

Youth Opportunities Unlimited

Economic mobility,
efficiency, and
alumni engagement.

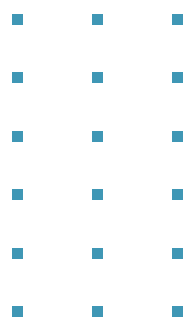




Introduction

Background

- Morehead-Cain Scholars @ UNC
- Civic Collaboration summer:
 - Non-profit work
 - Cities across the U.S.



Bios

Ethan Gailushas



Tanvi Gaur



Randy Chang



Paloma Fernandez



Jon Ayden Horne



Assigned to Y.O.U!

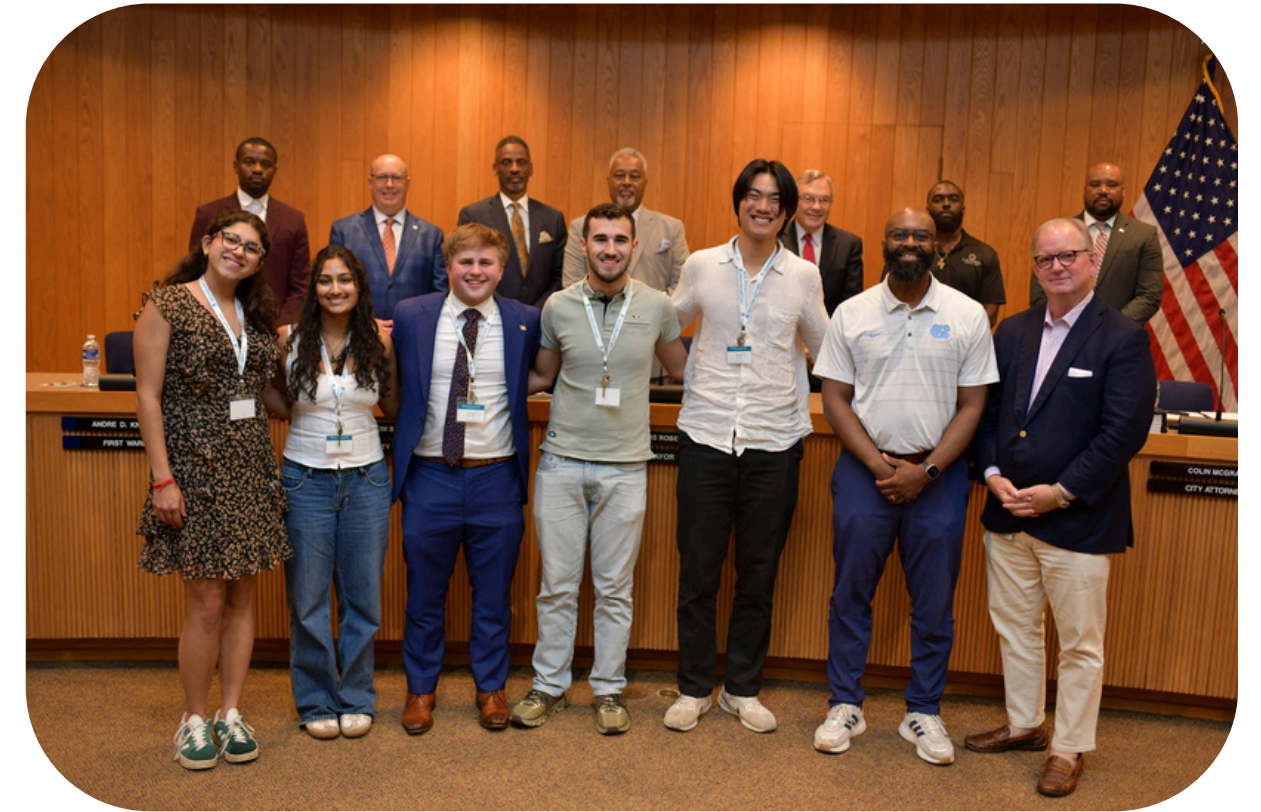
Y.O.U. serves 1,500 students each summer through the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), and serves up to another 3,500 students through its other programs, such as PEEKE, Jobs for Ohio Graduates, PACE, and more.

The main mission of these programs is to prepare teens and young adults to become economically self-sufficient contributors to the workforce of Northeastern Ohio.



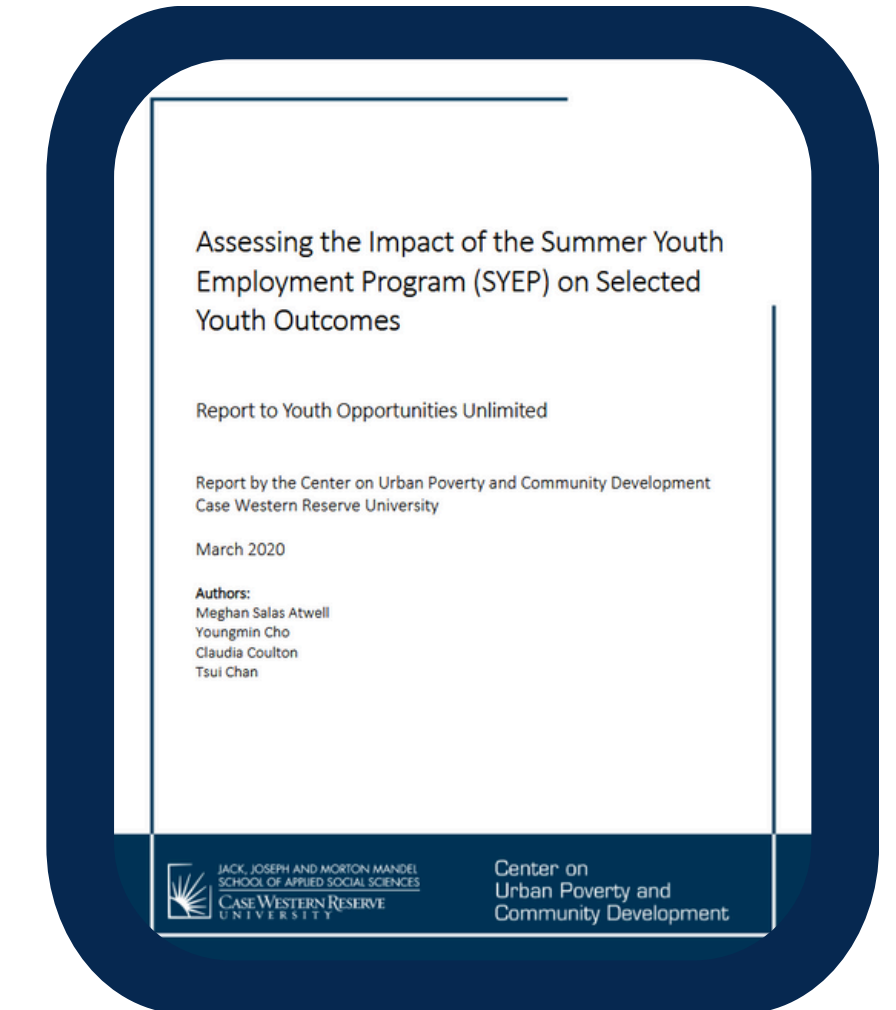
Mission:

1. Define “economic mobility”
2. Evaluate barriers to workforce development
3. Recommend solutions to these barriers



Core Methodology

- Eight weeks, 30+ formal interviews, countless informal interviews
- Studies (e.g. CWRU)
- Five site visits



Thank you!



Randell McShepard

Vice president of Public Affairs and Chief Talent Officer. RPM Inc.



Pam Macer

Chief Program Officer, Youth Opportunities Unlimited



Tom Miller

*Chief Program Officer, Youth Opportunities U
Senior Director, Early Career Exploration, Greater Cleveland Partnership*



Aram Nerpouni

Chief Workforce Advancement Officer, MAGNET



Robert Brown

Former City Planner, City of Cleveland



Tobin Buckner

Director, Employer Partnerships & Engagement, Youth Opportunities Unlimited



Jane Campbell

Former Mayor, City of Cleveland



Eric Dillenbeck

Director, Work Experience Programs, Youth Opportunities Unlimited



Debi Pence-Meyenberg

Chief Operating Officer, Youth Opportunities Unlimited



Sonya Pryor-Jones

Chief, Youth and Family Success, City of Cleveland



Sabrina Roberts

Senior Advisor to Executive Chris Ronayne, Cuyahoga County



Michelle Rose

Chief Executive Officer, Greater Cleveland Works



Craig Dorn

President & CEO, Youth Opportunities Unlimited



Robert Eardley

Chief Information Officer, University Hospitals



Molly Feghali

Director of PACE, Training & Curriculum, Youth Opportunities Unlimited



Eric Gordon

Senior Vice President, Student Development and Education Pipeline, Cuyahoga Community College



