

OVERTOWN

children & youth coalition



Overtown, a community where all children and youth reach their full potential.

www.overtowncyc.org

About Us

In 2012, the Overtown Children and Youth Coalition (OCYC) was formed by the anchoring community-based nonprofit organizations in the Overtown community:

Urgent, Inc., Overtown Youth Center, Touching Miami With Love, Lotus House, and Dress for Success—with support from the Southeast Overtown/Park West Community Redevelopment Agency and City of Miami District 5 Commissioner Michelle Spence-Jones.

Within months, additional stakeholders joined under the OCYC umbrella to take a groundbreaking step: shifting from siloed, service-based efforts to a collective impact, systems-level approach to improving outcomes for Overtown’s children, youth, and families.

In 2016, OCYC was designated as a Florida Children’s Initiative under Florida Statute §409.147, and by 2017 OCYC was operating as one of Florida’s five designated, place-based cradle-to-career initiatives statewide. These sister initiatives include Miami Children’s Initiative in Liberty City (Miami), Parramore Kidz Zone (Orlando), New Town Success Zone (Jacksonville), and the Sulphur Springs Neighborhood of Promise (Tampa)—working in parallel to coordinate supports from birth through college and career, modeled after the Harlem Children’s Zone approach.

OCYC continues to serve as the backbone organization—supporting Overtown’s anchoring organizations and partners—to empower a community where all children and youth reach their full potential.



The Overtown Children and Youth Coalition (OCYC) empowers Overtown’s future—one child, one family, and one community at a time. Since 2012, OCYC has served as a backbone organization uniting more than 60 partners to ensure children and youth in Historic Overtown have the resources and support they need to thrive. Through monthly collaboration across education, workforce development, health, safety, and accountability initiatives, OCYC drives systems-level change through collective action.

A critical focus of OCYC’s work is closing the digital divide. Through its Laptop Scholarship Program, OCYC has distributed 467 laptops over a three-year period to date, including 100 during National S.T.E.M./S.T.E.A.M. Day 2023, with a goal of equipping 1,000 households within five years.

OCYC also invests in leadership development through the annual I’m the Boss of My Life Youth Conference, a free, transformative experience serving more than 375 young adults, per year, ages 16–24. Now entering its seventh year, the conference features powerful speakers, hands-on workshops, and motivational sessions designed to help participants lead with confidence, purpose, and vision. This signature event continues to spark empowerment, connection, and pride, affirming the brilliance and potential of Overtown’s emerging leaders.

Your support makes all of this work possible. Every donation fuels access to technology, strengthens youth leadership initiatives, and builds a more connected and resilient community. When we invest in our children, we invest in the future of Overtown. Together, we can do even more because every contribution, big or small, helps a young person believe in their potential and pursue their dreams.



Mission Statement & Values

Through a collective impact model Overtown Children and Youth Coalition (OCYC) serves as the backbone to support Overtown's anchoring organizations to empower all the community's children and youth to reach their full potential.

- **Collaboration**
- **Community**
- **Leadership**
- **Continuous Communication**
- **Integrity**
- **Accountability**
- **Empowerment**



Anchoring Organizations



Services

Services	Purpose
Apprenticeships / Internships	On-the-job training designed to empower youth to develop and improve their right-now planning, educational proficiency levels, social skills, health, civic engagement, financial literacy, and job-readiness skills.
Career Pathways	Provide a series of structured and connected education programs and support services that enable students to advance over time to better jobs and higher levels of education and training.
Hospitality and Tourism Training	Coordinate, engage, and mobilize community partners related to art, education, training, customer training, professional development, and hospitality workforce development. Facilitate engagement including, hospitality, entrepreneurial/workforce development, and internships.
Healthy Eating / Healthy Lifestyle	Provide programs focused on living a healthy life including physical exercise, nutrition, and mental wellbeing,
Career Exploration	Youth between the ages of 14 to 24 years old receive career exploration training to prepare them for career opportunities.
Youth Mentoring Program	Youth mentoring sessions for youth between the ages of 8 and 24 years old.
College Tours	Age-appropriate youth visit and participate in tours of colleges/universities and career-technical institutions to prepare them for postsecondary training upon graduating from high school.
Foreign Language	To better prepare the working youth for long-term career opportunities in South Florida, youth participate in foreign-language courses.
STEAM Training	Hands-on workshops for the youth to learn and be exposed to training and career opportunities in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math.
Parents Training	Provide parents in the Overtown community with information and access to pre-birth, birth, and early education resources to better prepare them as caregivers.

Partner Testimonials

By joining forces with the Coalition, we have unlocked a powerful network of dedicated partners and stakeholders, uniting our efforts towards a common goal of empowering children and youth in Overtown.

——— Dr. Saliha Nelson (URGENT, Inc.)

OCYC is a premier organization that not only gives voice to the needs of youth families and community spaces but they provide solutions and resources to alleviate generational issues.

——— Trina Harris (Touch Miami with Love)

Student Testimonials

"Remaining Knowledgeable, Maintaining a quality reputation, and being able to Endure any challenge is a Boss. I'm so thankful for the boss of my life conference because I'm now able to apply everything I learned into the boss I will be one day!"

——— Genesis Love

OCYC is an authentic leader in ensuring that the service providers of Overtown have the resources they need to be champions of our community.

——— Ieshia Haynie (The Optimist Club)

The organization has gathered community partners to band together and tackle the problems of our community to make life better for our youth and their families.

