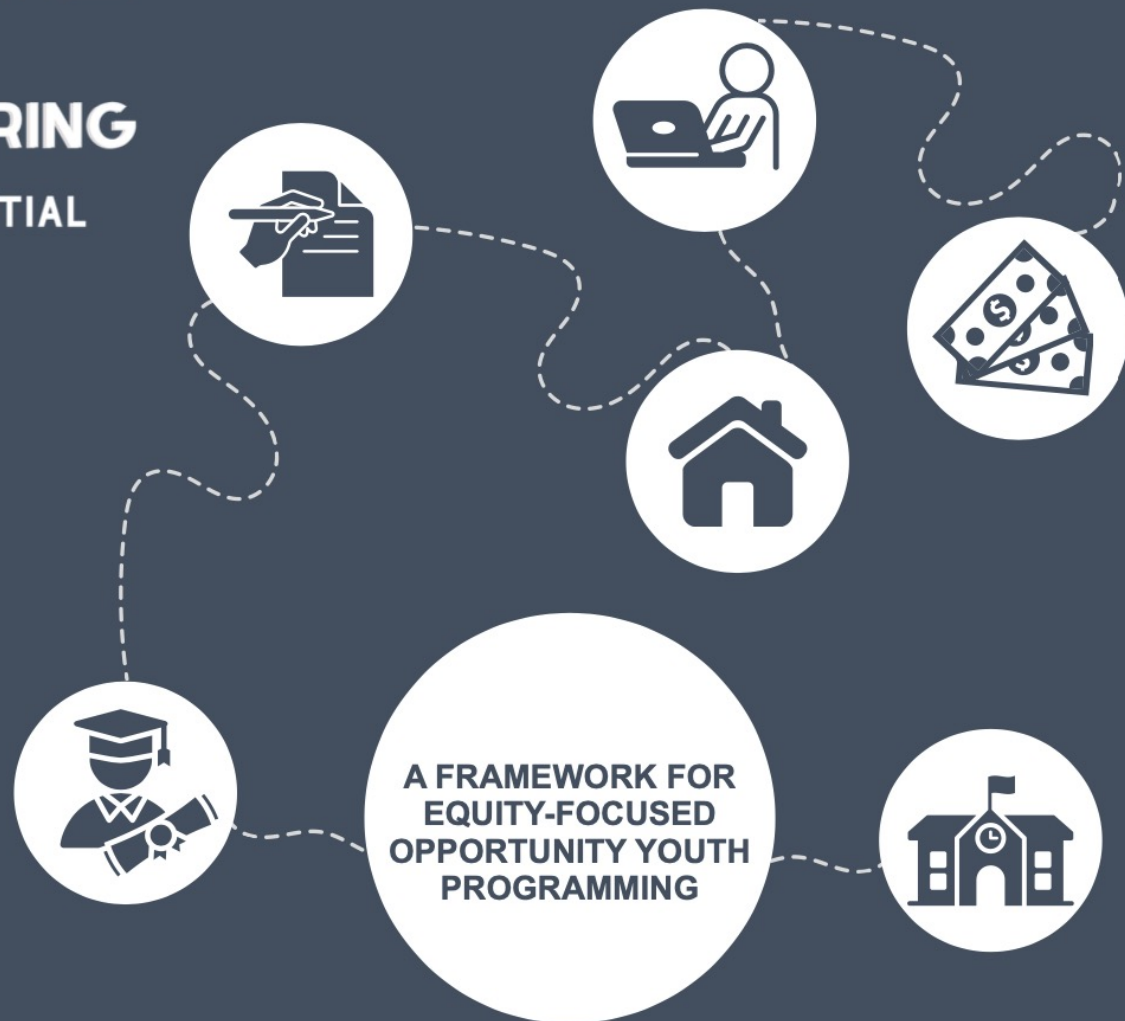


UNLOCKING YOUTH POTENTIAL

A PATHWAY TO INCLUSIVE HIRING

NATIONAL INSTITUTE TO UNLOCK POTENTIAL



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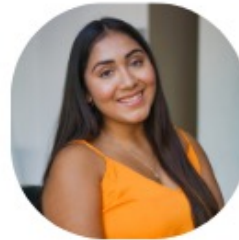
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The National Institute is developing a guiding framework for organizations to implement effective First Chance workforce development programs for Opportunity Youth.

