



# YOUTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN CALIFORNIA

Overview, Initiatives, and Best Practices

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: YOUTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN CALIFORNIA

California's economic prosperity and societal well-being are deeply intertwined with the development of its youth workforce and by extension, its public youth workforce development system (YWDS), which strives to equip young individuals with essential skills and create pathways for personal and professional growth. This report provides an overview of California's YWDS, its structure, strategic direction, and innovative practices by Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs). Primarily, this report aims to stimulate more local and system-wide partnerships with community-based organizations (CBOs) to better serve California's youth by creating more equitable access to education and career pathways.

## Education and Employment Data

Access to education and employment opportunities are not evenly distributed among the state's young people. This summary draws on 2022-23 high school data from the California Department of Education and 2022 employment data for 19-24-year-olds from the American Community Survey.

### Education Data

#### Disparities among HS Students:

Latino/Hispanic, Black/African American, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Pacific Islander:

- 61%-77% socio-economically disadvantaged
- Homelessness: 30-60% higher than other groups

#### Highschool Graduation and Dropout Rates:

- Graduation rate: 86% overall; lower among Foster (61%), Homeless (73%), Black/African American (78%), American Indian/Alaska Native (79%), Hispanic/Latino (83%) students
- Dropout rate: 8% overall; higher among Foster (24%), Homeless (17%), Black/African American (14%), American Indian/Alaska Native (13%)

- Across all race/ethnic groups: devastating effects on educational outcomes for Foster students

#### School Enrollment (Ages 19-24):

- Overall average: 47%; lower among Black/African American (41%), Hispanic/Latino (40%), American Indian/Alaska Native (36%), Other (39%), mixed-race (43%)

#### Pursuing Post-secondary Education (Ages 19-24):

- Less common among American Indian/Alaska Native (48%), Hispanic/Latino (52%), Black/African American (55%)
- More common among Asian, Non-Hispanic/Latino, and White youth (73%, 68%, and 65%, respectively)

### Employment Data

#### Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR):

- Overall: 70%; American Indian/Alaska Native youth had highest (77%), Chinese youth had lowest (49%)

#### Unemployment Rate:

- Overall: 9%; Black/African American youth had highest (15%); Japanese youth had lowest (3%)

#### Employment to Population Ratio:

- Overall: 63%; American Indian/Alaska Native youth had highest (70%); Chinese youth had lowest (45%)

#### Ethnic and Racial Comparison:

- Hispanic/Latino youth had higher LFPR (73%) and employment to population ratio (66%) relative to Non-Hispanic/Latino (67% and 61%, respectively)

### Disconnection Data (Ages 16-24)

- 11% of California's young people were **disconnected (i.e., not in school nor at work)**; vast majority had not yet entered the labor market and had no previous work experience.
- Highest disconnection rates: Black/African Americans (18%), American Indians/Alaska Natives (14%) & Hispanic/Latino (13%)
- Older youth (22-24) accounted for 50% of disconnected population, but comprised 1/3 of total 16-24-year-olds



### **Opportunity Youth**

“Opportunity Youth” (OY) are teens and young adults (16-24) who are neither in school nor working (disconnected) and/or have experiences with foster care, the justice system (e.g., probation), or homelessness and thus experience complex, unique barriers compared to their peers. Providing OY with the resources to address possible social, emotional, physical, or systemic barriers can unlock their potential and enable them to make meaningful contributions in the workforce.

### **Public Youth Workforce Development System**

The YWDS is a comprehensive network of programs funded at federal, state, and local levels. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) centralizes state and local workforce development efforts. Programs are aimed at economic growth and providing support services, including education, case management, and access to quality jobs. Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) play a pivotal role in administering funds to support workforce initiatives by assessing the needs of the local economy and overseeing the local workforce system. Many LWDBs established Youth Councils focused on addressing the unique needs of youth. LWDBs work closely with various stakeholders to develop and coordinate workforce strategies and policies and oversee education, employment, and other supportive services. Successful workforce development programs necessitate collaborations among government agencies, CBOs, education providers, and other stakeholders.

### **California’s Workforce Development Board: Strategic Initiatives and Funding**

California is committed to creating a "High Road" economy, focusing on equity, high-quality employment opportunities, and environmental responsibility. The California Workforce Development Board (CWDB) leads this effort, implementing initiatives to improve upward mobility and make quality employment and education accessible to all. These initiatives include aligning workforce development with youth needs, expanding access to education and training, and providing a person-centered, integrated approach.

In 2022, CWDB's WIOA initiatives served nearly 36,000 youth, exceeding targets in employment, earnings, and skill gains. Yet, with 5 million teens and young adults, over half a million of whom were disconnected, and marked disparities in educational and job access, WIOA efforts alone fall short. Enhancing resources, partnerships, and engagement is essential to support California's at-risk youth.

LWDBs with Youth Committees tended to receive a slightly higher portion of youth funding (relative to their total funding) and show benefits in program variety, engagement, and outcomes. Their performance metrics, including employment, education, training rates, and skill gains, suggest that Youth Committees positively impact results.



