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Youth Employment and Work Readiness: An Outcome Evaluation of the County of Santa Clara Intern & Earn Program

KimLien Le

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Youth Employment and Work Readiness:
An Outcome Evaluation of the County of Santa Clara Intern & Earn Program

By
KimLien Le

A Thesis Quality Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the
Masters Degree
In

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Professor Frances Edwards, Ph.D.

The Graduate School
San Jose State University

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INTRODUCTION

In 2016, the County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors approved the Santa Clara County Youth Employment Initiative to provide employment-based services to youth in the county. Part of the initiative included a subsidized summer internship program. This pilot program was implemented in summer 2017 as the TeenWORKs program, later renamed the YouthWORKs program, and then rebranded as the Intern & Earn Program (County of Santa Clara, 2019, n.p).

The purpose of this research was to conduct an outcome evaluation of the County of Santa Clara Intern & Earn summer internship program, evaluating the impact of the program on the youth participants' perception of their work readiness, as measured by their understanding of employer expectations, ability to communicate professionally, knowledge of career options, and their educational aspirations for future career advancement.

This study focused on the most recently completed program year, summer 2019. Matched data for prior program years is available but not comparable as the assessment survey questions were constructed differently each year.

BACKGROUND

The County of Santa Clara Intern & Earn Program was “designed to reduce the effects of generational poverty by providing low-income and disadvantaged children with employment-based opportunities that foster safety, career exploration and exposure to public service... [by serving] work-aged youth, ages 16-24 years old, who are enrolled in the CalWORKs, CalFresh and Foster Care programs” (County of Santa Clara, 2016, n.p.).

The California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) is the locally implemented Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) federal program that provides cash aid, job preparation services, and other benefits to eligible families for a lifetime limit of 48 months. CalWORKs eligibility includes meeting the following guidelines: household income, minor-aged child(ren) living in the home, and child(ren) who are deprived of support because at least one parent is unemployed, disabled, deceased, or continuously absent from the home (California Department of Social Services, 2019b).

The CalFresh program, formerly known as Food Stamps, is the locally implemented Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) federal program that provides food cost assistance to eligible individuals and families with no time-on-aid limit. CalFresh eligibility is determined by household income (CDSS, 2019a).

Foster Care is a child welfare program that provides a variety of supportive services to minor-aged children who have been placed in out-of-home care due to parental abuse or neglect. (CDSS, 2019c).

The County of Santa Clara Intern & Earn Program’s subsidized employment component was initially designed to be a six-week paid summer internship in which eligible youth may work up to 20 hours per week and are compensated at a rate of \$15 per hour (County of Santa Clara,

2016, n.p.). Earnings from participation in the program do not negatively impact the youth's household's food budget or cash aid benefits. In the third program year, the number of internship hours was increased so that youth could work up to 30 hours weekly (County of Santa Clara, 2018, n.p.). In the fourth program year, the internship duration was extended to eight-weeks and compensation was increased to \$16 hourly (County of Santa Clara, 2019, n.p.).

Youth throughout Santa Clara County, who are currently receiving benefits through the CalWORKs, CalFresh, and Foster Care programs; are identified by program staff as eligible to participate in the Intern & Earn summer internship program. Program staff reach out to youth and their parents via postcards, text messages, emails, and phone calls to offer program information and invite youth to participate during the summer months. Once youth submit and meet the work documentation requirements, they are matched to a job placement based on their internship job application that identified their work history, skills, and interest (County of Santa Clara, 2017, n.p.).

Youth participants from the CalWORKs program are ages 16-18, the CalFresh program are ages 16-21, and Foster Care program are ages 16-24 (County of Santa Clara, 2018, n.p.). Younger interns may be participating to seek additional income during the summer months while they are not attending school, while older interns may be participating as a gateway to permanent employment.

During the summer internship program, CalWORKs and CalFresh youth participants receive support from a Social Services Agency (SSA) Employment Counselor (EC) at the Employment Connection Center (ECC), while Foster Care youth participants receive support from an EC at the Hub Resource Center (Hub). These ECs are responsible for routine check-ins to provide the interns with guidance and coaching. Additionally, the interns are offered

professional development workshops on a weekly basis at the ECC and the Hub, with the interns being highly encouraged to participate. Both the ECC and the Hub are located in San Jose. These workshops allow interns the opportunity to engage in employment-based discussions and skills trainings that cover a variety of job preparation topics. Workshop curriculum topics explore resume building, educational/career pathways, effective customer service, career exploration, finding a career, identifying skills, keeping a job, making an application stand out, workplace communication, applying for college, paying for college, interview preparation, social media usage, and employer expectations (County of Santa Clara, 2019, n.p.).

Internship Participation

Using 2019 data from the County of Santa Clara Intern & Earn summer internship program, 514 youth were placed at a summer internship worksite. Of these youth, 47% (243) were enrolled in the CalWORKs program, 23% (120) were from the CalFresh program, and 29% (151) were from the Foster Care program. Of these youth participants, 41% (210) were male while 59% (304) were female.

As for the worksite type, 54% (278) of interns were placed at nonprofit organizations, 32% (165) of interns were placed at public agencies, and 14% (71) of interns were placed at private businesses throughout Santa Clara County.

Ninety-one percent of youth enrolled in the CalWORKs program completed their 8-week internship, CalFresh youth had a 97% internship completion rate, and Foster Care youth had a 77% internship completion rate. Furthermore, 13 youth participants were offered and accepted unsubsidized, permanent employment at the end of their summer internships. Of these, four were from the CalWORKs program, one was from the CalFresh program, and eight were from the Foster Care program.

