

# Partnering With Employers

## Effective Practices for YouthBuild Programs



YouthBuild

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## Introduction

It is important to recognize and acknowledge that YouthBuild students drive their personal transformation and success both in and beyond the program. YouthBuild staff and program elements play a critical role in providing the opportunities for young people to succeed. For young people to succeed beyond the program, YouthBuild staff can consider building a strong career development model that matches student interests with employment opportunities in high-demand sectors. A key part of building a strong career development component at your program is to identify the appropriate employers, engage them, and build lasting and effective partnerships.



YouthBuild graduates are more likely to be successful in their post-program placements and are more likely to remain in placements if, prior to leaving YouthBuild, they acquire relevant occupational skills for entry-level employment and access to local employers. Employers with connections to YouthBuild are more likely to hire YouthBuild graduates and can provide valuable input to program staff on the specific knowledge, skills and aptitudes young people need in order to be successful in their initial placements. In turn, YouthBuild staff can integrate this information into the YouthBuild curriculum, ensuring that graduates are on the pathway to educational opportunities, and employment that pays family-sustaining wages.

## U.S. Department of Labor Employer Engagement Learning Community

Beginning in November 2011, ten DOL YouthBuild Programs participated in a learning community to demonstrate the link between effective employer engagement and higher rates of job placements and retention outcomes. Through the learning community, the programs identified specific approaches to engage local employers effectively in high-growth sectors.

The ten sites selected to participate in the Employer Engagement Learning Community were diverse in many different aspects.

- **States:** Illinois, Ohio, New York, and Washington
- **Sponsoring organizations:** large nonprofits, multi-service organizations, and government agencies
- **Program staffing configuration:** full-time, part-time or no career development specialists
- **Student characteristics:** young parents, former gang members and ex-offenders
- **Organizational development:** Long-standing programs and newly-funded under the Department of Labor

The learning community was organized around the following questions:

- What does it take to ensure that young people experience seamless transitions out of the YouthBuild program environment and into entry-level employment?
- How can YouthBuild program staff identify employment opportunities in high-demand sectors and occupations within these sectors?
- What practices promote higher placement rates and retention outcomes for young people?
- What are the career pathways for graduates entering high-demand sectors?

Over a ten-month period, participants in the learning community utilized tools and resources to target and engage employers. The resources included:

- Three webinars offered by YouthBuild USA
- Site visits and individual coaching
- Additional technical assistance through Jobs for the Future in the form of:
  - instruction on using labor market data to identify employers and entry-level occupations in high-demand sectors in local communities;
  - strategies for engaging employers to define career pathways that lead to higher wages and skill attainment; and
  - strategies for connecting post-secondary programs with labor market information and employer feedback to identify “best bet” careers.

At the end of the initiative, participants shared with peers in the learning community: the occupations they chose to target, criteria for choosing employers, strategies to engage them, challenges they faced, and recommendations for other YouthBuild programs.

## Employer Engagement Framework

Successful YouthBuild programs develop training and education curricula and offer life skills support to prepare their students to be competitive in the local labor market. Additionally, programs also make connections with businesses, post-secondary educational institutions, unions, and workforce partners in their communities to provide next-step opportunities to their students. *It is not enough to train and educate young people and point them in the direction of a job or school.* It is equally important for program staff to create strong partnerships with businesses and post-secondary institutions to ensure that students are prepared to transition out of YouthBuild and into the right combination of work and educational experiences that lead to good jobs and sustainable careers.

The programs that excel in this work know that their success depends on understanding the needs of two stakeholder groups – YouthBuild students (employees) and employers. This is often called a dual-customer approach. Understanding this reality, the U.S. Department of Labor encourages all DOL YouthBuild programs to think broadly about the role of YouthBuild programs in supplying a pool of screened, qualified, and trained students to employers who need such employees.

## Information Sources

The effective practices compiled in this guide were informed by the lessons learned from the Employer Engagement Learning Community as well as resources from the workforce development field. These included:

- **YouthBuild program best practices.** These were gathered through telephone interviews with staff (using a standard interview protocol), tools and resources YouthBuild programs utilized in the learning community, and through presentations in the learning community webinar series.
- **Jobs for the Future (JFF) and DOL YouthBuild coaches.** As part of a technical assistance contract, JFF trained DOL YouthBuild coaches and YouthBuild programs in the learning community to gather and analyze labor market information to identify high-growth sectors. JFF also focused on employer engagement strategies to foster partnerships with stakeholders such as post-secondary institutions, Workforce Investment Boards (WIB), One-Stop Career Centers (also known as American Job Centers), and unions.
- **Literature review.** The guide also contains best practices and examples of applying local labor market information (LMI), developing program specific marketing and networking approaches, and utilizing employer engagement strategies.

## Emerging Themes

The learning community identified five effective practices that worked across the range of programs that participated:

<b>1</b>	Research the local labor market, assess students, and learn about employers.	When programs thoroughly research the local labor market, they identify new and sustainable career opportunities in local industries that are growing and pinpoint industries that are declining. Local labor market research benefits students and strengthens programs. It also gives programs the data to identify the most suitable employers within specific industries.
<b>2</b>	Sell the program and its results.	Yes, this is a sales job so a program should consider leading with the benefits to the employer. YouthBuild students' post-program success is in part dependent on the ability of staff to articulate clearly the ways in which partnership with YouthBuild can benefit businesses and employers.
<b>3</b>	Engage employers on multiple levels.	Make it easy for them to invest. Placement is just one avenue for connecting with employers; and it may not be your first point of engagement.
<b>4</b>	Build strong and strategic partnerships with post-secondary education institutions and workforce development partners	YouthBuild programs do not operate in a vacuum! YouthBuild staff can leverage the resources of organizations involved in the education, training, and employment system to increase their own pool of resources and provide greater opportunity for students.
<b>5</b>	Develop a long-term vision.	Set the program up for success by planning beyond the next training cycle, funding year or current cohort.

While there is not a set formula for building effective and engaging partnerships with employers, the following effective practices emerged from the Employer Engagement Learning Community. YouthBuild programs can utilize these strategies to plan and guide this work. The strategies, practices, tools and resources identified and developed through the Learning Community can help YouthBuild programs attain successful post-program placement outcomes including higher rates of employment and post-secondary education.

# 1. Research the Local Labor Market, Assess Students, and Learn About Employers

While most YouthBuild programs focus on construction and construction-related training such as weatherization, programs are beginning to offer trainings and secure post-program placements in a wide range of other industries including healthcare, hospitality, logistics and transportation, manufacturing, retail, warehousing and waste management. Programs conduct labor market research to identify high growth industries and “good-fit” occupations in their area. Additionally, they also discuss hiring needs with potential employers, visit human resources personnel and hiring managers, and get a clear understanding of the specific skills and education levels needed for each position.



*“Do the research. Look at Labor Market Information, look at trends, review and analyze the data. It is not always pretty or sexy but you need to understand your population and what is going on in your community. This information is incredibly important and valuable.”*

GREG MARTINEZ, CENTRAL STATES SER

## Research the Local Labor Market

The labor market operates on a supply and demand dynamic. Workers seek and compete for employment opportunities while employers search for qualified employees. This process occurs at all levels of the labor market, from the day laborer on a temporary job at a construction site to a chief executive at a global corporation. In fact, our economy is dependent on the correct occupational fit in this process between employers and employees.

YouthBuild programs are poised to play an important role helping students and employers bridge the labor market supply and demand process. While programs prepare young people by offering educational opportunities, hands-on training, and support services to prepare young people for successful careers, they can consider going beyond this preparation process in order to ensure the post-program success of students. YouthBuild staff can proactively learn about students’ vocational interests and understand the educational, technical, and soft skill requirements employers seek, by conducting labor market research.

Labor market research may seem daunting, but it is simply putting together the puzzle pieces which consist of current and future local job prospects. Jobs for the Future, in their technical assistance work with the Employer Engagement Learning Community, identified the following steps for conducting regional labor market research.

Labor market research should include:

- Projected growth or decline of industries\* in a region
- Projected growth or decline of occupations<sup>+</sup>
- Wages by occupation and industry
- Projected annual job openings by industry sector and occupation
- Education, certification and licensure required for occupations
- Employers by industry sector
- Employer demand by occupation

\* An industry is a group of establishments that produce similar products or provide similar services such as the auto industry, the hospitality industry or the construction industry.

+ An occupation is made up of a set of activities or tasks that an employee performs such as a mechanic or a teacher.



#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information, see *Tackling the Labor Market: A Guide to Getting Beyond the Data* in Appendix A.

For a glossary of terms, please see *Glossary of Labor Market Terms* in Appendix B.

Because there is a wealth of labor market information, when conducting labor market research confine the focus to key occupational data for growing occupations that are a good fit for YouthBuild students. These include:

- **Wages.** The potential earnings by hour or year for an occupation in a metropolitan or non-metropolitan area based on earnings reported for the most recent year. Because YouthBuild students are likely to be entry-level workers, they will not earn the median wage (defined as the middle value, where 50 percent of workers earn more than the median wage and 50 percent earn less). Therefore, it is helpful to look at the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile wages, which is a good indicator of entry-level wages.
- **Growth.** The potential growth of the occupation or industry over the next decade.
- **Job openings.** The most recent projections on how many jobs are currently available and projected to be open. Programs can view this information by year and by state.
- **Education, training and work experience.** Based on national trends, this should include how much education, training, and/or work experience a student may need in order to work in the occupation.



#### Fishing Used To Be a Lucrative Industry In Washington State

The staff at Lummi Housing Authority YouthBuild knew fishing was the fabric of their community through their own experience and those of students and their families. As the industry declined, fishing relief money was allocated for re-training grants in welding and other vocational areas. By looking at the projected annual occupational growth by industry, Lummi YouthBuild staff knew the fishing industry in their area would not be rebounding anytime soon. Even if a student wanted to follow in family footsteps and fish to earn a living, the jobs were few and there was no job growth projected. “If the fishing industry wasn’t dying out, we would adjust our strategy to place there, but we did not want to set students up to fail” according to Matt Magrath, Lummi Nation Housing Authority

When reviewing occupational data to identify careers that will be a good fit for YouthBuild students, be sure to focus on career pathways that:

- Match student interests
- Require an educational level that is less than a bachelor's degree
- Are projected to grow and have openings in the region
- Pay a median wage that is at least 80 percent of the region's median wage
- Offer career advancement

In addition to labor market data, YouthBuild programs may also consider local community information. For example, because community colleges are in constant communication with employers regarding technical courses and certifications, they are a great source of local labor market information. This can help staff identify career pathways and develop training curricula for vocations that align with local occupational growth. Incorporating local labor market information can also be a way to affirm what YouthBuild staff and students may already know by observing industry trends in the community.



### How the Data Can Be Used

When conducting labor market research, programs should consider using occupational analysis to project the number of job openings by occupation as well as identifying education and training requirements, salary, and major employers in the sector. *Utilizing Labor Market Data for Job Placement* by ICF International provides detailed instructions on using labor market research.

The below labor market analysis conducted by Richland County is an example. In their labor market research, Richland identified five high-growth occupations and ranked them by the projected number of job opening annually over the next five years. They also discovered that the highest demand occupations also do not require a college degree because much of the training can be obtained on the job. Next, they matched individuals with career interests and preferences within the growing sectors, tourism and hospitality, in this case.

The ultimate goal of labor market research for YouthBuild programs is to match students' interests, education, and skill levels with growing industries. Doing so will yield better opportunities for students and successful post-program outcomes.

#### Labor Market Analysis – Richland County

Top Five Occupations Ranked by Estimated Annual Openings 2011-2016 – Richland County



Occupation Title	2011 Employment	2016 Projected Employment	Estimated Annual Openings 2011-2016	Average Annual Salary	Education / Training Required	Major Employers
Customer Service Representatives	5,213	5,641	86	\$ 30,112	HS diploma, some college, OJT	BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF SC CELLCO PARTNERSHIP PALMETTO GBA LLC
Retail Salespersons	7,135	7,519	77	\$ 23,240	OJT	WAL-MART ASSOCIATES INC
Registered Nurses	5,089	5,460	74	\$ 59,664	Associate/Bachelors degree	PALMETTO HEALTH SISTERS OF CHARITY PROVIDENCE HOSPITAL WJBD VA MEDICAL CENTER
Home Health Aides	1,584	1,801	43	\$ 18,806	OJT	PALMETTO HEALTH
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	2,551	2,737	37	\$ 16,674	OJT	Restaurants

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), SC Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW), and ICF International

The information contained in this document is proprietary to ICF International.



## Assess Students

Employers consider a range of factors when making decisions about hiring, including technical skills, job readiness skills, and soft skills. Hence, YouthBuild staff may consider building in considerations of student readiness, including barriers to employment, when helping students plan for post-program placement and transition.

Many YouthBuild programs, including members of the Employer Engagement Learning Community, utilize job readiness observations and checklists as a critical tool to help students make the transition from YouthBuild to the world of work. By focusing on student readiness during the program cycle, YouthBuild staff can help students develop soft skills needed to succeed in their chosen occupations. Observation checklists and readiness assessment tools help programs continuously measure student growth, provide feedback to students, and determine their readiness to pursue employment opportunities. See the [Pathways to Long-Term Success for YouthBuild Students](#) program manual.



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on work readiness assessment tools, see *The Work Readiness Behavioral Assessment Tool with Rubric and Guidance* in Appendix C.

Assessing student readiness also includes addressing barriers to employment that students may face such as the inability to pass a background check or a drug test. YouthBuild staff should be familiar with potential employers' screening criteria and match students to employers accordingly. For example, if Home Depot will not hire employees with a criminal record you might consider looking for opportunities at a local hardware store that may have more flexible screening criteria. Similarly, if a local weatherization company will not hire employees with a criminal record to conduct home weatherization, the company may provide opportunities in the warehouse or central office. It is also important to note in conversations with employers which criminal offenses are acceptable for hiring young offenders.



### Student Readiness in Practice

Ray Fleming of Prologue Inc. works with youth prior to placing them into post-program placements to ensure they are prepared, motivated to succeed, and possess appropriate work clothes and grooming. During this period, he discusses employer expectations.

This also helps him maintain positive relationships with employers. During one program cycle, he placed four students with an employer. While two of the students were terminated from employment, he was able to maintain a positive relationship. It was in part because the two students that remained employed were well prepared for employment.





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### Creative Job Placement Strategies

Because some of the Central States SER student population are former gang members, the staff have to adopt creative job placement strategies. These students may not feel comfortable in particular neighborhoods because of gang activity and associations. Therefore, staff began conducting labor market research at the neighborhood level. Staff learned about the hiring needs of small businesses and identified jobs in students' neighborhoods. As a result, they were also able to identify employers who were willing to be flexible with their hiring requirements and give students a chance.

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## Learn About Employers

There are many Web-based resources that will help staff and students prepare for post-program placement. Staff can learn about employment statistics and hard employment numbers as well as identify potential industries and occupations from many labor market websites. Students can also use many of these resources to explore careers and utilize interest assessment and career exploration tools. Staff and students can work together to match student interests with potential career pathways.



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### Community Map

YMCA of Greater New York developed a "community map" of all employers in the community. Based on the map, staff created an employer database which contained key contact information at each business. They also indicated whether the program had an existing relationship or connection to the employer.

Then, the Career Developer utilized the list to make introductory phone calls with each business. Where there was a connection, the Career Developer utilized it. Where there was not a connection, the Career Developer made cold calls.

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Once staff narrow down industries and occupations, the next step is to identify employers within the targeted areas. While Internet research can yield great resources, it is only a part of filling out the career development landscape. One of the most important ways of identifying employers is to get "out from behind the desk" and visit employers within the region and neighborhood. This will allow staff to learn about available job opportunities and potential matches with the YouthBuild student demographics. Programs should consider staffing their programs in a manner that supports the development of sustainable employer relationships. One way to do this is to hire or dedicate staff as an employment specialist, employer liaison, job developer and other similar roles.

## Employer Connections through Sponsoring Organizations and Employer Advisory Boards

Many YouthBuild programs in the learning community were housed within larger organizations such as Goodwill, YMCA, and United Way. Because the sponsoring organizations had resources YouthBuild programs did not, such as connections to potential employers, YouthBuild programs in the learning community leveraged those resources. Staff identified these potential employers by reviewing the Board of Directors, donor lists, and businesses that sponsored organization-wide events. Learning community members also learned that connecting with their sponsoring organization's Executive Director, Chief Financial Officer, and Director of Development was crucial for opening networking opportunities and creating successful partnerships.

Employer advisory boards are also important avenues for identifying and fostering relationships with potential employers. While employer advisory boards do not always result in immediate placement opportunities, using these boards is an effective strategy for developing new connections and paving the way for opportunities to meet new employers. YouthBuild staff can educate advisory board members on the impact of YouthBuild on the lives of students by introducing students to advisory board members. Because student presentations and testimonials are powerful, board members have the opportunity to hear successes, struggles and stories of individual students that they might not otherwise hear. By interacting with students, board members will also have a greater appreciation for and understanding of YouthBuild’s programmatic work. This board interaction is also important for students because they gain experience in public speaking and opportunities to interact in a professional setting. While these interactions do not always lead to job placement, this process is an effective strategy for developing skills for future placement. It is important not only to form an advisory board but continually to engage members in the program’s work. For more information on maintaining an active advisory board, see page 28 of the [Pathways to Long-Term Success for YouthBuild Students](#) program manual.



### **Workforce Investment Boards**

A Workforce Investment Board (WIB) is a regional organization that implements the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) within a specified area in every state. WIBs carry this out by coordinating and leveraging workforce strategies with education and economic development stakeholders within local communities. This work helps ensure that local workforce development and job training organizations meet the needs of employers. Additionally, fifty percent of WIB board membership is made up of private sector employers. WIBs also oversee American Job Centers, formerly known as local One-Stop Career Centers, which are clearinghouses for jobs and career opportunities in the local labor market.

As a result of this central role WIBs play in local communities, they usually have a finger on the pulse of economic and workforce activity in the region, making WIBs a valuable source to learn about high-growth sectors, industry trends and workforce development funding, initiatives, and projects. YouthBuild programs should consider becoming familiar with their local WIBs by meeting with staff to learn about potential opportunities for identifying and connecting with employers and labor market information (including employment data and industry trends).

For information on sample interview questions that will help YouthBuild programs gather information from WIBs, see Appendix D, *Understanding Your Local Labor Market: Interview Guide and Sample Telephone/Email script for Workforce Investment Board (WIB)*, developed by Jobs for the Future.

## American Job Centers

American Job Centers (formerly known as One Stop Career Centers) are a resource within the employment system in each state. American Job Centers provide a full range of services and assistance to all job seekers at no cost. For this reason, partnerships with local American Job Centers are essential for DOL YouthBuild grantees. Because American Job Centers provide valuable information about employers and the labor market, YouthBuild staff should become familiar with their local American Job Center and use them as a resource to learn about job openings, business openings, closings, and hiring trends.



## Job Fairs

YouthBuild staff can consider attending job fairs sponsored by American Job Centers and other organizations. Although job fairs yield mixed results for student placement, these fairs are usually an ideal opportunity for staff to connect with multiple employers in the area as well as learn about open positions and hiring requirements. The job fair offers an opportunity for a brief introduction and staff can follow up with a more in-depth meeting at a later date (the next section provides more details).

## Chambers of Commerce

Every large city and most small cities and town have a local Chamber of Commerce. Chambers of Commerce are membership organizations for mostly small businesses with fewer than 100 employees. Most Chamber events are for members, but YouthBuild staff can attend educational events open to the public on the local economy, jobs and industry trends.



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

For sample questions that will help guide a conversation with local Chamber of Commerce, see Appendix E, *Understanding Your Local Labor Market: Interview Guide and Sample Phone/Email Script for Chambers of Commerce* developed by Jobs for the Future.

## Industry Associations

YouthBuild staff can use industry associations, including human resources networks, to identify specific employers within an industry. Many associations have state and regional chapters. Some of these chapters hold meetings that are open to the public. Industry associations are also a good source of information on wages, employee trends, job descriptions, and the impact of federal legislation on hiring practices and employment regulations.



### The Advantage of a Good Agency Relationship

Central States SER staff developed a relationship with an industry staffing agency. Through that relationship, staff engaged members to identify strategies they utilized to build their network and help them identify jobs that would be a good fit for YouthBuild students.

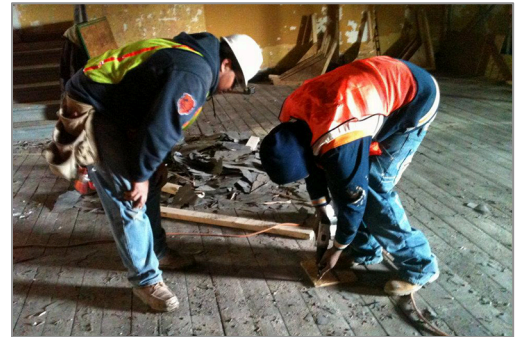
Central States SER continues to foster the relationship with the agency by engaging them to identify baseline information on job openings and potential employers.

## Local Newspapers

In the past, newspapers were the primary source for job advertisements. While the role of newspapers in finding job opportunities has diminished, the business section of the newspaper still remains a good source of information to learn about hiring trends and new developments including construction projects, business closings, and lay-offs.

