation (SMU CORE), Big Thought tells the story of the impact of its Opportunity Youth work via the COP and beyond. This partnership contributes to tangible outcomes for the OY COP, including building tailored messaging that reflects the needs, pathways and access points for Opportunity Youth.<sup>v</sup>

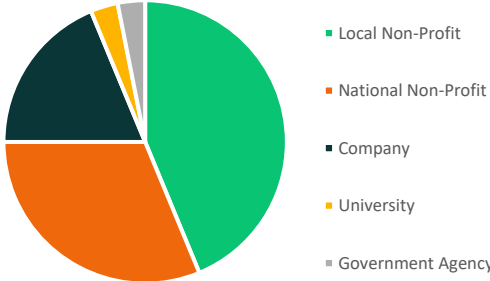
## Participant Cohort

The first cohort of OY COP organizations features a diverse group of 33 organizations, including Big Thought, serving or engaged with Opportunity Youth in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Big Thought conducted outreach, with the plan to recruit up to 10 organizations focused on Opportunity Youth and juvenile justice work. Big Thought received interest from nearly 50 organizations, with a total of 33 formally joining the OY COP.

Participants include representatives from a mix of non-profit, for-profit and public sector organizations, bringing

unique perspectives and experiences supporting Opportunity Youth. Both local and national non-profit participants have direct ties to the Dallas-Fort Worth area and offer local programming. Six local companies are members of the COP, including representatives from

Organization Type



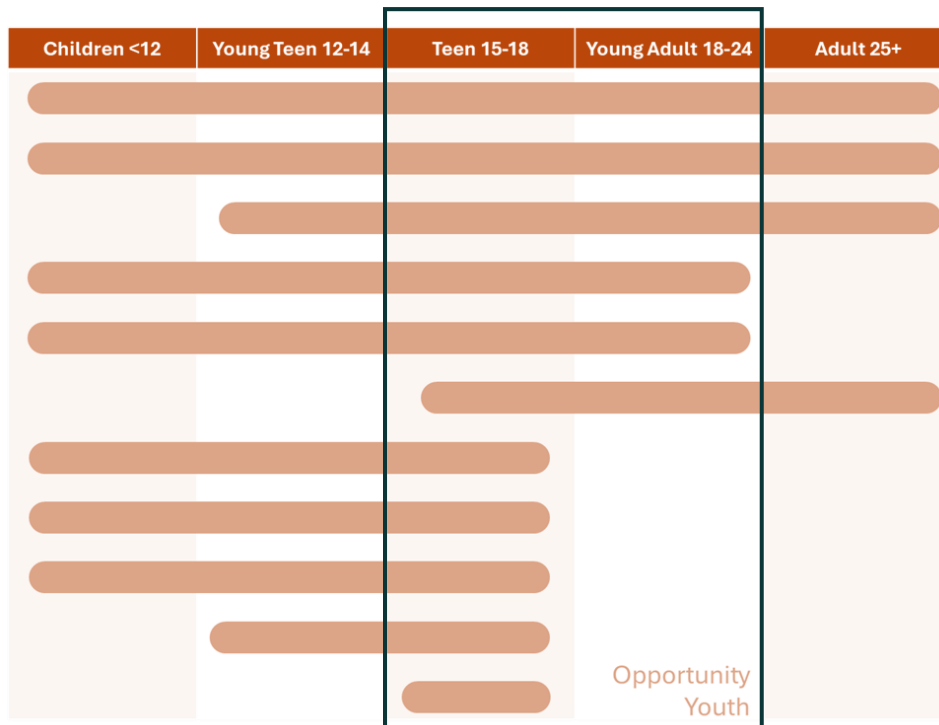
Fossil Group, Sam’s Club and Equus Workforce. Private sector participation is particularly valuable from the perspective of potential employers of Opportunity Youth, as well as community members and donors. Participating organizations range from small community groups with a handful of employees to a local university serving 100,000 students annually.

### Target Audiences

While OY COP participants share a common purpose in addressing the needs of Opportunity Youth, each organization approaches the OY COP through a unique lens, grounded in its broader mission and approach to service.

