



HERE FOR GOOD

The Impact of the YMCA of Greater New York on New York City's Economy

Full Study



Prepared by Appleseed
2013



PROSPECT PARK YMCA

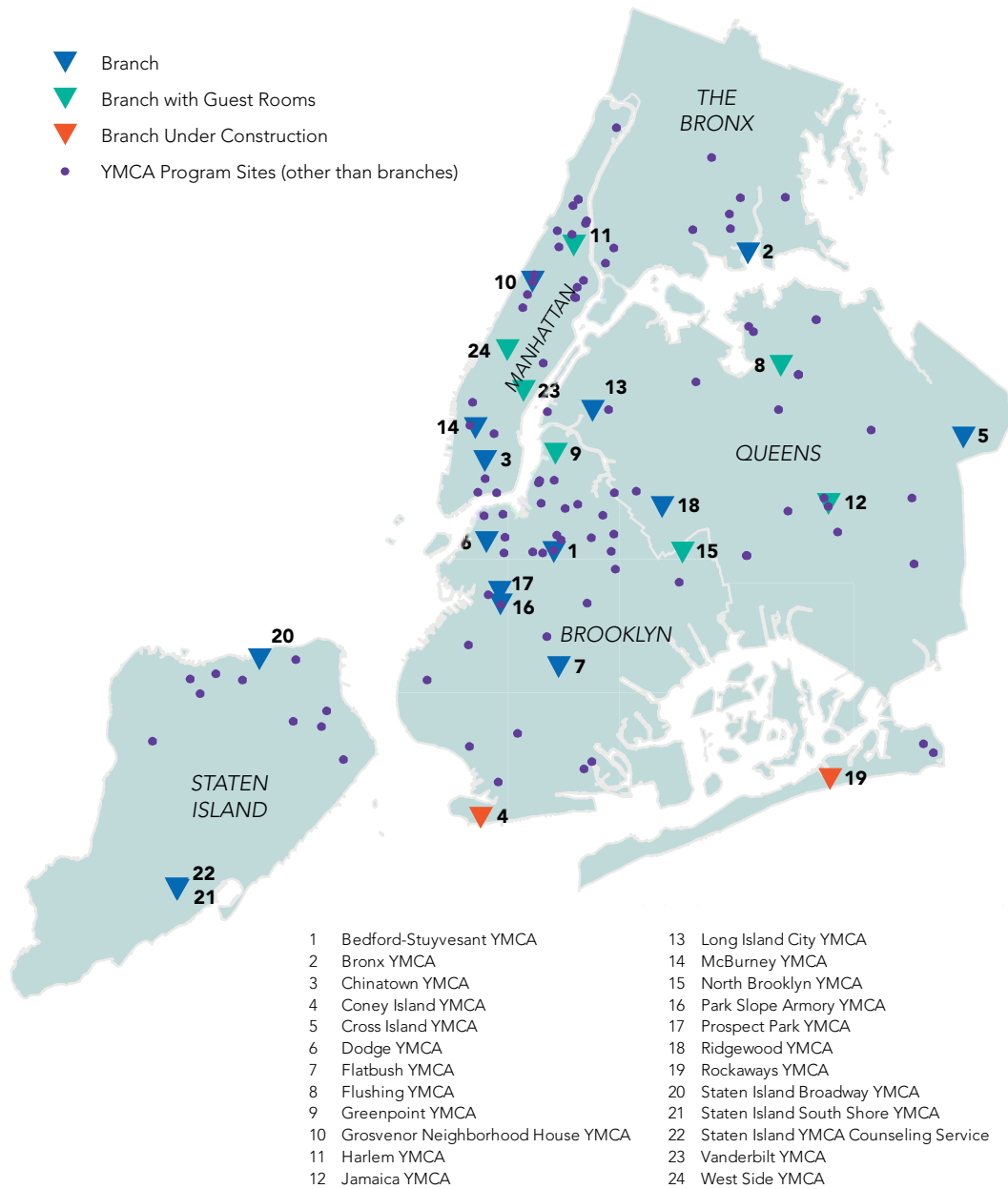
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Figure 1: Location of YMCA facilities in New York City



Introduction

This report describes the multiple ways in which the YMCA of Greater New York – a not-for-profit organization, founded in 1852, that serves families, individuals and communities in all five boroughs of New York City – contributes to the vitality of the City’s economy. The report describes the YMCA’s current economic impact as an enterprise – as an employer, a buyer of goods and services, and a sponsor of construction projects – and examines as well the long-term benefits that the City (and society at large) derives from the Y’s current investments in youth development, healthy living and community-building.

The YMCA currently serves about 500,000 people annually, ranging in age from infants and toddlers to school-age children and teens to young, working-age and older adults. Its programs primarily operate from 22 branch buildings located in neighborhoods throughout New York City, and in more than 100 other locations, including New York City public schools, community centers and senior centers. In addition to its currently operating branches, the YMCA has two new branches under construction in Rockaway and Coney Island.

Seven of the YMCA’s branches also include residences with a total of 1,644 rooms. These residences generally serve two distinct groups – individuals who are receiving services and support from various social services agencies; and transient visitors to New York City.

Figure 1 shows the location of the YMCA’s branches in New York City, the two now under construction, the Y’s residential facilities, and other locations throughout the City where the Y provides services.

As of August 2012, more than 167,000 individuals and families were YMCA members. They included more than 31,000 families, nearly 49,000 individual adult members and more than 87,000 youth members. Taking into account the multiple individuals included in family memberships, YMCA members account

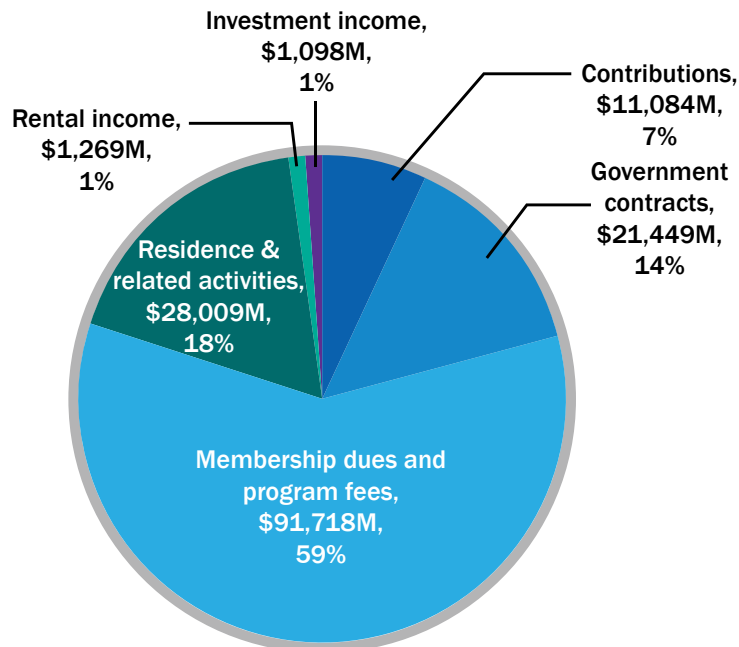
for more than 200,000 of approximately 500,000 New Yorkers the organization currently serves. Others include community residents who are not members but pay for specific services or programs that the Y offers; and children participating in programs such as the after-school programs the Y provides at public schools throughout the City.

The YMCA's strong ties to local communities and the popularity of its programs are reflected in continued growth in the number of YMCA members. From January 2005 through January 2012, the total number of adult and family memberships City-wide grew from fewer than 50,000 to nearly 81,000 – an increase of about 65 percent.

In 2011, the YMCA's operating revenues and support totaled \$154.6 million. As shown below in Figure 2, membership dues and program fees accounted for 59 percent of all revenues; residences for 18 percent; and private contributions for about 7 percent.

While government funding accounts for only about 14 percent of the YMCA's total revenues, it is critical to several of the organization's programs. Moreover, public and philanthropic funding have played a critical role in allowing the YMCA to incubate new programs that are then able to attract funding from a variety of other sources.

Figure 2: YMCA of Greater New York revenues by source, 2011 (dollars in thousands)



Purpose and organization of the report

Many New Yorkers are no doubt familiar with the YMCA – either through participation in its programs or simply through its visibility in their neighborhoods. But there are probably far fewer who are aware of the scope and scale of its operations in New York City or of the multiple ways in which it helps strengthen communities throughout the City.

This report assesses the YMCA of Greater New York's impact on New York City's economy, from two perspectives – the immediate impact of the YMCA as a significant enterprise in its own right; and its longer-term contribution to the strength of the City's economy and the vitality of its communities through its three-part mission of youth development, healthy living and community-building. The report was prepared by Appleseed, a New York-City based consulting firm with extensive experience in conducting economic and community impact analyses.

- Part One of the report assesses the impact of the YMCA as an economic enterprise – as an employer, a buyer of goods and services, and a sponsor of construction projects.
- Part Two discusses the programmatic and economic impact of the YMCA's services, focusing on four areas – youth development, healthy living, community-building and the YMCA's residences.
- Part Three concludes the report with some brief comments on why the YMCA's impact in New York City could be even greater over the next five to ten years than it is today.
- Part Four views the YMCA's impact from a different perspective, by focusing on a single branch – the Bedford-Stuyvesant YMCA – and its contribution to the vitality of the neighborhoods it serves.

Acknowledgments

Appleseed could not have completed this report without the cooperation of many people at the YMCA of Greater New York. We would particularly like to thank Paul Custer, Shannon Cussen, Diosdado Gica, Michael Guarino, Lyn Hall, Donnalea Hulett, Dordy Jourdain, Sharon Levy, Jack Lund, Dana Mantella, Rena McGreevy, Charlene Prieto, Jack Rappaport, Rosalie White and Joshua Wojehowski.

