

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT ACADEMY

Education • Employment • Empowerment



arts.street

Osage  
CAFÉ

# Youth Employment Academy

**Mission** The Youth Employment Academy's mission is to serve young adults in breaking the cycle of generational poverty in Denver communities by gaining personal and economic stability through education, arts and technology, and employment training.

**Vision** Every youth shall have a stable environment offering empowerment through education and economic opportunities in order to grow and become positive members of a vibrant living community.

**Location** Denver, CO

## Summary

Youth Employment Academy (YEA) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit dedicated to empowering young adults in marginalized communities to reach their education and employment goals. YEA offers employment training in **three core industry areas: Culinary Arts, Customer Service, and the Creative Industries**. For each industry focus area, YEA has a revenue-generating social enterprise or program that provides training, certification, mentorship, and internships to youth participants.



**Culinary Arts** The Osage Café is YEA's training ground for the culinary arts. Before beginning their training at the Osage Café, youth interested in careers in the culinary industry obtain their SafeServ certification through a YEA course. Then, many enter into a 120-hour internship, building practical front- and back-of-house skills in an on-the-job training setting in a restaurant setting. Youth learn from an Executive Chef who manages the kitchen, ensures food quality, and offers mentorship to aspiring chefs. In addition, **the Osage Café serves healthy and affordable meals in the Mariposa District community for breakfast and lunch and offers high-quality catering to the Greater Denver Area.**

**DECATUR** FRESH



**Customer Service** Decatur Fresh, a full-service grocery market located in Sun Valley, is the vehicle for youth to develop their customer service skills. Youth receive necessary certifications in a classroom setting, complete a 120-hour internship, build concrete skillsets in food retail, and **determine their next career opportunity with mentorship and support from YEA staff at Decatur Fresh.**



**Creative Industries** Arts Street@YEA uses the creative arts to empower youth to pursue future education and employment opportunities. Arts Street's **Creative Industry Academies** utilize up-to-date technologies to introduce youth to careers in creative industries such as graphic design, videography, marketing, and web design. Arts Street's **internship opportunities** provide youth real-world "learn & earn" experience working on client-based public art and design projects in a working studio while learning valuable job readiness skills. Finally, Arts Street's **studio mentorship** provides a safe space where youth can continue to build their creative skills, find their own passions and pursue further education.



## Objectives

- 1 Train youth in industry-specific and soft skills that lead to a **sustainable career or education path**.
- 2 Help youth **attain certifications** necessary for careers in their chosen industries.
- 3 Provide **mentorship and connect youth to wraparound supports** including housing, food, healthcare and mental health support, and childcare.
- 4 Offer **paid internships** that teach concrete skills and professionalism in an on-the-job setting.

## Participants

Since 2007, YEA has served over 3,500 youth ages 14 to 24, throughout the Denver metro area, first as a program of the Denver Housing Authority (DHA), and then in 2012 as its own stand-alone 501(c)3 organization. **YEA's participants are from the most underserved and marginalized communities.** In order to build equity, our first priority is to serve youth living in public housing and other low-income youth in Denver. 92% of our participants are people of color and 97% of their families earn less than 30% of Denver's Median Area Income.

## Key Partnerships

- Denver Housing Authority
- Denver Public Schools School to Work Alliance Program
- Denver Public Schools Career Connect
- Secret Sauce Restaurant Group
- Colorado High School Charter
- City & County of Denver Office of Children's Affairs

**Legal Structure** YEA is an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit affiliated with the Denver Housing Authority.

## Contact

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## Impact

### Short-term Outcomes

- Participants obtain entry-level **employment in chosen industry**.
- Participants enroll in **affordable post-secondary training**.
- Participants **graduate high school**.
- Participants are **mentally and physically stable**.
- Participants are more likely to **advocate for and engage with their communities**.

### Mid-term Outcomes

- Participants **gain industry-specific employment skills** (hard and soft skills, credentials, workplace readiness, job experience).
- Participants receive **support in managing barriers to employment**, economic stability, and housing stability.
- Participants **gain self-confidence** and self-esteem.
- Participants gain knowledge of how to **advocate for and engage in their communities**.

### Long-term Outcomes

- Participants obtain a **career with a livable wage**.
- Participants are **thriving and healthy** in their communities.
- Youth are empowered and **their voices are represented** in engaged community.

