

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation’s Opportunity Youth Initiative serves young people aged 16-24 who are disconnected from school and work. The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and our partners provide access to meaningful career pathways, particularly in the hospitality and health care industries, including wrap-around supports and opportunities for advancement. Ultimately, this work aims to fulfill the economic and personal promise for youth the Hilton Foundation serves, without outcome disparities dependent on race/ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation. The Opportunity Youth Initiative has historically operated in New Orleans, where it will continue, while now expanding to Los Angeles and two international cities to be determined.

## Ideal state

All previously disconnected young people in New Orleans, Los Angeles, and two international cities will achieve economic self-sufficiency and well-being through access to meaningful career pathways, particularly in the hospitality and health care industries, with no gaps by race/ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. Cities around the U.S. and world are implementing similarly effective strategies to help youth reach their potential.

## History and Background

This work is rooted in the Foundation’s long history in hospitality. Until 2010, the Foundation focused on establishing and expanding the Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management at the University of Houston to develop the pipeline of future hospitality leaders. In 2015, our board approved the Hospitality Workforce Development Major Program, which focused on supporting opportunity youth in New Orleans by building hospitality career pathways, supporting youth workforce systems change, and funding the capacity of local youth-serving organizations. Major accomplishments from this time period include the establishment of a collaborative focused on a “functional zero” framework to end youth disconnection in the city and the start of a hospitality program at the New Orleans Career Center to provide Career and Technical Education to students in the New Orleans Public School system.

The Opportunity Youth Initiative began in 2020 to support disconnected young people in achieving self-sufficiency and well-being through career pathways, especially in hospitality and health care. One in four young adults ages 15-24 globally (350 million) is an opportunity youth—that is, under or unemployed and not in school. This includes 4.6 million youth throughout the U.S. Strategy25 expands our work to Los Angeles and one or two international cities over time. It also expands beyond a focus on hospitality to now support pathways and support for health care careers, and preparation for the changing economies of the future. We will continue to explore other industries as we grow the Opportunity Youth Initiative.

## 5-year goals\*

**20% decline in youth disconnection by decreasing disconnection in New Orleans to 12% and in Los Angeles to 9%**

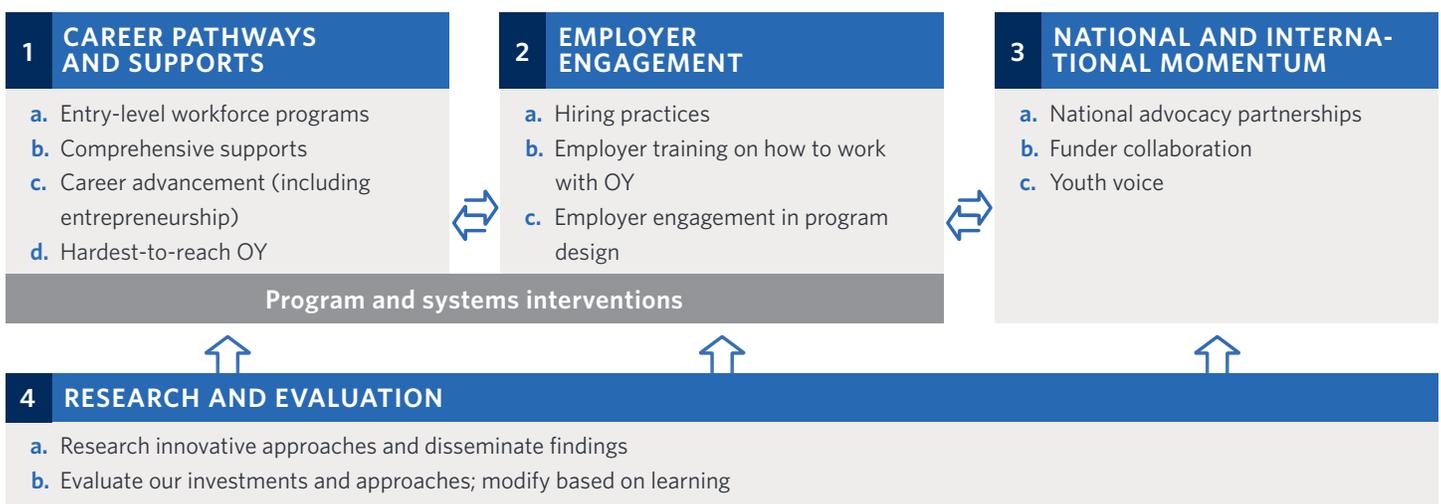
**3,500 former opportunity youth are hired into higher-mobility jobs**

**30% decrease in disparities in disconnection by race/ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation in New Orleans and Los Angeles**

**Active well-coordinated efforts to work toward functional zero rates of disconnection are established**

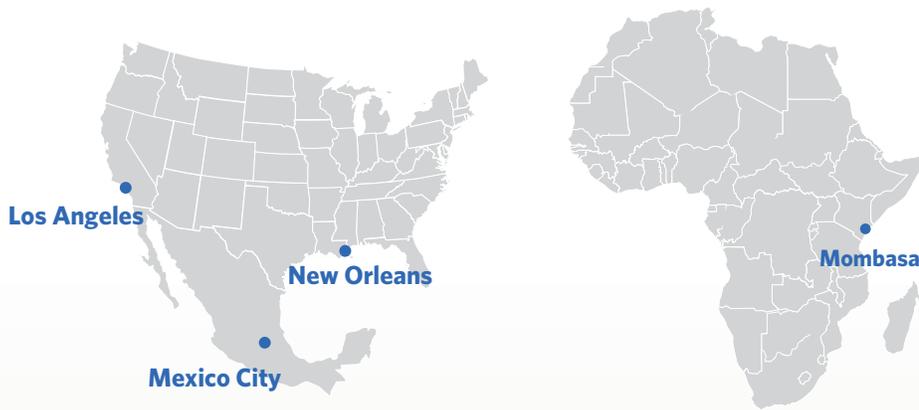
\*Note that baselines pre-date COVID-19 and will be updated as newer data become available.

## Strategy architecture



## WHERE WE WORK

- Mexico City and Mombasa are likely locations but not yet final



### EQUITY FOCUS

- Youth of color (in the U.S.)
- LGBTQ youth (in the U.S.)
- Women (in the U.S. and internationally)
- Marginalized communities (internationally)
- Build the capacity of local organizations to serve their communities

### OTHER KEY METRICS

- Youth leaders are a formal, integral part of local decision-making, and at least 100 young people are trained and connected to these opportunities
- Public workforce development systems and funding streams serve 15 percent (~650,000) of opportunity youth in the country
- \$35-40 million in leveraged funding is aligned to the Foundation's work in Los Angeles and New Orleans

### PROGRAM COSTS



#### Strategy25

(2021-2025):

Est. \$90,000,000

### CHALLENGES



- Urgent public health and economic security challenges divert attention from workforce funding
- Persistent narratives around young people are deficit-based and often negative. They perpetuate harmful stereotypes and result in policies and practices that either discount the lived experiences of young people and/or actively harm them and their communities
- Pandemic-induced learning loss and disconnection from school likely will have wide-ranging negative impacts, leading to increased youth disconnection over time
- Persistent racial discrimination reduces pathways in higher-mobility or higher-wage positions for Black, Indigenous, and people of color, or other marginalized opportunity youth in international settings

### OPPORTUNITIES



- Working in two locations domestically and expanding to additional international locations enables the Opportunity Youth Initiative to diversify our portfolio, build a learning community of practice across geographies, and strengthen the global movement
- In the U.S. and many other places in the world, health care is a stable and growing industry that can provide career pathways for opportunity youth