

2024



COLLEGE CHANGES EVERYTHING[®]
CONFERENCE

Empowering College Students Through Mentorship and Peer-to-Peer Engagement

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INTRODUCTIONS



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AGENDA



Organization Overviews

What does Mentorship mean?

Volunteer Recruitment

Volunteer Resources

Challenges



WHO'S IN THE ROOM

- Program Staff
- Campus Staff
- Educators
- Counselors
- Child Welfare Professionals
- Volunteers
- Other



AMERICA NEEDS YOU

First-generation students face significant barriers to college and career success:

- Only 21% of U.S. low-income, first-gen students graduate within six years¹
- Even with a degree, first-gen graduates earn a **median household income 27% lower** than peers with college-educated parents
- Colleges have limited resources to build career competencies, with a national median ratio of career services staff to students of 1,583:1³
- In addition to competencies, **networking is also critical** to upward mobility, providing access to power, information, and resources





MISSION AND PROGRAMS

America Needs You (ANY) fights for economic mobility for ambitious, **first-generation** college students. We do this by providing transformative **mentorship** and intensive **career development**.

THE FELLOWS PROGRAM

Launched 2010, 2500 students served

- A two-year program
- In-person Saturday workshops focused on career development
- Monthly enrichment and networking events
- 1:1 mentorship for personal support and career guidance
- Extensive internship and full-time job networks
- Holistic support, including grants

FIRSTGENU

Launched 2022, 2000 students served

- An online, five-week program with five cohorts offered each year
- 15 self-paced career development modules available across three pathways
- Cohort support and community-building opportunities
- Networking and professional enrichment events
- Opportunity to earn digital badges
- Access to professional network and internship opportunities



FELLOWS PROGRAM TOPICS

Career Planning	Soft Skills
Assessing The Right Career For You	Communication Skills
Resume Writing/Cover Letters	Leadership & Teamwork
Interviewing Strategies	Organization In & Out of the Workplace
Mock Interviews/Elevator Pitch	Project Management
Informational Interviews	Skills for the Modern Workforce
Critical Thinking	Life After College
Communication Skills	Life After College Panel
Presentation Skills/Public Speaking	Managing Up
Networking Skills	Organizational Culture
Developing Your Personal Brand	Communication in the Workplace
Time Management	Unwritten Rules of the Workplace





FIRSTGENU PATHWAYS

Job Search Skills <i>Available Now</i>	Leadership Skills <i>Available Now</i>	Career Management Skills <i>Available in Fall 2024</i>
Connecting the Dots: College to Career	Communication Skills: Listening, Writing & Speaking	Career Planning
Networking & Career Planning	Leadership & Teamwork	Managing Your Personal Brand
Preparing Application Materials	Organization In & Out of the Workplace	Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace
Interview Skills	Project Management	Identity in the Workplace
Navigating Workspaces	Skills for the Modern Workforce	Life After College



PROGRAM OUTCOMES



96%

graduate within six years of enrollment

82%

secure employment or enroll in grad school within six months

87%

secure career-trajectory internships



IT TAKES A COMMUNITY TO BUILD SUCCESS!



“ANY means being able to sit at tables that I didn’t have access to. I always knew the potential, **I knew I was going to get somewhere big, but I just didn’t have the resources or the network to do so.**”

Mircelis Paredes
Fellow

“Serving as a Mentor Coach is my way of maintaining the values that got me where I am today; **it feeds my soul.**”

Anthony Louis
Mentor Coach



“As a first-generation, Haitian-American college student, I’m aware that the odds are always against me. FirstGenU has prepared me to beat those odds. **Through the courses, I’ve gained competencies that will allow me to enter any room confidently.**”

Ralph Olibrice
FirstGenU Student



Y-CAP provides youth with foster care experience ongoing support in navigating the college landscape.

Peer Advocates and their mentees collaborate to **build community**, **develop healthy social networks**, and overcome the challenges of college life through **mutual support** and relationship building.