Only about half of organizations have programming geared toward specific age groups. In some cases, the Opportunity Youth age range of 16-24 represents the upper end of an organization’s target audience, while other organizations primarily serve an adult population. Meanwhile, other organizations serve job seekers, policymakers, donors, local communities, mental health providers, non-profits, incarcerated individuals, and families of incarcerated loved ones. One benefit of the OY COP approach is bringing these diverse organizations together with Opportunity Youth at the center, rather than the periphery.

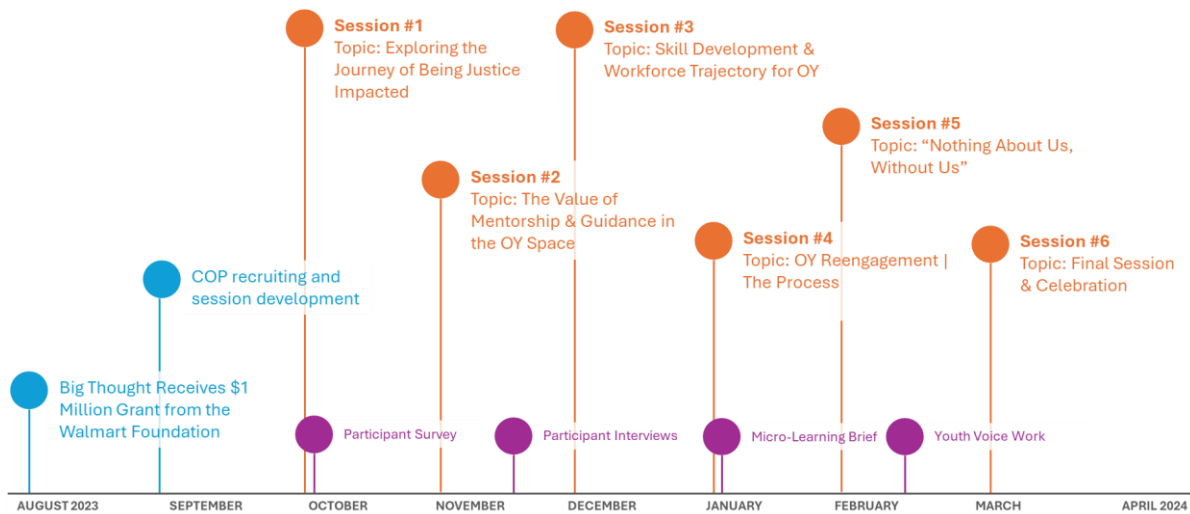
### Ages Served



## Milestones

The inaugural OY COP program consisted of six sessions on topics related to Opportunity Youth, taking place between October 2023 and March 2024. Additional research milestones

contributed to a deeper understanding of Opportunity Youth experiences, participant perceptions and organizational needs.