## Capturing Information from Employers

To build a reliable employer database that contains “in-demand jobs” that are a good fit for YouthBuild students, it is important that staff collect detailed information from employers. *Understanding Your Local Labor Market: Interview Guide and Sample Telephone/Email Script for Employers* (available in Appendix F), developed by Jobs for the Future is a comprehensive tool that helps YouthBuild programs identify job opportunities and prepare the program and students for placement. It includes gathering information, such as:



- education and training level requirements (jobs requiring less than a bachelor’s degree are the best fits)
- technical and soft skills requirements
- wage information
- application and screening requirements
- qualities of a successful candidate



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### Focusing on Logistics and Medical Fields

Based on the labor market research Shauna Eakins from Youth Over Us conducted, she focused on short-term certifications that lead to job placement. Although a certified home building program existed in the area, she chose to focus on the logistics and medical fields. These two industries offered stable wages (\$9-\$15/hour) and had educational requirements attainable in a short time frame, which made them a good fit for YouthBuild students.

In the logistics field, which includes warehouse and transportation occupations, Youth Over Us partnered with Columbus State LogisticsART program. Students enrolled in a training program that led to a certification and apprenticeship opportunities.

Youth Over Us also identified a state-tested nursing assistant program for participants interested in nursing. It provided the first step on a career ladder leading to licensed practical nurse and registered nurse positions. Through Franklin County YouthBuild’s relationship with Nationwide Children’s Hospital, participants with certifications were hired as nursing assistants.

As Shauna told her students, “I could go to a KFC and get you a placement, but jobs are about lifelong goals and keeping yourself going.”

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### **Focusing On Machine and Hazardous Waste Industries**

The labor market research R.J. Douge from OAI, Inc. conducted, reinforced the career development strategy the program was following.

OAI, Inc. focused on placement in the machine manufacturing and hazardous waste industries. The labor market research confirmed employment growth in these sectors. The manufacturing field was a good fit for YouthBuild students because of the stable starting wage (\$14-\$15/per hour) with an education requirement of a Computer Numeric Control (CNC) certification that did not require a GED as a prerequisite.

In the hazardous waste industry, students placed as Environmental Technicians had only to complete a 40-hour Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) training to become certified.

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## 2. Sell Your Program and Its Results.

Many staff work for YouthBuild because of their passion for helping young people and to carry out the mission of their organization. YouthBuild staff, particularly program directors, career transition specialists, and job developers, should be comfortable with the language of business and develop the ability to “sell” their successes, value-added services, and the benefits to employers of partnering with them. Networking and developing partnerships with employers is a continuous and ongoing process and cannot happen from “behind the desk.” In fact, students’ post-program success is in part dependent on the ability of staff to articulate clearly the ways in which YouthBuild can benefit businesses and potential employers. This process includes fostering a tenacious attitude in staff to seek and build relationships with potential employers, to develop a concise employer pitch, and to measure and analyze data that demonstrate an accurate understanding of education, certification, and employment outcomes for students. Additionally, students need to be taught to understand and develop professional portfolios.



### Create the Opportunity

*“Every meeting with an employer is an opportunity.”*

JOE PERILLO, UNITED WAY OF LONG ISLAND.

YouthBuild staff describe job development and employer engagement as a “24/7” job in itself. Programs that successfully engage employers and develop ongoing and sustainable partnerships have staff that see every encounter with an employer as a potential for engaging them. Opportunities for engagement can occur at structured events such as job fairs, industry network meetings, conferences, or board meetings. These opportunities can also happen at unstructured networking situations and often tend to be more effective than structured events for introducing employers to YouthBuild.

Staff from YouthBuild programs in the learning community described several effective practices that helped them turn chance encounters with employers into sustainable relationships.

### Job Development is a “24/7” Job

Greg Martinez from Central States SER turned a dinner conversation with the restaurant manager into a networking opportunity with a potential employer. Because the manager expressed interest in YouthBuild, Greg followed up the conversation with an email that contained a link to the program’s Facebook page. He also asked the manager to provide food for an upcoming graduation. The restaurant manager not only provided the food but also attended the graduation. He was impressed with the graduation and hired a graduate. While restaurant jobs are not an industry target for Central States SER, it was a good fit as a transitional job for skill building.

## Service Call Becomes a Pitch for the Program

United Way of Long Island was looking for a cooling system for the program facility. The president of an HVAC company came to assess the program's cooling system needs. During the service call, he had the opportunity to meet students and staff and take an extensive tour of the YouthBuild facility. He recalls, "About an hour into the tour, I realized this was something I wanted to get involved with. I believe in the program and how they are doing things." Because HVAC was a target industry for United Way of Long Island, over time they were able to turn the visit into a partnership with a potential employer.



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on YouthBuild Long Island's work with employers and an interview with the HVAC company president, see the [Employer Engagement E-Learning Series \(Part 3\)](#).

## Job Fair Conversations Become a First Step

Kyra Doubek of Tacoma Goodwill Industries regularly attends job fairs to meet with employers. She talks to employers, collects business cards, and learns about potential job openings. Because immediate follow-up is key to engaging employers, she sends a hand-written note to the employers she meets and includes her business card. She follows up with a telephone call the following week and requests a meeting. This process helps her turn a cold call into an easier and more effective connection with a potential employer.

## A Pitch Leads to a Meeting

*"I conduct random visits utilizing the elevator speech "2-minute" rule. I have a brief synopsis of the organization and the program. If someone doesn't have the time to meet with me, I can talk about Prologue YouthBuild and YouthBuild within 2 minutes with the goal to schedule a meeting with me afterward. I get them intrigued."*

RAY FLEMING, PROLOGUE, INC.

This approach may result in employers telling Ray Fleming that they don't have the time to meet with him immediately but that they would like to schedule a meeting to hear more. Ray reported that 80 percent of his unscheduled visits are successful using this approach.

## Lead With the Benefit To the Employer

YouthBuild's mission is powerful and the passion YouthBuild staff possess to ensure students succeed is impressive. This passion also has a positive impact on employers. Therefore, it is important for staff to connect the passion with clearly articulated reasons for partnering with YouthBuild.



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### Employability Survey Sends the Right Message

Central States SER staff developed an employer satisfaction survey, which they use to gather data from employers and improve their services.

While employers are willing to provide training in technical skills, they are not interested in teaching soft skills. YouthBuild plays a unique role in helping young people develop soft skills which are essential for success in the workplace. It is a great selling point to the employer and an opportunity to communicate the importance of employability skills with students. Staff at Central States SER use the employability survey as a tool to communicate this message to students and help them develop essential soft skills.

To access Central States SER Employer Satisfaction Survey, see Appendix G.

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This process includes approaching employers by appealing to their bottom line as well to their sense of community. YouthBuild staff can research the needs of employers and pitch YouthBuild within that context. YouthBuild programs can help employers with their recruitment efforts by:

- helping students attain soft skills that are crucial for success in the world of work
- assessing student readiness rigorously and sending the best qualified candidates
- reducing recruitment costs by screening applicants and sending them directly to the employer
- providing a diverse candidate pool that helps employers achieve a diverse workforce
- instituting a strong post-program placement support system that increases student retention and reduces turnover costs for employers
- helping employers identify and attain tax credits
- assisting employers demonstrate investment in the community



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### Preparation is Key

Kyra Doubek of Tacoma Goodwill Industries uses meetings with employers to learn about their goals, mission, and hiring needs. She prepares for each meeting by gathering baseline facts about the company and uses the meeting to ask detailed questions. She also articulates that meeting the employers hiring needs is a top priority for YouthBuild. She waits until the end of the meeting to discuss the details and needs of her program.

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*“We talk about our program as a business. We don’t say, hey, can you help us? We say that we are a training program that takes our work seriously and have trained people who are ready to go.”*

JON BERSCHE, YOUTHCARE

*“It has to be a win-win. How will our young people benefit them? We send them qualified applicants who can meet their need. It may also help them with their own numbers and quotas.”*

R.J. DOUGE, OAI, INC.

*“I make reference to students who show their drive and motivation. I speak to their work ethic.”*

SHAWNEE KINLEY, LUMMI NATION HOUSING AUTHORITY



## Develop a Professional Business Portfolio

YouthBuild programs work with students to develop a complete and professional career portfolio to showcase their accomplishments in the program and to ensure young people are ready for the work world. Similarly, YouthBuild staff can develop a business portfolio. A portfolio is a tool that showcases the work and accomplishments of the YouthBuild Program. As with students, when staff share a business portfolio at a meeting with an employer, they communicate YouthBuild's professionalism and preparedness.

Programs can consider including the following items that will shine the spotlight on the YouthBuild program and make the presentation more interesting and effective:

- Professionally-designed brochure or flyer
- Summary or outline of the career readiness curriculum (when applicable)
- List of former students who have been successfully placed and the names of their current employers
- List of current students with their skill set, quote from them about their reason for being in the program, and photographs of students
- Employment and post-secondary education placement and retention rates
- Certifications offered
- Letter of reference or testimonial from other employers (it is particularly helpful to have a letter of reference from an employer in the same field as the business in the meeting)
- Photographs of students on a job site, working with tools in a vocational classroom, graduations, etc.
- Links to the program's website, Facebook page, as well as promotional and educational videos produced by the program
- Business cards
- Promotional materials with the programs logo including magnets, pens, coffee mugs, or t-shirts



### 3. Engage Employers on Multiple Levels

YouthBuild programs with the broadest range of employer connections have a diverse mix of employers involved at different levels of the organization. Because employer relationships develop over time, YouthBuild programs engage employers incrementally. Often, this process begins with an invitation to invest in YouthBuild students. On a basic level, programs can request employers to provide equipment for student use or food for graduations and events. Another level of engagement is to invite employer to participate in practice interviews or provide feedback and strengthen curricula (technical and soft skills) to ensure students are prepared for employment. Programs can engage employers at a deeper level by inviting potential employers to sit on a board or an advisory committee, or invite them to participate in a joint service project (e.g. mentoring relationship, tutoring, after school supports, etc.).



*“There are 100 ways to engage employers.”*

GREG MARTINEZ, CENTRAL STATE SER

It takes a considerable amount of time and effort to develop long-lasting partnerships with employers. YouthBuild has to cultivate meaningful relationships with staff at targeted businesses and build trust between the two organizations. It is a step-by-step process that begins with small steps. The initial contact may be simple conversation followed by an email with more information about the program. The exchange can progress into a donation request for the program. The steps to build a relationship with employers are not always formulaic. However, it is important to follow-up with potential partners and pay attention to opportunities that can deepen the relationship.



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#### Corporations Want to Help

Donal Codgell from YMCA of Greater New York knows that corporations are always finding ways to donate to non-profits for tax reasons and good public relations. He was connected to a major coffee chain in their neighborhood by an organization that solicits food donations from companies. He spoke with the manager about providing breakfast for program participants. According to Donal, it was a perfect match. Their students were in need of breakfast to get through the day and the manager of the coffee chain wanted to promote their brand in the community. They catered and attended a YouthBuild graduation where they saw elected officials and business leaders in attendance, which allowed the coffee to what they were involved in and what their contributions meant. According to Donal, “that solidified our relationship. We haven’t placed anybody there yet, but there is fertile ground and we will be placing people there in the future.”

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The level of engagement can vary from employer to employer. The table below describes the three levels of employer engagement. Employer engagement in tier one can yield opportunities for singular and short-term involvement, such as food or equipment donations. Employer engagement in tier two is ongoing. Businesses may provide donations but are also engaged at a programmatic level such as providing job shadow and internship opportunities. Tier three partners are deeply involved at the programmatic level. Senior staff at both organizations collaborate regularly and the employer may work to raise the profile of the YouthBuild program.

It is important to have a range of partnerships at varying levels of engagement. Tier one partners can provide short-term results but the relationship will not grow into a strong partnership or provide increased opportunities without further cultivation. YouthBuild programs have manageable and effective partnerships when they engage a large number of employers in tier two. Programs can consistently engage these partners in different aspects of the program. While tier three partners can be tremendously important for advancing the goals of the YouthBuild program, they also require a tremendous amount of time and effort. If a program has too many tier three partners, the care and nurturing of partnerships can begin to detract from other areas of work.

Tier	What It Looks Like (May include one of more in each category)
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides singular (or ad hoc) donation of food, equipment, and/or volunteer time</li> <li>• Provides informational interviews and/or tutors</li> <li>• Reviews all resumes sent by YouthBuild staff</li> <li>• Offers one-off placements</li> </ul>
2	<p>May include above <b>and</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides consistent and regular donations of food, equipment and volunteer time</li> <li>• Travels to the YouthBuild site to conduct practice interviews, conduct workshops or serve as a speaker</li> <li>• Attends graduations and other YouthBuild events</li> <li>• Sits on an advisory board</li> </ul>
3	<p>May include above <b>and</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides scholarship funding</li> <li>• Determines career pathways for YouthBuild graduates</li> <li>• Sits on sponsoring organization's board of directors</li> <li>• Creates pipeline placements aligned with their business</li> <li>• Represents employer partner on sector projects and other projects with multiple stakeholders</li> <li>• Represents himself /herself and his/her business as a public champion and advocate</li> <li>• Is interested in programmatic as well as stewardship issues</li> </ul>

## 4. Build Strong And Strategic Partnerships With Post-Secondary Education Institutions and The Public Workforce Development System

YouthBuild staff can leverage the resources of organizations involved in the education, training and employment system to increase their own pool of resources and provide greater opportunity for students. Active involvement with organizations and industry increases opportunities for students and deepens the connections to allies in the field. In fact, the most successful programs have strong relationships with a broad range of partners, each of whom brings unique resources to the table. Some of these relationships are in the form of casual referrals and others are formal partnerships forged through memoranda of agreement (MOAs), contracts, and jointly-funded projects.

*“It takes a village to do job placement. We can’t rely on just one network.”*

ELIZABETH MORGAN, UNITED WAY OF LONG ISLAND

### Post-secondary Institutions

For some YouthBuild students, particularly students interested in pursuing careers that require an industry-recognized certificate or post-secondary degree, enrollment in a post-secondary institution is the logical next step. Regardless of whether most students choose to pursue post-secondary education or not, it is important for YouthBuild programs to develop formal partnerships with a range of post-secondary institutions including four-year and community colleges, vocational and technical schools, and unions.

- Partnerships inherently help organizations build trust, which can help YouthBuild programs address policies that are barriers to the success of YouthBuild students. For example, Youth Over Us discovered the local community college did not accept applicants with felony convictions. The staff worked with the review board to revise their acceptance policy. As a result, students with felony convictions can be considered for community college enrollment if they write a convincing personal statement, provide a copy of their arrest record, and participate in a lengthy and detailed interview with the review board. After the policy change, five students with convictions enrolled in the community college.
- Post-secondary institutions can ensure YouthBuild students gain access to a broader range of supports including placement and career services offered through the institution. These resources can supplement the work YouthBuild staff do with students thus ensuring their success after the program.
- YouthBuild programs can access new resources through their partnerships with post-secondary institutions. Programs can leverage these partnerships to collaborate on state-funded sector projects or apply for funding that requires multiple stakeholders.
- Through creative agreements, programs can encourage students to pursue further education through incentives. For example, if students at OAI, Inc. score a 3,000 or above on the GED, they have the opportunity to attend the local community college free of cost. Students who complete their GED but score less than 3,000 can enroll in one college class for free.

## Workforce Investment Boards

Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) are the nerve center of regional and local workforce development. Often, they are the primary force that convenes sector and non-sector-based workforce projects. They also work closely with employers at the regional level, oversee Youth Councils, and provide funding for in-school and out-of-school programs for youth ages 14 through 21. As a result, YouthBuild programs find WIBs to be crucial partners for a variety of reasons including employer engagement. There are three primary ways that YouthBuild programs can partner with WIBs. These include:



- **Partnering on a WIB project.** WIBs initiate many projects but they cannot run successful programs without a consistent pipeline of participants. YouthBuild can play an important role by connecting YouthBuild students to these initiatives and projects, thereby meeting the needs of both WIBs and YouthBuild students.

*Where Labor Supply Meets Labor Demand: Connecting Workforce Development to Economic Development in Local Labor Markets*, developed by The Aspen Institute, provides further details on WIB initiatives and projects, including the KentuckianaWorks Construction Pipeline Project. Workforce Investment Board for Greater Louisville designed a pre-apprenticeship program to equip workers with skills and work on the construction of a new sports arena. Partners on this project included the Urban League, Trades Council, fifteen trade unions, and numerous contractors and subcontractors.



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### WIA Program Offers Many Services

YouthBuild students may benefit from many of the services that are offered under the WIA youth program. These services include:

- tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to secondary school completion
  - alternative secondary school offerings
  - summer employment opportunities linked to learning
  - paid and unpaid work experiences
  - occupational skill training
  - leadership development opportunities
  - supportive services
  - mentoring
  - follow-up services
  - comprehensive guidance and counseling
-

- **Participating in a WIA Youth Council meeting as a guest or becoming a member.** The Youth Council, made up of a diverse membership including youth-serving non-profit organizations, schools, parents and youth enrolled in programs, implements parts of the WIB five-year plan that relate to youth. They also recommend youth service providers, provide oversight for youth activities, and coordinate youth programs and initiatives. As a member of the Youth Council, YouthBuild programs have the opportunity to become visible in the labor market, learn about opportunities for funding, and connect with employers. Even if YouthBuild programs are not members, they can participate in the meetings which are open to the public.

Referring students to WIA youth service providers for co-enrollment. As a WIA youth, YouthBuild students can receive additional resources, including case management, supportive services and access to other services such as guidance and counseling, mentoring and other leadership development opportunities

Additionally, students over the age of 18 may be eligible for short-term training under the WIA adult training system offered through the American Job Centers.

We are working with WIA-based certifications for our students. The idea of a certification makes them more competitive in 6-9 months but it also gives them lifelong skills.” Shauna Eakins, Youth Over Us

## American Job Centers

American Job Centers can be natural and effective partners for YouthBuild programs. They provide a range of valuable career development services free of cost to everyone, including access to job listings, workshops (resume writing, salary negotiation, basic computer skills, etc.), resources (computers, telephones, etc.), job fairs and additional support services based on eligibility.



### WIA Program Offers Many Services

As with proving eligibility for YouthBuild, young people have to meet and show proof of eligibility for WIA services. For youth services, young people have to be between the ages of 14 and 21, come from a low-income family, and demonstrate at least one of the following barriers:

- deficient in basic skills
- high school drop-out
- homeless, a runaway or a foster youth
- pregnant or parenting youth
- an offender
- disabled or requiring additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment

To prove eligibility, young people must provide original documents. It may also take up to 60 days to process the application for services, so programs should help young people plan early.

While some YouthBuild programs find using and building a relationship with American Job Centers natural and easy, others find this process challenging. If programs do not have an existing relationship, students can also find services offered by the American Job Centers overwhelming and hard to navigate.



Because American Job Centers are important workforce development and training engines in local communities and regions, YouthBuild programs will need to be creative and persistent in building a relationship with them. Programs that have built successful relationships have found the following strategies helpful in navigating the American Job Center Network:

- **Sign up for e-newsletters and notices.** Most American Job Centers publish a monthly calendar of events including job fairs, on-site employer recruitments, workshops and industry briefings.
- **Get to know individuals handling WIA eligibility.** As with employers, getting to know staff and introducing them to YouthBuild can help you engage American Job Centers and build a strong relationship. Once key people are identified, YouthBuild staff can better assist students navigate the American Job Center.
  - *Individuals handling WIA eligibility.* Once you identify the person, be sure to have an introductory meeting with them. This person can be enormously helpful in providing students access to WIA resources.
- **Develop a relationship with staff members.** Utilize YouthBuild staff and the network of the sponsoring organization to make introductions and gain access to American Job Center staff. Be sure to invite staff to visit the program and take a tour. Once a relationship with staff has been established, the program can deepen the partnership with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which will outline services and referrals that will be offered and establish roles and expectations for YouthBuild and American Job Center staff. Programs can consider forging individual relationships with key staff, including:
  - *Job Developer or Business Account Representative.* Because American Job Centers have varying job placement approaches, it is important to get to know this individual and understand the process the local American Job Center follows.



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### Building a Partnership

Donal Codgell from YMCA of Greater New York became familiar with both of the One-Stop Career Centers in his area. He learned that one of the centers focuses a lot of their services on entry-level employment by hosting employers with jobs in retail and security. Not only does he use the services of his center, he attends partnership meetings where career developers from many organizations come together to share job leads and new opportunities. Employers are often brought into these meetings to connect with staff and share information.

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When working with students, it is important that staff guide students through the process of navigating the American Job Center and familiarize them with the resources available to them. Program staff may accompany students to Center for the orientation and membership process. Once students are acclimated and familiar with the Center, they are less likely to feel overwhelmed.

## Unions

Unions, especially in the construction trades, are experiencing an economic downturn in the current economic climate. Journey workers are not able to secure employment. As a result, opportunities into apprenticeships programs have slowed or come to a standstill. Despite limited movement into apprenticeships, many YouthBuild programs in the learning community felt it was strategically important to maintain their relationships with unions.



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### Building a Bridge to Apprenticeships

Although YouthCare was located in a community college that was based in the trades, the program found it challenging to connect with the apprenticeship coordinators.

Jon Bersche, a YouthCare staff member, worked on building the relationship. His efforts eventually paid off and he was invited to participate in the monthly apprenticeship coordinators meetings. To ensure students can benefit from this opportunity and be competitive candidates for union apprenticeship slots, he is also working with the YouthCare construction instructor to make the curriculum even more rigorous.

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While waiting for employment opportunities to open with construction unions, YouthBuild staff continued to learn about other union apprenticeship programs in the area. As with any employment prospect, staff gathered information about the application process, requirements for entry, educational requirements, and desired apprentice characteristics. Programs also identified individuals charged with screening and interviewing applicants.



## 5. Develop A Long-Term Vision Of Your Program

Change is inevitable in the labor market, with partner organizations, and even within YouthBuild programs. Staff transitions occur routinely and sometimes without much advance notice. An employer partner may indicate potential openings but depending on economic realities may have to limit their hiring. Students' strengths, skills, ideas, and attitudes can change with each cohort. Therefore, it is important for every YouthBuild program to develop a long-term plan to ensure young people achieve success that is flexible and able to absorb change. This requires YouthBuild staff to plan strategically beyond the upcoming fiscal year or program cycle, ideally five to ten years into the future.



