



National  
Urban League

The Division of Education  
& Youth Development

The National Urban League's evidence-based and scalable signature programs are professionally implemented by local Urban League affiliates to enhance the economic and educational status of our constituents.

# Project Ready

A SIGNATURE PROGRAM OF THE NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE

PROJECT  READY

## Our Approach.

*Project Ready* prepares African American and other historically underserved youth for college and career, utilizing a set of evidence-based standards, impactful local and national partnering, innovative content, asset-based approaches, professional development, and practical tools specifically designed for, and unique to, the Urban League Movement. In order to grow into healthy, responsible adults, youths require a range of developmentally appropriate supports, services, and opportunities, only some of which are provided in schools.

1,537

students were  
served across  
25 programs  
in 2018

89%

feel that they have brighter  
plans for their futures and  
are better informed on  
college options/readiness

94%

feel that  
they are better  
informed on career  
preparedness

93%

believe  
that they can  
make the world  
better

### 2025 EMPOWERMENT GOAL

Every American child is ready for college, work and life.

#### THE NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE'S SIGNATURE EDUCATION PROGRAM, **PROJECT READY**,

helps 6th through 12th grade students to progress academically and intellectually, to benefit from college culture enrichment and support opportunities, and to develop important skills, attitudes, and aptitudes that position them well for success during and after high school.

For the National Urban League, readiness means that youth have the necessary skills, attitudes, information, perspective, and intellectual and social capital necessary for success and achievement without needing remediation in the first year of college or career.

15,000

STUDENTS HAVE BEEN  
SERVED THROUGHOUT  
THE 11 YEARS OF  
**PROJECT READY**

# Accomplishments.

In 2018, the National Urban League asked 1,537 participants across 25 programs if they had learned more or were behaving differently compared to before they joined *Project Ready*. An average of 9 out of every 10 respondents felt that they were planning better for their future, were more informed on how to best navigate college campuses in regard to their needs and interests, and were better educated on how to prepare for the type of career path they wanted. Assisting students in making the leap from aspiration to reality is a challenge of out-of-school time programming that *Project Ready* specifically and intentionally addresses.

**PROVIDING YOUTH WITH PRODUCTIVE EXPOSURE** to an array of learning and developmental opportunities, knowledgeable adults outside their families, and motivated peers can result in very different levels of student development and achievement.<sup>1</sup> In fact, research demonstrates that a substantial percentage of achievement and academic success for high-income students can be explained by their increased access to educational opportunities in non-school settings.

## FINDINGS REPORTED IN 2018 FOR PROJECT READY

**73%** of students claim they attend school more often as a result of participating in the program

**76%** of students increased their ability to achieve personal goals in social interaction while maintaining positive relationships

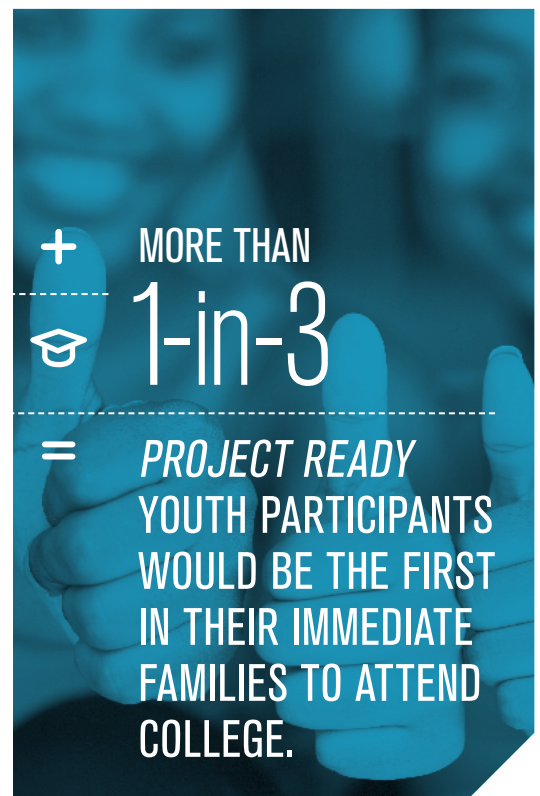
**66%** of students increased the adult network available to them at times of stress



Readiness means that youth have the necessary skills, attitudes, information, perspective, and intellectual and social capital necessary for success and achievement without needing remediation in the first year of college or career.