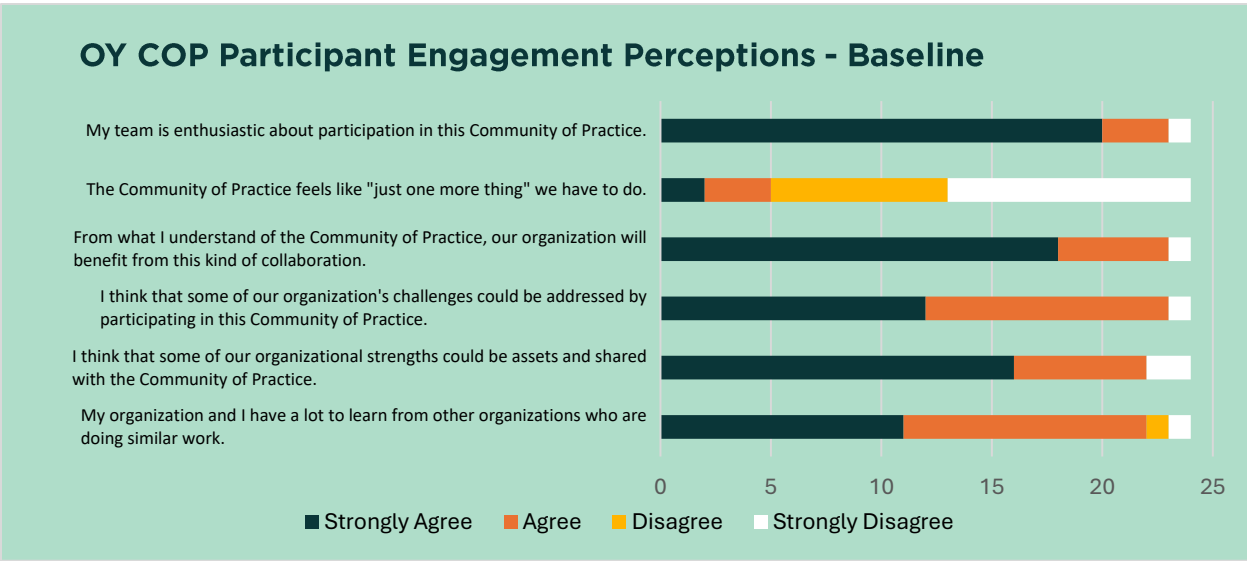
# Impact

The DFW OY COP follows an equity-centered design framework, which focuses on leveraging peoples’ lived experiences and tangible needs to create solutions that meaningfully address change and create sustainable impact. In alignment with this, the OY COP’s first step has been to survey participating organizations which validated that initial reactions to the initiative are positive, with respondents expressing enthusiasm about joining the OY COP and optimism that their organization’s ability to impact Opportunity Youth will be boosted by this type of collaboration.<sup>vi</sup>

The perceived strengths of the OY COP program are closely tied to efforts to define and demonstrate organizational benefits. The survey revealed for the participants, the highest value aspects

of the OY COP included networking and closer connections, identifying common struggles across organizations, supporting knowledge sharing, and shining a light on the needs of Opportunity Youth.<sup>vii</sup>

Baseline perceptions indicated that some organizations understandably expressed hesitancy around prioritizing time to participate in the OY COP. As a long-time convener, Big Thought entered this project understanding that non-profits are resource constrained and that justifying an investment of time can be a hurdle if the experience doesn’t yield direct benefits for them. We took this as a challenge from the onset to continually gather session feedback from our partners and interrogate our sessions for maximum effectiveness.



## Opportunities

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### **Facilitating organizational connections and professional development**

Participants in the OY COP are deeply committed to addressing community needs and working with Opportunity Youth. With personal and professional experiences rooted in social advocacy, survey responses expressed a dedication to “holistic interventions” and professional development opportunities.<sup>viii</sup> In this context, it comes as little surprise that OY COP participants cited partnership/collaboration and networking opportunities as the most hoped-for outcome of their involvement. Participants noted a desire to network with “like-minded partners” in ways that would be “impactful, sustainable and profitable for all.” Monthly meetings provided opportunities to strengthen connections, and participants appreciated the quality of discussions in these sessions.<sup>ix</sup>

### **Identifying commonalities among diverse organizations**

The programmatic and focus area diversity among the 33 OY COP participating organizations is notable. While all serve Opportunity Youth in some capacity, participants range from local community organizations to national non-profits and even for-profit companies. Some organizations work exclusively

with youth under the age of 18 while others focus on programming for young adults or families, and the programmatic areas are equally diverse, from youth services to training to wrap-around supports and many others. By connecting these organizations under the shared objective of better meeting the needs of Opportunity Youth, the OY COP is well positioned to identify commonalities in how organizations conceptualize the challenges facing Opportunity Youth. Through interviews conducted by SMU CORE with fourteen of the OY COP organizations, five overarching themes emerged that collectively signify the multifaceted nature and range of challenges that this work involves. Taken together, the themes help provide a broader understanding of the landscape participating organizations are navigating and informed the continued design and facilitation of the OY COP sessions.