——— Sonia Jacobson (Suited for Success)

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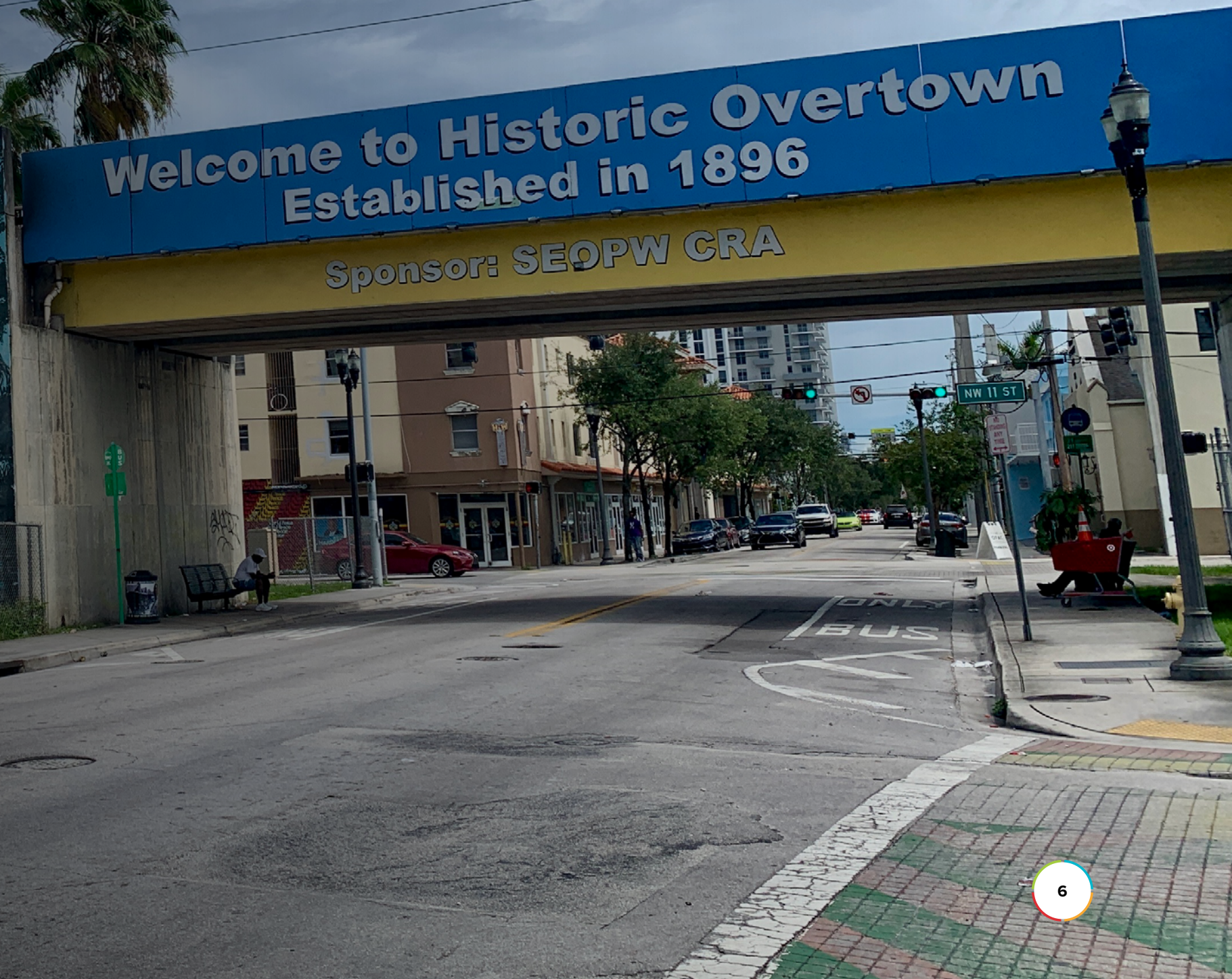
——— Tyler

Significance of the Overtown Community

Recognition of Overtown's significant past is important for its future.

Overtown is a historic neighborhood in Miami named by residents who affectionately referenced “going over town” en route to visit the community. It was once known as an entertainment and business mecca where prominent African Americans lived and worked. After the construction of I-95, it became one of the poorest neighborhoods in the country.

Overtown is in the midst of revitalization. When the construction is done, there will be more homes, retail, commercial space and office space, not to mention a stop on Brightline trains. Overtown will soon return to a vital area for shopping, business interaction and entertainment paying special attention to its history and culture.



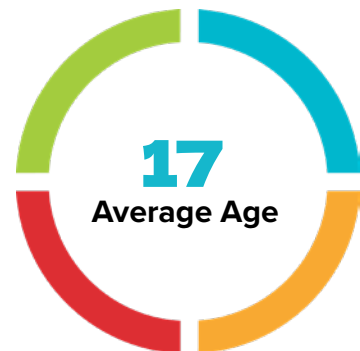
Student Impact

I'm the Boss of My Life Youth Conference

The annual I'm the Boss of My Life Youth Conference hosted by OCYC and all our service providers. The conference provides for the youth to participate in workshops that will prepare them to be the boss of their lives. 2025 marked our fifth annual conference.

Activities Include:

- Speakers
- Trainings
- Seminars
- Workshops



6TH ANNUAL

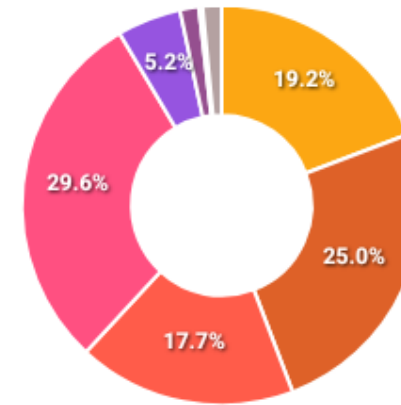


Registration Summary *I'm the Boss of My Life Youth Conference*

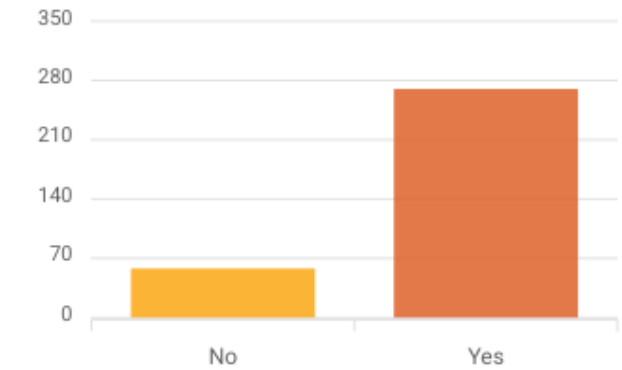

328
Total Registrants

Grades

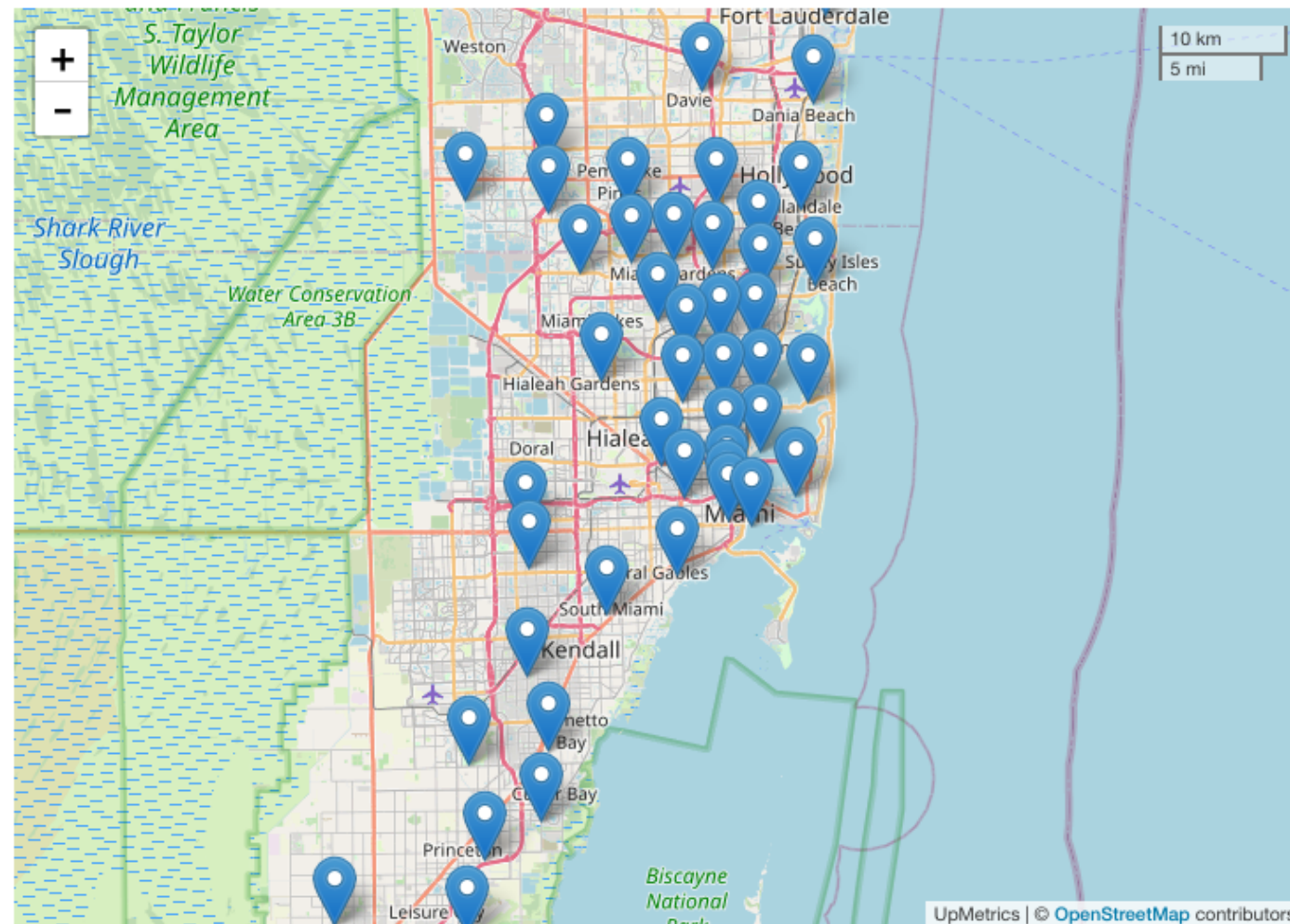
- 10th - High School Sophomore
- 11th - High School Junior
- 12th - High School Senior
- 9th - High School Freshman
- College Freshman
- College Junior
- College Senior
- College Sophomore



