

**Application Section I: Community Connectors Program Description**

1. **The target population is students grades 5–12. Identify the grade level or levels at each school that your program will be targeting. Programs may serve students in one or more grade levels.**

The Youngstown Business and Education Community Connections (YBECC) program will target and be available to all Youngstown City School District students in grades 11–12. The district serves approximately 750 students in grades 11–12 across four schools: Choffin Career and Technical Center, Chaney High School, East High School, and the Youngstown Early College.

2. **Provide the number of youth in each grade level and at each school your program proposes to serve.**

While all 11th and 12th grade students in Youngstown City School District will have the opportunity to participate in this program, we anticipate that only a subset of students will participate at first with the goal being to build momentum and increase participation over time. Fifty (50) students at Choffin Career and Technical Center currently participate in a job shadowing and internship program, though it is not offer all of the services and options that this new program will provide. Since this school already has students engaged, however, it will likely have a higher participation rate in Year 1 than the other schools. Following are estimates for the number of participating students at each school.

	<b>Year 1: 2015–2016</b>	<b>Year 2: 2016–2017</b>	<b>Year 3: 2017–2018</b>
Choffin Career & Technical Center	75	100	125
Chaney High School	25	50	75
East High School	25	50	75
Youngstown Early College	25	25	25
<b>Total Students Served</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>300</b>

3. **Select one: Which of the following best describes the proposed project? Select one.**

- A.  Totally new program developed by this organization
- B.  Replication of an existing model in use by others  
- Please provide the name of this model.
- C.  Expansion of an existing program within the applicant organization
- D.  Extension of an existing program to a new setting

4. **Please describe your project. How will it address each of the five Community Connectors core principles and what outcomes will you use to measure success.**

The Youngstown Business and Education Community Connections (YBECC) program is a mutually beneficial partnership between the Regional Chamber, Alliance for Congregational Transformation Influencing our Neighborhoods (ACTION), Youngstown City School District (YCSD), Eastern Gateway Community College, and the City of Youngstown to connect high school students with local area businesses and adult mentors. By leveraging the power of collaboration and the vast amount of human talents and financial resources in the Mahoning Valley community, the program will help to better prepare students to succeed academically and in the workforce.

The YBECC program will positively impact student hopefulness and workforce readiness by matching students to mentoring, job shadowing, internship, and externship opportunities in the local business community. The school district will engage students in the program and prepare them with basic job skills such as resume writing, interviewing, time management, team collaboration, and dressing for success. Based upon student career interests, available positions in the participating businesses, and adult mentor profiles, students and mentors will be matched for a yearlong mentoring and career-based working experience. By leveraging the unique assets of each partner organization from the education, business, and community perspectives, this program will prepare students to be successful young adults by focusing

on basic job skills, career-specific knowledge and skills, and social-emotional skills such as goal-setting, self-determination, and perseverance. Further, the mentorship relationships will ensure students have a positive relationship with a caring, responsible adult whom they can trust and go to for guidance.

As successful professionals, many mentors may already have an intuitive sense about how to instill positive behaviors in young people, and they certainly will have valuable career-related talents, knowledge, and skills to share with students. This program, however, will also provide them training and resources to increase hope among students. Research defines hope as the belief in a better future, confidence in oneself to achieve their goals for a better future, and an awareness of potential obstacles and multiple pathways for realizing these goals (Lopez, 2013). This directly aligns with the Community Connectors grant principles of hope building, including: 1) setting goals to be prepared for 21st century careers, 2) building character, 3) developing pathways to achievement, 4) building resiliency, and 5) believing in a positive future. Once recruited and screened, adult mentors from local area businesses will receive professional learning and resources to help them understand hope and why it is critical for students, and to equip them with concrete strategies to build hope during their time with students. In addition, the program will offer at least two large-group events throughout the year where mentors can learn more strategies and be inspired by national and community speakers. Business professionals, community members, and students might also choose to attend these events as well.

Outcomes of a successful program will include:

- Student, business, and mentor engagement and participation comparable to the estimates provided above (150 students served in 2015–2016, 225 students in 2016–2017, 300 students in 2016–17);
- Positive feedback from students, business leaders, and mentors about their experience and perceived benefits of the program;
- Renewal commitments from businesses between program years;
- Student growth in basic job knowledge and skills, career-specific knowledge and skills, and hopefulness (as measured by pre- and post-assessments);
- Improvements in student academic achievement, graduation, health and well-being, and college- and career-readiness; and
- Productive working relationships and increased collaboration between the school district, businesses, faith-based community, and city government.