### **Boosting success through knowledge sharing**

One of the core objectives of the OY COP program is to “identify and share successful areas of practice, identify common challenges, and curate resources to support those needs.”<sup>x</sup> With this goal in mind, knowledge sharing has been central to the OY COP program to date. Monthly learning sessions allowed OY COP participants to hear

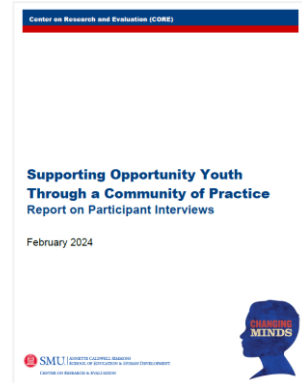


from Big Thought as well as external experts on topics to help build shared understanding of the factors contributing to risk for Opportunity Youth, the impact of involvement in the criminal justice system, systemic disparities affecting Black and Brown males, and

trauma-informed approaches to working with youth. Session survey respondents found the content relevant, easy to understand, and worth the time commitment.<sup>xi</sup>

### **Five Key Themes** from *Supporting Opportunity Youth Through a Community of Practice - Report on Participant Interviews*

The findings underscore the complex interplay of personal, systemic, and organizational factors in supporting justice-impacted youth. By addressing root causes, redefining success, and implementing innovative approaches, stakeholders can work towards fostering equitable opportunities and positive outcomes for justice-involved youth.



1. **Personal connections and motivations** play a pivotal role in participants' engagement with diversion programs and workforce supports. These connections, rooted in personal experiences, community needs, and career paths, drive individuals to address challenges within their communities with purpose and dedication.
2. The **root causes and problem conceptualization** shed light on systemic issues perpetuating cycles leading youth into contact with the juvenile justice system. From community history and generational trauma to food deserts and biases within the judicial system, urgent systemic reforms are imperative to address these multifaceted challenges comprehensively.
3. **Organizations' approaches and interventions** demonstrate diverse strategies aimed at providing comprehensive support for justice-impacted youth. Through initiatives like financial literacy, career development, and mentoring, organizations strive to foster positive outcomes and societal reintegration for youth in need.
4. The **definition of success** is multifaceted, encompassing indicators such as program impact, success stories, and low recidivism rates. These underscore the effectiveness of interventions in promoting positive youth development and reshaping societal perceptions.
5. **Barriers, strategies, and needs** highlight the challenges and interventions essential for supporting justice-impacted youth effectively. Stigmas, challenges, and misunderstandings hinder program effectiveness, necessitating innovative strategies and addressing identified needs to overcome barriers and promote positive outcomes for youth and their communities.



## **Opening the door to broader youth engagement**

Connections between organizations across the DFW area also presents participants with opportunities to expand their knowledge about the needs of the youth being served. Through interviews conducted by Big Thought's Youth Advancement Coordinator with affiliated

and unaffiliated Opportunity Youth, the OY COP program identified several pain points that limited access to or involvement in relevant programming. Findings from these interviews can inform development of best practices or shared resources to increase youth access, participation, engagement and the quality of programming at OY COP organizations.<sup>xii</sup>

## **Challenges**

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### **Devoting time and resources**

As with any new and unproven program, the devotion of additional time and resources is perceived as a risk for some participating organizations. While responses to the OY COP intake survey overwhelmingly indicated enthusiasm about participating, it also revealed that participants were concerned that time and resource constraints as well as scheduling conflicts could challenge their capacity for full participation. These concerns reflect deeper challenges faced by organizations serving Opportunity Youth. Within the context of limited funding and related staff capacity challenges, the addition of yet another responsibility may be daunting. In fact, five out of 24 survey respondents agreed with the description of the OY COP as “just one more thing” that needs to be done.<sup>xiii</sup>

### **Proving value for participating organizations**

Given the financial and resource constraints faced by organizations serving Opportunity Youth, Big Thought was keenly aware of the need to ensure that participation delivered tangible benefits to participating organizations and the youth they serve. Intake surveys indicated that multiple participants hoped their involvement with the OY COP would increase funding opportunities and enhance knowledge, and subsequent measurement and reporting may provide more specifics related to impacts on Opportunity Youth.<sup>xiv</sup>

### **Demonstrating applicability to organizational priorities**

The diverse programming and areas of focus for participating OY COP organizations represents both a strength and a challenge. While diverse voices increase the potential for transformative



thinking about how best to support Opportunity Youth, not all of the knowledge shared is immediately applicable to all participants. Participants from smaller organizations expressed concern about how to make use of OY COP best practices within the context of narrow service offerings, also expressing concern about their organization's mission being misunderstood or undervalued among the larger group.<sup>xv</sup> OY

COP session feedback collected from participants indicates that many of these initial concerns were likely mitigated with over 92% of responses agreeing that strategies and information can and will be applied to their future work, and that the time invested in the session was worthwhile. Comments shared back with the Big Thought team were promising and reiterate this value.



