



Annual Report 2024

# *Raleigh Summer Youth Employment Program*

Housing and Neighborhood Department

*Rebekah Dixon, Youth Employment Program Manager*

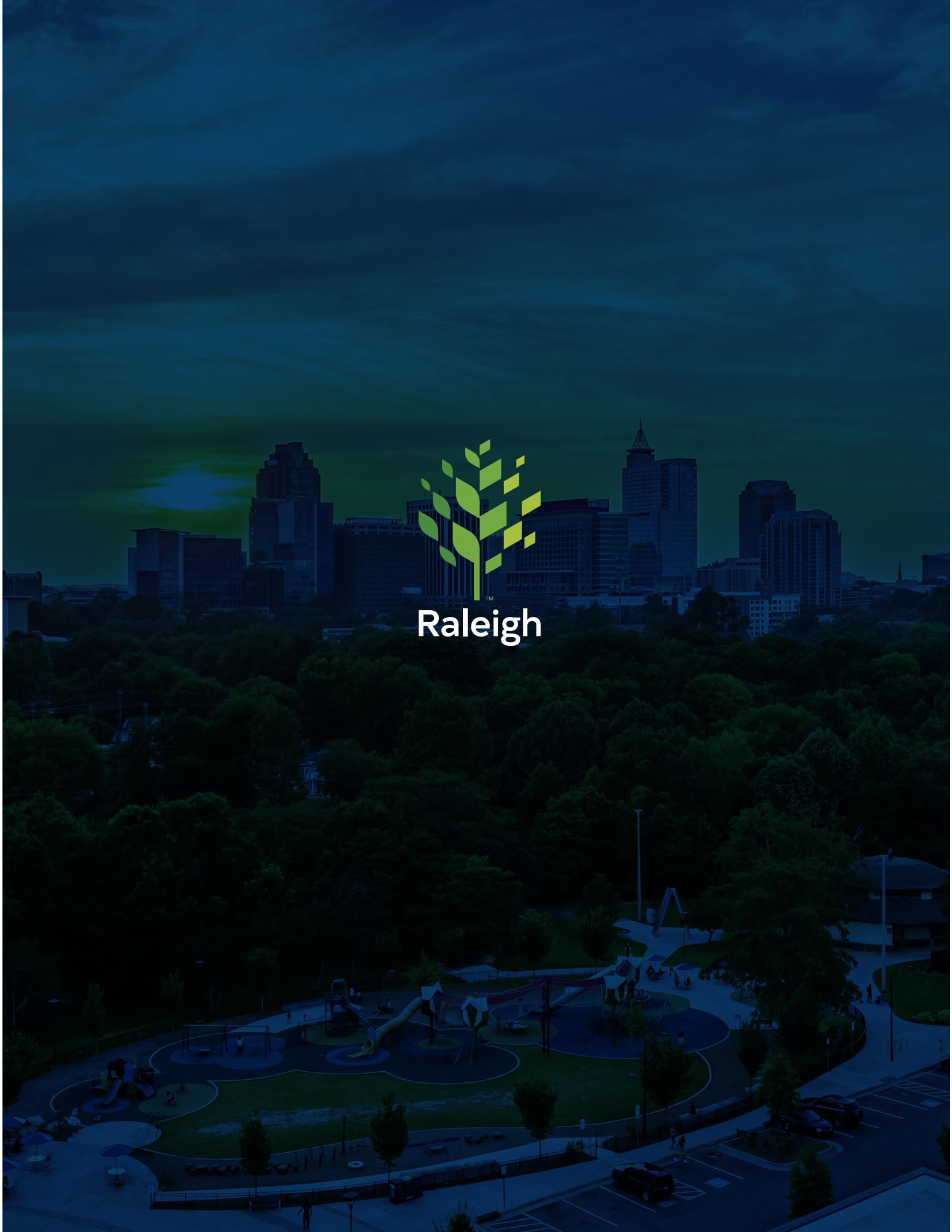
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Raleigh



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# Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Program Demographics</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<i>Employment Structure of RSYEP</i> .....	5
<i>Facts &amp; Figures</i> .....	6
<i>Participants by High School</i> .....	6
<i>Participants by Zip Code</i> .....	8
<b>Program Details</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<i>Traditional Pathway (In-Person)</i> .....	9
.....	10
<i>Hybrid Pathway (In-Person/Remote)</i> .....	10
<i>Virtual Pathways (Remote)</i> .....	13
<i>2024 RSYEP Academy (Life Skills/Professional Development)</i> .....	19
<i>RSYEP Program Highlights 2024</i> .....	20
<b>What Do the Youth Think?</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>Thank You to our Partners</b> .....	<b>23</b>

## Executive Summary

The **Raleigh Summer Youth Employment Program (RSYEP)** is an impactful program designed to provide meaningful work experiences and career development opportunities for youth aged 15 to 18 in Raleigh, North Carolina. Established with the goal of fostering workforce readiness, the program offers young people the chance to gain valuable professional skills, explore potential career paths, and earn a paycheck during the summer months.