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Part One

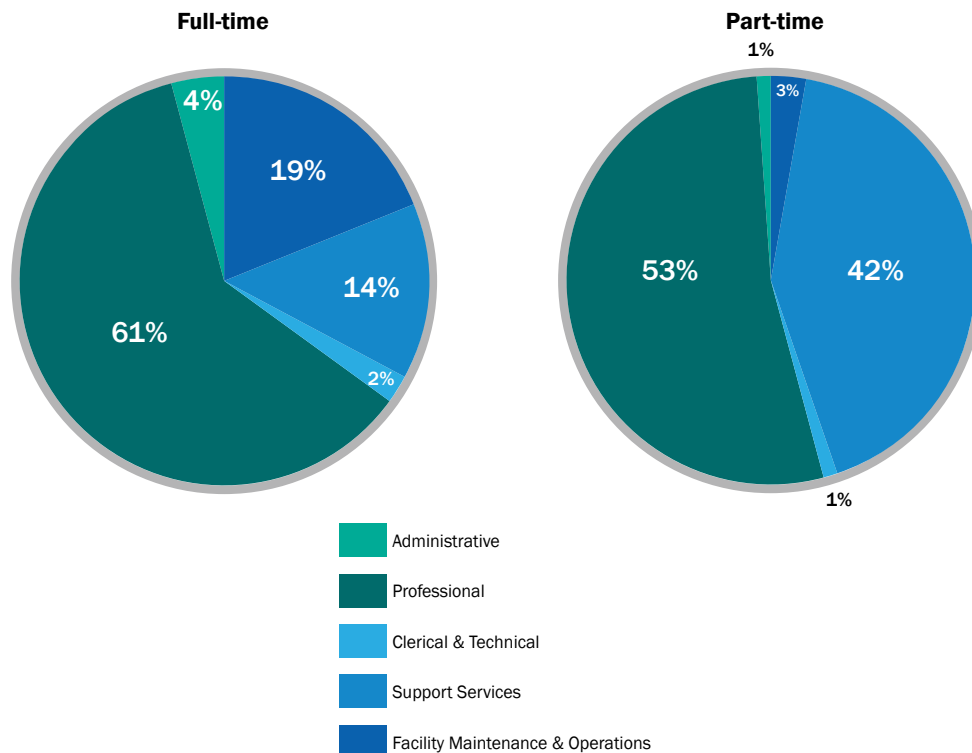
The YMCA as an Economic Enterprise

In addition to being a leading provider of services to families and individuals in all five boroughs of New York City, the YMCA of Greater New York is a significant enterprise in its own right. The YMCA employs thousands of New Yorkers, purchases a wide range of goods and services from New York City businesses and invests in facilities throughout the City. This part of the report describes the YMCA's impact as an employer, a purchaser of goods and services and a sponsor of construction projects.

The YMCA as an employer

As of the end of 2011, the YMCA of Greater New York employed 3,786 people in regular year-round jobs – 831 in full-time and 2,955 in part-time positions. (The large number of part-time positions primarily reflects employment of professional and support staff in the branches.) As Figure 3 shows, professional employees account for the largest share of both full-time and part-time jobs at the YMCA.

Figure 3: Full- and part-time employment by occupational category, 2011



In addition to these year-round employees, the YMCA in 2011 employed 706 people in seasonal jobs – for example, in staffing summer camps.

Taking into account the organization's full-time, part-time and seasonal employees, we estimate that in 2011 the YMCA of Greater New York directly accounted for approximately 2,540 full-time-equivalent (FTE) jobs.

During 2011, the YMCA of Greater New York paid a total of \$63.2 million in salaries and wages to its employees, about 83 percent of which was paid to residents of New York City.

At a time when New Yorkers are concerned not only about the availability of jobs but also about the quality of those jobs, it is worth noting that the great majority of the YMCA's full-time employees (including non-professional staff) earn wages and salaries that exceed the "living wage" standards recommended by some labor and community organizations – \$10.00 per hour for jobs that provide health insurance, \$11.50 for those that don't. Table 1 shows the average yearly earnings of the YMCA's full-time employees in 2011, by occupational category.

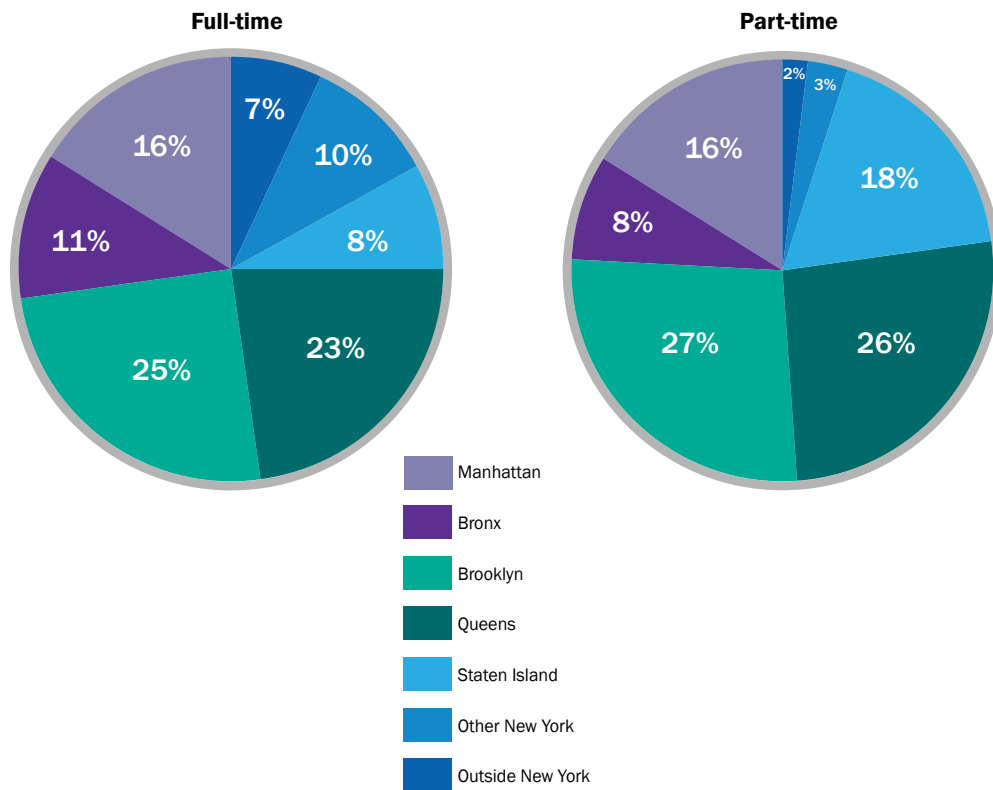
In addition to the wages and salaries it pays, the YMCA provides a full range of employee benefits. For full-time employees, they include comprehensive health care and dental insurance, life insurance, retirement contributions and other benefits. For part-time employees, they include several low-cost, employee-funded health insurance options, retirement contributions and other benefits. In 2011, the YMCA spent more than \$15 million on employee benefits (including the employer's share of FICA and unemployment insurance premiums).

The YMCA of Greater New York also provides a wide range of training and professional development opportunities for its employees. In 2011, YMCA employees collectively participated in a total of 5,927 training experiences – training programs lasting from three hours to two full days, offered in eighteen different areas relating to the Y's services and operations. This in effect means that YMCA employees – whether full-time or part-time – participated in an average of 1.3 training programs over the course of the year.

Table 1: Average annual earnings of YMCA employees in 2011, by occupational category

Occupational group	Number of full-time YMCA employees	Average annual earnings
Professional	509	\$49,303
Administrative	30	\$33,570
Clerical	13	\$30,414
Support services	114	\$27,875
Maintenance and operations	160	\$27,445

Figure 4: Full- and part-time employment by place of residence, 2011



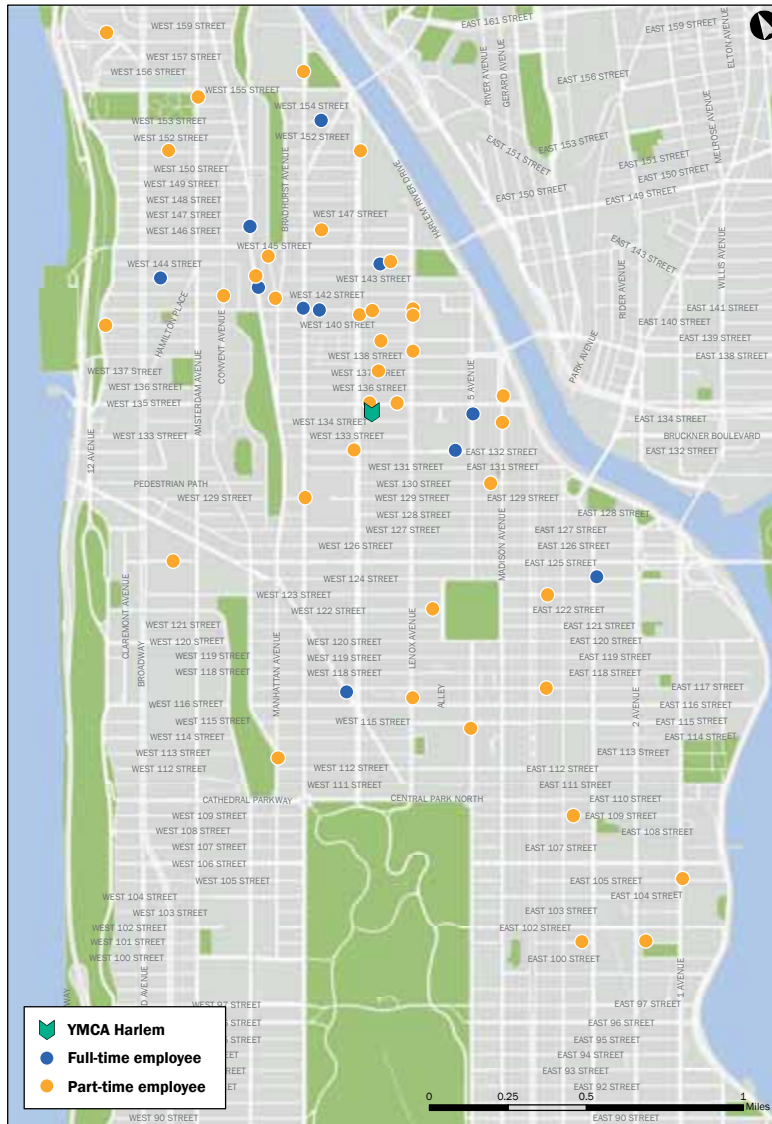
Where YMCA employees work – and where they live

YMCA employment is heavily concentrated in the branches. In the fall of 2012, 83 people were employed in central administrative functions at the YMCA of Greater New York's headquarters on West 63rd Street in Manhattan. The remainder work in the branches and in other neighborhood programs.

As Figure 4 shows, 83 percent of full-time, year-round YMCA employees, and nearly 95 percent of part-time employees, live in New York City. About 10 percent of full-time employees and 3 percent of part-time workers live elsewhere in New York State.

In addition to being New York City residents, many YMCA branch employees are also residents of the neighborhoods where they work, participating in the life of the community and spending money with local businesses. The Harlem YMCA offers a notable example. Of the branch's 122 full-time, part-time and seasonal employees, 57 live either in West, Central or East Harlem or in Hamilton Heights. Figure 5 highlights where these 57 employees live.

Figure 5: Place of residence of Harlem YMCA employees



Communities benefit in two ways from this geographic clustering of YMCA employees. Local YMCA branches provide jobs for neighborhood residents (both adults and, as discussed below, teens); and having neighborhood residents working at the local branch helps the YMCA ensure that its staff understand and are responsive to local needs and concerns.

A major employer of young New Yorkers

Early work experience can be a critically important factor affecting young adults' success in the labor market. Andrew Sum of Northeastern University – one of the nation's leading authorities on youth employment, has noted that:

Cumulative work experience in the teen years has significant, positive impacts on employment, hourly wages, and earnings of young adults in their early to mid 20s.... teens who work in high school, especially males, are less likely to drop out of high school before graduation and those who participated in work-based learning programs are more likely to see the connection between school, work and their career goals...jobless teens in low income families and those who live in local labor markets with fewer legitimate job opportunities for teens are most likely to engage in delinquent behavior and become involved with the criminal justice system.¹



Yet for many young people – especially for African-American and Latino youth and those from low-income families – getting that work experience can be difficult, especially at a time when the labor market is still suffering from the effects of a prolonged recession and continuing economic uncertainty.

