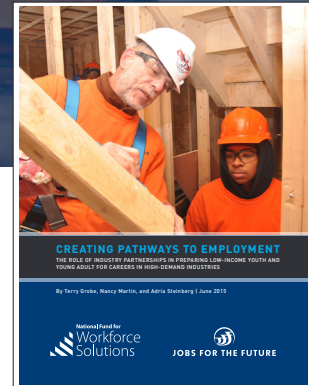


# CREATING PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT

THE ROLE OF YOUTH/INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS IN PREPARING LOW-INCOME YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS FOR CAREERS IN HIGH-DEMAND INDUSTRIES

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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JOBS FOR THE FUTURE



The United States is in the midst of a youth unemployment crisis that is having a negative impact on young adults' success in the workplace and depriving employers of a prepared workforce. A full 6.7 million American youth (ages 16-24), 17 percent of that age group, are neither in school nor working.<sup>1</sup> At the same time as this population of "opportunity youth" struggles to enter the labor market, many employers are struggling to identify skilled workers for high-demand sectors.

The National Fund for Workforce Solutions, in partnership with Jobs for the Future, and with support from the Rockefeller Foundation launched the Youth/Industry Partnership Initiative (YIPI), designed to learn as much as possible in an 18-month timeframe about how employer-led industry partnerships, such as those in the National Fund communities, could contribute to addressing this dual crisis and to generating improved outcomes for older youth and benefits to participating employers. Specifically, how can industry partnerships be harnessed to create employment pathways aligned with employer needs that offer a clear sequence of education coursework, training credentials, and job placement in high-demand sectors? YIPI provided support to three National Fund collaboratives to investigate this question.

The key learning emerging from this initiative is the importance of 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, to build high-quality

employer-connected pathways. Each stakeholder plays key roles in connecting young adults to employment—all parties must work closely together in order to advance better outcomes.

- **Community providers** play key roles in identifying, recruiting and supporting young adults so they can enter, persist, and succeed in pathway programming. Community agencies also help youth build their professional skills and provide continuing support for young adults once they enter employment.
- **Employers** play vital roles in providing information on key skills required to enter and advance in the sector. They also contribute by advising and participating in program and curricular design and offering on-the-job training and first jobs.
- **Workforce intermediaries** provide the connecting functions, brokering relationships among agencies, training institutions or programs and employers, and identifying which sectors hold the most promise for training and supporting older youth.

The YIPI project was designed as a learning initiative to generate lessons for the field and create appetite for additional research and development. The emerging work at the YIPI sites to create high-quality employment pathways is proving that the National Fund for Workforce Solutions' employer partnerships and similar national ventures hold the potential to both address our youth employment crisis and generate our next-generation skilled workforce for employers.

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The full report is available at <http://www.jff.org/publications/yipi>

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