I learned a lot and really walked away with some ideas for better serving our community.



Made me think about how my org can fill gaps of our clients' education!



Such an eye-opening experience



This was information that can be applied to our workforce program.



Was looking for something to help bring programming to the next level and I believe this will help greatly.



# Opportunities & Future Focus

*“I’m really optimistic to see so many dedicated people and to be able to create a community of people that can help out Opportunity Youth...we [Big Thought] connect with people that do their thing and we can create a network of people that are all serving as many youths as possible. That’s what I’m really excited about it, just community at work.”*

-Ania Hodges, Youth Advancement Coordinator at Big Thought and Co-Leader of Opportunity Youth Community of Practice

Big Thought’s Opportunity Youth COP has been active for less than one year but has clearly established favorable perceptions among participating organizations. To continue building on this momentum, recent feedback collected from COP participants as well as via the Youth Voice Work, a series of roundtable discussions with youth themselves, highlighted several potential areas of opportunity for future priorities and focus points.

### **Double down on collaboration and partnerships**

Across the board, participating peer organizations indicated that they find significant value in the OY COP’s facilitation of collaboration and partnership. While this connection has been a primary goal of the OY COP from the outset, the appetite for this type of interaction only continues to build as

organizations experience the value firsthand. The ongoing practice of sharing learnings, perspectives and experiences from the varied ways that participating organizations are approaching the prevention of juvenile justice system involvement and potential disconnection is inspirational, and can lend itself to greater innovation, resourcefulness and advocacy.

### **Increase engagement and retention supports**

Another area identified as benefiting from further focus relates to how organizations can sustain client recruitment, engagement and retention efforts. In particular, the notion of valuing and centering youth input regarding what matters to them when it comes to program engagement is something to build upon. Given that many of the participating organizations indicated that they



continue to struggle with participant engagement and retention, information and supports that contribute to a deeper understanding of what motivates and empowers youth, as well as what factors may impede their ability to participate, will remain highly relevant to COP members.

### **Continue to address common barriers**

Given the variety of organizations included in the COP, barriers can be unique to different situations and settings. However, based on surveys and discussions, there is a common set of barriers that are fundamentally impacting nearly all participating organizations - and subsequently Opportunity Youth. In particular, more intensive study and programming surrounding widespread issues like funding and staffing represents a significant area of need, with more than 70% of

participating organizations indicating that funding is a major barrier and more than half pointing to staffing related challenges.<sup>xvi</sup>

### **Turning learning into collective action**

Survey responses confirmed that COP participants are eager to continue turning their learning into action. Given the multi-dimensional challenge of reducing youth interaction with the juvenile justice system, the ability of a single organization to solve the problem comprehensively is not possible. Instead, participating organizations can benefit from organizing and taking action as a COP collective community, while also utilizing strategies and interventions that address specific root causes and systemic factors that are also in line with their organization's mission.<sup>xvii</sup>



# Keeping Opportunity Youth in Focus: 2024 Voice Work

The impact of Big Thought’s Opportunity Youth programming is deeply entwined with maintaining an active and open dialogue with youth voices. Big Thought’s Youth Advancement Coordinator and Ambassador, hosted two youth roundtable discussions aimed at understanding how to enhance Big Thought’s Opportunity Youth support. Seventeen young people participated, including a mix of youth from Big Thought programs and unaffiliated youth from the community. The Youth Advancement team was inaugurated in 2023 as Big Thought strived to more intentionally and explicitly focus on elevating youth voice into organizational structures and decision making, and the team itself is comprised of former youth program participants.



### Conversation 1

- 8 youth ages 16-24 from Big Thought Programs
- 50% Black/African American
- 38% Hispanic/Latino



### Conversation 2

- 9 youth ages 16-24 unaffiliated with Big Thought programs
- 44% Black/African American
- 56% Hispanic/Latino
- 2 Opportunity Youth, 3 college students, 4 high school students

The importance of Youth Voice elevates beyond the relatively simple selection of which types of programs or activities a young person is interested in and to offer. Youth Voice should be an active ingredient in the organization’s culture and contributing to deeper examination of program design, operational supports, and overall culture. To that end, questions covered a range of topics, including preferences for how to recruit and register youth for relevant programs; what makes Opportunity Youth feel empowered or disempowered; gaps or needs characterizing the Opportunity Youth experience; and perspectives on careers and transitioning to adulthood. Several broad themes emerged from the roundtable discussions, including the following.



