

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a youth apprenticeship?

A youth apprenticeship combines on-the-job training (provided by an employer in a business, industry, or related organization considered essential to the economy of a local area, region, or state) with job-related academic instruction in a curriculum aligned with national skills standards for a specific career pathway.

Ideally, youth apprenticeships develop and grow as technologies advance and technical training requirements evolve. In many cases, students begin their youth apprenticeship in their eleventh- or twelfth-grade years, continuing their experience for a duration of three years or longer within the chosen career location. Many youth apprenticeship programs also offer the option of students earning college/university credit for post-secondary coursework supported by the apprenticeship sponsor.

Why is the idea of youth apprenticeships becoming a key priority in education and business today?

A variety of factors are leading to the increasing national focus on the value of youth apprenticeships, including:

A rapidly changing job market requiring entering workers to demonstrate proficiency in a variety of higher-order reasoning and technical skills;

The growing realization that **student loan debt** is increasing dramatically, becoming one of the key debt sectors in the U.S. economy;

The **lack of alignment** between many college majors and current (and future) workplace requirements.

The astounding transformation of the post-industrial workplace is clearly evident when we consider what is on the horizon in the career marketplace. According to LinkedIn's "15 of the Most Promising Jobs in the US in 2019," the following represent high-paying and highly technical career

pathways presently and in the near future:

- ▶ **Data scientist**
- ▶ **Site-reliability engineer**
- ▶ **Enterprise account executive**
- ▶ **Product designer**
- ▶ **Business analytics**
- ▶ **Customer success manager**
- ▶ **Engagement manager**
- ▶ **Solutions architect**
- ▶ **Information technology lead**
- ▶ **Software development (scrum manager)**
- ▶ **Cloud architect**
- ▶ **Product marketing manager**
- ▶ **Solutions consultant**
- ▶ **Project managers**
- ▶ **Machine learning engineers**

Twenty-first century education both in the United States and globally is faced with the realization that there needs to be a growing emphasis on alignment between **how students are educated, what and how they learn, and how they are prepared for the world** beyond the classroom (parallel to John Dewey's famous three-part purpose for education, i.e., to prepare students to become life-long learners, ethical citizens, and successful participants in the world of work).

What are the key components of an effective youth apprenticeship?

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, youth apprenticeships may vary, depending upon the location and sponsoring business, corporate, or organizational agency, but all successful apprenticeships provide five essential components:

Active involvement of business, including apprenticeship councils, industry associations, and other partnerships sharing administrative tasks related to maintaining the apprenticeship;

Structured on-the-job training, including support and coaching from experienced mentors on-site;

Classroom-based academic instruction related to the technical and academic competencies required for the job;

Rewards for student acquisition of apprenticeship skills, including wages as students begin work and pay increases as they meet identified performance benchmarks; and

Nationally recognized credentialing that is portable and provides certification that the apprentice is fully qualified for a position in the chosen industry or field.

How do youth apprenticeships differ from other career development programs?

Youth apprentices are **hired** by an employer and receive **a paycheck from their first day of work**. Their wages increase as they progress in the worksite and demonstrate growing knowledge, skills, and technical competencies. Typically, an apprenticeship lasts **multiple years (averaging three years)**, beginning usually during students' junior year in high school. Unlike other career preparation experiences (e.g., shadowing, internships), youth apprentices complete their initial training with industry-recognized credentials. In some cases, they may also complete the program with **earned college credits** that may lead to an Associate Degree.

Why are youth apprenticeships becoming a priority in the U.S. workforce?

A variety of factors reinforce the need for expansion of apprenticeship experiences for high school students.

Youth unemployment in the 16-18-year age range is at its highest since the 1950s.

The vastly expanding technological knowledge base (including growing influence of Artificial Intelligence, automation, and reduction of the need for unskilled labor) is evident throughout the United States economy today.

The absence of highly skilled workers capable of succeeding in high-tech positions, with many such positions going unfilled is decried by many industry leaders.

High school students hunger for experience-based and authentic learning experiences. We are also witnessing a growing sense they want work aligned with their personal search for efficacy and meaning.

What career pathways are considered high-priority today?

Although specific locations and regions may experience differing priority areas in their workforce, the U.S. Department of Labor has identified the following **high-priority workforce pathways** in which there is growing need for highly trained and highly skilled workers:

- ▶ **Advanced Manufacturing**
- ▶ **Construction**
- ▶ **Energy**
- ▶ **Finance and Business**
- ▶ **Healthcare**
- ▶ **Hospitality**
- ▶ **Information Technology**
- ▶ **Telecommunications**
- ▶ **Transportation**

How do students benefit from participation in a youth apprenticeship?

