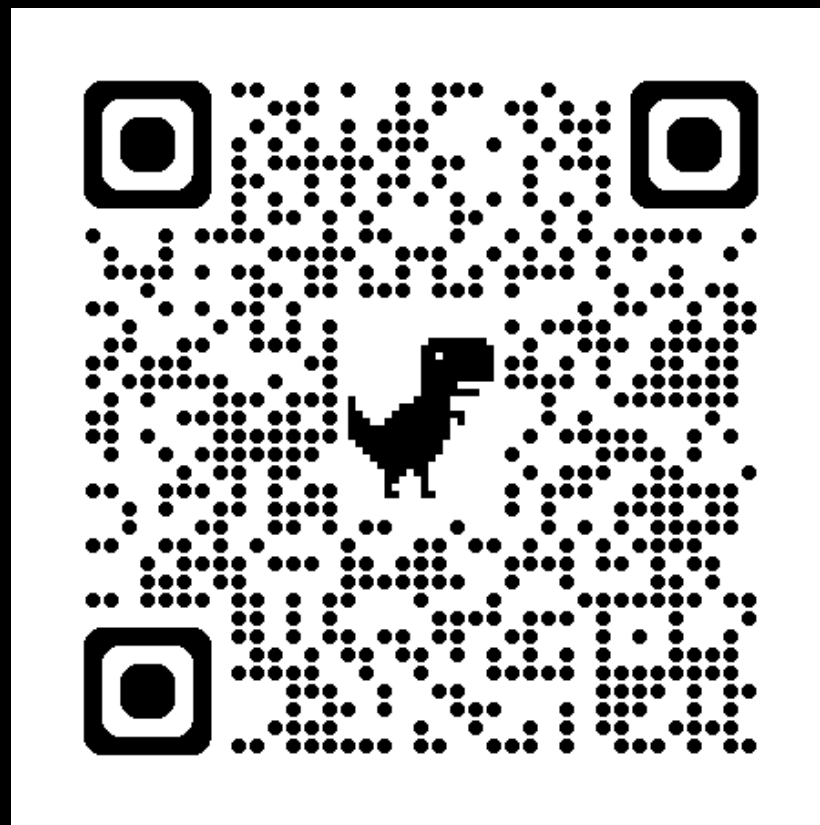




WELCOME!

**DALLAS - FT. WORTH  
OPPORTUNITY YOUTH  
COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE**

# Registration Link



# Opportunity Youth Leads

Ania Hodges  
Youth Advancement Officer



Kristina Cola  
Sr. Director, Learning Systems



# Setting Intentions & Creating Norms

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- Be respectful
- Be inclusive
- Stay open-minded
- Be aware of impact over intention
- Be mindful of confidentiality



# OUR AGENDA

Welcome

Setting Intentions

“Get to Know Activity”

Fireside Chat

Lunch Break

Community of Practice Details

“Networking Activity”





# Fireside Chat

**LaChanda Dupard, CEO of Fit  
and Faithful Living**

**And**

**Yulise Rivers, Chief  
Innovations Officer of Lone  
Sta Justice Alliance**



# Who are Opportunity Youth?

- Aged 16-24, not in school, not in college or postsecondary, not in work, or working in low-wage, dead-end jobs
- Nationwide, there are over **5 million** opportunity youth and young adults



# OPPORTUNITY YOUTH PILLARS



Community  
Engagement



Pathways/Workforce



Advocacy/Messaging



Youth Development





# Corporate Investment in Opportunity Youth

Walmart Foundation



# The Challenge: Avoiding Dreamy- Eyed Planning

- OY work requires intentional, individualized, and patient programming to truly make a systematic change. The most effective iteration of this work will most likely be in steady increases in quality rather than "booming" successes
- "As an organization, BT must avoid being the source of those feelings [overlooked, undermined] by making sure every initiative is infused with dignity and trust in OY autonomy and self-sufficiency, which means not getting so lost in overall goals and results that the individuals are forgotten. Assisting the person, not the project."
- -Voice Work Report

# Youth Voice Work

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**Opportunity Youth are facing many systematic and personal barriers that put resistance on their transition to adulthood**

**Voice Work: Youth led solutions to youth issues**

Current OY mindset...

