



## **CONNECTING YOUNG ADULTS TO SKILLS AND JOBS**

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LESSONS FROM THE NATIONAL  
FUND'S SECTORAL STRATEGIES



The National Fund for Workforce Solutions is a national network promoting economic opportunity and prosperous communities through investment and innovation. Based in Washington, DC, the National Fund partners with philanthropic organizations, employers, workers, public and private community organizations, and more than 30 regional collaboratives to invest in skills, improve systems, and generate good jobs. The National Fund supports civic and business leaders in promoting evidence-based practices and policies that build shared prosperity. Learn more about the National Fund and its local partners at [www.NationalFund.org](http://www.NationalFund.org).



THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

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# Introduction and Overview

Approaching its second decade of work, the National Fund for Workforce Solutions is a national network promoting economic opportunity and community prosperity through investment and innovation. The National Fund partners with philanthropy, employers, workers, public and private community organizations, and more than 30 regional collaboratives to invest in skills, improve workforce systems, and generate good jobs.

Consistent with its commitment to creating opportunity and improving local and regional economies, the National Fund promotes strategies that use sector or industry partnerships to support young adults in developing in-demand skills, preparing for a successful career, and securing a job. Stubbornly high young adult unemployment rates persist in the wake of the Great Recession, and, if unaddressed, could have long-lasting negative consequences not only for young workers, but also for the communities where they live. In response, the National Fund and its partners are working to determine how its sectoral models might be adapted and utilized to address young adults' employment challenges.

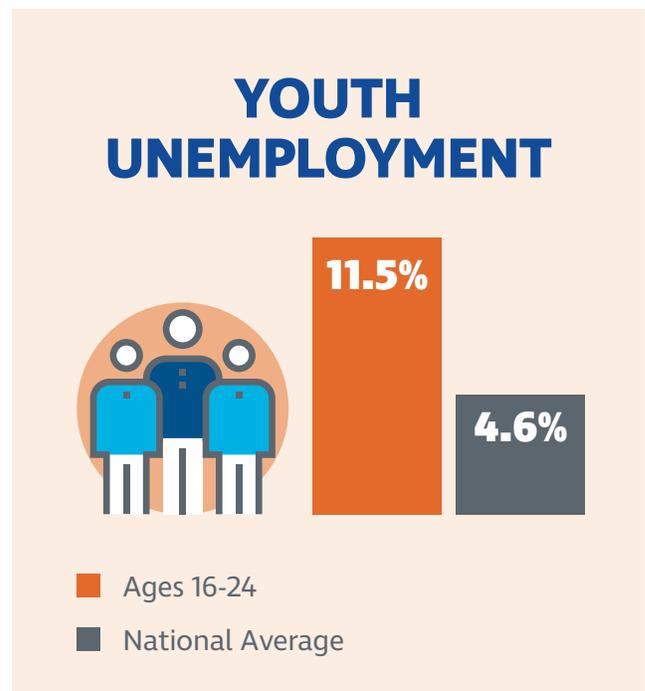
This report documents emerging practices from the National Fund's young adult work to date, and also provides a context for understanding the status of young adult sectoral work nationally.

## Specifically, the report:

- Describes the short history of young adult sectoral work;
- Highlights aspects of the National Fund's YA Initiative;
- Lifts up lessons from the communities involved in the YA Initiative;
- Provides recommendations to advance this work.

## The report also includes appendices with:

- A summary of strategies based on National Fund collaboratives' experiences in building YA sector models;
- In-depth profiles of two National Fund sites describing how they crafted their YA sectoral initiatives and what they learned;
- Snapshots of several additional collaboratives' YA work; and
- A bibliography of recent publications on sectoral strategies and other demand-driven approaches.



## SECTION I

# Using Sectoral Strategies to Connect Young Adults to Employment

The National Fund designed its **Young Adult (YA) Initiative** to use a sectoral strategy to provide employment opportunities for 18- to 25-year-olds who are unemployed and not enrolled in school. This report reviews ongoing efforts and lessons learned from National Fund member collaboratives participating in that initiative. As such, it aims to add to the growing body of literature documenting strategies and highlighting progress in this emerging field.

Interest in sectoral employment strategies<sup>1</sup> has grown steadily over the last two decades. By training low-wage and underemployed job seekers to compete for family-sustaining jobs in high-demand industries, sectoral strategies help both individual workers and employers, and promote regional prosperity. Sectoral strategies also seek to improve existing jobs, for example, by helping employers understand the value of offering training and career development services and changing business practices in ways that reduce turnover and increase productivity.

Sectoral approaches focusing intentionally on youth and young adults emerged only a few years ago, and are still in the early stages of development. Evidence gleaned from years of research on earnings impacts of sectoral programs, notably findings from evaluations by Public/Private Ventures and the Aspen Institute,<sup>2</sup> demonstrated that these strategies had the potential to improve earnings for young adults.

Demand-driven strategies for young adults were also boosted through the work of the White House Council for Community Solutions, formed by President Obama in 2010 to identify strategies to re-engage disconnected youth and young adults. The Council produced several seminal reports, including an extensive tool-kit by Gap, Inc.,<sup>3</sup> designed to encourage

employers to hire young people, and another that stressed the economic value of hiring and training young adults.<sup>4</sup>

As interest and investment in young adult sectoral strategies grew, several initiatives took shape. In addition to the National Fund's Young Adult Initiative, three major sectoral projects emerged.

- **Young Adult Sectoral Employment Project (YASEP)**. YASEP, established in New York City in 2013, was the nation's first sectoral strategy intentionally focused on youth and young adults. **JobsFirstNYC**, an intermediary focused on connecting out-of-school and out-of-work young adults to economic opportunity, convened stakeholders to explore the potential for tailoring sectoral strategies for young adults. Based on these deliberations and with support from regional philanthropies, JobsFirstNYC<sup>5</sup> awarded \$50,000 planning grants to several partnerships to initiate young adult sectoral efforts. Each partnership included an employer or intermediary partner, at least one training institution with connections to the employer, and community-based organizations to provide support services. As the partnerships implemented programming, JobsFirstNYC convened them in a learning community, and documented lessons in a recent report by Sheila Maguire.<sup>6</sup>

Today, YASEP has grown to 11 partnerships managing young adult sectoral projects across a continuum of sectors, including health care; transportation, distribution and logistics; and information technology.

Despite YASEP's successes to date, Maguire's report raises an important challenge for young adult

sectoral work: the inherent tension between youth development approaches — which see young people as assets to be nurtured and supported, and sectoral approaches — which focus extensively on meeting the needs of employers for skilled workers.

As Maguire puts it, youth development programming is about “screening in” — i.e., making all feel welcome and valued, while most sectoral strategies are about “screening out” — i.e., delivering to employers only those individuals who can meet their needs and expectations. Given this challenge, flexible funding and strong community partnerships are essential keys in preparing young adults to succeed in sectoral employment programs.

- **Youth/Industry Partnership Initiative (YIPI).** In early 2014, the National Fund invited its member funding collaboratives to submit proposals aimed at extending sectoral employment strategies to low-income, disconnected 18- to 24-year-olds.

Nine communities developed and submitted proposals. From these, [SkillWorks](#) (Boston), [Workforce Solutions Collaborative of Metro Hartford](#), and [SkillUp Washington](#) (Seattle) received Rockefeller Foundation–supported \$80,000 grants to implement their plans over 18 months. Another three collaboratives participated in the YIPI learning group.

The National Fund and Jobs for the Future captured lessons from YIPI in [Creating Pathways to Employment](#)<sup>7</sup> in 2015. The experiences of the YIPI sites illustrated that high-quality career pathways required “a collective, place-based effort that is driven by employers and industry partnerships and relies on community providers and education/training providers, as well as local workforce intermediaries.” Key partners and roles included:

- » **Community organizations** recruit, prepare and support young adults so they can enter and succeed in pathway programs.

- » **Employers** provide information on key skills required to enter and advance in their sector, advise on program and curriculum design and offer on-the-job training and development opportunities for entry-level jobs.

- » **Workforce intermediaries** connect the essential functions by brokering relationships among agencies, training institutions or programs and employers, and identify which sectors hold the most promise for training and supporting young adults.

- **Generation Work.** The Annie E. Casey Foundation–funded [Generation Work](#) project is the most recent young adult sectoral initiative. Launched in late 2015, Generation Work is designed to “identify effective ways to help young people from low-income families get and keep well-paying jobs.”<sup>8</sup> Generation Work supports five local partnerships — in Cleveland, Hartford, Indianapolis, Philadelphia and Seattle — to combine demand-driven strategies with positive youth development support services for 18- to 29-year-olds. Each site received an initial \$100,000 planning grant, and the Foundation expects to invest \$6 million over the next four years to scale local sectoral strategies by helping workforce systems and practitioners build stronger connections to employers and serve as networks for young people seeking employment.



Youth Hub, supported by SkillWorks, Boston, MA

## SECTION II

# The National Fund Young Adult Initiative

The National Fund's Young Adult (YA) Initiative began in 2014 as an extension of YIPI. Because more sites had sought to participate than the YIPI funding could support, the National Fund concluded that the high level of interest warranted additional resources.

The [Annie E. Casey Foundation](#) agreed, and provided the National Fund with support to establish its Young Adult Initiative and assist collaboratives interested in developing young adult projects. Efforts under the Initiative include:

- **Technical Assistance** to 12 National Fund collaboratives to develop plans for young adult sector strategies, followed by additional coaching support for six of those sites;
- **A Peer Learning Community** for National Fund collaboratives interested in pursuing young adult sector strategies;
- An **Employer Champion Program** to recognize businesses with exemplary practices for hiring, training and retaining young adult workers;
- Profiles of **Exemplary Training Providers** working with collaboratives to prepare young adults for employment;
- **Regional Young Adult Labor Market Analyses** of Milwaukee, WI and Pittsburgh, PA to provide in-depth information on labor and employer trends for two National Fund communities and serve as a research model for other communities.