Through RSYEP, participants are placed in a variety of roles within local government departments, non-profit organizations, and private sector businesses. These placements are carefully selected to offer youth exposure to diverse work environments and industries, including parks and recreation, business and finance, healthcare, child development, entrepreneurship, law and law enforcement, marketing, and more.

Key features of the program include:

- **Work-Based Learning:** Participants work 20–35 hours per week in professional settings, gaining hands-on experience.
- **Professional Development Workshops:** Youth engage in training sessions focused on essential skills like resume building, interview techniques, communication, teamwork, and financial education.
- **Mentorship and Networking Opportunities:** Through mentorship, participants receive guidance from professionals in their fields, helping to build confidence and career connections.

Since its inception, the program has successfully contributed to the personal and professional growth of Raleigh’s youth, helping them develop a strong work ethic, increase their employability, and set a foundation for future college and career success. The RSYEP not only benefits the participants but also



strengthens community ties and supports local businesses and organizations by providing motivated, well-prepared young employees.

**A major achievement for the 2024 season was forming a partnership with Coastal Credit Union. Coastal Credit Union provided onsite non-custodial bank accounts for program participants, enabling 100% direct deposit. We are enthusiastic about the future of this collaboration.**

In conclusion, the Raleigh Summer Youth Employment Program is a vital investment in the future workforce of the city, providing youth with the skills, experiences, and networks necessary to thrive in their careers and contribute positively to the community.

This report details program logistics, partnerships, and initiatives that RSYEP cultivated over the 2024 program year.

# Program Demographics

## Employment Structure of RSYEP

**1. 450 applicants and offered 194 positions. Our final completion number for Summer 2024 was 184.**

### **2. Application and Interview Process**

- Two Types of Interviews for this cohort  
*Youth were able to choose to attend a virtual interview or one of the in-person interview options.*

#### **i. Virtual**

*Interviews were conducted in a pre-recorded method using the software SparkHire. Youth record their responses to 8 questions recorded by the Youth Employment Program Manager and submit when completed. Virtual interview option was available the entire six weeks of the application process.*

#### **ii. In-Person**

*Youth were able to choose from two dates to attend an in-person interview session.*

- Application
  - i. Applicants were asked to complete applications via NeoGov.
  - ii. Application was open for six weeks.

**3. As youth apply to be participants in RSYEP, youth were able to select their top 3 choices of career pathways/interests:**

- Business and Finance
- Child Development
- Entrepreneurship
- Healthcare (Includes Public Health and Mental Health)
- Law
- Marketing
- Recreation Programming
- Skilled Trades