**5. Please describe the specific activities your program will conduct.**

The program activities can be summarized as follows:

- Program Planning, Coordination, and Oversight
- Outreach to Students and Families, Acceptance, and Student Preparation
- Outreach to Businesses, Site Selection, and Preparation
- Interviews and Student-Mentor Matching
- Job Experience and Mentoring
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Public Advocacy and Engagement

**Program Planning, Coordination, and Oversight:** As the lead organization, the Regional Chamber will immediately convene all partners and initiate a planning process to ensure that the program can begin operating at the start of the 2015–2016 school year. Through a series of working meetings, the leadership team will develop and finalize all aspects of the program, add further detail to the implementation plan, and set efforts in motion to recruit businesses and mentors. After the program is initiated, the Chamber will continue to oversee the program and convene regular opportunities for partners to meet, review interim results, and plan ongoing implementation.

**Outreach to Students and Families, Acceptance, and Student Preparation:** At the start of each program year, the district program coordinator will work with school staff to make students, parents, and school counselors aware of this opportunity, including benefits and requirements. Upon declaring their intention to participate, students will be invited to an orientation session where they will fill out a short survey about their career interests. The program coordinator will use these surveys to match students to open positions. The program coordinator will also lead at least three workshops at the schools for students

to develop skills related to writing resumes, interviewing, time management, team management and collaboration, and dressing for success. With the support of a part-time school-based site coordinator (job coach) at each high school, the coordinator will also work to ensure students have the necessary transportation and uniforms for their job placements. As an incentive, student participants will have an opportunity to receive mentoring opportunities as well as drivers training courses, high school course credit, recreational field trip opportunities, and real-world job site experiences.

**Outreach to Businesses, Site Selection, and Preparation:** All partners will play a role in reaching out to businesses and securing their involvement. Partners will recruit adult mentors within businesses from several existing networks. The first network is the Regional Chamber's membership base of 2,500 business partners/members. Additionally, the City provides tax abatement incentives to businesses (35 currently) with one of the conditions being that these companies help train, hire, and employ City residents. This program will provide an organized means for businesses to fulfill this promise and effectively engage local youth. Finally, the school district currently offers 17 workforce development programs and each has an advisory committee comprised of between five and twelve local professionals. These advisory committees can help to recruit other businesses as well as become involved in the programs themselves. Once business leaders agree to participate and appoint mentors, the program coordinator will conduct background checks to ensure the safety of students. Additionally, the program will provide an orientation and set of resources to prepare mentors to begin working with students.

**Interviews and Student-Mentor Matching:** After participating students and mentors have been identified, the district program coordinator will facilitate a matching process based upon student interests, available openings, and geographic proximity of the school and business. Students will be matched to an appropriate mentoring, internship, externship, and/or job shadowing opportunity. Students will need to interview for the position, which will enable them to demonstrate knowledge gained through related workshop participation. Students will also provide a resume as a part of the interview process. All of these opportunities will be guided learning experiences for students.

**Job Experience and Mentoring:** Matched students will engage in a year-round learning experience within a real work environment, while also benefitting from the guidance of an adult mentor. Equipped with the hope-building strategies shared in the orientation, mentors will help students engage in career goal setting, practice discipline and perseverance, make positive personal choices, and develop confidence in their abilities to succeed. To further aid mentors in this work, program leaders will send monthly communications and provide at least two learning opportunities during the year. These communications and learning opportunities share new tips, tools, and ideas for supporting student hopefulness. The program will sponsor at least two speaker/learning events focused on how to build hope, develop character, and support students in their success, with mentors being strongly encouraged to attend at least one of the events. In this "win win" arrangement, meanwhile businesses will benefit from the opportunity to expose students to the possibilities their industry has to offer and by creating a pipeline of future employees.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** Throughout the course of the program, the leadership team will coordinate the collection and review of data to ensure the program is successful in impacting student hopefulness and workforce readiness. The district program coordinator will manage a process with students and mentors to record mentoring hours, student attendance, mentor feedback, and student knowledge and experience data. In addition, the program coordinator and school-based job coaches will visit the work sites regularly to interface with the mentors and assess progress. Once mid-way through the year and once at the end of the program year, the leadership team will review all data, discuss program strengths and opportunities for improvement, and identify any changes needed for future program years. The team will also monitor academic achievement, high school graduation, and workforce/postsecondary enrollment data.

**Public Advocacy and Engagement:** In addition to the activities that students and mentors will experience, the program's success and sustainability will depend on public support and generating interest from businesses and future funders. Led by ACTION and the district's Communications Director, the leadership team will develop a plan for communicating the program's value to the community at large. This may include efforts to position the program as a successful, innovative, and attractive opportunity for both businesses and students, as well as identifying opportunities to collect and share success stories from

participating students, mentors, businesses, and partner organization members. One idea that will be explored is the possibility of providing a “badge” to participating businesses that they can proudly display on their billboards, marketing materials, and place of business. The City of Youngstown can also play an active role in sharing good news about the program and highlighting successes.