While all components of the National Fund's YA Initiative contribute to its overall effectiveness, the work is, above all, designed to build a community of practice that supports and expands YA sector work. Young adult job seekers, particularly those who are unemployed and unenrolled in school for extended periods of time, are likely to need training and support services beyond those typically required

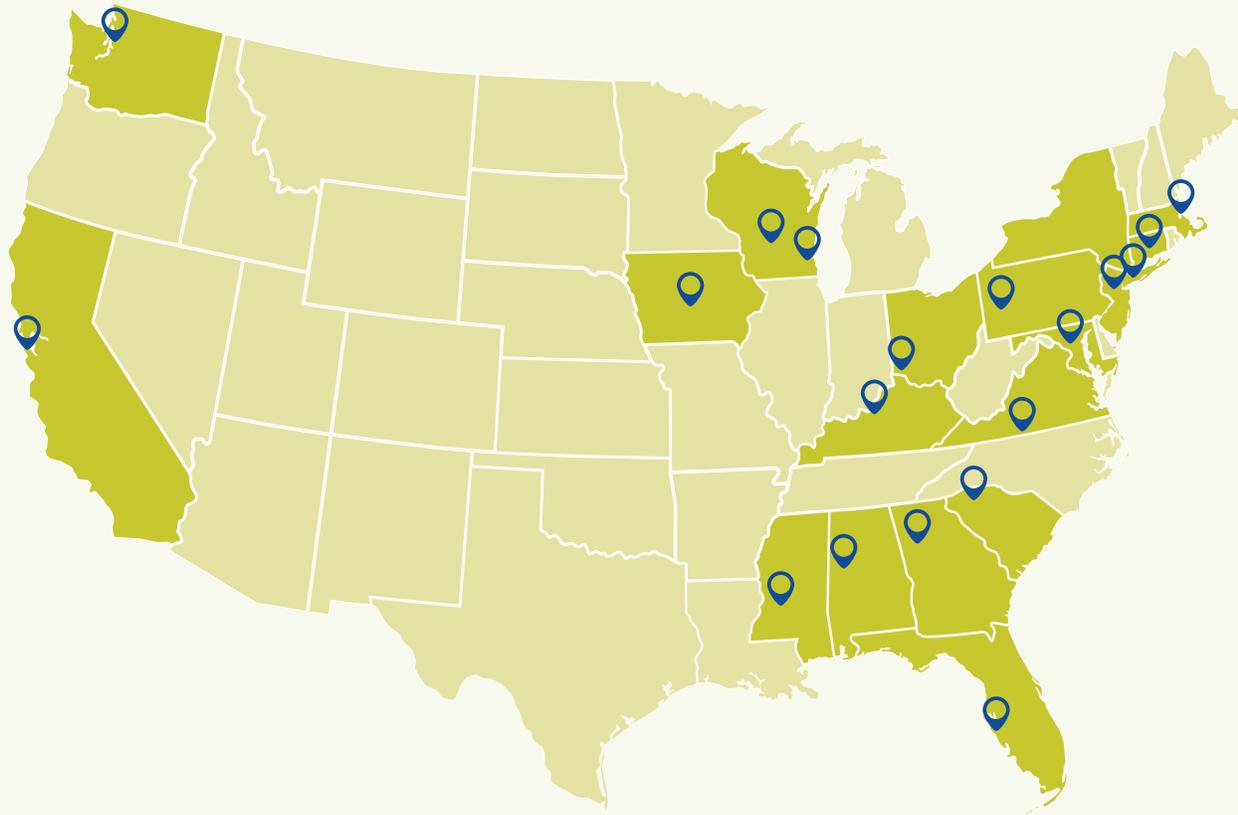
for adult programs. The initiative was a valuable opportunity for National Fund collaboratives to share their successes and challenges and learn from one another how to tailor a successful model to better serve young adults.

Today, the National Fund [Peer Learning Community](#) includes almost two dozen collaboratives (Figure 1), each pursuing approaches aimed at creating sectoral models for out-of-school and out-of-work young adults. The Peer Learning Community works together to share information through conferences, webinars, workshops, and dissemination of research summaries and effective practices.



New York Alliance for Careers in Healthcare.

Figure 1: National Fund Collaboratives Engaged in Young Adult Peer Learning Community



Atlanta CareerRise  
Atlanta, GA

Baltimore Workforce Funders Collaborative  
Baltimore, MD

SkillWorks  
Boston, MA

CareerEdge Funders Collaborative  
Bradenton/Sarasota, FL

Partners for a Competitive Workforce  
Cincinnati, OH

Central Iowa Works  
Des Moines, IA

Dan River Region Collaborative  
Danville, VA

Greenville Region Workforce Collaborative  
Greenville, SC

Workforce Solutions Collaborative of Metro Hartford  
Hartford, CT

Delta Workforce Funding Collaborative  
Jackson, MS

KentuckianaWorks/WIRED 65  
Louisville, KY

Milwaukee Area Workforce Funding Alliance/Employ  
Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI

New York Alliance for Careers in Healthcare  
New York, NY

CareerWorks: Greater Newark Workforce Funders  
Collaborative, Newark, NJ

Partner4Work/Pittsburgh Works  
Pittsburgh, PA

Bay Area Workforce Funding Collaborative  
San Francisco, CA

SkillUp Washington  
Seattle, WA

West Alabama Works  
Tuscaloosa, AL

Incourage Community Foundation, Workforce Central  
Wisconsin Rapids, WI

## SECTION III

# Lessons Learned

The National Fund's Young Adult Initiative is producing knowledge and experience that can guide the efforts of other communities interested in undertaking young adult sectoral strategies. The emerging lessons from the National Fund YA Initiative are consistent with findings from YASEP and YIPI, which stress the value of close connections to employers, partnerships with community organizations, and workforce intermediaries. Further, National Fund collaboratives also share the view that dedicated and flexible funding is necessary to ensure the success of young adult sectoral strategies, and that the lack of available, targeted resources is a clear impediment to progress. More detail on this point is included in Section IV.

This section focuses on noteworthy practices and recommendations emerging across the National Fund YA Initiative sites. For an on-the-ground view of how sites have implemented YA efforts and what they have learned, see the Appendix for profiles of [CareerEdge Bradenton/Sarasota](#) and [Delta Workforce Funding Collaborative](#), as well as snapshots of [several additional sites](#).

Drawing from work with the YA collaboratives over the last year and a half and the lessons they have shared in the Peer Learning Community, the National Fund has identified several cross-cutting themes in connecting young adults and sectoral strategies.

### **Build connections for efficiency and effectiveness.**

National Fund collaboratives are led by workforce intermediaries, which understand the importance of cross-system collaboration, connections to community partners, and identifying clear, complementary roles. National Fund YA Initiative sites have emphasized the importance of discovering partners' mutual interests in the work, as well as the distinct contributions that each organization can make to it. This approach

builds on the strengths of a collaborative's members, allowing them to do what they do best, and avoiding duplication of effort or competition for the same resources. Several National Fund collaboratives found that developing memoranda of understanding among partners, spelling out specific duties of individual partners, was a useful tool.

### **Collect, analyze, and utilize data.**

National Fund collaboratives rely on in-depth knowledge of regional economic data to understand the demands of regional employers, which helps to identify occupations in high-demand industries and develop pathways and ladders to address them. Close working relationships with employers, including a deep knowledge of industry supply chains, is arguably the best way to gather this information. Other likely sources include local workforce boards, which use detailed economic data to develop local plans and identify training needs, and ongoing national research like that available in the American Community Survey and Current Population Survey. Collaboratives participating in the National Fund YA Initiative also paid close attention to educational attainment and employment experiences of their young adult populations. This information helped them to understand which young people were at the greatest risk and might need assistance, as well as identify longer-term problems, e.g., if youth populations lacked credentials to fill looming shortages in the regional economy. State departments of education can serve as good sources for graduation rates; the National Student Clearinghouse tracks postsecondary enrollment and success; and the American Community Survey sorts young adults by education and employment status.

### **Identify Specific Recruitment Strategies.**

It can be challenging to identify and then recruit young adults for training, particularly those who have been disconnected from school and work. As the YIPI

and YASEP experiences demonstrate, this is another instance in which collaborating with community organizations can be particularly helpful. Many youth-serving organizations are located and work directly in communities where young people live, and thus might already have strong connections to potential trainees.

If direct approaches are needed, research suggests that peer-to-peer recruitment is particularly effective with disconnected young people. These “boots on the ground” approaches often employ youth outreach workers who know and have relationships with disconnected young people, know where they hang out, and understand how best to motivate them. Outreach via social media used by the target group can also help, particularly for sites lacking the resources for staff-intensive outreach and recruitment.

### **Offer pre-enrollment preparation and screening.**

Determining how individuals will respond to a rigorous, demand-driven training program can be difficult, particularly for young adults with limited work experience. To make the best decisions possible about young adults’ fitness, several National Fund collaboratives exposed candidates to training regimens and workplace realities prior to or as part of the programs. These toe-in-the-water experiences included field trips to employer partners’ worksites, guest speakers who shared the rewards and opportunities of different career paths, and assessments that helped gauge interests in and aptitudes for the work.

Several sites also noted the importance of pre-screening for drug use and issuing warnings about the likelihood of random testing during training, particularly in health-related careers. With the growth in marijuana decriminalization, many young people do not understand that its use can disqualify them from certain types of employment, and National Fund sites lost several promising candidates due to failed tests.



Central Iowa Works

### **Train in cohorts.**

Consistent with research findings,<sup>9</sup> many National Fund sites grouped young trainees for the duration of the program, which helped to establish connections, promote collaboration and teamwork, and build esprit de corps. While there is something to be said for open enrollment, which allows students to enter and exit on an ongoing basis, the experiences here suggest that the benefits of the cohort approach outweigh any disadvantages. Some collaboratives also reported benefits of mixed cohorts — young adults and older workers training together — where group interaction combines youthful enthusiasm with experience, maturity and perspective.

### **Offer ongoing guidance and support.**

Pre-enrollment screening and barrier alleviation can smooth the path for young adult trainees, but many are likely to need ongoing counseling and support to complete programming successfully. National Fund collaboratives addressed this need in several different ways. Partnering with high-quality youth-serving community organizations for case management services can be an effective approach. In other instances, staff from the collaborative and/or the training institution play these roles. In any case, the point is to stay in close contact with young trainees to help them stay on track. Familiarity with local networks of social service agencies helps connect young trainees to needed resources. Often, young



YouthBuild Boston, supported by SkillWorks

adults may not realize they can qualify for benefits and services that can help them to overcome barriers, e.g., food, transportation, and health care. Ongoing career advising through career navigators or other knowledgeable staff also helps contribute to student success. These services are important to expose trainees to career possibilities, and also to guide students into alternative pathways as needed.