### **Innovative Practices and Spotlight on Outstanding LWDBs**

The report highlights several innovative practices spearheaded by LWDBs, such as building community partnerships, increasing community engagement, and creating comprehensive support networks. These practices demonstrate a shift in strategy towards reducing inequality and improving long-term outcomes through education and access to quality jobs. Notably, the youth-serving systems in the City of Los Angeles and Fresno County are commended for their exemplary work.

### **Conclusion and Future Steps**

California's public workforce system aims to create a thriving, equitable economy where all Californians have access to education, training, and career opportunities. However, challenges remain, including limited awareness and partnerships among organizations with similar goals. Future steps include generating momentum around a unified, holistic effort to reduce inequities to education and employment for OY, as outlined in Assembly Concurrent Resolution 16 (ACR 16). Among others, recommendations include expanding career-connected training and education, creating more "earn and learn" opportunities, and providing additional resources, including mentorship, for OY. These require increased collaboration between CBOs, educational institutions, government agencies, and other stakeholders. We hope that this report sparks the needed partnerships with CBOs to ensure that OY have the resources and support they need to reach their potential.



# YOUTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

In the diverse and evolving landscape of California, the youth workforce development system plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of our economy and society. Equipping all young people with the critical hard and soft skills, support, and experience to meet the needs and challenges of the future labor market and thrive is a direct investment in California's economic health and societal well-being.

The California public youth workforce development system is a network of federal-, state- and local-level funded programs and countless organizations serving the needs of job seekers, workers and employers through training and education, support services, case management, access to quality jobs and other opportunities, and more. Focusing on local, underserved communities, these initiatives create otherwise not accessible pathways for youth to personal and professional growth that provides opportunities to contribute their unique talents, ultimately improving their and their families economic stability, upward mobility and quality of life outcomes. Failing to invest in youth workforce initiatives has long-term implications, including lost human capital, increased reliance on social services, poverty, poorer health, and involvement in the justice system.

Partnerships play a pivotal role in equipping young adults with the skills, knowledge, and opportunities necessary to thrive in the workforce, making it essential for community-based organizations (CBOs) and other stakeholders to understand the complexities and nuances of the public workforce development system. This report, focused on providing a thorough overview of this system, is particularly pertinent for CBOs operating outside the direct network of America's Job Centers of California. These organizations are instrumental in delivering education, workforce development, case management, and supportive services to youth, especially in underserved communities.



This report delves into the various components of the youth workforce development system in California, examining its structure, the range of initiatives underway, and the best practices being adopted across different regions and sectors. The analysis includes a review of the policies and programs that are currently shaping the outcomes for youth in the workforce, as well as the challenges and barriers that they face. By providing this comprehensive overview, the report aims to offer CBOs a detailed understanding of the current state of youth workforce development in California.

Moreover, the report seeks to highlight the significant role that CBOs play in this ecosystem. It underscores the importance of their work in bridging gaps, providing essential services, and advocating for the needs and interests of the youth they serve. In doing so, it also identifies areas where these organizations can align their efforts with broader state initiatives, enhance their impact, and foster stronger partnerships with other stakeholders in the system.

In conclusion, this report is not just an overview of the youth workforce development system in California; it is a call to action for all stakeholders, particularly CBOs. It encourages collaboration, innovation, and a renewed commitment to investing in the potential of our youth. Through this examination, the report endeavors to inform and inspire action and collaboration among all stakeholders involved in shaping California's future workforce. By the end of this journey, readers will have gained a nuanced understanding of the youth workforce development system, empowering them to make informed decisions and take impactful actions that will shape the future of our state. It is important to note, however, that the information presented in this report is not exhaustive, nor is it meant to be.

# CALIFORNIA STATEWIDE YOUTH EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT DATA



This section delves into the educational and employment landscape for youth in California.

Despite statewide efforts to improve equity, significant barriers remain in education and employment for California's youth, particularly for those from underserved communities. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated these disparities, impacting long-term quality of life outcomes

## 2022-2023 High-school (9-12 Grade) Enrollment and Outcomes Data from California's Department of Education

### High School Enrollments

- The majority of high school students (9th -12th grade) come from traditionally higher-barrier populations. 61% percent are socio-economically disadvantaged, 2.9% are homeless, and .5% are foster youth, with many also belonging to traditionally underserved race/ethnic groups.
- Rates of socio-economically disadvantaged, homeless and foster youth varied across race/ethnic groups: (1) Between 60.5%-76.8% of Latinos/Hispanics, Black/African Americans, American Indians/Alaskan Natives, and Pacific Islanders are socio-economically disadvantaged -compared to 40% or less for other groups. (2) Students from these same race/ethnic groups had 30-60% higher rates of homelessness than the overall average, and (3) the percentage of foster youth among African American and American Indian/Alaska Natives students was 400% higher than those of all other student populations.