The YMCA of Greater New York helps to address this challenge in several ways. It is one of the City’s leading employers of young workers. The Y employs approximately 1,800 people teenagers and young adults (from age 14 through 24), mostly in part-time or seasonal jobs in YMCA after-school programs and camps. These jobs help young New Yorkers gain the experience and develop the basic workplace skills they will need to succeed in the world of work.

The YMCA also provides other programs and services that prepare young people for jobs, and help them connect with employers. These are described in Part Two of the report.

Purchases of goods and services

In 2011, the YMCA of Greater New York spent more than \$62.5 million on purchases of goods and services (excluding construction), of which nearly \$22.6 million (about 36 percent) was paid to companies located in New York City, and \$5.1 million (8.2 percent) to companies located elsewhere in New York State. Major categories of goods and services purchased from New York City companies are shown below in Table 2.

Leading categories of goods and services purchased from companies located elsewhere in New York State are shown in Table 3.

¹ Andrew Sum et al, “Vanishing Work Among U.S. Teens, 2000-2010: What a Difference a decade Makes,” Northeastern University Center for Labor Market Studies, July 2010, p. 10.

Table 2: Leading categories of goods and services purchased from NYC companies in 2011

Category	Payments to NYC companies
Miscellaneous contractual services	\$5,304,400
Electricity, gas and steam	\$3,760,800
Insurance	\$3,540,700
Space rental and condo fees	\$1,726,700
Professional services	\$1,687,600
Maintenance and repair services	\$1,346,600
Supplies (maintenance, office, program, fuel)	\$1,165,100

Table 3: Leading categories of goods and services purchased from companies elsewhere in NYS in 2011

Category	Payments to NYS companies
Miscellaneous contractual services	\$811,600
Supplies (maintenance, office, program, fuel)	\$658,500
Cleaning services	\$477,000
Food and beverages	\$471,900
Maintenance and repair services	\$401,000
Insurance	\$372,600
Telecommunications	\$341,200
Professional services	\$360,600
Data processing	\$277,200
Charter transportation	\$247,200

In addition to its payments to New York City and other New York State companies, the YMCA spent nearly \$4.5 million on employee health benefits in 2011. About 95 percent of this total was paid to companies located outside New York State. Most of this expenditure however, translates directly into payments to health care providers in the communities where YMCA employees live. For purposes of this analysis, we therefore treat 85 percent of all spending on employee health benefits – more than \$3.8 million – as payments to health care providers in New York.

Taking into account both direct payments to New York City vendors and payments to health care providers, we estimate that in 2011, the YMCA's purchases of goods and services directly supported 162 full-time-equivalent jobs with New York City companies.

Construction

In 2011 the YMCA of Greater New York directly spent \$7.47 million on construction. Of this total, about \$3.34 million was paid to contractors based in New York City; and \$1.28 million to contractors located elsewhere in New York State.

However, the total cited above significantly understates recent spending on construction of YMCA facilities in New York City. This is because the YMCA has in recent years undertaken the development of several facilities in partnership with private developers. For example:

- The Dodge YMCA occupies a 40,000 square-foot space in a 300,000 square-foot mixed-use building at 225 Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn that was completed in 2006. The building also contains rental apartments and retail space. The YMCA contributed \$10.5 million toward the estimated \$17 million cost of developing its space; the developer covered the rest.
- The Chinatown YMCA similarly occupies a 44,000 square-foot space in a 500,000 square-foot building on the corner of the Bowery and Houston Street in Manhattan, finished in 2007, that also includes rental apartments and retail. The YMCA paid the developer a small percentage of the estimated \$20 million cost of its space, which it owns jointly with another non-profit organization.

Similar approaches are now being used to develop new YMCA branches in Rockaway and Coney Island.

- The YMCA of the Rockaways is now under construction at the corner of Beach 73rd Street and Rockaway Beach Boulevard. This new branch will be a stand-alone building, developed on City-owned land as part of a new residential community. The developer is contributing \$8 million toward the \$21.4 million cost of the new building. Completion had been scheduled for the fall of 2013, but is likely to be delayed three to five months due to the effects of Hurricane Sandy on the site and the surrounding area.
- The Coney Island YMCA will be part of a 196-unit low-income housing project now under construction at Surf Avenue and 29th Street. The YMCA space – estimated to cost \$23 million – is being built primarily with a combination of developer financing and Low-Income Housing Tax Credits; the YMCA itself is contributing \$4.75 million toward the total cost. This project was expected to be completed in the summer of 2013 but, like the Rockaway YMCA, is now likely to be delayed for three to five months.

Taking into account both the YMCA's direct spending on construction and spending on the two new branches being constructed by third-party developers, we estimate that investments in existing and new YMCA facilities in 2011 directly supported about 129 FTE jobs in construction and related industries.

Indirect and induced effects

The YMCA's impact on New York City's economy goes beyond the direct impact of spending on payroll, purchasing and construction. It also includes "indirect and induced" or "multiplier" effects. Local companies from which the YMCA buys goods and services use some of the money they earn from the Y to buy goods and services from other local businesses; and those businesses in turn buy some of what they need from still other New York City companies. Similarly, YMCA employees (and the employees of the YMCA's New York City-based suppliers) spend part of their take-home pay locally – for housing, utilities, food, child care, entertainment and other household needs.

Using the IMPLAN input-output modeling system (a modeling system widely used in economic impact analyses), we estimate that in 2011 the YMCA's spending in New York City (including spending by third-party developers on construction of YMCA facilities) indirectly generated:

- 409 FTE jobs with employers throughout New York City;
- \$29.6 million in earnings; and
- \$78.9 million in City-wide economic output.

Combining the direct impacts cited previously with the indirect and induced effects cited above, we estimate that in 2011 spending by the YMCA of Greater New York on payroll, purchasing and construction, along with spending by its developer partners on the construction of new Y facilities, directly and indirectly accounted for:

- 3,243 FTE jobs in New York City;
- \$113.2 million in wages; and
- \$191.7 million in City-wide economic output.

Table 3 summarizes the direct, indirect/induced and total impact of YMCA and related developer spending on New York City's economy in 2011.



The impact of YMCA construction spending – a longer view

The construction impacts described previously and included in Table 4 represent the impact of YMCA and developer investments during a single year. Viewed over the course of a decade, the cumulative impact of these investments is of course much greater.

Table 4: Impact of YMCA payroll, purchasing and construction

	Jobs (FTE)	Output
YMCA payroll		
Direct	2,543	\$63,224,400
Indirect/induced	251	46,907,000
Subtotal	2,794	\$110,131,400
YMCA purchasing		
Direct	162	\$25,944,600
Indirect/induced	80	16,696,200
Subtotal	242	\$42,640,800
YMCA construction*		
Direct	129	\$23,564,800
Indirect/induced	78	15,321,300
Subtotal	207	\$38,886,100
Total	3,243	\$191,658,300

*Includes spending by developers on construction of new YMCA facilities in Rockaway and Coney Island.

From 2007 through 2016, the YMCA expects its direct investment in construction to total nearly \$101 million. Investments by others – by the School Construction Authority at the Bedford-Stuyvesant YMCA; by developers at the Chinatown, Rockaway and Coney Island branches; and at the Flushing branch, where a new facility will be developed as part of Flushing Commons, a new mixed-use development – are expected to total an additional \$100 million. We estimate that over the course of this ten-year period, spending by the YMCA and its partners will directly support 1,095 person-years of employment in construction and related industries.²

Taking into account indirect and induced effects, we estimate that during the same period, construction spending by the YMCA of Greater New York and its partners will directly and indirectly generate:

- 1,760 person-years of employment throughout New York City;
- \$138 million in earnings; and
- \$330 million in City-wide economic output.

² A person-year is equivalent to the time worked by one person employed full-time for one year; 821 person-years over a ten-year period would thus be equivalent to an average of 82 full-time-equivalent jobs in construction and related industries, every year for ten years.

Impact on state and city revenues

As a not-for-profit charitable organization, the YMCA of Greater New York is by law exempted from most forms of taxation. Nevertheless, the YMCA's operations and construction spending, and investments in YMCA facilities by its developer partners, generate several types of revenue for both New York City and New York State. These include:

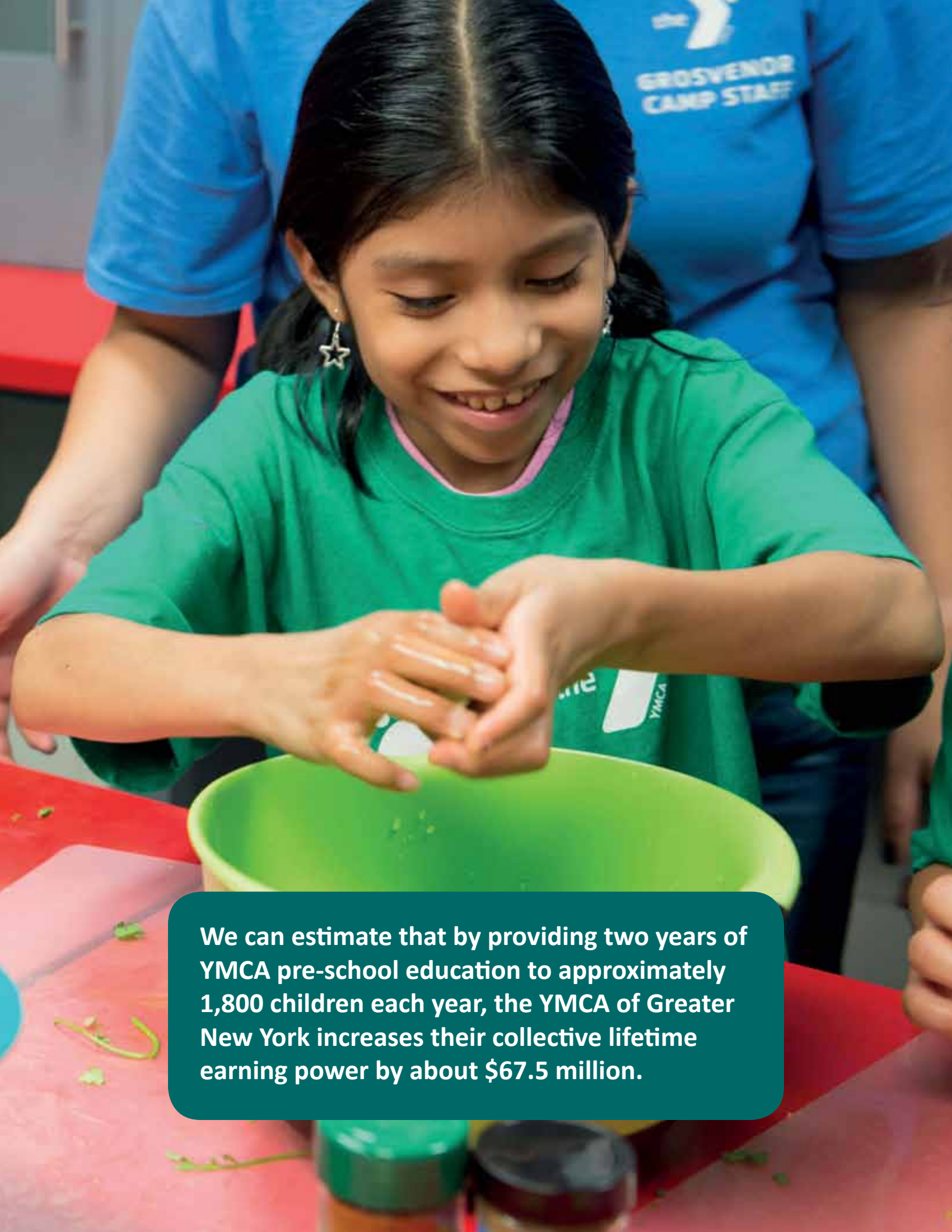
- Approximately \$2.265 million in New York State and New York City personal income taxes withheld from the wages and salaries of YMCA employees;
- Approximately \$904,500 in New York State unemployment insurance taxes;
- About \$695,100 in fees paid to various New York City agencies (Table 5);
- About \$23,100 in fees paid to various state agencies.