### **Increase the capacity of youth-serving community partners.**

Youth-serving community-based organizations partnering with National Fund collaboratives on YA strategies offered high-quality programs and services incorporating youth development practices. These services are often essential, particularly for lower-skilled young adults. However, some collaboratives found that community-based organizations lacked knowledge and experience concerning the skills and attitudes that potential employers expect of young adults. In other instances, some partners could not move young adults through adult education programming fast enough to enable them to enroll and succeed in training programs.

To address these gaps, National Fund sites offered professional development workshops for community providers, focusing on what young adults would need to know and be able to do to succeed in sectoral training and employment. Others sponsored field trips

to worksites and hosted forums where community organizations could hear from and interact with employer partners. Further, as noted above, some collaboratives utilized memoranda of understanding to clarify expectations of participating community organizations and other partners.

### **Provide work experience and career exploration for more young adults, including while in high school.**

Early work exposure can increase long-term employment and earnings and promote acquisition of postsecondary credits.<sup>10</sup> National Fund sites understand this and are incorporating internships and related programming into their training strategies. The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act's (WIOA's) new 20 percent work experience requirement provides an opportunity to support internships and related activities, including for young adults as a part of sectoral strategies. Some National Fund sites have also found that utilizing performance-based, contextual assessments can more accurately assess young people's skill levels and fit for sectoral training.

Many National Fund collaboratives believe that these experiences should be offered to students while still enrolled in high school, and some are working with school systems to help young people still enrolled to build knowledge of sectors and skills needed to succeed in high-demand occupations. Although the YA Initiative focuses on young adults who are unemployed and unenrolled, many sites are working with school systems to support work experience, career exploration, and enhanced career and technical education as an important strategy for helping youth stay connected. These approaches are consistent with several nationally prominent career pathways models, e.g., *Pathways to Prosperity*,<sup>11</sup> the Harvard Graduate School of Education initiative aimed at strengthening secondary and postsecondary CTE offerings, and building sequential pathways to sub-baccalaureate credentials.

### **Develop intentional strategies to bridge transitions.**

Just as young trainees need case management and support during their program participation, many

will also need help in transitioning from training to postsecondary education and/or to the workplace. Research suggests that first-generation college goers struggle due to financial barriers and lack of social connections and that these challenges can be mitigated by working with postsecondary institutions to provide mentors and counselors to work with these young people and keep them on track. Providing centers or meeting spaces where young people can congregate and interact with one another also has the potential to promote persistence.

Close working relationships with employer partners where young people are placed can help smooth their transition to the workplace, including troubleshooting problems that might arise. Furthermore, consistent with broader sectoral approaches for adults, working with and understanding the needs of employers can create opportunities to change human resource practices in ways that are more supportive of young adults, for example by training supervisory staff on principles of youth development, and strategies to help young adult employees grow as employees and leaders.

### **Make the most of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.**

Several National Fund YA Initiative collaboratives have direct ties to local workforce boards, which develop workforce development policy and distribute federal WIOA funding in localities throughout the nation. These collaboratives are exploring the potential offered by the Act to promote career pathways, including sectoral strategies. In other instances, collaboratives not directly tied to workforce boards report challenges in working with the new WIOA system, e.g., lack of understanding of the new system, and the time required for eligibility determination and enrollment.

It is still too early to judge how effectively WIOA funding is being utilized to develop and implement young adult sectoral strategies. Certainly the potential is great, with strong statutory and regulatory language in support of career pathways and industry partnerships, and leadership roles for employers in designing and putting in place appropriate programs and services. But headwinds also exist.



Civic Works, supported by Baltimore Workforce Funders Collaborative

For example, while most youth advocates applauded WIOA's substantially increased focus on 16- to 24-year-old out-of-school youth and other high-risk populations, these young people are likely to be somewhat deficient in academic and work readiness skills. Thus, given the skill levels and related training required by many sectoral strategies and the higher risk status of WIOA's target youth population, local boards and service providers may face challenges in building WIOA-funded programs that meet the needs of employers and young adults.

One solution would be to enroll more skilled out-of-school youth and young adults — i.e., those with secondary credentials and some work history. But this could risk losing the important opportunity to invest new WIOA provisions in the young people who need them most.

A much more appropriate strategy would be to develop carefully sequenced sets of education and training services to move lower-skilled out-of-school youth to a place where they could benefit from sectoral approaches. Local boards' abilities to move in this direction will rely in part on additional actions and guidance by federal agencies, which is discussed in detail in the next section.

## SECTION IV

# Recommendations to Promote Young Adult Sectoral Strategies

The work of National Fund collaboratives and other communities around the nation shows great promise, as demonstrated by the practitioners, policymakers, employers, and funders who have joined forces to prepare young adults for employment in high-demand sectors. In addition, as noted, research documents the increased earnings for young adult participants in sectoral approaches.

However, formidable challenges exist. For young people with limited employment experience, the workplace is uncharted territory. And precisely because they are younger and have less experience, young adults can easily misjudge their commitment and dedication to an extended training regimen. Further, older youth and young adults lacking secondary education credentials and work history will be doubly challenged to qualify for and succeed in sectoral approaches.

Several issues are central to realizing the potential of YA sectoral employment strategies.

### **A critical need for dedicated funding.**

One of the most important keys to YASEP's and YIPI's successes was access to dedicated funding for convening, planning, and implementation of young adult sectoral models. JobsFirstNYC leaders point to the flexible, long-term funding received from regional philanthropies, which made it possible for grantee partners to meet, learn what sectoral training could and should look like, create detailed plans, and then to build effective programs.

By contrast, YA Initiative collaboratives received coaching and technical assistance, but no direct funding to plan or implement their YA strategies. While many made progress, the most successful sites had access to alternative resources which enabled

them to build programs. National Fund collaboratives deeply valued peer learning and access to effective practices and technical assistance, but also believed that more progress was possible if combined with site funding.

Where will this support come from? Philanthropies have championed and funded sectoral work for the last two decades. Even so, many advocates and practitioners believe that foundations could do more to advance the work, and that metrics and outcomes should be recalibrated to reflect the realities of serving disconnected young people in sector strategies. In short, expanded and flexible philanthropic support will continue to be an essential need for YA sector strategies.

Some limited federal support is available. With its emphases on career pathways and co-enrollment, WIOA presents opportunities to support YA sectoral strategies. But even if fully and efficiently leveraged, available funding for WIOA youth activities can serve only a small fraction of eligible youth and young adults, not to mention those who do not qualify for WIOA based on school, employment or income status. Also, there are continuing discussions of related YA pathways strategies, including apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships, but thus far these remain limited in most states and localities. Further, the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act is up for reauthorization and could be another vehicle to support sectoral strategies. As currently constructed, Perkins focuses only on secondary and postsecondary students, but not on those who are unemployed and unenrolled in school.

Clearly, new funding models are needed to support this work. Perhaps one answer lies in looking beyond workforce-related funding to higher education.



SkillUp Washington

Each year, Congress appropriates billions of dollars in student financial aid to millions of older youth and young adults who are enrolled in institutions of higher education. However, many young people cannot access these funds because they do not qualify under the provisions of the Higher Education Act (HEA). While a comprehensive discussion of this topic is not possible in this report, HEA reauthorization, which is expected to be undertaken in the 115th Congress, has the potential to make financial aid available on a fairer basis for many older youth and young adults.

Another potential source of support is expanded partnerships with employers, who could take on portions of sector training costs. Many employers already provide funding to a limited extent, including to a number of National Fund collaboratives. However, as Bob Giloth of The Annie E. Casey Foundation and Maureen Conway of the Aspen Institute have observed, over the last decades a number of economic pressures “upset traditional business hiring and training patterns and institutions,” and as a result, “internal investments in workforce training, particularly at the entry level, diminished.”<sup>12</sup> Similarly, Elyse Rosenblum and Sara Toland have suggested that “social norms” of many modern-day employers do not include the notion of career preparation: “In general, employers do not take responsibility for preparing the future workforce.”<sup>13</sup>

There are good examples of employers countering this trend. For example, Corporate Voices for Working Families profiled several leading employers, e.g., CVS, Pacific Gas and Electric, and Johns Hopkins Hospital, which are “growing their own talent” through internal pathways.<sup>14</sup> Recent examples include [Gap, Inc.](#), which continues to promote pathways, and the [100,000 Opportunities Initiative](#), led by Starbucks. The [National Fund’s CareerSTAT](#) and [Young Adult Employer Champions](#) also work closely with collaboratives and community partners to invest in their communities’ workforce and train their incumbent workers.

With many states exerting leadership in career pathways (through the earlier mentioned Pathways to Prosperity network and the Center for Law and Social Policy’s Alliance for Quality Career Pathways,<sup>15</sup> among others) there may be new opportunities for coordinated, cross-investor, public-private funding to build YA sector successes and accelerate young adult strategies.

### Creating access for lower-skilled young adults.

The National Fund YA Initiative targets 18- to 25-year-olds. This population includes young people with widely differing skills and credentials, ranging from those who dropped out of high school, have low literacy levels, and very limited work experience, to individuals with secondary credentials, significant work histories, and perhaps even some college. This inclusive definition is similar to the recently-coined term “Opportunity Youth” — i.e., 18- to 24-year-olds who are out of school and out of work — and encompasses many of the young people who fall within WIOA’s expansive definition of out-of-school youth.

What are the implications, if any, for young adult sectoral strategies when the target population’s range of skills is so broad?

One issue is the potential for “creaming” — taking the best qualified young people and leaving the rest behind. It could be argued that young adult sector strategies should focus on better-prepared individuals, who could be expected to possess the skills and experiences to succeed in demand-driven

approaches. It is also true that in most communities and nationally, many young people with high school diplomas and some work history remain out of the labor force and could benefit from training and paths to living-wage careers.

But sector strategies are also about increasing the well-being of low-wage workers and job seekers. Therefore, shouldn't YA sector work reflect these principles and also find ways to engage and support lower-skilled individuals?

Paul Osterman points out that much of the youth unemployment crisis resolves over time, stating that "the vast majority of youth settle into careers successfully as they age."<sup>16</sup> But looking at disaggregated data, Osterman finds that "there is a subset of young people about whom we should be quite concerned," such as young African Americans and Latinos, whose rates of unemployment are substantially above those for their white counterparts. Based on these findings, Osterman concludes, "scarce youth-policy resources are better focused" on these young adults who are at greater risk of long-term disconnection.

YASEP serves young adults with a wide range of skill sets because of the strength and breadth of its partnerships. For example, entry into the healthcare pathway requires a high skill level, but transportation/distribution/logistics (TDL) is lower, and sector-specific assessments and requirements can vary widely. While few local collaboratives can match YASEP's scope and access to resources, assembling a range of sector strategies and building close working relationships between them serves as a model for how sector strategies can serve a continuum of young adults.