- No Dignity
- Can't find safe spaces to learn and grow without harsh punishment or judgement
- Loneliness from not finding community/guidance/mentors
- Financial or physical barriers (lack of transportation , finances for supplies or professional clothes) discourage them from pursuing goals.



# FINDINGS

## For Opportunity Youth (OY) Report-SMU CORE

Too Few Resources

Lack of economic development

Holistic approach

Generational Trauma

Out of School Time involvement

Financial Literacy

Underemployment

Community History

Unhoused Youth

Mentoring

Rent-burdened households

Impact of Racial Injustice

Food Deserts

Untreated Mental Health Issues



## **SOCIETY vs OPPORTUNITY YOUTH**

What do people in society currently say about youth 16-24, not employed or in school?

What are the current stories about young people in this age demographic?

Who make up most of the opportunity youth?

- Mindset about Adolescence

### **Framing Narratives**

- Plugged in
- Community connections
- Common needs
- Steep climb
- Exploration and discovery
- Roots

# Mental Models: Creative Solutions & Metro Handley

# What's Important?

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Holistic Supports



Meaning & Belonging



Well Being

A close-up photograph of several people's hands clasped together in a circle, symbolizing unity and community engagement. The hands are of various skin tones and are positioned in a way that suggests a group hug or a supportive gesture. The background is dark and out of focus, emphasizing the hands in the foreground. The text "Community Engagement" is overlaid in the center in a bold, orange font.

# Community Engagement



**CREATE  
CREATE  
CREATE  
CREATE  
CREATE**

**GREAT  
GREAT  
GREAT  
GREAT  
GREAT**

## COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

*A system of collective exploration and reflection with a stakeholder community that share a common concern or a passion for something they do.*

*This community of practice will build a shared identity and foundation for strategies and best practices that can be shared and implemented locally and nationwide.*





# PROJECT FOCUS

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Opportunity Youth

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Criminal Justice & Second Chance Initiatives

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Ecosystem Development

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Workforce Opportunities

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Narrative Change & Advocacy

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Research & Evaluation

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National Strategy Development



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## Community of Practice

30-40, diverse group of stakeholders from the business, nonprofit, civic, justice, workforce, higher education

- Facilitated sessions for 6 months

- Cohort 1: **October 2023 – April 2024**
- Cohort 1 Activations: Currently in progress
  - Partners are able to activate in 3 tiers
    - Embed youth leadership
    - Pathways/Creator Archetype cohort
    - Create workforce-based program
- Cohort 2: **November 2024 – May 2025 (YOU!)**





- (ROUGHLY) 7-MONTH ENGAGEMENT SERIES
- 1 MEETING PER MONTH FOR 3 HOURS
- COMMITMENT TO COP EXPECTATIONS & SHARED VALUES
- COMMITMENT TO KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND COLLABORATION
- EACH PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION RECEIVES \$1K STIPEND FOR PARTICIPATION



# INITIATIVE CONNECTIONS & OUTCOMES



# Workforce Partnerships

EQUUS: Workforce prep and employment matching

Unlock Potential: National workforce partner led here in Dallas by Responsibly Business Initiative for Justice

- Employment matching with large industry partners

Walmart: Job fair for opportunity youth and beyond

- Internal supports for youth workers
- Benefits of employment with Walmart

# Data & Impact

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- Year One of DFW OY COP
  - SMU CORE qualitative report
  - Micro-learnings
  - DFW OY COP Whitepaper publication
- During activation, COP Participating Organizations will be required to:
  - List program on DCoL platform for each iteration;
  - Submit enrollment and attendance information
  - Engage in evaluation efforts (i.e. observations, surveys)
  - Engage in Learning Pathways Initiative



# Local, State and National Advocacy



Integrating OY language and focus into all levels of advocacy and public policy change.



Expanding our advocacy reach to new federal initiatives that impact our OY youth.



Learning best practices from what has been done in other states, what can be done in Texas, and who to partner with.





# Scheduled Session Dates

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***youth perspectives on youth issues***

# **Youth Roundtable**

**November 2, 2024  
3-5:30PM**

**1409 Botham Jean Blvd #1015  
Dallas TX 75215**

# Thank you for your time!

Questions & Reflections