### **4. Had 6 Youth Employment Career Coaches**

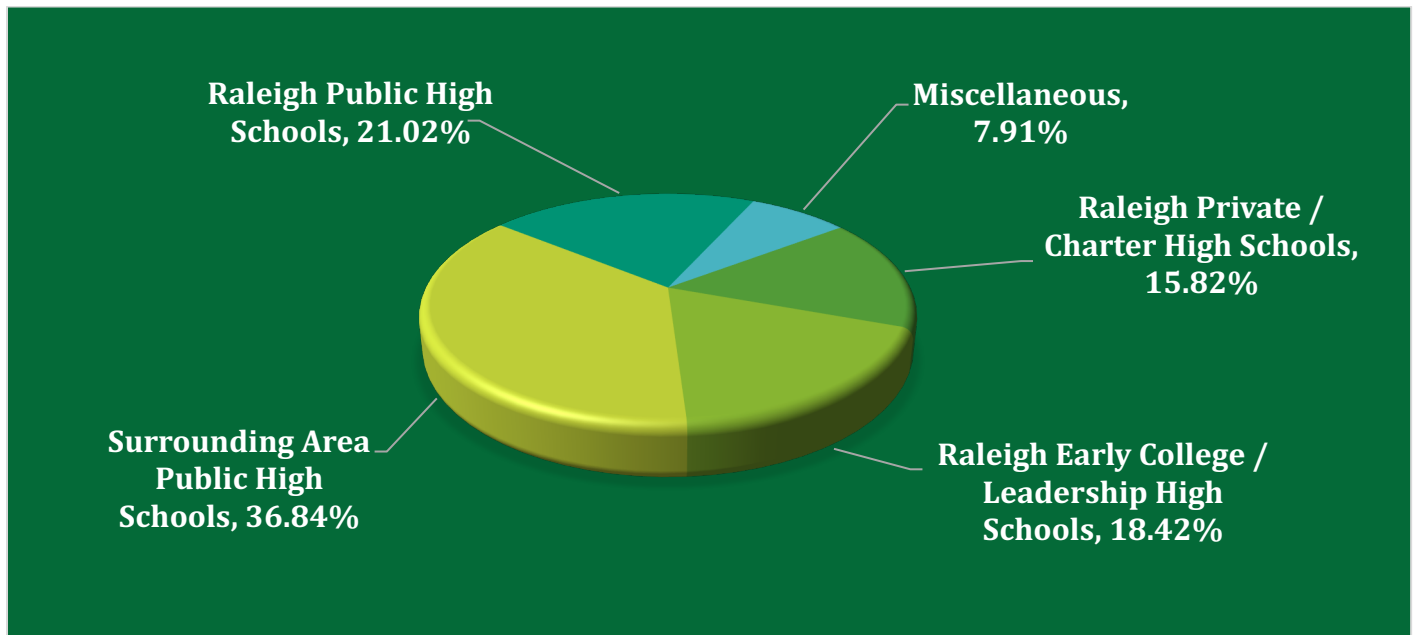
- 1 Former RSYEP & BSW UNC-Charlotte
- 1 Graduate Student Wake Forest University: Clinical Mental Health Counseling
- 1 Wake County Public Schools Career Development Coordinator
- 2 Wake County Public Schools High School Counselors
- 1 Wake County Public Schools



## Facts & Figures



## Participants by High School



### Raleigh Public High Schools:

Enloe

Athens Drive

Millbrook

Southeast Raleigh Magnet

Sanderson

Needham B. Broughton

Leesville Road

Score Academy

### Surrounding Area Public High Schools

- Rolesville
- Garner Magnet
- South Garner
- Knightdale
- Heritage
- Holly Springs
- Middle Creek
- Apex Friendship
- Apex High School
- Green Hope
- Hillside
- Panther Creek
- Wakefield
- Willow Springs High School

### Raleigh Early College/Leadership High Schools

- Vernon Malone Career and College Academy
- Wake Young Women's Leadership Academy
- North Wake College & Career Academy
- Wake Young Men's Leadership Academy
- Wake Early College of Health & Sciences
- Wake Early College of Information & Biotechnology
- Wake STEM Early College High School

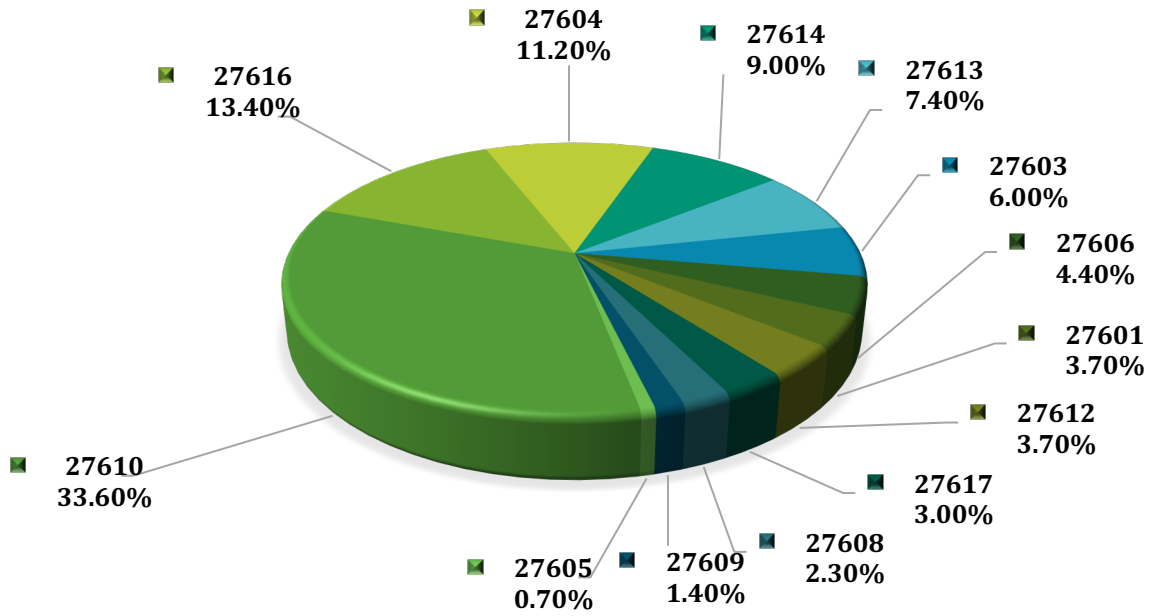
### Raleigh Private/Charter High Schools