National Fund YA sites are wrestling with these issues, and in a number of instances are building the kinds of interlocking community partnerships that can, over time, prepare lower-skilled young adults for sectoral strategies.

For example, [Mississippi Delta Workforce Funding Collaborative](#) accepts individuals with 5th grade reading levels, and co-enrolls them in adult



New Community Corporation, supported by CareerWorks: Greater Newark Workforce Funders Collaborative

basic education/GED courses and college-level occupational skills coursework in health care and industrial fields, which eventually result in recognized industry credentials with significant value in the marketplace. The National Fund collaborative [New York Alliance for Careers in Healthcare \(NYACH\)](#), one of the YASEP sites, has also made progress in this area, developing CBO-college bridge programming that builds the basic skills of youth participants while also advancing occupational preparation.

In short, consistent and transparent efforts to serve high-need young adults are possible, and highly desirable if sectoral programs are to be true to their foundational commitment to improving the life chances of lower-skilled, lower-wage workers.

## Raise the Floor.

Thus far, National Fund and other young adult sectoral strategies have focused predominantly on preparing new workers for skilled positions. This focus has been driven by growing concerns about young adult unemployment, as well as the scarring effects of long periods of joblessness, particularly in the wake of the Great Recession. Millions of young adults remain unemployed and unenrolled in school, with few prospects for meaningful careers.



Workforce Solutions Collaborative of Metro Hartford

At the same time, through their sectoral work with both youth and adults, several National Fund sites have observed that there are significant numbers of lower-skilled young adults who have found employment, but currently occupy positions that pay little and provide few opportunities for advancement.

This raises the broader issue of improving job quality, also a central tenet of the National Fund's work. Recent work by the Aspen Institute identifies a series of "raise the floor" strategies, including improved compensation, benefits, job design, access to training, and others.<sup>17</sup> Since many young adults currently work in low-wage jobs, increasing the emphasis on these strategies is sensible and appropriate.

Speaking at a recent [National Youth Employment Coalition](#) meeting, one YASEP employer champion spoke of his company's efforts to reshape training for front-line supervisors who oversee many new young adult hires. Further, the firm's training for young adults began to incorporate leadership skills, including self-reflection and problem solving. As a result, turnover rates for young adults in the firm plummeted.

### **Continuing roles for the federal government in the WIOA rollout.**

As noted earlier, WIOA statutory language and subsequent rulemaking from the U.S. Department of

Labor and other partner agencies stress the importance of career pathways, including for out-of-school youth and young adults, and also underscore the value of co-enrolling out-of-school youth in as many core WIOA programs (e.g. adult training, adult education, and vocational rehabilitation) as appropriate. Local areas can and should consider using these strategies to build sectoral approaches for young adults.

However, many questions remain concerning how young adults can move through a career pathways sequence smoothly when definitions of participation and performance levels may differ for each core program. Making matters more challenging, most local workforce boards do not have experience co-enrolling eligible youth in adult programming. For example, the National Skills Coalition, in its [comments on the WIOA Notices of Proposed Rulemaking](#), stated that fewer than ten percent of Workforce Investment Act (WIOA's antecedent) youth participants between the ages of 19 and 21 were co-enrolled in an adult workforce program, and less than one percent were co-enrolled in adult education programs.<sup>18</sup>

In the final WIOA rulemaking, federal agencies acknowledged the need for more guidance on how to co-enroll young people in multiple core programs, and pledged an interagency effort to provide guidance and technical assistance on how to incorporate career pathways into youth programming.<sup>19</sup>

The federal agencies developing guidance and technical assistance for both career pathways and co-enrollment could provide state and local governments with the support and flexibility in creating a seamless WIOA system. This would allow young people to move into and through different WIOA core programs and toward postsecondary credentials with as few bureaucratic barriers as possible.

The Departments took important steps in the final rule to clarify several definitions and procedures that will improve services for high-risk young adults. It will be critical that the forthcoming guidance and technical assistance continue in this vein by encouraging and promoting high-quality sectoral approaches for eligible young adults.



New York Alliance for Careers in Healthcare.

## An ongoing need and demand for technical assistance.

Because young adult sector work is in its infancy, knowledge about what constitutes effective practice is still emerging. As a result, many communities who might have an interest in YA sector strategies do not have access to information about how to proceed and succeed. This document, following in the footsteps of the YIPI and YASEP reports and work supported by the Aspen Institute, hopes to provide information and tools that can support young adult sectoral strategies. However, the need — and thirst — among practitioners and policymakers for effective practices and program models remains great.

Numerous guides and related technical assistance materials have been published in the last few years focusing on demand-driven youth employment strategies. Organizations have released over a dozen employer tool-kits and guidebooks to make the case to employers about how young adults can address their talent gaps.

Recent initiatives also have encouraged young adult hiring, e.g., the [Grads of Life](#) campaign and the Starbucks-led [100,000 Opportunities Initiative](#). While these organized efforts may be useful in encouraging employers to hire young adults, relatively little attention has focused on roles of intermediaries, community organizations, and other partners in preparing young people for living-wage employment, and how they can develop strong local practice. The National Fund collaboratives came to the YA Initiative with vastly different experiences in developing and framing programming for older youth and young adults. Even so, they worked together and learned from one another, growing in their knowledge of youth development principles and how they can be incorporated into demand-driven strategies.

These types of collaborative and interactive learning communities are extremely helpful for communities interested in building YA sector approaches. Even in the absence of dedicated funding, finding support for these efforts remains crucial in advancing the YA work.

# Conclusion

This report aimed to present the work and lessons of the National Fund's Young Adult Initiative; to summarize research and thinking to date on sectoral approaches for young adults, discussing how the National Fund's efforts build on and expand them; and to provoke thinking about how best to move this work forward. As a result, we hope to encourage a wider discussion and replication of young adult sectoral strategies and spur increased investment in efforts aimed at bringing them to scale.

Young adult sectoral work is difficult and complex. It often involves changing employer perspectives about young adults, while at the same time ensuring that those young people can actually meet the needs of the 21st century workplace.

It asks differing actors — public, private, and nonprofit — to come together, learn each other's languages, and work in common cause, perhaps for the first time. And it requires that we find ways to turn the youth development vs. demand-driven strategies conundrum into a win-win for all parties.

These challenges notwithstanding, vital work is under way in communities across the country to connect young adults to sectoral employment strategies. The hard questions — around readiness, preparation, and fit — are being asked and answered. The both/and, dual customer equation is being analyzed and solved.

After decades of neglect, over the last half decade we have seen the attention of policymakers, thought leaders, funders, and the general public turn to the importance of addressing and resolving the young adult unemployment crisis. Numerous conferences have been held, reports generated, and new statutes enacted.

Let's seize the opportunity to build on emerging lessons learned and inspire more communities to take up and advance this work.

## APPENDIX A.

# Strategies for Building a Young Adult Sector Model

This page summarizes effective strategies based on National Fund collaboratives' experiences in building Young Adult (YA) sector programs, and is intended to serve as a guide for other communities interested in developing their own approaches.



### Form Partnerships with Key Stakeholders

**Who:** A trusted intermediary

- Convene partners, e.g. youth-serving community-based organizations (CBOs), education/training institutions, employers, workforce systems, public care agencies, others
- Identify specific roles for partners
- Guide the process and hold partners accountable



### Plan the Sectoral Approach

**Who:** The intermediary, workforce system, and other designated partners

- Analyze regional labor market information and young adult demographics
- Build relationships with employers in sectors identified as targets for the strategy
- Select sectors based on data, knowledge of employer needs, and capabilities of target youth population
- Explore and secure funding to support sector strategy



### Develop the Program

**Who:** The intermediary, training institution, employers, the workforce system, and CBOs

- Identify and map all elements of the program and determine roles for each partner
- Develop supports necessary for success, for both YA participants and employers
- Review partner capacity and strengthen as needed



### Recruit, Enroll and Prepare YA for Sectoral Training

**Who:** CBOs or other designated partners

- Recruit and assess potential participants re. basic skills, work readiness, barriers, etc.
- Expose participants to the sector and occupations to gauge interest and fit
- Provide basic skills remediation, as needed
- Strengthen readiness through work experience (e.g. job shadowing, internships, supported or transitional employment), service projects, and/or project-based learning



### Train YA for the Identified Sectoral Job(s)

**Who:** The training partner, with support from CBOs and employers

- Provide bridging/transitional support as trainees adjust to program requirements
- Deliver occupational training and skills development consistent with sector requirements, ideally yielding marketable credentials
- Provide additional academic skill building, as needed
- Connect participants to part-time work experience in related fields



### Place, Retain, and Advance YA in Jobs

**Who:** The intermediary, employers, CBOs, and training institutions

- Place training completers in jobs, consistent with their preparation and with employers' needs
- Conduct regular check-ins with employers and young workers, which can diminish over time
- Offer young workers access to ongoing skill building and credential attainment, to promote career advancement
- Connect young workers to alumni supports and peer group activities



### Provide Ongoing, Tailored Supports Across the Continuum of Preparation, Training, and Placement

**Who:** The intermediary, CBOs, and other designated partners

- Build relationships between participants and caring adults throughout their program experience
- Identify and address barriers to participants' success
- Offer career counseling and navigation

## APPENDIX B.

# Site Profile: CareerEdge Funders Collaborative, Bradenton/Sarasota, FL

CareerEdge was the first National Fund collaborative in the southeastern United States, and is the recipient of the National Fund's Exemplary Collaborative Award in recognition of its successes in preparing and connecting job seekers with employers who need their skills and talents. CareerEdge focuses on meeting the employment needs of fast-growing sectors in the regional economy, including manufacturing, health care, computer science and information technology, and transportation, distribution and logistics, and has been extremely successful in developing and leveraging resources from area employers, regional and national philanthropies, and local government. Like other National Fund sites, CareerEdge focuses on the demand side and works hard to help employers fill their skills gaps, but at the same time tries to help individuals enter the workforce and/or move up career ladders to positions with living wages.

### Why did CareerEdge decide to move into the young adult sectoral space?

CareerEdge is committed to promoting regional prosperity and believes that supporting young people is essential to that goal. Participating in the National Fund's Young Adult "YA" Initiative is providing an opportunity to develop new models focusing directly on this population, identify employer needs that these young people can fill, and secure a pipeline of skilled workers to fuel the continuing economic success of the region.

