



# Work-Based Learning

In an era in which [three out of every four students](#) are already working their way through college, internships, co-ops, and apprenticeships all present students with opportunities to earn income in their desired career fields, rather than toiling away in dead-end jobs that do not necessarily accommodate class schedules and school responsibilities. Employers that offer work-based learning opportunities also benefit because the trainees develop skills that make them good candidates for permanent jobs.

JFF recommends four key policy approaches for expanding access to high-quality work-based learning experiences. We believe a good place to start is by launching a statewide initiative to promote work-based learning opportunities, set quality standards, and match interested students and employers. States should also consider providing employers with tax incentives and wage subsidies for employing and training students. Moreover, as interest in apprenticeships grows, we call on states to partner with community colleges to expand opportunities for apprentices to earn college credit for on-the-job training and to develop apprenticeship programs in a wider array of fields, like manufacturing, health care, and IT. Finally, states should reimagine the work-study model by investing in approaches that connect aid-eligible students with career-oriented job placements on and off campus. Doing so would stretch state funding for financial aid further because employers would cover portions of students' financial aid packages by paying wages to students.

## Findings from 15-State Study



**On average,** just under half of the four recommended work-based learning policies have been adopted per state.



**Signs of progress:** Two-thirds of states have statewide initiatives to increase work-based learning opportunities for postsecondary students. Nearly as many of the states have strengthened partnerships between Registered Apprenticeship programs and community colleges.

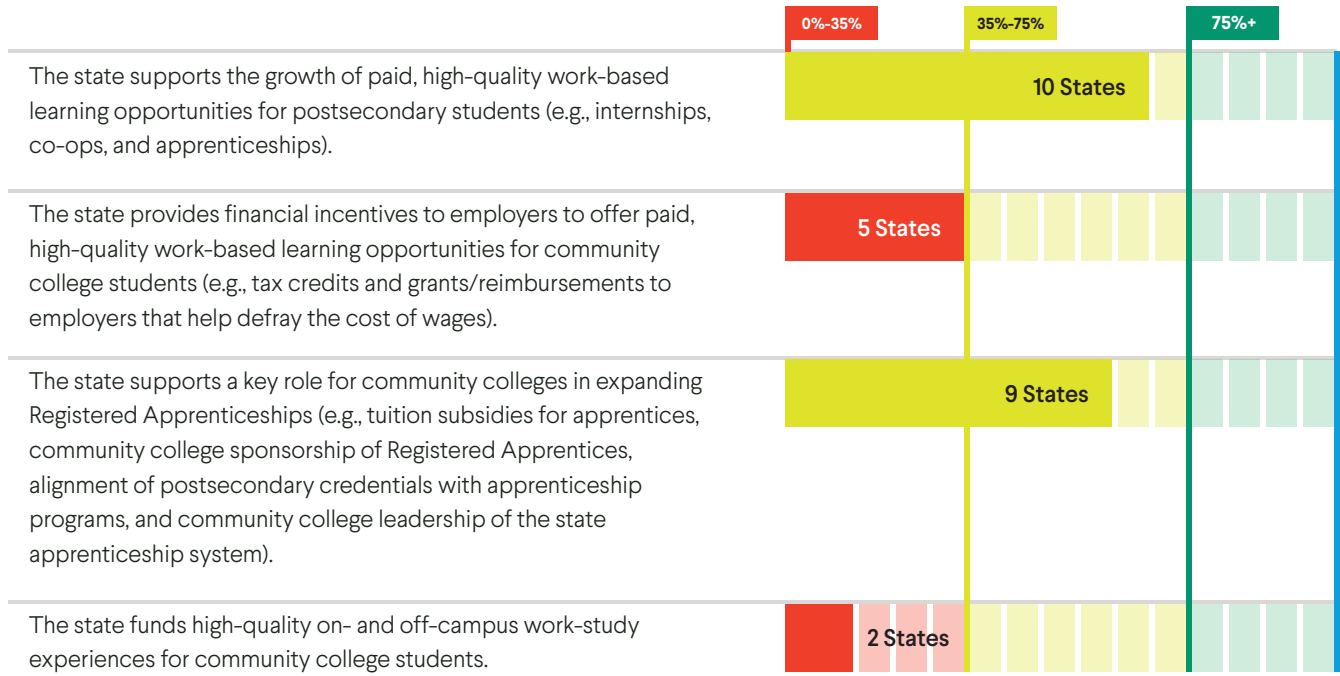


**Critical gaps:** Only one-third of the states provide financial incentives to encourage employers to offer paid, high-quality work-based learning opportunities for students. And even fewer states are funding high-quality on- and off-campus work-study experiences for students.



**Ahead of the curve:** New Jersey, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin.

## The state supports work-based learning opportunities for postsecondary students as part of their program of study.



### State Spotlight: **New Jersey**

New Jersey is promoting work-based learning as a pillar of its new [strategic plan for higher education](#), and is funding several initiatives to expand internship and apprenticeship placements. The state has committed \$1.5 million for its Many Paths, One Future Internship Grant program. A collaboration between the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the Department of Education, and the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, the program reimburses employers 50 percent of the wages they pay to new high school and college interns, up to \$1,500 per student. A similar effort called the NJ Career Accelerator Internship Program, which is specifically for first-time interns enrolled in STEM education programs and pursuing STEM-related internships, also reimburses employers 50 percent of an intern’s wages, but with a higher cap of \$3,000 per student. The state is also committed to expanding apprenticeship opportunities. With financial support from the federal government, New Jersey community colleges have committed to significantly scaling apprenticeships to serve more than 6,000 students in the health care and advanced manufacturing sectors.