Frank Sullivan

Chief Executive Officer, RPM International



Fran Stuart

Data Analyst, PolicyBridge



Darlene Toney

Program Officer, Youth and Human Services, Cleveland Foundation



Kate Schwab

Chief Access Officer, College Now Greater Cleveland



Demarje Hogan

Volunteer and Alumni Coordinator, Youth Opportunities Unlimited



Ayanna Hughey

Head of Human Resources, Cleveland Foundation



Lilian Kuri

Chief Executive Officer, Cleveland Foundation



Heather Light

Director of Advancement, Youth Opportunities Unlimited

Susan Pennybacker

European History professor at UNC Chapel Hill, Cleveland Native

Geoff Lipnevicius

Senior Manager of Organizational Effectiveness at Lincoln Electric

Maria Lozada

RSS, Youth Opportunities Unlimited

Jerry Armstrong

Manager, Employer Partnerships, Youth Opportunities Unlimited

Rochelle Bowser

RSS, Youth Opportunities Unlimited

Matt Henry

Salesforce Consultant

Heather Pollack

Head of LED, Youth Opportunities Unlimited



Part 1: Defining Economic Mobility

Steps to Economic Mobility



**Sustained, predictable
wage growth**

Steps to Economic Mobility



**Sustained, predictable
wage growth**

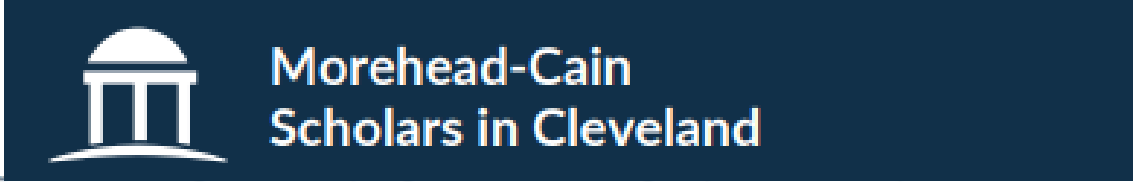


Long-term retention of employment
Financial and housing stability
Educational opportunities

Steps to Economic Mobility



A note on other definitions



around economic mobility. PolicyBridge defines economic mobility as “a measure of an individual, family or group improving their economic status over time, usually measured in income and wealth.”

ECONOMIC MOBILITY

Intergenerational economic mobility – the likelihood that children born into families with low wealth can achieve a higher standard of living



FEDERAL RESERVE BANK of CLEVELAND

[Home](#) > [Publications](#) > [Notes from the Field](#)

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Defining the Challenge: Promoting Economic Mobility and Resilience

To promote economic mobility and resilience among the underserved, an organization must first decide how it defines these terms. The definitions played a prominent role at a recent community development conference. Read how.

Layisha Bailey
Contributing Author

Tonline Economic mobility



Part 2: Barrier Identification

Barriers to Youth Workforce Development in Cleveland

▶  **Transportation Barriers**

▶  **Educational Preparation Gaps**

▶  **Limited Long-Term
Impact Measurement**

▶  **Unsustainable/Inconsistent
Funding Models**

▶  **Transition to Sustained Employment**

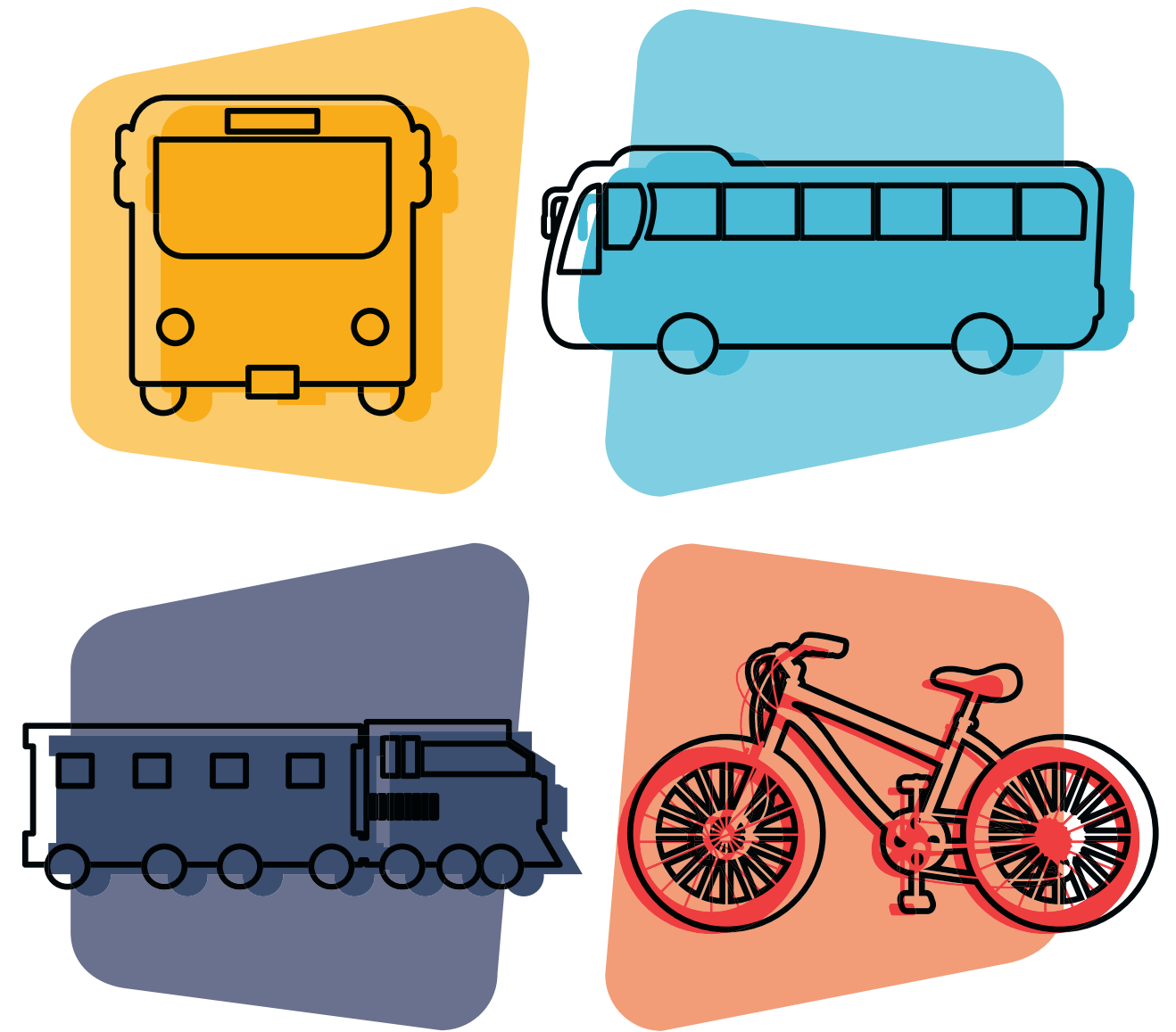
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Transportation



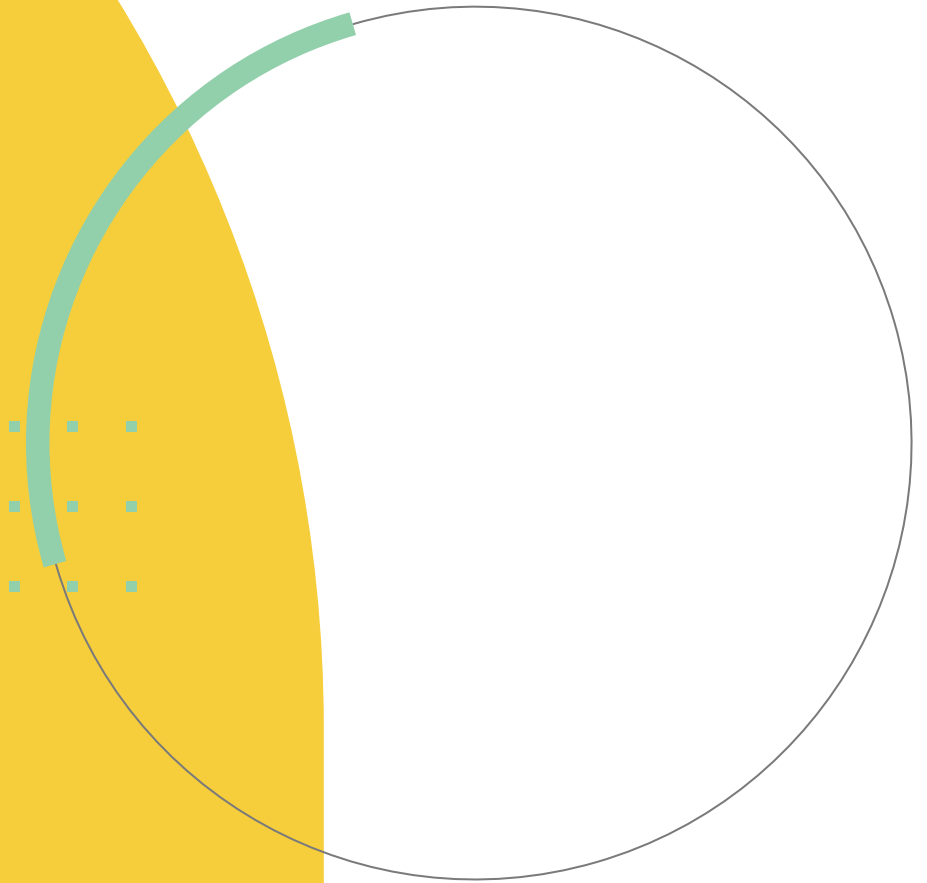
Transportation

- **Transit Gaps:**
 - Strong downtown connections
 - Poor suburb-to-suburb routes limit job access
- **Reliability Paradox:**
 - Employers penalize tardiness without accounting for unreliable public transportation
- **Safety Constraints:**
 - Youth limited to walking distance or accessible transit routes
- **Systemic Inequity:**
 - Transportation access determines program participation
 - Reinforces geographic disadvantages



