

Helping Youth Pursue Excellence (HYPE)

Safety, Homelessness, Education, & Housing
Committee

November 29, 2023



HYPE Program

- The program started as a day reporting program for justice-involved youth when Denver Juvenile Services Center opened in 2013.
- The HYPE Program now has multiple service options for justice-involved youth:
 - Educational Support
 - Restorative Services: Victim Impact Group
 - Community Service (youth and young adult)
 - Community Engagement (food boxes, Youth Summit, farm events)
 - Vocational Program
- Program partners include: The Urban Farm (TUF), Office of Financial Empowerment & Protection, Community College of Denver, Denver Department of Public Health & Environment

HYPE Program – All Programs

- Through September, the HYPE program has received 95 referrals for service in 2023.
- Successful program completion rate in 2023 = 84%

Referrals by Program

- Vocational: 50
- Victim Impact: 26
- Community Service: 14
- Educational Support: 5

Referrals by Agency

- Youth Detention Continuum: 27
- Denver Juvenile Probation: 23
- District Attorney Diversion Program: 20
- Denver Public Safety Youth Programs: 13
- Other: 12

Referral Demographics

Gender

- Male: 87%
- Female: 13%

Race/Ethnicity

- Hispanic/Latino: 43%
- Black: 40%
- White: 11%
- Other: 6%

Age

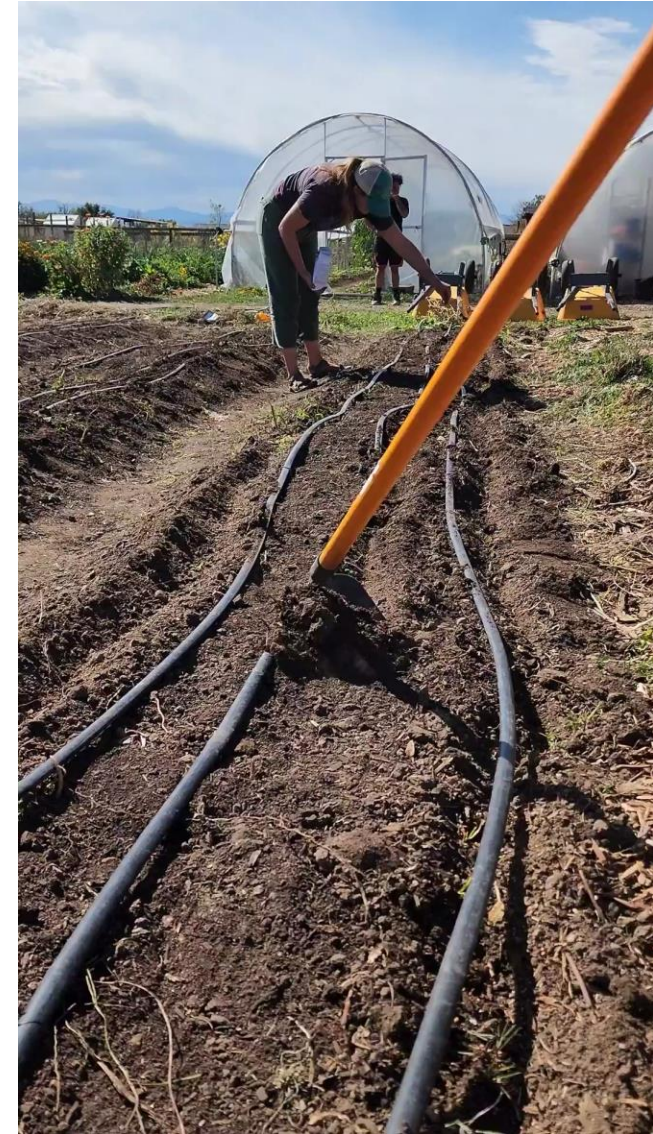
- 14-16: 63%
- 17-19: 35%
- 20-23: 2%

HYPE Program – Vocational Track

- Included in the 2023 Youth Violence Prevention Plan as a tactic and opportunity under the focus on career development strategy.
- Majority of referrals from diversion (municipal and state), pretrial release, and probation.
- Program Overview
 - 10-week “earn as you learn” job and life skills program for justice-involved youth.
 - Youth engage in 24-hour work weeks which includes a combination of classroom and farm-based experiential learning activities.
 - Curriculum includes job-readiness training, financial literacy, career exploration, guest speakers, job site visits, and ongoing support services post-HYPE.
- Who qualifies?
 - Youth 14-19 years old who reside in Denver or attend school in Denver.
 - All charges are accepted except sexual-based charges. Crimes of violence are accepted on a case-by-case basis.

HYPE Program – Vocational Track

- 90% completion rate for 2023 (45 of 50 youth).
- 80% of participants were compliant with supervision requirements while in the program.
- Over \$85,000 in wages paid directly to participants.
- Participants contributed to the production of over 10,000 pounds of fresh produce, meat, and eggs donated to the community each year, supporting a restorative justice model.
 - Over 1,750 meals provided in programming and over \$20,000 worth of healthy groceries distributed per year.
- Participant perspectives:
 - “Helped me realize that there are better things to do in life then what I was doing.”
 - “Helped me get back on track.”
 - “Kept me out of detention.”
 - “I’ve learned to be more patient, plant, build, improve my people skills. I’m just better overall.”





Partnership with The Urban Farm

- Partnership with The Urban Farm began in 2014
 - One day per week – limited to community service and restitution
- Moved vocational program to The Urban Farm in 2020 to expand experiential learning model and farm-based programming
 - Horticulture, equine, poultry and small livestock programming, site maintenance
 - Daily activities: feeding, watering, seed-to-harvest
 - Projects: greenhouse construction, tree planting
 - Annual events: plant sales, Farm Fest, Stock Show
 - Provides two meals per day and grocery boxes

HYPE in Action



"My thoughts of The Urban Farm are, I feel really happy and appreciate the chance to be apart of something really great. They help you with financial education, they help you better your work skills, they help you with everyday struggles, and they help you mentally. This program is a real life-saver. I would suggest this program a thousand times for those in need of help with financial aid, work opportunities, and trying to get your life together."

- Nemo, 2021 HYPE Participant

HYPE in Action



“The programming has showed me leadership skills and social skills and taught me new ways to make food and eat better.”

- 2023 HYPE Participant

Gilberto's Story

- Gilberto referred by Denver Juvenile Probation to complete 18 hours of community services.
- He was hesitant about working on a farm and participating in the HYPE Community Service Program.
- He completed his hours then asked his probation officer to refer him to the HYPE Vocational Program because he enjoyed his time in the program and working at The Urban Farm.
- He successfully completed the HYPE Vocational Program and was asked to return as a Youth Lead to assist the HYPE team with running the next cohort.

Program Expansion

- Entrepreneurial track – youth desire to be self-employed
- Food Truck Program
 - Farm-to-Truck
- Equine Program
 - Riding and therapy
- Need for additional space and infrastructure



Questions?