- Raleigh Charter
- Faith Christian Academy
- Word of God Academy
- Neuse Christian Academy
- Friendship Christian School
- Saint Mary's School

### Miscellaneous

- Cary Academy
- Franklin Academy
- Home School

## Participants by Zip Code





# Program Details

## Employment Pathways

### Traditional Pathway (In-Person)

RSYEP provides in-person work opportunities that connects youth with meaningful hands-on job experiences within various City of Raleigh departments, local businesses, and non-profit organizations.

*Traditional Pathway Partners:*



### Snapshot of the Traditional Pathway





## Hybrid Pathway (In-Person/Remote)

The *Entrepreneurial Hybrid pathway* involved students working collaboratively in teams over an 8-week period to tackle real-world challenges posed by local businesses. Each student group engaged in a hands-on, problem-solving process, applying their skills to identify, analyze, and develop innovative solutions to address the specific needs of these businesses. RSYEP partnered with District C to produce the teamship model and coaching certification.

The program culminated in a *Pitch Event*, where student teams presented their proposed solutions to business partners and a live audience. This event provided students with a platform to showcase their ideas, business acumen, and creativity, simulating a real-world entrepreneurial pitch experience. Through this hybrid approach, students not only gained technical and entrepreneurial skills but also learned how to communicate effectively and professionally in a high-stakes environment.

## Snapshot of the Hybrid Pathway



6

local Small Businesses  
participated



Business partners reported  
that they agree or strongly  
agree they are more likely to  
consider a RSYE for a job or  
internship