02

Educational Preparation Gaps



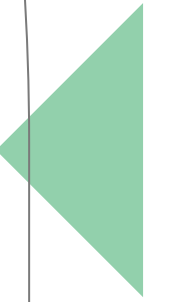
Educational Preparation Gaps

- **First Job Reality:**
 - Many participants lack basic workplace soft skills and professional norms
- **Accountability Disconnect:**
 - "Late to school ≠ late to work"
 - Youth lack understanding of workplace consequences
- **Communication Standards:**
 - Phone etiquette
 - Professional communication major deficits
- **Resource Challenge:**
 - Front-loading remedial education stretches budgets
 - Reduces participant capacity



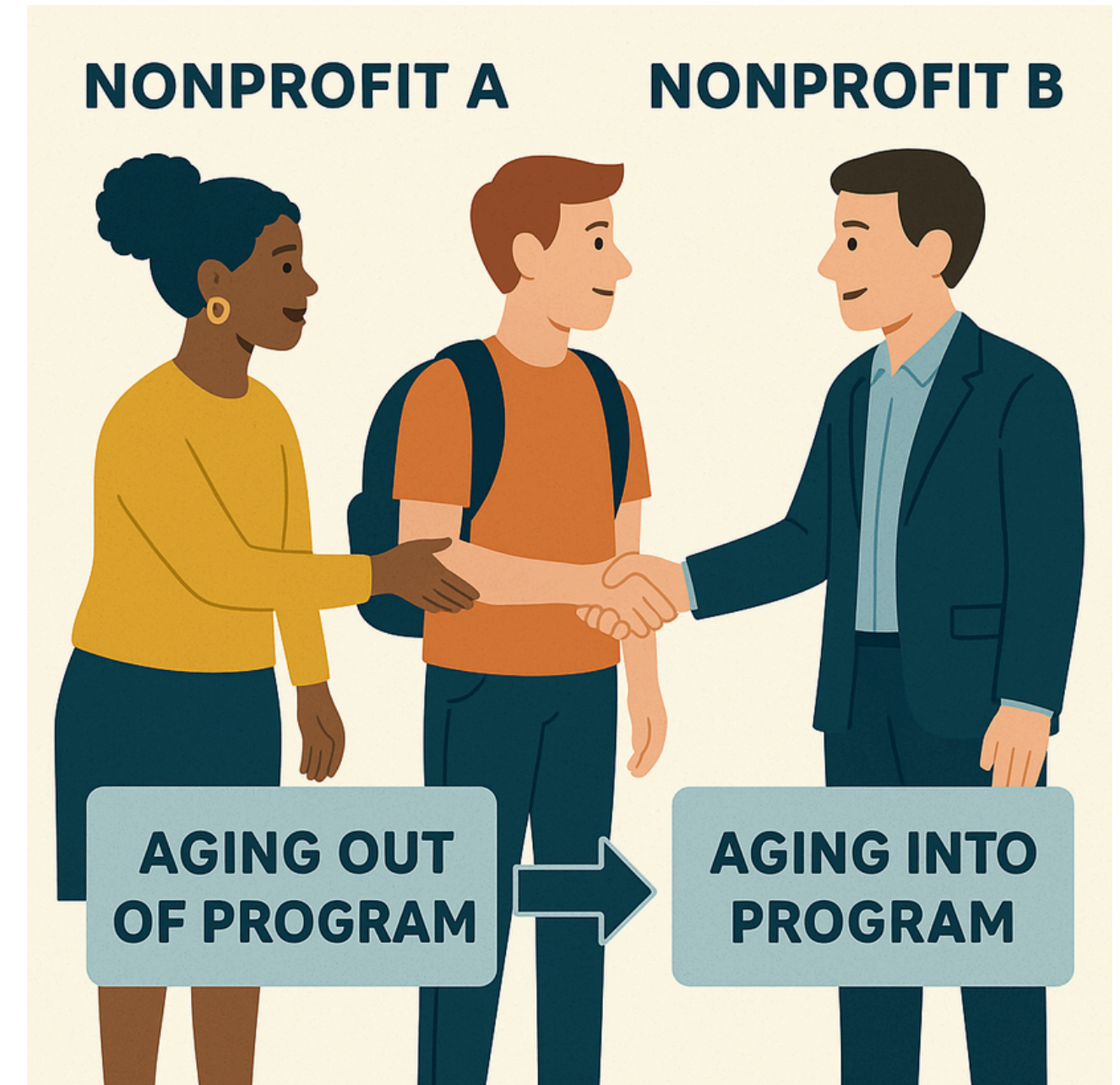
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Transition to Sustained Employment



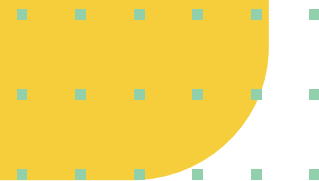
Transition to Sustained Employment

- **Hand-offs**
 - One nonprofit to the next
- **Many nonprofits face the same challenges and have the same goals**
 - Transportation, alumni, data
 - Economic mobility in Cleveland
- **College NOW, Greater Cleveland Works**
- **Skill > credentials**



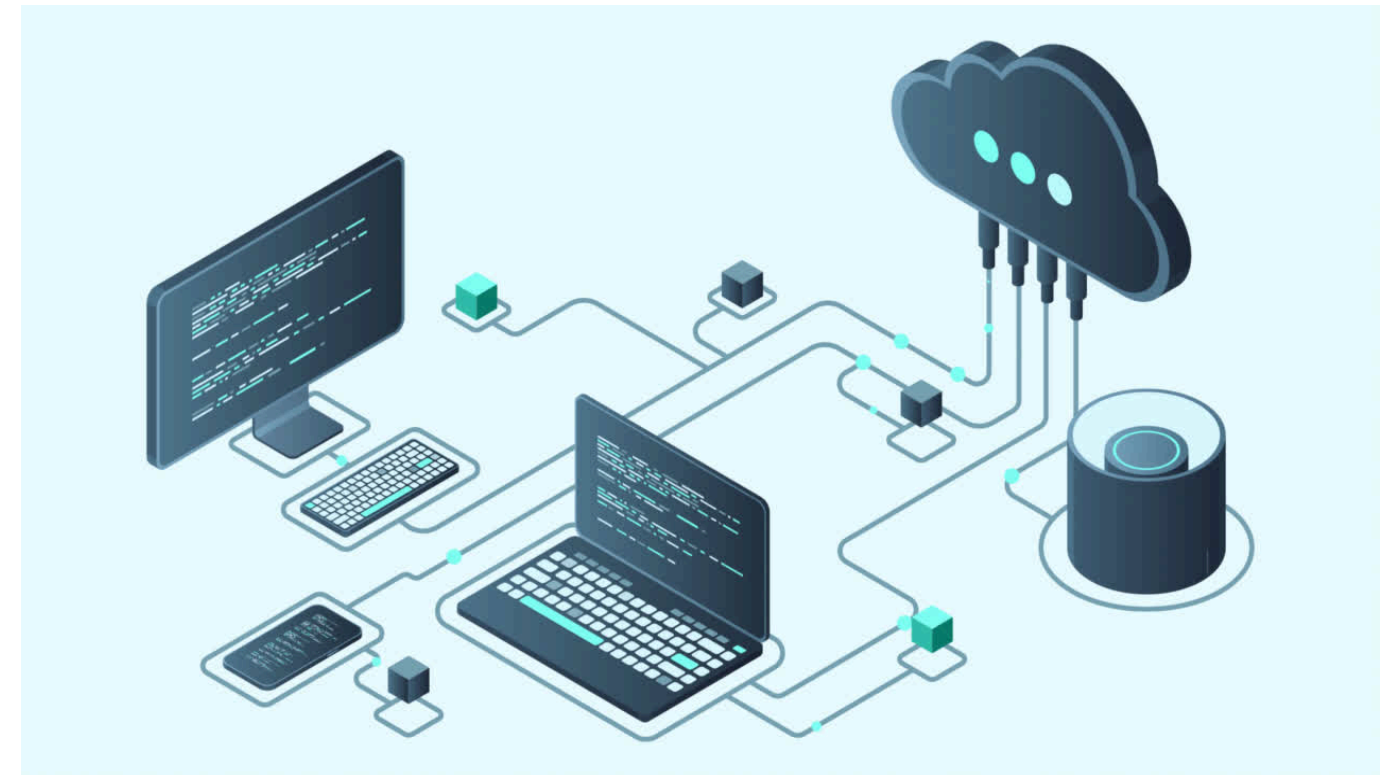
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Limited Long-term Impact Measurement