# HIGH SCHOOL OUTCOMES



- The overall high school graduation rate in California was 86.2%, with lower rates among Foster (61%), Homeless (73%), Black/African American (78%), American Indian/Alaska Native (79%), and Hispanic/Latino (84%) students.
- Compounding these inequities, graduation rates among homeless and socioeconomically disadvantaged students varied substantially across racio-ethnic groups, ranging between 64% and 93%. Socio-economically disadvantaged or homeless African American/Black and American Indian/Alaskan Native students fared far worse than others.
- Trends were similar for dropout rates (8% overall average), with higher dropout rates among Foster (24%), Homeless (17%), Black/African American (14%), and American Indian/Alaska Native (13%) students.
- Black/African American or American Indian/Alaskan Native students, who were also socioeconomically disadvantaged or experienced homelessness, had markedly higher dropout rates than all others.
- One high-barrier population omitted from previous racio-ethnic groups comparisons is Foster Youth. Experience in the foster system seems to have devastating effects on education outcomes, both in terms of low graduation and high dropout rates across racio-ethnic subgroups. This suggests that these youth face unique, significant barriers to education and likely other opportunities.

These findings highlight that certain populations experience greater barriers in high-school, especially Foster, Homeless, Black/African American, and American Native/Alaskan Native youth. Inequities are further exacerbated when youth from historically underserved race or ethnic populations also experience financial hardships. It is important to note that data for justice-involved youth was not examined.



## EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT DATA FOR OLDER YOUTH 19-24 YEARS OLD

### School Enrollment (19-24 only)\*

- School enrollment (includes high-school, community college, trade school, etc.) data for 19-24 year-olds showed diverse educational engagement across race and ethnic subgroups. White young adults (19-24 years old) were the largest group, with exactly half in school, which was close to the overall enrollment rate of 47% in 2022.
- The highest rates of enrollment were among Chinese youth (71%) and Other Asian/Pacific Islanders (63%), while only 41% of Black/African American and 36% of American Indian or Alaska Native 19-24 year olds were enrolled in school. Low educational engagement was also seen among those identified as 'Other race' (39%) and mixed-race (43%). With regard to ethnicity, whereas over half of all non-Hispanic/Latinos were enrolled in school (53%), Hispanics/Latino youth were enrolled at a lower rate (40%).

### Educational Attainment (19-24 only)\*

#### No HS Diploma/GED:

- Of 19-24 year olds in 2022, Amer Indian/Alaska Native youth had the highest percentage without a HS diploma/GED (13%), followed by Hispanic/Latino youth. Other race and ethnic subgroups varied between 3-4%. signaling potential systemic issues or barriers to completing basic education.

#### HS Diploma/GED, but No Further Education:

- A significant proportion of Black/African American, Amer Indian/Alaska Native, and Hispanic/Latino teens and young adults (41%, 40%, and 39%, respectively), had completed high school but had not (at least at the time) pursued further education. This was considerably higher than the percentage among Asian, Non-Hispanic/Latino, and White populations (24%, 29%, and 30%, respectively).

#### HS Diploma/GED, At Least Some Further Education:

- A similar trend was found in the relative proportions of 19-24 year old youth who pursued education beyond high school. Whereas most Asian, Non-Hispanic/Latino, and White youth did so (73%, 68%, and 65% respectively), around half of Amer Indian/Alaska Native, Hispanic/Latino, and Black/African American youth did not (48%, 52%, and 55%, respectively).

Overall, these disparities in education coupled with (and often resulting from) broader systemic and socio-economic barriers, may, and often do, translate into unequal access to employment opportunities and varying income levels.

\*American Community Survey (2022, 1-Yr Est.)



# EMPLOYMENT DATA

A recent study from UCLA Labor Center found that employed young workers tend to experience poorer working conditions, have fewer opportunities for advancement, and lower wages. One in two young workers earn low wages with Hispanic/Latino and Black young workers having the highest rates of low wage work. Many young workers are also enrolled in school (29%). These “workers and learners” often experience financial hardships and must work many hours (e.g. over 40 hours/week) while enrolled, which jeopardizes their ability to succeed in achieving credentials. An analysis of 2022 employment and labor market data (American Community Survey, 2022) revealed the following:

## **Race and Ethnicity:**

In 2022, California Labor Force data indicated that labor force participation rates among 19-24-year-olds varied widely among race and ethnic sub-groups,

- American Indians or Alaska Native teens and young adults, while having fewer employed individuals, had the highest labor force participation rate (77%). Over seven-in-ten youth who identified as White were connected to the labor market (71%), and youth who identified as Black/African American were also connected at a relatively high rate (68%).
- Whereas 63% of Other Asian/Pacific Islanders were engaged in the labor market, there were proportionally fewer Japanese youth who were (54%). Youth who identified as some other race were engaged at a high rate (73%), as were youth who identified as two or more major races (71%). Chinese young adults had the lowest labor force participation rate (49%), but as noted above, they had the highest rates of educational enrollment.
- With regard to ethnicity, youth of Hispanic/Latino descent were engaged in the labor force at a higher rate relative to their Non-Hispanic/Latino peers (73% and 67%, respectively), but as noted above, Non-Hispanic/Latino youth had higher school enrollment rates.