While it is important to develop a long-term vision, program staff can also continually assess that vision against program and economic realities as they change. As such, YouthBuild programs should consider how changes in students' capabilities, vocational interests and backgrounds from cohort to cohort measure against the long-term plan. Staff can measure the vision against local employment trends, and workforce policies, as well as new ideas and practices among leading businesses and industries. Regularly measuring against the long-term vision will help programs make necessary changes, help strengthen partnerships, and build a blueprint for the future with important stakeholders.

To ensure that change does not derail the work of the program, it is important to document contacts, processes and procedures. When developing a long-term vision, successful programs implement the following approaches:

- **Focus on long-term job growth projections.** YouthBuild programs can and should access trends in the workforce and demographics, as well as occupational growth data, which usually project growth over a ten-year period. For example, with an aging population, services for senior citizens, particularly healthcare, will grow in the coming years. Similarly, as manufacturing becomes more automated, the need for workers with advanced computer certifications will grow just as the demand for energy conservation will ensure growth in weatherization and clean energy sectors. Paying attention to these changes and developing a vision around them will help YouthBuild programs strategically position their partnerships and participants.
- **Nurture relationships with partners and stakeholders.** Strong partnerships take time to develop and even more time to maintain. It is easy to get excited when a job placement occurs, when a new employer joins the advisory board or when the Workforce Investment Board includes YouthBuild in a new initiative. It is critical for programs to follow up frequently with partners and check in with employers and other stakeholders. Staff can determine if the program continues to meet the needs of partners, that partners are satisfied with their level of involvement with the program; and to develop steps to engage partners further and deepen their commitment.

- **Assess students' skills, abilities, and aspirations on a continuous basis.** Students vocational interest and needs change with each cohort. YouthBuild staff ensure their students' success by knowing them and identifying their needs. When staff are familiar with their students interests, skills, and aspirations, they can better represent them to employers, school admission counselors and union leaders.

## Conclusion

Through the tools, resources, and technical assistance guidance provided, the YouthBuild programs that participated in the DOL YouthBuild Employer Engagement Learning Community had the opportunity to help staff grow professionally, as well as expand and deepen their work with employers. Many programs opened new occupational options for students by incorporating additional industries into their post-placement work. Their work also led to identifying innovative strategies and approaches that will help all YouthBuild programs build strong career development elements and further the success of young people.



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the DOL YouthBuild career and post-secondary model, see the *Career and Post-Secondary Development Roadmap* in Appendix I.

As mentioned throughout this guide, building partnerships and relationships with employers is time consuming and requires effort. Therefore, YouthBuild staff might consider being strategic in their approach. These strategies include:

- Nurturing initial contacts with potential employers into strong, multi-faceted partnerships that create lasting opportunities
- Utilizing a business approach and making the case that a partnership with YouthBuild will meet the needs of businesses
- Developing relationships with staff at partner organizations
- Ensuring a match between students' skills and interests and specific job requirements
- Leveraging public workforce system and post-secondary institution resources to supplement career exploration

# Resources

## Using Labor Market Resources

In order to make a good job or placement match, YouthBuild staff should know and understand students' interests and skill levels. The resources listed below contain assessments and other interactive tools that programs may use with their students to help them identify their vocational interest and abilities. Staff can demonstrate critical thinking with youth by analyzing the results of interest inventories with them, giving youth the ability to apply the results of the assessment to their individual situations.

Prior to working with students, YouthBuild staff can explore the tools and become familiar with them. This will ensure that staff provide the appropriate guidance to students as they begin to use the tools.



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

More information on leading data-focused discussions and activities with frontline staff is available at [Using Data for Success](#), a resource created by Public/Private Ventures.

## YouthBuild Program Manuals

[Pathways to Long-Term Success for YouthBuild Students](#) program manual provides further information on developing a comprehensive plan for the post-program success of your students. It provides ready-to-use tools and resources so you can provide effective career development for your young people. The manual features helpful information on preparing young people for jobs, careers, further training or post-secondary education; placing young people in jobs, post-secondary institutions, or service placements; and, supporting young people to maintain their post-program placement successfully after they exit YouthBuild.

*“We have to understand projected [industry] growth but we also need to help our students identify what they want to do with their life. What are their financial goals and what kind of education will support them in their chosen career? I consider myself a dream engineer. I don’t stifle people’s dreams. Sometimes you have to take a job in the meantime to work toward the dream, but the driver here is not the market, the driver is the student.”*

KYRA DOUBEK, TACOMA GOODWILL INDUSTRIES

## Industry and Occupational Data

- [The Bureau of Labor Statistics \(BLS\)](#), an agency within the U.S. Department of Labor, provides wide-ranging labor information at the national level as well as some state, regional, and local level information.
- [The Occupational Outlook Handbook](#) (published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics) provides information on careers from an occupational perspective, such as job descriptions, training, and education necessary for particular occupations, current and projected earnings, job prospects, and working conditions. It also contains job search tips and state-by-state job market data. Each May, BLS releases updated employment and wage estimates for states and metropolitan areas. Every two years, the 10-year projection for occupational growth is also updated. The data is presented at a national level with links to each state, labor market area and county.

## State Labor Market Information (LMI)

- [State LMI Office or Department](#) offers state-level labor market information and analysis that may be helpful to employers and job seekers as they make career, education, and economic development decisions. Many states provide industry, employer, occupation and wage information in addition to training, education and job search information and resources.
- [Workforce Investment Boards](#) (Regional Employment Boards) provide information on local and regional workforce training resources as well as the needs of the local economy. WIBs may also provide a map of the economic landscape for the region, information on the distribution of workforce development funding in the region and information on industries and businesses involved in workforce and economic development initiatives.



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information, see *The Labor Market Blueprint for Youth* developed by the Massachusetts North Shore Regional Employment Board and the North Shore Youth Career Center in Appendix H.

- **Unions.** All unions have informational Websites about training, education and apprentice opportunities. Unions represent the trades (e.g. carpenters, electricians, painters, masons, construction craft laborers, etc.) and other industries (e.g. healthcare, hospitality, clerical, etc.). Reviewing websites is a good first step to understanding union requirements for entry into apprenticeship and their cycles for recruitment.

## Career Exploration Resources

- [O\\*NET Resource Center](#) contains several online interactive career exploration tools. These self-directed tools will help young people consider and plan career options as well as prepare and transition into a career effectively. The tools include several assessments that are based on a “whole-person” concept. The assessments will help students assess their interests, identify work values and abilities, and match them to job skills and occupations in their local labor market.
- [CareerOneStop](#) is a comprehensive career exploration web site sponsored by the Department of Labor that provides a range of information on career pathways, qualifications, including educational requirements for specific careers, and opportunities

to assess skills and identify potential career matches based on interests and/or skills. The web site also provides information through a variety of formats, including online occupational videos.



#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

For a step-by-step guide on using Career One Stop, see *Jobs for the Future, Understanding Your Local Labor Market: Tackling the Labor Market*, in Appendix A.

- [My Next Move](#) is a tool through which students can explore career options by keyword or browse careers by industry. The database contains over 900 career options. Each occupational profile provides a basic job description, knowledge required to perform the duties, skills and abilities needed to succeed, a description of personalities that would enjoy a particular occupation, technology used in the field, educational requirements, and job outlook with salary information. Students that are not certain about their career options can complete an interests and skills survey that will be used to match them to best career options.

YouthBuild programs may also access more tools on State Department of Labor websites, as many states develop career assessment tools that are available online.

## Career and Education Information

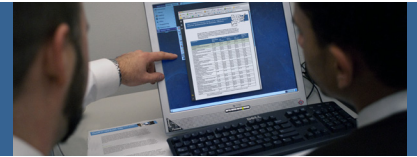
[National Center for Education Statistics](#) (NCES) is located within the U.S. Department of Education and the Institute of Education Sciences. Programs can access data and relevant information about all levels of training and education. The College Navigator page helps users find information about colleges and certificate programs by field of study, state and zip code. It provides side-by-side comparisons of schools and can export lists of schools and information into a spreadsheet for easy analysis. The Career/Technical Education (CTE) page of the Website contains information on career and education offerings and credentials, cost, and financial aid.

## Appendix

- A. Jobs for the Future  
*Understanding Your Local Labor Market: Tackling the Labor Market*
- B. Jobs for the Future  
*Understanding Your Local Labor Market: Glossary of Labor Market Terms*
- C. United States Department of Labor (Adapted by Flushing YouthBuild)  
*The Work Readiness Behavioral Assessment Tool with Rubric and Guidance*
- D. Jobs for the Future  
*Understanding Your Local Labor Market: Interview Guide and Sample Phone/Email script for Workforce Investment Boards (WIB)*
- E. Jobs for the Future  
*Understanding Your Local Labor Market: Interview Guide and Sample Phone/Email Script: Regional Chamber of Commerce*
- F. Jobs for the Future  
*Working With Employers: Interview Guide and Sample Phone/Email Script: Employers*
- G. Central States SER, Jobs for Progress, Inc.  
*Youth Employment Suitability Survey*
- H. North Shore Regional Employment Board and North Shore Youth Career Center  
*Choosing Your Career: A Guide for Teens*
- I. YouthBuild USA  
*Career and Postsecondary Development*



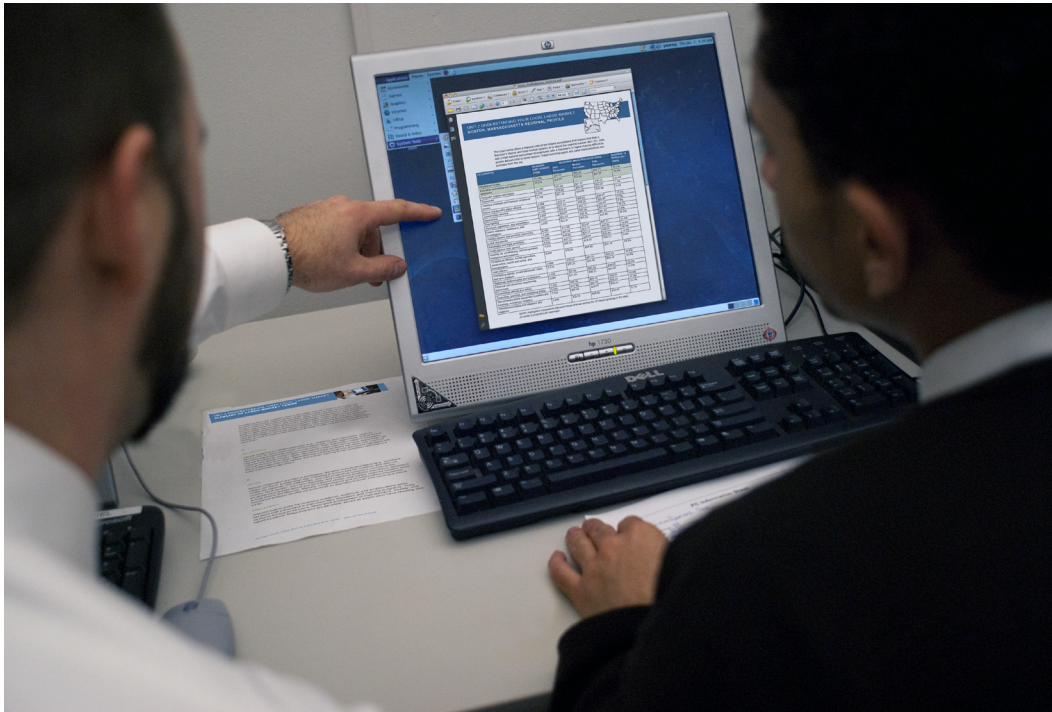
## UNIT 2 UNDERSTANDING YOUR LOCAL LABOR MARKET TACKLING THE LABOR MARKET



### TACKLING THE LABOR MARKET A Guide to Getting Beyond the Data

This guide outlines:

- The data you should know about any occupation
- What it means
- How to find it
- How to explore occupations through CareerOneStop and other Web sites



<i>Key Data You Should Know About Any Occupation.....</i>	<i>page 3</i>
<i>Five Steps for Building a Working Knowledge of Your Labor Market.....</i>	<i>page 5</i>
<i>Online Resources for Exploring Occupational Data.....</i>	<i>page 6</i>
<i>Guide to Exploring CareerOneStop.....</i>	<i>page 8</i>





# TACKLING THE LABOR MARKET

## KEY DATA YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ANY OCCUPATION

What to look for and what it means	Look specifically for:	Look for the following keywords:	Example using the occupation Computer Support Specialist (CareerOneStop Web site data)
<p><b>WAGES</b> For: A metropolitan/nonmetropolitan area Time frame: The most recent year reported What this tells you: How much your student may earn working in the occupation, per hour or per year, in a metropolitan/nonmetropolitan area <i>Tip: In addition to finding the median hourly wage for an occupation, you can find it for a metropolitan or nonmetropolitan area. For example, the median hourly wage in the Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA NECTA Division was \$21.91 in 2009. Go to Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Area Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates at: <a href="http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oesrcma.htm">http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oesrcma.htm</a> Find your state, click on a metropolitan/nonmetropolitan area, and then click on "All Occupations," to find its median hourly wage estimate. Note the year. You can also find regional wage data for hundreds of occupations.</i></p>	<p><b>Entry-level wage</b></p>	<p>In a CareerOneStop Occupation Profile:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Since most new employees will not start out at the median wage, it's helpful to look at an occupation's 10th-percentile wage, which is often a good indicator of an entry-level wage (though it can be more or less depending on your students' individual educational credentials and work history). (See the "10%" figures for your selected metropolitan area. These are the 10th-percentile wages for the occupation, which means that 10% of the workers in a given occupation earn less than the 10th-percentile wage and the remaining 90% earn more than the 10th-percentile wage.) Note the year in the table.</li> </ul> <p>Other keywords include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Starting wage"</li> </ul>	<p>In 2009, the 10th-percentile wage for a Computer Support Specialist in the Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA NECTA Division was \$18.54/hr. This means that 10% of Computer Support Specialists earned less than \$18.54/hr. and the remaining 90% earned more.</p>
	<p><b>Median wage</b></p>	<p>In a CareerOneStop Occupation Profile:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See the "<b>Median</b>" wage for your selected metropolitan area. This is the 50th-percentile wage for the occupation, which means that 50% of workers in the occupation earn less than the median wage and the remaining 50% earn more. Be careful not to confuse this with an average wage (same as a mean wage). It's best not to use/cite an average wage with your students because it's very sensitive to unusually high or low values. Use the median instead. Note the year in the table.</li> </ul> <p>Other keywords include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"50th-percentile wage"</li> </ul>	<p>In 2009, the median wage for a Computer Support Specialist in the Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA NECTA Division was \$28.09/hr. Therefore, 50% of Computer Support Specialists earned less than \$28.09/hr. and the remaining 50% earned more.</p>
<p><b>GROWTH</b> For: A state Time frame: Over a 10-year period (e.g., 2008-2018). See the most current projections period available. What this tells you: Whether and how much the occupation is expected to grow over a 10-year period in a state. This percentage can be positive, zero, or negative. <i>Tip: It's helpful to know an occupation's projected growth rate, but you should focus more on its total job openings. Why? Occupations with negative percent growth may still have lots of job openings for your students.</i></p>	<p><b>% growth</b></p>	<p>In a CareerOneStop Occupation Profile:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See "<b>Percent Change</b>" for your selected state. In the same table, note the 10-year period between the years listed under "Employment."</li> </ul> <p>Other keywords include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Percent change in total employment" or "Employment change (percent)"</li> <li>"Projected growth"</li> <li>"Growth rate"</li> </ul>	<p>The occupation Computer Support Specialist is expected to grow 6% from 2006-2016 in Massachusetts.</p>

# TACKLING THE LABOR MARKET

<p>What to look for and what it means</p> <p><b>TOTAL JOB OPENINGS</b></p> <p>For: A state</p> <p>Time frame: Average annual number of openings within a 10-year period. See the most current projections period available.</p> <p>What this tells you: How many jobs are available now, and how many are projected to be open on average, per year, in a state (within a 10-year projections period). This number includes new jobs and replacement job openings.</p> <p><i>Tip: The CareerOneStop Web site breaks down the # of total job openings by year, but other data sources may not. Check to see if your number is an annual average or a total # for the entire 10-year period. Use the annual average when talking to students because it's easier to envision.</i></p>	<p>Look specifically for:</p> <p><b># of job openings per year</b></p>	<p>Look for the following keywords:</p> <p>In a CareerOneStop Occupation Profile:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See <b>"Job Openings"</b> for your selected state. Remember that this is an average annual number within a 10-year projections period. To find the job openings, see the table that shows projections period, in the same table that shows the years listed under "Employment."</li> </ul> <p>Other keywords include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Job openings due to growth and replacement needs"</li> <li>• "Projected need for employees"</li> </ul>	<p>Example using the occupation Computer Support Specialist (CareerOneStop Web site data)</p> <p>The occupation Computer Support Specialist is projected to have 640 job openings per year, on average, between 2006-2016 in Massachusetts. This includes new jobs and replacement job openings. 2006-2016 is the projections period in this example.</p>
<p><b>EDUCATION, TRAINING, &amp; OR WORK EXPERIENCE</b></p> <p>For: The U.S.</p> <p>Time frame: The most recent year reported by the BLS</p> <p>What this tells you: How much education, training, and/or work experience your student may need to work in the occupation based on national trends. These data can include not only postsecondary awards (e.g., occupational certificate, Associate's degree, Bachelor's degree), but also typical work experience and on-the-job training levels.</p>	<p><b>Most common educational/training level</b></p>	<p>In a CareerOneStop Occupation Profile:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See the <b>"Most Common Education/Training Level."</b> Remember that this level is for the U.S.</li> </ul> <p>Other keywords include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Education &amp;/or training level"</li> <li>• "Work experience"</li> </ul>	<p>The most common educational/training level for a Computer Support Specialist in the U.S. is an Associate's degree.</p> <p><i>Note: You don't need to cite a date as long as it's the most recent year reported by the BLS. The CareerOneStop Web site keeps these data updated.</i></p>
	<p><b>% of employees aged 25-44 with a Bachelor's degree or higher</b></p>	<p>In a CareerOneStop Occupation Profile:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See the <b>"Bachelor's degree," "Master's degree,"</b> and <b>"Doctoral or professional degree"</b> percentages in the "Distribution of Educational Attainment" table. Add these three percentages together. This sum will give you the percentage of employees in the occupation, aged 25-44 in the U.S., with a Bachelor's degree or higher.</li> </ul>	<p>41.2% of Computer Support Specialists in the U.S. have a Bachelor's degree or higher.</p> <p><i>Note: In this example, we've omitted the age range (25 to 44 years old). You may choose to do the same in presenting this information.</i></p>

## FIVE STEPS FOR BUILDING A WORKING KNOWLEDGE OF YOUR LABOR MARKET

### Step 1

**Get familiar with some key terms/concepts in the labor market including:**

- Percentile wages (including the 10th-percentile and median wage)
- Growth (of an occupation)
- Total job openings (for an occupation)
- Education, training, and/or work experience required/preferred

Pages 3 and 4 of this guide explain these concepts in detail. The Glossary of Labor Market Terms in this unit of your training materials can also help. You can have more meaningful conversations with employers, workforce development professionals, and your students if you are fluent in the vocabulary found in the glossary.

### Step 2

**Look over the *Regional Labor Market Profile*** found in this unit of your training materials. This profile pulls together the most recent labor market data from the BLS and your state's Labor Market Information (LMI) Office. Your profile offers a regional snapshot of occupations that appear to be in demand, pay at or near your region's median wage, and are accessible with less than a bachelor's degree. Review your profile to get a sense of these trends and to find regional workforce contact information.

### Step 3

**Explore a wide range of occupations through the CareerOneStop Web site.** Encourage students to use the Web site, too. For each occupation, you should know, at minimum, the data listed in step 1. Pages 8-13 of this guide offer tips for navigating this Web site.

*OPTIONAL: If you want to explore your state and its regional data in more depth, go to the Web site of your state LMI. You can use a search engine (type your state's name + LMI) or go to <http://www.state.sd.us/dol/lmic/usmapLMIClinks.htm> and click on your state to find more detailed data specific to your state and its cities/regions/workforce areas. Look through your state LMI databases and publications to find state and regional labor market data analysis, employers, business hiring expectations, and other information (these resources/tools will vary by state DOL).*

### Step 4

Develop a list of in-demand occupations that cover a range of career interests. Take some time to look through the occupations you've explored and think about which ones could be best bets for your students based on the data you've found on median wages, total job openings, and typical education/training/work experience levels.

### Step 5

Reach out! Collecting labor market data is just one piece of your research in identifying well-paying, in-demand jobs for your students. The only way to verify the data you've found is to talk with regional employers and postsecondary program coordinators. Units 3 and 4 in your training materials offer tips and interview guides (phone scripts and email templates) with suggested questions you can use and adapt in talking with these contacts. WIBs, One-Stop Career Centers, and chambers of commerce can also be very helpful in developing and narrowing down a list of best bets. Interview guides for these can be found in your Unit 2 materials.

#### REMEMBER

It's important to think about all the criteria that make an occupation a best bet. An occupation that pays good wages, requires less than a Bachelor's degree, has a high number of job openings per

year, and is employer-verified as 'in demand,' may still not end up being a best bet for your students. For example, an effective training program may not exist within a reasonable distance of where your students live/work. Or, a nearby

training program with strong employer relationships and an impressive job placement rate may have a 2-year waiting list. In addition, a best bet occupation for one student may not be a best bet for another.

