

HOGSETT

MAYOR

A large-scale youth summer employment initiative in Indianapolis will reduce crime and empower our city's young people to achieve success in the future.

Joe Hogsett will launch a program serving 1,000 local teenagers by the summer of 2016. This can be accomplished – without raising taxes – by leveraging our community's current standalone programs and convening corporate and nonprofit stakeholders in a highly visible, coordinated effort that is supported by the Mayor's office.

It is easier to build strong children
than to repair broken men.

- Frederick Douglass

THE FACTS

1 ONE IN THREE YOUNG PEOPLE IN INDIANAPOLIS UNDER THE AGE OF 18 LIVE IN POVERTY. AMONG THE MANY COMPLEX FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THIS INCREASE IN POVERTY IS THE LACK OF MEANINGFUL JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

In general, youth experience unemployment at a much higher rate than the rest of the population. While Indiana had an overall unemployment rate of 7.7% in 2013, the rate for teens between the ages of 16 and 19 was 22%. Black teens, in particular, experience unemployment at a rate as much as three times higher than their peers. The U.S. Department of Labor reports that teenagers who find summer jobs are less likely to drop out and more likely to find a job in the future. Teens who work 20 or more hours per week during their senior year also have access to higher-wage occupations later in life.

2 INDIANAPOLIS MUST ADDRESS THE EPIDEMIC OF VIOLENT CRIME INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE.

Over the last three years, Indianapolis experienced a dramatic rise in the city's murder rate, including many instances of violent crime involving teenagers. A significant contributing factor was the lack of opportunities for legal, meaningful work and engagement when school is not in session.

Without a structured school environment, many Indianapolis teens are left unsupervised during summer months. Summer employment will foster personal responsibility, leadership development, and workforce readiness. The more time young people spend working productively, the less time they will have to spend on unsupervised and potentially criminal activities.

As the recent Your Life Matters Plan of Action report indicated, Indianapolis faces an urgent public safety need to address the systemic problem posed by chronic unemployment of young people in our city:

Young adults should not be allowed to slip through the cracks in the system and fail to develop the basic skills necessary to be productive members of society. There must be urgency of action to fill gaps in Central Indiana's workforce system. Most businesses are unaware of the depth of Indianapolis' youth unemployment problem and how it contributes to problems facing the community, including crime.

[Your Life Matters – Plan of Action report, page 29]

3

INDIANAPOLIS LACKS A COORDINATED, COMPREHENSIVE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT EFFORT.

While there are several examples of successful standalone youth employment initiatives in Indianapolis, our community lacks a visible, coordinated effort to provide summer job opportunities to young people. As the Your Life Matters Task Force recently pointed out in its Plan of Action Report, one main barrier is an understandable lack of coordination between the various groups that are already engaged:

Good programs are often limited because much of their focus is on organizational survival, while there is often need for increased attention on growth in reach or quality improvement. Numerous programs and services are effective in providing youth workforce development and merely need professional development and capacity building support to enhance both their quality and service levels.

[Your Life Matters – Plan of Action report, page 32]

Joe Hogsett will lead an effort to bring these groups together with the goal of launching the city's first unified summer jobs program by the summer of 2016.

Nothing stops a bullet like a job.

- Father Greg Boyle

THE PLAN

Rather than reinventing the wheel and adding another layer of government bureaucracy, Hogsett will convene the diverse groups already working to employ our youth and direct those energies toward a comprehensive summer jobs program. As Mayor, he will also oversee further policy development, raise funds from individual and corporate partners, secure job commitments from employers, and seek to grow the initiative each year.

Beginning in the summer of 2016, these jobs will be available to young people in Marion County. Participating organizations and employers will offer positions that range from 20 to 25 hours per week with wages of at least \$8 per hour for six weeks during the summer. The program will aim to grow the total number of jobs available to young people through participating organizations and employers each year, with a goal of at least 4,000 new jobs in four years.

WHAT WOULD THE PROGRAM OFFER YOUNG PEOPLE?

In addition to providing valuable life experience and meaningful income to the program's participants, the City of Indianapolis would also work with participating organizations and employers to ensure that every young person receives job skills training that will equip them to be full participants in the local economy.

These efforts would include things such as résumé building workshops, job fairs for post-summer employment, and easily accessible information on the diverse educational, employment, and mentoring opportunities available for young people who may have different paths to individual achievement.

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST AND HOW WILL WE FUND IT?

For 2016 and 2017, the total cost will be approximately \$3 million. The vast majority of this will be reinvested back in the community in the form of job wages. Moreover, much of this funding will come from the corporate or nonprofit employers themselves. Additional funds from philanthropic organizations and federal grants will support positions with properly vetted non-profit or faith-based organizations.

Through reallocation of existing city resources and buy-in from partners, this program will be launched in 2016 without the need to use any local tax revenue.

A PROVEN STRATEGY TO CUT CRIME RATES AND GROW THE LOCAL ECONOMY.

Similar initiatives are already reducing crime and empowering kids in other cities like Washington, DC, Boston, Baltimore, Chicago, and New York. For example, Northeastern University found that "meaningful employment opportunities can help reduce violent, risky, and adverse social behaviors among economically disadvantaged youth from Boston's high crime neighborhoods during the summer months and prepare them for future employment and academic experiences."

In New York City, youth summer employment "decreases the probability of incarceration and decreases the probability of mortality," according to a study by the National Bureau of Economic Research. Further, an evaluation of Chicago's "One Summer Plus" eight-week jobs program by the University of Chicago Crime Lab showed that participants experienced a 43 percent reduction in violent crime arrests over a 16-month period. Simply put, these efforts produced a positive impact on participants beyond just the summertime duration of the program.