## Some of the participants' key takeaways

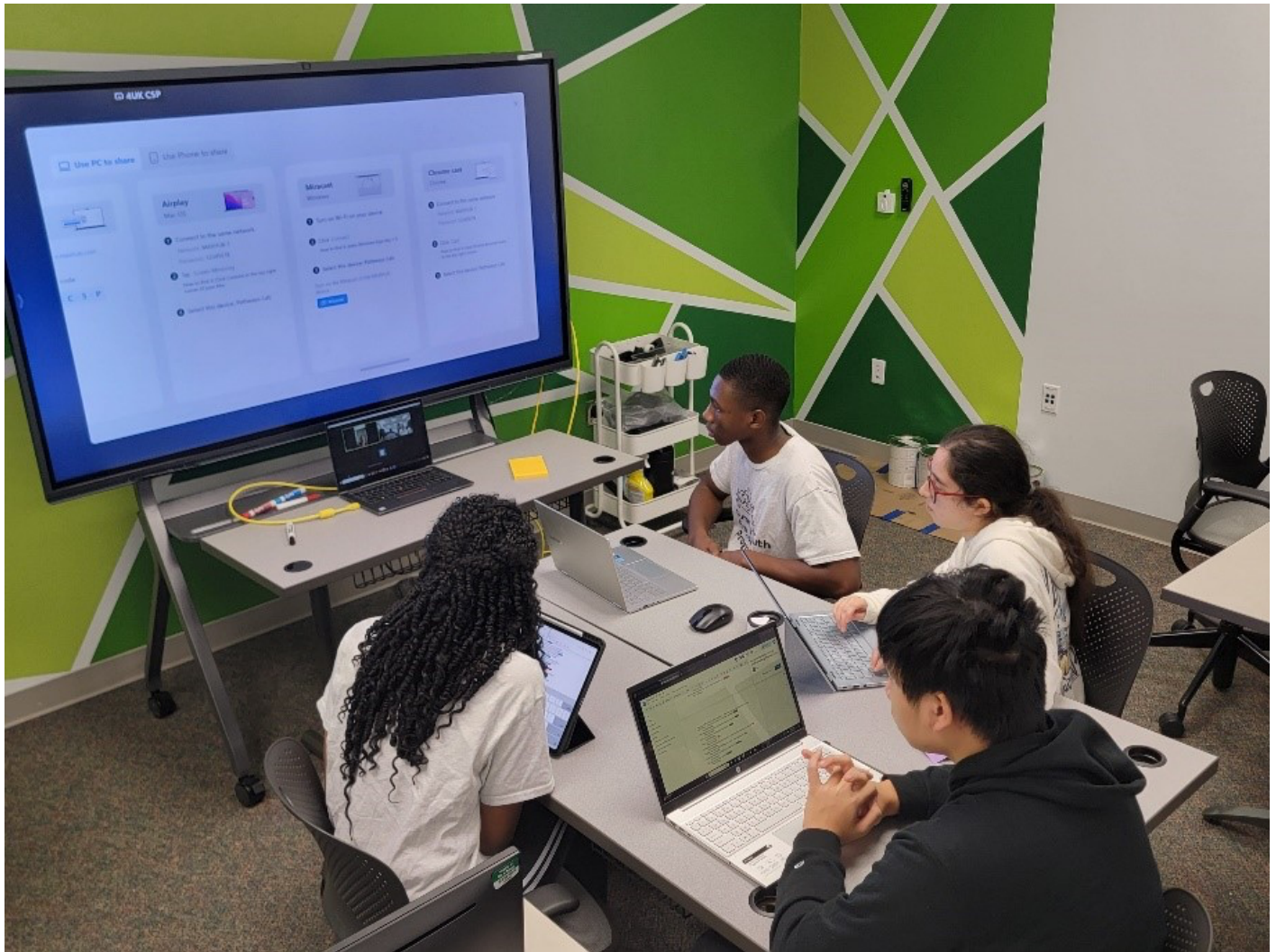
“

*This experience truly changed me. I made a lot of progress on myself by using psychological safety and being able to adapt to a new coach and new teammates.”*

“

*It was an exciting experience and truly teaches you what it's like to own a business and what it's like to give them a solution that could help them.”*





## Virtual Pathways (Remote)

In partnership with three prominent employers, Radius offers Virtual Work-Based Learning to prepare participants for the future workforce. This year marked the fourth virtual RSYEP summer program powered by Radius Learning, providing students with valuable, resume-enhancing work experience aimed at supporting their transition from high school to professional careers. Participants worked remotely on a challenge impacting Raleigh residents, with the goal of developing a solution through the creation of an app.

Youth in the virtual pathway focused on one of the following challenges:

- **Healthcare:** Developing an app to promote positive mental health and wellness among teens.
- **Marketing:** Creating an app to enhance NASCAR's appeal to special populations.
- **Business and Finance:** Designing an app to help families and teens navigate financial literacy.

## Snapshots of the Virtual Pathway



# 90%

indicated feeling more prepared for their careers after completing the pathway



During the last week of program, all participants had to pitch their app ideas to various City of Raleigh staff, business and community leaders who rated their presentations. Youth were given real time feedback.



Awards was given to participants based on the following: Innovation, Design Quality, Pitch Narrative, Impact, and Grammar & Punctuation.



Every Wednesday, participants had “Industry Wednesdays” where they were exposed to different careers within each organization. They were able to ask questions and receive contact information.

## Business & Finance



BANK OF AMERICA

- The Bank of America Sessions received a score of 9.0 out of 10.
- Industry Wednesday Guests:
  - Anthony Lando – Senior Vice President; Private Client Advisor
  - Jamaal Livan – Senior Vice President; GCB Senior Relationship Mgr.
  - Kecia Atkins – Vice President; Human Resources Manager
  - Adam Callahan-Officer, Financial Center Manager
  - Bernard Bajardi-Vice President, Senior Small Business Banker
- **Some of the participants’ key takeaways during the virtual experience were:**



*I learned how I want to build my future career. I figured out what exact steps I should take to achieve my dream job.*



*I think something I learned about myself is that I like structure and being able to look forward to a new workday each morning. Also, I love people and meeting new people and I really enjoyed the experiences that I was blessed with through RSYEP*

### Features

**Recommendations list**  
This is a feature that will be able to give people recommendations on jobs based on how they described themselves on the app.

**Tracker**  
This is a feature that will be used in multiple ways. For example in the language learning part you can use the tracker to track your progress and in the money managing part you can track how much money you are spending.

**Microphone/speak in**  
Having a microphone built in feature will help with speaking and pronunciation. This will give people the opportunity to hear themselves and do like self evaluation. When it comes to the language learning part.

**Language learning and translation**  
This is a feature where people who might be struggling to learn a new language can learn a new one and you can also use it as a translator and it will overall help benefit people when it comes to getting jobs and opportunities.