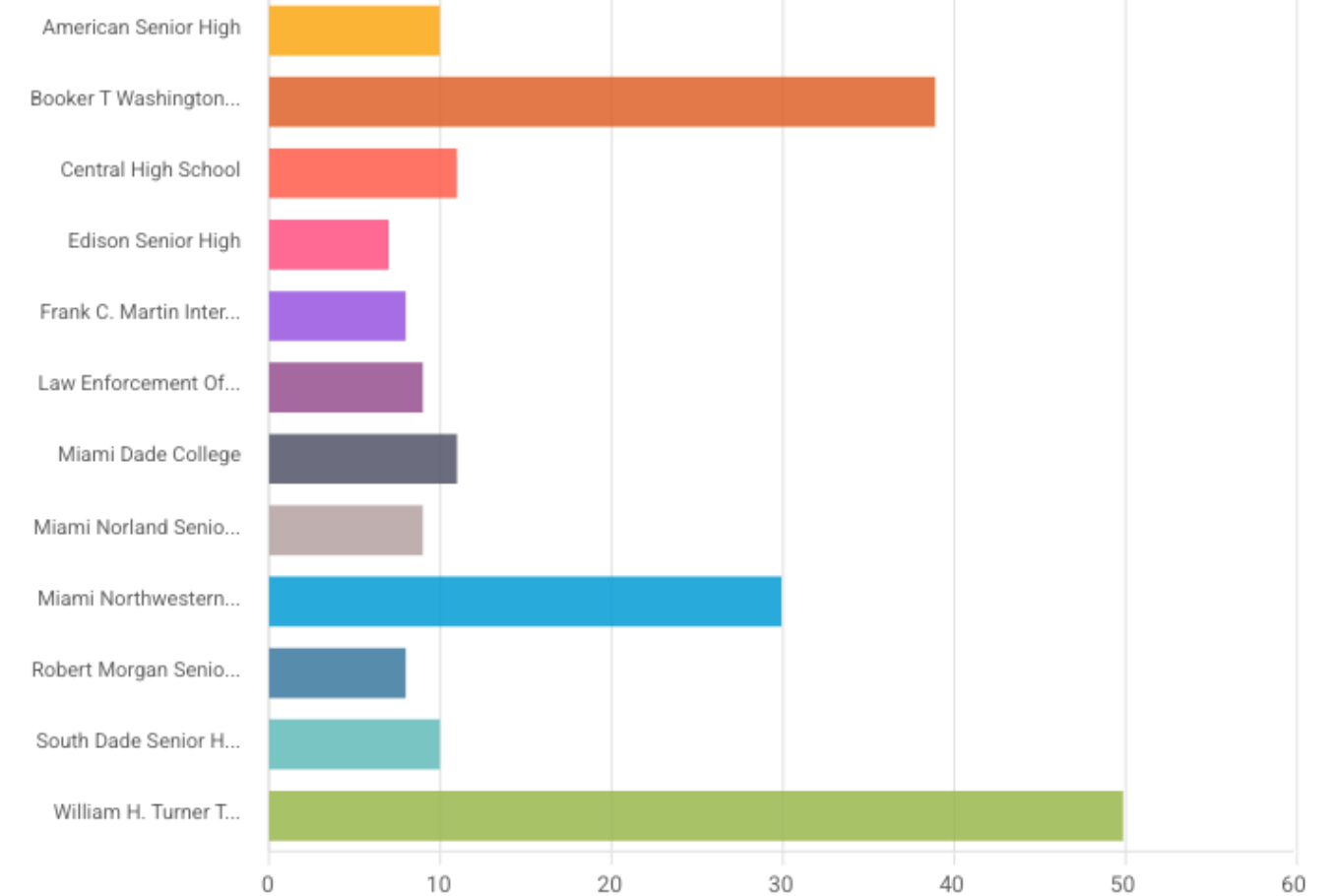
Is this your first work readiness conference?