**6. Discuss how the program will utilize [best practices](#) to ensure program success. Are there successful mentor programs after which you will model your program? Please name the program and describe what makes it successful.**

The YBECC program draws from research and best practices from a variety of perspectives, including the positive psychology, education, and economic development fields. Research defines hope as the belief in a positive future and in one’s own ability to achieve their goals. Hope is not just about optimism and dreams, however; rather, it requires problem solving and perseverance in the face of challenges (Lopez, 2013). Further, research shows that hope is malleable and not associated with one’s race, socio-economic status, or intellectual abilities. It is something that adults—educators, parents, and mentors—can share and develop in young minds. The YBCEE program will draw on this research and best practices identified by Shane Lopez, Robert Barr, Angela Duckworth, Battelle for Kids, and others. Further, this program will ensure that students are prepared to secure work in the future by focusing on social-emotional and basic job skills. The Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills (n.d.) reports that the most important skills are professionalism, teamwork, oral communication, and ethics and social responsibility.

This program also utilizes best practices related to successful career and technical education programs and partnerships between the business, K–12 education, higher education, and civic government sectors. Effective career and technical education programs provide relevance, which increases student engagement, effort, and hope because they can see how academic learning can be applied in the “real world” work environment. Recommendations from the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE, 2010) state that “students enrolled in CTE experience career pathways through job shadowing, internships and relationships with employers...find what they like to do and what their passions are” and experience “tangible connections to career areas [that] bring purpose to students’ learning and intentionality to their plans for the future.” Providing a mentor within the context of a professional job setting will help students set career-relevant goals; identify necessary steps toward those goals such as completing high school, enrolling in postsecondary programs, and making positive life decisions; and receive the support and encouragement needed to pursue these goals.

This program will also be modeled after current successful programs in Ohio such as The Miami Valley Career Center Pre-Apprenticeship Program, Upper Valley Career Center Pre-Apprenticeship Program, The Pioneer Career Center Internship Program, and The Great Oaks Placement Program. These current programs will be helpful as we develop a new program unique to Youngstown.

**7. Describe your organization’s previous experience with this type of program OR a program of a similar scale, including previous evaluations, size and duration of previously implemented programs, goals, and outcomes.**

YCSD currently operates a job shadowing and internship program for approximately 50 students at Choffin Career and Technical Center. Student are placed in local businesses/industries representing the following career pathways: healthcare, food service, manufacturing, social services, construction, retail, advertising, media, and technology. Through this program, students are able to explore career fields while also earning high school credit. Student participants have demonstrated the ability to set their career goals, exhibit positive character, and demonstrate workforce readiness. This effective program and the district program coordinator’s experience leading it will serve as a critical foundation for the new YBECC program.

In addition, the Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber’s relevant previous experiences include creating the Steel to Scholars program, which promotes excellence in education, as well as founding the P-16 Council from Trumbull, Mahoning, Columbiana, and Ashtabula counties. Relevant prior experiences for other partner organizations include the City of Youngstown’s efforts to engage local businesses in education and workforce training agreements, ACTION’s advocacy efforts to establish Eastern Gateway Community College and successfully educating voters on critical bond levies, and Eastern Gateway

Community College's active involvement in the existing career program at Choffin Career and Technical Center.

**8. What will make this collaboration successful? What will the indicator(s) of success be for this collaboration?**

Whatever the type of education and business partnership, the benefits must be realized by all partners or the arrangement is not a partnership (Grobe et al., 1993). In successful partnerships, the benefits radiate from one partner to another, resulting in rewards for all constituencies. Ultimately, YBECC benefits must be realized and perceived by everyone involved, including the students and their families, business leaders and adult mentors, and all partner organizations. Success in this regard will be judged by whether all of these stakeholders indicate that they experienced benefits as a result of the program. Ideally, the program's success will stimulate organizational partnerships and collaborations beyond the scope of this project in a way that further strengthens the Youngstown economy and community.

Developing and maintaining a solid partnership will require a great deal of communication and coordination. To ensure effective relationship building and strategic collaboration, the leadership team will need to give the committed time and attention to this program. The Regional Chamber's role in convening and coordinating regular leadership team meetings will be critical to ensure common understanding and progress toward key milestones among all partner organizations. Further, regular communications to program participants including students and families, school staff, business leaders, and mentors will be important. An indicator of success in this regard will be the presence of consistent communications between all partners and collaborative decision-making.

