

[Hilton Foundation invests in opportunity youth in New Orleans](#)

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The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation has awarded the Cowen Institute's [EMPLOY Collaborative](#) a \$350,000, one-year planning grant to develop hospitality career pathways for New Orleans' opportunity youth, which are 16-24 year olds who are neither in school nor working.

Louisiana has the highest rate of opportunity youth of any state and New Orleans has the third highest rate of opportunity youth of the 50 largest metro areas in the country, according to Cowen Institute research. More than 18 percent of 16-24 year olds in the region are opportunity youth, compared to almost 14 percent nationally.

For this reason, coupled with the city's prominent hospitality industry, the Foundation has chosen to focus its efforts in New Orleans. The effort draws upon the Foundation's history with the city, particularly in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, and the city's historical importance to Hilton Hotels. The Foundation is also investing in Café Reconcile and Liberty's Kitchen, both of which are members of the EMPLOY Collaborative.

EMPLOY implements collective solutions to decrease the number of disconnected youth in New Orleans by engaging them in quality education and employment pathways. As a cross-sector collaborative that engages over 25 different organizations that intersect with opportunity youth, EMPLOY and the Cowen Institute are supporting a citywide effort to build demand-driven hospitality career pathways.

"The Cowen Institute is honored to be a part of this impactful work. We look forward to playing a key role in connecting young people with meaningful career opportunities within the hospitality industry," said Executive Director Amanda Kruger Hill. "We are grateful to the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation for their commitment to New Orleans."

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, which was established in 1944 by the founder of Hilton Hotels, funds nonprofit organizations working to improve the lives of disadvantaged and vulnerable people throughout the world. For more information, visit: www.hiltonfoundation.org.