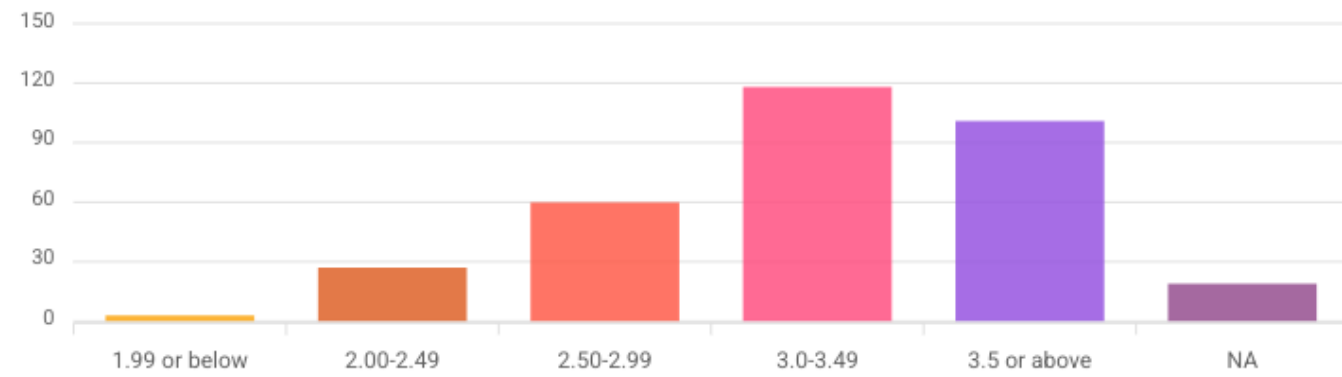
Attendee Residence



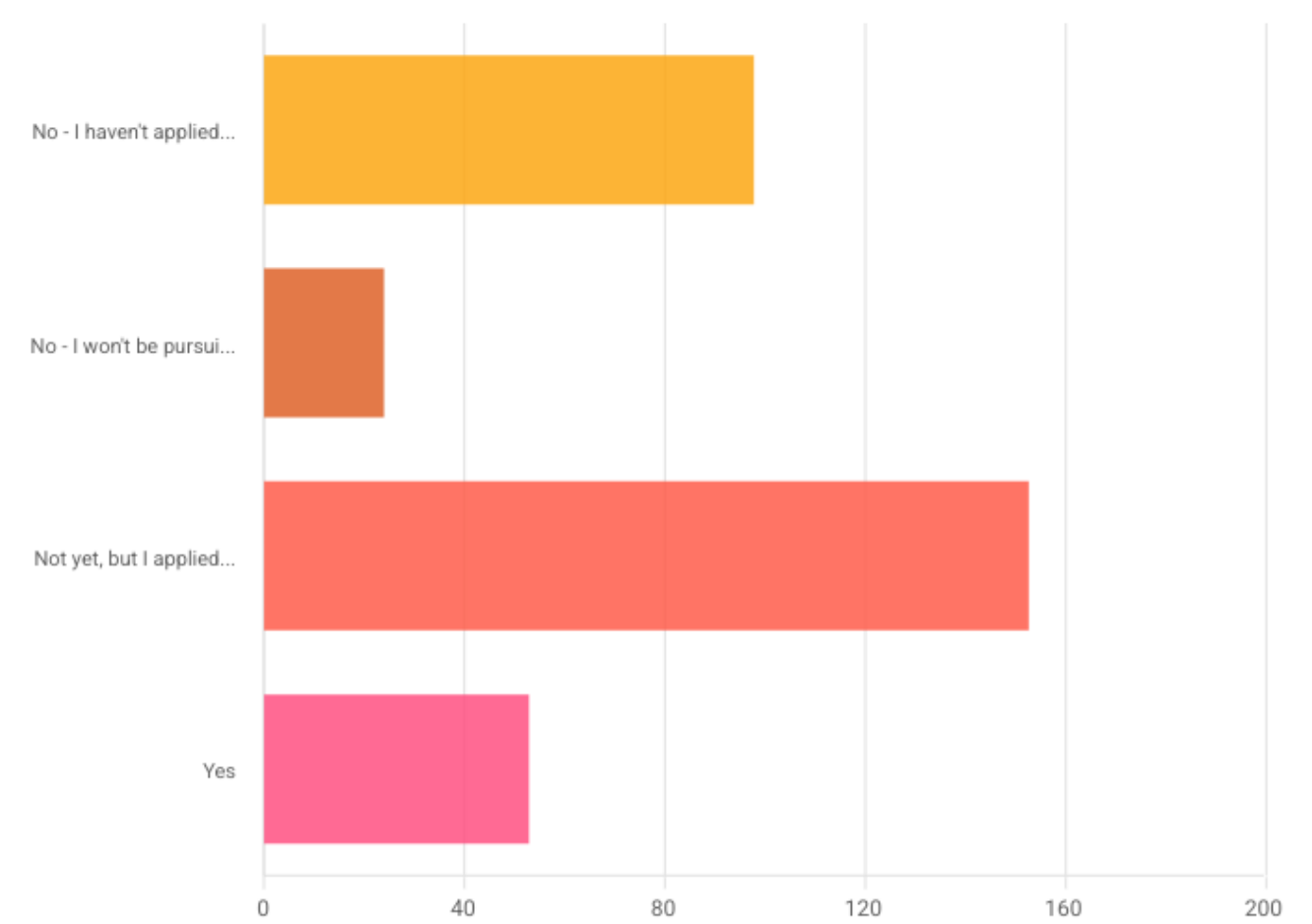
School (with 5+ youth attending)



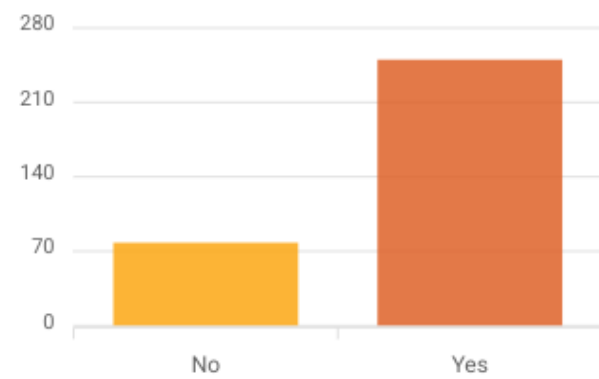
What is your current GPA?



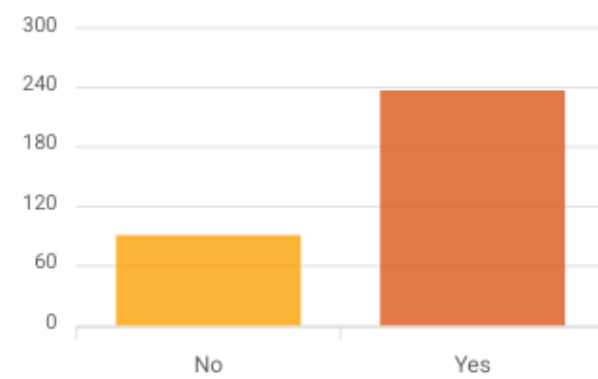
Do you have a job for this summer?



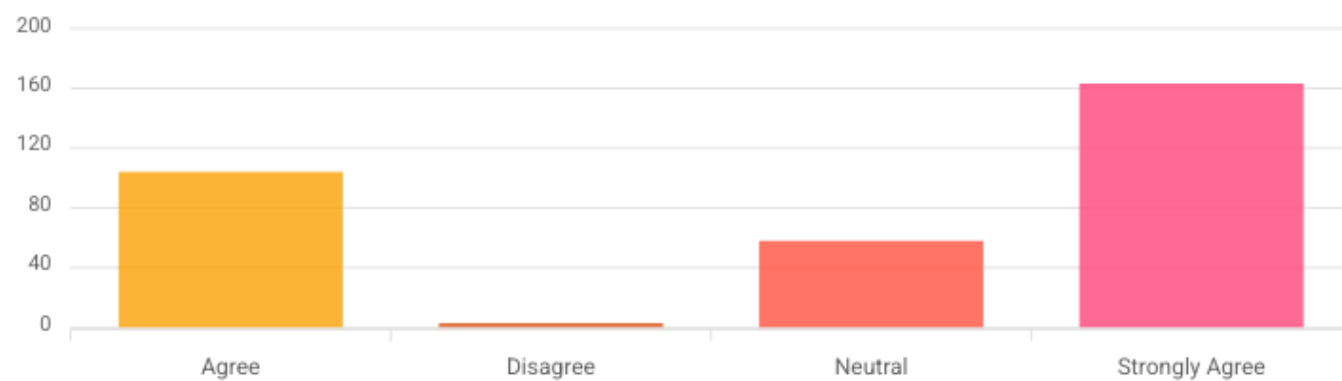
Do you have a bank account?