Table 5: Fees paid to New York City and New York State agencies, 2011

Agency	Fees paid, 2011
New York City	
New York City Water Board	\$440,900
NYC Department of Education	\$140,200
NYC Fire Department	\$55,000
NYC Department of Health	\$22,900
NYC Department of Buildings	\$15,700
NYC Department of Finance	\$13,100
Other NYC	\$7,300
<i>Total NYC</i>	<i>\$695,100</i>
New York State	
NYS Office of Children & Families	\$14,800
NYS Department of Taxation & Finance	\$4,200
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation	\$2,300
Other NYS	\$1,800
<i>Total NYS</i>	<i>\$23,100</i>

From 2007 through 2016, the YMCA expects its direct investment in construction to total nearly \$101 million. Investments by others – including investments by developers at the Chinatown, Rockaway and Coney Island branches, and at the Flushing branch, where a new facility will be developed as part of Flushing Commons, a new mixed-use development – are expected to total an additional \$100 million.





We can estimate that by providing two years of YMCA pre-school education to approximately 1,800 children each year, the YMCA of Greater New York increases their collective lifetime earning power by about \$67.5 million.

Part Two

Investing in New York's Future

In addition to its immediate impact as an employer, a purchaser of goods and services and a sponsor of construction projects, the YMCA of Greater New York contributes to both the current vitality and the long-term growth of New York City's economy through the services it provides to children, adults, families and communities. Through the wide array of programs it offers, the Y is simultaneously serving current New York City residents and investing in the City's future.

This part of the report describes the YMCA's youth development, healthy living and community-building programs, as well as its residences; and assesses the impact of several of these programs on the economic well-being of the people the YMCA serves, and on New York City – now and in the long run.

Youth development

The YMCA of Greater New York is New York City's largest private, not-for-profit youth-serving organization, offering a wide range of programs for pre-school and school-age children, adolescents and older teens. These programs currently serve approximately 200,000 young New Yorkers each year.

Programs for pre-school children

The YMCA of Greater New York's services to young New Yorkers begin in early childhood.

- In 2011-12 the Y offered nursery school and publicly-funded universal pre-K programs at ten of its branches in New York City, serving a total of 1,821 young children.
- YMCA branches also offer a variety of programs (often for younger pre-school children) in areas such as art, music, games and fitness that combine fun with development of basic skills, socialization and experience in classroom settings. In 2011, 2,031 children participated in these programs.
- Group swim lessons for 3-to-5-year-olds are among the YMCA's most popular programs. In 2011, 6,429 children participated in group swim lessons at 18 branches in New York City.

Impact of early education on children's future earnings

During the past twenty years, a growing body of research has shown that the economic and social impacts of high-quality early childhood education are significant and long-lasting. One of the most widely-cited of these studies, the High/Scope Perry project, tracked two groups of low-income African-American children who had been living in Ypsilanti, Michigan in the 1960's – one which had two years of high-quality pre-school education, and one which had no pre-school education. The study found that at age 40, those who had two years of high-quality pre-school:

- Were more likely to have completed high school (77 vs. 60 percent);
- Were more likely to be employed (76 vs. 62 percent);
- Had a higher median income (\$20,800 vs. \$15,300); and
- Had cumulatively earned an average of \$156,490 more (in 2000 dollars) through age 40.

Moreover, the researchers found that benefits to society were far greater than the benefits to individual students – most notably as a result of reduced involvement in criminal activity. They estimated that savings from crime reduction through age 40 averaged more than \$170,000 per participant.

Summarizing their findings, the researchers concluded:

High-quality pre-school programs for young children living in poverty contribute to their intellectual and social development in childhood and their school success, economic performance and reduced commission of crime in adulthood. This study confirms that these findings extend not only to young adults but to adults in mid-life. It confirms that the long-term effects are lifetime effects.³

The findings of the High/Scope Perry project may not be totally applicable to the YMCA of Greater New York's pre-school programs, which serve a more socioeconomically diverse population. Nevertheless, their overall direction is clear; and it is supported by the work of other researchers. If we assume that two years of YMCA pre-school education increases children's lifetime earnings by an average of \$75,000 – less than half the increase through age 40 found in the High/Scope Perry study – we can estimate that by providing this service to approximately 1,800 children each year, the YMCA of Greater New York increases their collective lifetime earning power by about \$67.5 million.

³ Lawrence J. Schweinhardt et al, *The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study through Age 40: Summary, Conclusions and Frequently Asked Questions* (High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 2005) p. 5; emphasis in original.

School-age children and teens

The YMCA of Greater New York also offers programs aimed at improving school outcomes and providing opportunities for educational enrichment to school-age children and teens throughout the City.

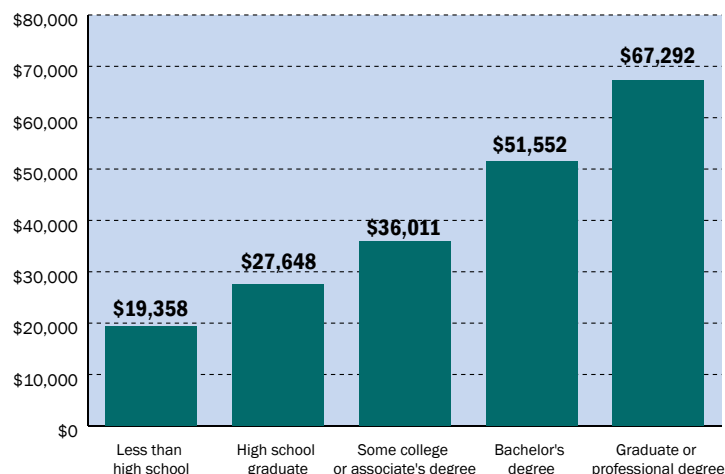
- The Y After-School Academy provides opportunities for academic support and enrichment, recreation and other services at more than 100 locations in New York City. In 2011 these programs served 11,428 students.
- During the summer of 2011, 8,762 children and 578 teenagers attended YMCA camps, including day, overnight and holiday camps. YMCA camps in New York City offer a wide range of opportunities for both recreation and learning in areas as varied as sports, swimming, outdoor skills, art, music and computer skills.
- The YMCA's Teen Centers offer a wide range of activities on both weekday and weekend evenings, including sports, physical fitness and recreation, as well as homework assistance, assistance with college applications and other services.
- Starting in the sixth grade and continuing through high school, the Y Scholars program seeks to increase students' awareness of the importance of higher education, help them make the transition to college, and ensure that they are prepared to do college-level work. From a pilot program serving 50 students at one school in 2008-2009, Y Scholars had grown by 2011-2012 to one in which 14 YMCA branches worked with 650 students in 17 schools throughout the City. And for 2012-13, the program has doubled, serving a total of 1,200 students.



Summarizing the results of multiple evaluations of out-of-school-time programs in states across the country, the Harvard Family Research Project concluded that:

Participation in after-school programs is associated with better attitudes toward school and higher educational aspirations, higher school attendance and less tardiness, less disciplinary action (e.g. suspension, lower drop-out rates, better performance in school (as measured by achievement test scores and grades), greater on-time promotion, improved homework completion and engagement in learning. The common thread in all of these studies is that balancing academic support with engaging, fun and structured extra-curricular and co-curricular activities that promote youth development in a variety of real-world contexts appears to support and improve academic performance.⁴

Figure 6: Median earnings of NYC residents by educational attainment, 2006-2010 (in 2010 dollars)



Impact on students' future earnings

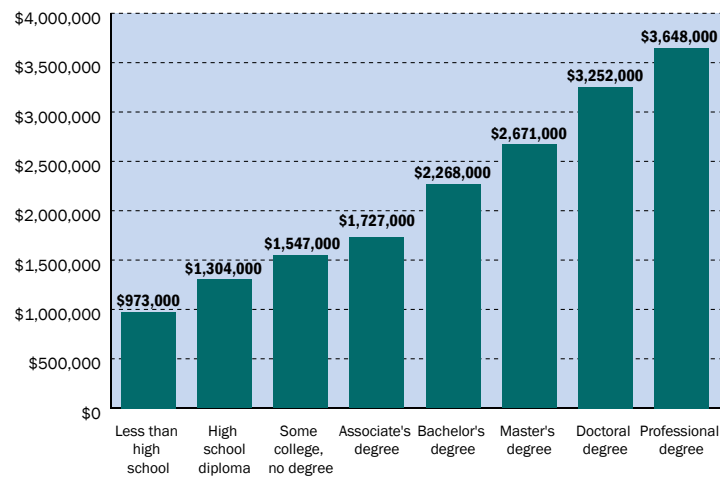
To the extent that the YMCA's school partnerships and after-school programs improve school performance and reduce the likelihood that participating students will drop out, they can have a significant impact on students' future earnings. As Figure 6 shows, between 2006 and 2010 the median earnings of high school graduates in New York City (in 2010 dollars) were nearly 43 percent higher than the median earnings of New Yorkers who had not finished high school.

Similarly, to the extent that the Y Scholars program increases the number of high school students who go on to college and earn bachelor's degrees, it will have an even more dramatic impact on participants' earnings. Between 2006 and 2010, the median earnings of New York City residents with bachelor's degrees were 86 percent higher than the median earnings of high school graduates.