Clarity of agreed upon roles and responsibilities will also be critical for success. This partnership has the potential to be successful due to the unique assets that each partner organization brings and how roles have been identified based upon these assets. During program initiation in spring 2015, these roles and responsibilities will be revisited and even further specified. A detailed implementation plan including key milestones, timelines, and responsibilities will be developed by all partners to ensure a common understanding of expectations. All partner organizations will actively contribute to and take responsibility for the success of the program. Related to roles, success will heavily depend on the effectiveness and contributions of all partner leads (i.e., the leadership team) and the district program coordinator who will work directly with students, families, and mentors. The leadership team has developed and reviewed a job description for this role. Finally, program success will require attention to evaluation, feedback loops, and opportunities to revisit programmatic details between years. Outcome data and feedback will be collected and reviewed fully at least once each year as part of a continuous improvement process.

## **Application Section II: Program Management**

**9. Leadership Team:**

The YBECC leadership team will be comprised of one representative from each partner organization. The team will meet and communicate with one another regularly to ensure effective collaboration. In addition to the individuals comprising the leadership team, each organization may involve additional personnel and additional organizations may be engaged as part of this work.

**Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber – Nick Santucci, Manager, Education & Workforce Development.** Mr. Santucci leads educational attainment and workforce efforts on behalf of the Chamber and its members. Mr. Santucci's primary responsibilities related to the Youngstown Business and Education Community Connections (YBECC) program will include convening all partners in regular leadership team meetings, engaging the Chamber's member businesses in the program, and managing the program budget and timelines. Mr. Santucci is a 2009 graduate of Howland High School and a 2013 graduate from John Carroll University (JCU). In his four years at JCU, he participated in an inner city service learning program called We, The People, where Nick tutored inner city school children once a week on the U.S. Constitution. His passion and love for helping the community and their families has allowed him the opportunity to serve at the Chamber and to lead this project. The Chamber's relevant prior experience includes the creation of a program called Steel to Scholars, which promotes excellence in education, as well as founders of P-16 Council from Trumbull, Mahoning, Columbiana, and Ashtabula counties.

Additionally, the Chamber's involvement in helping to better the standards of education in the area has obtained support from hundreds of businesses within the area.

**ACTION – Rose Carter, Director/Organizer.** Ms. Carter serves as the director of ACTION, a grassroots community organization uniting faith groups, schools, neighborhood organizations, tenant councils, and other non-profits to work for social justice. ACTION's mission is to create a safer community, improve the quality of education, provide a voice for young people, support the rights of immigrants, and strengthen communities in Mahoning Valley. ACTION is presently composed of 19 institutions ranging from inner city African American churches to suburban Catholic Churches, and has an active leadership base of approximately 100 community leaders who are involved in many organizing campaigns. Recent achievements under Ms. Carter's leadership include successfully educating voters on two critical bond levies, leading a signature campaign in support of establishing Eastern Gateway Community College, and convening key community leaders to address issues of urban sprawl and inner city decay. Ms. Carter has an infectious passion for educating the city's youth and for bringing people and organizations together to solve issues in the community. She compares it to starting a business: "You see the potential in something and want it to grow." Ms. Carter's primary responsibilities for this program will include advocacy and communication efforts to build public awareness and support for the program, spearheading sustainability planning and fundraising; and providing professional development for the mentors related to building hope.

**Youngstown City School District – Joseph Meranto, Executive Director of Career Technical and Adult Education.** Mr. Meranto has served as the Executive Director of Career Technical and Adult education for the Youngstown City School District for the last twelve years. In this capacity, Mr. Meranto is responsible for the supervision of all career technical programs, including the 14 programs housed at Choffin Career and Technical Center, three programs at the Chaney High School campus, and the new 7th and 8th grade Career Connections program called Discovery 3 at the East campus. Mr. Meranto is quite active at the state level in the area of Career Technical Education and currently is the President-Elect for the Ohio Career Technical Association. As a lifelong Youngstown resident, Mr. Meranto has a passion for not only the students and school district but the entire city as well. He has fostered many partnerships between the city schools and various community groups including the Regional Chamber of Commerce, City of Youngstown and Mayor, and the Mahoning County Commissioners, as well as many state legislators in various capacities. Additionally Mr. Meranto has developed articulation agreements with Eastern Gateway Community College, Youngstown State, Kent State, Akron University and other postsecondary partners to provide credits for students in the career technical programs. Mr. Meranto has also spearheaded efforts to align Choffin with many local business partners, which has included the development of several advisory committees that involve more than 200 local business and industry professionals. Mr. Meranto's role in the YBECC program will be to supervise the district program coordinator who will lead all of the outreach and support for students and families, as well as to ensure that job shadowing and mentorship programs align with the academic and social-emotional needs of students.

