

PATHWAYS TO COMMUNITY CHANGE CAREERS

CYLC prepares students from historically-marginalized communities to pursue careers in community change. The work-based learning component, in which students are matched with a community-based partner addressing issues the student cares about, provides students with the unique opportunity to observe and experience what a community change job can be and to begin to define their own community change career goals and pathways to achieving them.

Through their participation in CYLC, students learn that they can have careers in community change, working to address the issues affecting their communities. CYLC students come into the program knowing that they want to serve a purpose and make a positive impact on their community but are not sure how.

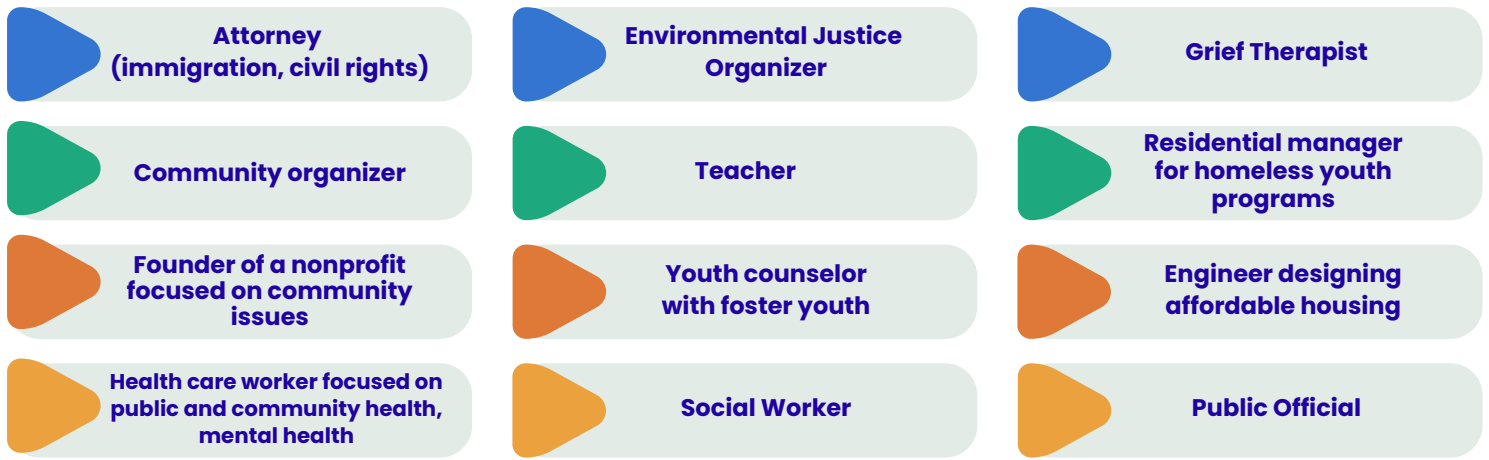
Impact of CYLC on Students' Career Goals

With guidance and support from program mentors, students identify next steps for pursuing their community change career goals, which typically include →

- Completing their degree and enrolling in four-year college, then a graduate program.
- Researching majors that would align with a career working for social justice.
- Networking with community leaders, nonprofits, and other individuals who can support their “visions and aspirations”
- Gaining more insight into how nonprofits work and more experience in the field.
- Researching more about the day-to-day of jobs in community change.
- Working on my public speaking skills.
- Preparing to navigate a work environment.

The experience of being placed with a community-based organization for work-based learning allows students to learn about the different kinds of jobs that exist in the community change sector and begin to identify their own career goals.

EXAMPLES OF THE CAREER GOALS OF CYLC STUDENTS



MY CAREER GOAL IS TO:

Work for a nonprofit focused on trauma healing for youth through the arts.

Start my own nonprofit organization addressing community needs related to behavioral health.

Become a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) to become a mental health professional focused on trauma healing for black and brown communities.