LITERATURE REVIEW

By placing low-income youth in subsidized summer employment programs that provide early work experiences with public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private businesses; disadvantaged youth are given the opportunity to access skills development and employer networks, increase family earnings, reduce engagement in criminal activity, and improve future job prospects.

Youth Employment Challenges

Congress has a responsibility for creating policies and programs to strengthen the economy, which in turn provides a job with a living wage to everyone who wants to work, leading to reductions in youth unemployment rates.

The labor activity for youth under age 25 has been declining markedly since the turn of the century (Fernandes-Alcantara, 2015; Congressional Research Service, 2017; Child Trends, 2019). In 2018, the national youth (ages 16-24) employment rate was 50%, with 20% of high school students and 45% of college students employed either full- or part-time (Child Trends, 2019, United States Department of Labor, 2019). Employment rates are even lower among nonwhite youth from low-income households residing in high-poverty neighborhoods with failing public schools (Sum, Khatiwada, Trubsky, Ross, McHugh, & Palma, 2014; Child Trends, 2019; Modestino, 2019; Modestino & Paulsen, 2019). Notably, the economy is not the only factor contributing to the youth unemployment rate. Some youth are unable/unwilling to work because they are enlisted in the military, enrolled in school full-time and are not looking for a job, have parents who financially support them, or are stay-at-home parents providing care to their young children (Child Trends, 2019).

While half of the legally authorized to work youth in the U.S. are employed, nearly 70 million youth are actively looking for jobs (Dennett & Modestino, 2013; Kluve Puerto, Robalino, Romero, Rother, Stoterau, Weidenkaff, & Witte, 2019; Modestino, 2019; Modestino & Paulsen, 2019). Moreover, job-seeking youth may face constraints that affect their access to employment, such as employers' perception of young people's inferior work behaviors, youths' lack of preparation for the hiring process, and employers' increased expectations for post-secondary credentials and soft skills (Harrington, Snyder, Berrigan, & Knoll, 2013; Lee, 2014; Saltsman, 2017; Child Trends, 2019; Modestino, 2019; Modestino & Paulsen, 2019).

Fortunately, federally sponsored youth employment initiatives played a major role in helping young people secure jobs and thrive academically. Table 1 outlines the historical context of major federal youth employment and job training initiatives highlighted by Fernandes-Alcantara (2015) and Congressional Research Service (2017).

Table 1: *U.S. Youth Employment and Training Initiatives*

Enacted	Policy/Program	Intent
1933	Civilian Conservation Corps	Provided young men with employment in the environmental sector during the Great Depression.
1962	Manpower Development and Training Act	Trained workers displaced by technological changes.
1964	Economic Opportunity Act	Created programs to promote job training, education, and small business loans.
1973	Comprehensive Employment and Training Act	Provided workers with training and employment in the public sector.
1977	Youth Employment and Demonstrations Project Act	Provided youth with training programs and employment opportunities.

1982	Job Training Partnership Act	Created programs to prepare economically disadvantaged youth and unskilled adults facing employment barriers entry into the workforce.
1994	School to Work Opportunity Act	Provided local support to develop school-based learning that integrates a component to prepare high school students for career activities and further education.
1998	Workforce Investment Act	Provided labor force investment through increased employment, earnings, retention, and education attainment for youth and adults.
2009	American Recovery and Reinvestment Act	Provided funding for programs that create and save jobs.
2014	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act	Created programs to support job training for youth and displaced workers, adult education, employment services, and vocational rehabilitation.
2016	Summer Opportunity Project	Connected youth to their first job, educational opportunities, and supportive services during the summer.

In today's competitive economy, and with the job exodus of the Baby Boomer generation underway, it is an especially important time to bridge the looming talent gap. One transition strategy involves developing specialized training and mentoring programs to prepare future generations to fill these soon-to-be vacant jobs.

The literature on youth employment in general is extensive, while the literature on summer youth experience programs is limited to state and city programs located in the East Coast. The literature presents mixed outcomes in response to school-year youth employment and positive implications of youth employment during the summer months.

Year-Round Employment

Schochet, Burghardt, and McConnell (2008) used data from the National Job Corps Study (NJCS) to examine the effectiveness of the youth education and job training program. In their findings, program participants experienced short-term increased earnings with gains that were sustainable in older youth.

Brame, Bushway, Paternoster, and Apel (2004) used data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) to examine the relationship between adolescent employment and criminal behavior. The researchers concluded that the effect of youth employment on the risk of engagement in criminal activity is spurious due to the sensitivity of unobserved traits. They suggested that future research focus on identifying plausible variables beyond basic demographics that have a causal influence on the adolescent employment-crime relationship.

Rothstein (2007) used data from the NLSY to investigate the relationship between high school employment and academic performance. The results showed that increased hours of youth employment have a minor negative impact on a student's grade point average. This finding may be attributed to the employed youth attending school tired and less focused, and having less time to dedicate to completing homework assignments or studying for exams.

Apel, Bushway, Brame, Haviland, Nagin, and Paternoster (2007) used data from the NLSY to examine the relationship between youth employment and antisocial behavior. They did not find a uniform effect among youth who worked intensively for the first time. Some participating youth benefitted from working intensely while attending school because it gave them structure in their lives, while other participating youth were likely to become involved in criminal activity, substance use, and delinquency as an outlet. The researchers suggested that

subsequent criminal behavior was dependent on the youth's developmental history prior to employment.

Kalenkoski and Pabilonia (2009) used data from the American Time Use Survey (ATUS) to examine the relationship between time spent working and student achievement. They found that an increase of 30 minutes of work per weekday resulted in a reduction of 7 minutes of time spent on homework per day and the same increase per weekend day resulted in a reduction of 2 minutes of time spent on homework per day.