Limited Long-term Impact Measurement

- **Resource Constraints:**
 - Organizations want to track alumni
 - Lack of funding, staff, and technology
- **Broken Engagement Cycle:**
 - Low alumni tracking leads to poor engagement
 - Reduces ability to demonstrate success + collect donations
- **Missing Infrastructure:**
 - No alumni networks → disconnected former participants
- **Volunteer Recruitment Failure:**
 - No alumni → missed opportunity for volunteer recruitment



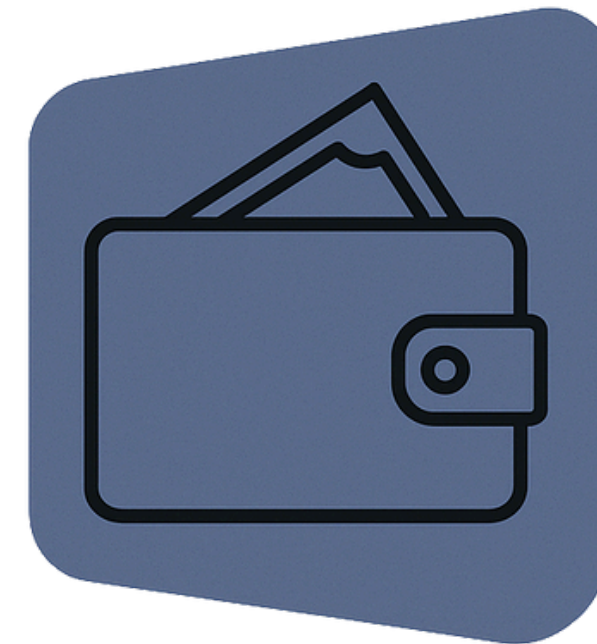
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Unpredictable Funding Methods



Unpredictable Funding Methods

- Relies mostly on volatile public funding to pay youth wages
 - In the Summer Youth Employment Program
 - Around 75% of funding is from government TANF funds (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)
- Employer partners typically don't contribute financially
- Funding and school engagement varies year to year
 - Makes long-term planning and sustainability more difficult
 - We need more consistent, predictable, and efficient systems





Part 2: Proposed Solutions

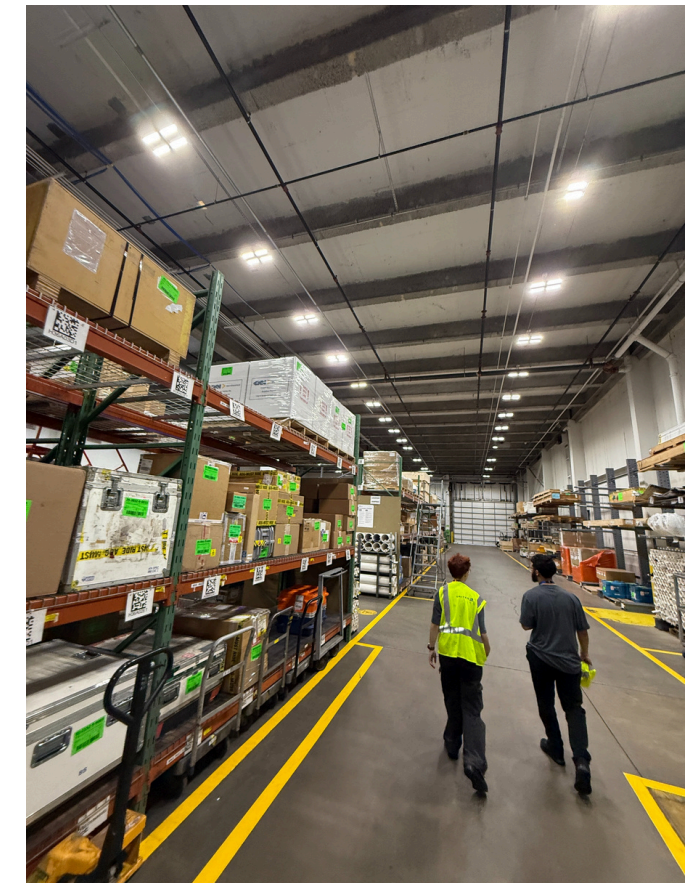
01

Mentorship and Career Pathways



Mentorship and Career Pathways

- **Maximizing Youth Workforce Development Impact**
 - Specialized programs like Argonaut
 - Informal mentorship
 - Multi-year engagement models
 - Industry exposure matters more than job type
- **Low-investment, high-impact strategies for any employer:**
 - Create "exchange" opportunities between different locations
 - Focus on career pathway education alongside daily tasks
- **Participants use quality programs as stepping stones - returning for college applications, career advancement, and professional transitions**