## Healthcare

- The UNC Health Industry sessions received a score of 9.8 out of 10
- Industry Wednesday Guests:
  - Justin Merchant-Respiratory Therapist
  - Juliana Sullivan-Respiratory Therapist
  - Kimetha Smith-Case Management
  - Christine Carr-Occupational Therapist
  - Chloe Peach-Imaging
  - Doug Palmer-Protective Services



- **Some of the participants' key takeaways during the virtual experience were:**



*I learned that I enjoy researching pertinent healthcare issues. Prior to working in this pathway, I had wanted to find ways to address the healthcare problems in lower income communities but didn't know how or where to start. This pathway allowed me to share my ideas and come up with an effective solution.*



*I enjoyed the aspect of this being based all around mental health, as in mental health is the same equal priority as health wellbeing. If you think that you were in pain psychically for example your elbow is at a slight discomfort you easily get it checked out. But when it comes to mental health it is brushed aside.*

**Our Goal and Vision:**  
Help lower-income civilians access the health management that they need.

It is no surprise that many low-income Americans struggle with both mental and physical health. With healthcare expenses rising more and more each year, those who live with lower incomes suffer the most. Harmony Haven strives to eliminate the lack of accessibility and information regarding health through easy-to-use and accessible resources. Our long-term goal is to grant those in difficult financial situations the care and health management that they need, without having them worry about cost.

Download today and take your first steps towards a healthier life!

Welcome to Harmony Haven! Are you ready to take the first step towards a healthier life?  
Login  
Sign up

Harmony: our mascot!

The graphic is a promotional slide for the Harmony Haven app. It features a blue and white color scheme. On the left, there is a cartoon cat mascot wearing glasses. In the center, a speech bubble contains text about the app's goal and vision. On the right, a smartphone displays the app's login and sign-up screen, which includes the Harmony Haven logo, a heart icon, and the mascot's face. A call-to-action button is at the bottom left.



## Sports & Entertainment Marketing

- The NASCAR Industry sessions received a score of 8.8 out of 10
- Industry Wednesday Guests:
  - Ester Fonseca-Patriarco-Manager, Sustainability
  - Sara Houston-Manager, Driver and Team Marketing
  - Perri Hiergesell-Account Executive, Drive and Team Marketing
  - Lindsay Hall-Senior Director, Marketing Strategy
  - Tori Burke-Director, Strategy and Innovation
  - Sarah Campbell-Account Executive, Brand Marketing
- **Some of the participants' key takeaways during the virtual experience were:**



*This experience truly changed me. I made a lot of progress on myself by using psychological safety and being able to adapt to a new coach and new teammates."*



*Something that I learned about myself and my abilities are that I actually enjoy doing things that deal with problem solving. Usually, it is something I have ideas for but I never had an experience of it for a job on something that is a major real world issue. This is kind of something that made me realize that problem solving but also marketing/business to an extent, like the promotional and creation aspect, is something I want in my future career*



**CoryXKenshin** - Gaming Youtuber with 18.6 million subscribers

Propose an idea for Cory to play the game and promote it to gamers. It will encourage viewers to play the game.



**MrBeast** - Influencer who has 299 million subscribers

Get MrBeast to fund an extremely large tournament with a large prize pool. The amount of people who join and watch this tournament will most likely motivate viewers to play the game.



**Nintendo, PlayStation, Xbox** - Video game companies

Propose an idea to these gaming companies to do a collaboration having a console designed and themed for the NASCAR game. Giving fans and other players a reason to try the game out.

## Additional Virtual Job Placements

In the *Raleigh Summer Youth Employment Program*, youth had the opportunity to work remotely with public health and mental health nonprofits, gaining valuable experience while making an impact. One of their key roles involved creating presentations on *public health justice* for the *Center for Black Health & Equity*. These presentations focused on critical issues such as health disparities, access to care, and the promotion of health equity in Black communities, empowering youth to advocate for social change and improved health outcomes.

RSYEP also collaborated with the mental health nonprofit *Darkness Rising*. Participants assisted in organizing and promoting mental health events designed to raise awareness and provide support for marginalized communities. The youth also conducted research on the mental health needs of local populations, helping to inform *Darkness Rising's* outreach and programming efforts. Through these projects, youth not only developed key skills in research, communication, and event planning but also contributed to advancing public health and mental wellness in underserved communities.