Over the course of the participants' working lives, the cumulative effects of these differences can be dramatic. At the national level, a recent study of Census Bureau data by the Georgetown University Center for Education and the Workforce found that the median lifetime earnings of high school graduates exceed those of workers who have not completed high school by \$331,000 (Figure 6). The median earnings of those with bachelor's degrees exceeded those of high school graduates by \$964,000, and the earnings of those who attend college but do not earn a degree by \$721,000.⁵

⁵ Anthony Carnevale, Stephen Rose and Ben Cheah, *The College Payoff: Education, Occupations and Lifetime Earnings*, Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, 2011 p. 3

Figure 7: Lifetime earnings of U.S. residents by educational attainment



Applying these differences to participants in the YMCA's education programs:

If 1,500 students who have participated in the YMCA's after-school and partnership programs enter high school each year and the drop-out rate (currently 12 percent in New York City) for these students is reduced by 20 percent, we can estimate that each year these programs increase participants' lifetime earnings by approximately \$12.6 million.

- If 100 Y Scholars graduate from high school each year and if, as a result of their participation in the program, 30 students who would not otherwise have done so complete a bachelor's degree, we can estimate that each year, the program increases the lifetime earnings of participants by approximately \$21.6 million.
- By helping children and teens develop the knowledge, skills and habits they need to succeed in school, these and other YMCA programs for young people help students enhance the career prospects and future earning power – and help build the City's economy as well.

Impact on parents' employment

In addition to their impact on students' future employment and earnings, pre-school, after-school and summer programs can have a more immediate impact on parents' employment and earnings. For example, a study conducted at



Brandeis University found that the additional stress experienced by working parents whose minor children are left unsupervised during after-school hours resulted in their missing an average of five more days of work each year than their co-workers.⁶ More recently (and closer to home) a survey of working parents with children enrolled in after-school programs in New York City, 36 percent of those surveyed said that if those programs were not available they would have to quit their jobs. Another 16 percent said they would keep their jobs and leave their children at home unsupervised; and about 6 percent said they did not know how they would resolve the problem.⁷

Nationwide, about 48 percent of all mothers with minor children were employed full-time in 2010. If we assume that the percentage is the same for children in the YMCA's out-of-school-time programs – and assuming that some families have more than one child participating in these programs – we can estimate that in 2011 the Y's after-school programs were serving the children of approximately 5,000 parents who worked full-time.

Based on the survey results cited above, we estimate that in 2011 YMCA after-school programs enabled approximately 1,800 parents to work full-time who otherwise would not have been able to do so; and approximately 1,100 others who remained employed would on average lose the equivalent of about a week's work each year as result of problems relating to lack of after-school supervision of their children.

Assuming that these parents earn an average of about \$35,000 (typical of a wide range of service occupations in New York City), we can estimate that the aggregate earnings of parents who are able to work as a result of their children's participation in YMCA after-school programs total approximately \$63 million annually.

Both through their impact on children's future earning potential and their immediate impact on parents' employment, the YMCA's youth development programs make a lasting contribution to the vitality of New York City's economy.

⁶ Brandeis University Community, Families and Work Program, *Parental After-School Stress Project: Report of Findings*, April 8, 2004.

⁷ Campaign for Children, *Parents' Voices*, May 24, 2012

Helping young people make the transition to the workforce

The knowledge and skills that provide a foundation for future success are not limited to those that are acquired in the classroom. Experiential learning and real-world work experience are also essential. Without early work experience, it is more difficult for young people to build their earning power and to develop lasting connections to the workforce.

As noted in Part One, the YMCA is one of the City's leading employers of teens and young adults. Each year, the Y provides opportunities for young people to gain real work experience in neighborhoods throughout the City – summer and part-time positions for students as well as full-time jobs for some young adults who have completed their education.

In addition to employing young people directly, the YMCA offers several programs that help young people prepare young New Yorkers for jobs and careers.

- The YMCA's **Teen Career Connection** program gives teens an opportunity to learn about and gain hands-on work experience in fields that interest them. This eight-week summer program combines up-front classroom training with six-week internships with leading New York City companies and not-for-profit organizations.
- The Flushing YMCA's **YouthBuild** program targets disconnected youth – young people age 17 through 24 who are neither in school nor working. The program, funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, combines GED preparation with vocational training, individual counseling and hands-on work experience in building housing for homeless or other low-income people. In 2011, 64 young New Yorkers participated in the program.



Several recent studies have highlighted the long-term cost of disconnection from school and from the labor market – both for individuals and for society at large. A 2012 report by three New York City-based researchers estimated that from age 16 onward, the lifetime social cost of long-term labor market disadvantages suffered by disconnected youth average more than \$755,000.⁸ If each year the Y's youth employment programs help 100 young people who might not otherwise have done so to develop lasting connections to the labor market – probably a very conservative assumption – we can estimate that these programs annually produce more than \$75 million in long-term social benefits.



Supporting healthy living

Enabling its members to live healthier lives through physical fitness and by providing other health-related services has long been a central part of the YMCA's mission. The Y offers physical fitness opportunities geared to the needs of people of all ages and with a variety of needs.

Swimming, fitness and recreational programs

Many of the YMCA's 200,000 individual and family members regularly use the exercise facilities available in their local branches. Through its **Strong Kids Card Program**, the Y also provides access to a local Y for young New

Yorkers, regardless of their ability to pay for a YMCA membership; and many other New Yorkers come to the Y to take advantage of specific programs. Some of the most notable fitness and recreational opportunities the YMCA provides are described below.

The YMCA's **swim programs** – in operation since the organization was founded more than 150 years ago – provide a recreational opportunity and contribute to healthy living for tens of thousands of New Yorkers. They also represent the only exposure that many City residents have to swimming and water safety. In 2011, swim programs at the YMCA served more than 27,800 New Yorkers, including:

- 9,055 children through the YMCA's preschool group swim and individualized lessons;

⁸ Clive Belfield, Henry Levin and Rachel Rosen, *The Economic Value of Opportunity Youth*, Corporation for National and Community Service/White House Council for Community Solutions, January 2012, p.2

- 662 youth in swim clubs and teams;
- 1,560 adults in recreational swim; and
- 532 older adults in specialty swim classes.

In addition, the YMCA's **Swim for Life** program provides specialized swim and water safety lessons to second graders, in order to address a leading cause of death for elementary age children in the city. In 2011, this program served 665 children and, in total, more than 8,200 NYC children have participated in this program since its inception.

The YMCA also offers a wide range of other fitness and recreation programs as well. For example:

- **Youth Sports Programs**, which range from fitness to martial arts to sports leagues and clinics, served nearly 14,000 children in 2011;
- **Martial Arts for Youth and Teens** served 2,942 young people in 2011; and **Sports for Teens** programs served an additional 2,600 adolescents and older teens;
- **YMCA Camps** offer year-round opportunities for youth to have the overnight or day camp experience and include Teen Camp (for 578 young people in 2011), Summer Camp for Youth (7,726), and Holiday Camp (986).
- **Youth Dance**, where offerings include ballet, tap, hip hop and ballroom, served 1,553 young people, not including an additional 866 served in Adult Dance in 2011.
- In addition to the tens of thousands of members who participate in adult exercise and fitness classes at the Y, more than 13,700 non-members participated in these programs in 2011. These programs included **Adult Group Exercise** and **Fitness** classes, which had 13,704 participants in 2011. They also included cardio strength and training for more than 4,700 city residents and personal fitness and training for nearly 6,600 people.



- In addition, more than 3,000 older adults benefit from recreational programming in activities ranging from art, music, and dance to fitness. Some of the most popular programs are **Group Exercise** for older adults, serving 489 city residents in 2011, and **Fitness Classes** for older adults, serving an additional 609 older residents.

In 2011, more than 35,500 children and adults participated in these programs.

Health and prevention programs

In addition to its recreation programs, the YMCA offers a number of opportunities for New York residents to improve their health and well-being through prevention activities.



- The YMCA's **Addiction and Substance Abuse** programs, based at its Staten Island Counseling Service in the Eltingville neighborhood on Staten Island, served 2,442 people in 2011. For adults, the Center offers a short-term program aimed at helping those entering treatment develop the skills required for a successful recovery, and for remaining alcohol and drug-free. For adolescents and older teens, the Center offers a program that emphasizes helping young people avoid alcohol and drugs by building on individual strengths and minimizing risk factors.
- The YMCA's **Diabetes Prevention Program** works with people considered to be at risk for developing Type 2 diabetes. It seeks to reduce that risk through a structured sixteen-week "lifestyle intervention" program aimed at increasing physical activity, healthier eating, and moderate weight loss. In its first year of operation, the program assisted more than 200 New Yorkers.
- **Livestrong at the YMCA** offers the opportunity for cancer survivors to develop a holistic approach to overcoming challenges through personalized physical and social activities in a supportive environment. In 2012, 29 people were served through this program in five branches.

The economic value of healthy living

As one New York City's most leading – and most accessible – providers of facilities and services for enhancing physical fitness and encouraging health living, The YMCA is a major contributor to the health of the City's people. A review of research on physical fitness and health conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2001 found that creation of, or improving access to, places where people can exercise led to a 25.6 percent increase the percentage of people in the surrounding area who exercise three or more days per week.⁹

Inadequate physical activity is a major contributor to many of America's most crippling diseases. The CDC study cited above, for example, found that physical inactivity accounted for 22 percent of all coronary heart disease in the U.S., 22 percent of all colon cancer, 18 percent of all fractures due to osteoporosis, 12 percent of all type-2 diabetes and 12 percent of all hypertension.¹⁰ And while the problem may be more acute in the U.S. than elsewhere, it is by no means a uniquely American problem. In a study recently published in *The Lancet* (the British medical journal), a team of researchers found that inadequate physical activity accounts for 6 percent of all coronary heart disease worldwide, 7 percent of all type 2 diabetes, and 10 percent of all breast and colon cancer, and leads to 5.3 million premature deaths annually.¹¹

In a paper presented to the American College of Sports Medicine in 2007, Dr. Michael Pratt noted that lack of regular physical activity doubles the risk of heart disease, type-2 diabetes, and obesity, and the risk of suffering a fatal stroke. Obesity also increases the risk of suffering a wide range of other illnesses, including respiratory problems, chronic back pain and osteoarthritis. Taking all of these effects into account, Pratt estimated that physical inactivity costs the U.S. \$76 billion annually in direct spending for medical care, and as much as \$117 million when economic factors such as absenteeism and reduced productivity are taken into account.¹²

State-by-state data published by the Centers for Disease Control indicate that as of 2010, about 36.1 percent of all adult residents of New York State did not regularly engage in physical activity – close to the national average of 35.5 percent. If we assume that the prevalence of this problem (and its effects) is similar in New York City to that found nationwide, we can estimate that the cost of inactivity among New York City residents (including direct medical costs and other economic costs) is on the order of \$3.1 billion annually – roughly \$1,000 in higher medical costs, lost work time and lower productivity for every physically inactive adult New Yorker.