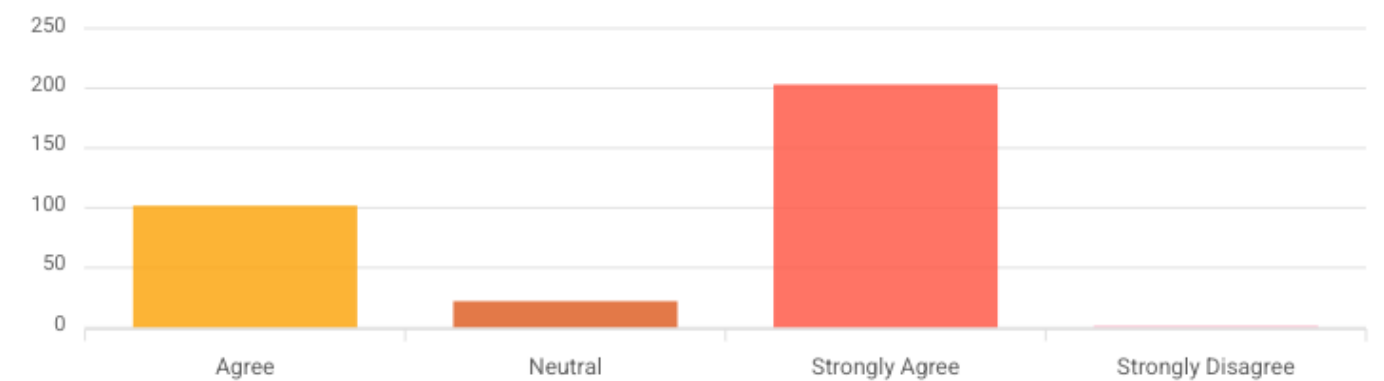
Do you have a state-issued ID card?



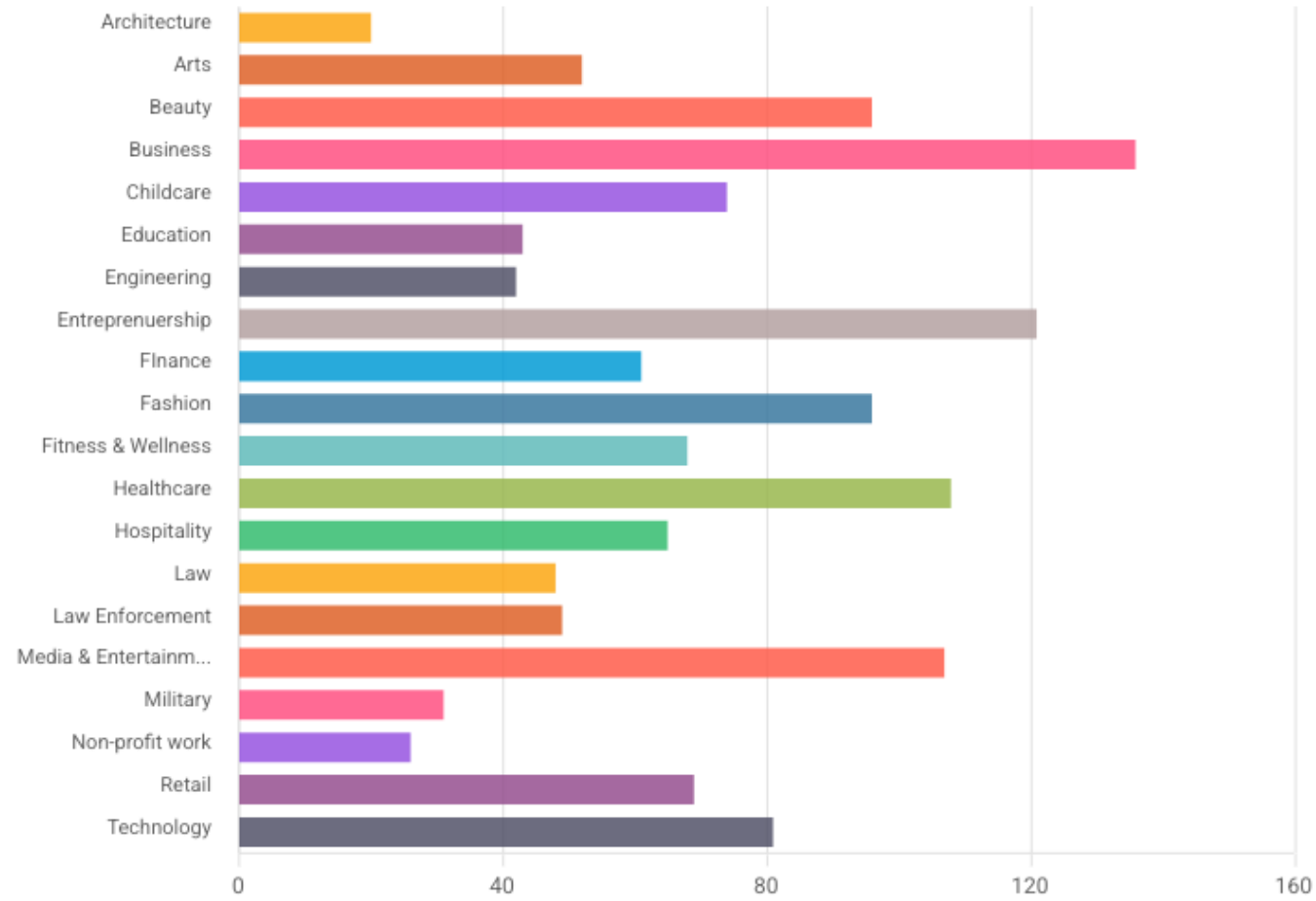
I feel my community believes in me and is supporting me as I develop my job and career path.