**Enhancements.** All *Project Ready* programs share fundamental goals and program standards that include specialized supports targeting various program areas, specific age groups, career interests, and academic opportunities for improvement. The National Urban League has developed several innovative program enhancements based on the core *Project Ready*: Postsecondary Success model, including:

- MIDDLE SCHOOL TRANSITIONS
- LITERACY COACH
- MENTOR
- HISTORICAL & CULTURAL LITERACY
- STEAM (SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, ARTS/AGRICULTURE & MATH)
- FINANCIAL CAPABILITY
- SERVICE LEARNING



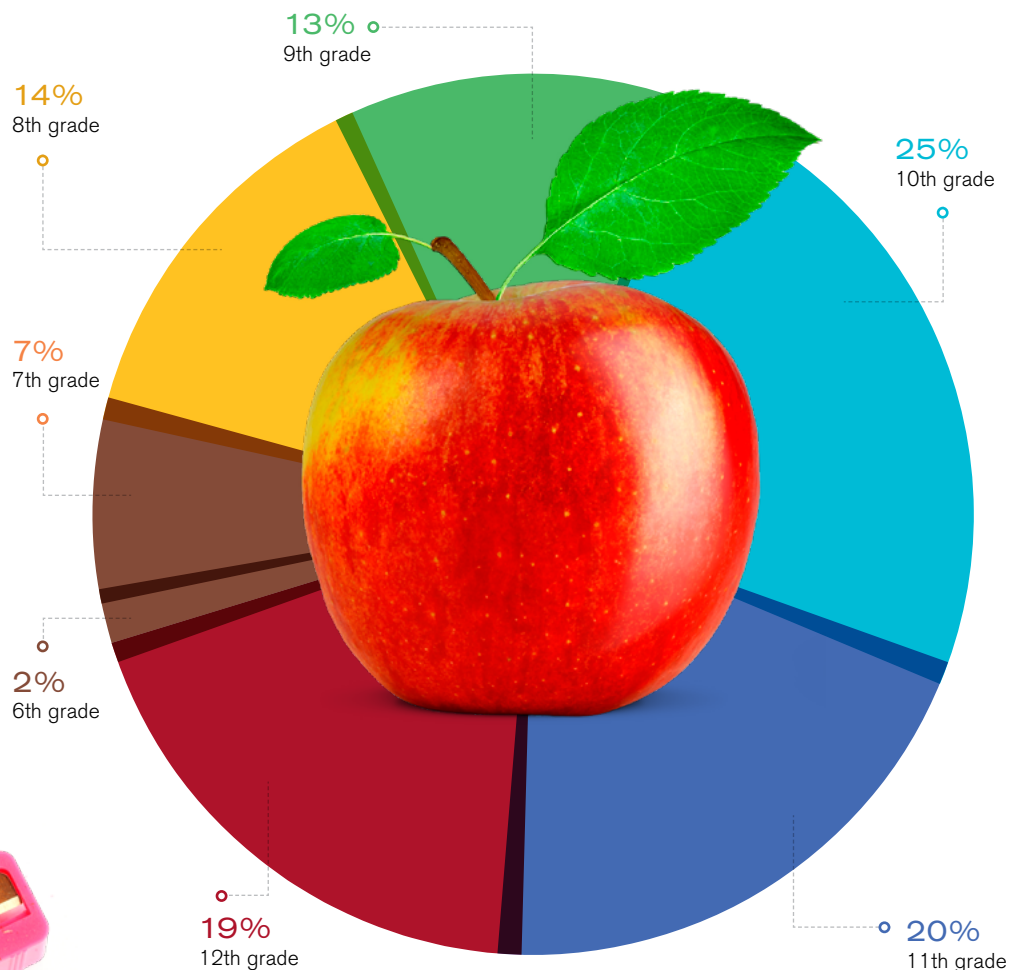
1. Karl L. Alexander, Doris R. Entwistle, Linda S. Olson. Source: Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Summer, 2001), pp. 171-191

## Participants.

Most of the young people in *Project Ready* are African American, slightly skewing female. Although some may be struggling academically, most are strongly oriented toward going to college, finding the right career path, preparing for their futures, and improving their prospects.