# EMPLOYMENT & DISCONNECTION DATA



## Age:

- Employment rates and labor force participation rates increase with age, from 49.36% employed at age 19 to 73.51% at age 24, and from a 56.4% participation rate at age 19 to 79.3% at age 24.
- The number of those not in the labor force decreases as age increases, suggesting a transition from education to employment.

## Gender:

We found no differences in employment, unemployment, or labor force participation rates between males and females.

## Disconnection Data for Youth 16-24 (American Community Survey, 2022)

In 2022, 11% of California's youth aged 16-24 were considered "disconnected" - not enrolled in school or working. As most younger teens are enrolled in school, the disconnection rate is much higher for older youth between 19 and 24 years old (ranging between 12%-17%). Young adults between the ages of 22 and 24 account for half of the disconnected youth population, but are only one third of the total 16-24 year old population. Across race and ethnic subgroups among 16-24 year olds, disconnection rates varied from 6% to 18%, with Black/African American youth having the highest disconnection rates (18%) followed by American Indian/Alaskan Native (14%) and Hispanic/Latino (13%) youth.

## Summary of Findings

Together, these findings highlight that many of California's teens and young adults continue to experience considerable barriers to education and employment, despite state-wide efforts to improve opportunity equity across youth. COVID-19 further exacerbated disparities, resulting in greater unemployment and disengagement among already underserved youth populations. Opportunity inequities tend to have a negative impact on youth's long-term quality of life outcomes, such as poor health, financial security, housing instability, and reliance on social services, and thus have broader implications for local communities and society as a whole.



# WHO CAN BENEFIT MOST FROM CALIFORNIA'S YOUTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS?

The transition to adulthood is complex and challenging for youth 16-24 years old, who are suddenly faced with added responsibilities (e.g., housing, work), autonomy, and navigating interpersonal relationships. COVID-19 presented additional challenges for transition age youth, in relation to mental health, engagement/disconnection, financial stability, high inflation and the rapidly evolving job market.

A successful transition to adulthood is contingent upon having developed the foundational soft (e.g., social emotional learning skills) and hard (e.g., literacy, numeracy) skills through education and resources. Yet, systemic, socio-economic, and familial inequalities create barriers, such as family demands, housing instability, lack of quality of education, lack of role models, and limited access to opportunities, for some youth. Youth who experience high barriers often are forced to navigate the transition to adulthood at an earlier age than their peers, without the skills and support needed and struggle to engage and perform well in school. Making matters worse, disconnection from education and resources makes it even harder for these youth to develop the foundational skills needed. Further, any gaps in education or work histories negatively impact youth's future employability and earnings potential, even after reentering the workforce. These experiences create trauma for youth, further reducing their resources (e.g., negative self-esteem, perceived inaccessibility of certain careers). Without support, these youth will be at-risk of continued disconnection, poverty, homelessness, poor health, reliance on public services, and crime. Despite these barriers, with the correct resources and support, disconnected youth can contribute valuable skills to the workforce and represent an enormous pool of untapped human capital that if leveraged, can strengthen communities, the economy and society at large.

“Opportunity Youth” are teens and young adults (16-24) who are neither in school nor working (disconnected) and/or have experiences with foster care, the justice system (e.g., probation), or homelessness and thus experience complex, unique barriers compared to their peers. They are referred to as “Opportunity Youth” because disconnection from education and employment prevents society from benefiting from their unique talents. Providing Opportunity Youth with the tools and resources to address possible social, emotional, physical, or systemic barriers can unlock their potential and enable them to make meaningful contributions in the workforce.

# UNDERSTANDING & ADDRESSING BARRIERS



Understanding possible barriers is key to helping Opportunity Youth achieve their potential. First, Opportunity Youth may have difficulty identifying potential career paths and making informed decisions about their future, especially if they have had limited exposure to career options or perceive that certain careers are not accessible. Second, Opportunity Youth often have limited access to quality education and training opportunities that are aligned with career pathways and interests. Third, many Opportunity Youth are lacking in necessary social emotional learning (e.g., communication, decision making) and job readiness (e.g. resume writing, interviewing) skills. Fourth, Opportunity Youth may have limited networking and mentorship opportunities, which help youth identify career pathways and development.

Finally, Opportunity Youth, in particular those transitioning out of foster care or the justice system or who have experienced significant trauma, often receive inadequate support. Many of these barriers can be addressed with education and training, social support, mentorship, supportive services, and career pathways.

As a whole, it is evident that there are substantial inequities in education and employment for California's Youth, which were further amplified with Covid-19. Opportunity Youth face unique challenges with considerably fewer resources, but also offer untapped human capital that if leveraged can strengthen local communities and the economy. As such, workforce initiatives should focus on addressing existing barriers to make available this otherwise unutilized human talent. This builds on a recent resolution, ACR16, calling for the state to reduce existing economic inequities for youth, understand their needs and experiences, and provide needed services. Developing solutions to address these inequities lays the groundwork for Opportunity Youth-related workforce development initiatives and next steps.

