



How they got started:

In ongoing collaboration with Erin Mills Connects and The Dam, this program delivery involved 17 high school aged youth who met online weekly until June 2024.

The challenge:

For these youth, a **lack of employment opportunities** in combination with **limited job-readiness skills**, were negatively impacting their wellbeing and community belonging.



Here’s how they made a difference:

1. Building a Network	2. Finding Key Allies	3. Focusing their Efforts	4. Crafting a Powerful Message
Drawn from various high schools, the youth shared their school and job search experiences to expand their knowledge of community and build relationships. 	The youth collaborated with YMCA’s Youth for Entrepreneurship program to learn more about factors affecting youth employment. 	In exploring the multiple impacts of employment – from fostering independence to expanding social networks to strengthening a sense of community belonging – the group decided to direct their efforts to increasing access to employment with the aim of engaging local policymakers, educators, and employers.	The group created a presentation citing their research and personal experiences and drafted calls to action. 

Their change action:

The group **organized and delivered a hybrid Employment Success Strategies workshop** where they presented their calls to action and conducted an employment workshop for youth.

The workshop featured experts from YMCA’s Youth for Entrepreneurship program who shared tips on navigating resume screening systems; a program facilitator who presented on the R.A.T.S. resume method; and a youth engagement coordinator from EveryMind Mental Health Services who spoke about maintaining wellness and practicing self-compassion during the job search.

Ripple effects:



Resources for Youth

Participants summarized information shared into a resume and interview toolkit. These resources, along with a recording of the workshop, are available on the Erin Mills Connects website to serve as a lasting resource for youth and engage the broader community.



Strengthening Community

Program successes helped partners secure funding to expand their activities to promote youth wellbeing.



Increased Youth Employment

A number of program youth and attendees at their employment workshop event successfully obtained jobs.