*Public Health and Mental Health Pathway Partners:*



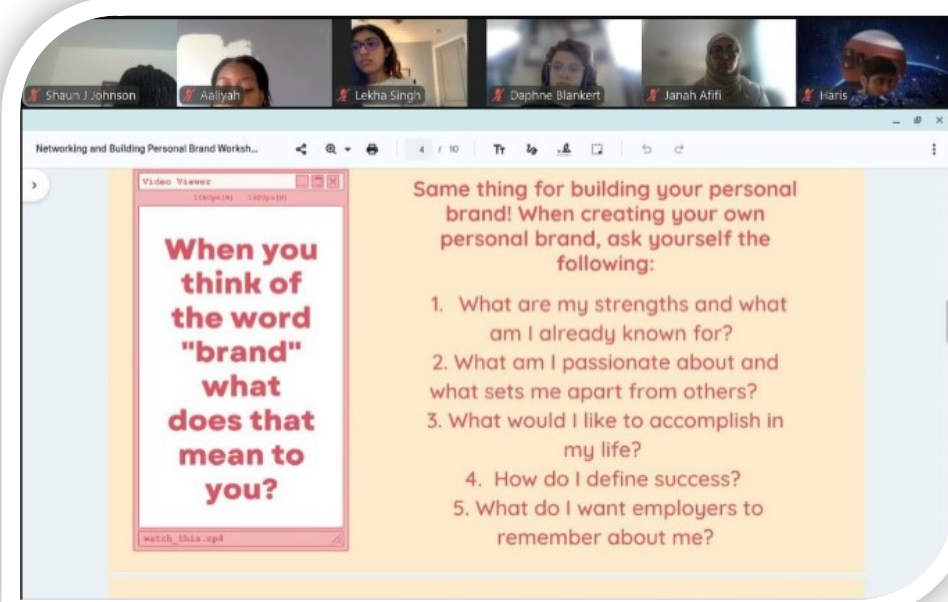
## 2024 RSYEP Academy (Life Skills/Professional Development)

- Resume and LinkedIn (In-person) Workshop
- Resume Editing (Youth had one on ones with coaches to create, edit, and develop)
- Interview Etiquette
- Professional Headshots
- Better Money Habits (Financial Education)
- College Application & College Essay Writing
- Goal Setting
- Building Elevator Speeches
- Time Management
- Practicing Mindfulness (2<sup>nd</sup> year)
- Promoting Life Balance (2<sup>nd</sup> year)
- Building Your Network (2<sup>nd</sup> year)
- Career Exploration and Assessments
- Bring Your A-Game to Work Certification-**69 first year participants passed and are certified.**



### Strategies

- Time Tracking**  
Monitoring Time Usage  
Track how time is spent on activities.  
Identify areas for improvement.
- Flexibility**  
Adaptability in Time Management  
Adjust plans to accommodate changes.  
Balance between structure and flexibility.
- Setting Boundaries**  
Establishing Limits  
Balance work and personal time.  
Maintain a healthy work-life balance.



Networking and Building Personal Brand Worksh...

When you think of the word "brand" what does that mean to you?

Same thing for building your personal brand! When creating your own personal brand, ask yourself the following:

1. What are my strengths and what am I already known for?
2. What am I passionate about and what sets me apart from others?
3. What would I like to accomplish in my life?
4. How do I define success?
5. What do I want employers to remember about me?

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## RSYEP Program Highlights 2024



1. **Healthy Conflict Resolution and Decision Making with Step Up Ministry:** Each week, participants discussed aspects of how to navigate decision making when having conflicts with peers. Participants also learned tips on healthy decision making in various scenarios.
2. **Wake County Public Schools Internship Credit:** Each WCPSS student submits their internship packet to the Youth Employment Program Manager. Upon completion and return to the corresponding counselor (varies by school), participants earn an internship credit for WCPSS.
3. **Bouncing Back from Setbacks:** Youth participated in a workshop led by Gene Hoskins of Peace of Mind Psychological Services, PLLC. During the session, they identified and defined setbacks, explored their psychological and emotional impacts, discussed strategies for adaptation and pivoting, and learned practical tools for resilience and recovery.
4. **Swipe Right to Healthy Relationships:** Youth took part in a workshop led by Dr. Shanita Brown, a licensed trauma therapist. In the session, they explored key components of healthy relationships, developed communication and conflict resolution skills, and identified common issues in unhealthy relationships. The workshop also highlighted the importance of self-care and mental health in maintaining strong, healthy relationships.
5. **College Application Week Assistance:** Participants (seniors) and their families were offered a one-on-one opportunity to work with the Program Manager and Coaches on applying to colleges during Free Application Week.
6. **RSYEP Ambassadors:** The RSYEP Ambassadors program is a key component of the Raleigh Summer Youth Employment Program, designed to cultivate leadership and peer mentorship among participants. Ambassadors are selected based on their exceptional performance, dedication, and potential. Their role includes representing the program at events, supporting fellow participants, and providing feedback to enhance the program's impact. Ambassadors also help facilitate workshops and activities, serving as role models and fostering a positive, inclusive environment. This program not only acknowledges their achievements but also equips them with valuable skills for future leadership roles.
7. **Financial Aid Luncheon:** Participants and their families came to a luncheon with the Program Manager and Coaches to work through completing the FAFSA process.
8. **Professional Headshots:** As part of the professional development workshop on Resumes and LinkedIn, the Raleigh Summer Youth Employment Program offered participants the chance to have professional headshots taken by Premier Branding & Marketing Solutions. Each participant received two edited headshots to enhance their professional profiles.