## **The Dignity Imperative**

Across all discussion topics, perhaps the strongest emerging theme was youth's emphasis on the need for a sense of dignity. Especially in interactions taking place in education or employment settings, if respect is lacking youth noted that they are much more likely to disconnect. Leading with this awareness was positioned as a critical success factor in programming or outreach aimed at Opportunity Youth. Furthermore, the significance youth placed on personal dignity and respect highlighted the importance of keeping focus on the person being served, instead of just checking boxes outlined by project or initiative goals. A lack of dignity and respect towards young people can lead to feelings of alienation and disconnection, as they may feel undervalued and misunderstood by society. This disconnection can push them to seek validation and purpose outside of traditional societal structures. Conveying a sense of dignity, trust and belief in the individual in each and every youth interaction will build a solid foundation for eventually achieving these goals. But again, in the spirit of leading with dignity, efforts must begin with and remain focused on "assisting the person, not the project."<sup>xviii</sup>

## **Recruitment & Marketing**

When it comes to recruitment and attraction, Opportunity Youth value an incentive of some sort, especially if it somehow ties program participation to their own personal goals. Youth indicated that they want to feel a connection to the program and its values and seek opportunities where they can make a valuable and measurable contribution. They are also looking for substance – involvement that is more than "just checking a box" – and ultimately want to feel a sense of dignity in everything they do. When discussing recruitment considerations, Opportunity Youth agreed on a few baseline expectations: they seek programs that state definitive goals, concrete outcomes, and have received external public validation via awards, recognition, media attention or event affiliation.

Effective program marketing can include a range of outreach channels, but roundtable participants suggested that they remain partial to social media campaigns. While guerilla marketing tactics – such as paper flyers or street teams – may also appeal, the deciding factor is the content. Youth also suggested that first-hand accounts from peers in the program, or from other individuals directly impacted by the program, are extremely powerful. Additionally, the ability to gain a clear understanding of why an organization came to be – including the mission of the founders – is a critical factor for attracting this segment.

### **Safety & Empowerment**

When asked questions related to safety and empowerment, youth indicated that being surrounded by people that look like them or at least reflect their community's diversity is key. Especially in group settings, they want to be real, say things that are hard to say, and be able to express trauma or vulnerability amid people they trust emotionally. A big component of trust is knowing that what they share will not be used to judge or dismiss them later. Multiple youth shared that they seek opportunities that hold space for mistakes, apologies and asking for help. This leads to a sense of safety and empowerment and makes them more likely to take risks and try new things.

Instances which led to youth feeling disempowered included racism, being judged on appearance, being overlooked because of age and inexperience, or a getting a sense that their passion for something was not reciprocated. Youth suggested that they are eager to learn and test their comfort zones, but this has to be accompanied by a positive and constructive feedback loop. In particular, receiving wisdom, advice and reassurance from mentors and peers was noted for creating a greater sense of safety and empowerment.



## **Gaps & Needs**

The 2024 Youth Voice Work revealed some gaps and needs related to youth emotional and social well-being. Participating youth agreed that COVID negatively impacted their social skills. From difficulty starting conversations to a reduced ability to concentrate on what others are saying, youth noted a significant dip in their ability to interact post-COVID. They also reported that as a result, they often feel like they have a low social battery, which only leads to feeling more disconnected and less likely to engage. Further discussions of unfulfilled needs or gaps experienced at low points of their journeys revealed that transportation remains a critical area of need. Clothes, support and understanding were also mentioned, but ultimately youth expressed a desire for more guidance from someone that could understand their position in life. Several youth indicated that having more perspective and help with major life transitions and new experiences – especially when coming from someone with a similar lived experience – is highly needed and valued.