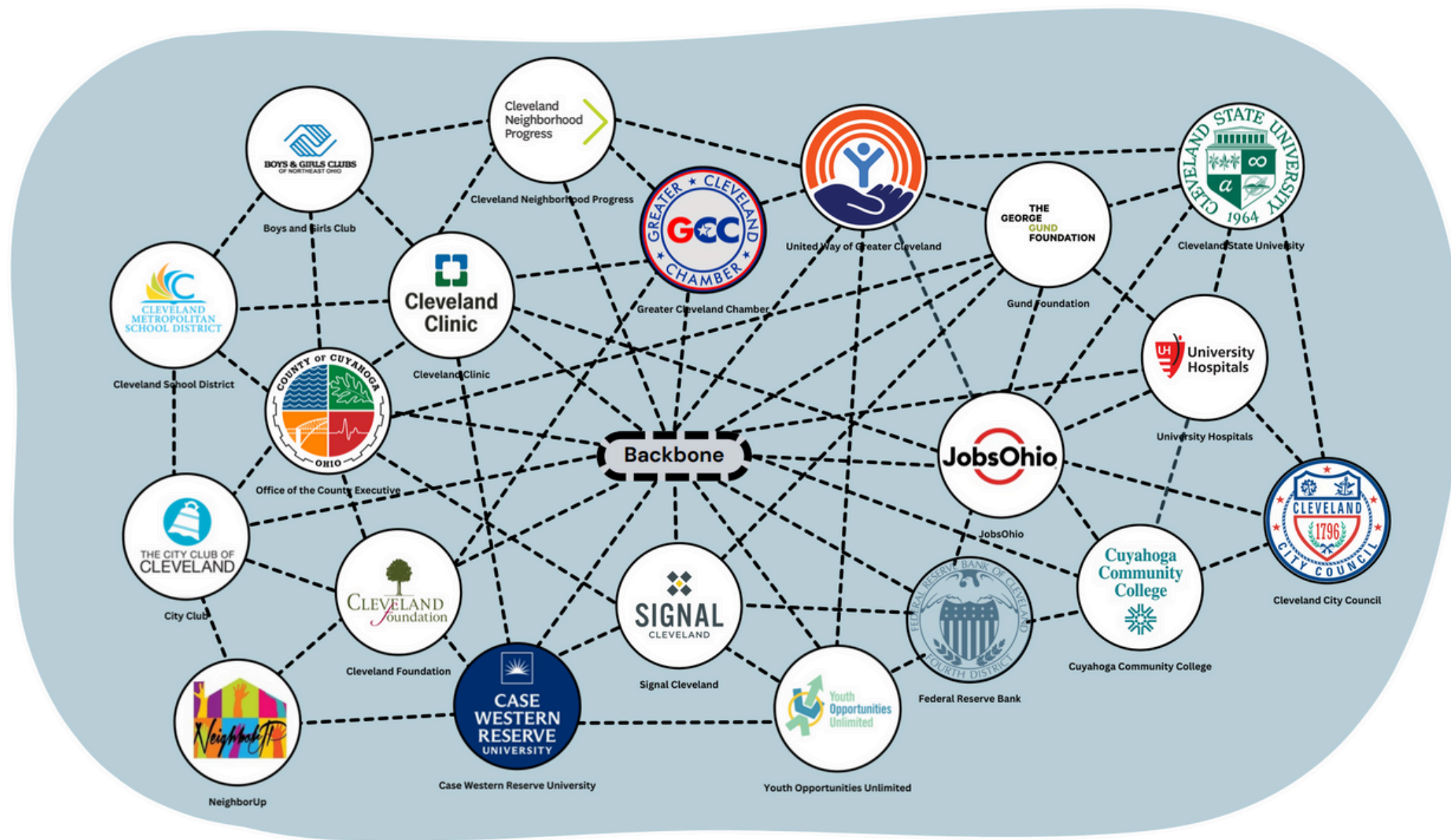




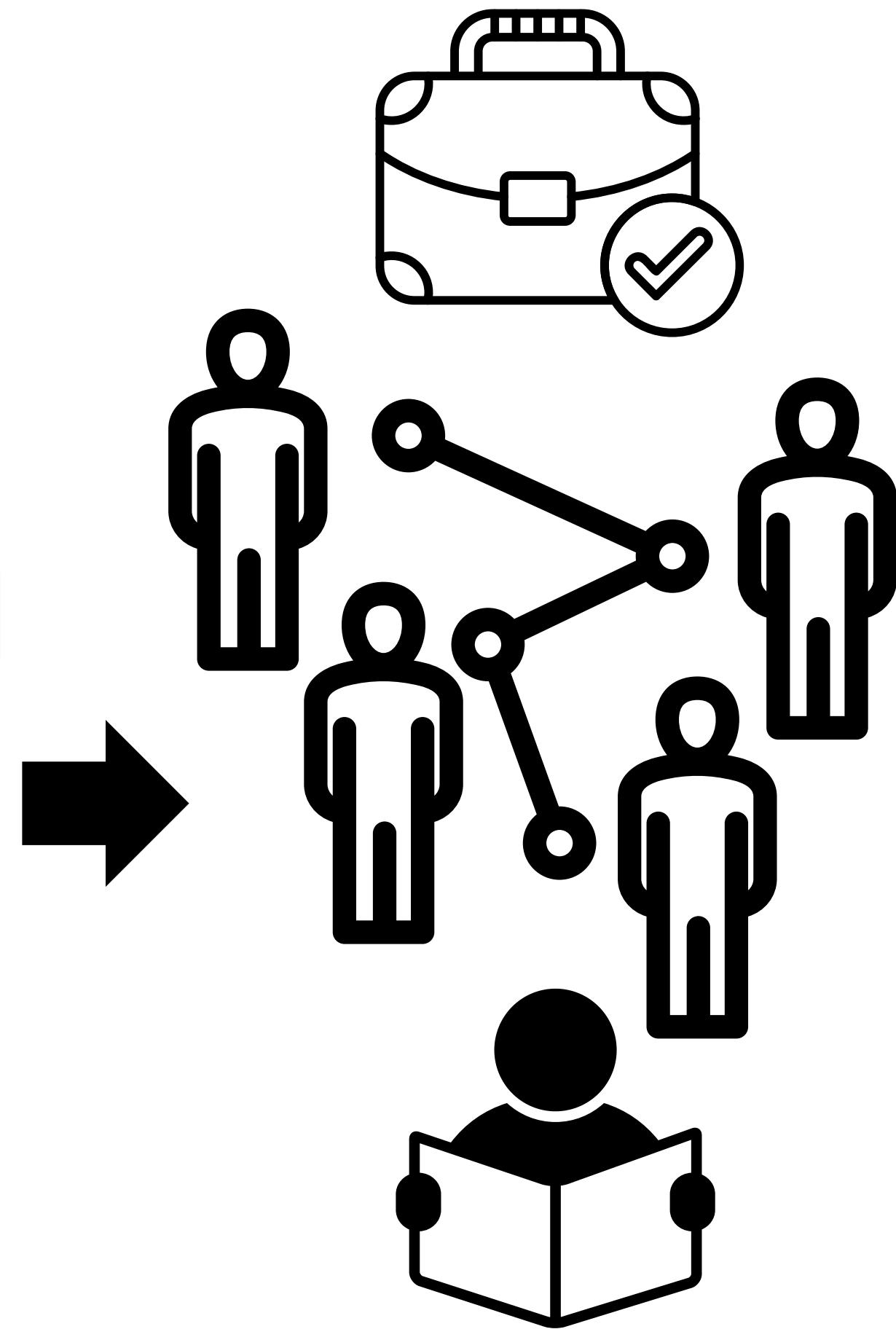
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Cross-Sector Collaboration Opportunities





(Thank you Morehead-Cain '26!)



Cross-Sector Collaboration Opportunities

1. Adopt shared definitions and metrics:

- Ecosystem-wide standards = alignment + avoid costs

2. Unify intake systems into a "**Cleveland Jobs Profile**"

- "Stable" information transfers automatically = less redundancy

3. Coordinate assessment and follow-up systems

- Pool resources to reinforce tracking tools (e.g. data sharing)

4. Focus resources on specialized programming

- Via eliminating administrative/programming redundancy

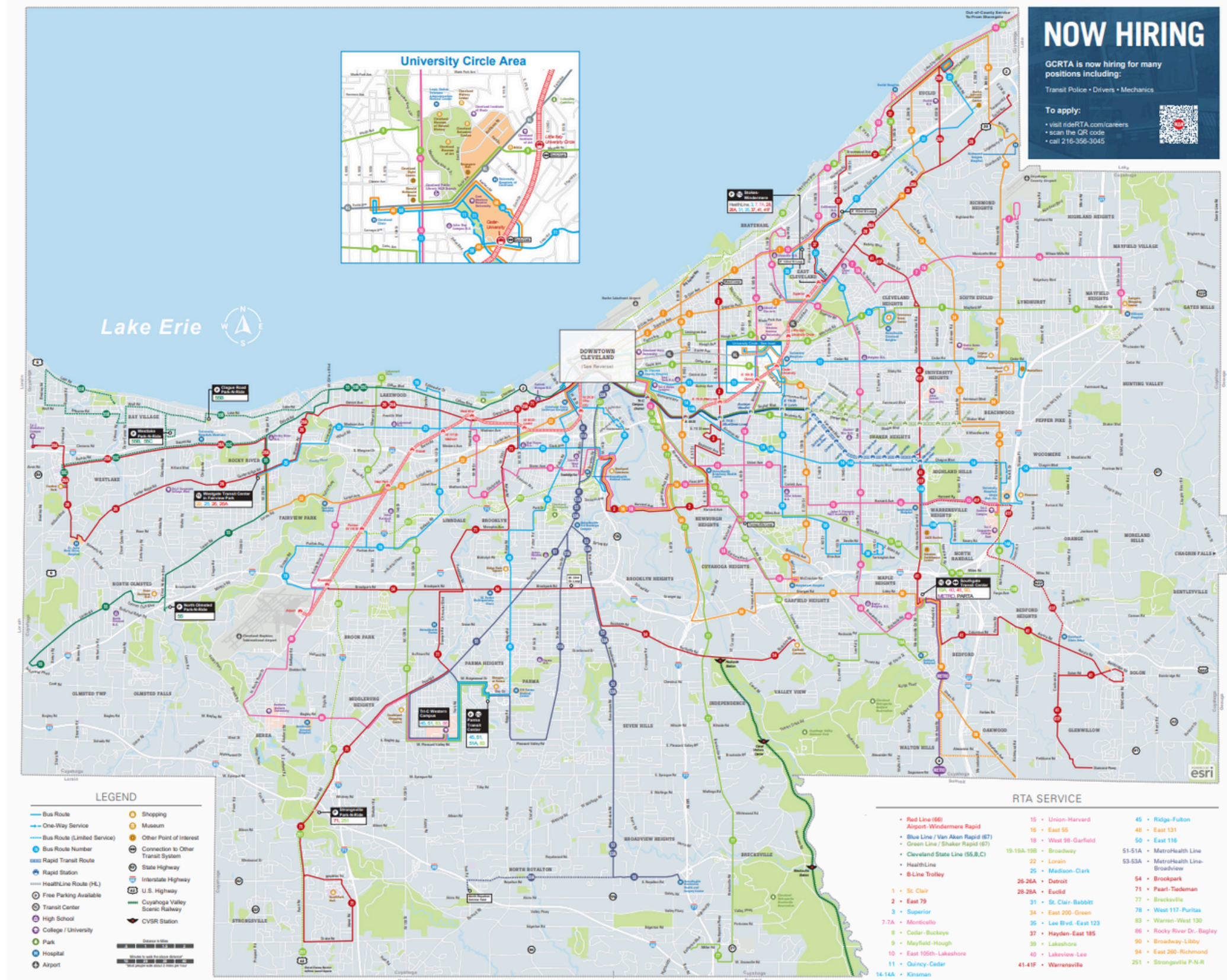
End goal: seamless program transitions, referrals, comprehensive data coverage.