Our **focus is Black and Brown youth** who have experienced the legal or carceral system, the foster care system, parental incarceration, and/or human trafficking as minors.

These **systems** and many others **create the disparities** young people experience by perpetuating white supremacy culture.

Our **young people** are **smart, capable, resilient, and resourceful** and they hold the knowledge of how best to support themselves and how to change the system so all youth thrive.

NIUP's Equity Statement

Our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion implores us to **reimagine all systems** that contribute to youth being disconnected and deepen inequities in education and employment.

Currently, **racism is inherently embedded in policies** that we tend to adopt and implement in our practices and programming to secure funding further perpetuating systems that promote racial inequity, high barriers, and low resources for communities of color, specifically Black, Indigenous, and Hispanic/Latinx communities, to advance social and economic wellbeing.

Our systems must instead **center on young people's needs**, values, and voices to achieve outcomes and promote opportunities for current and future generations. Acknowledging racial equity and building systems focused on addressing racial disparities in quality employment with livable wages and education with non-traditional pathways to increase positive outcomes for all youth.

We stand firm in **our commitment to all youth having access** to quality employment and educational opportunities.



Call to Co-Creation

Proposing an equity focused program model in which young people, CBOs, and employers **co-create** the program to align with local context, meet young people where they are, and connect them with employment.

Asks all partners to enter with a **learning** mindset and a **commitment** to let their practices and policies be **changed** to reduce barriers and advance equity.

National Institute to Unlock Potential

A research, data, and narrative shift guide for organizations supporting Opportunity Youth led by Perservere.

Partnering with First-Chance Employers

Partnering with employers to provide first-chance employment for Opportunity Youth. This initiative is called Unlock Potential and is led by Responsible Business Initiative for Justice (RBIJ).

Growing Capacity for Community-Based Organizations

Providing space for organizations to build and sustain the capacity to support youth, and disrupt the systems that impact them.

Developing Youth Leaders

Utilizing positive youth development strategies that center youth voices to build self advocacy, confidence, dignity, and joy. This initiative is led by Youth Development and Well-being Consultant, Kia Jarmon.