**Eastern Gateway Community College – Jerry Klinessmith, Dean of Business, Engineering, and Information Technology.** Jerry Klinessmith has served as an Academic Dean at Eastern Gateway Community College for the past four years. Mr. Klinessmith oversees the Business, Engineering, and Information Technology (BE&IT) departments at the main campus in Steubenville and the sites in Youngstown and Warren, Ohio. This includes the oversight of more than 100 employees and the BE&IT programs including program growth, course development, student issues, and public relations. Prior to this opportunity, Mr. Klinessmith served as HVAC coordinator at Stark State College, where he oversaw the HVAC program that includes the development and growth of the program, 4,000 square feet of lab space, 350 students, one full-time employee, and 15 adjunct instructors. Mr. Klinessmith is also involved in community projects and outside organizations that include Shared Educational Facility project, NOCHE, OMEGA, Rotary, and Steubenville Big Red STEM project. Additionally, Mr. Klinessmith has been administering \$3.5 million in TAACCCT funds from the Department of Labor. These funds will be used to develop machining and welding programs in Youngstown to support students and the local industry. These projects and associations provide an example of the passion Mr. Klinessmith has for the community college students and his commitment to see those students succeed.

**City of Youngstown – T. Sharon Woodberry, Director of Community Planning and Economic Development.** Ms. Woodberry has worked for the City of Youngstown’s Economic Development Office in numerous progressive capacities for 16 years. As Director of Community Planning and Economic Development, she is in communication with local businesses on a daily basis and through this interaction is able to stay abreast of companies’ needs, many of which center around workforce issues. Collaborating on a program that positions city youth for success and job opportunities directly supports the mission of this office to improve the quality of life of city residents and solidify a strong tax base.

**10. A timeline of all major activities must be provided. Assessment, planning and initial training must be completed by September 7, 2015. Services must begin by September 7, 2015.**

<b>Year 1: 2015–2016</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Program Planning	Initiate program planning for the 2015–16 school year, including but not limited to the development of a detailed implementation plan and articulation of program participation requirements and benefits for participating students and businesses.	April – May 2015
Recruitment and Selection of Businesses	Communicate with businesses to encourage and request participation in the program. Multiple networks will be used including the City of Youngstown, Regional Chamber, and Choffin Career Technical and Education Center advisory groups.	June – July 2015
Recruitment, Selection, and Preparation of Mentors	Recruit, screen, and prepare mentors from within the selected businesses. Onboarding will include a program overview and key components of building student hope and increasing workforce readiness.	July – August 2015
Outreach to Schools, Students, and Families	Share information with school administrators and counselors, students, and families regarding the program requirements and benefits. Recruit students to participate.	July – August 2015
Student Acceptance and Preparation for Job Interviews	Accept students and conduct orientation session which will include career interest survey and education on preparing for interviews.	September 2015
Interviews and Student-Mentor Matching	Prepare students to interview with job supervisors. Facilitate a student-mentor/business matching process.	September 2015
Job Experience and Mentorship	Prepare students to engage in a year-round internship, externship, or job shadowing experience with the support of their mentor. Collect attendance data, feedback, and site visit notes.	September 2015 – May 2016
Communications with Participants	Send regular communications to participating students and their families, mentors, and business leaders.	September 2015 – May 2016
Professional Learning/Speaker Events	Plan and convene two speaker events regarding how to foster hope and build character, as part of ongoing professional learning for mentors.	November/ December 2015 and April/May 2016
End-of-Year Review	Review data and feedback, identify successes and opportunities for improvement, and develop plans for Year 2 (2016–17).	May 2016

<b>Year 2: 2016–2017</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Program Planning	Initiate program planning for the 2016–17 school year, including but not limited to the development of a detailed implementation plan and articulation of program participation requirements and benefits for participating students and businesses.	June 2016

<b>Year 2: 2016–2017</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Renewal of Participating Businesses, Recruitment and Selection of New Sites	Communicate with businesses to renew and/or request participation in the program.	June – July 2016
Recruitment, Selection, and Preparation of Mentors	Recruit, screen, and prepare new mentors from within the selected businesses. Communicate with returning mentors to confirm requirements and share any changes for 2016–17.	July – August 2016
Outreach to Schools, Students, and Families	Share information with school administrators and counselors, students, and families regarding the program requirements and benefits. Recruit students to participate.	July – August 2016
Student Acceptance and Preparation for Job Interviews	Accept students and conduct orientation session, which will include career interest survey and education on preparing for interviews.	September 2016
Interviews and Student-Mentor Matching	Prepare students to interview with job supervisors. Facilitate a student-mentor/business matching process.	September 2016
Job Experience and Mentorship	Prepare students to engage in a year-round internship, externship, or job shadowing experience with the support of their mentor. Collect attendance data, feedback, and site visit notes.	September 2016 – May 2017
Communications with Participants	Send regular communications to participating students and their families, mentors, and business leaders.	September 2016 – May 2017
Professional Learning/Speaker Events	Plan and convene two speaker events regarding how to foster hope and build character, as part of ongoing professional learning for mentors.	November/ December 2016 and April/May 2017
Plan and Launch Public Awareness Campaign	Develop plan to develop program brand and share success stories in an effort to inform the public about this exciting program.	December 2016 – February 2017
End-of-Year Review and Sustainability Planning	Review data and feedback, identify successes and opportunities for improvement, and develop plans for Year 3 (2017–18). Develop detailed sustainability plan including anticipated budget for Year 4 (2018–19), planned funding, and commitments from partners.	June 2017