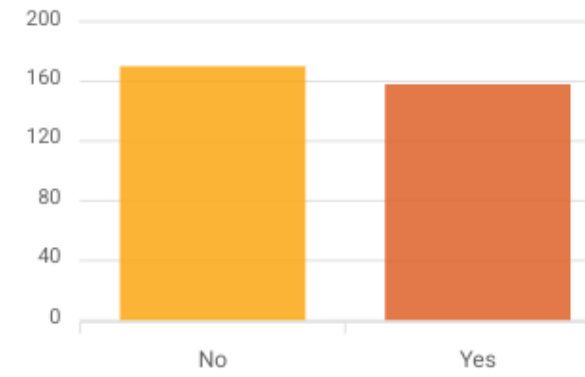
I am excited about my job and career future signing up for this work readiness fair.



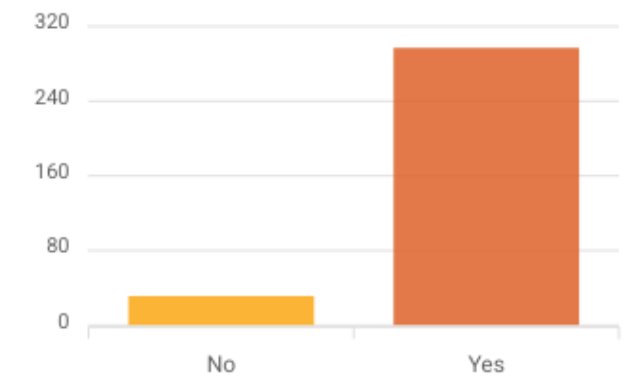
What industries interest you?



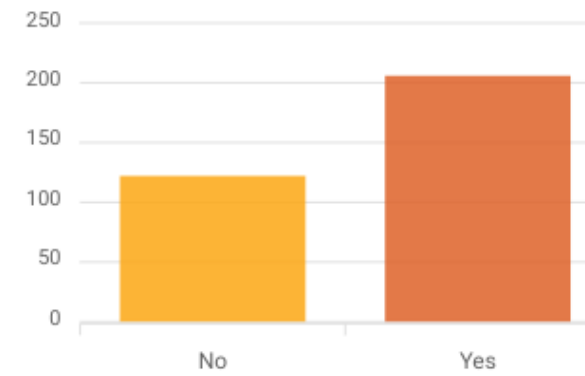
Have you ever been employed?



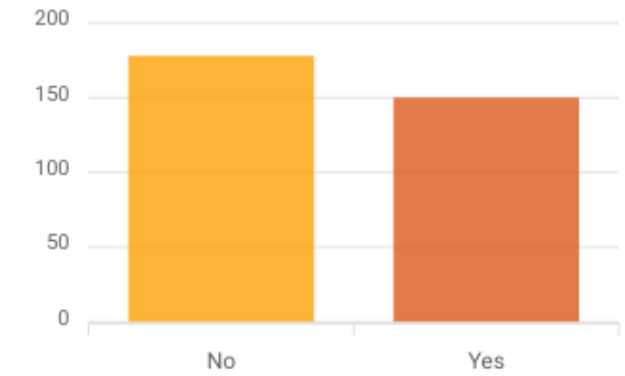
Do you know the training/education to acheive your dream job?



Do you have an updated resume to use for job applications?



Do you have someone to look up to in your dream job?



To view more impact metrics of the conference, click below.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Student Impact

OCYC Laptop Scholarship Program

How can the community as a whole best contribute to supporting the children and youth of Overtown? One way is by working together to ensure all children have access to technology—which includes owning a laptop!

The OCYC Laptop Scholarship is a way to team up to make this possible—a way for youth, families, and organizations to work together to bring about this change in Overtown and beyond.

To date, the OCYC Laptop Scholarship Program has held three award ceremonies to present laptops to youth applicants across Overtown and surrounding neighborhoods. To date, 467 laptops awarded to student applicants. The goal is to continue to award laptops until policies change so that every child in Overtown has a personal computer. The scholarship for the students goes beyond just receiving a laptop. We provide the students with free access to the Internet, skills training on business basics such as website development, social media etiquette, program usage of standard business applications, and more. Students are also respected as equal partners, This initiative is the head start our children and youth desperately need to compete and thrive in the marketplace of today and tomorrow. OCYC is committed to assisting students who cannot participate in digital learning because they do not have access to reliable Internet connections or devices.