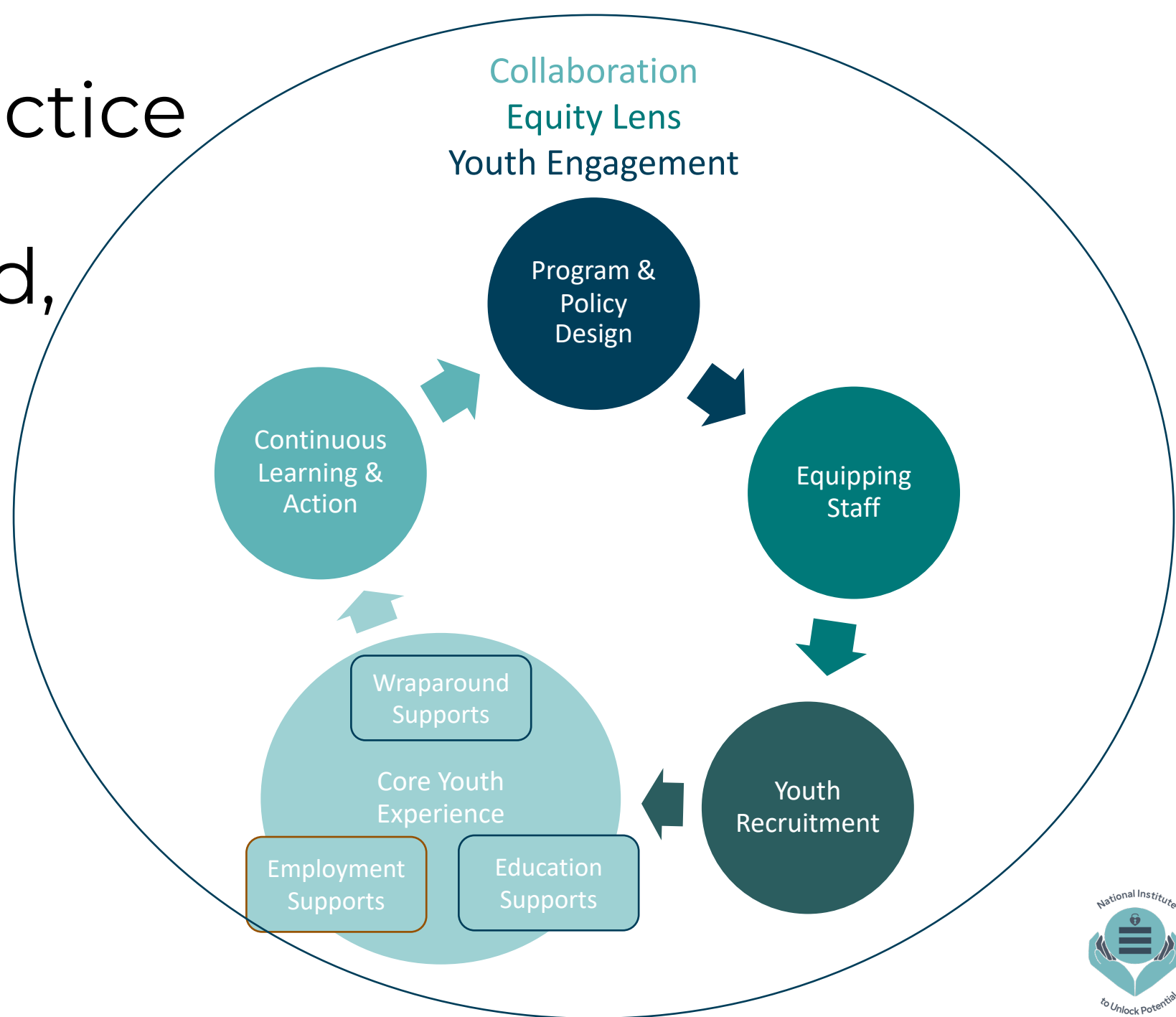
RACIAL EQUITY

HEALING → JUSTICE → WELL-BEING → LIBERATION → JOY

TRUST

LOVE

10 Areas of Practice in an Equity Focused, Collaborative OY Initiative



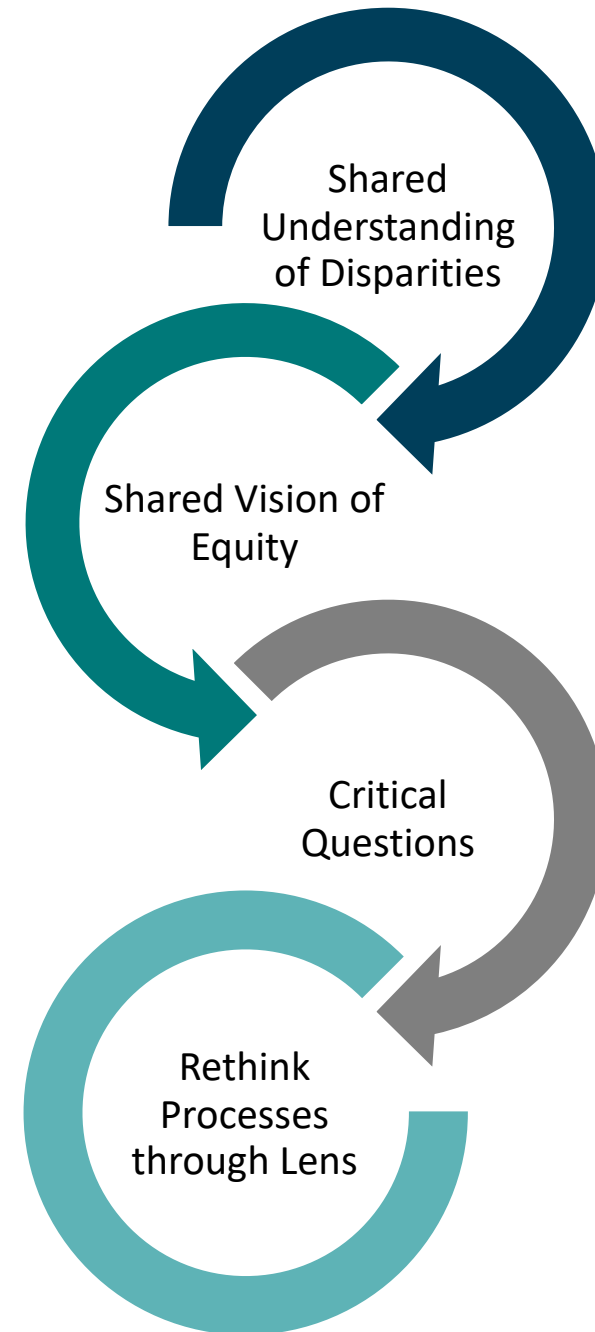
Collaboration

The **relationships** between partners in the initiative is part of the program that young people experience and requires intentional tending to be successful.