<b>Year 3: 2017–2018</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Program Planning	Initiate program planning for the 2017–2018 school year, including but not limited to the development of a detailed implementation plan and articulation of program participation requirements and benefits for participating students and businesses.	June 2017
Renewal of Participating Businesses, Recruitment and Selection of New Sites	Communicate with businesses to renew and/or request participation in the program.	June – July 2017
Recruitment, Selection, and Preparation of Mentors	Recruit, screen, and prepare new mentors within the selected businesses. Communicate with returning mentors to confirm requirements and share any changes for 2017–18.	July – August 2017
Outreach to Schools, Students, and Families	Share information with school administrators/ counselors, students, and families regarding the program requirements and benefits. Recruit students to participate.	July – August 2017

Year 3: 2017–2018		
Activity	Description	Timeline
Student Acceptance and Preparation for Job Interviews	Accept students and conduct orientation session which will include career interest survey and education on preparing for interviews.	September 2017
Interviews and Student-Mentor Matching	Prepare students interview with job supervisors. Facilitate a student-mentor/business matching process.	September 2017
Job Experience and Mentorship	Prepare students to engage in a year-round internship, externship, or job shadowing experience with the support of their mentor. Collect attendance data, feedback, and site visit notes.	September 2017 – May 2018
Communications with Participants	Send regular communications to participating students and their families, mentors, and business leaders.	September 2017 – May 2018
Sustainability and Fundraising Campaign	Act upon detailed sustainability plan, which may include seeking additional funding and securing commitments from partners.	October 2017 – June 2018
Professional Learning/Speaker Events	Plan and convene two speaker events regarding how to foster hope and build character, as part of ongoing professional learning for mentors.	November/ December 2017 and April/May 2018
Plan and Launch Public Awareness Campaign	Develop plan to develop program brand and share success stories in an effort to inform the public about this exciting program.	December 2017 – February 2018
End-of-Year Review	Review data and feedback, identify successes and opportunities for improvement, and develop plans for Year 4 (2018–19).	June 2018

**11. Describe the implementation process for reaching the following milestones:**

**The leadership team’s plans for reaching the identified key milestones are described below:**

- a) Screening, orientation, supporting, and monitoring process for mentors and other personnel working directly with youth:** Once businesses are identified for the program, mentors from within these organizations will be identified and recruited. Mentors will be business employees who are successful in their careers, demonstrate leadership and strong interpersonal skills, and communicate a passion for supporting youth. The leadership team will together outline a list of desired traits and requirements for participating in the program. Once mentors are identified, the school district will conduct background checks to ensure the safety of students. Prior to engaging with students, mentors will be required to participate in an orientation where they will learn about the program goals and expectations, receive guidance on ways to build character and hope in students in alignment with the five principles mentioned above, and receive information about their mentee(s). Once mentorships are established and students are attending their job sites, the district YBECC program coordinator will manage a process to record mentoring hours and student attendance, gather feedback via evaluation forms and conversations with students and mentees, and conduct site visits regularly to interface with the mentors, observe interactions, and assess progress. If the program coordinator determines that any mentor is neglecting their role in any way, she will share her concerns with the leadership team and business leader and reassign the student as necessary. Also, four part-time school-based site coordinators (job coaches) will be hired to monitor the students on the job sites and work with them on developing good work practices along with character building and other positive social skills.
- b) Identification and intake process for mentees:** Students who express an interest in the program will be invited to an orientation session where they will learn about participation requirements and benefits, as well as fill out a short survey about their career interests. School counselors and administrators will also be presented with information about the program so they can recommend students for the program. Students must have a minimum 2.0 GPA and no pattern of poor behavior to be considered for the program. Once students are accepted, the program coordinator will match them to a mentor and job opportunity. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in at least three workshops as part of the program. These workshops will help students develop basic job skills related to writing resumes,

interviewing, time management, team management and collaboration, and dressing for success. Should students need assistance with the cost of transportation and/or uniforms, the program coordinator will coordinate and supply these things.