Sabia (2009) used data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health) to examine the effect of school-year employment on youths' academic performance. The researcher found that there is only a marginal significance between school-year work and students' grade point average (GPA).

Monahan, Lee, and Steinberg (2011) used data from original researchers to investigate whether adolescent employment affected academic, behavioral, or psychosocial outcomes. They found that youth who were working at moderate intensity levels had no difference in any areas compared to their non-employed counterparts. On the contrary, youth who were working at high intensity levels reported higher levels of decision-making autonomy but lower expectations of educational attainment and school engagement, as well as higher levels of substance abuse and deviance.

Summer Employment

Naccarato, Brophy, and LaClair (2013) performed a study that focused on New York State's Summer Youth Engagement Program (NYSYEP). This program is a 10-week intervention period and is available for youth who have a criminal history. The researchers noted

that every additional hour of youth engagement in the NYSYEP resulted in a 2% decrease in youth rearrests rate.

Leos-Urbel (2014) conducted a study that focused on New York City's Summer Youth Employment Program (NYCSYEP). This 6-week program is available to low-income high school students through a lottery system. The researcher found that NYCSYEP participation increased school attendance by 2-3 days, and increased the probability of attempting and passing standardized English and math exams. Schwartz, Leos-Urbel, and Wiswall (2015) also studied this same program. They concluded that NYCSYEP participation improved student academic outcomes, and that it was more significant for those youth who participated in the program for multiple years. Gelber, Isen, and Kessler (2016) assessed this program as well, and that discovered NYCSYEP participation caused increases in the probability of earnings and employment in the year of participation, and decreases in the probability of incarceration and mortality. Additionally, Valentine, Anderson, Hossain, and Unterman (2017) studied the same program and determined that NYCSYEP participation caused increases to earnings and employment in the initial year of participation.

Heller (2014) examined Chicago's One Summer Plus (OSP), which is an 8-week part-time summer employment program. The researcher found that OSP reduced violence by 43% over a 16-month period among youth living in the most violent neighborhoods. Davis and Heller (2017) conducted experiments on the same program and concluded that OSP decreased violent-crime arrests by 42%, even after the summer months.

Modestino (2019) evaluated Boston's Summer Youth Employment Program (BSYEP). This 6-week program is available to youth through a lottery system. The results showed that BSYEP participation reduced the frequency of criminal arraignments. Modestino and Paulsen

(2019) also studied this program and concluded that BSYEP participation increased job readiness skills, community engagement skills, and college aspirations.

METHODOLOGY

While much of the existing literature centered on summer youth employment programs based in the East Coast, this relevant literature research did not reveal any studies pertaining to summer youth employment programs based in the West Coast, or any that specifically served youth in welfare programs. This study focused on the County of Santa Clara Intern & Earn Program, specifically the subsidized summer internship component for youth in the CalWORKs, CalFresh, and Foster Care public assistance programs, which is designed to gain work experience and develop life skills, which would ultimately lead to economic self-sufficiency.

This research conducted a program outcome evaluation as described by Sylvia and Sylvia (2012) to “(1) determine the interrelationship of various program goals with program functions, (2) develop a set of indicators to evaluate the success of the program functions, (3) generate a set of valid measures to make the indicators operational, and (4) design the evaluation so that one can determine what the program outcomes are and whether they have been positive” (p. 125). The methodology was adapted to evaluate this research as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: *Outcome Evaluation of the County of Santa Clara Intern & Earn Program*

Theoretical Goals	Program Goals	Proximate Indicators	Program Measure	Program Outcomes
T ₁ : Reduce the effects of generational poverty by providing low-income and disadvantaged youth with employment-based opportunities that foster safety, career exploration, and exposure to public service.	G ₁ : Provide paid summer internships to 550 work-age youth who are enrolled in the CalWORKs, CalFresh, and Foster Care programs (T ₁)	<p>I₁: Number of local employers recruited to serve as internship worksites (G₁)</p> <p>I₂: Number of internship placements and retention rate (G₁)</p> <p>I₃: Value of internships as indicated by the five areas of the program (G₁)</p>	<p>M₁: Survey comparison by benefit program (I₁, I₂, I₃)</p> <p>M₂: Survey comparison by sex (I₁, I₂, I₃)</p> <p>M₃: Survey comparison by age (I₁, I₂, I₃)</p> <p>M₄: Survey comparison by worksite type (I₁, I₂, I₃)</p> <p>M₅: Number of interns by residential supervisorial district (I₁, I₂, I₃)</p> <p>M₆: Number of internships by worksite supervisorial district (I₁, I₂, I₃)</p>	O ₁ : Positive shift in youth participants' employment experiences in the five program areas (M ₁ , M ₂ , M ₃ , M ₄ , M ₅ , M ₆)

All de-identified data used to measure the success of this program was obtained from the County of Santa Clara SSA's Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) for the 2019 summer internship program. The evaluation of this data included pre- and post-assessment data that was constructed and collected by the ORE for over 500 youth participants currently enrolled in the CalWORKs, CalFresh, and Foster Care public assistance programs. The surveys explored the

interns' experiences in the mentorship, employer expectations, workplace communication, future job prospects, and career aspiration areas of the program.

The activities involved in this research are excluded from review by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) because there are no human subjects. See Appendix A and Appendix B for a copy of the pre- and post-assessment questionnaires administered online to youth by the ORE.

