



What We Do

Many at-risk youth and young adults are faced with tremendous obstacles that make them vulnerable to dropping out of school, unemployment or underemployment, and a lifetime of poverty. Youth Connect, under the auspices of CareerSource, is a work-readiness program that provides guidance and financial resources needed to change lives. Students may attain their GED and/or train in technology, mechanical and healthcare programs that lead to industry certifications and technical degrees, breaking the cycle of poverty and despair for hundreds of promising teens and young adults.

Youth Connect provides services and resources to assist qualified youth, between 16 and 24, to enroll in and successfully complete educational and training programs in order to transition into employment. The program services are free of charge, some of which may include counseling, assistance with educational costs and expenses, alternative education and job placement services. More than 3,495 students have earned industry certifications since the program began.

By the Numbers 2021-22

- 106** Youths served
- 102** New student enrollments
- 59** Positive outcomes (employment, post-secondary education or military)
- 85** Credentials (GED, part of a program completed or professional license)

Words of Gratitude From Our Students

As a single mother of a toddler, my son will not remember a time when his mother was overworked and underpaid. Thanks to the generosity of donors and programs like Youth Connect, he will only remember that his mother is a nurse. Nursing school has caused many sleepless nights and being absent from family functions, but it has given me tremendous purpose." – Kyla M.

"I am a 21-year-old trying to turn his life around. A few years ago, I got into some trouble with the law and ended up going to jail. I am happy to say that I am drug-free now and have been out of jail for two years. Hopefully, if all goes well, I can graduate from PTC and start working in my field as a welder. Luckily, there are people in my life that believe in second chances and hopefully this is mine." – Austin B.

"I really enjoy my time at Pinellas Technical College and my auto body course. There was a time in my life that I had no idea what I wanted to do. But now that I'm in my classes, I have a plan and a possible career. My teachers really want me to succeed." – David O.

MORE ABOUT YOUTH CONNECT

Program Background and Objectives

Youth Connect is designed to prepare youth for employment and/or post-secondary education through academic and occupational learning opportunities. Services provided to eligible youth are tailored to meet the specific needs of each individual and may include: dropout prevention strategies, alternative school services, career counseling, assistance with educational costs and job placement services.

Program eligibility includes economically disadvantaged youth who are in or out of school, have dropped out of school, are ex-offenders, in foster care, homeless, pregnant or parenting, unemployed or underemployed, and those with basic skills deficiencies.

Services Provided by Youth Connect Include:

- Individualized assessment
- Secondary alternative education/GED
- Leadership development/work readiness
- Career guidance and counseling
- Information on training providers and educational programs
- Occupational skills training
- Transportation assistance

Three career coordinators and an employment specialist work directly with disadvantaged young adults. The Pinellas Education Foundation partners with Pinellas County Schools and CareerSource Pinellas to identify eligible youth and young adults. Some have either dropped out of high school to enroll in adult education and work toward a GED; others have received a high school diploma or GED, but are not employed or underemployed and in need of training and/or job placement services. A referral system with the CareerSource Pinellas centers, Adult Career Education sites, and other organizations enables the Pinellas Education Foundation to connect with eligible youth in Pinellas County.

How You Can Help!

Your company/organization is invited to join the business partners who prepare disadvantaged young adults for a better future through a sponsorship of Youth Connect. Sponsorship contributions to the Youth Connect program are used to fund the Frances Stavros Career Education Scholarship Program, which provides career education scholarship assistance to Youth Connect students to attend academic programs at Pinellas Technical College. Additionally, scholarship dollars can be used to fund program participation requirements often not covered by scholarships, such as tools, uniforms, etc.

Sponsorship Opportunities

- All contributions will be matched by the Frances Stavros Career Education Endowment Fund
- Each sponsor receives annual updates on the progress of sponsored students and a thank you letter
- Sponsor listing as a supporter of the Frances Stavros Career Education Scholarship Program
- Opportunity for a private tour of Pinellas Technical College career facilities



**Pinellas Education
Foundation**

12090 Starkey Road Largo, FL 33773
pinellaseducation.org