## **Looking Ahead**

Topics related to the transition to adulthood and future career outlook were raised during the Youth Voice Work roundtables. Participants expressed mixed experiences with engaging in the workforce so far. Most notably, the sense that they were not allowed to make mistakes or have the space to learn needed skills in a safe environment proved to be a strong deterrent to specific job scenarios.

Still, youth were optimistic about the future when asked to talk about what they predict will be top earning jobs when they are 30. Roles related to the technology sector and software development were noted, as well as the trades, such as electricians, plumbers or farmers. Youth acknowledged the potential for AI to affect the career landscape, while noting that health care fields – and especially mental health, counseling and psychology – will remain in strong demand.

# Conclusion

What's next for the OY COP? Big Thought is planning a deepening and expansion of OY COP efforts. Members of the initial OY COP cohort are exploring ways to activate their learnings, while continuing to stay connected and share best practices. Areas of potential activation include establishing Youth Ambassador roles within their organizations and creating new innovations within established programming to better serve and support Opportunity Youth and their families. Big Thought plans to help resource members as they embark on their selected activation strategies.

In November 2024, Big Thought will welcome its next OY COP cohort. Initial interest has been strong, and a wait list has already been established to accommodate the many practitioners seeking one of the 30-40 spots.

OY COP program leaders are also exploring opportunities to scale nationally, taking the program and learnings developed in DFW to other communities and national organizations.

A new year for the initiative also offers the opportunity to continue developing community of practice curriculum, starting with an even deeper emphasis on embedding youth voices into COP sessions and process. Participants can expect a continued focus on hearing directly from Opportunity Youth while engaging in activities that foster deeper understanding and support personal dignity and respect.

Looking ahead, momentum behind the program will be further boosted by sharing more stories of real impact, as told by COP participants and Opportunity Youth themselves. These first-hand narratives will also demonstrate the notion that connecting with Opportunity Youth does not require monumental efforts – significant change can begin with simple acts of engagement and community-building.

*“For decades, Big Thought has built systems that are represented by community-based organizations wrestling with real life challenges impacting young people. Focusing in on Opportunity Youth and their future opportunities and inherent potential is critical. We are committed to this important work and believe it will lead to monumental changes within our community and for our youth.”*

- Erin Offord, President & CEO, Big Thought



# Citations

- 
- <sup>i</sup> <https://www.aspencommunitysolutions.org/who-are-opportunity-youth/>
- <sup>ii</sup> Big Thought, Brief: DFW Opportunity Youth Community of Practice Micro-Learnings Report #1, 24 January 2024
- <sup>iii</sup> Big Thought, Opportunity Youth COP Overview, 2023
- <sup>iv</sup> Big Thought, Opportunity Youth Community of Practice slide deck, 2023/2024
- <sup>v</sup> Big Thought, Opportunity Youth Community of Practice slide deck, 2023/2024
- <sup>vi</sup> Big Thought, Survey, Year 1 COP Participants, 2023
- <sup>vii</sup> Big Thought, Survey, Year 1 COP Participants, 2023
- <sup>vii</sup> Big Thought, Survey, Year 1 COP Participants, 2023
- <sup>viii</sup> Southern Methodist University Center on Research and Evaluation, OY COP Participant Interviews, February 2024
- <sup>ix</sup> Big Thought, Survey, Year 1 COP Participants, 2023; OY COP Course & Session Surveys
- <sup>x</sup> OY COP Overview & Grant Request Description
- <sup>xi</sup> DFW Opportunity Youth Community of Practice Micro-Learnings Report #1, 24 January 2024
- <sup>xii</sup> 2024 Voice Work Report: An Emphasis on Dignity
- <sup>xiii</sup> Big Thought, Survey, Year 1 COP Participants, 2023; DFW Opportunity Youth Community of Practice Micro-Learnings Report #1, 24 January 2024
- <sup>xiv</sup> Big Thought, Survey, Year 1 COP Participants, 2023
- <sup>xv</sup> Big Thought, Survey, Year 1 COP Participants, 2023
- <sup>xvi</sup> Big Thought, Survey, Year 1 COP Participants, 2023
- <sup>xvii</sup> Big Thought, Survey, Year 1 COP Participants, 2023
- <sup>xviii</sup> 2024 Voice Work Report: An Emphasis on Dignity