Hypotheses

The assessment survey results were separated by public assistance benefit program type, participant's sex, participant's age group, and the internship type. The questions were then categorized by question type to assess the variances within each group between the time they started and completed the summer internship. Additionally, the scores were sorted into supervisorial districts and worksite locations to determine whether participants of one district are more likely to participate in the Intern & Earn summer internship program compared to another district, and whether jobs are heavily concentrated in one district or evenly distributed. Based on the literature review, my hypotheses are as follows:

H₁: Participants in the CalWORKS program will experience the highest increase in their work readiness levels compared to their counterparts in the CalFresh and Foster Care programs.

H₂: Male participants will report higher gains in work readiness levels compared to their female counterparts.

H₃: The youngest participant group (16-18) will report higher gains in work readiness levels compared to the two older participant age groups (19-21 and 22-24).

H4: Participants placed at public agencies will experience the highest increase in their work readiness levels compared to participants placed at nonprofit organizations and private businesses.

H5: Most participants reside in Santa Clara County Supervisorial District 2 (downtown San Jose, southeast San Jose, and parts of east San Jose).

H6: Most internship worksites are concentrated in Santa Clara County Supervisorial District 2 (downtown San Jose, southeast San Jose, and parts of east San Jose).

FINDINGS

The County of Santa Clara Intern & Earn summer internship program pre-assessment survey was administered to youth participants during the internship orientation at the ECC, the Hub, North County SSA office in Mountain View, and South County SSA office in Gilroy. The post-assessment survey was administered to youth participants during the internship graduation celebration at the ECC. While at the orientation and graduation celebration, interns are instructed to complete the pre-assessment survey at the orientation site's computer lab. If they do not complete the surveys while at the events, or are unable to attend the nonmandatory events, during which they are paid for their time, they receive either an email or a text message reminding them to complete the survey.

Interns must access a link on the County of Santa Clara Employment Connection public website (Employment Connection website) to complete the assessment surveys via SurveyMonkey, a free online survey tool. They have until the end of the first week on the job to complete the pre-assessment survey, and two weeks after the internship to complete the post-assessment survey. These surveys evaluated the interns' experiences, interests, and internship preferences. Participants were assured that the information collected would be treated as confidential, would not impact their internship position or public assistance benefits, and would only be used for research purposes.

Fifty-five percent (284) of youth participants completed the pre-assessment survey prior to beginning their internship, while 44% (227) of youth participants completed the post-assessment survey after completing their internship. While many youth participants took the surveys, only 129 of them completed both the pre- and post-assessment surveys. Thus, matched

data (completed pre- and post-assessment surveys for the same intern) was available for 25% of the youth who were placed at a summer internship site during the 2019 program year.

Survey Participant Demographics

This research focused only on the population that completed both the pre- and post-assessment surveys. For program year 2019, a total of 129 youth participants completed both questionnaires. Each youth's unique identifier code, CWIN, was used to link the survey responses to his or her individual demographic profile. All demographic information (e.g., gender, age, race, ethnicity, language, etc.) was tracked for statistical purposes only.

Figure A reflects participation by the public assistance benefit program. Forty-one percent of interns were enrolled in the CalWORKs program, 33% in the Foster Care program, and 26% in the CalFresh program.

Figure A: Survey Participation by Intern's Program Affiliation

Figure B reflects participation by the intern's sex. Fifty-nine percent of interns were females and 41% were males.

Figure B: *Survey Participation by Intern's Sex*

Figure C reflects participation by the intern's age. Twenty-nine percent of interns were 16 years of age, 27% were 17 years of age, 9% were 18 years of age, 9% were 19 years of age, 9% were 20 years of age, 8% were 21 years of age, 2% were 22 years of age, 3% were 23 years of age, and 4% were 24 years of age.

Figure C: *Survey Participation by Intern's Age*

Figure D reflects participation by the intern's ethnic origin. Fifty-three percent of interns were Hispanic/Latino, 16% were Asian/Pacific Islander, 12% were African American/Black, 9% did not disclose their ethnicity, 7% were White, and 2% were other.

Figure D: *Survey Participation by Intern's Race*

Survey respondents were asked to select an option that best represents how they feel about statements related to their internship experience. The responses were based on a 5-point Likert scale. The questions were then assigned a score of 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree. Therefore, a higher survey response score is associated with a higher level of work readiness. This research focused only on the work readiness questions.

Youth participants were asked to respond to the following statement “I have a good understanding of the expectations and responsibilities of what an employer expects from me.” The results showed youth enrolled in CalFresh, male participants, interns between the ages of 22-24, and youth placed at private internships experienced the highest increase in this area of work readiness.

Table 3 shows aggregate responses by public assistance benefit program, Table 4 shows aggregate responses by youth participants' sex, Table 5 shows aggregate responses by youth participants' age, and Table 6 shows aggregate responses by internship placement type.

Table 3: *Understanding of Employer Expectations – Program*

Program	Total Respondents N = 129	Pre-Assessment Overall Mean	Post-Assessment Overall Mean	Variance	% Change
CalWORKs	53	4.64	4.68	0.04	0.85%
CalFresh	34	4.65	4.71	0.06	1.27%
Foster Care	42	4.81	4.76	(0.05)	-1.05%

Table 4: *Understanding of Employer Expectations – Sex*

Sex	Total Respondents N = 129	Pre-Assessment Overall Mean	Post-Assessment Overall Mean	Variance	% Change
Male	53	4.64	4.66	0.02	0.43%
Female	76	4.74	4.75	0.01	0.21%

Table 5: *Understanding of Employer Expectations – Age*

Age	Total Respondents N = 129	Pre-Assessment Overall Mean	Post-Assessment Overall Mean	Variance	% Change
16-18	84	4.65	4.69	0.04	0.85%
19-21	34	4.76	4.68	(0.08)	-1.71%
22-24	11	4.82	5.00	0.18	3.60%

Table 6: *Understanding of Employer Expectations – Worksite*

Worksite	Total Respondents N = 129	Pre-Assessment Overall Mean	Post-Assessment Overall Mean	Variance	% Change
CBO	71	4.68	4.66	(0.02)	-0.43%
Public	49	4.82	4.82	0.00	0.00%
Private	9	4.22	4.56	0.34	7.46%

Youth participants were asked to respond to the following statement “Currently, I can ask for guidance to complete any work task.” The results indicated that youth enrolled in CalWORKs, male participants, interns between the ages of 16-18, and youth placed at community-based internships experienced the highest increase in this area of work readiness.