### ONLINE RESOURCES FOR EXPLORING OCCUPATIONAL DATA

The following Web sites are just a few of the many publicly accessible resources you can use to explore regional, state, and national occupational data. They are also great resources for students to use on their own.

#### **CareerOneStop:** <http://www.careeronestop.org/>

This is the primary Web site used in this guide to explore occupations. Linked to state and national statistics, CareerOneStop is a U.S. Department of Labor–sponsored Web site that offers career resources and workforce information to job seekers, students, businesses, and workforce professionals to foster talent development in a global economy.

CareerOneStop's features include:

- **Career Exploration Tools**—Find self-assessments, browse occupations and industries, learn about employment trends, and more.
- **Education and Training Information**—Resources to plan students' education, including information on college and training certification courses, apprenticeships, community college, job corps centers, and more. There is also information about paying for school, including financial aid and scholarships.
- **Résumé and Interview Advice**—This section offers tips for creating and improving students' résumés and cover letters. Find résumé samples and templates, plus advice on thank-you notes and inquiry letters. It also offers job interview advice.
- **Salary and Benefits Information**—Tools to help compare information on wages and salaries. There is also information on relocating, how to pay for school, and where and how to file for unemployment benefits in your state.
- **Information on Building a Career Ladder and Sample Career Ladders**—Offers sample career ladders/lattices in several industries. The samples show how a worker can move through a career by acquiring additional knowledge and skills through education, training, or work experience. This part of CareerOneStop's 'Competency Model Clearinghouse' also offers instructions on how to build career ladders/lattices.
- **Job Search Guidance**—Get advice on planning and networking, finding potential employers, and how to apply for jobs. It also offers tools to help find a job.
- **People and Places to Help**—Get information on how to locate resources and services near you. It also provides tips on salary negotiation.
- **Military Transition Resources**—This resource connects veterans and transitioning service members with high quality planning, training, and job search resources.

CareerOneStop products include:

- **America's Career InfoNet:** <http://www.CareerInfoNet.org>  
America's Career InfoNet helps individuals explore career opportunities to make informed employment and education choices. The Web site features user-friendly occupation and industry information, salary data, career videos, education resources, self-assessment tools, career exploration assistance, and other resources that support talent development in today's fast-paced global marketplace.

- **America's Service Locator: <http://www.ServiceLocator.org>**  
Connects individuals to employment and training opportunities available at local One-Stop Career Centers. The Web site provides contact information for a range of local work-related services, including unemployment benefits, career development, and educational opportunities.
- **mySkills myFuture: <http://www.mySkillsmyFuture.org>**  
This Web site helps career changers and dislocated workers find new occupations to explore. Users can identify occupations that require skills and knowledge similar to their current or previous job, learn more about these suggested matches, locate local training programs, and/or apply for jobs.

### **My Next Move: <http://www.mynextmove.org>**

Do your students already know the type of jobs they are interested in? If not, would they know if they saw it, or are they not really sure at all? My Next Move is specifically designed to help students determine the right careers for them and to help find jobs that they will enjoy. They can search for careers by key word, by exploring specific industries, or by completing a brief interest inventory that leads to a list of associated jobs. All of these options are easily accessible on the Web site's home page.

### **O\*NET OnLine: <http://online.onetcenter.org>**

For more in-depth occupational information, use the O\*NET database (CareerOneStop frequently links to this Web site). The O\*NET program is the nation's primary source of occupational information. Its database contains information on hundreds of standardized and occupation-specific descriptors. Available to the public at no cost, it is continually updated by surveying a broad range of workers from each occupation. Information from this database forms the heart of O\*NET OnLine, an interactive application for exploring and searching occupations. The database also provides the basis for Career Exploration Tools, a set of valuable assessment instruments for workers and students looking to find or change careers. The Occupational Information Network (O\*NET) is being developed under the sponsorship of the US Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration (USDOL/ETA) through a grant to the North Carolina Employment Security Commission. (Note: At the bottom of an occupation's "Summary Report", under the header "Wage and Employment Trends", you can select any state to compare up-to-date national and state trends including: wage range, employment totals, percent change in employment, and job openings.)

### **State Labor Market Information (LMI) Offices**

If you want to explore a state and its regional data in more depth, see the state LMI Web site. You can use a search engine (type the state's name + LMI) or go to <http://www.state.sd.us/dol/lmic/usmapLMIClinks.htm> and click on the state to find more detailed data specific to it and its cities/regions/workforce areas. Look through state LMI databases and publications to find state and regional labor market data analysis, employers, business hiring expectations, and other information (these resources/tools will vary by state DOL).



## GUIDE TO EXPLORING CAREERONESTOP

The following are instructions for how to use the CareerOneStop Web site to explore occupations, including learning about the tasks performed and skills used on the job, and important data on wages, growth, job openings, and education/training/work experience commonly required. We've chosen the occupation 'Computer Support Specialist' here as just one example of the numerous occupations you can explore through the Web site.

1. Go to the CareerOneStop Web site: <http://www.careeronestop.org>. Click on **BROWSE OCCUPATIONS**.

careeronestop  
PATHWAYS TO CAREER SUCCESS

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- **Resumes + Interviews**  
Resume advice, samples & templates... Cover letters and thank-you notes... Interviews... and more
- **Salary + Benefits**  
Wage and salary information... Benefits... Relocating... and more
- **Job Search**  
Plan your search... Browse job sites... After an offer... and more
- **People + Places to Help**  
Services near you... State web sites... Unemployment insurance... Salary negotiation... and more

2. In the keyword search box, type 'Computer Support Specialist' and then click 'Search.' A box of relevant occupations will appear on the next screen. Highlight the one you want (if not already highlighted) and click 'Continue.' If the occupation you want is not listed, click 'New Search.' (Alternatively, you can look for an occupation within the occupation groups listed below the keyword search box.)
3. Once you've selected the occupation you want, you will be guided to select a state. Once you have done so, click 'Continue.'
4. You should now see an Occupation Profile for the occupation and state you selected. This profile contains generalizable information about the occupation and information specific to the state you selected (e.g., wage and employment figures).

Links under Profile Content will take you directly to specific sections on this page, also found by scrolling down the page.

Use these links to either change the occupation while remaining on your state, or change the state while remaining on the occupation.

The screenshot shows the 'Occupation Profile' page for 'Computer Support Specialists' in 'Massachusetts'. The left sidebar contains a navigation menu with categories like 'Occupation Information', 'Industry Information', 'State Information', 'Career Tools', 'Videos', and 'Find It By Topic'. The main content area includes a search bar, 'Selected Criteria' (Occupation: Computer Support Specialists, State: Massachusetts), and a list of links for 'Profile Content' such as 'Wages', 'Employment Trends', 'Knowledge, Skills, & Abilities', 'Tasks & Activities', 'Tools & Technology', 'Education & Training', 'Related Occupations', and 'Web Resources'. Below this is the 'COMPUTER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS: MASSACHUSETTS' section, followed by an 'Occupation Description' and a 'Career Video' section with a video player and download options for Windows Media and Real Player.

Tools for career exploration and planning, including self-assessments, an 'Employer Locator,' a 'Résumé Tutorial,' 'Career Resource Library,' and much more.

All Occupational Profiles begin with an occupation description. Most also have Career Videos that show real people on the job. Click on this link to find additional video resources, including Spanish language videos.

The next page contains detailed information about some of the resources that can be found when you scroll down the Occupation Profile.

5. As you either scroll down the page or select links under 'Profile Content,' you will find information about the selected occupation's:

- **STATE AND NATIONAL WAGES** (plus a link to **WAGES BY METROPOLITAN AREAS**)—This section includes hourly and yearly wage ranges for the occupation.
- **STATE AND NATIONAL TRENDS**—Employment trends focused on job growth and job openings figures.
- **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES**—A list of the occupation's most important knowledge, skills, and abilities. (Note: To find the occupation's interest code, click on the 'Source' link at the bottom of this section. This should bring you to the occupation's O\*NET OnLine 'Summary Report.' Click on 'Interests' to find the 'interest code' for the occupation. In this case, the interest code for Computer Support Specialists is RIC.)
- **TASKS AND ACTIVITIES**—A list of occupation-specific tasks and the most important generalized work activities for the occupation.
- **TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY**—A list of machines, equipment, tools, and software that workers may use in the occupation.
- **EDUCATION AND TRAINING**—Use this information as an indication of how much education/training/work experience a person may need for this occupation (remember that this may vary by region and employer). This section includes information on the most common educational/training level for the occupation and a table showing the occupation's distribution of educational attainment (for the U.S. only). In addition, under the table, you'll find links to 'colleges, training schools and instructional programs' for the occupation, a 'Short-Term Training Finder,' 'Education Resources,' a 'Financial Aid Advisor,' and a 'WIA Eligible Training Provider List.'
- **RELATED OCCUPATIONS**—Links to occupations with similar skill requirements. Note that these occupations may be in different industries.
- **WEB RESOURCES**—Links to online resources related to the occupation's occupational group.

A guide to the information highlighted in orange follows. On the next several pages, you will also see data tables surrounded by red text explaining what the numbers in those tables mean.

### STATE AND NATIONAL WAGES

This table in the Occupation Profile provides state and national data on wages for the selected occupation. In this case, the occupation is 'Computer Support Specialist' and the selected state is 'Massachusetts':

STATE AND NATIONAL WAGES						
LOCATION	PAY PERIOD	2009				
		10%	25%	Median	75%	90%
United States	Hourly	\$13.08	\$16.50	\$21.30	\$27.54	\$34.95
	Yearly	\$27,200	\$34,300	\$44,300	\$57,300	\$72,700
Massachusetts	Hourly	\$17.47	\$21.46	\$27.11	\$34.08	\$42.46
	Yearly	\$36,300	\$44,600	\$56,400	\$70,900	\$88,300

*Occupation Wages FAQs · Median Wage by Occupation Across States · Compare Wages by Occupation and Local Area · Compare Wages by Metropolitan Areas*

Notice the year in the table—2009. This is the year you'd cite for the wage data. The table shows a range of hourly and yearly percentile wages (10%, 25%, Median, 75%, 90%) for the U.S. and Massachusetts. Here's what they mean:

A percentile wage shows the percentage of workers in an occupation who earn less than a given wage and the percentage that earn more. Therefore:

- The **10%** figure is the 10th-percentile wage. If we look at the Massachusetts data, this means that **in 2009, 10% of Computer Support Specialists in Massachusetts earned less than \$17.47/hr. and the remaining 90% earned more than \$17.47/hr.** *NOTE: The 10th-percentile wage is often a good indication of an 'entry-level' wage.*
- The **25%** figure is the 25th-percentile wage. This means that **in 2009, 25% of Computer Support Specialists in Massachusetts earned less than \$21.46/hr.** and the remaining 75% earned more than \$21.46/hr.
- The **median** is also known as the 50th-percentile wage. This means that **in 2009, 50% of Computer Support Specialists in Massachusetts earned less than \$27.11/hr. and the remaining 50% earned more than \$27.11/hr.** The median is the middle value of an ordered set of values; in this case, it is the middle wage in the full range of wages. Be careful not to confuse this with an average wage (same as a mean wage). It's best not to use/cite an average wage with your students because it's very sensitive to unusually high or low values. Use the median instead.
- The **75%** figure is the 75th-percentile wage. This means that **in 2009, 75% of Computer Support Specialists in Massachusetts earned less than \$34.08/hr. and the remaining 25% earned more than \$34.08/hr.**
- The **90%** figure is the 90th-percentile wage. This means that **in 2009, 90% of Computer Support Specialists in Massachusetts earned less than \$42.46/hr. and the remaining 10% earned more than \$42.46/hr.**

### WAGES BY METROPOLITAN AREAS

Wages can vary widely by region, even within a state, so it's advisable that you and your students know an occupation's metropolitan/nonmetropolitan area wage. To find wages by metropolitan/nonmetropolitan area, click on the link [COMPARE WAGES BY METROPOLITAN AREAS](#) a few lines below the 'State and National Wages' table. Once you've clicked on the link, select a metropolitan area and click 'Continue.' (Or, if you prefer, you can select up to 10 metropolitan areas to compare wages for the selected occupation.) You should now see a new table titled 'Wages by Metropolitan Areas' for the occupation and area(s) you selected:

WAGES FOR COMPUTER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS						
LOCATION	PAY PERIOD	2009				
		10%	25%	Median	75%	90%
United States	Hourly	\$13.08	\$16.50	\$21.30	\$27.54	\$34.95
	Yearly	\$27,200	\$34,300	\$44,300	\$57,300	\$72,700
Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA NECTA Division	Hourly	\$18.54	\$22.49	\$28.09	\$35.04	\$42.93
	Yearly	\$38,600	\$46,800	\$58,400	\$72,900	\$89,300

In this case, we see a table showing the 2009 percentile wages for a 'Computer Support Specialist' in the U.S. and in the 'Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA NECTA Division.' Hourly and yearly wages are shown. If we use the 10th-percentile wage figure as an indicator of an entry-level wage range, we see that an **entry-level wage for a Computer Support Specialist in the Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA NECTA Division would likely be around \$18.54/hr.** In addition, we see that the **2009 median wage for a Computer Support Specialist in the Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA NECTA Division was \$28.09/hr. or \$58,400 per year.**

### STATE AND NATIONAL TRENDS

This table in the Occupation Profile shows 10-year employment projections for the selected occupation. *(NOTE: National projections may be more current than state-level projections, as state updates often lag by 9 or more months. Projections are updated every two years.)*

STATE AND NATIONAL TRENDS				
UNITED STATES	EMPLOYMENT		PERCENT CHANGE	JOB OPENINGS <sup>1</sup>
	2008	2018		
Computer support specialists	565,700	643,800	+14%	23,460
MASSACHUSETTS	EMPLOYMENT		PERCENT CHANGE	JOB OPENINGS <sup>1</sup>
	2008	2018		
Computer support specialists	17,360	18,420	+6%	640

<sup>1</sup>Job Openings refers to the average annual job openings due to growth and net replacement.

This table shows national and state-level data on occupational growth and job openings. Here's what each means:

- Percent change represents an occupation's projected growth. It tells us whether and how much the occupation is expected to grow over a 10-year period (in this case, between 2006 and 2016 in Massachusetts). This percentage can be positive, zero, or negative. A positive percentage shows growth. The larger the positive percent change, the faster employment is projected to grow in that occupation. The larger the negative percent change, the faster employment is projected to decline. For the purposes of this training, it's helpful to focus on the state figure. **The table shows that the occupation Computer Support Specialist is projected to grow 6% from 2006-2016 in Massachusetts.**
- Job openings consist of:
  - Growth—Newly created jobs
  - Replacement openings—Turnover that results from people who leave the occupation (i.e., quit, retire, advance, pass away)

In this table, job openings are shown as an average annual number. **It is projected that there will be an average of 640 Computer Support Specialist job openings per year from 2006-2016 in MA.**

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Use the information in this section as an indication of how much education/training/work experience a person may need for this occupation (this may vary by region and employer).

See the **'Most Common Educational/Training Level'** for the occupation. In this case, we see that for **Computer Support Specialists**, an **Associate's degree** is the most common educational/training level.

Next, take a look at the 'Distribution of Educational Attainment' table:

DISTRIBUTION OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT							
OCCUPATION	PERCENT OF EMPLOYEES AGED 25 TO 44 IN THE OCCUPATION WHOSE HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IS						
	Less than high school diploma	High school diploma or equivalent	Some college, no degree	Associate's degree	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Doctoral or professional degree
Computer support specialists	1%	12.5%	29.4%	16%	33.1%	7.2%	0.9%
Computer Specialists	0.6%	6.3%	17.8%	10.7%	44.2%	18.2%	2.3%
Computer and Mathematical	0.5%	4.7%	13.6%	8%	41%	23.8%	8.3%
Total, All Occupations	10.7%	27.6%	20.6%	8.9%	19.4%	8.3%	4.5%

This table shows the occupation's distribution of educational attainment (on a national level only). Here we see, for example, that **16% of Computer Support Specialists in the U.S. (aged 25-44) have an Associate's degree.**

### TIPS

- Remember that the level of education/training required or preferred for an occupation may vary by region and employer. For example, the most common educational/training level for Computer Support Specialists in the U.S. is an Associate's degree. However, the table shows us that, nationally, 41.2% of Computer Support Specialists have a Bachelor's degree or higher (just add the percentages for 'Bachelor's degree,' 'Master's degree,' and 'Doctoral or professional degree'). This high percentage shows that, in some regions, an Associate's degree is not sufficient to get a Computer Support Specialist job.
- In other words, while a Bachelor's degree may not be the most common

educational/training level for an occupation, employers may prefer or require one in some regions. If for a given occupation a high percentage of employees have a Bachelor's degree or more, conversations with employers will help to determine the credentials they prefer or require.

- To get general information on work experience typically needed to access an occupation, go to the section in the Occupation Profile titled 'Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.' At the end of the section, you should see a 'Source' link to the 'Occupational Information Network.' Click on the link. You should now see a 'Summary Report' for the occupation. Click on **JOB ZONE** and look at the section 'Related Experience.' Conversations with employers will also help to give

you an idea of the work experience they prefer or require for a given occupation.

- Under the 'Distribution of Educational Attainment' table, you'll find links to:
  - COLLEGES, TRAINING SCHOOLS AND INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS** for the occupation
  - SHORT-TERM TRAINING FINDER** (education and training programs where one can earn a certificate, diploma, or award in less than 2 years)
  - EDUCATION RESOURCES**
  - FINANCIAL AID ADVISOR** (to help find funds for financing education)
  - WIA ELIGIBLE TRAINING PROVIDER LIST**



6. Watch the **CAREER VIDEO** (below the 'Occupation Description') to see real people on the job. Career videos include text for those who are hard of hearing. A link to 'Additional videos' provides Spanish language videos, industry videos, and more.

### Career Video



View career video with one of the following:

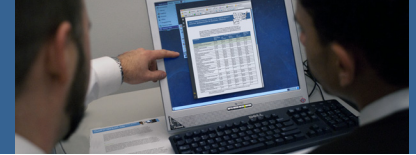


[Additional videos](#) and more information available on CareerOneStop.

7. Keep exploring CareerOneStop's features! Click on as many sections and links as you can to find additional information/resources not included here. You can also print out printer-friendly versions of Occupation Profiles and other CareerOneStop resources/tools for you and your students to use.

## UNIT 2 UNDERSTANDING YOUR LOCAL LABOR MARKET

### GLOSSARY OF LABOR MARKET TERMS



The following terms are commonly used in connection with labor market information and workforce development. Definitions were drawn from several sources, including the LMI offices of California, Massachusetts, Nebraska, Ohio, and Rhode Island; and the Web sites of ACTE (Association for Career and Technical Education), the Bureau of Labor Statistics, CareerOneStop, the International Economic Development Council, Jobs for the Future, NAHETS (National Association of Heavy Equipment Training Schools), National Council for Workforce Education, National Institute for Literacy, Ohio Stackable Certificates Initiative (Ohio Board of Regents' University System of Ohio), *Pennsylvania Career Guide 2008-2009* (PA Dept. of Labor & Industry), the Workforce Strategy Center, and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL).

#### A

##### apprenticeship

Trains an apprentice in a skilled profession (e.g., carpentry, auto mechanics, welding). Working under the direct supervision of an experienced worker, apprentices receive on-the-job training supplemented by classroom instruction. Their sponsors—including employers, employer associations, and joint labor-management organizations—provide apprentices with instruction that reflects industry needs. Apprenticeships generally last about four years but can range from one to six years. Apprenticeship training programs are usually registered with DOL or a State Apprenticeship Agency and provide training under conditions specified in a written apprenticeship agreement.

#### B

##### benefits

Nonwage compensation provided to employees. Benefits include paid leave (e.g., vacations, holidays, sick leave); supplemental pay (including premium pay for overtime and work on holidays and weekends, shift differentials, and non-production bonuses); insurance (life insurance, health benefits, short-term disability, and long-term disability insurance); retirement and savings plans (defined benefit and contribution plans); and legally required benefits (such as Social Security and Medicare, Workers' Compensation and Unemployment Insurance). Excluded from employee benefits are such items as payment-in-kind, free room and board, and tips.

##### bridge program

Helps adult students obtain the necessary academic, technical, and employability skills they need to enter and succeed in post-secondary education and training programs. They are often the first rung on the way to career-path employment in high-demand, middle- and high-skill occupations. Bridge programs are generally aimed at adults who have reading and

mathematics skills at or below the ninth-grade level, who may or may not have a high school diploma or GED. Most will have been out of school for a significant amount of time. Those who complete bridge programs typically move on to college-level education and training in the targeted field; however, sometimes they gain sufficient career-focused skills to obtain an entry-level skilled job. However, because bridge programs can provide both credentials and links to transparent education pathways, completers can return to education to advance to a higher-skilled position in the field. Bridges can be offered through many avenues, including adult basic skills/GED, English as a Second Language, developmental education, adult vocational/technical education, or WIA-supported programs.

### Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)

The principal fact-finding agency for the federal government in the broad field of labor economics and statistics. BLS is an independent statistical agency that collects, processes, analyzes, and disseminates essential data to the American public, the U.S. Congress, other federal agencies, state and local governments, and business and labor leaders. It also serves as a statistical resource to DOL by collecting, processing, analyzing, and disseminating data relating to employment, unemployment, the labor force, productivity, prices, family expenditures, wages, industrial relations, and occupational safety and health.

## C

### career and technical education (CTE)

Highly specialized, technical training in a specific field, linked to academics. CTE schools offer training in health care, automotive, construction, horticulture, engineering, computer technology, business, and many other fields. CTE has a long and rich history in the United States. Today's CTE has evolved from a limited number of vocational programs available at the turn of the 20th century into a broad system that encompasses a variety of challenging fields in diverse subject areas which are constantly evolving due to the changing global economy. Today's CTE provides students with: academic subject matter taught with relevance to the real world; employability skills, from job-related skills to workplace ethics ; career pathways that link secondary and postsecondary education; second-chance education and training; and education for additional training and degrees, especially related to workplace training, skills upgrades and career advancement. Each state administers CTE in a different manner. In many cases, state and local CTE programs are "leading the way" with regard to important public policy issues such as high school reform and secondary-postsecondary transition.