9 Centers for Disease Control, *Increasing Physical Activity: A Report on Recommendations of the Task Force on Community Preventive Services*, October 2001

10 Ibid.

11 Dr. I-Min Lee et al, "Effects of physical inactivity on major non-communicable diseases worldwide: an analysis of burden of disease and life expectancy," *The Lancet*, July 2012

12 *Medical News Today*, June 8 2007



By itself, of course, the YMCA cannot cure what has been called an epidemic of inactivity. But the Y is already helping to reduce its effects. In 2011, YMCA records indicate that 8,224 of the Y's adult members "carded in" at least 100 times during the course of the year. If we assume that these adult members are regularly engaging in some form of exercise at the YMCA, we can estimate that the resulting reduction in the number of physically inactive New Yorkers translates into savings of about \$8.2 million annually in avoided medical costs and avoided losses of work time and productivity.

Moreover, by engaging young people in fitness and sports activities, the YMCA helps them develop habits of physical activity that can extend into

adulthood – thus assuring that in the future the individual and social costs of physical inactivity can be further reduced.

Other, more targeted programs can have even greater impacts. The Diabetes Prevention Program, for example, is based on a lifestyle intervention model that was rigorously tested in clinical trials funded by the National Institutes of Health. The program was found to reduce the incidence of Type 2 diabetes by 58 percent relative to a control group.¹³

Recent research has estimated that for patients diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes at age 50, the lifetime costs of the disease (including direct medical care, complications associated with diabetes and lost productivity) average \$172,000.¹⁴

If we project based on the NIH trial that the DPP will keep 116 of its 200 first-year participants from developing diabetes, we can estimate that in just its first year, the reduced future costs to the participants and to society will exceed \$19.9 million.

¹³ Diabetes Prevention Program Research Group, "Reduction in the Incidence of Type 2 Diabetes with Lifestyle intervention or Metformin," *New England Journal of Medicine*, February 2002

¹⁴ *EndocrineToday.com*, June 27, 2010

Taking one more example – research conducted for the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration has estimated that every dollar invested in substance abuse prevention generates \$18 in lifetime social benefits.¹⁵ Applying this ratio to the services offered by the YMCA in New York City, we estimate that last year alone the Y’s program generated more than \$36.3 million in long-term social value.

Building stronger communities

In addition to its role in educating the City’s young people and enabling New Yorkers to live healthier lives, the YMCA of Greater New York helps in other ways to strengthen the fabric of community life in neighborhoods throughout New York City.

Strengthening civic engagement

The YMCA offers several programs designed to foster civic engagement on the part of young New Yorkers.

- The YMCA **Leaders and Junior Leaders Clubs** create opportunities for youth in the city to work together in teams and develop their leadership and social skills. The program is currently offered at 26 locations, with 653 teens actively participating in 2011.
 - Junior Leaders Clubs are open to middle school students and create opportunities for leadership training, community service and college and career exploration. On average, Junior Leaders provide 16.6 hours of service to their local communities during the program year.
 - Leaders Clubs provide high school students with the opportunity to meet weekly in small groups to develop and implement community service projects. Participants provide an average of 25.3 hours of service each year to their local communities.

In 2012, the Leaders and Junior Leaders Clubs participated in a city-wide day of service focused on anti-bullying efforts. A total of 114 club members participated in this event, creating public service announcements related to bullying prevention. Many local branches of Leaders and Junior Leaders continued their work after this event with bullying prevention activities in their own communities.

¹⁵ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, *Substance Abuse Prevention Dollars and Sense: A Cost-Benefit Analysis*, 2002, p. 3

- **Youth and Government**, a program designed to increase young people's familiarity with the democratic process, operates in 14 branches around the city. Teens debate policy issues, create mock interventions in state government, and design service initiatives around these issues. In 2011, 489 teenage New Yorkers participated in the program.
- **Teens Take the City** is a leadership development program operating in 17 YMCA branches, in which teens are given the opportunity to collaborate and address issues affecting their local communities. Participants develop policy proposals related to specific local issues, and then work together to plan and implement relevant service projects. For example:
 - Teens in **Flushing** developed an advocacy project to educate their local community about their civil rights. This included the creation and distribution of a brochure and hosting a training session for other local teens on an awareness of their civil rights.
 - Teens in **Greenpoint** educated their local community about green energy and worked on a garden beautification project at the Lentol Garden.
 - Teens in **Long Island City** worked to raise awareness on the lack of pedestrian safety at a specific intersection in Queens.



In 2011, 562 young New Yorkers participated in the program.

More than two-thirds of participants in the Teens Take the City and Youth in Government programs are volunteering over 40 hours of service to their local communities each year.

Welcoming the newest New Yorkers

The YMCA also offers programs aimed at helping immigrants adapt to their new home.

- As part of its New Americans Initiative, the YMCA operates **New Americans Welcome Centers** at six branch locations – Chinatown, Harlem, Bronx, Park Slope, Flushing and North Shore, Staten Island. Each center provides a variety of services including English for speakers of other languages, cultural orientation, citizenship preparation, job readiness, and information and referral services. Some centers also offer adult literacy, GED preparation, computer literacy and substance abuse and alcohol prevention counseling. In 2011-12, enrollment in classes and workshops offered by the Y's New Americans Welcome Centers totaled 11,557.
- The Y's **English Language and Employment Services for Adult Immigrants and Refugees** (ELESAR) program provides similar services as the New Americans Welcome Centers, but at a number of additional locations throughout the city. In 2011-12, enrollment in ELESAR's classes and workshop totaled 4,281.

The Y reports that in 2011-12, 62 percent of 6,490 participants in its English language and literacy programs (more than 4,000 immigrants) improved their



proficiency in English by at least one level.

Improvements in English language proficiency and basic literacy can significantly increase the earnings of immigrant workers. A recent report from the Lexington Institute estimates that the earnings of Latino immigrant workers who do not speak English well or not at all trail those of their fellow immigrants who speak English well by about \$3,000 per year.¹⁶ If we assume that participation in the Y's programs reduces that gap by about one-third and that in the future about 60 percent of those with improved English language skills will be employed in any given year – and given an average age of 35 among program participants – we can estimate that each year the Y's programs increase the participants' aggregate lifetime earnings by more than \$72 million.

The benefits of helping new immigrants improve their English are not limited to the impact on their earnings. Immigrants who are more fluent in English are also less likely to be unemployed – can participate more actively in their children's education – are less isolated from their neighbors.¹⁷

Strengthening neighborhoods

Beyond the specific effects of its individual programs, the YMCA of Greater New York also strengthens the neighborhoods in which it operates by enhancing their overall attractiveness as places to live, work and raise a family. By providing a place where people of different ages, ethnic and cultural backgrounds can associate and interact, the Y helps to multiply the relationships that help knit neighborhoods together.

The YMCA also provides this common ground in other ways as well – for example, by partnering with other neighborhood institutions and organizations to sponsor community events such as health fairs, and providing space for meetings of block associations and other neighborhood groups.

Neighborhoods served by local YMCA branches also benefit from what Edward Glaeser and others have called the “social multiplier” effect. The presence of an attractive, well-run YMCA offering a variety of physical fitness options will increase the number of people who exercise regularly; and a noticeable increase in the number of neighborhood residents who are exercising regularly will encourage others to do likewise – even if they never set foot inside the Y. Similarly, to the extent that the YMCA's after-school programs, Y Scholars and other programs increase the number of local high school students who see going to college as both a desirable and an achievable goal, some of that impact is likely rub off on their classmates – including classmates who have never participated in YMCA programs.

¹⁶ Amber Schwartz and Don Soifer, *The Value of English Proficiency to the United States Economy*, Lexington Institute, December 2012

¹⁷ Tia Elena Martinez and Ted Wang, *Supporting English Language Acquisition: Opportunities for Foundations to Strengthen the Social and Economic Well-being of Immigrant Families*, Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2005 p.15

YMCA residences: A resource for New York City

In addition to the other services it provides, the YMCA of Greater New York has guest rooms at seven of its branches – Flushing, Greenpoint, Harlem, Jamaica, North Brooklyn, Vanderbilt and West Side. Together (as shown in Table 3), these seven branches have 1,644 guest rooms, with a total of 2,177 beds. Guest rooms are concentrated in Manhattan, with the West Side (West 63rd Street), Vanderbilt (East 47th Street) and Harlem (West 135th Street) branches accounting for 64 percent of all rooms.



With an overall occupancy rate of 73 percent, the YMCA's seven residences collectively provide about 435,000 room-nights of lodging annually.

These facilities generally serve two distinct populations.

- Longer-term residents include people for whom YMCA rooms serve as transitional housing, along with a smaller number of permanent residents.
- Transient guests are visitors to New York City for whom rooms at the Y represent an attractive and relatively inexpensive form of lodging.

Longer-term residents currently account for about 52 percent of all room-nights at YMCA residences, and transients for 48 percent. Transients, however, account for about 76 percent of the revenues generated by the Y's residential operations. Two of the Y's residences – West Side and Vanderbilt – account for 80 percent of all transient room-nights and about 86 percent of all revenues from transient accommodations.

Table 6: Guest rooms and total beds by branch

Branch	Total rooms	Total beds
Flushing	127	147
Greenpoint	99	135
Harlem	216	283
Jamaica	269	269
North Brooklyn	97	98
Vanderbilt	379	593
West Side	257	652
<i>Total</i>	<i>1,644</i>	<i>2,177</i>