Table 7 shows aggregate responses by public assistance benefit program, Table 8 shows aggregate responses by youth participants’ sex, Table 9 shows aggregate responses by youth participants’ age, and Table 10 shows aggregate responses by internship placement type.

Table 7: *Ability to Communicate Professionally – Program*

Program	Total Respondents N = 129	Pre-Assessment Overall Mean	Post-Assessment Overall Mean	Variance	% Change
CalWORKs	53	4.36	4.42	0.06	1.36%
CalFresh	34	4.53	4.56	0.03	0.66%
Foster Care	42	4.69	4.55	(0.14)	-3.08%

Table 8: *Ability to Communicate Professionally – Sex*

Sex	Total Respondents N = 129	Pre-Assessment Overall Mean	Post-Assessment Overall Mean	Variance	% Change
Male	53	4.36	4.53	0.17	3.75%
Female	76	4.62	4.47	(0.15)	-3.36%

Table 9: *Ability to Communicate Professionally – Age*

Age	Total Respondents N = 129	Pre-Assessment Overall Mean	Post-Assessment Overall Mean	Variance	% Change
16-18	84	4.43	4.48	0.05	1.12%
19-21	34	4.62	4.53	(0.09)	-1.99%
22-24	11	4.82	4.55	(0.27)	-5.93%

Table 10: *Ability to Communicate Professionally – Worksite*

Worksite	Total Respondents N = 129	Pre-Assessment Overall Mean	Post-Assessment Overall Mean	Variance	% Change
CBO	71	4.39	4.54	0.15	3.30%
Public	49	4.69	4.43	(0.26)	-5.87%
Private	9	4.44	4.56	0.12	2.63%

Youth participants were asked to respond to the following statement “Currently, I have an understanding of the job options that I would like to pursue.” The results displayed demonstrated that youth enrolled in Foster Care, male participants, interns between the ages of 16-18, and youth placed at public internships experienced the highest increase in this area of work readiness.

Table 11 shows aggregate responses by public assistance benefit program, Table 12 shows aggregate responses by youth participants’ sex, Table 13 shows aggregate responses by youth participants’ age, and Table 14 shows aggregate responses by internship placement type.

Table 11: *Knowledge of Career Options – Program*

Program	Total Respondents N = 129	Pre-Assessment Overall Mean	Post-Assessment Overall Mean	Variance	% Change
CalWORKs	53	4.28	4.11	(0.17)	-4.14%
CalFresh	34	4.21	4.26	0.05	1.17%
Foster Care	42	4.45	4.57	0.12	2.63%

Table 12: *Knowledge of Career Options – Sex*

Sex	Total Respondents N = 129	Pre-Assessment Overall Mean	Post-Assessment Overall Mean	Variance	% Change
Male	53	4.04	4.17	0.13	3.12%
Female	76	4.51	4.39	(0.12)	-2.73%

Table 13: *Knowledge of Career Options – Age*

Age	Total Respondents N = 129	Pre-Assessment Overall Mean	Post-Assessment Overall Mean	Variance	% Change
16-18	84	4.17	4.18	0.01	0.24%
19-21	34	4.56	4.50	(0.06)	-1.33%
22-24	11	4.73	4.64	(0.09)	-1.94%

Table 14: *Knowledge of Career Options – Worksite*

Worksite	Total Respondents N = 129	Pre-Assessment Overall Mean	Post-Assessment Overall Mean	Variance	% Change
CBO	71	4.30	4.17	(0.13)	-3.12%
Public	49	4.41	4.55	0.14	3.08%
Private	9	4.00	4.00	0.00	0.00%

Youth participants were asked to respond to the following statement “I plan on attending a vocation school, a community college, or a 4-year university after high school.” The results showed that youth enrolled in CalFresh, male participants, interns between the ages of 16-18, and youth placed at private internships experienced the highest increase in this area of work readiness.

Table 15 shows aggregate responses by public assistance benefit program, Table 16 shows aggregate responses by youth participants’ sex, Table 17 shows aggregate responses by youth participants’ age, and Table 18 shows aggregate responses by internship placement type.

Table 15: *Educational Aspirations for Future Career Advancement – Program*

Program	Total Respondents N = 129	Pre-Assessment Overall Mean	Post-Assessment Overall Mean	Variance	% Change
CalWORKs	53	4.26	4.34	0.08	1.84%
CalFresh	34	4.35	4.44	0.09	2.03%
Foster Care	42	4.60	4.40	(0.20)	-4.55%

Table 16: *Educational Aspirations for Future Career Advancement – Sex*

Sex	Total Respondents N = 129	Pre-Assessment Overall Mean	Post-Assessment Overall Mean	Variance	% Change
Male	53	4.13	4.34	0.21	4.84%
Female	76	4.58	4.42	(0.16)	-3.62%