# OVERVIEW OF CALIFORNIA'S YOUTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: SCOPE AND STRUCTURE



California is committed to equipping its workforce with the necessary skills and resources to thrive in today's job market by investing substantial resources towards youth workforce development programs. California's public workforce development system is part of the federal public workforce development system, as such we first provide a brief overview of the federal system.

Enacted in July 2014, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) replaced the 1998 Workforce Investment Act as the major federal workforce development law. WIOA sets out to create an integrated, customer-focused public workforce system that connects job seekers, particularly young people and adults facing substantial employment challenges, to quality jobs and career paths, while also assisting employers in recruiting and maintaining skilled employees. The Act has six core programs and is divided into five sections:

- Workforce Development Activities (Title I): Overseen by the U.S. Department of Labor, includes state and national programs, and the Job Corps.
- Adult Education and Literacy (Title II): Managed by the U.S. Department of Education, focusing on state grants and leadership activities.
- Wagner-Peyser Act Amendments (Title III): Modifies the Employment Service authorizing act
- Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Amendments (Title IV): Centers on vocational services for the disabled.
- General Provisions (Title V): Governs WIOA's administration.

WIOA centralizes state and local workforce development efforts through the creation of local one-stop shops that offer training, education, career services, and supportive services. Currently, WIOA operates close to 2,300 Career OneStop centers (or America's Job Centers; AJCs) nationwide. As part of this endeavor, WIOA provides funding and guidelines to states and local workforce development boards to implement and oversee this initiative, including overall structure, who is served, and fund allocation. Though WIOA's six core programs serve vulnerable, high-barrier populations that include both adults and youth, Title I includes funds specifically allocated for disconnected (out-of-school and out-of-work) and other high barrier youth populations. Funding opportunities and allocation will be discussed in greater detail later in this report.



At the state level, it is administered by the California Workforce Development Board (CWDB), which works in conjunction with the Employment Development Department (EDD), the California Labor & Workforce Development Agency (LWDA), and other partner agencies, and plays a crucial role in developing, implementing, coordinating and guiding the various state's workforce development efforts for youth across the state. CWDB's mission is to ensure the state has a skilled and competitive workforce that meets the needs of employers and job seekers alike. Though largely shaped by WIOA, California's public workforce development system is multi-faceted, consisting of numerous initiatives at the federal, state, and local level, funding sources, and partnerships with diverse stakeholders.

Aligned with federal guidelines, California's public workforce development system consists of 14 Regional Planning Units (RPU) that house 46 local workforce development boards (LWDBs). RPU were created to take an industry-centered approach to workforce development. Through regional partnerships with industry, education and all other relevant stakeholders, they are tasked with implementing sector-specific programs and aligning LWDBs initiatives. They are evaluated by the state based on participant skill attainment, participant upward mobility and equity, and system alignment.

California's LWDBs, located primarily based on the WIOA client population, are responsible for administering local, state and federal funds to support workforce initiatives, assess the needs of the local economy, and oversee the local public workforce system for youth and adults. LWDBs work closely with other government departments, industry, employers, CBOs, education and training providers, and other youth-service providers to identify workforce needs, develop and coordinate workforce strategies and policies, administer training initiatives, and oversee the administration of education, employment, and other supportive services. By tailoring their efforts to meet the unique needs of the local area, LWDBs work to ensure that their initiatives are effective and responsive to the local population and labor market demands. Though LWDBs serve both youth and adult customers, many have Youth Councils that focus specifically on addressing the unique needs of youth. Currently, only 16 of the 46 LWDBs have Youth Councils. CBOs interested in learning more about local initiatives or getting involved should contact their LWDB. A list of LWDBs and Youth Councils is included at the end, along with their contact information.

At the core of our public workforce development system are America's Job Centers, or one-stop delivery centers that provide a range of services (e.g., counseling, training) to job seekers. In California, LWDBs allocate funds to their system of America's Job Centers of California (AJCCs) to facilitate the delivery of workforce development services for youth. Service providers must compete for WIOA funding through a competitive proposal or application process, and if selected they become AJCCs. Key requirements for AJCC certification include effectiveness, physical and programmatic accessibility for individuals with disabilities, and continuous improvement. Under WIOA, AJCCs offer wrap-around services to young adult job seekers by partnering with community employers, education providers, non-profits, and other service providers. WIOA stipulates that 75% of expenditure of Youth funds be allocated to serving out-of-school, out-of-work youth, but also aims to serve other high barrier youth subpopulations, including foster, low-income, probation, and homeless youth. Additionally, some WIOA adult funds are used to serve 16-24 year olds. AJCCs also receive additional funds through various LWDB grants and initiatives. AJCCs provide Opportunity Youth with opportunities to build job readiness and technical skills, assistance reconnecting to the workforce and/or education, and access to other supportive services. Though systemically labeled as AJCCs, some local areas may have youth-focused one-stop centers (e.g., YouthSource Centers in Los Angeles). We will refer to them generally as AJCCs for this report.