9. **Lunch and Learn with a Lawyer:** The Raleigh Summer Youth Employment Program (RSYEP) partnered with the *Wake County Bar Association* and *Campbell School of Law* to host a Lunch & Learn event. The day began with a panel discussion featuring current Campbell law students, followed by a diverse panel of practicing attorneys from the Wake County/Raleigh area. After lunch, participants visited the courthouse, where they met Judges *Ashleigh Parker* and *Damion McCullers* and took part in a mock criminal murder trial. To conclude the day, RSYE toured the *Wake County Detention Center*, where officers provided insights into the prison system.
10. **Lunch and Learn with RPD:** The Raleigh Summer Youth Employment Program (RSYEP) partnered with the Raleigh Police Department (RPD) to host a Lunch & Learn event. Chief Patterson kicked off the event, discussing career opportunities within the Chief's office. Representatives from various RPD units then shared insights into both law enforcement and civilian career paths. After lunch, participants engaged in a "speed dating" format to explore a wide range of career options within RPD.
11. **Empower App:** The Empower App is a tool used by RSYEP to connect with youth effectively. Within the program, it facilitates communication, financial education, announcements, tracking of hours worked, and other administrative tasks. Participants can also access program documents and set budget and savings goals.
12. **Family Reunion Finale:** To mark the conclusion of the program, RSYEP held a Finale Celebration at the Carolina Pines Community Center. During the event, 10 participants were recognized as Outstanding Youth, based on nominations from their supervisors. The new year's Ambassadors were introduced, and outgoing Ambassadors were honored for their contributions. All participants received completion certificates. Following the awards ceremony, attendees enjoyed a cookout-style meal, Italian ice, and a variety of music and games.



# What Do the Youth Think?

## Results from End of Program Evaluation

Each question was based on the rating scale 1-5.

(1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neither Agree nor Disagree 4=Agree 5=Strongly Agree).

Below is the average rating for each question.

<b>You learned something that you can share with others?</b>	<b>4.40</b>
<b>Do you feel more confident in your ability to work independently and with others?</b>	<b>4.48</b>
<b>You will take the skills you learned from RSYEP 2023 into your future work or academic spaces?</b>	<b>4.66</b>
<b>You are more aware of opportunities and future fields?</b>	<b>4.60</b>
<b>Please indicate your agreement to the following statement with 10 being the highest level of agreement: I would recommend this program to a friend.</b>	<b>9.37</b>
<b>What did you learn about yourself while working with RSYEP?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I learned about my passion for mental health, how it motivated through this whole entire program, acing each adventure at a time.</li> <li>• Participating in RSYEP helped me discover my ability to adapt to new environments and challenges. I learned that I can quickly pick up new skills and effectively apply them in a professional setting.</li> <li>• Something that I learned about myself while working for RSYEP is how to branch out of my comfort zone and try new things.</li> </ul>



## Thank You to our Partners

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all our program partners for their invaluable support during the Summer 2024 Raleigh Youth Employment Program. Your commitment and collaboration were instrumental in the success of this year's initiative. Thank you for your continued partnership and for making a positive impact on our community.

- **America Saves for Young Workers**
- **Aztec Software**
- **Bank of America**
- **Bank On North Carolina**
- **Campbell School of Law**
- **Capital Smilez Photo Booth**
- **Center for Black Health and Equity**
- **Coastal Credit Union**
- **College Foundation (Sarita Broadway)**
- **Darkness Rising**
- **District C**
- **DJ Club Rheub**
- **Dr. Shanita Brown, Transformative Counseling & Consulting, PLLC**
- **Embassy Suites at Crabtree**
- **Empower App (One Absolute)**
- **Gene Hoskins, Piece of Mind, LLC.**
- **Human Resources (City of Raleigh)**
- **Judge Ashleigh Parker**
- **Judge Damion McCullers**
- **Legal Aid of NC: Child Advocacy**
- **NASCAR**
- **NC State McKimmon Center**
- **Premier Branding & Marketing Solutions**
- **Radius Learning**
- **Raleigh Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources (City of Raleigh)**
- **Raleigh Police Department**
- **Ratliff Business Consulting**
- **Roll On Up Gaming**
- **S&K Funnel Cakes**
- **Step Up Ministry of Wake County**
- **Summer Job Connect/CITI Foundation**
- **Tastes by Troy Catering**
- **UNC Health**
- **Wake County Bar Association**
- **Wake County Detention Center**
- **Wake County Public Schools**
- **Wanda's Little Hands**



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