CareerEdge is data-driven in all aspects of its work, striving to identify skill gaps facing employers, and finding opportunities to close them. For example, based on analyses of education attainment figures, CareerEdge found that postsecondary credential

acquisition rates for young adults were well below those for adults, both in the region and the state as a whole. These findings were alarming, since an increasing number of jobs in the region and elsewhere require postsecondary training. In short, these deficits could spell trouble, not only for young people as individuals, but for the economic well-being of the entire region.

Based on these data, CareerEdge concluded that the region needed a "both/and" strategy which focused on students who were still in school, as well as young adults who were out of school and unemployed, ensuring that they are equipped with skills to access high-demand, living-wage jobs in the regional economy. CareerEdge's efforts on behalf of out-of-school youth formed the basis of its National Fund YA work.

## How did CareerEdge organize its young adult work?

The first step was to review the literature and identify what was known about effective practice in the young adult employment field, e.g., the National Fund's YIPI report, as well as other publications by organizations like the Aspen Institute. Based on these documents, it was clear that what was needed was a carefully organized and staged process with multiple components that would require several outside partners. CareerEdge leaders developed the outline of a plan, consistent with what was learned in the research scan, and then began to vet it with knowledgeable groups like youth-serving community organizations, secondary and postsecondary schools, employers, and the regional workforce board. After a lot of discussion and input, a multi-step model was agreed to:

- **Employer Needs Assessment**, including interviewing existing employer partners; consulting regional and state-level labor market information; and identifying credentials with value to employers and that are appropriate for the young adult target population.
- **Young Adult Recruitment**, which focuses on working through organizations that interface with and provide services to young people, including Community Youth Development, a Sarasota youth-serving organization; the Boys & Girls Club; Big Brothers Big Sisters; Goodwill; the housing authority; and several others.
- **Young Adult Assessment**, including an interview with a career coach, administering the TABE exam, participating in an orientation regarding the expectations of the program, and screening for human service-related needs like food, clothing, child care, transportation, etc.
- **Bridges to Careers**, a locally designed work readiness training program created with support from area employers, postsecondary education institutions, and financial institutions.

- **Credential Attainment**, with training delivered by area postsecondary institutions such as Manatee Technical College and Suncoast Technical College (of course, timing is dependent on the specific occupational credential).
- **Intentional Barrier Remediation and Support**, through a dedicated career coach working with participants to promote their development, persistence and success.
- **Internships**, which would last 3 to 4 weeks, and pay \$10/hour. Employers are reimbursed up to \$1,500 for each internship.

While the model was being developed consistent with its focus on data, CareerEdge undertook an employer needs assessment to identify candidate occupations which would be offered in the first sessions. The assessment yielded a very strong demand for Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs). These positions are at the lower end of the skilled employment wage scale, but CareerEdge leaders believed that they were also a good match for lower-skilled young people who are trying to reconnect to education and a career. Furthermore, many hospitals and other healthcare facilities in the area offer tuition reimbursement for upskilling and credential acquisition.

Based on CareerEdge's review of recent research and best practices, it became clear that we needed a carefully organized process with multiple components that could leverage several outside partnerships.

**Deborah Chapman**

Program Director  
CareerEdge



CareerEdge Funders Collaborative, Bradenton/Sarasota, FL

## How is the model funded?

The primary funding source for the National Fund YA Initiative comes through a grant to support the Bridges to Careers program, described earlier as one of the seven components of the training model explained above. Although Bridges is primarily a multifaceted soft skills and work readiness curriculum, the grant purposes are broad enough to allow training for credential attainment as well. Funding for the internship program comes from a separate grant, and CareerEdge is able to allocate a portion of funding from philanthropic investments aimed primarily at training for high-demand occupations to support the YA model.

## What is the status of model implementation?

The 12-week CNA training program was launched in February 2016, and was offered again in June. The model was delivered at an area technical college and functioned as expected, with a couple of exceptions. For example, the internship proved to be inappropriate for the CNA program because CNA classes include clinical training and considerable on-the-job training (OJT). Therefore, healthcare facilities don't typically see the need to provide internships for CNAs since they already have a significant degree of direct care experience.

Also, the number of participants and completers were both lower than hoped. In each cohort almost half the students who started the program did not complete it. This was due to a combination of factors, including attendance, academic failure, and also failing randomly administered drug tests, which proved to be the cause of most of the attrition. This was particularly frustrating because students were cautioned that drug use, including marijuana, was not permissible and would be grounds for termination. Unfortunately, the warning was unheeded by several young students, who were otherwise doing well in the program.

Even so, those who graduated were immediately offered positions, or in some cases decided to continue their education to earn credentials with greater compensation.

## What are some of CareerEdge's key lessons learned to date that might be useful to others who are interested in taking up this work?

Appreciating that every site is different in terms of employer mix, population, and political realities, several lessons learned by CareerEdge should be useful to all areas considering YA sectoral strategies.

- First of all, **rely on and be guided by your data.** Understand where your employer demand is, and what it will take to address it. To understand the demand side, CareerEdge carefully studies regional labor market information and also consults extensively with employers concerning their needs. Also, get to know the young adult population in your area. What are your high school dropout and graduation rates? How many young people go on to postsecondary education? How many complete their first year and eventually earn a credential? Education data are retrieved through the Florida Access Network and the Florida Department of Education. Other good data sources include local workforce boards and school districts, and national sources like the American Community Survey and the National Student Clearinghouse. In some localities, there might be an intermediary that already collects some of these data.

- Next, of course, **rely on and trust your employer partners.** They are eager to help you help them, and they understand better than anyone the kinds of skilled workers they need. So ask them what they need, and engage them in a partnership that might enable you to leverage resources and build additional capacity. The YIPI study also talked about the importance of **developing close ties to community organizations** who understand where to recruit and how to prepare young people for employment. CareerEdge’s experiences validate this finding.
- **Social media are useful recruitment strategies.** CareerEdge didn’t have the personnel resources to take the “boots on the ground” approach, which is often cited in research as an effective recruitment strategy. However, interviews and surveys of participants indicated that recruitment through social media was a very effective way to reach young adults.
- **Pay close attention to the timing of enrollment and program start-up.** For the first cohort, in particular, CareerEdge leaders felt that they had lost many applicants because there was insufficient time for them to move through the WIOA eligibility and enrollment process. As a result, several young adults who likely would have qualified for WIOA as out-of-school youth did not have time to complete the process. On the other hand, if the time frame for enrollment is too long, some young adults will lose interest and drop out. In short, this timing issue must be managed carefully.
- **Establish caring relationships among young adults and program staff.** Recruiting cohorts of young adults, and allowing them to advance together through the training, as feasible, helps to accomplish this. The trust, friendship, and mentoring that grow from collective experiences can have powerful benefits for participants, and help them build a positive peer network. Also, building close connections between young adults and program staff has been touted for at least 20 years as an essential component of successful youth development efforts. CareerEdge’s experiences underscored these practices, and the relationships established made a positive difference for many students.

▮▮ CareerEdge’s CNA pilot demonstrated the importance of close relationships between young adults and a caring adult. Whether they are established through instructors, career coaches, professional counselors or other staff members, these relationships are definitely a key to success. ▮▮

**Deborah Chapman**

Program Director  
CareerEdge

- **Offer bridging strategies to address education and work readiness skill gaps.** Most young adults will not be ready to walk into a training program, and if they are, they probably don’t need that much help. CareerEdge’s Bridges to Careers soft skills training was extremely successful in helping young adults gain the professionalism they needed to succeed in the training program. Because Bridges contains numerous modules, trainers are able to customize content to suit the needs of the audience, but core principles of communication and workplace etiquette are always part of the core content. Almost all the students worked through the modules and emerged with much stronger interpersonal and work readiness skills. Interestingly, when and when not to use cell phones and social media were particularly valuable aspects of the training, since it was a huge area of need according to employers.
- **Consider student financial contribution, but carefully.** CareerEdge thought initially about requiring participants to pay a portion of the cost of the program, e.g., uniforms and related supplies.

But it soon became evident that most potential participants simply didn't have any money to spare, so that requirement was dropped. Still, it is an ongoing concern, since CareerEdge leaders believe that some level of personal financial investment might result in a greater commitment to the training.

- **Understanding drug-related issues is extremely important.** As noted earlier, the most significant issue causing CNA program termination was failure to pass random drug tests. This underscores the importance of up-front screening and communication to ensure that young adults clearly understand that they will be tested during training, and that they will be terminated if they test positive. It's also important to understand the differences in drug policies by industry sector. Health care is, of course, extremely strict in this regard. Other sectors, however, construction, for example, might have quite different standards. So because drug use is so prevalent among young adults, it is important to understand how different sectors treat these issues, and to help program participants comply with these rules.
- **Be prepared for setbacks.** This is very hard work. Life happens, and some young adults simply aren't ready for it yet. So this work requires that adult leaders be prepared to deal with these kinds of adversity in loving and supportive ways, when, inevitably, they happen.
- **Find a community of practice.** The chance to learn with and from peers who are struggling with the same challenges, and celebrating similar successes can be a valuable aspect of this work. So find a supportive peer group — in the National Fund or perhaps another national organization like the National Youth Employment Coalition, Communities Collaborating to Reconnect Youth, or the National Skills Coalition. Peer learning is powerful, and much more fun than going it alone.

“ To understand the job demand side of the equation, CareerEdge commissions and studies regional labor market information, and also consults extensively with employers concerning their workforce needs. ”

**Deborah Chapman**

Program Director  
CareerEdge

## What other plans does CareerEdge have for young adult work?

CareerEdge has an established **Internship Reimbursement Program** that offers employers up to \$1,500 for hiring a college intern at a minimum of \$10/hour. The objective of this initiative is to encourage employers in high-demand sectors to offer students (including those from technical and trade schools) experiential opportunities that propel their learning, boost their resumes, and expose them to the realities of the work environment. The experience also allows them to gain the soft and critical thinking skills needed in today's work environment, and it increases their ability to better market themselves. Employers gain from the benefit of vetting potential new hires in a cost-effective manner, while addressing their need for skilled talent.

One example of how well the internship can work is the Precision Machining Program at Suncoast Technical College. This one-year industry-recognized certification class includes an experiential component at the end of the program that begins with a job shadowing process, and then leads to internship placements at local manufacturers. Internship funding is key to placing the students, and the majority of graduates are hired at their internship site.