Table 17: *Educational Aspirations for Future Career Advancement – Age*

Age	Total Respondents N = 129	Pre-Assessment Overall Mean	Post-Assessment Overall Mean	Variance	% Change
16-18	84	4.25	4.32	0.07	1.62%
19-21	34	4.65	4.56	(0.09)	-1.97%
22-24	11	4.73	4.45	(0.28)	-6.29%

Table 18: *Educational Aspirations for Future Career Advancement – Worksite*

Worksite	Total Respondents N = 129	Pre-Assessment Overall Mean	Post-Assessment Overall Mean	Variance	% Change
CBO	71	4.27	4.23	(0.04)	-0.95%
Public	49	4.73	4.69	(0.04)	-0.85%
Private	9	3.56	4.00	0.44	11.00%

Lastly, youth participants were asked the following: “Currently, is there an adult who you can identify as your mentor for career assistance or career advice?” The results showed youth enrolled in Foster Care, male participants, interns between the ages of 22-24, and youth placed at community-based internships experienced the highest increase in this area of work readiness.

Table 19 shows aggregate responses by public assistance benefit program, Table 20 shows aggregate responses by youth participants’ sex, Table 21 shows aggregate responses by youth participants’ age, and Table 22 shows aggregate responses by internship placement type.

Table 19: *Career Mentor - Program*

Program	Total Respondents N = 129	Pre- Assessment Total # Yes	Post- Assessment Total # Yes	Variance	% Change
CalWORKs	53	36	38	2.00	5.26%
CalFresh	34	25	23	(2.00)	-8.70%
Foster Care	42	35	42	7.00	16.67%

Table 20: *Career Mentor - Sex*

Sex	Total Respondents N = 129	Pre- Assessment Total # Yes	Post- Assessment Total # Yes	Variance	% Change
Male	53	36	39	3.00	7.69%
Female	76	60	64	4.00	6.25%

Table 21: *Career Mentor - Age*

Age	Total Respondents N = 129	Pre- Assessment Total # Yes	Post- Assessment Total # Yes	Variance	% Change
16-18	84	62	63	1.00	1.59%
19-21	34	28	29	1.00	3.45%
22-24	11	6	11	5.00	45.45%

Table 22: *Career Mentor - Worksite*

Worksite	Total Respondents N = 129	Pre- Assessment Total # Yes	Post- Assessment Total # Yes	Variance	% Change
CBO	71	51	58	7.00	12.07%
Public	49	39	40	1.00	2.50%
Private	9	6	5	(1.00)	-20.00%

The majority (44%) of youth participants reside in County Supervisorial District 2.

Results for the number of interns residing in each of the supervisorial districts throughout Santa Clara County are shown in Table 23.

Table 23: *Youth Participant by County Supervisorial District*

Intern Residence	Number of Participants	Percentage
District 1	21	17%
District 2	57	44%
District 3	30	23%
District 4	13	10%
District 5	8	6%

The majority (65%) of worksites are located in County Supervisorial District 2. Results for the number of youth participants placed at internship sites in each of the supervisorial districts throughout Santa Clara County are shown in Table 24.

Table 24: *Intern Placement by County Supervisorial District*

Internship Site	Number of Employers	Percentage
District 1	14	11%
District 2	84	65%
District 3	16	12%
District 4	13	10%
District 5	2	2%

ANALYSIS

The main objective of this study was to evaluate the impact of the County of Santa Clara Intern & Earn summer internship program on youth participant's perceptions of work readiness, particularly how they differ among different demographics: public assistance benefit program type, participant's sex, participant's age group, and the internship type. The data for this research, obtained from the ORE, assessed participants' internship experiences and work skill confidence levels prior to and after completion of their internship. Twenty-five percent of the youth participants completed both the pre- and post-assessment survey. Data for this research focused on this subset population. Overall, youth participants who are males between the ages of 16-18 and are placed at either a nonprofit or private internship worksite reported the highest gains in work readiness levels.

Hypothesis Testing

The findings established that both CalFresh and Foster Care youth participants experienced the highest gains in overall work readiness levels based on their survey responses to the five internship areas. Therefore, H_1 where CalWORKs participants would experience the highest increase in their work readiness levels is rejected.

The findings revealed that male participants and the youngest group of participants (ages 16-18) reported the highest gains in overall work readiness levels based on their survey responses to the five internship areas. Therefore, both H_2 and H_3 are accepted.

The findings indicated that youth participants placed at both nonprofit organizations and private businesses experienced the highest gains in overall work readiness levels based on their survey responses to the five internship areas. Therefore, H_4 where interns placed at public agencies would experience the highest increase in their work readiness levels is rejected.

The findings revealed that youth participants predominantly reside in Santa Clara County Supervisorial District 2 and internships are also predominantly located in the same district.

Therefore, both H_5 and H_6 are accepted.

The research also demonstrates that as an entire population, interns reported overall positive shifts in their employment experiences in the five internship program areas. However, when matching individual responses to these survey questions, the results varied between different categories of interns and yielded negative changes in some cases.

Limitations

Nonetheless, these findings must be interpreted with caution, as several limitations potentially exist in this study. First, approximately half of the interns completed the survey before or after completing their internship but only 25% of the participants completed both the pre- and post-assessment survey. The target population may offer too small a sample size for generalizable matched data analysis because it could alter the overall mean scores. Thus, a larger sample size may produce more precise results.

The second limitation concerns the electronic administration of the surveys during program events. Participants must retrieve the survey link by first accessing the Employment Connection website. Participants who did not attend the orientation or the graduation celebration may have forgotten to access the Employment Connection website at a later time to complete the surveys. Thus, in the future, alternative survey methods may be employed to maximize the response rate.

The third limitation concerns the academic researcher's inability to conduct a longitudinal study due to the research submission deadline. Therefore, the time available to measure change over time was constrained by this deadline.