### career ladder/lattice

Shows how a worker can build a career by moving up into positions with more responsibility. By acquiring additional knowledge and skills through education, training, or work experience, a worker can follow a career ladder within one organization or across several organizations. One example of a career ladder would be the path on which one can rise from lawyer in a law firm to partner to managing partner.

### career pathway

A series of connected education and training programs and support services that enable individuals to both secure employment within a specific industry or occupational sector, and to advance to higher levels of education and employment in that sector. Each step on a career pathway is designed to prepare workers for their next level of employment and education. Career pathways focus on easing and facilitating student transition from: high school to community college; developmental to credit postsecondary coursework; and community college to university or employment. Career pathways target jobs in industries of importance to local economies. Their purpose is to create avenues of advancement for current workers, jobseekers, and future labor market entrants, and to provide a supply of qualified workers for local employers. They help to strengthen the “supply chains” that produce and update a region’s knowledge workforce.

### certification

Certification serves to document the competence of an individual on a set of predetermined qualifications or performance standards of an industry group, agency, or association. Its purpose is to confirm that a person is able to competently complete a job or set of tasks, usually by the passing of an examination. It is issued to an individual by an external organization. Certification is voluntary but may be required by some employers in some occupations (e.g., nursing assistants, financial advisors). Some kinds of professional certification are valid for a lifetime, once the exam is passed. In other cases, individuals have to be recertified after a certain period of time. Also, certifications can differ within a profession by the level or specific area of expertise. Certification does not refer to the state of legally being able to practice or work in a profession. That is licensure. Usually, licensure is administered by a governmental entity for public protection purposes and certification by a professional association (e.g., Licensed Practical Nurse). However, they are similar in that they both require the demonstration of a certain level of knowledge or ability.

### U.S. Chamber of Commerce

The world's largest business federation, representing the interests of more than 3 million businesses of all sizes, sectors, and regions, as well as state and local chambers and industry associations. More than 96 percent of U.S. Chamber members are small businesses with 100 employees or fewer. Its principal activity is developing and implementing policy on major issues affecting business. Although all chambers can work with all levels of government, they tend to concentrate their efforts on specific levels: local chambers of commerce tend to focus on local issues; state chambers on state issues; and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce focuses on issues at the federal government level. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is not a governing body, chartering agent, or a regulatory agency for chambers of commerce, and has no say in how chambers decide to run themselves. Any community can organize and support a chamber of commerce. Local chambers of commerce are membership organizations of the business community whose members can range from small businesses to large corporations, and can include education and health care institutions. These chambers deliver programs (e.g., business networking events) and provide support services to their members, while representing them through economic development initiatives and public policy advocacy.

### criminal background check

Record requests made by some employers during pre-employment screening to discover any possible criminal history. For some jobs, employers request criminal background checks on job candidates, especially on those seeking positions of trust or those that require high security, such as within a hospital, airport, school, financial institution, or government entity. These checks are traditionally administered by a government agency for a fee, but can also be administered by private companies.

## D

### U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)

A cabinet-level U.S. agency that enforces laws protecting workers, promotes labor-management cooperation, sponsors employment and training placement services, oversees the unemployment insurance system, and produces statistics on the labor force and living conditions. DOL administers a variety of federal labor laws including those that guarantee workers' rights to safe and healthy working conditions, a minimum hourly wage and overtime pay, freedom from employment discrimination, unemployment insurance, and other income support.

## E

### economic development

The entire array of activities intended to expand the economy of a designated area to increase the number of jobs available to the population of that area. Some of these activities are conducted by government, and some by the private sector, often in partnership with government.

### employment change (number)

The numerical change in employment measures the projected number of job gains or losses in a given period of time (e.g., the difference between a base year and a projected year in number of jobs). For example, if an occupation had 1,000 jobs in 2006, and it's projected to have 1,500 jobs in 2016, the employment change (number) is 500. In this case, the occupation is showing positive growth and is considered a growing occupation. However, if an occupation had 1,000 jobs in 2006, and it's projected to have 800 jobs in 2016, the employment change (number) is -200. This negative growth shows that employment is declining. Also referred to as "net change in employment." The formula for numerical employment change is:

*employment change number = # of jobs in projected year - # of jobs in base year*

### employment change (percent)

The percent change in employment measures the projected rate of change of employment in an occupation. A rapidly growing occupation usually indicates favorable prospects for employment. However, even modest employment growth in a large occupation can result in many more job openings due to growth than rapid employment growth in a small occupation. In addition, an occupation with declining employment (one that shows a negative percent change) may still provide a sizable number of job openings due to replacement needs. This number is sometimes given for a 10-year period (e.g., 2008-2018). Also referred to as “percent change,” “growth rate,” or “growth percent.” For an occupation, percent change in employment is calculated using the following equation:

$$\text{employment change percent} = \text{employment change number} / \text{base year number of jobs} * 100$$

### entry-level job

A job for which employers hire workers with little or no previous work experience or with relatively minimum training or education. Occupations that require more education or training may have specific entry-level classifications such as apprenticeship or internship.

## G

### growth rate (projected for an occupation)

Occupational growth can be considered in two ways and it is important to differentiate between the two: by the rate of growth (i.e., “employment change percent”) and by the number of new jobs created by growth. Some occupations both have a fast growth rate and create a large number of new jobs. However, an occupation that employs few workers may experience rapid growth, although the resulting number of new jobs may be small. For example, a small occupation that employs just 1,000 workers and is projected to grow 50 percent over a 10-year period will add only 500 jobs. By contrast, a large occupation that employs 1.5 million workers may experience only 10 percent growth, but will add 150,000 jobs. As a result, to get a complete picture of employment growth, both measures must be considered. Growth (or expected increase in jobs) can be driven by a number of factors, including changes in technology and business practices, trends in laws and government regulations, and increases in research and development expenditures. Declining occupational employment stems from falling industry employment, technological advances, changes in business practices, and other factors. The larger the negative percent change in employment, the faster employment is declining. Industry growth or decline will affect demand for occupations. At the same time, job growth can vary among major occupational groups.



### H

#### Holland codes

A set of personality types described in a theory of career choice formulated by psychologist John L. Holland. Holland's six personality and work environment types are: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional. The acronym for these personality types is RIASEC, which is why some use the terms "Holland codes" and "RIASEC codes" interchangeably. This model has been adopted by the DOL for categorizing jobs relative to interests.

### I

#### industry

A group of establishments that produce similar products or provide similar services. For example, all establishments that manufacture automobiles are in the automotive industry. A given industry, or even a particular establishment in that industry, might have employees in dozens of occupations. The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) is used to categorize industries.

#### industry sector

A group of firms that share some commonality, such as the product, the inputs, or the skill sets of employees.

#### internship

A structured program in which an individual gains supervised practical experience in an occupation. May be paid or unpaid.

### J

#### job opening

According to BLS, a specific position of employment to be filled at an establishment. Conditions include the following: there is work available for that position; the hired employee could start within 30 days; and the employer is actively recruiting for the position. In reviewing projections for a 10-year period (e.g., 2008-2018), look to see if the job opening data represent this 10-year figure or an annual average.

### job openings due to growth and replacement needs

The projected number of job openings for an occupation (generally for a 10-year period such as 2008-2018). The number of openings due to growth (i.e., “new jobs”) is the positive employment change from a base year to a projected year. If employment declines, then there are no job openings due to growth. The number of openings due to replacement needs (i.e., “replacements” or “replacement openings”) is the net number of workers leaving an occupation who will need to be replaced. According to BLS, replacement needs are projected to account for 67 percent of the approximately 50.9 million job openings between 2008 and 2018; therefore, even occupations that are projected to experience slower-than-average growth or to decline in employment still may offer many job openings.

*job openings due to growth and replacement needs = new jobs + replacement openings*

If employment change is negative, job openings due to growth (i.e., new jobs) equal zero and total job openings equal replacement openings.

*NOTE: If you are researching in-demand occupations for your students, “total job openings” is generally the most useful statistic for projecting the number of openings in a given occupation. BLS focuses on this number rather than on “net job openings” because replacement openings have already been adjusted for projected employment declines.*

### job shadowing

Allows one to directly observe another person at work. One can observe firsthand the day-to-day activities he/she would be performing in a particular job and learn what skills are needed to obtain that job. Acting as a shadow also gives one a chance to ask any questions he/she might have about the job and how to prepare for it.

## L

### labor market

The market in which workers compete for jobs and employers compete for workers.

### labor market analysis

The measurement and evaluation of economic forces as they relate to the employment process. There are many variables affecting labor, geography, and supply-demand relationships, including population growth and characteristics, industrial structure and development, technological developments, shifts in consumer demands, the volume and extent of unionization and trade disputes, recruitment practices, wage levels, and conditions of employment and training opportunities.

### labor market area

An economically integrated geographical unit within which workers may readily change jobs without changing their place of residence. Generally, the area consists of a central city and surrounding territory within commuting distance, and takes the name of its central city. The boundaries depend primarily on economic and geographic factors, not on political jurisdiction.

### Labor Market Information (LMI)

Each state and territory in the U.S. has a Labor Market Information (LMI) office that produces statistical information in cooperation with BLS. State LMI offices collect, analyze, and provide the public with information on their states' respective labor market. Statistics include employment levels, unemployment rates, wage and earnings data, estimates of available labor, employment projections, business staffing patterns, career planning information, etc. These statistics are available for geographies such as the state, workforce development regions, metropolitan areas (MA), counties, select cities, and Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) areas. Employers, career counselors, educators, economic developers, job placement personnel, training program planners and policymakers use these data. LMI offices produce their statistics using the same procedures and methodologies. This allows for comparisons across different geographies, and for the collected statistics to be aggregated for use in national estimates. Each state's LMI office produces statistics for BLS, but they each operate independently, usually as a part of a state agency. (For example, in Nebraska, this office is a part of Nebraska Workforce Development—Department of Labor. In Alabama, it is a part of the Department of Industrial Relations.) Perhaps the most important reason for directly contacting LMI offices is that they often produce more detailed, local, and current information than what is required to support BLS in order to better serve local needs. LMI offices are also familiar with local conditions and can direct people to data for regions or metro areas within their state. In addition, they may conduct special studies, analyses of local conditions, and customized reports for local governments, state agencies, businesses or economic development entities. Some LMI offices serve as "test" or R&D sites to produce new statistical products and services. For example, Nebraska's LMI Center conducts surveys pertaining to job vacancy, job turnover, and employee benefits—surveys that are not yet conducted by all states.

### labor supply

The number of persons employed and unemployed, plus those that would seek employment if they believed jobs were available. Generally, this term has been applied to those who are unemployed.

## M

### mean wage

An average occupational wage estimate calculated by summing the wages of all the employees in a given occupation, and then dividing that total by the number of employees.

### median wage

The estimated 50th percentile of the distribution of wages based on data collected from employers in all industries. The “median” is the middle value of an ordered set of values wherein half of the numbers lie below and half lie above its value; 50 percent of workers in an occupation earn less than the median wage, and 50 percent earn more. The median wage is the same as the 50th-percentile wage. The Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) branch of BLS produces employment and wage estimates for more than 800 occupations.

## N

### net change in employment

The net difference in jobs from one period of time to another. Also referred to as “employment change number.”

*net change in employment = # of jobs in projected year - # of jobs in base year*

### net job openings

The net change in employment and replacements. This number is always less than or equal to total job openings. There is no comparable national statistic for “net job openings.”

*net job openings = net change in employment + replacement job openings*

### new jobs

This number only represents positive employment change from a base year to a projected year (if employment change is negative, “new jobs” is zero). For example, if an occupation had 500 jobs in 2006, and it’s projected to have 700 jobs in 2016, the number of new jobs equals 200. However, if an occupation had 500 jobs in 2006, and it’s projected to have 400 jobs in 2016—a net change of -100—this is negative employment change, so the occupation’s “new jobs” value is zero. BLS does not publish “new jobs” numbers, but it refers to “new jobs” as “job openings due to growth.”

*new jobs + replacement openings = total job openings*

## O

### occupation

A set of activities or tasks that employees perform. Employees that perform the same tasks are in the same occupation, whether or not they are in the same industry. For example, “cafeteria worker” is a service occupation found in many different industry sectors, including services (schools, hospitals, businesses), the trade sector (eating establishments, department

stores), and manufacturing industries. Some occupations are concentrated in a few particular industries; other occupations are found in many industries. In some cases, people differentiate occupations from jobs by defining a job as paid work at a specific organization.

### Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Program

A federal/state cooperative program that produces employment and wage estimates for more than 800 occupations. The OES survey is a semi-annual mail survey of non-farm establishments. BLS produces the survey materials and selects the establishments to be surveyed. The sampling frame (the list from which establishments to be surveyed are selected) is derived from the list of establishments maintained by State Workforce Agencies (SWAs) for unemployment insurance purposes. Establishments to be surveyed are selected in order to obtain data from every metropolitan and non-metropolitan area in every state, across all surveyed industries, and from establishments of varying sizes. The SWAs mail the survey materials to the selected establishments and make follow-up calls to request data from non-respondents or to clarify data. The collected data are used to produce occupational estimates at the national, state, and sub-state levels.

### Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH)

The OOH is a nationally recognized source of career information designed to provide assistance to individuals making decisions about their future work lives. Revised every two years by BLS, the OOH provides information on job duties; working conditions; employment; training, advancement, and other qualifications; job outlook; earnings; related occupations; and sources of additional information for more than 250 different occupations covering 9 out of 10 jobs in the economy.

### on-the-job training

Supervised real-life practice in a current job, usually conducted at the worksite.

### One-Stop Career Center

One-Stop Career Centers provide jobseekers with a full range of assistance under one roof and work with employers to build a competitive workforce. Established under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), One-Stops operate in all 50 states and Puerto Rico, offering training referrals, career counseling, job listings, and similar employment-related services (e.g., résumé writing classes). The typical One-Stop Career Center serves thousands of individuals who are seeking employment, changing jobs, reentering the workforce, or learning new skills. They also help businesses find the qualified workers they need. Depending on the capabilities and priorities of the local area, they can offer businesses electronic job orders and job fairs, use of private interview space, background checks and customized screening, and regular referrals of qualified candidates. Many businesses work with One-Stop Career Centers to find diverse candidates including youths, older workers, and individuals with disabilities. The One-Stop Career Center system is coordinated by DOL's Employment and Training Administration (ETA). To search for One-Stop Career Centers by city or zip code, visit <http://www.servicelocator.org/>.

### Occupational Information Network (O\*NET)

The nation's primary source of occupational information, replacing the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT). It provides comprehensive occupational descriptions and data for use by jobseekers, workforce development offices, human resources professionals, students, researchers, and others. Central to O\*NET is the O\*NET database, containing information on hundreds of standardized and occupation-specific descriptors. The database, which is available to the public at no cost, is continually updated by surveying a broad range of workers from each occupation. Information from this database forms the heart of O\*NET OnLine, an interactive application for searching occupations. The database also provides career exploration tools, a set of assessment instruments for workers and students looking to find or change careers. O\*NET is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration (USDOL/ETA) through a grant to the North Carolina Employment Security Commission.

## P

### percentile wage

Shows the percentage of workers in an occupation that earn less than a given wage and the percentage that earn more. For example, a 25th-percentile wage of \$15.00 indicates that 25 percent of workers (in a given occupation in a given area) earn less than \$15/hr; therefore, the remaining 75 percent earn more than \$15/hr. Often shown as 10th, 25th, 50th (or median), 75th, and 90th-percentile wage estimates.

### postsecondary awards

Awards signifying completion of an educational program beyond the high school level, including postsecondary vocational awards (e.g., an occupational certificate); Associate's degrees; Bachelor's degrees; bachelor's or higher degree, plus work experience; Master's degrees; Doctoral degrees; and first professional degrees. Postsecondary institutions such as community colleges, technical colleges, universities, colleges that offer baccalaureate degrees and higher, and private technical schools offer these awards. Students are often taught in traditional classrooms and/or via distance learning facilities.

*NOTE: Each of the occupations for which BLS publishes projections data is assigned one of these seven education categories or one of its four training categories (see the categories under "work-related training"). Taken together, BLS uses these 11 education and training categories to describe the most significant education or training pathway to employment for each occupation. Occupational analysts assign a single category that best describes the education or training needed to become fully qualified in a given occupation. However, for any given occupation, it is important to ask employers if this education level accurately reflects what they require or prefer in a job applicant or employee.*



### projected need for employees

See “total job openings.”

### projection

A prediction or estimate of an actual value in a future time period. They are based on information available at the time the projections were made, such as past industry employment trends, population trends, and anticipated industry developments. Economic conditions change in ways that cannot be predicted, so projections must be updated periodically. Because projections are estimates based on imperfect information and are updated frequently, they should be used only as a guide for evaluating training and education needs. Local information must be taken into account when thinking about national and state-level employment projections. Employment projections are less accurate for small areas because employment levels for small areas tend to fluctuate more than for large areas. For example, it is possible for industry employment to decrease nationally, but increase locally—and vice versa. Long-term projections are intended to anticipate major structural changes in employment patterns. The focus on structural changes makes long-term projections more appropriate than short-term projections for planning training and education programs. BLS updates long-term employment projections every two years (e.g., 2006-2016, 2008-2018, etc.). These 10-year projections of industry and occupational employment, labor force, and economic growth are widely used in career guidance, education and training program planning, and for studying long-range employment trends. The projections provide information to individuals who are making decisions regarding education and training, entering the job market, or changing careers. States make independent employment projections with the support of the national office.

## Q

### quartile

The value of the boundary of the 25th, 50th, or 75th percentile of a frequency distribution divided into four parts, each containing a quarter of the population.

## R

### replacement openings

The number of job openings expected to arise from the need to replace workers. These openings result from people leaving occupations and are created by retirements, promotions, transfers, disabilities, and other turnover. They are an important source of job opportunities. According to BLS, replacement needs are projected to account for 67 percent of the approximately 50.9 million job openings between 2008 and 2018; therefore, even occupations

that are projected to experience slower-than-average growth or to decline in employment still may offer many job openings. In most occupations, replacement openings account for many more job openings than employment growth does. Replacement needs are calculated from monthly Current Population Survey (CPS) data. Also referred to as “replacements,” “number of openings due to replacement needs,” “replacement needs,” or “net replacement needs.”

*NOTE: there is no comparable national statistic for “net job openings.”*

*new jobs + replacements openings = total job openings*

*net change in employment + replacement openings = net job openings*

### S

#### stackable certificates

Represent the continuum of credentials available to youths and adults, including but not limited to high school diplomas, GEDs, technical certificates, work readiness credentials, two- and four-year degrees, apprenticeship credentials, etc. These credentials are meant to serve as evidence of a student's academic competencies and or/college and work readiness for postsecondary institutions and employers. The system of stackable certificates serves to clearly connect pre-college academic work to credit-bearing career and technical coursework that leads ultimately to a college degree. Local programs may develop and award stackable certificates. For example, the Ohio ABLE program created the Basic and Advanced Skills Certificates and the Oral Communication Certificate, which are awarded through local ABLE programs to qualified adults.

#### soft skills

Soft skills refer to a cluster of personal qualities, habits, attitudes, and social graces that help an employee perform well on the job as an individual and as part of a team. Soft skills include: communication skills; problem solving skills; flexibility; strong work ethic; leadership qualities; a positive attitude; the ability to handle criticism; time management; and teamwork. Employers from all industries value soft skills because research experience show that they can be just as important an indicator of job performance as hard skills.

### T

#### total job openings

The projected number of job openings for an occupation (generally for a 10-year period such as 2008-2018). The number of openings due to growth (i.e., “new jobs”) is the positive employment change from a base year to a projected year. If employment declines, then there are no job openings due to growth. The number of openings due to replacement needs (i.e., “replacements”) is the net number of workers leaving an occupation who will need to be

replaced. According to BLS, replacement needs are projected to account for 67 percent of the approximately 50.9 million job openings between 2008 and 2018. Thus, even occupations that are projected to experience slower-than-average growth or to decline in employment still may offer many job openings. Comparable to “job openings due to growth and replacement needs” or “projected need for employees.”

*NOTE: If you are researching in-demand occupations for your students, “total job openings” is generally the most useful statistic for projecting the number of openings in a given occupation. The BLS focuses on this number rather than on “net job openings” because replacement openings have already been adjusted for projected employment declines.*

*total job openings = new jobs + replacements openings*

### transferable skills

Skills, personal qualities, and attributes that a worker can transfer to other occupations. A person acquires these skills through a range of life activities—jobs, classes, parenting, etc.

## U

### underemployed

Persons who are employed in positions that do not utilize their skill or educational level, or who desire a full-time job but are only working part-time because of economic conditions.

### unemployed

Individuals, aged 16 years or older, who are not working but are able to work, available for work, and seeking either full-time or part-time work.

## W

### wage

Money paid to an employee. The Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) branch of BLS produces employment and wage estimates for more than 800 occupations. Wages for the OES survey are categorized as straight-time, gross pay, exclusive of premium pay. The collection of wage data includes: base rate; cost-of-living allowances; guaranteed pay; hazardous-duty pay;; on-call pay; tips; and incentive pay, including commissions and production bonuses. Excluded from the wage data are: back pay; jury duty pay; overtime pay; severance pay; shift differentials; nonproduction bonuses; and tuition reimbursements. Wages can be reported on an hourly or annual basis. For example, in the Occupational Outlook Handbook compiled by BLS, jobs that are typically salaried show annual wages; jobs that are normally hourly show hourly wages.