- c) Involving families of youth and ongoing training of mentors throughout the life of the program, including topics and frequency:** The district YBECC program coordinator will encourage parental involvement throughout the program by hosting activities such as a parent night, career fair, Night at the Arts, and college fairs. Additionally, students will be asked to write and/or present about their experience as a mentee and the career goals they have for themselves as part of the program, which will be shared with parents and school counselors for their awareness and action. The initial orientation at the beginning of the school year will provide mentors with a foundation by describing the purpose of the program and sharing examples of hope-building strategies. However, the leadership team also recognizes that mentors will benefit from ongoing learning opportunities as well. The program will sponsor at least two speaker/learning/collaboration events focused on how to build hope, develop character, and support students in their success each year. Mentors will be strongly encouraged to attend at least one of the events. The leadership team will bring in speakers who can offer professional learning and/or inspiration to mentors. In addition, these events will serve as an opportunity for mentors to connect with one another, share stories and strategies, and over time establish a community of active mentors in the community. Further, the leadership team will consider making these events open to the public or perhaps even to students and families as another engagement opportunity. Finally, in addition to these two events each year, the leadership team will send regular communications to mentors and business partners in an effort to share relevant articles, tips, and success stories.
- d) Assessing fiscal accountability and faithful implementation of project plans:** As the lead, the Chamber will oversee and report on finances and implementation, however all partner organizations have a critical role to play in ensuring success. The YBECC has enlisted Battelle for Kids to provide project management counsel. Each spring or summer as part of the planning and year-end review process, Battelle for Kids will participate in and/or facilitate portions of a one to two-day working meeting with the leadership team where an evaluation of progress and planning of upcoming milestones and responsibilities will take place. In addition, their team will offer implementation counsel via quarterly conference call meetings. These regular checkpoints, combined with the regular meetings and communication between members of the leadership team and partner organizations will ensure all parties are kept abreast of developments or and held accountable for respective responsibilities.

**12. Describe how each applicant partner plans to contribute to the overall program plan including, but not limited to, time contribution, personnel contribution, monetary contribution, shared responsibilities, use of facilities, etc. Complete the Roles and Responsibilities worksheet attachment.**

This partnership will utilize the unique assets of each organization to implement a program that develops student hopefulness and workforce readiness for the benefit of individual children as well as the greater Youngstown community. Specific contributions and responsibilities are outlined in the enclosed Roles and Responsibilities worksheet. Primary roles and responsibilities for each organization are as follows:

**Regional Chamber**—As the lead organization, the Regional Chamber will oversee the program as a whole and facilitate collaboration between partners; manage a detailed implementation plan and ensure clarity of roles, responsibilities, and key milestones; serve as the fiscal agent and manage the program budget; and facilitate the writing and delivery of any grant-required reporting. The Chamber will also play a critical role in the implementation and success of the program itself. The Chamber will engage the Chamber's member businesses and bring additional partners in when advantageous to the program. Further, the Chamber will ensure alignment between program services and business needs to strengthen, enhance, and enrich the quality of education and life choices for participating students. The Chamber will allocate the lead program director to this program and will provide 50% of this personnel time as an in-kind contribution.

**ACTION**—ACTION will spearhead advocacy and communication efforts to build public awareness and support for the program; lead a campaign to sustain future years of the program; lead the planning and convening of professional development for mentors related to building hope including two learning events each year which may include identifying speakers, planning the program, creating communications to

advertise the event, and recruiting volunteers for the events. Additionally, ACTION will participate in leadership team meetings, contribute to program planning, and support the recruitment of mentors through other organizations, such as Mahoning Valley Association of Churches, Youngstown State University, Oakhill Collaborate, and other community groups. ACTION will allocate 50 percent of the coordinator's time to this program and will provide this personnel time as an in-kind contribution.

**Youngstown City School District**—The school district will serve several key roles, including managing career pathways curriculum, program-related outreach and communications to students and families, and job skills coaching for students. The district will manage the program curriculum and ensure alignment with standards and credit requirements for students; lead outreach to students and families; match students with mentors; lead workshops for students to prepare them for success in their job placements (e.g., writing resumes, interview skills, time management skills, team management skills, dressing for success); manage record-keeping for student attendance and administer a pre- and post-program assessment of students' knowledge and experience; facilitate screening process for the mentors (i.e., BCI and FBI check); encourage parental involvement along with social activities; and monitor progress by visiting work sites and gathering feedback via evaluation forms from the mentors. Additionally, the school district will participate in leadership team meetings and contribute to program planning; partner closely with ACTION to provide professional learning for mentors; support other partners in recruiting business leaders and develop training resources and programming for business leaders; and support communications to businesses and the public. YCSD will allocate 10 percent of the Executive Director of Career Technical and Adult Education's time, 10 percent of the Communications & Public Relations Director's time, and 100 percent of District YBECC Program Coordinator's time, with the Executive Director and Communications Directors' time being provided as an in-kind personnel contribution.