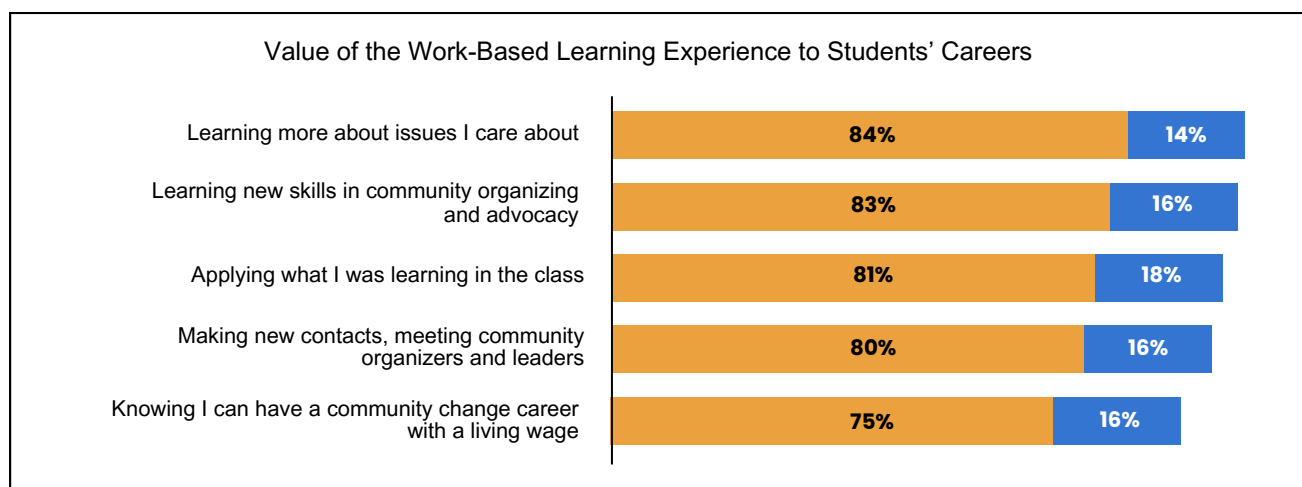
Work on legislative policy. I'm working on a criminal justice degree and law school to prepare for that.

Further my impact in the intersection of arts and education, possibly in roles related to community engagement or program management.

Find a job that allows me to be financially independent, to work in a place where I am helping others and can continue to be challenged....I want to work where it involves me being in the community, educating others, and educating myself.

IMPACT OF CYLC WORK-BASED LEARNING ON CAREER DEVELOPMENT

CYLC students value the opportunity to engage in work-based learning, particularly because it allows them to learn more about community issues, to learn organizing skills, apply what they learn in the coursework, meet community and nonprofit leaders and see that they too can have a career in community change.



Through their engagement with work-based learning, CYLC students gained and applied new skills in organizing, including:

- How to research issues – from civil rights and immigration to mental health and environmental issues – and analyze policies related to those issues.
- How to communicate effectively with others, including through community outreach and planning community events.
- How to engage community members, for example by talking to people about concerns they have and through education workshops about issues and resources.
- How to network, meet new people, and make new connections and experiences.
- How the nonprofit world works to “get ideas off the ground.”

Students' positive experience with work-based learning shows them that they can and want to have a community change career. Through their time with the community-based partner that hosts them, students are exposed to other nonprofits, a variety of community issues, and the leaders from different sectors working on those issues. CYLC lays a strong foundation on which students from historically-marginalized communities can begin to create their own career pathway advancing social justice.

I have learned that it is possible to do what I love, to be involved in my community, and to make a career for myself doing both.

I learned that there are so many more organizations in my community than I thought there were. That lead me to research organizations around me and search for ways that I could help out with issues that I feel need change.

I found out that there are many different jobs out there that help fight for social issues, like worker's rights related jobs such as health and safety inspectors that help keep workers safe at their jobs.

CYLC made me more passionate to continue following this career path in which I can help improve my community in a positive way.

Data in this Impact Spotlight comes from surveys completed by a total of 71 CYLC students participating in the Fall 2022 & Fall 2023 cohorts across five colleges.