Lastly, the academic researcher had limited access to data. The matched data captured the participant's experiences immediately before and after the internship. The study may have revealed more significant relationships if long-term effects are tracked and available for evaluation.

Areas for Future Research

The analysis of this work shows that younger males affiliated with either the CalFresh or Foster Care programs gained the most foundational skills needed to be minimally qualified for employment, as determined by their internship experiences. Nevertheless, future research remains necessary to validate the conclusions that can be drawn from this study.

A highly recommended study that could be looked at in the future involves identifying first-time versus returning interns to the program. This could allow researchers to compare experiential differences between these two cohorts. A deeper study on work readiness levels for this target population would be highly recommended, with an additional long-term time point survey. This could allow researchers to compare survey responses immediately before, after, and one-year post internship participation. Lastly, a future research project using a qualitative research approach is also desirable. This could allow researchers to explain the reported decreases in work readiness levels after internship completion.

Conclusion

This research has captured the impact of the County of Santa Clara Intern & Earn summer internship program on youth participants' perception of their work readiness. This study is valuable to the program's decision-makers because it provides insight into where to focus resources for future program enhancements.

One way that administrators can strengthen the program is by conducting a process evaluation to explore ways in which interns are matched to their internship site. At a high level, the majority of interns reside in Supervisorial District 2 and the majority of internships are located in the same district. However, there is a disparity in the distribution percentage – there are 20% more internships in Supervisorial District 2 than there are interns residing in the same district.

Another way to enhance the program is to increase evaluation data. This can be accomplished by providing interns with monetary incentives, such as gift cards, to encourage youth participation in the assessment surveys. If this is not a feasible method, administrators can make the paid orientation and graduation celebration events mandatory, as time is already allotted into those events for youth to complete the assessment surveys.

Additionally, this research contributes to the existing body of knowledge related to youth summer employment. It provides a good starting point for further research involving participants affiliated with public assistance programs and youth summer employment programs administered by a public agency based in the West Coast.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: 2019 Pre-Intern & Earn Assessment Survey

Welcome to the 2019 County of Santa Clara Intern & Earn summer internship! The 8-week internship will provide you with exposure and experience working in a part-time job position. Before starting the internship, we need you to complete this short survey. Please answer all of these questions to the best of your ability. Your responses will be confidential, will not be shared, and will not impact your internship position.

If you have any questions about the internship or about the survey, please ask an employment counselor.

* 1. Enter your CWIN number (reservation number):

* 2. Are you currently in high school?

☐ Yes

☐ No

* 3. What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed?

☐ 9th grade

☐ 11th grade

☐ 10th grade

☐ 12th grade, no diploma

* 4. Did you participate in the 2018 Intern & Earn summer internship program?

☐ Yes

☐ No

* 5. Have you had any previous work experience in the last year? (Do not include your 2018 Intern & Earn internship experience.)

☐ Yes

☐ No

* 6. What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed?

☐ 9th grade	☐ Vocational, Technical, Certificate, Or Business School beyond High School level
☐ 10th grade	☐ Some college credit, but less than 1 year
☐ 11th grade	☐ One or more years of college, no degree
☐ 12th grade, no diploma	☐ Associate degree (for example: AA, AS)
☐ High School graduate (high school diploma or GED equivalent)	☐ Bachelor's degree (for example: BA, AB, BS)

* 7. Did you participate in the 2018 Intern & Earn summer internship program?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

* 8. Have you had any previous work experience in the last year? (Do not include your 2018 Intern & Earn internship experience.)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

* 9. Currently, is there an adult who you can identify as your mentor for career assistance or career advice? (for example your social worker, teacher, coach, school counselor etc.)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

* 10. Choose the option that best represents how you feel about the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have a good understanding of the expectations and responsibilities of what an employer expects from me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Currently, I can ask for guidance to complete any work task.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Currently, I have an understanding of the job options that I would like to pursue.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I plan on attending vocational school, a community college or a 4-year university after high school.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

* 11. How did you hear about the 2019 Intern & Earn program? *Mark all options that apply.*

☐ Eligibility Worker	☐ Postcard
☐ Employment Counselor	☐ School
☐ Friends	☐ Social Media (YouTube videos, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)
☐ The Hub	☐ Social Worker
☐ Lobby Posters	☐ Text Message
☐ Parent/Guardian	
☐ Other (please specify):	

* 12. How would you prefer to apply to the internship?

- ☐ E-mail
- ☐ In-person
- ☐ Online
- ☐ Phone Call
- ☐ Text
- ☐ Other (please specify):

* 13. What is your preferred method of communication?

- ☐ E-mail
- ☐ In-person
- ☐ Online
- ☐ Phone Call
- ☐ Text
- ☐ Other (please specify):

* 14. What is your preferred e-mail address?

* 15. What is the best number to reach you?

* 16. Do you have plans to attend school after the internship ends?

☐ Yes

☐ No

* 17. What are your school plans after the internship ends?

☐ Finishing High School (to get a high school diploma or GED equivalent)

☐ Attend Community College

☐ Attend Vocational School

☐ Attend 4-year University

☐ Other (please specify)

* 18. What are your school plans after the internship ends?

☐ Attend Community College

☐ Attend Vocational School

☐ Attend 4-year University

☐ Other (please specify)

* 19. Do you have plans to work after the internship ends?

☐ Yes

☐ No

* 20. What are your work plans after this internship ends?

☐ Work part-time

☐ Work full-time

☐ Other (please specify)

* 21. Would you be interested in attending additional job skills' workshops?