CareerEdge is also developing a working **partnership with the Sarasota County School District** and Suncoast Technical College to establish a postsecondary bridging ramp to in-demand occupations. The goal of this effort is to focus resources on younger adults to keep them from heading down a path to unemployment or underemployment. To this end, CareerEdge has launched a new “Pathway to Apprenticeship” pilot program which offers a tuition-free, eight-month program to produce more plumbers, which is a critical need for the region. A requirement of the program will be FAFSA completion, which CareerEdge leaders expect will yield federal financial assistance sufficient to cover most of the costs of the program. Grant funds will fill any gaps.

To promote the program, the school district has agreed to contact approximately 5,000 members of the senior classes over the last five years — including those who might have dropped out — touting this free training and recruiting unemployed and unenrolled young adults. There has also been major media coverage of the program’s creation, and the pilot will help determine if district outreach can be an effective recruitment strategy, and also whether the promise of “free college” will entice sufficient numbers of students into the program, most of whom can then draw down financial aid based on their FAFSA completion.

Also, given the low postsecondary credential attainment in the region, CareerEdge has long championed efforts to increase college access, matriculation and success more broadly among young adults. As in many communities, there is widespread interest in college going and credential attainment, but affordability is perceived to be a barrier. To address this issue, CareerEdge is part of a coalition of community members utilizing a collective impact approach to FAFSA completion, in order to increase the numbers of applications and leverage more federal financial aid, a significant amount of which goes unallocated in most years. The “College Access Network” organized a set of FAFSA labs to work directly with students and parents to provide access to computer labs where the forms can be completed and filed. As a result of these efforts, Sarasota County is now first in the state for the percentage of students completing the FAFSA.

As in many communities, college affordability is perceived to be a barrier for many residents. To address this issue, CareerEdge is part of a coalition of community members utilizing a collective impact approach to FAFSA completion designed to increase student aid applications and leverage more federal funding for post-secondary attainment.

**Deborah Chapman**

Program Director  
CareerEdge

## APPENDIX C.

# Site Profile: Delta Workforce Funding Collaborative, Jackson, MS

The Delta Workforce Funding Collaborative (DWFC) serves a 14-county region along the northwestern Mississippi Delta. Partners include the Foundation for the Mid South, the Mississippi Economic Policy Center, the South Delta Planning and Development District, the Tri-County Workforce Alliance, and the Mississippi Community College Board, all working together to increase the occupational skills and education levels of unemployed and underemployed Mississippians to prepare them for employment primarily in the healthcare and manufacturing sectors.

### Why did DWFC decide to get into the YA sectoral space?

Equity has always been at the center of the collaborative's work, which is focused on efforts that improve the life chances of lower-income and lower-educated Mississippians. There is a strong need to build educational and occupational skill levels for 18- to 24-year-olds. This is particularly important to those who have not yet earned a high school diploma because it creates opportunities to connect them to training and careers where they can earn a living wage. Given a chance to make their way into the economic mainstream, many young adults in the region are prepared to work hard and do what it takes to be successful. DWFC wants to help do that by providing access to basic education, postsecondary training, and credentials which can connect young adults to careers in health care and/or manufacturing.

DWFC has a strong record of working with regional employers and training providers, particularly in health care and manufacturing. Labor market data for the region indicate that jobs related to electronic health records and industrial technicians (e.g., welding, heating & air, electrical, and machine tool operation) will be in high demand and see significant wage gains.

The collaborative believed that young adults could be placed in several fields in these sectors if they were prepared for those jobs.

What was needed was a model that could take high school dropouts who were motivated to get back into school and build their skill levels, and move them through a progressive set of experiences leading to in-demand postsecondary credentials.

Understanding this need, DWFC contributed funding to a pilot program at Mississippi Delta Community College that was able to do just that. Community Collaboration 4 College and Careers (CC4CC) takes a co-enrollment approach, allowing individuals who meet a reading level requirement to enroll in GED (high school equivalency) preparation and selected career technical credit pathways concurrently.

DWFC recruits prospective students through area job fairs, community-based literacy providers and other partners. All applicants are TABE tested as a baseline for their next steps. Participants who do not score the necessary level (5th grade or higher) are referred to a community-based organization for literacy or other skill building. Those who meet the required level are invited to take the next step.

“ Students who do not have their high school diplomas are untapped potential for workforce development and ultimately economic development. I have seldom met more determined individuals than these students, who have lived life a little and now know what they need to do to survive. ”

**Martha Claire Drysdale**

Community Development Director  
DWFC

In addition to meeting the TABE requirements, a critical component of the application process is an extensive personal interview. Students learn about the expectations of the program and the staff gauge the readiness of students to meet them. They need to demonstrate, for example, the desire and commitment to attend and participate in the programming while managing other life circumstances. Because the program does not include stipends, most students must balance school with work; some will work full-time in addition to classes. Obviously, it takes dedication to be able to handle these competing responsibilities.

Another part of the interview is about barrier identification. It is well understood that many of these young people face multiple challenges, including child care, transportation, health, and food security. It is important that they acknowledge their issues so that staff can help find ways to overcome their barriers and help them succeed in the program and beyond. Program leaders understand the various public systems that can provide assistance and can sometimes inform students about specific assistance that is available to help them to get the most appropriate set of benefits.

The interview and ongoing counseling sessions, both formal and informal, are all part of the process of building personal relationships to underscore the importance of students being open to ongoing communication and feedback.

Once accepted, program leaders work with students to develop a schedule that typically has college coursework in the morning and GED preparation in the afternoon. These schedules are very individualized based on the areas each student needs work on to pass the exam. Work readiness and other soft skills training are integrated into the training program, as are tutoring and support from career navigators. Students also hear from guest speakers, who can provide information and answer questions about specific occupations and sectors. This type of information is key to students early in the program, when they might change their minds about which occupations they are interested in. Much of the first year's college coursework is transferable to multiple occupational training programs; typically no ground is lost if a student changes her/his mind. Also, if time and scheduling permit, offering this type of sector-related information at sessions preceding the beginning of the program is a great idea. An early development model of that approach (Your Future, College Ready in 8 Days [CR8]) helps incoming students the summer prior to admission to explore careers with guest speakers and wage data coming directly from industry partners.

### Where is DWFC in terms of implementing the model?

The pilot program, concluded in 2015, served approximately seventy 18- to 24-year-olds, with 83 percent of them securing a job after completion of the program. Based on these successes, the model has been institutionalized, with about 100 students in total participating during the following program year. At any given time, the student population ranges from ten to three dozen, depending on enrollment and attrition. The model is highly successful and continues to be used as a national best practice.

DWFC has worked hard based on these successes to increase the capacity of community-based organizations (CBOs) to work with students, and

to help CBOs and staff at local community colleges collaborate more effectively. While initially focused on the healthcare and manufacturing sectors that have strong potential for growth, the model will be used to move forward in other high-wage sectors in the future.

## How is the model funded?

CC4CC's funding approach results in little or no cost to the students. The college provides the first six credit hours for free, based on the belief that many students who complete the program will continue at the college to earn advanced credentials and degrees. CC4CC also succeeded in leveraging a variety of foundation and government grant programs to help offset costs of tuition, books, and supplies. Lastly, the program has learned how to utilize the federal Pell Grant ability-to-benefit provision, which enables individuals without high school diplomas to draw down federal student financial aid if they are in an approved career pathway (although experience has shown that it is often preferable to wait to utilize Pell until students are more firmly established in their college careers).

## What are some of the key lessons learned to date that might be useful to others who are interested in taking up this work?

- Because this is a sectoral employment program, **you have to know your employers in your sectors.** Really know them — the people, the work they do, who the young adult champions are, and how all the “capillaries” and supply chains fit together. Understanding these things, you can increase the chances that you can help young people find and stay on a path leading to livable-wage jobs.

This is particularly important because, when most students come to CC4CC, they do not have a clue about which sector they are interested in. They just want a good job. At least 70 percent fall into this category, and probably half of those who think they know what they want to do end up changing their minds during the program. Understanding that these changes of mind are going to take place, and also having a substantive knowledge of your sector partners and their needs, is important in helping to guide students into coursework that aligns with their interests and capabilities.

- Beyond the employers themselves who support the program and hire its graduates, the most important thing for success is a strong focus on **building personal relationships between students and program staff.** Program leaders stay close to students, particularly during the early phases of the program, to convey the sense of caring and support that can be essential to success. That is particularly important for these young people, who are unlikely to have anyone in their family who attended college, and have little direct access to the kinds of support systems research suggests are so important for first-time college goers.
- Another essential factor is ensuring that **all the partners in the referral system are on the same page.** In short, referral needs to be multidirectional. That is, whether it is the community college, the WIOA one-stop, the school districts, GED-providing CBOs, or others, everyone must understand the process and how to manage caring handoffs from one organization to another. The last thing that should happen is to let any of these young people — who are taking a risk by asking for help and support — fall through cracks which adult professionals have allowed to form in their own systems. All partners must be crystal clear about how the pieces fit together.



Delta Workforce Funders Collaborative.

“ So many students come into our offices and have no idea what they want to do. Knowing the industry partners well enough to give students a peek into the work itself and the potential wages is a huge benefit. A lot of students (and parents for that matter) still think you have to go to law school to make six figures and I can tell you a lot of electricians and plumbers who laugh at that misconception. ”

**Martha Claire Drysdale**

Community Development Director  
DWFC

- It is also important to **work with the CBO community to build capacity** to ensure that young people are prepared for the rigor of the program. There are some wonderfully caring organizations in the region, and all work hard to develop a common understanding of the skill sets young people will need to succeed in the workplace. To those ends, there is a great deal of face-to-face planning, as well as opportunities to showcase the program’s positive outcomes so that all parties can share in the successes.
- It is extremely useful to **become familiar with the variety of social safety net programs and services** offered in the community. As noted earlier, often young people do not really know what kinds of help are available. So the ability to pick up the phone and connect them to services that can really help them — in the program and in life — can make the difference between success and another setback.

- Another really important thing is to recognize how important it is to these students to **feel that they are part of the college family**. Seemingly small things, like providing students with college identification cards for access to the library and student center, can bring an incredible sense of pride and accomplishment, and motivate them to succeed.
- Support from the college to offer the program and back it financially by **offering the first six credits at no cost to the student** has been huge. Not only is it a generous and thoughtful gesture, it makes good business sense, because so many students are staying well beyond the six-credit mark and earning credentials. This eventually makes money for the college, helps boost the economic well-being of the surrounding communities, and diversifies the student body.
- Lastly, **connecting and collaborating with others** addressing young adult advancement for promising practices and lessons learned is always helpful.