# OVERVIEW OF CALIFORNIA'S YOUTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM: STRATEGIC DIRECTION, FUNDING AND INITIATIVES

A healthy workforce development system for youth is essential for the economic success of California's youth. The CWDB works to ensure that all of California's youth have the skills and opportunities to succeed in the workplace and achieve income mobility. In 2022, 35,968 teens and young adults acquired skills and experiences that prepared them for the workplace through California's workforce development initiatives. California's public workforce development system for youth represents a comprehensive network of organizations and agencies aimed at preparing Opportunity Youth to thrive in the workforce and improving the overall economic prosperity of the state.

Leading this effort, the CWDB, nationally recognized for being forward-thinking and innovative, has pioneered the journey towards a "High Road" economy, anchoring its approach to workforce development in the pillars of (1) equity/social fairness, (2) worker voice, (3) high-quality employment opportunities and (4) environmental responsibility. The overarching goal is to improve upward mobility for California's Opportunity Youth and make quality employment and education accessible to all Californians. This will be done by creating sector-based, youth-focused workforce development strategies through partnerships with high road employers, identified based on quality of product, workforce needs, and investment in human capital (e.g., quality jobs, career development). These initiatives are not just about job placement; they encompass a holistic approach to skill development, ensuring that young individuals are well-equipped to thrive in California's dynamic labor market. We will explore how these programs are creating, building upon, and refining on-ramps to employment, and the diverse pathways they offer for skill acquisition and professional growth.

# BRIEF OVERVIEW OF FEDERAL FUNDING FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Developing the future workforce is pivotal for long-term economic stability, yet understanding and navigating the public youth workforce system, with its intricate federal, state, and local interconnections, is often challenging. In this section, we first outline some of the major funding streams at the national level and how they are allocated across California. And then, we focus on California's funding sources and funding initiatives.

Funding for workforce development flows through multiple levels of government, starting from the federal level, then moving to state and local levels, before ultimately reaching workers and employers. The allocation of funds is guided by the federal budget, which is sanctioned by Congress and the President. This budget outlines the financial resources for various federal agencies, four of which are the most involved in the workforce system (i.e., the Departments of Labor, Education, Health and Human Services, and Agriculture).

Workforce development funds are distributed to states through various acts and programs, but primarily through WIOA. After the state's governor receives these federal dollars, they are generally allocated to state WDBs, which are then allocated to LWDs. While WIOA state formula grant funds (i.e., WIOA Title I) are directly transferred from the governor to state WDBs, the route for non-WIOA programs can vary, sometimes going directly to local governments without going through the state WDBs. At the local level, these funds are utilized in the one-stop system established by WIOA, offering various support services to both employees and employers. The service providers that comprise the one-stop system are called America's Job Centers.

## **Authorized Federal WIOA Funds**

In Program Year (PY) 2023, the federal government authorized \$11.3B in funding under WIOA (which includes State Formula Grant Programs, Adult Education and Family Literacy, Wagner-Peyser, Job Corps, a series of National Programs, and the Rehabilitation Act). The WIOA Title I State Formula Grant Programs were allocated \$4.5B for workforce development activities, which include Adults and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training and Youth Workforce Investment. In addition to the Youth Workforce Investment Grant Program, WIOA also includes provisions for two other youth-focused programs - Job Corps and YouthBuild. Below is the financial breakdown for each of the five WIOA Title I workforce development programs and activities:

- Adult Employment & Training - \$885,649,000
- Dislocated Worker Employment & Training - \$1,421,412,000
- Youth Workforce Investment - \$948,130,000
- Job Corps - \$1,176,015,500
- YouthBuild - \$105,000,000

Therefore, for PY 2023, the Federal Government authorized and allocated \$5.1B in WIOA funds, over half of which was exclusively for youth workforce development (\$2.8B). And, given that older teens (18 and above) are eligible to receive Adult Employment & Training services, a significant number of additional 18-24-year-olds also received some type of employment or training related service.

In addition to these investments the Federal Government allocates other WIOA funds, some of which are ultimately used by youth. A sample of these programs is listed below:

- Employment Service Program (WIOA Title III)
- H1-B Training Grant Programs
- Future Scholars for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Workforce Development Program

# CALIFORNIA'S WIOA PERFORMANCE AND FUNDING ALLOCATION

The 2022 WIOA Annual Report highlights the CWDB's progress in implementing the 2020-2023 State Plan and achieving its goals for youth, shedding light on current youth-focused workforce development initiatives and future directions. CWDB not only oversees the implementation of WIOA but also leverages considerable federal and state resources toward identifying, developing, implementing, and monitoring additional workforce development initiatives for youth.

The 2022 WIOA Annual Report shows that the CWDB has made significant progress in implementing the State Plan for youth. For example, the CWDB has:

- Exceeded almost all WIOA outcomes goals for Youth surpassing employment rates by at least 5%, median earnings by over \$1,000, and measurable skill gains targets by almost 8%, and only narrowly missed the credential attainment rate goal by 1.7%. It is important to note that COVID-19 may have impacted the low attainment rate in the first quarter.
- Implemented a waiver decreasing the WIOA federal expenditure requirement from 75% to 50% for Out-of-School Youth, freeing up funds to serve in-school Opportunity Youth at risk of disconnection (Waiver of WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A)).
- Served a total of 35,968 youth through WIOA funds (see table below). Of those, there were at least 1,364 foster youth, 2,452 Homeless youth, 909 Justice-involved youth and 16,136 low-income youth. Additionally, 9% came from the two most vulnerable race and ethnic subgroups: 2,861 Black/African American and 485 American Indian/Alaskan Native youth were served.

