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# Hartford Data Collaborative's Research Projects with Hartford Youth

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# Pilot Project Spring 2022: Hartford Youth Researchers

- In March, CTData staff recruited youth through HDC's data partners and Hartford youth organizations.
- 6 Hartford youth (4 in high school and 2 in college) joined HDC for 8 weeks from mid-April through mid-June, serving as the first cohort of Hartford Youth Researchers
- Hartford Youth Researchers
  1. Attended workshops in: Data Literacy, Data Collection and Analysis, Using Integrated Data; Data Storytelling.
  2. Developed research questions around Youth Behavioral Health
  3. Analyzed data from the City of Hartford's grants to encourage youth engagement post-COVID (Project UNITY)
  4. Presented findings from the research at June Data Walk attended by the Mayor's Chief of Staff, City officials, HDC Executive Board members, and other community leaders

# Youth Researchers Impact Program and Policy Change in Hartford



## DATA WALK

Youth Researchers articulated the need for diverse enrichment activities in Hartford to improve Hartford children and youth outcomes, and shared their experiences through Data Walk

Their discussion with City officials led to changes in program implementation to emphasize the need for data to better understand program impact

- HDC staff and youth researcher held consultations in Summer 2022 with city-funded programs to improve their data collection and capacity skills
- HDC and Youth Researchers hold ongoing conversations with City of Hartford staff on program design and improvements
- Hartford communities benefit from data-trained youth to improve their data capacity and data reporting leading to improved understanding of program impacts in Hartford

# Program Helped Youth Improve Data Skills and Career Focus



Feedback from the program indicated all participating Youth Researchers improved their ability to seek out data and develop insights from data projects through training and research project.



Youth Researchers reported that the program also helped them with their college and career goals and gain meaningful connections with peers and city leaders.

# Hartford Youth Serve Important Role Incorporating Community Voice in Hartford Data Projects:

## **From Youth Researcher Nathaniel**

**Gardner:** "being a part of the Hartford Youth Researchers program has been a life-changing experience... It has given me a new understanding on a multitude of topics, opened up new career opportunities, helped me gain valuable connections, and understand the importance of how everybody's story matters... I hope this program can also teach others the value of everybody's stories."



**Shian Earlington:** Learning about data that is about Hartford youth has certainly empowered me... I have learned to use data to tell a story about Hartford youth by being able to hone in on the qualitative data. This is the part of my research that allows youth and families to speak their truth and tell their stories as well as keen lived experiences. ...At the end of the day, we cannot treat our youth like a "number" that does not have needs, emotions, feelings or that do not face adversity. [Through this program] I learned how to create and narrate a story that is grounded in data but also shows humility and the true human aspect of Hartford youth.

# Next Steps: Hartford Youth Data Fellowship

- 5 month Fellowship for 8-10 Youth from January 2023 – May 2023
- Open to Hartford residents ages 17-24, enrolled in school
- 10-15 hours/month, includes data workshops, meetings, and project development
- Office hours/project development in coordination with CTData staff, City of Hartford officials; Hartford community leaders
- Data projects: youth engagement post-COVID, youth behavioral health, community indicators.
- Collaborate with city and community leaders
- Capstone project: Develop presentation at the end of program for youth's resumes: blog post, report, infographic, policy briefing
- \$1,500 stipend for participation, with bonus for presentation and evaluation
- Youth earn certificate for program completion

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