## What other plans does DWFC have for the young adult work?

The major focus will be to continue working on and refining the current model, with the goal of increasing the numbers of young adults who can be served. Some of the partners might vary, but the focus will stay on the same sectors.

One area that will see increased attention is the communication liaison work aimed at breaking down and altering territorial mindsets, and to building common commitment to shared goals. DWFC will continue to bring current and potential partners to the table, underscoring that finding and emphasizing each organization’s areas of strength can produce more consistent outcomes for participants.

Another emerging lesson: upskilling lower-level young adult incumbent workers and moving them up a career ladder can be a valuable approach in addition to working with new employment candidates. A focused strategy of targeting young adult incumbent workers, especially in health care, could prove to be a successful model for further sector development.

Specifically, there is a group of young adults who are currently working in low-wage jobs but not being internally promoted, e.g., workers who did not complete high school and are currently unable to return for extensive training for a new career option, but who could be upskilled while on the job. Employers state that a general soft skills upgrade along with customer service skills could promote an otherwise stagnant worker. The key takeaway: continue robust programs that help entry-level workers while also implementing promising models for incumbent workers.

“I tell our students – most of whom are young women – that if they don’t want me “up in their business,” then this probably isn’t the right program for them. Because we want to know about their hopes, their fears, their dreams, and their aspirations. We want to be there for the good times and the bad times. This type of relationship-building is an essential aspect of the program.”

**Martha Claire Drysdale**

Community Development Director  
DWFC

## APPENDIX D.

# Snapshots from Additional Sites

### KentuckianaWorks, Louisville, KY

KentuckianaWorks, the local workforce board that also houses the local National Fund collaborative (WIRED 65), has begun to forge more intentional connections between its existing sectoral efforts and youth employment programming.

KentuckianaWorks has established a number of sector-based training facilities. For example, for several years its Kentucky Manufacturing Career Center (KMCC) has worked with employers to identify needs and develop training to meet those needs. KMCC employers have identified developing a pipeline of young adults into manufacturing as a critical need for their long-term business success. In addition, KentuckianaWorks runs a long-standing Kentucky Youth Career Center (KYCC), which includes numerous programs for out-of-school, out-of-work youth supported by a range of local, state and national resources.

KentuckianaWorks identified the MSSC Certified Production Technician (CPT) as a potential fit for a youth sectoral match; the training can be completed in a few months, leading to a highly valued certification that puts new employees into jobs in a high-demand manufacturing pathway. KMCC offers CPT cohort training throughout the year and has the flexibility to incorporate young adults from KYCC into existing programs or to run an all-youth cohort. However, as KYCC staff began identifying potential participants, they found themselves facing a challenge — few of the young adults found manufacturing to be of interest.

In response, KentuckianaWorks went to the source: young adults themselves. KentuckianaWorks had begun piloting an internship opportunity for WIOA-eligible youth who had completed other Career Center programming. The program, called Internship Academy, included four days of intensive training in work readiness, leadership development, and guest speakers;

followed by a 7-week, 20 hours/week internship; followed by job placement. Many of the expenditures were applicable to WIOA's new 20 percent work experience requirement. The internship also required that youth work as a team on a capstone project. For the second internship cohort, which began in early 2016, the youth interns agreed to take on this challenge as their project: how could KentuckianaWorks better attract young people to manufacturing?

**Emerging Effective Practice.** The youth interns had little knowledge of manufacturing when they began their project. They interviewed and visited several KMCC employers and did research on millennials and manufacturing. The interns worked with a video production company to create a **short video, aimed at youth**, that addressed why manufacturing could be a great career. The youth tapped into the KMCC employers they had visited as ongoing advisors as they completed their project.

The interns presented the video, the results of their research, and their recommendations to the KMCC Employer Advisory Group. They had a wide-ranging discussion with the employers. The youth shared that their trips to manufacturing plants had been critical to changing their perceptions, and employers were encouraged to connect with KentuckianaWorks and other stakeholders to host youth.

Coming out of the meeting, there was strong interest in utilizing the video not only in KYCC but also more widely in the schools. A team from the school system committed to working with KentuckianaWorks to identify a distribution method. Employers also expressed interest in using the video themselves to promote interest in manufacturing careers.

### Employ Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI

Employ Milwaukee is Milwaukee's workforce development board. As such, it manages WIOA

funding, as well as a wide variety of other public and private investments, providing education and employment services to hundreds of employers and thousands of youth and adults across the region. Employ Milwaukee is also a leader in the collaborative [Milwaukee Area Workforce Funders Alliance](#).

Employ Milwaukee has taken advantage of new elements in the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) to model its programs around strategies that focus on sector-based programming designed to provide career pathways for older youth and young adults. For example, the Milwaukee Achiever bridge-to-college program serves as a re-engagement center for out-of-school youth by aligning high school equivalency programming with occupational training offered at a regional technical college. Another example of sectoral work is the COIN Initiative, in which Employ Milwaukee partners with Milwaukee Public Schools to provide training in construction-related professions for unemployed and underemployed low-income residents, including young adults, and offering work opportunities through facilities and service maintenance contractors.

**Emerging Effective Practice.** In the last few years, Employ Milwaukee has developed **sector-based Industry Advisory Boards** (IABs) across five key sectors in the local economy, which provide real-time employer relations and industry guidance for WIOA programming and investments. These industry partners work with Employ Milwaukee to develop career pathways with a clear sequence of education and training that results in skills and credentials aligned with the needs of the industry sector and provides multiple points of entry to good jobs. The IABs have expressed interest in building pipelines for youth and young adults, as employers have studied the region's demographics and are concerned about where they will find the next generation of workers. Almost all the IAB members have forged linkages with local educational institutions to connect with students, and they support Milwaukee's Summer Jobs and Beyond program. Next steps include leveraging relationships with IAB members, or in some cases asking members to facilitate discussion with their sector peers, in order to place youth and young adults into internships, youth apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, and other employment and training opportunities.



Partner4Work, Pittsburgh, PA

## Partner4Work, Pittsburgh, PA

Partner4Work serves as the workforce development board for the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County, an area with more than 1.2 million residents. Partner4Work houses [Pittsburgh Works](#), the local National Fund collaborative, which has built a network of over 80 adult training providers that prepare adults for in-demand jobs. As part of its broader mission, Partner4Work is working to create a young-adult-to-adult career pipeline that aligns services and resources, and leverages career pathway opportunities to help young adults access employment in well-paying jobs that provide the potential for upward mobility.

A good example of Partner4Work's burgeoning young adult sectoral work is the Cohort-Based Industry-Focused Training Model, an important part of WIOA out-of-school youth year-round programming, designed to create direct pathways to postsecondary education, employment, and careers with life-sustaining wages. Occupational skills training, featuring peer and instructor supports, includes career exploration, on-site career experience, occupational skills attainment, and industry-recognized certification. Four out-of-school youth (OSY) community-based providers have focused their efforts in the construction industry, serving over 100 young adults, with training that results in at least one certificate.

**Emerging Effective Practice.** Partner4Work sees significant opportunity to **link cohort-based youth-serving sector strategies with the Pittsburgh Works network** and to sector strategies that have historically served adults and dislocated workers. To these ends, Partner4Work is working to enhance the capacity of youth-serving programs by engaging providers in Pittsburgh Works trainings and employer discussions, opening access to resources, and connecting young adult providers with workforce development providers throughout Allegheny County. Further, Partner4Work has identified several youth providers with the capability to adopt and implement high-quality sectoral strategies, and has begun the process of identifying sector-based groups of employers to be linked with young adult providers to ensure that programming is grounded in the needs of regional businesses.

Another emerging model is Partner4Work's ongoing effort to create an engaging **video game with the capacity to assess the aptitude of young adults ages 17 to 29 in technical fields**, including skills in problem solving, algorithmic thinking, creating and implementing a solution, and attention to detail. When finalized, the game will be free to the public and will be utilized to help individuals identify latent skills and connect with training and career exploration. It will also help businesses assess the knowledge base of potential employees.

## APPENDIX E.

# National Fund Young Adult Initiative Components

The National Fund's Young Adult Initiative has several distinct components:

### Technical Assistance

Upon launching the YA Initiative, the National Fund solicited letters of interest from member collaboratives desiring assistance to develop or adapt sectoral strategies for young adults. Twelve communities were identified for support, and each worked with coaches to draft and refine local plans by mid-2015. Based on their planning work, six of the twelve sites expressed interest in more in-depth technical assistance and coaching on YA strategies, which took place in 2015-16. In 2016-17, the National Fund will continue to offer coaching support to a select number of sites implementing YA efforts.

### Peer Learning Community

In implementing the YA Initiative, the National Fund also sought to create a vibrant community of practice to advance the emerging field of YA sectoral work. The **YA Peer Learning Community** connects and builds capacity of collaboratives interested in building young adult sectoral efforts. The National Fund held the first in-person Peer Learning Community convening in 2016; another will take place in 2017. Peer Learning sites also participate in YA workshops at other National Fund conferences. In addition, the National Fund offers webinars, produces research summaries and disseminates materials to inform and lift up lessons from the participating collaboratives.

### Employer Champions

There are few better advocates for YA strategies than employers who are actively engaged in that work, and whose stories can help to interest and engage other employers in YA approaches. Appreciating this, the National Fund established its YA Employer Champions

program to recognize the contributions of employer leaders and to share their experiences.

To date, the National Fund has recognized 17 leading employers who have been exemplary partners in generating critical information on how employers can develop systems for attracting, training and retaining young adults. The National Fund has profiled several Employer Champions, and others have presented their experiences at national convenings where other employers can hear their messages. The National Fund will recognize additional YA Employer Champions in 2017.