Equity Lens

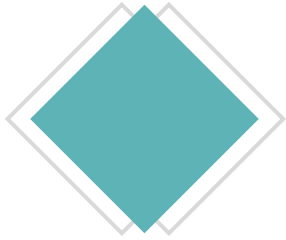
In partnership, build shared practices to help you **evaluate** decisions in terms of how they move you **towards** or **away** from equity



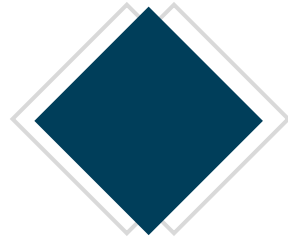
Principles of Youth Engagement

1. Build psychological **safety**
2. Well-equipped **staff** trained in youth engagement
3. Cultivate authentic **two-way relationships** rooted in mutual respect
4. Establish **norms** and guidelines early and often
5. Remove barriers and offer **supports to participation**
6. Clarity on **role** of young people and informed consent
7. **Prepare** and support youth in multiple ways
8. Consistent opportunities for meaningful **action**
9. Intentional space for **story telling**
10. **Flexibility** and **patience**

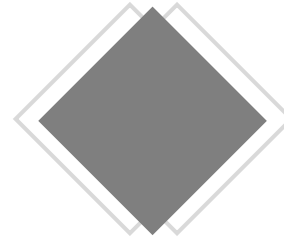
Program Design Process



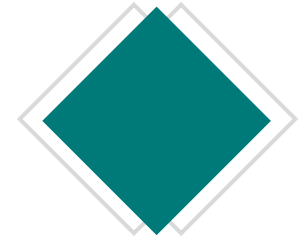
**Community Strengths
and Needs
Assessment**



**Root Cause Analysis
with an Equity Lens**



**Research on Effective
Strategies**



**Youth-Engaged Design
Process**

Prepare and Equip Staff

Space for staff to explore
and shift the
organization's culture
around youth

Commitment from to
protect time to work in
this way



Equip staff to live out changes in practices that reduce barriers and meet youth where they are; turnover-proof

Professional development in Positive Youth Development, Trauma Informed Care, cultural competence, mentorship, Supervising people early in their career, etc.

Recruitment Strategies

- Utilize **multiple** strategies at once
- More **personal** approaches are more effective
- Create a **youth affirming** presence, space, and voice for the program
- Ensure **accessibility** and **visibility** of programming – social media presence, scheduling, providing childcare, food, transportation, hybrid options

Wraparounds

Childcare	Transportation	Housing Assistance and Navigation
Financial Capability & Assistance	Technology Assistance	Disability Access Needs
Legal Advocacy and Assistance	Mental Health Care	Physical Health Care
English Language Learning	Identification	Utility Assistance
	Food Assistance	

- The **Social Determinants of Work** are factors that shape a person's access to work. All of the social determinants of work are impacted by historical and current racist policies that distribute opportunities and resources unevenly.
- As such, providing wraparound services and supports that address the social determinants of work is critical to **advancing equity**.

Education Supports: Core Elements

1

Preparation & Enrollment Navigation

- Coaching & info on education path that is a good fit
- Ensure young person can maintain income while learning
- Navigating application processes

3

Academic Supports

- Tutoring & advising
- Providing books, technology, other needs
- Mentorship

2

Financial Aid

- Finding financial aid opportunities that are a good fit
- Educating young people on financial options & implications
- Navigating paperwork with young person

4

Support Persistence

- Ongoing services to maintain stability and as challenges arise
- Peer supports
- Stipends while learning

Employment Supports: Core Elements

High Quality Career Navigation

- Provide info on high demand jobs and fit for individual youth
- Support the job search, resume, & interview process
- Warm connections or actual placements with employers
- Ongoing youth-centered, expert coaching throughout

Skills Development & Credentialing

- Soft skills development
- Credentialing or training in hard skills aligned with high-demand industry needs
- Digital literacy & skills to reduce barriers

Paid Opportunities while Skill Building

- Jobs paying living wage or mortgage-paying wage
- Paying stipends while learning
- Paid training, internship, or apprenticeship programs