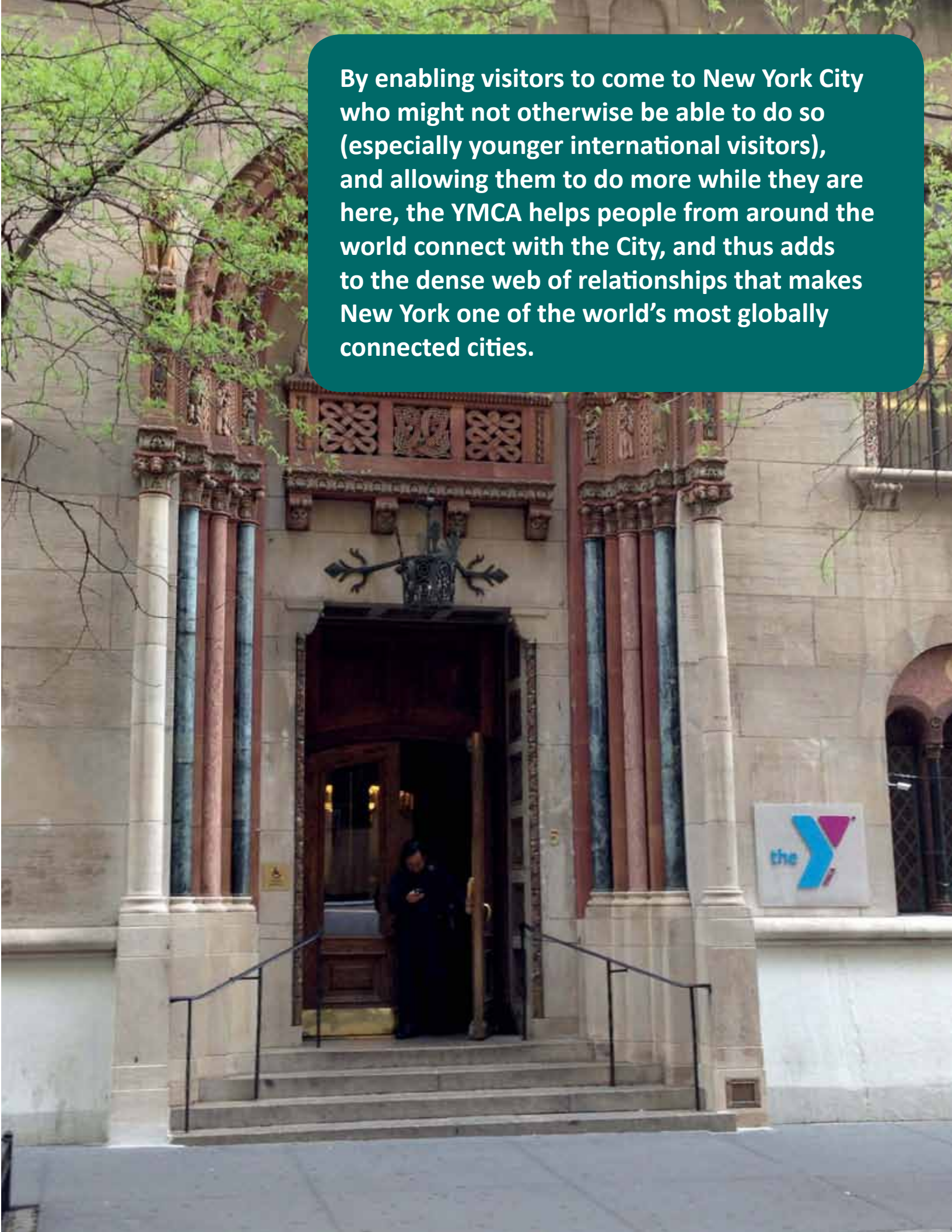
YMCA residences contribute to the vitality of New York City's economy in several ways.

- By providing transitional housing, the YMCA provides a critically needed resource for some of New York's most vulnerable populations, including formerly homeless people, people in recovery and others. Safe, secure housing in a supportive environment is essential to the process of stabilizing and rebuilding the lives of these New Yorkers; and for some, a critical step in enabling them to find jobs and permanent housing.
- The YMCA's guest rooms are a particularly valuable resource for visitors (such as backpackers) whose trips to New York City depend in part on their ability to find relatively low-cost accommodations. (The average daily room rate for short-term guests is about \$76.70.) They are particularly attractive to international visitors; about 59 percent of all transient occupants of YMCA guest rooms come to New York City from outside the U.S. They include students, other low-budget travelers and people who come to New York City for special events such as the New York City Marathon.
- By providing relatively low-cost lodging for these visitors, the YMCA also allows them to spend more on food, shopping, entertainment and other services. If we assume that half of all transients staying in YMCA guest rooms would not have come to the City (or would not be staying as long) if they were not able to stay at the Y – and that these visitors spend an average of about \$100 per day on purposes other than lodging – we can estimate that YMCA guest rooms currently generate about \$18.3 million annually in incremental visitor spending.

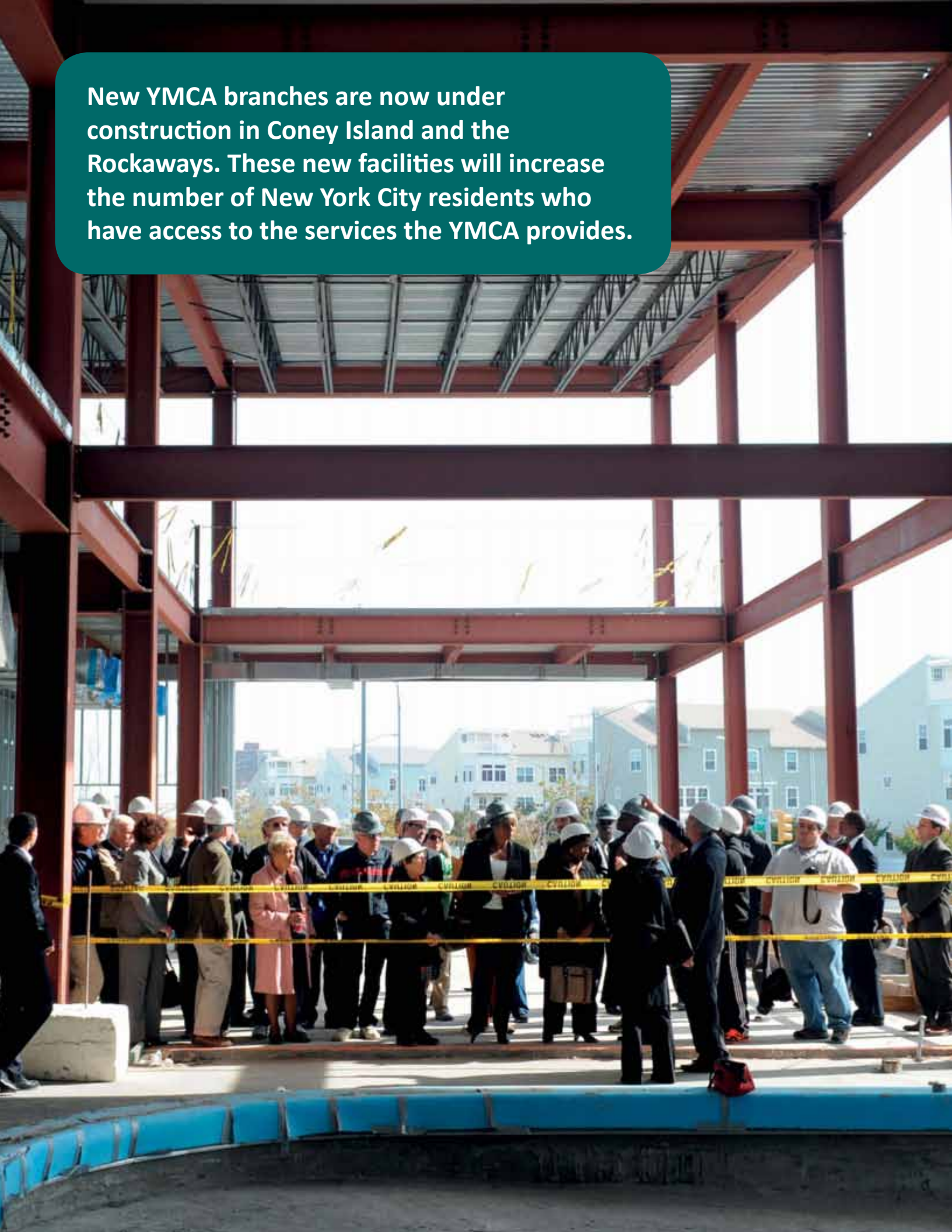
Taking into account both the direct and indirect/induced effects of their spending in the City, we estimate that incremental spending by visitors to the City staying in YMCA guest rooms in 2011 directly and indirectly supported approximately 275 full-time-equivalent jobs in the City, with wages totaling approximately \$10.3 million, and generated approximately \$26 million in City-wide economic output.

- Over time, the impact of the YMCA's visitors goes beyond the immediate impact of the money they spend during their time in the City. By enabling visitors to come to New York City who might not otherwise be able to do so (especially younger international visitors), and allowing them to do more while they are here, the YMCA helps people from around the world connect with the City, and thus adds to the dense web of relationships that makes New York one of the world's most globally connected cities.
- The net revenue that these facilities generate – especially by providing accommodations to transients – help to finance the services that the YMCA provides in communities throughout the City.

By enabling visitors to come to New York City who might not otherwise be able to do so (especially younger international visitors), and allowing them to do more while they are here, the YMCA helps people from around the world connect with the City, and thus adds to the dense web of relationships that makes New York one of the world's most globally connected cities.



New YMCA branches are now under construction in Coney Island and the Rockaways. These new facilities will increase the number of New York City residents who have access to the services the YMCA provides.



Part Three

A Growing Impact

As significant as the YMCA of Greater New York's impact has been, it is likely to be even greater over the next five to ten years.

New branches, new facilities

New YMCA branches are now under construction in Coney Island and the Rockaways. These new facilities will increase the number of New York City residents who have access to the services the YMCA provides. Other new facilities in various stages of development include a replacement for the existing Flushing branch, which will be built as part of the new Flushing Commons mixed-use development, and a new aquatics center at the Prospect Park Y. Planning is underway for replacement of the existing Harlem Y, and replacement of several other branch buildings – including the Vanderbilt, Greenpoint, Flatbush and Jamaica branches – will also be explored.

In addition to the neighborhoods cited above, the YMCA of Greater New York will be exploring other locations where the development of new facilities might enable the organization to expand further the services it provides to New Yorkers.

Helping young New Yorkers succeed in school and beyond

Year by year, the cumulative impact of the YMCA's youth development programs – including pre-school, after-school, school partnership and college prep programs – will grow as these programs develop and as more and more participants complete high school, enroll in college and earn degrees. For New York City, the payoff from these programs will be measured in a better-educated, more highly-skilled work force, higher incomes, reduced unemployment and stronger economic growth.



A healthier New York

Programs such as the Strong Kids Card that engage children, adolescents and older teens in becoming and staying physically active will have a growing impact, as participants in these programs develop habits of exercise and other healthy behavior that last into adulthood. Over time, these programs will curb the growth of health care costs in New York City, improve productivity and enhance the City's competitiveness.

Strengthening the City's neighborhoods

Both through their own efforts and through collaboration with other community organizations, YMCA branches are helping to make neighborhoods more attractive places to live, work and raise a family. In an era when New York City's economic vitality increasingly depends on its ability to develop, attract and retain talented workers, managers and innovators, the quality of life that the City's neighborhoods offer is central to its future.



Both through their own efforts and through collaboration with other community organizations, YMCA branches are helping to make neighborhoods more attractive places to live, work and raise a family.





Figure 8: The Bedford-Stuyvesant YMCA's primary service area



Part Four

The Impact of a Neighborhood Branch – Bedford-Stuyvesant as an Example

Parts One, Two and Three of this report highlighted the multiple ways in which the YMCA of Greater New York – as an enterprise and through its programs and services – contributes to the vitality of New York City’s economy. Part Four illustrates the same themes by focusing more specifically on the neighborhood-level impact of one local branch – the Bedford-Stuyvesant YMCA.

The YMCA has been part of the Bedford-Stuyvesant community since 1889. Like the community itself, the Bedford-Stuyvesant YMCA went through a long period of decline in the latter part of the twentieth century. During the past decade, however, the Bedford-Stuyvesant Y has undergone a dramatic turnaround, and has become a significant participant in the ongoing revitalization of the surrounding neighborhood.