*NOTE: OES normally releases both annual and hourly wages for all occupations. However, check any notes on the data to find exceptions to this (e.g., occupations whose wages are adjusted for the lack of summer employment). In some cases, hourly wages can be converted to annual wages (and vice versa) using the following formulas (again, check any notes on the data to see if these formulas apply):*

*hourly wages = annual wages/2080*

*annual wages = (hourly wages) \* (2080)*

### workforce development

All programs that prepare people for work, whether operated by public, private, and/or nonprofit entities. Workforce development and training refer to community efforts to train individuals for specific jobs or industries. Training may cover basic skills (e.g., literacy, numeracy), soft skills (e.g., work ethic, attitude, getting to work on time), and/or specific job skills (e.g., carpentry, Web site development). Community workforce efforts may also include job placement assistance, résumé writing, interview skills, and retention services such as legal advice and child care, all of which can help people stay in a job once placed there. The goal of workforce training programs is to improve individuals' skill sets, to place them in jobs, and help businesses find employees in line with their needs. A good workforce training program serves two types of customers: individuals and businesses. The U.S. public workforce system is a network of federal, state, and local offices that function to support economic expansion and develop the talent of our nation's workforce. In order to meet the challenge of the 21st-century global economy, the public workforce system works in partnership with employers, educators, and community leaders to foster economic development and high-growth opportunities in regional economies.

### Workforce Investment Act (WIA)

Comprehensive reform legislation that supersedes the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and amends the Wagner-Peyser Act, signed into law on August 7, 1998 by President Bill Clinton. This federally funded employment and training program provides the framework for a unique national workforce preparation and employment system, the most important aspect of which is its focus on meeting the needs of the nation's businesses for skilled workers and the training, education, and employment needs of individuals including career development services for adults, youth and for individuals employed, underemployed, and unemployed. Key components of WIA enable customers to easily access information and services they need through One-Stop Career Centers; empower adults to obtain the training they find most appropriate through Individual Training Accounts; and ensure that all state and local programs meet customer expectations. WIA provides the framework for the publicly funded workforce development system. Title I of the legislation authorizes the Workforce Investment System; Title II reauthorizes adult education and family literacy programs; Title III amends the Wagner-Peyser and related acts; Title IV reauthorizes Rehabilitation Act programs; and Title V contains general provisions.

### Workforce Investment Board (WIB)

Public/private partnerships located in each state that have several important functions in the public workforce system, including determining how many One-Stop Career Centers are needed in their area, where they will be located, and how they will be operated. WIBs also analyze workforce information to identify targeted industries and plan for future growth. They include representatives from business, organized labor, economic development, community-based organizations, education, workforce program administrators, etc. Although the public workforce system is federally funded, most of the services for businesses are available at the state and local levels. Under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, each state establishes a state workforce investment board that determines strategic priorities, identifies high-growth industries, develops a workforce investment budget, and establishes local workforce investment areas across the state to ensure that the workforce system is focusing on the regional economy. Each state is divided into one or more workforce areas, controlled by a local WIB. By law, more than 50 percent of each WIB must be made up of employer representatives from its community. While each state has a state WIB and local WIBs, the number of local WIBs can vary greatly from state to state. For example, California has almost 50 local WIBs, while Alabama only has 3. In addition, it is important to note that WIBs can also vary by name (e.g., the Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board, the Boston Private Industry Council, Nevadaworks in Reno). To search state and local workforce investment boards, visit [www.servicelocator.org/wibcontacts/](http://www.servicelocator.org/wibcontacts/).

### work readiness certificate

A certificate intended to serve as a signal to employers that a person has the basic skills needed to perform, at minimum, entry-level work across sectors. Employers generally use the term "work ready" to describe someone who possesses a baseline of hard skills (e.g., reading and math proficiency, computer literacy, using office equipment) and soft skills (e.g., customer service, problem solving, reliability, cultural competence, leadership, teamwork). In many cases, employers view this combination of skills as transferable from one position to another, across industries. Work readiness certificate programs come in many different forms, each with its own purposes, target populations, and competencies assessed. Some programs focus more on hard or soft skills, but the most prominent models incorporate both. Some target low-literate adults, who lack the kinds of credentials commonly accepted by employers as representative of a certain level of educational or professional preparation (e.g., high school or college diploma, steady work history, apprenticeship training). Others cover a range of people, from youths entering the job market to adults seeking to move up a career ladder. Some work readiness certificates are acquired by completing a training program that culminates in certification testing. Others can be acquired solely by passing a test that measures a specified set of employability competencies. In some cases, work readiness certification programs are managed by state agencies and conducted only in that state, while others lead to credentials that are designed to be portable across state lines.

### work-related training

Typically, a range of training that includes: work experience in a related occupation; long-term on-the-job training (12+ months of on-the-job training, or combined work experience and formal classroom instruction, including formal or informal apprenticeships that may last up to 5 years); moderate-term on-the-job training (1 to 12 months of combined on-the-job experience and informal training); and short-term on-the-job training (1 month or less of on-the-job experience or instruction). Individuals often receive this kind of work experience or training through apprenticeship programs and on-the-job training, mostly conducted at worksites.

*NOTE: Each of the occupations for which BLS publishes projections data is assigned one of these four training categories or one of its seven education categories (see the categories under “postsecondary awards”). Taken together, BLS uses these 11 education and training categories to describe the most significant education or training pathways to employment for each occupation. Occupational analysts assign a single category that best describes the education or training needed to become fully qualified in a given occupation; however, for any given occupation, it is important to ask employers if this training level accurately reflects what they require or prefer in a job applicant or employee.*

## YOUTHBUILD WORK READINESS BEHAVIORAL ASSESSMENT TOOL

Participant Name:	Workplace:
Start Date:	Trainer or Intern Supervisor:
Review Date #1:	Mid-Review Date:
	Final Review:

FOUNDATION SKILL	PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS	Performance Improvement Plan Needed (1)	Needs Development (2)	Proficient (3)	Leader (4)
ATTENDANCE	Understanding work expectations for attendance and adhering to them. Notifying supervisor in advance in case of absence.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 missed day or perfect in month
PUNCTUALITY	Understanding work expectations for punctuality. Arriving on time, taking and returning from breaks on time, and calling supervisor prior to being late.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 late day or perfect in month
APPROPRIATE APPEARANCE	Dressing appropriately for position and duties. Practicing personal hygiene appropriate for position and duties.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TAKING INITIATIVE	Participating fully in task or project from initiation to completion. Initiating interaction with supervisor for next task upon completion of previous one.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
QUALITY OF WORK	Giving best effort, evaluating own work, and utilizing feedback to improve work performance. Striving to meet quality standards.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
COMMUNICATION SKILLS	Speaking clearly and communicating effectively – verbally and non-verbally. Listening attentively. Using language appropriate for work place.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RESPONSE TO SUPERVISION	Accepting direction, feedback, and constructive criticism with positive attitude and using information to improve work performance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TEAMWORK	Relating positively with co-workers. Working productively with individuals and teams. Respecting diversity in race, gender, and culture.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PROBLEM-SOLVING/ CRITICAL-THINKING	Exercising sound reasoning and analytical thinking. Using knowledge and information from job to solve workplace problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
WORKPLACE SAFETY HEALTH AND POLICY	Demonstrating understanding of workplace culture and policy. Complying with health and safety rules. Exhibiting integrity and honesty.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ADD JOB-SPECIFIC SKILL (OPTIONAL) →		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ADD JOB-SPECIFIC SKILL (OPTIONAL) →		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ADD JOB-SPECIFIC SKILL (OPTIONAL) →		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Performance Imp. Plan Needed	Needs Development	Proficient	Leader
Is not yet demonstrating the skills required for the position and needs to have a formal plan for improving skills. Needs additional training.	Inconsistent in demonstrating and developing skills for the position, but development is needed.	Demonstrates the skills required for the position with rare exception, and shows initiative in improving skills.	Consistently demonstrates skills. Often exceeds expectations and has emerged as leader that improves overall team.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>To meet work readiness skill attainment:</b></p> <p>(1)* In <i>final</i> assessment, participant must meet “proficient” standard in 80% of the total categories listed and there should be no more “#1” scores.</p> <p>(2) facilitator or supervisor must verify that performance on job was satisfactory.</p> <p>(3) participant/intern must not have been terminated from this work experience.</p>	<p>Employee has satisfactory work performance</p> <p>Staff Signature: _____</p> <p>Employee Signature _____</p> <p>Date: _____</p>
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<b>Reviewer Comments:</b>



## PARTICIPANT EMPLOYEE EVALUATION GRADING SCALE

### ATTENDANCE

Perf. Improvement Plan Needed	Needs Development	Proficient	Exemplary
Excessive absences consistently impact work performance. Additional training is needed.	Below 90% attendance, but participant seeks out opportunities to make up missed work.	Maintains 90% attendance and notifies supervisor ahead of time prior to absence.	100% attendance or missed one day with valid reason that did not occur during first two weeks.

### PUNCTUALITY

Perf. Improvement Plan Needed	Needs Development	Proficient	Exemplary
Excessive lateness consistently impacts work performance. Additional training is needed.	Inconsistent in arriving to work, returning from breaks on time, and calling supervisor prior to lateness.	Arrives to work & returns from breaks on time with rare exception. If late, calls supervisor ahead of time.	Perfect or near perfect in arriving for work and returning from breaks on time. Model for other workers.

### APPROPRIATE APPEARANCE

Perf. Improvement Plan Needed	Needs Development	Proficient	Exemplary
Has not yet demonstrated appropriate appearance and/or personal hygiene for position and duties.	Inconsistent in demonstrating appropriate appearance and/or personal hygiene for workplace.	Dresses appropriately and practices hygiene for position and duties with rare exception.	Consistent display of professional appearance and hygiene serves as a model for other workers.

### TAKING INITIATIVE

Perf. Improvement Plan Needed	Needs Development	Proficient	Exemplary
Reluctant to begin tasks without significant staff intervention. Needs frequent reminders. Additional training may be needed.	Inconsistently begins or remains on task. Needs occasional prompting. Often satisfied with bare minimum performance.	Begins and remains on task until completion with rare exception. Can work independently. Initiates interaction for next task.	Consistently begins/remains on task until completion, and initiates interaction for next task. Can work independently, and leads others.

### QUALITY OF WORK

Perf. Improvement Plan Needed	Needs Development	Proficient	Exemplary
Has not yet given best effort. Rarely evaluates work and utilizes feedback. Completes work inconsistently. Additional training may be needed.	Uneven work quality. Sometimes evaluates own work and utilizes feedback, but inconsistent in meeting quality standards.	Quality of work meets expectations. Evaluates own work, and utilizes employer feedback to improve performance.	Quality of work often exceeds expectations. Consistently gives best effort. Evaluates own work and utilizes employer feedback.

### COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Perf. Improvement Plan Needed	Needs Development	Proficient	Exemplary
Seldom speaks clearly or listens attentively. Repeatedly uses inappropriate language for the workplace. May need additional training and support.	Inconsistent in communicating in manner and language appropriate for workplace. Inconsistent in effort to speak clearly or listen attentively.	Demonstrates positive oral and non-verbal communication with rare exception. Listens attentively and uses language appropriate for workplace.	Consistently demonstrates positive oral/non-verbal communication skills. Speaks clearly and listens attentively. Can effectively present to a group if needed.

### RESPONSE TO SUPERVISION

Perf. Improvement Plan Needed	Needs Development	Proficient	Exemplary
Reluctant to accept feedback and constructive criticism from supervisor. Responds with poor verbal or non-verbal communication. Additional training may be necessary.	Inconsistent in accepting direction, feedback, and constructive criticism from supervisor. Shows potential for improvement.	Accepts direction and constructive criticism with positive attitude with rare exception. Uses feedback to improve work performance.	Consistently accepts direction and constructive criticism with positive attitude. Uses feedback to improve work performance, and provides new and useful ideas to employer.

### TEAMWORK

Perf. Improvement Plan Needed	Needs Development	Proficient	Exemplary
Has not yet demonstrated appropriate group behaviors. Improvement needed in treating others with respect. Rarely contributes to group efforts. Additional training may be necessary.	Inconsistent in promoting positive group behaviors amongst coworkers, and in contributing to group efforts. Shows potential for improvement.	Works well with co-workers, is respectful, and contributes to group efforts with rare exception. Respects diversity within the workplace.	Consistently facilitates positive group dynamics. Demonstrates leadership that plays a significant role in success of group efforts. Promotes larger group unity.

### PROBLEM-SOLVING/CRITICAL THINKING

Perf. Improvement Plan Needed	Needs Development	Proficient	Exemplary
Makes little or no effort to use knowledge learned from the job to solve workplace problems.	Inconsistent in using sound reasoning to solve work problems. Shows potential for improvement.	Uses sound reasoning, and job knowledge to solve workplace problems. Shows initiative in improving skills.	Consistently applies sound reasoning to solve work problems. Identifies potential problems before they can occur.

### WORKPLACE CULTURE, POLICY AND SAFETY

Perf. Improvement Plan Needed	Needs Development	Proficient	Exemplary
Has not demonstrated understanding of workplace policies/ethics. Has not completed applicable training on workplace .	Inconsistent in demonstrating understanding of workplace culture, policies, and safety rules.	Demonstrates understanding of workplace policies. Completed safety training if applicable, and adheres to rules. Exhibits honesty and integrity.	Shows clear understanding of work policies and safety rules. Exhibits honesty and integrity. Has completed applicable safety trainings and has led coworkers.

### GENERAL KEY

Perf. Improvement Plan Needed	Needs Development	Proficient	Exemplary
Is not yet demonstrating the skills required for the position and needs to have a formal plan for improving skills. May need additional training.	Inconsistent in demonstrating and developing skills for the position, but development is needed.	Demonstrates the skills required for the position with rare exception, and shows initiative in improving skills.	Consistently demonstrates skills required for the position. Often exceeds expectations and has emerged as leader that improves overall team.

***This general key is adaptable for employers to copy, paste in boxes on page 1, and modify accordingly for job-specific skills.***

## Staff Guidance on Completion of Work Readiness Behavioral Assessment Tool

- ✓ **Objectives** - Participants will be able to:
  - a. Perform a self-assessment and review their first week's performance with staff member
  - b. Receive constructive feedback and recognition for positive work performances;
  - c. Identify personal strategies to improve their workplace behaviors and attitudes.

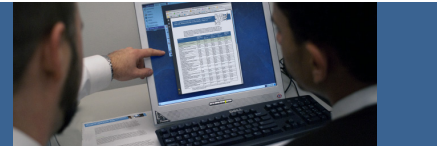
└ **Methodology:** Behavioral self-assessment and individual staff meeting with participant

✎ **Materials and Preparation:** Work Readiness Behavioral Assessment Tool

### Staff Guidance

- **Modifiable:** The criteria in the assessment is based off of national employer research, and can be modified by staff to reflect local employer labor market or job-specific tasks. Participants are also encouraged to conduct informational interviews with employers early on in initiative to help verify or modify tool.
- **Introduction:** By end of "Mental Toughness" or end of first week, work readiness behavioral assessment tool should be introduced to YouthBuild participants.
- **Frequency (Monthly):** The very first assessment should take place within the first two week of the program. After that, monthly assessments are recommended or bi-weekly for participants who have struggled significantly during their first week.
- **Staff Case Conferencing:** Tool should be discussed with entire YouthBuild Staff in a monthly case conference prior to assessment. Feedback should include input from multiple instructors including workshop facilitators, educational instructors, construction trainers, and staff from civic engagement activities
- **Participant Self-Assessment First:** Lead trainer should set individual appointments with each participant to address first work readiness assessment. Ask participants themselves to bring to the appointment a completed self-assessment of their work performance.
- **Participant "Team" Assessment:** programs may opt to include a secondary step where participants meet with their "co-workers" to receive feedback on their assessment.
- **Meeting Process:** After statement of meeting purpose by staff, open by asking participant to discuss their own self-assessment in each area and why they rated themselves as they did. After participant self-assessment, staff should discuss each of the assessment areas while giving acknowledgement and praise for high performing areas, suggestions for improvement for low performing ones, and particular emphasis on any discrepancies between participant and staff assessments. For participants experiencing challenges and have received a "1" in any category, a performance improvement plan should outline a set of goals in comment section.
- **Record Keeping:** Upon completion, staff assessment should be stapled on top of participant assessment and filed for future reference.

## UNIT 2 UNDERSTANDING YOUR LOCAL LABOR MARKET INTERVIEW GUIDE AND SAMPLE PHONE/EMAIL SCRIPT: WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD (WIB)



### RECOMMENDED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. I've been looking at some data from our regional labor market. It seems like for new graduates with less than a bachelor's degree, the following industries and occupations—[list some industries and occupations that appear on your *Regional Labor Market Profile – maximum five occupations/industries or break-up the list*—pay at or near the region's median wages and have a lot of job openings. **How does this align with what you see happening in the region? What in-demand, well-paying occupations in our local/regional labor market provide career advancement opportunities and are accessible to new graduates with less than a bachelor's degree?**
2. Are there any industries and occupations we haven't discussed that you think I should explore further?
3. Which regional employers have these kinds of jobs? With which industries and employers does your WIB work closely or have connections? Would you be willing to connect me to them—to provide me with their contact information? May I use your name as a reference?
4. Which employers are recruiting through the Joblinks/One-stop Career Center? Who should I contact there to learn more about this and other employer activities at the Career Center?
5. Who else in the region should I contact to help me learn about job opportunities for my students and to connect me to employers with these jobs?
6. What publications, tools, or Web sites do you think I should use to learn more about these kinds of jobs in the region?
7. What issues should I be thinking about in trying to identify jobs that are good bets for my students in this region?
8. In your work with your education partners, what local/regional training programs (community colleges, technical schools, apprentice programs, etc.) do you know about that prepare people for these jobs? What do you hear about them in terms of programs that are especially effective at placing older youth/young adults in good first jobs? Do you have contacts in these training programs you'd be willing to share with me?
9. What issues should I be thinking about in trying to identify **training programs that meet the needs of regional employers with these kinds of jobs?**

### SAMPLE PHONE SCRIPT FOR OUTREACH TO THE WIB

Hello [name of contact, if you have one]. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I'm a [your title] for [name of your organization]. My job is to [brief description of your mission/work]. I typically work with students who are [describe your students' ages, educational backgrounds, etc.].

I know that the WIB is invested in creating career pathways for the young people in our community. I've been looking at some of our regional labor market data, and I'd like to learn more about what's happening on the ground so that I can steer my students towards successful careers. **Would you be willing to schedule a phone call with me to discuss this?**

\*\*\*\*\*

*NOTE: At this point, you may go right into scheduling a call—or, if it makes sense, you can give the person on the line a little more context, in which case you could proceed as follows:*

As I mentioned, I've been looking at some data from our regional labor market. My goal is to identify occupations that provide advancement opportunities and are:

- In-demand (have job openings);
- Well-paying [insert a figure here that's at least 80% of your region's median wage]; and
- Accessible to recent graduates with less than a bachelor's degree.

I've identified some industries and occupations that seem to meet these criteria. **I'm calling you because I'd like to find out if my list aligns with what you're seeing through your work in the region. I also want to make sure that I haven't missed any occupations and industries that you think may be good options for my students.**

**Most importantly, I'd like to get your thoughts on whether the data is telling me the real story about labor market opportunities in our region.** I know that you work with leaders in business, labor, education, CBOs, economic development, etc., and I'd love to tap into what you've heard from them about these kinds of jobs.

I'd really appreciate some guidance on this work. With your help, I'll have a better understanding of workforce initiatives and job opportunities for my students so I can advise them in making more informed career decisions. This kind of information can also help me to narrow the list of postsecondary training programs to which I refer them.

[Add any closing comments.]

Thank you very much!

### SAMPLE EMAIL FOR OUTREACH TO THE WIB

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am a [your title] for [name of your organization]. My job is to [brief description of your mission/work]. I typically work with students who are [describe your students' ages, educational backgrounds, etc.].

I know that the WIB is invested in creating career pathways for the young people in our community. I'd like to learn more about our regional labor market to help steer them towards successful careers. **Would you be willing to schedule a brief phone call with me to discuss this?**

I've been looking at some data from our regional labor market. My goal is to identify occupations that provide advancement opportunities and are:

- In-demand (have job openings);
- Well-paying [insert a figure here that's at least 80% of your region's median wage]; and
- Accessible to recent graduates with less than a bachelor's degree.

I've identified some industries and occupations that seem to meet these criteria. I'm reaching out to you because I'd like to find out if my list aligns with what you're seeing through your work in the region. I also want to make sure that I haven't missed any occupations and industries that you think may be good options for my students.

Most importantly, I'd like to get your thoughts on whether the data is telling me the real story about labor market opportunities in our region. I know that you work with leaders in business, labor, education, CBOs, economic development, etc., and I'd love to tap into what you've heard from them about these kinds of jobs.

I'd appreciate any guidance you can give regarding this work. With your help, I'll have a better understanding of workforce initiatives and job opportunities for my students so I can advise them in making more informed career decisions. This kind of information can also help me to narrow the list of postsecondary training programs to which I refer them.

[Add any closing comments.]

Thank you very much,

[Your Name]

[Your Phone Number]



### RECOMMENDED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. I've been looking at some data from our regional labor market. It seems like for new graduates with less than a bachelor's degree, the following industries and occupations—[list some industries and occupations that appear on your *Regional Labor Market Profile*—pay [insert a figure here that's at least 80% of your region's median wage] and have a lot of job openings. **Does this align with what you see happening in the region? What in-demand, well-paying occupations in our local/regional labor market provide career advancement opportunities and are accessible to new graduates with less than a bachelor's degree?**
2. Are there any industries and occupations we haven't discussed that you think I should explore further?
3. Which regional employers have these kinds of jobs? Would you be willing to connect me to them or provide me with their contact information and allow me to use your name as a reference?
4. What do you think is the best way for me to connect to other local/regional employers with these kinds of jobs (i.e. names, contact information)?  
  