**Eastern Gateway Community College**—Eastern Gateway Community College is a critical partner due to its role in directly supporting both the education system and business community. The college will participate in leadership team meetings; contribute to program planning; provide counsel related to in-demand careers, postsecondary requirements, and curricular alignment and credit-bearing opportunities; support relationship building within the community to gain future partners and participants; and offer facilities for events as needed. The college's Dean of Business, Engineering, and IT will participate in all key planning conversations and provide mentors and educational consultants on a voluntary basis.

**City of Youngstown**—The City of Youngstown will play a key role in connecting businesses to the program as an opportunity and resource for their workforce pipeline. The City's representative will also be instrumental in elevating this program within the community, sharing successes of the program publically, and bringing in additional partners for the future.

### **Application Section III: Evaluation Plan**

**13. The evaluation plan is intended to provide lead organizations with a framework that will ensure the program is on track to positively impact the lives of students and identify needs for additional support when challenges arise. Each evaluation plan must list the scope of work and describe the following:**

It will be important to evaluate the success and impact of the YBECC program to ensure that funds and contributions are utilized effectively, to guide program improvements, and to inform sustainability planning. The YBECC leadership team plans to evaluate success as follows.

- a. Plans for keeping records of mentor contact hours, unduplicated count of students served each month, mentor training hours, etc. for ongoing reporting:** There will be a mentor weekly student contact hour log, training hours log, and mentor visitation hours spent in the community and business log. These will be kept on file for each student and the job coaches and Program Coordinator will review this on a regular basis.
- b. Gathering of data to measure progress of program towards meeting the selected goals:** The YCSD program coordinator will be responsible for collecting, managing, and reporting all participation and progress data. Measures will include student, business, and mentor participation numbers; feedback surveys regarding participants' experience and perceived benefits; student pre- and post-

basic job skills assessments (i.e., time management, dressing for success, etc.); and detailed records of student schedules. To assist in developing or identifying these measurement tools, the leadership team will engage Battelle for Kids for guidance.

**c. Projected indicators of success:** Indicators of success include:

- Student, business, and mentor participation as projected;
- Positive feedback from students, business leaders, and mentors about their experience and perceived benefits of the program;
- Business renewal commitments between program years;
- Student growth in basic job knowledge and skills, career-specific knowledge and skills, and hopefulness (as measured by pre- and post-assessments);
- Improvements in student academic achievement, graduation, health and well-being, and college- and career-readiness; and
- Productive working relationships and increased collaboration between the school district, businesses, faith-based community, and city government.

**d. Anticipated barriers to successful evaluation including data collection and measurement of progress toward outcomes:** Evaluating success will require thoughtful planning and a clear system for collecting and managing all data. The leadership team will engage Battelle for Kids, an organization with expertise in education and performance measures, to outline a process for such work. Battelle for Kids can also support the leadership team's decision-making around measurement tools to use, such as perception surveys and assessments of knowledge and skills. Anticipated barriers that will be addressed include accurately measure growth between a pre- and post-assessment, reliably assessing student hopefulness and workforce readiness, and compiling and aggregating many data points.

**14. Applicants are to complete the program model.**

Please see the enclosed logic model.

**Application Section IV: Sustainability**

**15. Describe how you plan to maintain the program after the grant funding period. Include a discussion about financial sustainability and sustainability of the partnership commitment. Applicants are not required to include cash as part of their local contributions; however, funding sustainability is critical to the Community Connectors program. Applicants that show the potential for funding sustainability will be given preference in application scoring.**

Program sustainability will be made possible by the nature of this unique collaboration between the business community, non-profit and faith-based organizations, city government, and the school district. With so many parties invested, the leadership team will leverage the commitments and partnership agreements developed with the support of this grant to sustain the program. Further, this win-win arrangement in which students benefit, adult mentors, and businesses benefit. The shared benefits will be such that participants will be invested in the continuation of the program. Data and feedback will be collected throughout the program so that evidence of the program's effectiveness can be provided as evidence for future private and public funding requests. Further, a public campaign will provide success stories and create a positive image of the program, which can further support fundraising and sustainability.

**Application Section V: Program Budget**

**16. Complete the budget form attachment and justify each of the budget items by creating a budget justification.**

Please see the enclosed budget form and narrative.

*By clicking this box,  I, Nick Santucci, agree, on behalf of this applicant, and any or all identified partners, that this application and all supporting documents contain information approved by a relevant executive board or its equivalent.*