The neighborhood: demographic and economic characteristics

The Bedford-Stuyvesant YMCA is located at 1121 Bedford Avenue in Brooklyn’s Bedford neighborhood. An adjoining neighborhood, Clinton Hill, lies just a few blocks to the west; Stuyvesant Heights several blocks farther to the east; and Crown Heights just a few blocks south. The map below shows the location of the Y, and the surrounding census tracts that make up the Bedford-Stuyvesant, Clinton Hill and Crown Heights North neighborhoods (as defined by the New York City Department of City Planning). The majority of members of the Bedford-Stuyvesant Y are concentrated in the shaded area shown in Figure 8.

The population of these neighborhoods totals approximately 266,000, an increase of about 3.2 percent since 2000 – about twice the City-wide rate of growth during the same period. About 63 percent of all area residents are African-American, about 16 percent Latino, 16 percent white and 3 percent Asian. About 20 percent of all residents are immigrants.

The population of the area is relatively young. About 25 percent of all residents of these neighborhoods are less than 18 years old (versus 21.8 percent for New York City as a whole), and 30 percent are younger adults between the ages of 18 and 34 (versus 27.5 percent for all of New York City).

Data from the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey for 2007-2011 highlight several notable trends.

- Between 2000 and 2007-2011, the percentage of the area's residents age 25 and older who have at least a four-year college degree increased from 14.5 percent to 26 percent – slightly lower than the comparable percentage for all of Brooklyn (29 percent).
- The area's employment ratio (the percentage of all those age 16 and older who are employed) rose during the same period from 45.1 percent to 52.8 percent. Viewing the same trend from another perspective – between 2000 and 2007-2011, the number of area residents who were employed grew by 29 percent.
- Between 2000 and 2006-2010, the median household income for the area grew in real terms (that is, adjusted for inflation) by 10.4 percent – a modest increase, but significantly better than the 0.8 percent decline in New York City's real MHI during the same period.



Despite these trends, the data for 2007-2011 also highlight some continuing problems in the area.

- The neighborhoods served by the Bedford-Stuyvesant Y are still a relatively low-income area, with a median household income of \$36,993 (in 2011 dollars) – 28 percent below the percent of the City-wide MHI of \$51,270.
- In 2007-2011, according to the American Community Survey, 29.8 percent of all area residents lived in households with incomes below the federally-defined poverty level (\$18,530 for a family of three in 2011), significantly higher than the City-wide poverty rate during the same period (19.4 percent).

Moreover, while crime (especially violent crime) has declined sharply in two local police precincts (the 79th and the 81st) it remains a significant problem for residents of these neighborhoods.

Rebuilding the YMCA

Early in the last decade, YMCA of Greater New York executives and board members were faced with the need to make a decision about the future of the Bedford-Stuyvesant branch. The Bedford-Stuyvesant Y was plagued with low and declining membership, deteriorating facilities and a limited range of

programs and services. Moreover, its annual operating deficit had become a serious cash drain for the City-wide organization.

Rather than closing the Bedford-Stuyvesant branch, the YMCA of Greater New York decided instead to make a major commitment to redeveloping its facilities and revitalizing its programs.

The YMCA developed a plan for demolishing an existing building at 1121 Bedford Avenue and constructing a new, 21,000 square-foot building; rehabilitating an adjacent building; and rehabilitating and adding to a third building (1119 Bedford Avenue) for use as the home of a new, small public high school, the Bedford Academy. The total cost of the two-year redevelopment project, which began in 2005, was approximately \$20.5 million, financed by:

- \$4.0 million in government funding – nearly 90 percent of it provided by New York City, with additional contributions from the State of New York and the federal government;
- \$4.4 million in funds secured for the project by the YMCA – with the board of the Bedford-Stuyvesant branch playing a leading role in fund-raising;
- \$4.6 million in borrowing; and
- \$7.5 million for the New York City School Construction Authority's redevelopment of 1119 Bedford Avenue, financed by the SCA.

With strong support from the YMCA of Greater New York, the City and the local community, the project was finished in two years, and the new Bedford-Stuyvesant Y was opened in January 2007. We estimate that over the course of the two-year construction period, the Y's and the City's investment in the project supported about 115 person-years of work in construction and related industries.



Growth of the Bedford-Stuyvesant YMCA

After completion of its new facilities, the Bedford-Stuyvesant Y's fortunes changed dramatically. From only 750 adult and family members in January 2005, the branch's membership grew to about 2,300 by January 2007 – and then doubled to about 4,600 in January 2008. In the four years between January 2008 and January 2012, adult and family memberships have increased by 47 percent, to about 6,800.

With a total of 12,001 family, youth and adult memberships in the summer of 2012, the Bedford-Stuyvesant branch ranked second in total membership among all YMCA branches in New York City – trailing only the West Side YMCA, which had 13,298 memberships.

The Bedford-Stuyvesant Y also ranks second among all branches in New York City when measured by the total number of individual New York residents served – a total of 31,387.

The Bedford-Stuyvesant branch is also a leader in several specific program areas.

- The Bedford-Stuyvesant branch operates the largest Y After-School Academy program in the City. In the fall of 2012, the Y was offering after-school programs at seven elementary schools (including one charter school), one middle school and one high school. In 2011, 1,046 children participated in the Bedford-Stuyvesant branch's Y After-School Academy program. By improving academic performance and increasing the likelihood that students will complete high school, we estimate that each year these programs add about \$1.1 million to participating students' aggregate lifetime earnings.
- The YMCA's collaboration with Bedford Academy High School is in many ways a model for more comprehensive partnerships with local schools, such as those that operate under the banner of the Y Schools program. With 366 students in grades 9 through 12, Bedford Academy operates in a building at 1119 Bedford Avenue that (as noted above) is leased from and immediately adjacent to the Bedford-Stuyvesant Y. Several YMCA staff members work at the school during class hours – for example, teaching health education classes. The Y's gymnasium doubles as the school's gym, with Y staff providing instruction; and Academy students participate in a wide range of after-school and evening activities at the Y.

Since it opened in 2007, Bedford Academy has been among the City's highest-rated high schools, with a 97 percent graduation rate and 92 percent of its graduates enrolling in two-year or four-year colleges.



- The Bedford-Stuyvesant YMCA also participates in the Y Scholars program, in partnership with Brooklyn Excelsior Charter School. During the 2011-12 school year, 32 students in grades 6 through 8 participated in the program. We estimate that by increasing the likelihood that students will go to college and earn degrees, in 2011-12 the Bedford-Stuyvesant Y's Y Scholars program added about \$600,000 to participating students' aggregate future earnings.
- The Bedford-Stuyvesant Y operates one of the largest programs of teen community and civic engagement in New York City. In 2011, 513 teens participated in the Y's Leaders and Junior Leaders, Clubs, Teens Take the City and Youth and Government programs – nearly 20 percent of all participants in these programs City-wide.
- In 2011 the Bedford-Stuyvesant YMCA ranked third among all branches in New York City in the number of participants in both youth sports programs (680) and adult fitness programs (583).
- The Bedford-Stuyvesant branch was one of two pilot sites for the YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program, and is now one of fifteen locations throughout the City where the program is available.
- In collaboration with Kings County Hospital and the Brooklyn Parkinson's Group, the Bedford-Stuyvesant Y offers a specially-designed exercise program for Parkinson's patients.

Other notable programs include African dance lessons for families, ballet lessons for pre-school children, and work-outs and instruction for aspiring young runners.

The Bedford-Stuyvesant YMCA as an employer

As of the end of 2011, 17 people were employed in full-time positions at the Bedford-Stuyvesant YMCA, and 160 in part-time jobs. In addition to these regular employees, 17 people worked in seasonal jobs at the Y. Wages and salaries paid to branch employees during 2011 totaled more than \$2.1 million.

As of the end of 2011, 7 of the branch's 17 full-time employees, 136 of its 160 part-time employees and 15 of 17 seasonal employees were residents of Brooklyn. They included 6 full-time employees, 77 part-timers and 10 seasonal workers who lived in Bedford-Stuyvesant and adjoining neighborhoods, including Clinton Hill, Fort Greene and Crown Heights.

The YMCA's contribution to community revitalization

The redevelopment of the Bedford-Stuyvesant YMCA and the growth of its programs during the past five years have helped in several ways to strengthen the neighborhoods the Y serves.

- Through its programs, the YMCA is helping to address some of the community's most pressing problems. For example:
 - Through its pre-school programs, partnerships with local schools and after-school programs, the YMCA is working to improve pre-school, elementary and secondary education in the area – expanding young people's opportunities to succeed and helping them develop the knowledge and skills they need to do so. By raising achievement levels and reducing drop-out rates, these programs can significantly increase students' future earnings, and the overall economic health of the community.
 - By increasing the number of physically active neighborhood residents, the YMCA makes a major contribution to the overall health of the community. As noted in Part Two, for every adult the Y helps to become and stay physically active, the wider community saves an average of about \$1,000 annually in reduced medical costs and avoided loss of work time and productivity.
- The restoration of the YMCA as an attractive, welcoming place that offers a range of resources and high-quality programs for both individuals and families enhances the attractiveness of the surrounding neighborhoods. This in turn makes it easier for these neighborhoods to attract talented people from elsewhere – and perhaps even more important, to retain their home-grown talent.
- The YMCA's organizational and financial commitment to rebuilding the Bedford-Stuyvesant Y and revitalizing its programs, along with New York City's investment in space for Bedford Academy, sent an important signal both to the community and to investors, encouraging new private investment in residential and retail development on Bedford Avenue.



Since 2007, data obtained from the New York City Planning Department and Department of Buildings indicate that about 300 new housing units have been built on the blocks surrounding the Y, and 145 units have been rehabilitated. The YMCA has thus been part of – and has at the same time has benefited from – the neighborhood’s resurgence.

The YMCA’s impact on the blocks surrounding its Bedford Avenue facility is also evident in the current market for residential real estate. A review of properties in the area recently listed on StreetEasy.com as being for sale or rent found several that specifically cite proximity to the Y as one of the property’s attractive features.

- The Bedford-Stuyvesant branch has become an active partner in a variety of efforts to strengthen the community. For example:
 - Through the Coalition to Improve Bedford-Stuyvesant (CIBS), the YMCA worked with several other local organizations to establish the Bedford-Stuyvesant Aging Improvement District – an initiative aimed at providing a more supportive environment for older neighborhood residents.
 - Under CIBS’ auspices, the YMCA is collaborating with several other local organizations to develop strategies aimed at making Bedford-Stuyvesant a drug-free community.



The Bedford-Stuyvesant Y also provides space for a variety of community events, and for meetings of neighborhood groups such as Brownstoners of Bedford-Stuyvesant and local block associations.

The revitalization of Bedford-Stuyvesant and Clinton Hill has been a broad-based process, involving tens of thousands of residents, thousands of property owners, hundreds of businesses and dozens of community organizations. Along with its members and partners, the Bedford-Stuyvesant YMCA has been an active participant in that process.