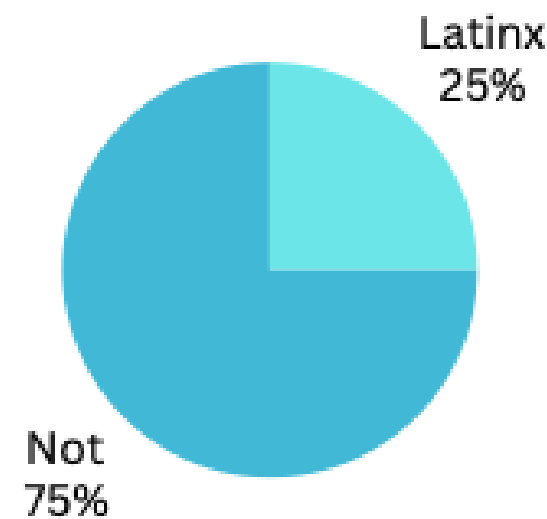
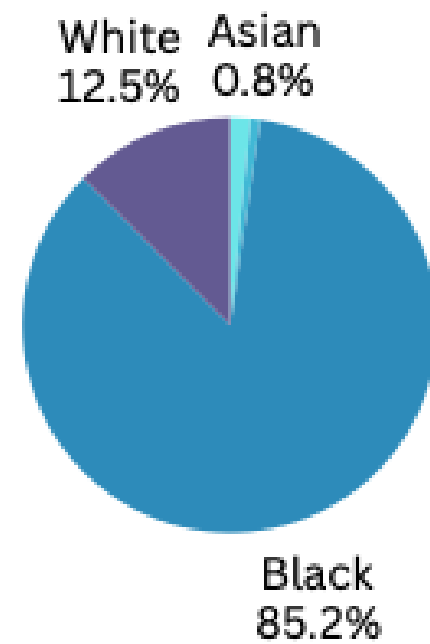
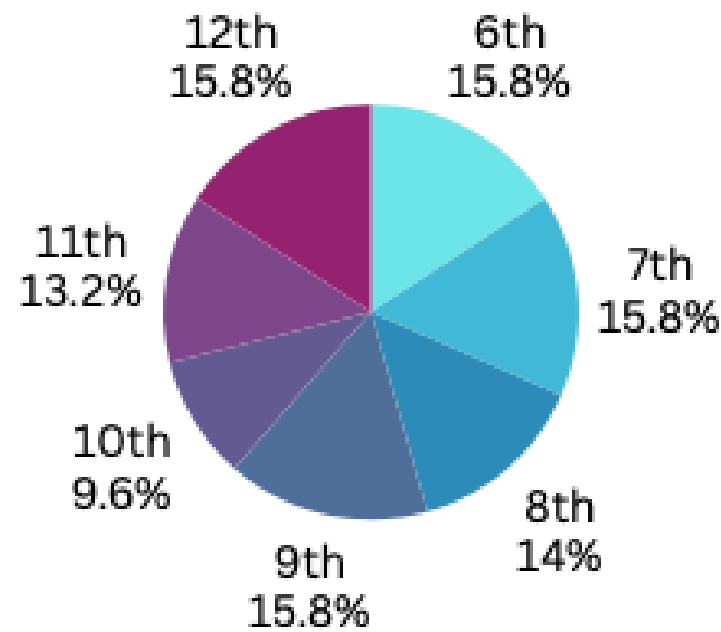
Student Impact OCYC Laptop Scholarship Program (cont.)

2025 Application Summary

133

Applications Submitted

103 Met eligibility: Middle & High School students living in or attending school in Overtown, and/or participating with Overtown partner orgs



93% Did not already own a laptop

58% Shared a laptop to complete academic work

88% Participating with 1+ Overtown Orgs

36% Attending an Overtown School

34% Living in 33136

Members

Support the children and families of the Overtown Community as we strive to build a thriving and resilient community.

Through their active engagement, OCYC Members continuously strive to improve the Overtown Community. As members of the coalition, individuals, businesses, and organizations help through committee work, donations of their services or funds, providing insight, volunteering, sponsorship of events or programs, and best of all, they mentor our youth to become productive citizens who will one day join us in continuing the effort to improve our community.

- Make-it-Happen Mindset >> Entrepreneurs, Business Leaders, Educational Institutions, Cultural Institutions, Community Organizations, and more
- A diverse and committed group of individuals, groups, and organizations
- Actively involved in improving the Overtown Community



Committees Our Real-world Local Influence



Committee	Purpose and Key Accomplishment
Productive & Working Committee	Discusses working and productive employment strategies for youth and young adults with goals to increase summer employment opportunities, develop, plan, and implement a Work Readiness Fair for youth ages 14-24, and to build a connective system that supports both education and employment opportunities for Overtown Communities. Created the annual I'm the Boss of My Life Youth Conference.
Healthy & Safe – Doula Training and Weekly FIT Fitness	The Doula Training program and weekly FIT Fitness sessions promote physical, mental, and maternal health by equipping community members with wellness education, preventative care practices, and consistent opportunities for active, healthy living.
Education & Community Engagement – Overtown Reads	Overtown Reads advances literacy and lifelong learning by engaging children, families, and community partners through culturally responsive reading experiences and educational programming that strengthen academic outcomes and community connection.
Accountability – 2025–2035 Master Plan Integration	The integration of the 2025–2035 Master Plan ensures long-term accountability by aligning programs, investments, and outcomes with a clear strategic framework that measures impact, guides decision-making, and drives sustainable community progress.

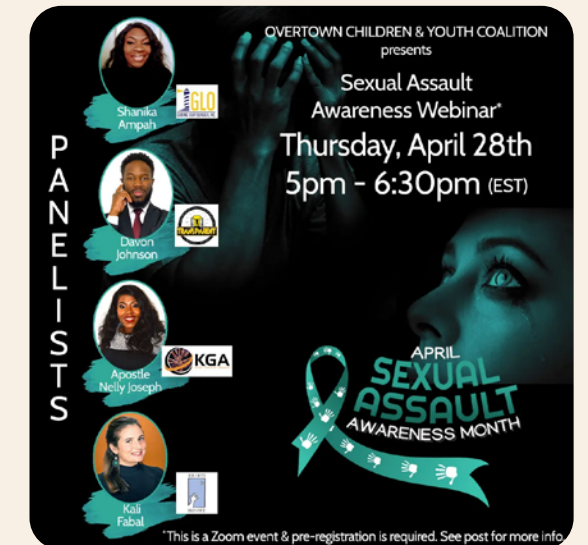
Professional Development Webinars

How We Train

We offer free professional development webinars to businesses and organizations that provide benefits and services to Overtown children and youth.

Key Topics:

- Collective Impact
- Community Engagement
- Cultural Connection
- Executive Leadership
- Grant Management & Sustainability
- Tips for Successful data collection and management



Backbone of Overtown Community

OCYC's support of the anchoring organizations brings the empowerment of the Overtown Community full circle.



Thank You!

Anthony L. Robinson, Executive Director
Anthony@OvertownCYC.org



www.overtowncyc.org
786-373-5862 • info@overtowncyc.org
219 NW 14th Terrace Suite. 403, Miami, FL 33136



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