Cross-Sector Collaboration Opportunities

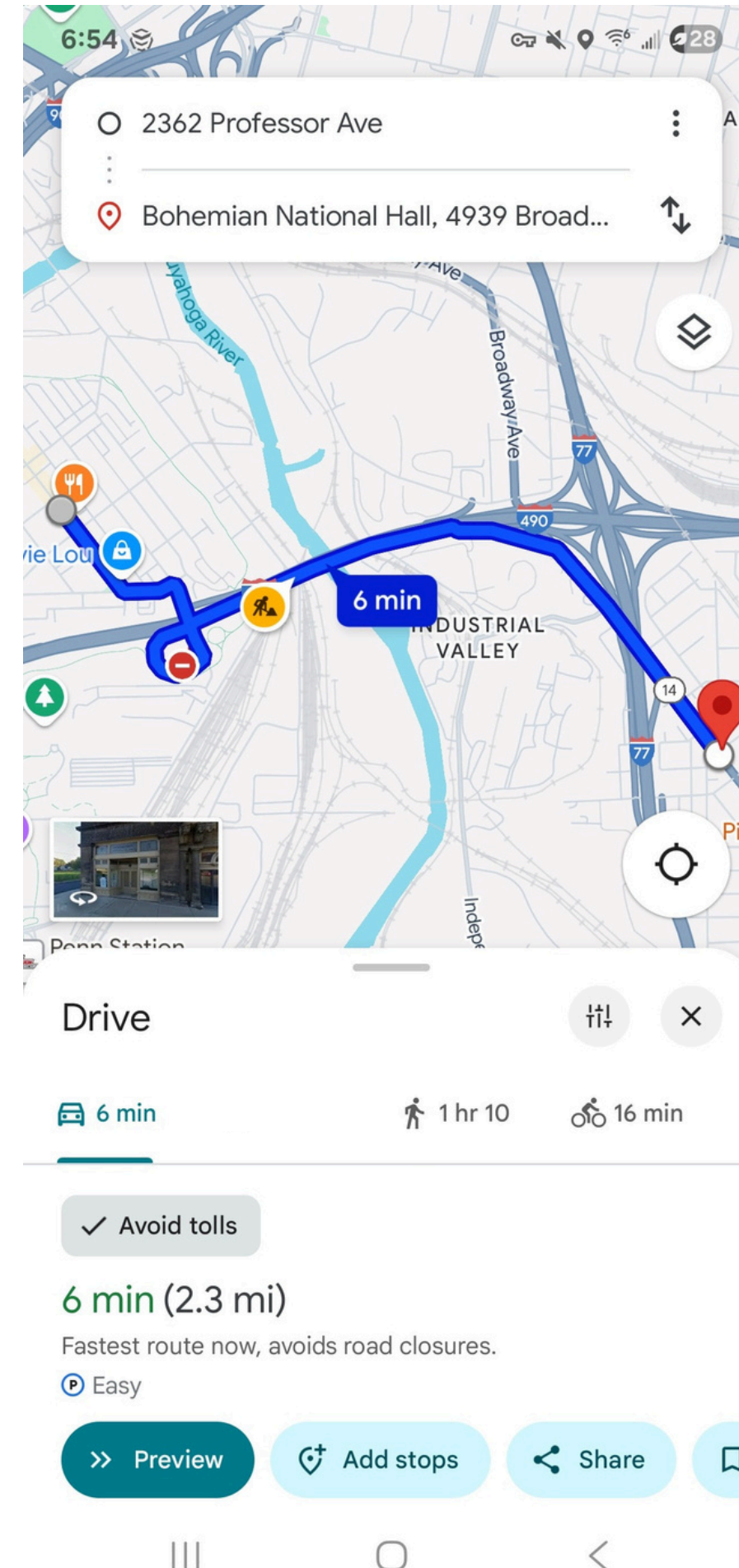
- Work with Greater Cleveland RTA
- Make direct requests, NOT general suggestions
- Use technology
- Input students address data and employer address data with transportation data and run AI simulations

Let's take a look at a sample simulation...



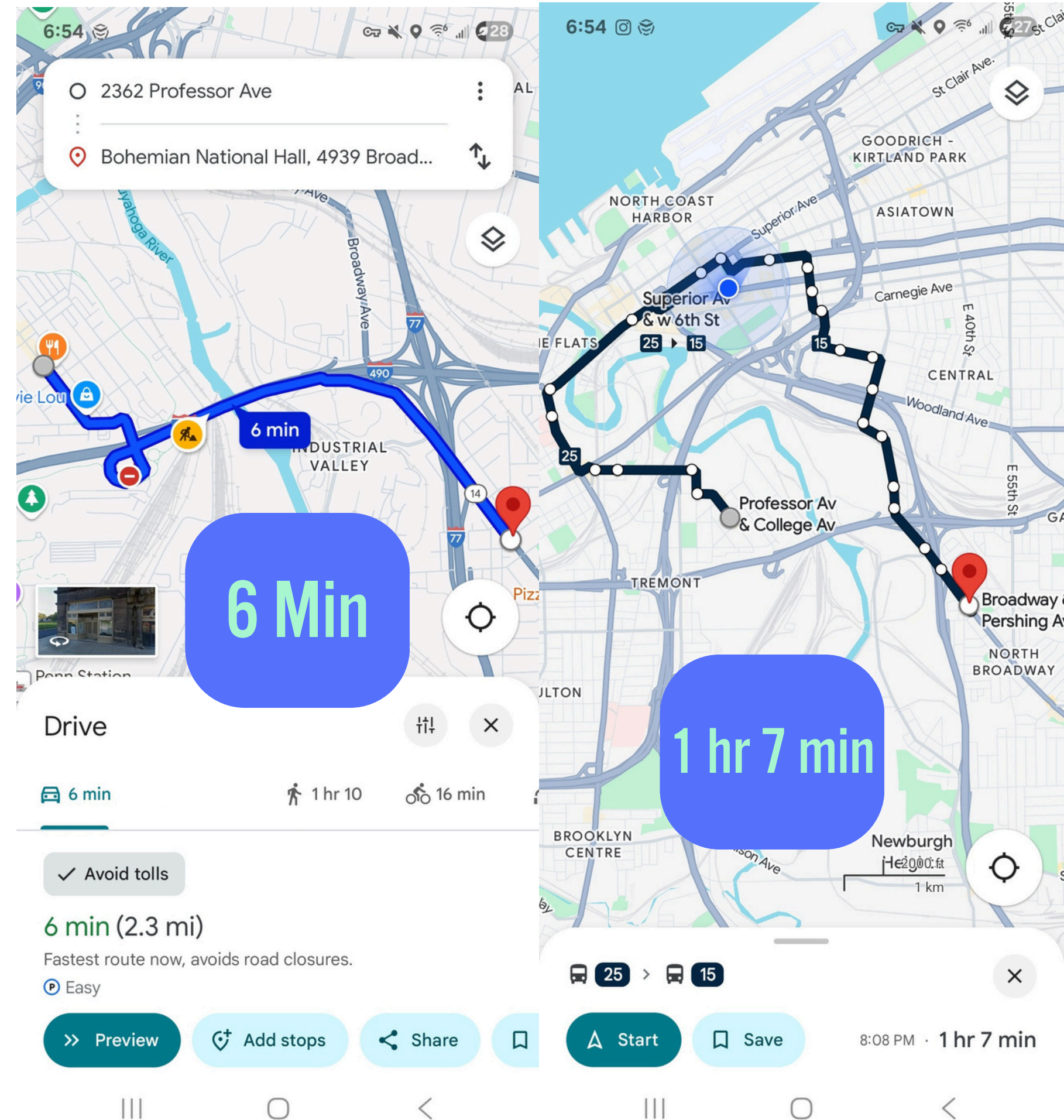
Cross-Sector Collaboration

- Sample simulation run through Google's AI
- Processing time 10 seconds
- Immediately flags inefficient routes
- With further simulation data, it will generate newer efficient routes for RTA
- Send the data and request changes to RTA
- IT'S FREE!!!



Cross-Sector Collaboration

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03

Strengthening the Y.O.U. Brand



Strengthening the Y.O.U. Brand

- **Challenge:** Participants credit employers, not Y.O.U., for summer experience opportunities
- **Solutions:**
 - Create "Y.O.U. Field Day" events connecting participants with peers and job coaches
 - Emphasize Y.O.U. branding during every step of programming processes
- **Impact:** Build Y.O.U.-specific memories, increase alumni engagement, foster long-term organizational loyalty



Strengthening the Y.O.U. Brand

- Targeted media packages can be sent to
 - Investors
 - Lobbyists
 - Employers
 - Community members
- Communicating qualitative impact is essential
- Short form videos can be produced in large scale to help social media engagement

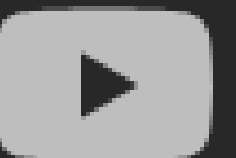




[Watch video on YouTube](#)

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04

Partnership with existing systems



Partnership with Existing Systems

- Leverage actors that already collect employment/wage data (educational institutions, employers, and government agencies): **from administrative burden into a strategic tool.**
- Building relationships amongst community actors helps lobbying efforts, future collaborations, etc.
 - E.g. Tri-C transportation schemes



Partnership with Existing Systems

Business strategies for improved consistency:

- Multiple lines in the water
 - Government funding
 - Philanthropic funding
 - Alumni funding
- Long-term plans and long-term deals
 - 3-5 year plans
 - 3-5 year investments
- Deals more favorable to Y.O.U.
 - Can we get funding from employers?
 - Can employers provide transportation?



Kids
Don't check email
They
Change numbers
And they
Move!



05

Y.O.U. Thrive: The Mobile App



Log In




Welcome Back!

Email

your@email.com

Password

Log In

 Sign In with Google

[Forgot Password?](#)

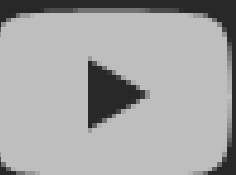
[Don't have an account? Sign up.](#)



[Watch video on YouTube](#)

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Y.O.U. Thrive

now

New message from advisor



Y.O.U. Thrive

now

Reminder: Please bring your birth certificate to the meeting tomorrow.