☐ Yes

☐ No

* 22. Which of the following workshop(s) would you be interested attending? *Mark all options that apply.*

- ☐ Building My Resume (What is a resume?, Writing tips, Do's and don'ts)
- ☐ Educational and Career Pathways (Options for higher education)
- ☐ Effective Customer Service
- ☐ Exploring My Job and Career Choices (Job vs. career, education and income, career exploration)
- ☐ Finding My Career (Exploring and planning career choices)
- ☐ Identifying My Skills (What is a skill?, Identifying my skills, Skills inventory)
- ☐ Keeping My Job (Standout and shine, Probation and termination, Keys to keeping a job)
- ☐ Making My Application Stand Out (The purpose of an application, Do's and don'ts, Completing an application)
- ☐ My Communication on the Job (Dealing with conflict on the job, cultural differences, mentors)
- ☐ Paying for College (Guide to financial aid)
- ☐ Preparing for my Interviews (What is an interview?, First impressions, answering questions)
- ☐ Social Media: Why It Matters (Do's and don'ts)
- ☐ What Employers Expect from Me (Needing a job vs. wanting to work, employer expectations, being my own boss)
- ☐ Other workshop topic not listed. (please specify)

23. Are there any reasons why you cannot attend the workshops?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

24. What prevents you from attending the workshop(s)? *Mark all options that apply.*

- ☐ After school activities (sports, band, etc.)
- ☐ Family obligations (childcare, watching younger siblings, etc.)
- ☐ Place the workshops are held
- ☐ School homework/studying
- ☐ Time workshops are held
- ☐ Transportation (no ride)
- ☐ Working (full-time or part-time)
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Appendix B: 2019 Post-Intern & Earn Assessment Survey

Thank you for participating in the 2019 County of Santa Clara Intern & Earn summer internship. The goal of the 8-week internship was to provide you with exposure and experience working in a part-time job position.

Before ending the internship, we need you to complete this short survey.

Please answer all of these questions to the best of your ability. Your responses will be confidential, will not be shared, and will not impact your internship position.

If you have any questions about the internship or about the survey, please ask an employment counselor.

* 1. Enter your CWIN number (reservation number):

* 2. Are you currently in high school?

☐ Yes

☐ No

* 3. What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed?

☐ 9th grade

☐ 11th grade

☐ 10th grade

☐ 12th grade, no diploma

* 4. What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed?

☐ 9th grade	☐ Some college credit, but less than 1 year
☐ 10th grade	☐ One or more years of college, no degree
☐ 11th grade	☐ Associate degree (for example: AA, AS)
☐ High School graduate (high school diploma or GED equivalent)	☐ Bachelor's degree (for example: BA, AB, BS)
☐ Vocational, Technical, Certificate, Or Business School beyond High School level	

* 5. Currently, is there an adult who you can identify as your mentor for career assistance or career advice? (for example your social worker, employment counselor, teacher, coach, school counselor etc.)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

* 6. Choose the option that best represents how you feel about the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have a good understanding of the expectations and responsibilities of what an employer expects from me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Currently, I can ask for guidance to complete any work task.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Currently, I have an understanding of the job options that I would like to pursue.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I plan on attending vocational school, a community college or a 4-year university after high school.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

* 7. Do you have plans to attend school after the internship ends?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

* 8. What are your school plans after the internship ends?

- ☐ Finishing High School (to get a high school diploma or GED equivalent)
- ☐ Attend Community College
- ☐ Attend Vocational School
- ☐ Attend 4-year University
- ☐ Other (please specify)

* 9. What are your school plans after the internship ends?

- ☐ Attend Community College
- ☐ Attend Vocational School
- ☐ Attend 4-year University
- ☐ Other (please specify)

* 10. Do you have plans to work after the internship ends?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

* 11. What are your work plans after this internship ends?

- ☐ Work part-time
- ☐ Work full-time
- ☐ Other (please specify)

* 12. In the last 6 months, have you been saving money?

☐ Yes

☐ No

* 13. What statements below describe your savings plan? Mark all options that apply.

☐ Building up a balance of money in my bank account

☐ Giving money to family to save on my behalf

☐ Saving cash at home or in my wallet

☐ I have not been actively saving (including I don't save/I have no money to save)

☐ Other (please specify)

* 14. Would you be interested in attending workshops to learn and/or improve your job skills?

☐ Yes

☐ No

* 15. Which of the following workshop(s) would you be interested attending? *Mark all options that apply.*

- ☐ Building my resume (What is a resume?, Writing tips, do's and don'ts)
- ☐ Educational and career pathways (Options for higher education)
- ☐ Effective customer service
- ☐ Exploring my job and career choices (Job vs. career, education and income, career exploration)
- ☐ Finding my career (Exploring and planning career choices)
- ☐ Identifying my skills (What is a skill?, Identifying my skills, skills inventory)
- ☐ Keeping my job (Standout and shine, probation and termination, keys to keeping a job)
- ☐ Making my application stand out (The purpose of an application, do's and don'ts, completing an application)
- ☐ My communication on the job (Dealing with conflict on the job, cultural differences, mentors)
- ☐ Paying for college (Guide to financial aid)
- ☐ Preparing for my Interviews (What is an interview?, first impressions, answering questions)
- ☐ Social media: Why it matters (Do's and don'ts)
- ☐ What employers expect from me (Needing a job vs. wanting to work, employer expectations, being my own boss)
- ☐ Other workshop topic not listed. (please specify)

* 16. Would you be interested in returning for this internship program next year?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

17. What was your favorite experience during the internship?

18. How can we improve the internship next year?

* 19. Would you recommend this internship to other youth?

☐ Yes

☐ No

20. Why not? Please explain.