Figure 2: National Fund Young Adult Employer Champions, 2015-2016

ACMT/Advanced Composites and Metalforming Technologies, Inc. (Hartford, CT)  
AgustaWestland (Philadelphia, PA)  
Austal USA (Mobile, AL)  
Carey-Floyd Manufacturing (Cromwell, CT)  
Giant Eagle, Inc. (Pittsburgh, PA)  
Keats Manufacturing Company (Wheeling, IL)  
Mallory Industries, Inc. (Farmington, CT)  
Okay Industries, Inc. (New Britain, CT)  
OpenSquare (Seattle, WA)  
Pointe Precision, Inc. (Plover, WI)  
PTR Baler and Compactor (Philadelphia, PA)  
Sinai Hospital/LifeBridge Health (Baltimore, MD)  
Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide (Stamford, CT)  
State Street Corporation (Boston, MA)  
Suffolk Construction (Boston, MA)  
Swiss Post Solutions, Inc. (New York, NY)  
University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (Pittsburgh, PA)

## Training Provider Profiles

YA sectoral strategies also require high-quality training partners to ensure that participants are ready for work. The National Fund produced profiles of four training providers with demonstrated records of success, to assist member collaboratives in developing a deeper understanding of how programs can effectively recruit, engage, and train young adults for sectoral employment. Organizations profiled include [Baltimore Center for Green Careers](#), [New Community Corporation](#), [M-Powered](#), and the [Creating IT Futures Foundation](#).

## Regional YA Labor Market Analyses

Appreciating the importance of labor market data in developing YA sectoral strategies, the National Fund produced in-depth analyses in two of the YA Peer Learning member communities — [Pittsburgh](#) and [Milwaukee](#). Many areas around the country examine labor market information, but few focus on young adults, who often experience different labor market prospects than older adults. Through these analyses, the National Fund aimed to spur consideration of labor market realities and potential for youth around the country, and to model how other communities might organize similar data efforts.



New Community Corporation, supported by Greater Newark Workforce Funders Collaborative

## APPENDIX F.

# Demand-driven Employment Strategies for Young Adults: Selected Resource List

This list of resources contains a number of hyperlinked documents relating to employer engagement and youth employment that have been published over the last half decade or so. While neither complete nor authoritative, it does contain useful research and effective practice literature on young adult-related employment. Although there is some overlap between categories in this list, organizing the material in this way can make the resources easier to access and use.

### Background, Research, and Rationale for Hiring Youth

Belfield, Clive, Henry Levin, and Rachel Rosen, “The Economic Value of Opportunity Youth” (January 2012).

Bridgeland, John, and Jessica Milano, “Opportunity Road: The Promise and Challenge of America’s Forgotten Youth” (Civic Enterprises and America’s Promise Alliance, January 2012).

Conway, Maureen, and Robert P. Giloth, eds., *Connecting People to Work: Workforce Intermediaries and Sector Strategies* (The American Assembly, Columbia University, 2014) [focused on adult workers, but also contains insights for older youth and young adults].

Lerman, Robert I., “Should Employer-Led Training be the Framework for Workforce Development?” (Maryland School of Public Policy and the Atlantic Council, 2013).

Martha Ross et al., “Unemployment Among Young Adults: Exploring Employer-Led Solutions” (The Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program, 2015).

Van Horn, Carl, Tammy Edwards, and Todd Greene, eds., “Transforming U.S. Workforce Policies for the 21st Century” (W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research and the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, 2015) [focused primarily on adults, but also contains essays pertinent to older youth and young adults].

### Guides and Toolkits for Engaging Employers and Hiring Youth

“A Toolkit for Employers: Why Employ Youth Who Have Had Juvenile Justice Involvement?” (LEAP [Learning, Employment and Achieving Potential for Youth with Juvenile Justice Involvement], Seattle).

“Active Labor Market Programs for Youth: A Framework to Guide Youth Employment Interventions” World Bank Employment Policy Primer 16 (November 2010).

“Career Pathways Toolkit: A Guide for System Development” (U.S. Department of Labor, 2015).

Cominetti, Nye et al., “Beyond the business case: The employer’s role in tackling youth unemployment” (The Work Foundation, Lancaster University [UK], 2013).

“Connecting Youth & Business, A Toolkit for Employers” (White House Council for Community Solutions, 2012).

“Employer Toolkit Summer 2016” (STEP-UP Achieve, Minneapolis).

Grads of Life Campaign: A Project of Opportunity Nation. (a website with tools designed to help employers develop sources of talent by creating customized employment pathways for young adults ages 16-24 who have not yet obtained a college credential)

"Promising Pathways to Careers Toolkit" (Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, 2012).

Taylor, Colin, "Employer Engagement in the National Fund for Workforce Solutions" (Jobs for the Future and the National Fund For Workforce Solutions, 2011).

"The Evolution and Potential of Career Pathways" (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

## Making the Business Case/Return on Investment

Bennett, Steve, and Katie Hall, "Employing Opportunity Youth: Recognizing and Re-enforcing the Business Case" (Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, 2014).

"Business at its Best: Driving Sustainable Value Creation, Five Imperatives for CEOs" (Accenture, 2011).

Carlton, Abigail et al., "Youth Hold the Key: Building Your Workforce Today and in the Future" (The Bridgespan Group and Bain & Company, 2015).

"Going Beyond the Bottom Line: Employer Perspectives on the Young Adult Workforce Development System in New York City" (JobsFirstNYC, 2012).

Job Opportunity Investment Network, "ROI360: How Workforce Partnership Training Benefits Business, Workers and Community" (Philadelphia, 2011).

Porter, Michael, "Creating Shared Value: Redefining Capitalism and the Role of the Corporation in Society" (Harvard Business Review, January, 2011).

Porter, Michael et al., "Measuring Shared Value: How to Unlock Value by Linking Business and Social Results" (FSG, 2012).

Rosenblum, Elyse, and Sara Toland, "Driving Employer Demand for New Sources of Talent" (Public Private Possibilities, 2013).

"Shaping the Future: Solving Social Problems through Business Strategy" (Committee Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy, 2010).

"Taking Care of Business: Transitional Jobs and Subsidized Employment Programs Benefit the Business Community" (National Transitional Jobs Network, 2013).

"A Call to Action for Youth Employment" (Opportunity Nation, 2015).

"Why Companies Invest in 'Grow Your Own' Talent Development Models, Including a Tool for Calculating Return on Workforce Readiness Programs" (Corporate Voices for Working Families, 2011).

"Youth Unemployment Challenge and Solutions: What Business Can Do Now" (ManpowerGroup, 2012).

## Effective Practice

Grobe, Terry, Nancy Martin, and Adria Steinberg, "Creating Pathways to Employment: The Role of Industry Partnerships in Preparing Youth and Young Adults for Careers in High-Demand Industries" (National Fund for Workforce Solutions and Jobs for the Future, 2015)

Hanleybrown, Fay et al., "Collective Impact for Opportunity Youth" (FSG, 2012).

Hossain, Farhana, "Serving Out-of-School Youth Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act" (MDRC, 2015).

"Innovations in the Field: Young Adult Sectoral Employment Project" (JobsFirstNYC, 2014).

Jain, Ranita, Maureen Conway, and Vickie Choitz, "Connecting Young Adults to Employment: Results from a National Survey of Service Providers" (Workforce Strategies Institute at the Aspen Institute, 2015).

Maguire, Sheila et al., "Job Training that Works: Findings from the Sectoral Employment Impact Study" (Public/Private Ventures, 2009).

Maguire, Sheila, "Optimizing Talent: The Promise and the Perils of Adapting Sectoral Strategies for Young Workers" (JobsFirstNYC and the Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program, 2016).

The Annie E. Casey Foundation, "Youth and Work: Restoring Teen and Young Adult Connections to Opportunity" (Baltimore, 2012).

Treskon, Louisa, "What Works for Disconnected Young People: A Scan of Evidence" (MDRC, 2016).

U.S. Chamber Foundation Center for Education and Workforce, "Making Youth Employment Work. Essential Elements for a Successful Strategy" (2015).

# Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Jobs and the Urban Poor, a 1995 Aspen Institute publication, included one of the earliest definitions of sectoral strategies which continues to drive the work of National Fund collaboratives and other leaders in this space. Authors Peggy Clark and Steven Dawson suggested that a sectoral strategies model: (a) targets a particular occupation within an industry; (b) intervenes by becoming a valued actor in the industry that employs that occupation; (c) exists for the primary purpose of assisting low-income people to decent employment; and (d) creates, over time, systemic change within that occupation's labor market.

<sup>2</sup> Maguire, Sheila, et al., "Tuning In to Labor Markets: Findings from the Sectoral Employment Impact Study" Public/Private Ventures, 2010.

<sup>3</sup> "Connecting Youth & Business, A Toolkit for Employers" (White House Council for Community Solutions, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> Belfield, Clive, Henry Levin, and Rachel Rosen, "The Economic Value of Opportunity Youth" (January 2012).

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.jobsfirstnyc.org/>

<sup>6</sup> Maguire, Sheila, "Optimizing Talent: The Promise and Perils of Adapting Sectoral Strategies for Young Adults" (JobsFirstNYC and the Aspen Institute, 2016).

<sup>7</sup> Grobe, Terry, et al., "Creating Pathways to Employment: The Role of Workforce Partnerships in Preparing Youth and Young Adults for Careers in High-Demand Industries" (National Fund for Workforce Solutions and Jobs for the Future, 2015).

<sup>8</sup> [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org)

<sup>9</sup> "What Works in Job Training: A Synthesis of the Evidence" (U.S. Departments of Commerce, Education, Labor and Health and Human Services, 2014).

<sup>10</sup> Chaplin, Duncan and Jane Hannaway, "High School Employment: Meaningful Connections for At-Risk Youth" (Urban Institute, 1996).

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/11/02/pathways-prosperity-meeting-challenge-preparing-young-americans-21st-century>

<sup>12</sup> Conway, Maureen and Robert P. Giloth, eds., "Connecting People to Work: Workforce Intermediaries and Sector Strategies" (The American Assembly, 2014).

<sup>13</sup> Rosenblum, Elyse and Sara Toland, "Driving Employment Demand for New Talent Sources" (Public Private Possibilities, 2013).

<sup>14</sup> "Corporate Voices for Working Families, Why Companies Invest in 'Grow Your Own' Talent Models" (2011).

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.clasp.org/issues/postsecondary/pages/aqcp-framework-version-1-0>

<sup>16</sup> Osterman, Paul, *The Labor Market Context for Employment and Training Policy*, in "Connecting People to Work" Maureen Conway and Robert P. Giloth, eds. (The American Assembly, 2014).

<sup>17</sup> Conway, Maureen and Steven L. Dawson, "Raise the Floor and Build Ladders: Workforce Strategies Supporting Mobility and Stability for Low-Wage Workers" (The Aspen Institute, 2016).

<sup>18</sup> "National Skills Coalition Comments on Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Notices of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRMs)" (May, 2015).

<sup>19</sup> Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration. 20 CFR Parts 603, 651, 652, 653, 654, 658, 675, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, and 688

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