100% Free



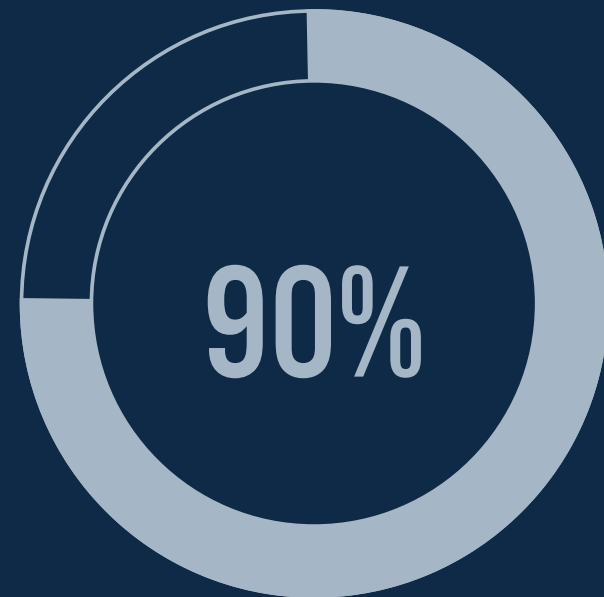
Firebase



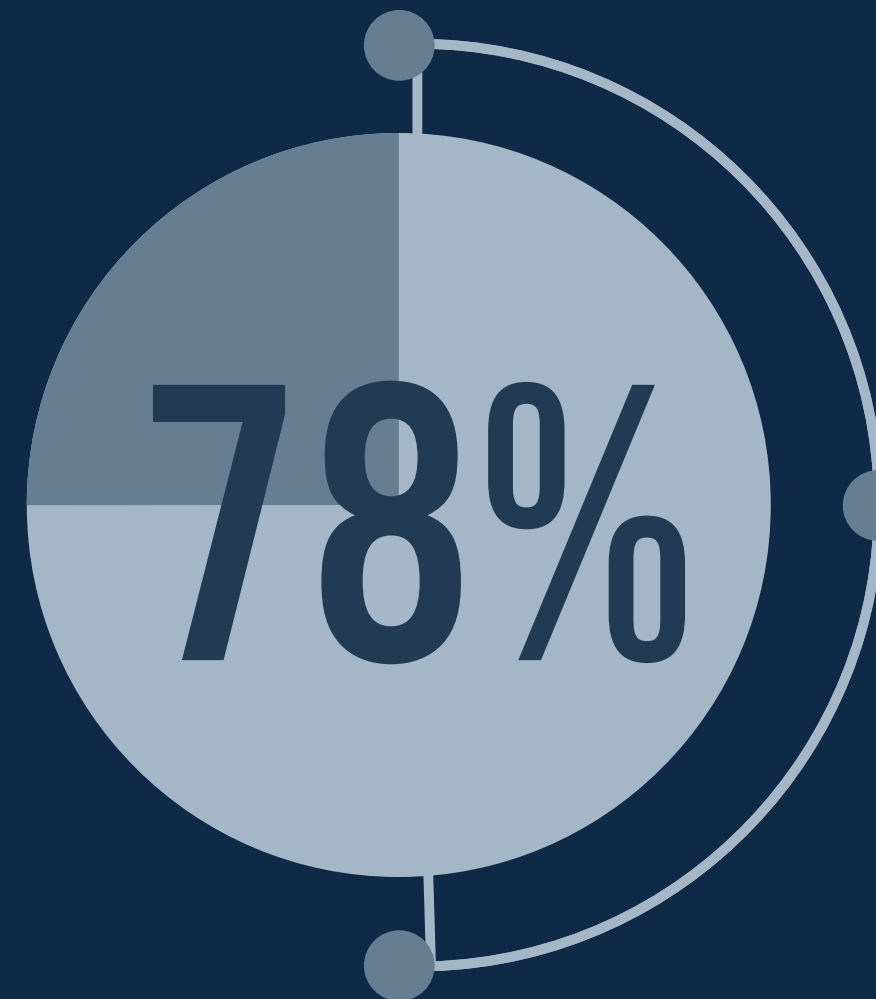
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Alumni engagement strategies





American
adults 18-65
who use
Google DAILY

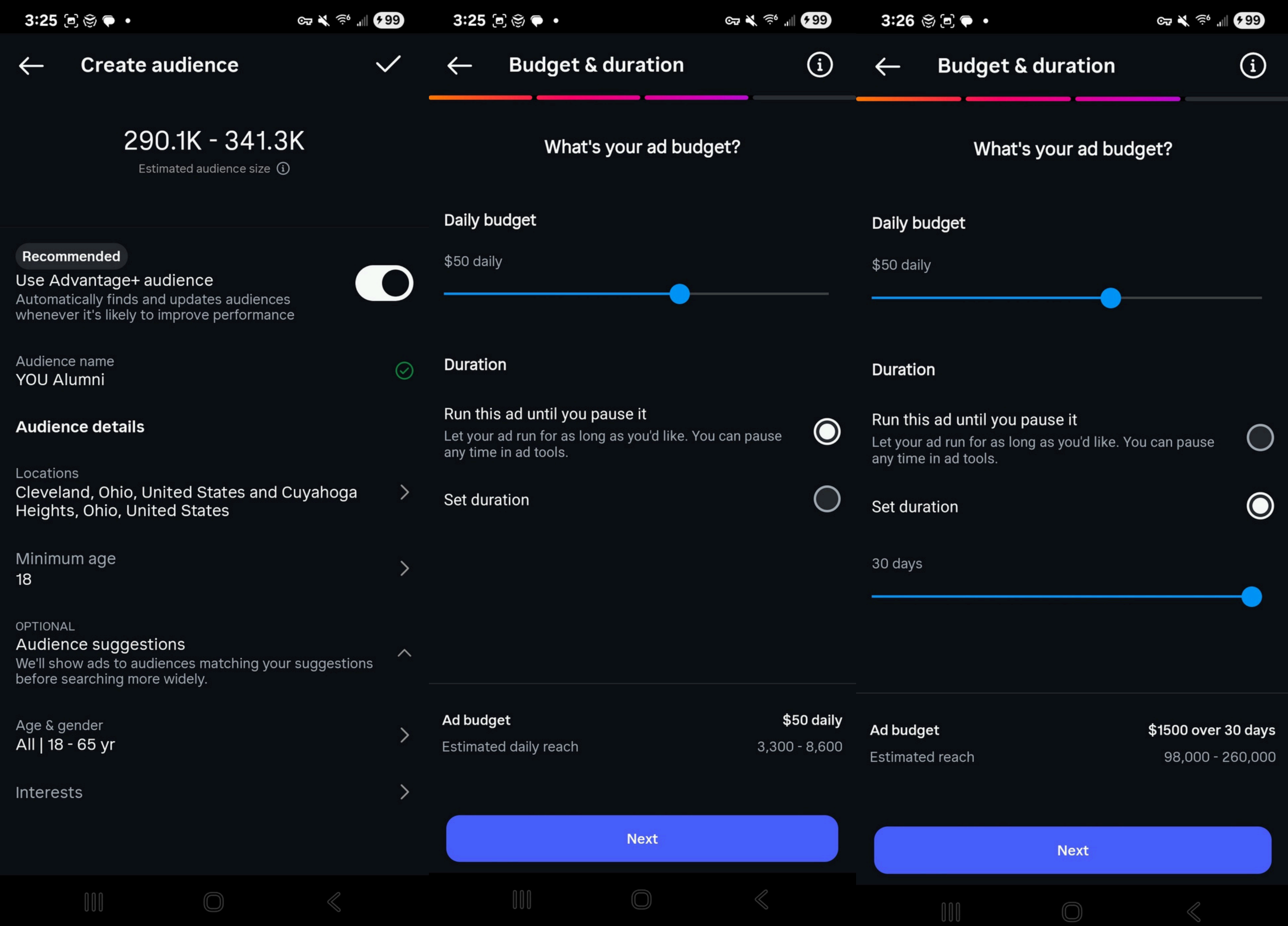


Facebook

American adults
18-65 using...

Instagram

SNS Advertising



SMS Advertising

**DID YOU PARTICIPATE IN
SUMMER EMPLOYMENT?**

**JOIN THE
Y.O.U.
ALUMNI
NETWORK!**



GIVE BACK!
YOU CAN HELP
CLEVELAND
YOUTH WITH
ONE
CLICK

JOIN THE NETWORK



Youth
Opportunities
Unlimited

FREE ADVERTISING



Let's run a story on finding Y.O.U. alumni.