*NOTE: Check the regional chamber of commerce Web site to find a list of its members; look for keywords such as "Membership," "Member Directory," "Business Directory," etc. You may find helpful employer contact information through these lists. However, since these lists can be very long, it's helpful to ask your interviewee about which ones you should contact first in your targeted industries.*
5. Who else in the region should I contact to help me learn about job opportunities for my students and to connect me to employers with these jobs?
6. What publications, tools, or Web sites do you think I should use to learn more about these kinds of jobs in the region?
7. What issues should I be thinking about in trying to identify jobs that are good bets for my students in this region?
8. What issues should I be thinking about when identifying training programs that meet the needs of regional employers with these kinds of jobs?



### SAMPLE PHONE SCRIPT FOR OUTREACH TO THE REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Hello [name of contact, if you have one]. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I'm a [your title] for [name of your organization]. My job is to [brief description of your mission/work]. I typically work with students who are [describe your students' ages, educational backgrounds, etc.].

I've been looking at some of our regional labor market data, and I'd like to learn more about what's happening on the ground so that I can steer my students towards successful careers. **Would you be willing to schedule a phone call with me to discuss this?**

\*\*\*\*\*

*NOTE: At this point, you may go right into scheduling a call—or, if it makes sense, you can give the person on the line a little more context, in which case you could proceed as follows:*

As I mentioned, I've been looking at some data from our regional labor market. My goal is to identify occupations that provide advancement opportunities and are:

- In-demand (have job openings);
- Well-paying [insert a figure here that's at least 80% of your region's median wage]; and
- Accessible to recent graduates with less than a bachelor's degree.

I've identified some industries and occupations that seem to meet these criteria. I'm calling you because I'd like to speak with you to get some feedback on my list and to make sure that I haven't missed any occupations and industries that you think may be good options for my students. **Most importantly, I'd like to get your thoughts on whether the data is telling me the real story about labor market opportunities in our region. I know that you work closely with employers and I'd love to tap into what you've heard from them about in-demand jobs and needs in our region. It'd be great if I could contact them to learn more about these jobs.**

I'd really appreciate some guidance on this work. With your help, I'll have a better understanding of workforce initiatives and job opportunities for my students so I can advise them on making more informed career decisions. This kind of information can also help me to narrow the list of postsecondary training programs to which I refer them.

[Add any closing comments.]

Thank you very much!



### SAMPLE EMAIL FOR OUTREACH TO THE REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am a [your title] for [name of your organization]. My job is to [brief description of your mission/work]. I typically work with students who are [describe your students' ages, educational backgrounds, etc.].

I know that the Chamber works closely with employers in this region. I'd like to learn more about our regional labor market to help steer my students towards successful careers.

**Would you be willing to schedule a brief phone call with me to discuss this?**

I've been looking at some data from our regional labor market. My goal is to identify occupations that provide advancement opportunities and are:

- In-demand (have job openings);
- Well-paying [insert a figure here that's at least 80% of your region's median wage]; and
- Accessible to recent graduates with less than a bachelor's degree.

I've identified some industries and occupations that seem to meet these criteria. I'd like to speak with you to get some feedback on my list and to make sure that I haven't missed any occupations and industries that you think may be good options for my students.

Most importantly, I'd like to get your thoughts on whether the data is telling me the real story about labor market opportunities in our region. I know that you work closely with employers and I'd love to tap into what you've heard from them about in-demand jobs in [your town/city/region].

I'd appreciate any guidance you can give regarding this work. With your help, I'll have a better understanding of regional labor market opportunities for my students so I can advise them in making more informed career decisions. This kind of information can also help me to narrow the list of postsecondary training programs to which I refer them.

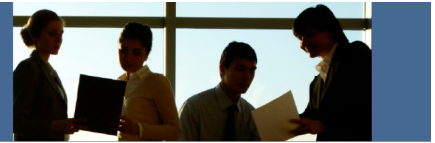
[Add any closing comments.]

Thank you very much,

[Your Name]

[Your Phone Number]





## RECOMMENDED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ABOUT EACH JOB OF INTEREST

NOTE: If the employer has a Web site, it's helpful to take a look prior to your interview to learn about the company/organization and to see which types of jobs are listed, if any. Look through job listings to find the following kinds of information about each job: job duties, qualifications, salary and benefits, full-time or part-time status, shift, etc. Notice which (if any) job titles appear more than once. The *Tracking Sheet for Employer Interviews* (see your training binder) is a helpful tool to capture your interview notes. Remember to use one tracking sheet for each job you discuss.

### INITIAL QUESTION

**At [name of employer], what in-demand jobs are accessible to recent graduates with less than a bachelor's degree (e.g., an occupational certificate, associate's degree, apprenticeship); **pay at least [insert 80% of your regional median wage here] per hour—or can advance to that amount in a relatively short period of time; and offer advancement opportunities?** [At this point you may want to mention 1 to 3 occupations on your research list that are associated with this employer and that seem to meet the above criteria.]**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Once the interviewee answers, let him/her know that you'd like to ask a series of questions about each job (see questions 1 to 10 below).**

\*\*\*\*\*

1. What is the **typical education/training level** (e.g., certificate, associate's degree, years of related work experience) **of your employees in this job?**
2. What is the **wage range for this job (entry-level to experienced)?** What **benefits does it offer** (e.g., health care, retirement plans, tuition remission) and when do they take effect? [NOTE: If the employer is national, make sure to ask for regional figures.]
3. **Can/do employees in this job typically advance to higher positions** in your company/organization? If so, what are the titles of these higher positions? How long does it typically take to be promoted and what wage gains are associated with this? [NOTE: Try to get a sense of the career ladder for this job.]
4. What are the **names of the schools and/or other training organizations that typically supply your job candidates and employees for this job?** For those schools/training programs that you think are most effective, what are they doing right? In your opinion, what can other schools/training programs do to better prepare their students for this job in your company/organization? [NOTE: If you are a counselor at a college program, and the interviewee does not identify your college, ask for feedback on ways in which your program(s) could better meet employer needs.]

5. *[NOTE: We recommend that you look for job listings on the employer Web site prior to asking the following questions. If you find (a) job(s) on your research list listed, check the number of openings (for each).]*  
**Roughly how many openings** does your company/organization currently have **in this job? Do you think this is this typical** these days **for companies/ organizations your size in this region**, or is it unusual in any way? **In the next 1-2 years, do you anticipate fewer, the same (number of), or more openings in this job, and why** (e.g., large number of retirees anticipated, technological advances, budget cuts)?
6. What are the **requirements for applying** to this job, and what does your **screening process** involve (e.g., background check, specific educational credentials, years of required/preferred work experience, industry certification, drug testing, a valid driver's license, immunizations)? If an applicant has a criminal background, can he/she still work in this occupation/field? If so, what can the applicant do to make himself/herself more marketable to employers like you (e.g., provide a character reference letter<sup>1</sup>)?
7. What are the **three most important things** you think **an applicant should know about working in this job?** (These may include lifestyle considerations such as night shifts, travel requirements, physical demands, or they may include minimum levels of specific skills.)
8. What personal **qualities do you look for in an applicant** (e.g., ability to work independently, orderliness, creativity, bilingualism)?
9. What are some of the **things with which employees new to the job struggle?** How could they be better prepared for the job so they're more qualified when applying and more likely to do well once on the job?
10. If my **students** are interested in learning more about this and other jobs you offer and about your company/organization in general, what are **some ways they can be connected?** *[NOTE: For example, would you be willing to talk to my students on the phone or in person by hosting a small group of us at your site? To visit our program to talk about your company/organization and what it takes to get a foot in the door—and ultimately succeed in these jobs? Does your company/organization provide internships (paid or unpaid), volunteer positions, or other career exploration opportunities?]*

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<sup>1</sup> For sample reference letters, go to the National HIRE Network's Web site and under 'Publications,' search for the manual 'How to Get Section 8 or Public Housing Even with a Criminal Record' by the Legal Action Center ([http://www.hirenetwork.org/pdfs/How\\_to\\_Get\\_Section\\_8\\_or\\_Public\\_Housing.pdf](http://www.hirenetwork.org/pdfs/How_to_Get_Section_8_or_Public_Housing.pdf).) See pages 68-70 and 75.

### EXTENDED LIST OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The questions that follow offer a more comprehensive list of questions for employers. They are categorized, with the recommended questions from pages 1 and 2 highlighted throughout.

#### Recruitment

1. How do you recruit candidates for this job? With whom do you partner for recruitment purposes (e.g., One-Stop Career Centers, community colleges)?
2. **What are the requirements for applying to this job, and what does your screening process involve (e.g., background check, specific educational credentials, years of required/preferred work experience, industry certification, drug testing, a valid driver's license, immunizations)? If an applicant has a criminal background, can he/she still work in this occupation/field? If so, what can the applicant do to make himself/herself more marketable to employers like you (e.g., provide a character reference letter)?**
3. How important is a candidate's prior work experience to land this job (or to work in entry-level occupations in this industry in general)? How much work experience does the typical entry-level employee have?
4. Would you hire recent graduates for this position? Why or why not?
5. **What personal qualities do you look for in an applicant (e.g., ability to work independently, orderliness, creativity, bilingualism)?**
6. Has the economy changed any job requirements or qualities that you seek in an applicant (e.g., more work experience preferred)? If so, how?
7. What, specifically, are you looking for on an applicant's résumé? What résumés stand out the most?
8. How diverse are your employees in this job (e.g., in terms of age, gender, race/ethnicity, special needs)? Are you making any special recruitment efforts to increase diversity in your company/organization?
9. In your opinion, is there an ample pool of qualified workers to fill this position when it's vacant? If not, what are the challenges in finding the right workers?
10. Have you experienced any challenges in recruiting and/or hiring applicants for this job (e.g., lack of work experience, skills deficits)? *[If the interviewee answers yes, ask him/her to describe the main challenges.]* What kinds of challenges, if any, have you experienced in retaining employees in this job and/or in advancing them?

### Job Characteristics and Trends

1. What is the **typical education/training level** (e.g., certificate, associate's degree, years of related work experience) **of your employees in this job?**
2. What is the **wage range for this job (entry-level to experienced)?** What **benefits does it offer** (e.g., health care, retirement plans, tuition remission) and when do they take effect? *[NOTE: If the employer is national, make sure to ask for regional figures.]*
3. What are the **names of the schools and/or other training organizations that typically supply your job candidates and employees for this job?** For those schools/training programs that you think are most effective, what are they doing right? In your opinion, what can other schools/training programs do to better prepare their students for this job in your company/organization? *[NOTE: If you are a counselor at a college program, and the interviewee does not identify your college, ask for feedback on ways in which your program(s) could better meet employer needs.]*
4. How many people do you currently employ in this position?
5. Roughly **how many openings** does your company/organization currently have in **this job? Is this typical** these days **for companies/organizations your size in this region**, or is it unusual in any way? **In the next 1-2 years, do you anticipate fewer, the same (number of), or more openings in this job, and why** (e.g., large number of retirees anticipated, technological advances, budget cuts)?
6. Is this job growing in this region? Are there many openings for this job in this region (or will there be in the future)? Please explain.
7. What are the job's main duties? Please describe a typical day or week in this position.
8. What are the job's typical working conditions (e.g., indoor vs. outdoor work, fast-paced work, option to work from home)?
9. What role does industry certification/licensure play in this job (e.g., to land a job, to advance)?
10. What role does computer literacy play in this job? What computer equipment and software does the typical employee use? What role do you think it will play in the future?
11. Is fluency in a language other than English required or preferred for this kind of work?
12. In your opinion, what are the top three soft skills needed to be successful in this job (e.g., communication, teamwork, critical thinking)?
13. What are the **three most important things** you think **an applicant should know about working in this job?** (These may include lifestyle considerations such as

night shifts, travel requirements, physical demands, or they may include minimum levels of specific skills.)

14. What are some of the things with which employees new to the job struggle? How could they be better prepared for the job so they're more qualified when applying and more likely to do well once on the job?
15. What are the traits and skills of people who are most successful in this job?
16. How transferable are the skills required for this job to other occupations and/or other industries? Please name any related occupations.
17. What type of on-the-job training/support do your employees in this job receive?
18. What new positions related to this job, if any, do you anticipate creating in the next few years due to new technology, new products, etc.?
19. What other employers in the region hire for this kind of job?

### Career Advancement Opportunities

1. How do you assess the job performance and advancement potential of your current employees in this position? How often is this done?
2. Can/do employees in this job typically advance to higher positions in your company/organization? If so, what are the titles of these higher positions? How long does it typically take to be promoted and what wage gains are associated with this?  
*[NOTE: Try to get a sense of the career ladder for this job.]*
3. What incentives does your company/organization provide for employees to improve existing skills and acquire new ones (e.g., tuition remission, professional development workshops, payment of professional certification fees)?

### Partnerships

1. Do you work with community colleges (including community college advisory boards), technical/trade schools, and other training programs to train and recruit employees? If so, which ones, and can you describe what that looks like?
2. What kinds of information sharing agreements, if any, do you have with these training programs to track job placement, retention, advancement, wage/salary data, additional educational credentialing, etc.?
3. In general, are postsecondary institutions in your area sufficiently preparing people for your workforce? Are these training programs well-aligned with your company's/industry's needs (for example, do their curricula effectively cover the



- professional and technical skills needed to succeed on the job)? What could they do better? Please explain.
4. Do you see any difference between how community or technical colleges prepare candidates relative to proprietary schools? Please explain.
  5. Does your company/organization work with the public workforce system (e.g., WIB, One-Stop Career Centers) to meet its workforce development goals? If so, please describe your relationship and experience with this (e.g., successes, challenges). If not, why not? In what ways could my organization/college work with the WIB and Career Center to make sure that my students are being connected to postsecondary programs that meet employer needs?
  6. In what ways could my organization/college work with the regional Chamber of Commerce to make sure that my students are being connected to postsecondary programs that meet employer needs?
  7. **If my students are interested in learning more about this and other jobs you offer and about your company/organization in general, what are some ways they can be connected?** *[NOTE: For example, would you be willing to talk to my students on the phone or in person by hosting a small group of us at your site? To visit our program to talk about your company/organization and what it takes to get a foot in the door—and ultimately succeed in these jobs? Does your company/organization provide internships (paid or unpaid), volunteer positions, or other career exploration opportunities?]*
  8. How can my organization/college develop better relationships with regional employers like you?

### Looking Ahead

1. What are your workforce development goals for the next 1-3 years?
2. Given these goals, in your opinion, what are the greatest opportunities facing your company/organization now *and* in the near future? What about those facing your industry?
3. What are the greatest challenges facing your company/organization and industry now and in the near future (e.g., new technology, employee skills deficits, new competition)?
4. How will these opportunities and challenges affect the occupation(s) we've discussed?

### **Additional Comments and Contacts**

1. Whom else should I contact to learn more about what my students need to get a foot in the door in this occupation/industry (e.g., other employers, industry associations, labor organizations)?
2. Is there any additional information not covered in this interview that you'd like to share?
3. Would you or someone else at your company/organization be willing to be my point of contact if I have questions in the future?

### SAMPLE PHONE/EMAIL SCRIPT FOR OUTREACH TO EMPLOYERS

Hello \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and [name of reference, if you have one] of [reference's employer] kindly referred me to you. I am a [your title] for [name of your organization]. My job is to [brief description of your mission/work]. I typically work with students who are [brief description of your students' ages, educational backgrounds, etc.]. One of the challenges I face in my work is making sure that I'm steering my students towards postsecondary programs that are a good match for their interests and that will get them good jobs in the region.

I'm contacting you because **I'd like to learn about in-demand jobs at [name of employer] that are accessible to recent graduates with less than a bachelor's degree (for example, an occupational certificate, an associate's degree, or apprenticeship); **that pay at least [insert 80% of your regional median wage here] per hour** (or can advance to that amount in a relatively short period of time); **and that offer advancement opportunities. I've been doing some research on the [name of your city/region] labor market and it indicates that your company/organization may have some jobs that meet these criteria.** [If you looked at job listings on the employer's Web site or elsewhere, mention in one sentence what you found/noticed here (for example, you may have noticed that one of the occupations on your research list has two job listings on the employer's Web site). In addition, you may want to very briefly mention a few other occupations associated with this employer that your team has selected to research from your *Regional Labor Market Profile*.]**

**Would you be willing to schedule some time [it's helpful to give an estimate for how much time you think you'll need] for a phone call or brief meeting so I can learn more about jobs that may be a good fit for my students and what you're looking for in prospective employees?** If you'd like, I'd be happy to email you my questions in advance.

[Add any closing comments.]

Thank you very much!

[Your Name]

[Your Phone Number]

### SAMPLE SCRIPT TO KICK OFF EMPLOYER INTERVIEW

NOTE: If you can find job listings on the employer's Web site, it's helpful to take a look prior to your interview to see which types of jobs are listed. The *Tracking Sheet for Employer Interviews* (see your training binder) is a helpful tool to capture your interview notes. Use one tracking sheet for each job you discuss.

\*\*\*\*\*

Hello! Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me. Before I begin with my main questions, I'd love to hear a little about your company/organization. [Ask a few questions about its mission, its services/products, years in operation, number of employees, etc., but try to keep these initial questions to a few minutes only.]

I thought it might also be helpful for me to tell you a little about my work, the research I'm doing, and what I'm hoping to learn from our discussion today. As I mentioned before, I work for [name of your organization] and our mission is to \_\_\_\_\_. My students are [brief description of your students' ages, educational backgrounds, etc.]. One of the challenges I face in my work is making sure that I'm steering my students towards postsecondary programs that are a good match for their interests and that will get them good jobs in the region.

As a result, I've done some research on the [name of your city/region] labor market to identify in-demand jobs that may be a good fit for my students [feel free to mention any relevant jobs within the employer's industry here]. The data is a starting point and a good guide for me in identifying an initial list of occupations to research, but connecting with employers like you is critical. Talking with you can help me confirm whether the data truly represents what's happening on the ground. It can also give me more specific information that the data cannot, such as the schools and/or other organizations that typically supply your job candidates and employees, the screening process for a particular job, the main qualities you're looking for in applicants for a specific job, etc.

**During our conversation today, I'm hoping that you can help me identify jobs at [name of employer] that meet the following criteria:**

- **have openings in our region;**
- **are accessible to recent graduates with less than a bachelor's degree;**
- **pay at least [insert 80% of your regional median wage here] per hour; and**
- **offer career advancement opportunities.**

I appreciate any information and insight you can offer. **[Mention that you plan to ask a series of questions about *each* job discussed. Proceed with your interview questions.]**

[Add any closing comments (e.g., "Thanks again. I hope that we can stay in touch so that I can stay informed about employer needs in this region as I advise my students...").]



Central States SER  
3948 W 26<sup>th</sup> Street  
Suite 213  
Chicago, IL 60623

# Youth Employment Suitability Survey

Please take a moment to fill out the following survey. Results will be used to help us strengthen our Youth Career Development and Job Skills Training curriculum. When you have completed the survey, please submit as an attachment to [scaudillo@centralstatesser.org](mailto:scaudillo@centralstatesser.org)

### About Your Business/Agency:

Name _____	E-mail _____
Address _____	Phone _____
City, State, ZIP Code _____	
May we add you to our mailing list, which offers exciting news about the Windy City YouthBuild program? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

### Business/Agency Background Information

1) In what field would you categorize your business/agency?

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2) What entry level positions are most routinely available?

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3) What are your peak hiring seasons?

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4) Who handles the hiring and training of new employees?

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### Recruitment and Intake of New Employees

5) How do you typically recruit new employees? (i.e. word of mouth, advertising, referrals, other)

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6) What is the average level of education for your employees?

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7) In lieu of a formal education, what skills would you accept from a candidate as proof of competency?

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8) Are you willing to work with a youth that has:

- tattoos on their neck, face or hands? \_\_\_\_\_
- limited or no work work experience? \_\_\_\_\_
- a criminal history or juvenile offense background? \_\_\_\_\_

9) What skills or characteristics would a youth candidate have that would allow you to forgo your reservations about their appearance or background?

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### **Work Environment**

10) At your business/agency, what is the biggest challenge that new employees face?

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11) What soft skill do you find to be most important to you in an employee?

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12) What are some red flags that would cause you to rethink the hire of a new employee?

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13) What is the average amount of retention time for new employees (i.e. 2 weeks, 3 months, a year, other)

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***Thank you for your participation!***







Find it...Get it...Keep it!

# Choosing Your Career: A Guide for Teens





## Website Resources

### How to Get Access to Careers

<http://getaccess.westone.wa.gov.au/careers/profiles/ListProfiles.asp>

### Resume Writing Template

<http://myfuture.com/careers/tools-checklists/resume-builder>

### Career Games for Teens

<http://www.careergames.com/>

### Games to Prepare You For Your Future

<http://www.careerswales.com/quiz/interviewgame.asp>

### Career Exploration & Planning System

<http://www.nycareerzone.org/>

### Massachusetts Career Information System

<http://masscis.intocareers.org/loginmain.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fdefault.aspx>

## Additional Resources

The best place to get more information on jobs and training programs is through the **North Shore Youth Career Center**:

181 Union Street, Lynn, MA 01901

**Hours:** Monday-Friday  
12:00 to 5:00 p.m.

**Telephone:** 781-691-7435

**Website:** [nscareers.org](http://nscareers.org)

**Facebook:** <http://www.facebook.com/pages/North-Shore-Youth-Career-Center/290803767123>

# Introduction

This is a Labor Market Blueprint made specifically for teens. We highlighted some of the skills and requirements that you will need to find a good job or begin a career path.