## In 2018

participants ranged from grades 6 through 12:



## Services.

All *Project Ready* programs must adhere to the educational and youth development principles set forth in the National Urban League's *Project Ready 2.0* Curriculum and the Youth Development Framework & Guide, including the use of planning and activity templates designed to encourage and support intentional programming.

## Success Story

**CHEYNEY** enrolled in the Louisville Urban League's *Project Ready* program with an expressed interest in majoring in communications. She was hoping for a career in radio or television. With the help and guidance of the program, Cheyney readily applied to several higher education institutions in Kentucky and surrounding areas.

**RESULT:** Cheyney was accepted to Morehead University, the University of Louisville, Western Kentucky University, and Fisk University. While attending an HBCU Showcase, she was also accepted to Alabama A&M. Cheyney hopes to not only attend Alabama A&M but also to receive a track sponsorship.

### WHAT CHEYNEY HAD TO SAY...

When asked what she gained from her participation in *Project Ready*, Cheyney believes that she now has greater insight into the college application process, the inherent financial value of attending college, and the importance of researching financial information and identifying scholarships available as early as possible.



## Success Stories.

**JORDAN** is an active member of the *Project Ready*: Mentor program at the Fort Wayne Urban League. At 13 years of age, Jordan is a Youth Advocate, Published Author, and National Speaker. After struggling in school, earning failing grades, and crying herself to sleep every night, Jordan was diagnosed with a learning disability. She refused to call it a disability because she says nothing is wrong with her and that she just learns differently. Instead of allowing the diagnosis to become a barrier for her, she decided to turn it into a blessing for others. There are thousands of kids just like her. She wrote *My Gift of Difference*, a book that teaches kids how to embrace all of their differences. Jordan has taken her "gift of difference" message to hundreds of kids in a number of cities across the country.

**RESULT:** Most recently, Jordan had the honor of telling her story at the National Urban League Youth Leadership Summit, where she shared the stage with Dr. Kendall Jasper and National Urban League President, Marc H. Morial. Jordan said that the Summit was a life-changing experience for her and she was very excited to receive the Youth Speakers award.

### A PORTION OF THE POEM JORDAN READ AT THE SUMMIT:

*"Six million kids have a learning disability, Attention Deficit Disorder, Dyslexia, and Dysgraphia, just to name a few...Society calls it a disability, I call it learning differently...Six million kids are in special education because sometimes their minds just can't return from vacation. It doesn't mean they are stupid, it doesn't mean they are slow, It also doesn't mean that they don't know, it just means they see the world differently, they receive things differently, but they don't want to be treated differently, they want to be loved and respected equally. This is me, because I have the gift of learning differently. I have what they call ADD."*

**LAURYN** is an active member of the *Project Ready*: Mentor program in the Houston Area Urban League. While a junior at Worthing High School, Lauryn was featured in a Houston Chronicle article, "Loss of jobs, business puts Sunnyside in peril." The article mainly discussed the spiraling of defunct businesses and unemployment rate in her community. It also mentioned a summer youth employment hiring event at her school, "Hire Houston Youth." The Mayor's summer employment program for youth links government institutions, businesses, and community organizations with area schools to offer internship and job opportunities to youth ages 16 to 24.



### LAURYN WAS AMONG THE 200 YOUTH WHO ATTENDED THE HIRING EVENT

at Worthing High School and one of the lucky few that received a job offer because of her self-confidence and excellent communication skills. However, the Houston Area Urban League (HAUL) Education and Youth Development staff would like to attribute her participation in the *Project Ready* NULITES job readiness workshops – "Interviewing Techniques" and "Resume Writing"—as factors which secured the summer job offer. Members of HAUL's Guild and volunteer auxiliary provided speakers to help students prepare for the hiring event. Lauryn attended the workshops, visited HAUL's CAN Center, and HAUL's designated room at Worthing High countless times to receive assistance in order to perfect her resume.