Why Programs like Y-CAP Matter

- **About 86% of foster care youth set the goal of attending college.**
- About 35% of the young people who turned 17 while in foster care enrolled in college, 86% of those who enrolled in college were community college students, and only 8% of those community college students graduated with a certificate or a degree.
- **Studies have found that just 3-4% of former foster youth obtain a four-year college degree. And between 2 and 6% receive a two-year degree.**
- Fewer than half of foster youth persist through their first year of college, compared to around 75 percent of first-gen, low-income learners.

Y-CAP Core Competencies

- Self-Advocacy Skills
- Academic Skills
- Leadership Skills
- Social and Emotional Skills
- Community Engagement
- Professional Development



Peer Advocacy

Skill Building

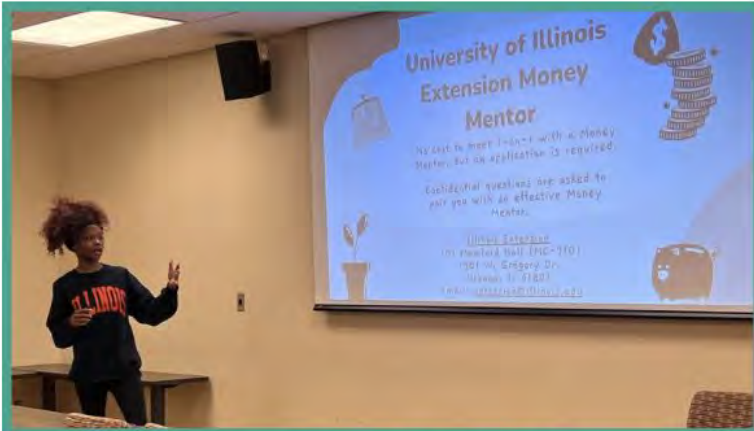
Community Building





Peer Advocacy

- GOAL SETTING
- RESOURCE CONNECTION
- RELATIONSHIP BUILDING



Skill Building

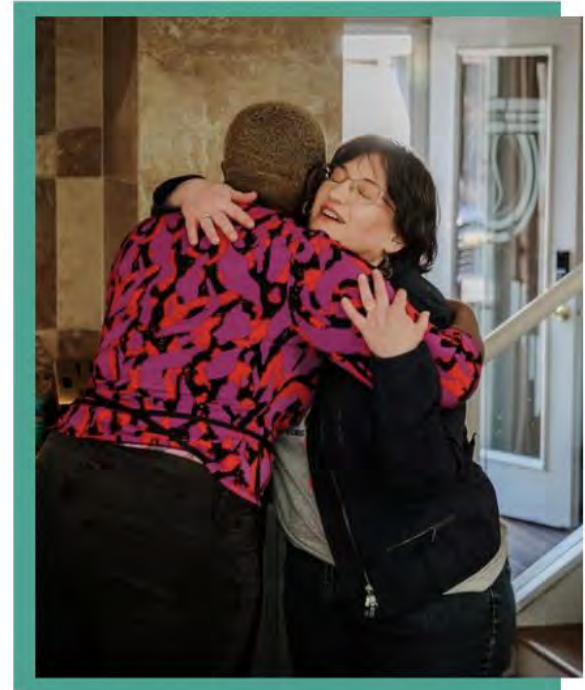
- PROFESSIONALISM
- FINANCIAL LITERACY
- LEADERSHIP

Community Building

- COMMUNITY SERVICE
- SOCIAL EVENTS
- COLLABORATIVE PLANNING



Collaboration



Challenges

- Recruitment
- Program Design and Implementation



Successes





- 100% of Y-CAP students say that Y-CAP has supported their academic success
- 100% of Y-CAP participants say they can identify individuals and resources in their web of support to help them through social, emotional, and academic challenges, as demonstrated in an annual survey
- 100% of Y-CAP participants will continue in or complete their program of study
- 80% of Y-CAP participants are enrolled and receiving support from DCFS
- 95% are receiving financial aid via their universities