AGE	Title I			Title III	TOTAL
	Adult	Dislocated	Youth	Wagner-Peyser	
>16			204	25	<b>229</b>
16-18	1,011	69	6,250	409	<b>7,739</b>
19-24	7,258	1,244	9,836	9,641	<b>27,979</b>
25-44			21		<b>21</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,269</b>	<b>1,313</b>	<b>16,311</b>	<b>10,075</b>	<b>35,968</b>



CWDB, together with other partner agencies, is responsible for determining how WIOA is implemented and how funds are allocated. CWDB seeks to invest in programs and LWDBs that incorporate youth development and employ best practices, providing wrap-around services with a focus on employment and post-secondary outcomes. Informed by data on the current labor market and demographic trends, the state uses the same Federal Government State Formula to allocate WIOA Title I Youth Workforce Investment funds to LWDBs. CWDB regularly evaluates these programs and adjusts its strategy and funding allocations to improve outcomes for youth. We analyzed the WIOA Title I funding allocation and performance indicators for each of the 45 LWDBs for both program years (PY) 2021-22 and 2022-23. The performance data is from 2021. In the section below, we highlight a few key findings. The full data set is provided in the Appendix.

## 1 Funding Allocation and Distribution

There's a notable variation in funding across different areas. Los Angeles City and County receive the highest youth funding for both Program Years (PY) 2021-22 and 2022-23, indicative of the larger population and economic scale in these areas. Youth funding forms a significant portion of the total WIOA Title I budget, with the average across all areas being approximately 35% for PY 2022-23. This emphasizes a strong focus on youth programs and initiatives.

## 2 Proportionality of Youth Funding

The percentage of Youth Funding relative to the total amount (i.e., for adults, dislocated workers, and youth) for PY 2022-23 ranges from 29% to 40%, with Santa Barbara and Los Angeles City at the higher end. This variability suggests differing strategic priorities or needs across the regions.

## 3 Counts of Youth Served

Total Youth Served varies significantly, with Los Angeles County serving the highest number (2,228), reflecting the broader demographic reach in more populous areas. The percentage of youth enrolled in more than one program, a measure of program engagement, shows a wide range - from 0.3% in Alameda to 96.6% in Madera. This disparity could be due to different program structures or varying youth needs in each locality.

## 4 Performance Metrics to Target Ratios

Performance metrics, such as the Employment/Education/Training Rate, Median Earnings, and Credentials, vary across local areas. For instance, Los Angeles City exceeds the Q2 and Q4 targets for Youth Employment/Education/Training Rate, indicating effective program outcomes. Median Earnings and Credential Ratios also vary, reflecting the differing economic landscapes and the effectiveness of training and education programs in translating into tangible earnings and qualifications for youth.

## 5 Skill Gains

The Measurable Skill Gains to Target Ratio is a crucial metric for understanding program efficacy in enhancing skills. Most areas meet or exceed their target ratios, signifying positive outcomes in skill development.

## 6 Overall Analysis

The data points to a substantial investment in youth workforce development across California, with variations in funding allocation and program performance reflecting the diverse economic and demographic landscapes of each local area. The general trend of meeting or exceeding performance targets across most areas is a promising indicator of the effectiveness of these programs in supporting youth employment and skill development.



**Additionally, we wanted to identify whether there were any noticeable differences in LWDBs with and without Youth Committees. We note a few general observations:**

**Observations for LWDBs with a Youth Committee:**

- Youth funding is substantial and often constitutes a significant portion of the Grand Total funding, ranging from 31% to 40%. This reflects a strong investment in youth programs.
- Total Youth Served varies significantly, with some LWDBs serving over a thousand youths and others serving as few as 19.
- Engagement in more than one program is particularly high in some areas (e.g., Tulare with 55.9% and Sacramento with 58.7%), which may suggest a broader range of services or better integration of programs.
- The Employment/Education/Training Rate to Target Ratios for Q2 and Q4 are generally at or above 1.00, indicating that these LWDBs are meeting or exceeding their targets.
- Median Earnings to Target Ratios vary, with several LWDBs exceeding the target, which could indicate effective training and employment programs.
- Credential to Target Ratios also vary, but there are notable successes with some LWDBs significantly exceeding their targets.
- Measurable Skill Gains to Target Ratios are mostly above the target, suggesting effective skill development initiatives.