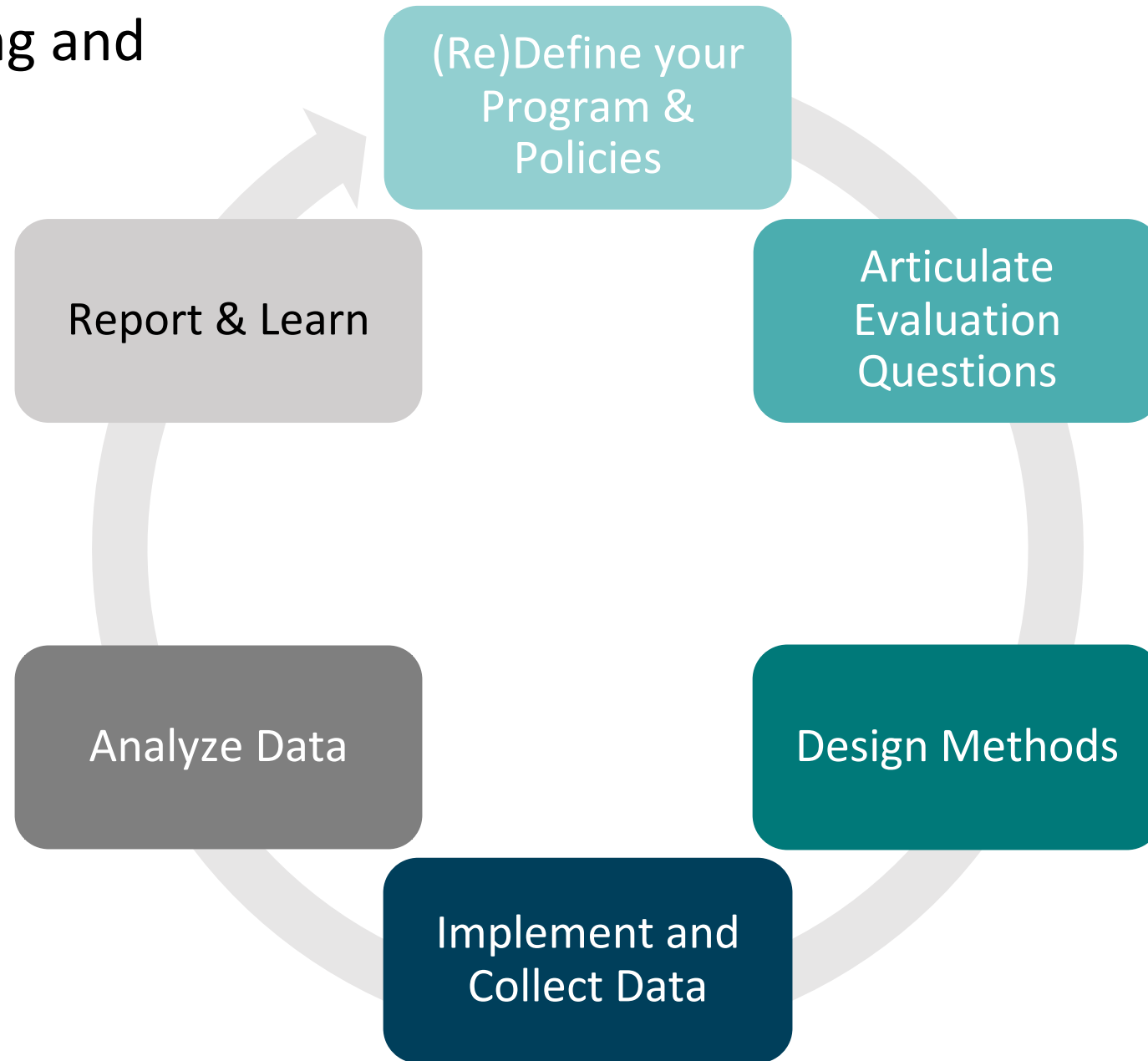
Support Entrepreneurial Pathways

- Business & finance management skills
- Mentorship
- Seed funding and access to capital
- Innovation

Support Retention

- Ongoing services to maintain stability and as challenges arise
- Supportive supervisors, mentorship relationships
- Company wide case management
- Peer supports

Cycle of Learning and Action



For More Information Contact:

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Unlocking Youth Potential: A Pathway to Inclusive Hiring



[Access the Full Framework Report Here](#)