From the Students

“My Peer Advocate makes me feel safe and comfortable. And she makes me laugh.” - UIUC Mentee

“Through the year we had so much support from not only Foster Progress but also UIUC faculty and we wanted to celebrate the community that was built through the year.” - UIUC Peer Advocate

“People think that kids like us don’t go to college, but us all being here together proves that wrong.” - UIUC Mentee

“I didn’t have anyone when I started college, so I’m tryna be that somebody that I needed” - NIU Peer Advocate

MENTORSHIP

- Holistic mentoring considers **the whole person** and their physical, mental, emotional, and professional needs. This type of mentorship aims to explore various aspects of an individual's life and health to **foster self-awareness, clarity, and direction.**
- A key difference between holistic and traditional mentoring is **the focus on the whole person** rather than just one specific area.

HOLISTIC MENTORING SKILLS

- **Empathy/Empathetic Leadership**
 - Empathetic leadership means having the ability to understand the needs of others and being aware of their feelings and thoughts.
- **Active Listening**
 - Active listening is a way of listening and responding to another person that improves mutual understanding.
- **Navigating Difficult Conversations**
 - Side-stepping difficult conversations can trap a team in unresolved problems, strained relationships, and missed chances for growth, which blocks progress and cultivates a lack of trust.

HOLISTIC MENTORING SKILLS

- **Listen:**

- Listen to understand, not to respond. Listen carefully and place your full attention on the speaker.

- **Affirm:**

- Affirm a feeling or a value. Affirming these can build trust and connection.

- **Respond:**

- Respond to questions or use “I Statements”. Explore their concerns or questions, but don’t talk past their points.

- **Ask:**

- Ask open-ended questions. Coming from a place of honest curiosity can help to provide clarity and support next steps.

RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

Email campaigns

Corporate partnerships

Fellow Alumni

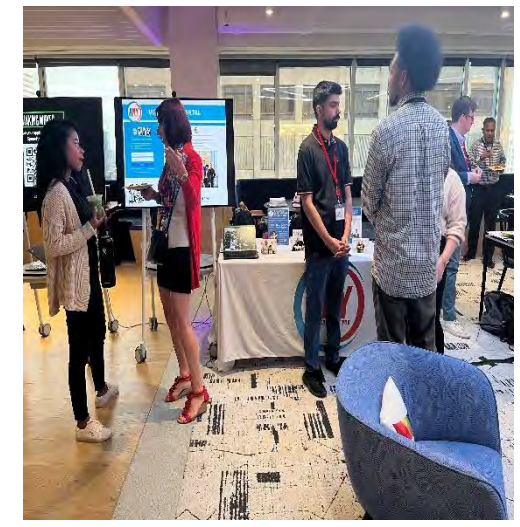
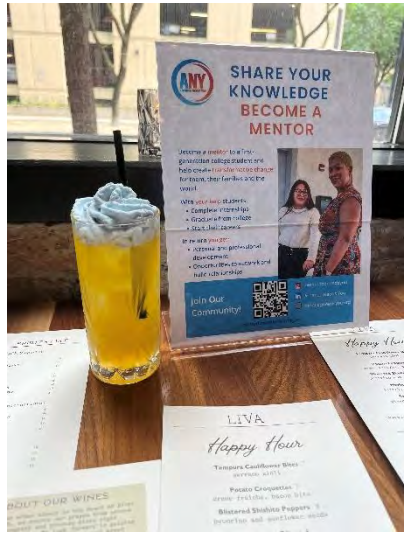
Grassroots campaigning

Peer to peer recruitment



VOLUNTEER RESOURCES

- Volunteer tool kit
- Corporate Partnerships
- Orientations/Events
- Associate Board and Advisory Board Members





VOLUNTEER CHALLENGES

- Time commitment – 2 years for a Mentor Coach
- Experience – assumption that you need mentorship experience or more work experience
- Imposter Syndrome – I am too young or too old.
- Aligning Fellow/Student Growth to Volunteers
- Penetrating corporate partners – community/affinity groups
- Volunteer/student retention