Youth apprentices enjoy multiple benefits from their participation, including enhanced educational opportunities reinforcing their academic skills and knowledge as well as a powerful head start on entering a chosen career pathway.

Apprentices receive hands-on career training, a comprehensive education aligning the academic and professional sides of their development, the potential for a long-term career in a growing career field, and one or more national credentials that are portable for presentation to employers and industries throughout the United States.

For school districts considering youth apprenticeships, how flexible are available models?

U.S. Department of Labor guidelines and policies encourage flexibility and innovation.

They emphasize the need for collaboration within the jurisdiction to ensure that proposed or operating youth apprenticeship programs are aligned with the workforce needs of a city, region, and/or state. That said, apprenticeship program design can be customized to meet the needs of participating businesses, including how, when, and where related instruction is provided to apprentices.

What services does the U.S. Department of Labor provide to support youth apprenticeships?

When schools and businesses register an apprenticeship program with the U.S. Department of Labor, they gain access to the following services:

- ▶ Technical assistance and support;
- ▶ National industry-recognized credentialing;
- ▶ High quality and rigorous performance standards aligned with current industry requirements;
- ▶ Potential tax credits for the sponsoring agency; and
- ▶ Access to federal resources to support the sustainability and scalability of the apprenticeship program.

Who are the external partners most frequently involved with school districts in youth apprenticeship programs?

A range of partners are typically associated with youth apprenticeship programs, including: (a) businesses, a consortia of employers, and industry associations; (b) labor and joint labor-management organizations; (c) state and local public workforce systems; (d) two- and four-year colleges that offer Associate and Bachelor's Degrees; (e) community-based organizations; and/or (f) economic development associates.

Where can I find more information about youth apprenticeship programs?

Numerous resources and materials are available on-line, including profiles of state-specific and national youth apprenticeship programs. Here are a few for your exploration (accessible via www.workforcegps.org):

WorkforceGPS: Navigate to Success
www.workforcegps.org

Framework on Registered Apprenticeship for High School Students (TEN 31-16)
www.wdr.doleta.gov

WIOA and Youth Apprenticeship Desk Aid (Using WIOA Adult, Dislocated, and Youth Funds to Support Apprenticeship)
www.DOL.gov

State and Local Apprenticeship Programs: Wisconsin Youth Apprenticeship Program
www.DOL.gov

Apprenticeship Carolina Youth Apprenticeship (South Carolina)
www.apprenticeshipcarolina.com

Apprenticeship Maryland
www.dllr.state.md.us

Georgia Youth Apprenticeship Program
www.gadoe.org

CareerWise Colorado
www.careerwisecolorado.org

School to Work Youth Apprenticeship Program (Rochester, NY)
www.fingerlakesyouthapprenticeship.org

Minnesota's Youth Apprenticeship Program
www.MN.gov

Charleston Regional Youth Apprenticeship Program
www.car_youth_apprenticeship

Kentucky TRACK Program
www.Kentucky.gov

Making Apprenticeships Work for Opportunity Youth (Jobs for the Future)
www.jff.org

Youth Apprenticeship Tools:

Youth Apprenticeship: Action Planning
Guide for Local Communities (Wisconsin)
www.dwd.wisconsin.gov

Youth Pre-Apprenticeship Recruiting,
Screening and Testing (North Carolina)
www.ncjustice.org

After-School Apprenticeship Program Toolkit
(Collaborative for Building After-School Systems)
www.expandedschools.org

Charleston Regional Youth Apprenticeship
Program Infographic (South Carolina)
www.charlestonchamber.org

Policies and Procedures for Bridging
Youth Apprenticeship to Registered
Apprenticeship (Wisconsin)
www.dwd.wi.gov

How to Implement a Pre-
Apprenticeship Program (Ohio)
www.education.ohio.gov

DOL YouthBuild Registered Apprenticeship Toolkit
www.workforceGPS.org

High School Apprenticeship Tools
(Department of Labor)
www.youth.gov

Research Studies and Toolkits on the Design
and Benefits of Youth Apprenticeships
Youth Apprenticeship: A Hopeful Approach for
Improving Outcomes for Baltimore Youth
www.urban.org

Making Youth Apprenticeships Work
for Illinois' Young Adults: Community
Recommendations for Youth Apprenticeships
www.cjc.net

Potential Role of Secondary CTE Programs in
Preparing Students for Apprenticeship Programs
www.innovativeapprenticeship.org

North Carolina Youth Apprenticeship Guide –
www.ApprenticeshipNC.org

Employer's Playbook for Building
an Apprenticeship Program-The
Manufacturing Institute
www.doleta.gov

Creating a Program-American Institute
for Innovative Apprenticeship
www.innovativeapprenticeship.org