



## YOUTH- AND COMMUNITY-BASED EVENTS

# UNITED WAY FOR SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN

 DETROIT, MI

The mission of United Way for Southeastern Michigan (UWSEM) is to mobilize the caring power of Detroit and Southeastern Michigan to improve communities and individual lives in measurable and lasting ways.

The Summer Career Connections Fair is a unique space providing Detroit youth and young adults with an opportunity to engage in job training, on-the-spot interviews for summer employment opportunities, additional skill-building, graduation preparation, and exploration experiences. The interactions created during the event helped develop strong relationships between Detroit's business community and young talent looking to begin building their careers.

## OUR APPROACH

Through our work in and with communities, the SCP team heard from youth and employers about the challenges they faced in finding employment, feeling confident and prepared, and transitioning into the professional workforce. To address these needs and ultimately support young people, we developed the Summer Career Connections Fair. Working in partnership with UWSEM, Grow Detroit's Young Talent, the City of Detroit, and the Mayor's Office, the SCP team designed the fair experience, directed planning efforts, recruited and managed session facilitators, and lead day-of-event execution.

The first (of three) Summer Career Connections Fair was hosted in May 2017 and was designed with three main goals: engage 500 Linked Learning high school juniors, provide programming and exploration opportunities based on defined college and career pathway pillars, and partner with Grow Detroit's Young Talent to get Linked Learning youth hired.

The first fair resulted in a high participation and engagement rate from students, volunteers, and employers, including:

**687**   
Youth attendees  
(Including **565** Linked Learning Youth)

**300+**   
Job offers for youth and young adults

**115**   
Event volunteers

**80**   
Partners and facilitators

**65**   
Participating employers

## OUR IMPACT

The youth-driven experience created within the Summer Career Connections Fair exceeded all participation and hiring goals in its first year. Most importantly, the fair created an environment where participants could engage in hands-on learning experiences and develop relationships that sparked their personal, academic, and professional interests and connected them with opportunity.

The design along with student, partner, and employer feedback from the event built a framework on which a multi-year continuum with two annual fairs was built. Over 1,000 young people have gained employment through these fairs since their inception.