The North Shore historically has had a highly educated workforce. In addition, the North Shore region has had a high concentration of fairly stable industries. In particular, Health Care and Education Services have historically employed large numbers of North Shore residents and shown consistent employment patterns in good and bad economic times.

The following pages contain detailed descriptions of the critical jobs, education and skills requirements, and career growth opportunities in four industries: Health Care, Financial Services, Manufacturing, and Construction. The final page of the report contains information on the North Shore Youth Career Center and some websites you can access to get more information.

Over the past ten years, health care has assumed the number one position of overall jobs on the North Shore. The manufacturing industry has lost a large number of jobs in the region, although it is still one of the largest employers in the region. Retail and Tourism are the other two industries with the largest employment in the region.

Over the past few years, the most important change in the region has been the increasing skills and education requirements. More education equals higher pay and better opportunities for career advancement. Some skills that used to be optional, like being good at Microsoft Office applications, are now basic entry-level requirements. In some industries, good credit scores or clean criminal records may be required. The job market is very competitive for good jobs right now but it pays to have as much information as you can to compete for these jobs.



This blueprint is  
here to help you!

## Key Health Care Facts

\$24.45

Average Hourly Wage

28,357

Jobs on the North Shore

523,550

Jobs in Massachusetts

102,020

New Jobs Expected in  
Massachusetts between  
2006 and 2016

## Largest Health Care Companies on the North Shore

There are more than 1,000  
Health Care businesses on the  
North Shore. Some of the largest  
include:

### Hospitals

Salem Hospital, Salem  
Union Hospital, Lynn  
Beverly Hospital, Beverly

### Nursing & Residential Care Facilities

Brooksby Village, Peabody  
Seacoast Nursing & Rehabilitation,  
Gloucester  
Bane Skilled Care, Lynn  
Ledgewood Rehabilitation &  
Skilled Nursing Center, Beverly

### Ambulatory Care

Harvard Vanguard Medical  
Associates, Peabody  
Lynn Community Health Center,  
Lynn  
Pediatric Health Care Associates,  
Peabody

# Health Care

The number one employer on the North Shore is Health Care. These jobs are in hospitals, nursing homes, home health care, laboratories and doctor's offices. Health care jobs don't just mean doctors and nurses. Like to work with computers? There could be a health care job for you.

## Health Care Jobs for the Future – That Means You!

### What are the jobs? How can I get them?

- ▶ **Nursing** (average wage: \$35.45 per hour; 3,950 North Shore jobs): Nurses are the largest single job in health care. Associate's or Bachelor's degree. CNA prior to going to nursing school or while in nursing school can be very helpful.
- ▶ **Certified Nursing Assistant** (average wage \$10-12 per hour; over 3,500 North Shore jobs): Good entry-level job. 75-hour training program to enter. CNA's dress, clean, and feed patients and help nurses meet patients' needs.
- ▶ **Medical Assistant** (average wage: \$15.93 per hour; 760 North Shore jobs): Take medical histories, record vital signs, process records, and collect and prepare laboratory specimens in doctors' offices.
- ▶ **Health Information Technology** (average wage: \$15.46 per hour; 290 North Shore jobs): Health care requires sophisticated computer systems to track patient care and get reimbursements. Background in both health care and computers.

### Career Ladders & Advancement Opportunities

One of the great things about health care is that you can work your way up. More education, training and experience = more money! Here are a few examples:

- ▶ Certified Nursing Assistant ▶ Licensed Practical Nurse ▶ Registered Nurse
- ▶ Certified Nursing Assistant ▶ Medical Technician ▶ Medical Technologist
- ▶ Certified Nursing Assistant ▶ Receptionist ▶ Medical Records Clerk
- ▶ Medical Assistant ▶ Medical Technician ▶ Medical Technologist
- ▶ Medical Assistant ▶ Radiological Technician

These are just some of the examples of where you can go in the health care field. There are many more options so do your research to find what you like best.

### What You Will Need

- ☑ A high school diploma with lots of math and science. Good overall academic record, college a must.
- ☑ Good reading, writing, and listening skills.
- ☑ Comfortable working with people and caring for them.
- ☑ It will be difficult to get hired in this field if you have a criminal record or if you do not pass a drug test.

## Key Financial Services Facts

\$32.87

Average Hourly Wage

5,807

Jobs on the North Shore

173,674

Jobs in Massachusetts

7,080

New Jobs Expected in  
Massachusetts between  
2006 and 2016

## Financial Services Companies on the North Shore

Eastern Bank, Lynn

Salem Five Bank, Salem

North Shore Bank, Peabody

Metro Credit Union, Peabody

Beverly Cooperative Bank, Beverly

### Note:

Banks often have many branches across the North Shore so the total number of jobs may actually be higher than listed here.

Look for bank branches in your neighborhood!

# Financial Services

Over 5,500 people work in the Financial Services on the North Shore. Banks have been increasing the number of branches throughout the North Shore, increasing the demand for tellers and assistant managers. If you like to work with people, if you are detail oriented, and have good sales ability, a career in the financial services industry may be for you!

## Financial Services Jobs for the Future – That Means You!

### What are the jobs? How can I get them?

► **Teller** (average wage: \$12.45 per hour; 720 North Shore jobs): The largest single job in the financial services industry. GED or high school diploma, some college experience helpful. Most important is good math and customer service skills.

► **Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks** (average wage: \$17.74; 2,560 jobs on the North Shore): In many other industries as well. Strong math skills and cash handling experience, as well as a clean credit report.

### Career Ladders & Advancement Opportunities

Here are some of the potential career pathways in financial services:

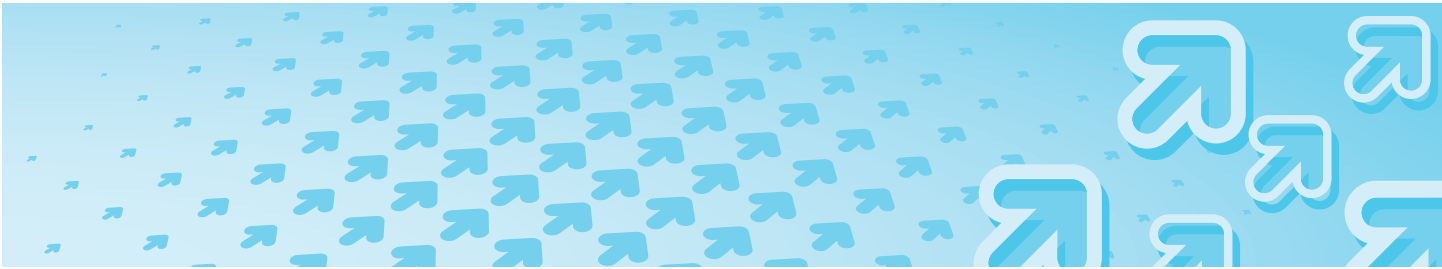
- Teller ► Senior Teller ► Teller Manager ► Assistant Branch Manager
- Teller ► Customer Service Representative ► Sales
- Teller ► Operations Clerk ► Analyst



“Our Bank President started out  
as a teller twenty years ago.”

## What You Will Need

- ☑ A high school diploma is required, some college helpful.
- ☑ Good reading, writing, and listening skills.
- ☑ Good credit.
- ☑ Sales is a big part of almost every job in financial services.



### Key Manufacturing Facts

\$38.45

Average Hourly Wage

12,614

Jobs on the North Shore

169,866

Jobs in Massachusetts

41,320

New Jobs Expected in  
Massachusetts between  
2006 and 2016

### Manufacturing Companies on the North Shore

There are over 400 manufacturing companies on the North Shore. These companies offer phenomenal opportunities for people interested in making products such as aircraft engines, computers, pharmaceuticals, and medical devices. Some of the largest manufactures on the North Shore include:

GE Aviation, Lynn  
Varian Semiconductor  
Equipment, Gloucester  
Analogic, Peabody  
Osram Sylvania, Danvers

# Manufacturing

The manufacturing industry is one of the four largest employers in the North Shore region. Manufacturing also pays strong wage rates. The average wage in manufacturing is nearly 50% higher than average wage rate for all businesses.

## Manufacturing Jobs for the Future – That Means You!

### What are the jobs? How can I get them?

- ▶ **Team Assembler** (average wage: \$12.13; 580 North Shore jobs): A high school degree, mechanical ability, and using hand tools and electrical equipment for entry-level positions.
- ▶ **Machinists** (average wage: \$22.56; 790 North Shore jobs): Foundation of the manufacturing industry. Strong mathematical knowledge, mechanical aptitude, computer skills, and specialized training are important.
- ▶ **Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technicians** (average wage: \$23.75; 590 North Shore jobs): Associate's degrees, particularly in Electrical Engineering. Demonstrated skills, acquired on the job or through an internship, in testing and maintaining electronic, mechanical, and/or optic equipment. Specialized knowledge required in some positions.

### Career Ladders & Advancement Opportunities

In manufacturing, advancement opportunities are determined by experience and increasing your ability to perform complicated tasks. Skill and education requirements are increasing all the time and you will always need to be learning in order to keep up. Many advancement opportunities will require an Associate's degree from a community college in the future. Some of the career pathways include:

- ▶ Assembler 1 ▶ Assembler 2 ▶ Assembler 3 ▶ Machine Operator (involves more electromechanical assembly and precision work)
- ▶ Assembler ▶ Technician ▶ Senior Technician ▶ Engineer
- ▶ Assembler ▶ Machine Operator ▶ Lead/Foreman ▶ Supervisor
- ▶ Technician ▶ Senior Technician ▶ Engineer
- ▶ Assembly Technician ▶ Senior Technician ▶ Senior Mechanical Technician or Electrical Technician
- ▶ Technician ▶ Senior Technician ▶ Supervisor

### What You Will Need

- ☑ A high school diploma or GED, some college or an Associate's degree is often required. As always, more education means better jobs and higher pay.
- ☑ Basic math skills such as algebra, geometry, and trigonometry. Computer literacy in Microsoft Office and Microsoft Project.

## Key Construction Facts

\$27.95

Average Hourly Wage

6,163

Jobs on the North Shore

122,742

Jobs in Massachusetts

4,300

New Jobs Expected in  
Massachusetts between  
2006 and 2016

## Construction Companies on the North Shore

Cranney Companies, Danvers  
JM Electrical Company, Topsfield  
Robert W Irvine and Sons, Lynn

### Note:

Many of the jobs in construction are union jobs. Check out local unions for both apprenticeship training programs and hiring options.

### Division of Apprentice Training Site

[www.mass.gov/dat](http://www.mass.gov/dat)

### Associated Building and Contractors

[http://www.abcma.org/  
Chapter\\_News.aspx](http://www.abcma.org/Chapter_News.aspx)

# Construction

There are good job opportunities in the construction industry. The most jobs in construction do not require a bachelor's degree. You can get into construction jobs through a combination of education and hands-on job experience. Trade knowledge is gained through a combination of trade schools, apprenticeship training, licensure, and on-the-job experience. One of the real job benefits in the construction industry is the well-defined career advancement options. If you like to work with your hands, have decent math skills and a strong work ethic, a career in construction may be for you!

## Construction Jobs for the Future – That Means You!

### What are the jobs? How can I get them?

- ▶ **Construction Laborers** (average wage: \$18.57; 590 North Shore jobs): A high school diploma or GED is generally preferred. Common sense, physical fitness, a strong work ethic, and physical strength, read blueprints, set up lasers for pipe laying, or do clean-up work with lead, asbestos, or other hazardous materials. High school diploma and strong math and reading skills to enter apprenticeship programs.
- ▶ **Electricians** (average wage: \$28.93; 310 North Shore jobs): A high school degree or GED, strong math and reading aptitude. Read and execute blueprints and plans, use hand and power tools, and understand electrical theory, circuitry, and National Electrical Code, green and clean energy systems are becoming more common.
- ▶ **Carpenters** (average wage: \$23.60; 780 North Shore jobs): Four-year apprenticeship and pass union-administered examination (including English aptitude). Green training elements as well.

### Career Ladders & Advancement Opportunities

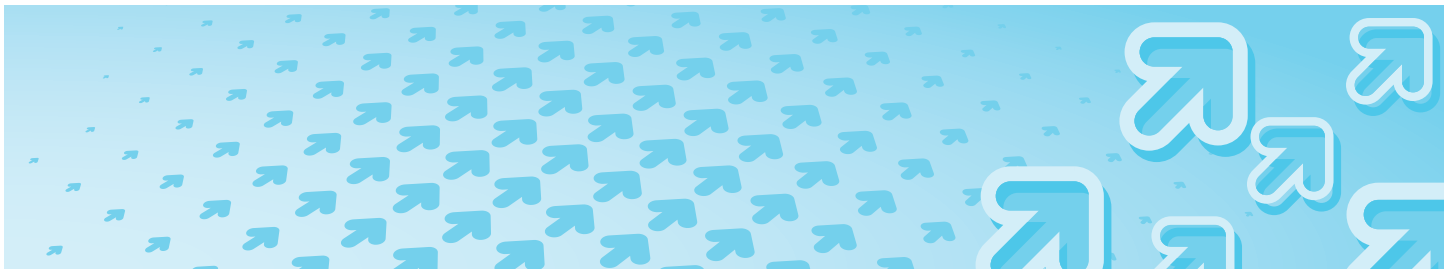
Career growth in the construction industry is based on meeting criteria that include education, demonstration of skills, and gaining a certain number of hours of experience in the field. Most jobs have very clearly defined criteria to advance from the entry level to the highest levels as your experience and capabilities grow.

- ▶ Apprentice Laborer ▶ Journeyman Carpenter, Cement Mason, Environmental Remediation Worker
- ▶ Apprentice Electrician ▶ Journeyman Electrician ▶ Master Electrician
- ▶ Apprentice Carpenter ▶ Journeyman Carpenter ▶ Carpenter Foreman

### What You Will Need

- A high school diploma or GED.
- Math, reading, and writing.
- Demonstrate hard work on the job.





### Key Life Sciences Facts

\$40.00

Average Hourly Wage

4,000

Jobs on the North Shore

100,000

Jobs in Massachusetts

12,538

New Jobs Expected in  
Massachusetts between  
2006 and 2016

### Life Sciences Companies on the North Shore

Abiomed

New England Bio Labs

Cell Signaling

Sage Science

Thermo Fisher

Hamilton Thorne

# Life Sciences

One of the industries that is growing on the North Shore is Life Sciences.

Life Sciences includes companies that make medical devices like heart valves, artificial knees, and surgery supplies, as well as companies that develop and sell new drugs. Both of these types of life science companies require high levels of education.

There is a vast diversity of jobs in the life sciences industry on the North Shore. Occupations range from Ph.D. level scientists and people with bachelor's and master's degrees working as bench scientists and technicians to a myriad of support level personnel. There are also many engineers and engineering technicians. There are also some jobs such as Testers, Quality Assurance Technicians, and Inspectors that may not require a college degree, but even these jobs require education beyond high school and industry experience.

The most important thing to know about Life Sciences is that you will need to have lots of education to get in. In high school, math and sciences are a requirement. Community college, and eventually at least a Bachelor's degree, will also be needed.

To see if you are interested in the field, see if there are internships available through your school or through the Career Center.



Find it...Get it...Keep it!

### Youth Career Center

181 Union Street

Lynn, MA 01901

781-691-7435

[www.nscareers.org](http://www.nscareers.org)



### North Shore WIB

70 Washington Street

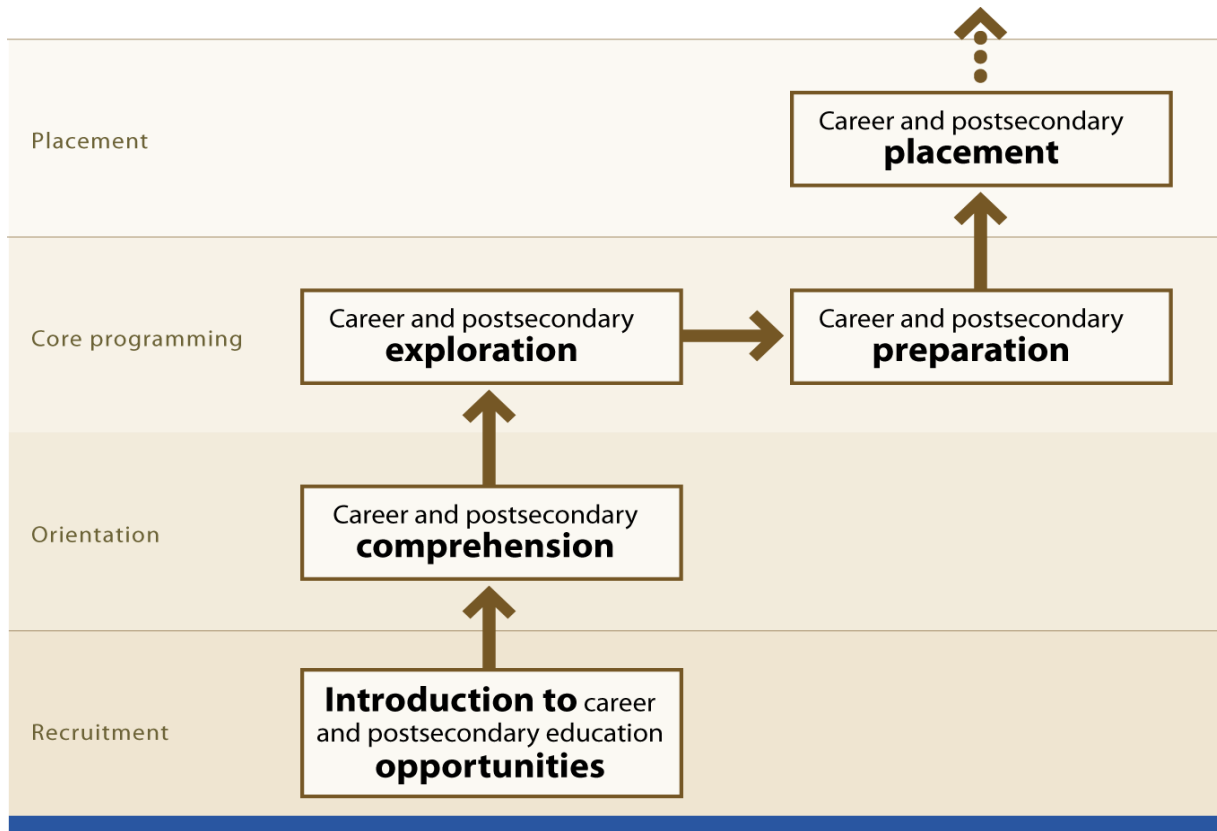
Suite 314

Salem, MA 01970

978-741-3805

[www.northshorewib.com](http://www.northshorewib.com)





## Career and Postsecondary Development at YouthBuild

Preparing young people for post-secondary education or helping them develop a career strategy are priorities for all YouthBuild programs. Career development at YouthBuild is a process by which students are able to assess their existing skills, knowledge, abilities and interests; explore job/occupational opportunities; develop realistic career goals and plans; and prepare themselves to enter the job market. With limited time to prepare young people for college and work, YouthBuild programs must adopt approaches to career development that are purposeful, targeted toward specific placements, and relevant to local economic opportunities. YouthBuild programs must introduce students to the world of work and postsecondary education early, and keep them engaged in planning for their future throughout the program.

In the model illustrated above we outline three essential phases of Career Development at YouthBuild programs: Comprehension, Exploration, Preparation. We have identified



activities which should occur at each of these stages as well as key competencies and understandings which should be developed.

The first phase, **Career Comprehension**, begins at recruitment and Mental Toughness and continues through orientation. During this time, participants begin learning about career and post secondary options. Upon completion of this phase, students should understand the difference between a job and a career, they should comprehend the importance of education to achieving personal and career goals, they should be aware of deadlines for applying for post secondary education and they should have identified how their interests, skills, values, and personalities can shape their career choices. **Key Activities:** Discussion of the links between PSE credentials and earning power, Vocational/Interest/Skill Assessments, beginning the planning process for postsecondary and career pathways.

**Career Exploration** occurs during the first part of core programming. Career development activities at this phase include career searches in sectors that are experiencing high growth, post secondary exposure, early college placement testing, and financial aid planning. During this time, students gain understanding of the personal and transferrable skills that will be required of them in the workplace and begin to apply knowledge about their skills and interests to their career search. They also gain understanding of the local labor market and begin planning for post secondary education. **Key Activities:** Career Coaches guide students' career search in sectors that are experiencing local high growth, job shadowing, employer tours, college visits, early financial aid applications, early college placement tests, information provided about AmeriCorps Education awards, Individual Development Accounts, Stoneman Scholarships.

During the second part of core programming, students begin **Career Preparation**. In addition to continuing to develop key workplace competencies, students learn job-seeking and study skills, and develop their own career and postsecondary education plans. Effective career development planning demands measurable progress along academic, behavioral, and technical competencies. It is critical for both the staff and the young person to remain focused on meeting the benchmarks outlined in the development plan. It is also essential that ongoing assessment tools be integrated into the program to ensure that students are progressing along their plans. At this stage, as students complete the program, they move into career and postsecondary placements. **Key Activities:** Completion of a Career Portfolio (including resume, sample cover letters, sample job applications, references, etc...), activities which encourage the development of soft skills, career mentoring, internships, college placement testing.

As students transition into post secondary and work placements, follow-up involves continued access for graduates to resources and guidance, including support and assistance with job searching, interviewing, studying, and navigating financial aid applications.

To help young people successfully transition into a work environment with a clear career pathway, career information, guidance, and supportive services are needed. The model we have proposed provides a basic framework for the kinds of supports that YouthBuild programs can and should offer their students.