- Cleveland specific
- Education related
- Youth related
- Philanthropy related

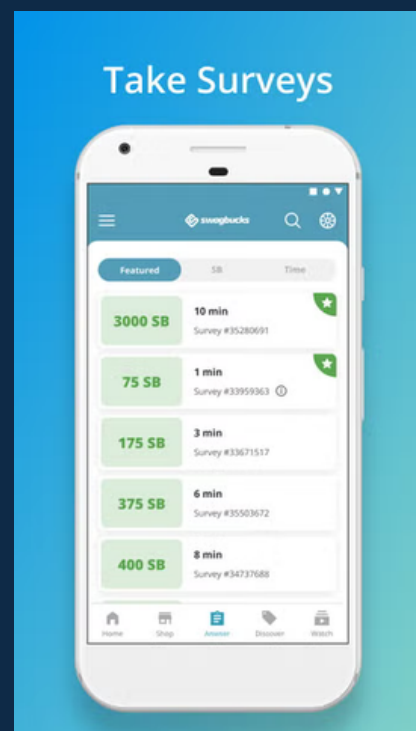


Surveys

- SHORT
- SIMPLE
- INCENTIVIZED



Swagbucks, points system
Alumni network



Appendix Item B: Example Survey

Page 1: Authentication

1. Please enter your identification number to continue:

i. *(Short text entry, required)*

Page 2: Survey Questions (Max 6)

1. How much impact did your Y.O.U. experience have on your current job situation?

i. *(Single-select scale, 1–5. Example: No impact, Slight Impact, Moderate Impact, Strong Impact, Very Strong Impact)*

2. Are you currently employed?

a. Yes, and it's been more than 90 days

b. Yes, but less than 90 days

c. No

3. Overall, what salary bracket are you in?

a. \$0 - \$11,600

b. \$11,601 - \$47,150

c. \$47,151 - \$100,525

d. \$100,526 - \$191,950

e. \$191,951 - \$243,725

f. \$243,726 - \$609,350

g. \$609,351+

4. Have you been contacted by Y.O.U. for any events or opportunities in the past 6 months?

a. Yes

b. No

5. Would you like help connecting to any additional resources (e.g., housing, transportation, mental health, training)?

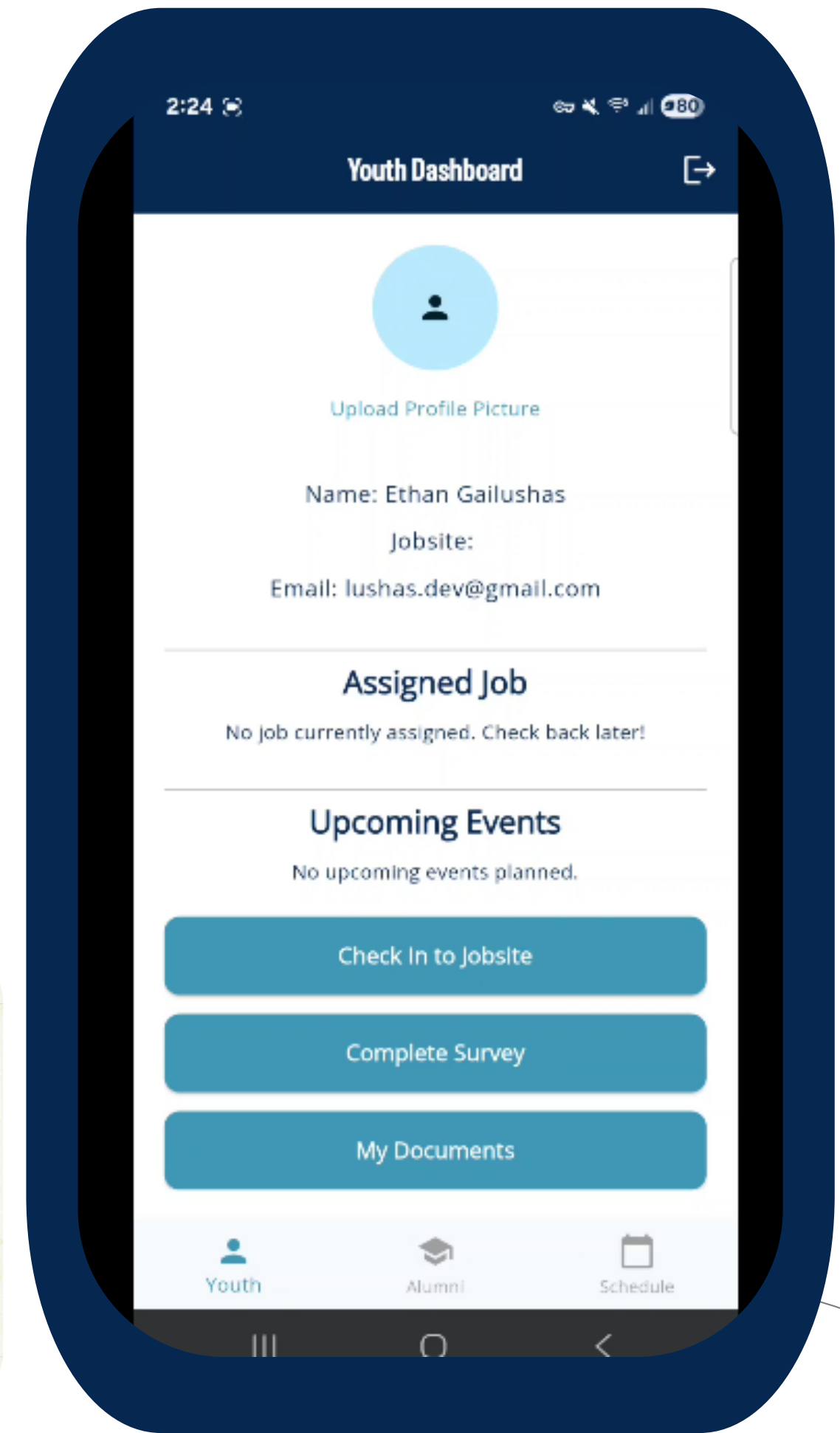
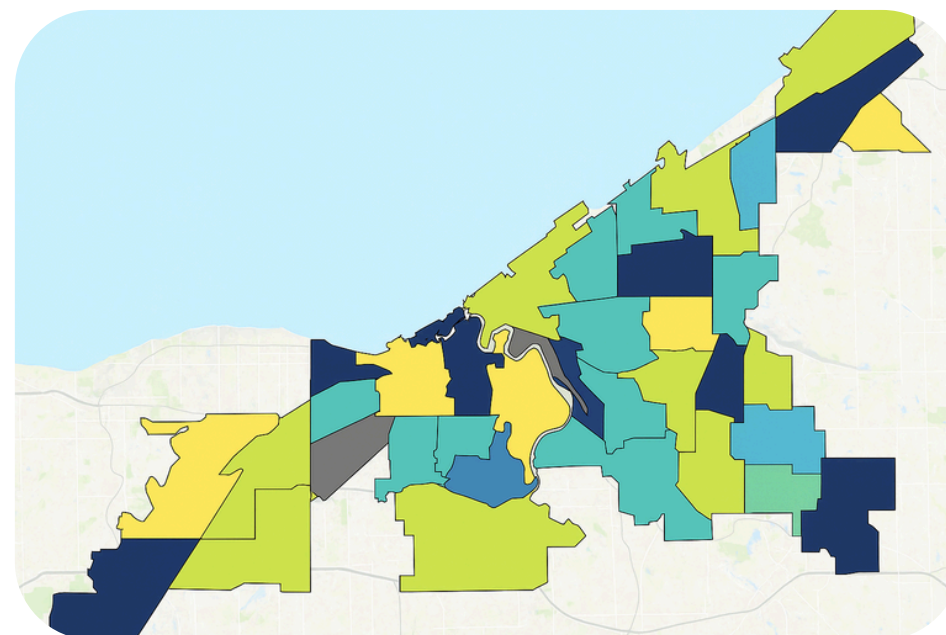
a. Yes

i. *(If "Yes") Which resources do you need most? (Short text response)*

b. No

Long-term Tracking Methodologies

- Shared data systems
 - “Cleveland profile”
 - Secure, participant-controlled digital identity.
 - Connects employers and employees.
 - Easy communication.
 - Easy survey medium.



Conclusion

Conclusion

1. Metrics: sustained, predictable wage growth; job retention; economic self-sufficiency; wealth building

2. Key transformations: cooperative intake/data systems; technology solutions; funding diversification; brand identity & meaningful programming; collaboration on transportation

3. Long/short term: while most solutions will take long periods of time to realize, our mockups are short-term previews.





Acknowledgements

Thank you!

- **Amanda Fogerty:** Always offering support, being incredibly helpful throughout this process, and showing unwavering commitment to improving outcomes for Cleveland's youth
- **Interviewees:** Thank you for your time, wisdom, and generous sharing of perspectives and experiences during our conversations
- **RPM International:** Being our generous co-host in Cleveland, inviting us to insightful community events
- **Morehead-Cain Foundation:** Thank you for funding this opportunity, allowing us to be here, and enabling us to engage with Cleveland's workforce development community
- **Youth Opportunities Unlimited:** Thank you for hosting us, allowing us to be part of your amazing mission, and providing generous, abundant support throughout our summer.





Questions?



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