



COUNCIL DISTRICT 8: A PROFILE OF CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

February 2025

ABOUT US

JobsFirstNYC

JobsFirstNYC creates and advances solutions that break down barriers and transform the systems supporting young adults and their communities in the pursuit of economic opportunities. Our innovative approach to developing new partnership models has helped shape public policy, private philanthropic investments, and the practices of employers, colleges, workforce development service providers, high schools, and others. Over the last 17 years, JobsFirstNYC has worked with more than 200 organizations and institutions across New York City and State to build innovative solutions that connect young adults to economic opportunities.

Community Service Society

Community Service Society of New York has worked with and for New Yorkers since 1843 to promote economic opportunity and champion an equitable city and state. We power change through a strategic combination of research, services, and advocacy to make New York more livable for people facing economic insecurity. By expanding access to healthcare, affordable housing, employment, opportunities for individuals with conviction histories, debt assistance, and more, we make a tangible difference in the lives of millions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4	Foreword
5	Executive Summary
7	Introduction
9	Demographic Profile
12	Socioeconomic Profile
12	Educational Attainment
13	K-12 Education
15	Summer Youth Employment Program
16	Income
19	Poverty
22	Work and Wages
28	Childcare
29	Housing
31	Health and Well-Being
31	Health
36	Mental Health
37	Neighborhood Factors
37	Broadband Access
37	Financial Access
38	Criminal Justice
41	Key Recommendations
43	Broader Policy Recommendations
45	Conclusion
46	Authors
46	Acknowledgments
47	Endnotes
50	Appendix

FOREWORD

My dedication to the well-being and prosperity of young adults is at the core of my public service mission. The future of our communities in East Harlem and the South Bronx is intrinsically linked to the economic mobility of our youth. As a committed stakeholder, it's imperative we ensure that our youth are equipped with the necessary support, resources, and opportunities to successfully navigate the workforce. The aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic has starkly highlighted the vulnerabilities our young people face, with nearly a quarter of them disengaged from both education and employment—a rate almost 60% higher than the city's average. This trend calls for immediate and strategic action.

We are a community with a lot of strengths, and together I know we can show up for our youth. I have partnered with some of our great local providers and employment experts to work with the community to identify strategies and solutions for the challenges facing the young adult workforce. Together, we can identify what young people need, build on local strengths, and fill gaps in services and support so we can open more doors for our young people.

To embark on this journey, accurate and comprehensive information is crucial. This report offers an insightful snapshot of Council District 8, employing the latest data to paint a detailed picture of our local economy and workforce, as well as the socioeconomic factors affecting our youth's employment readiness, including education, health, and housing conditions. This report is an invaluable tool for informing policy decisions and initiatives designed to foster the professional advancement and success of our young workforce.

I believe we can reimagine economic mobility for young adults in Council District 8, and this report serves as a valuable resource to inform policy decisions and initiatives aimed at supporting the professional growth and success of our young workforce.

I encourage all stakeholders to review the report and actively engage in the ongoing conversation on youth and workforce development in our community. Your input and feedback are essential as we work toward creating a more inclusive and prosperous labor environment for our young residents.

Diana Ayala

Deputy speaker of the New York City Council and City Council member representing Council District 8

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHAT IS COMMUNITY DISTRICT 8?

New York City Council District 8 (hereinafter CD 8) comprises the neighborhoods of East Harlem in Upper Manhattan and Mott Haven, Longwood, Highbridge, Concourse, and Port Morris in the Southeast Bronx. The district is home to approximately 280,000 New Yorkers. It is a vibrant and diverse community that has been in transformation over the past decade as gentrification takes hold. Since 2010, the population in CD 8 has grown by 4% as it has gained an estimated 11,000 new residents.

OVERVIEW

The Community Service Society of New York (CSS) was commissioned by JobsFirstNYC to develop a data profile of CD 8. Our aim was to produce a snapshot of CD 8 that could serve as the context for understanding opportunities and challenges related to economic mobility in the district and that could provide a foundation for the development of a community partnership aimed at enhancing opportunities for young adults. This report is intended to serve both as a ready source of community-level data and as an analytical tool that can help inform policy and program priorities for CD 8.

METHODOLOGY

We used a framework employing five interrelated yet conceptually distinct domains—demographic composition, socioeconomic landscape, housing, health and well-being, and neighborhood factors—to piece together a comprehensive profile of the district. Within each domain, we looked at current conditions relative to the rest of the city and trends over time to understand how CD 8 has been changing.

The backbone of this profile rests on American Community Survey data made available by the U.S. Census Bureau. In addition, we used the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages data made available by the New York State Department of Labor; the Housing and Vacancy Survey data made available by the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development; the Community Health Survey data from the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; New York City Department of Education data; and several other administrative data sources made available through New York City's Open Data portal.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

These key recommendations are based on JobsFirstNYC's experience and approach to supporting communities that face similar challenges to address the economic mobility needs of young adults.

- 1** The most critical community-wide recommendation for strengthening young adults' economic mobility is to **create a seamless continuum of integrated services across educational institutions, employers, and youth development institutions.**
- 2** **Support neighborhood partnership development.** It is crucial to tap into local expertise in addressing the needs of young adults who are out of school and out of work. Effective place-based collaborations utilize community knowledge to offer a range of coordinated services and supports.⁴³ Collaborating and building networks with a facilitation partner can help identify strategies and create comprehensive plans to address the challenges faced by community members.
- 3** **Replicate and scale successful partnership models between youth-serving organizations and institutions of higher education,** such as community colleges, to create industry-aligned programs that can help young adults build skills that lead to career pathways in high-growth industries. Such programs can develop industry-aligned curricula in collaboration with employer partners and utilize accelerated learning strategies such as credit for prior learning; competency-based models; and strategies to increase access to credentials for underprepared learners.
- 4** **Prioritize economic mobility and pathways to prosperity for young adults affected by systemic neglect or inequitable policies by centering them in the planning process and ensuring that youth workforce programs are aligned with their interests.**
- 5** **Create training programs for non-traditional jobs, industries, and work arrangements, including entrepreneurship and self-employment.** Due to lifestyle considerations, personal preferences, or labor market demand, some youth may desire a career outside the bounds of a single job or industry. Young adults should be able to access training programs and sources of information that prepare them to navigate the financial and legal complexities of alternative work arrangements, such as freelancing or work in the gig economy.

CONCLUSION

This report brings together the latest available data to provide a portrait of the current social and economic landscape in CD 8. It documents some of the broad challenges facing the community and highlights those that are of particular concern to young adults. From this data, and from the broad and deep expertise of the authors and contributors, this report also offers a set of targeted and more general recommendations for enhancing the economic mobility of young adults in CD 8 and building a more thriving community.

It is our hope that as interested parties in the community come together to create and implement a plan aimed at improving the economic mobility of young adults in CD 8, this strong data foundation can serve as a roadmap for their efforts and energies.



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