**Observations for LWDBs without a Youth Committee:**

- Youth funding as a percentage of the Grand Total is slightly lower on average, but still significant, indicating that youth programs are still a priority.
- The number of Total Youth Served is generally less than those with a Youth Committee, which might reflect differences in program capacity or focus.
- The percentage of youth enrolled in more than one program shows a wide range, with some LWDBs having high engagement.
- Employment/Education/Training Rate to Target Ratios for Q2 and Q4 vary, with some LWDBs falling slightly below the target.
- Median Earnings to Target Ratios show that some LWDBs are faring well, while others have room for improvement.
- Credential to Target Ratios are lower in some LWDBs without a Youth Committee, which might be an area to address.
- Measurable Skill Gains to Target Ratios have more variation, with some LWDBs below the target, indicating potential areas for program enhancement.

**General Comparison:**

- LWDBs with a Youth Committee seem to have a slightly higher percentage of youth funding relative to their total funding, which might contribute to their ability to serve more youth and offer diverse programs.
- Performance measures such as Employment/Education/Training Rates and Measurable Skill Gains generally appear to be robust for LWDBs with a Youth Committee, suggesting that the presence of such a committee might have a positive influence on program outcomes.
- The differences in Credential to Target Ratios suggest that having a Youth Committee could potentially influence the focus on credentialing as a key outcome for youth programs.



Equipping all young people with the critical hard and soft skills, support, and experience to meet the needs and challenges of the future labor market and thrive is a direct investment in California's economic health and societal well-being. These observations suggest that LWDBs with a Youth Committee may have certain advantages in program diversity, engagement, and performance outcomes. However, it's important to note that these are general trends and individual LWDB performance can vary based on a variety of factors, including local economic conditions, demographic needs, and specific program designs.

At the local level, LWDBs allocate various WIOA funds to AJCCs, which include CBOs and other non-profit organizations, educational institutions, as well as other entities. In addition to Adult and Dislocated Worker Training and Employment dollars, Youth Workforce Investment funds are also allocated to most AJCCs. Though LWDBs oversee the implementation of the local workforce system, AJCCs are obligated to follow WIOA statutory and regulatory federal requirements, including reporting youth participant employment and education/training outcomes, measurable skills gains, and credential attainment, after they exit the program. The allocation decisions made by LWDBs are also informed by AJCC past performance in achieving these outcomes as well as other and potential indicators of effectiveness.

### **California's Strategic Areas and Related Initiatives**

The path for the future, long term economic growth will be driven by creating a High Road economy through High Road Training Partnerships (HRTPs) with high road employers. This broad initiative leverages a sector-based, worker-focused approach to developing the youth workforce to meet the needs of high road employers.



Three key areas for initiatives to improve employment outcomes for Opportunity Youth are: (1) aligning workforce development with the needs of youth, (2) expanding access to education and training for youth, and (3) providing a more person-centered, integrated approach. The state will continue to fund initiatives under each of the three strategic directions. Below we discuss these three directions and key initiatives under each.

### **Aligning Workforce Development With the Needs of Youth in California**

This begins with identifying emergent industry sectors and workforce skills needed through regional partnerships and then, creating career pathways for Opportunity Youth to in-demand, quality jobs by developing training and education programs, providing needed support, and connecting youth to opportunities aligned with their interests, skills, and needs. We highlight a few initiatives focused on alignment. Additional funded initiatives are included in the fiscal flow section below.

- The SlingShot Challenge grant sparked efforts in creating regional partnerships and the creation of the 14 California RPUs, tasked with driving system alignment by creating synergy among regional industry, education, labor, workforce, and community partners to better serve high-barrier populations and create a more equitable workforce.
- CWDB will invest additional state-level WIOA discretionary state funds in High Road Training Partnerships, which are key in actualizing the state’s vision of creating a “California for All”. Using a sector-based, worker-focused approach to building partnerships with industry is needed to align training initiatives, meet Opportunity Youth’s needs, and create quality job opportunities that promote equity and sustainability. As part of this initiative, the Resilient Workforce Program was launched in 2022, which supports sector-focused projects in various industries, including healthcare and hospitality. Ongoing H RTP initiatives are focused on expanding these industry-specific efforts.
- As partnerships between LWDBs, industry, and education providers are necessary, CWDB is investing discretionary WIOA funds to support LWDB implementation of regional plans and sector initiatives. LWDBs are required to work with planning partners to identify, develop, prioritize, service, and feed “regional sector pathway” programs in RPUs. LWDBs were required to develop plans outlining how their current initiatives map onto their RPUs strategies and labor market needs.



## EXPANDING ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR YOUTH

As equipping youth with the requisite skills and opportunities needed to succeed in the workplace plays a critical role in reducing inequities, CWDB's goal is to expand access to education and training for youth, regardless of their background or income level. This includes increasing access to apprenticeships and other paid work experiences, providing financial assistance to low-income youth and expanding the availability of online and blended learning programs. Through partnerships with industry, education, and other youth providers, training initiatives can better meet the needs of youth and employers and increase the effectiveness of workforce development initiatives. Further, there is a push for increased engagement with education and training providers to make training more accessible (e.g., simple, flexible delivery). Below are some strategies to achieve this goal.

- Improve access to postsecondary and sub-baccalaureate credentials with demonstrable labor market value, including industry-recognized certificates or certifications, or certificates of completion of apprenticeship, or professional licenses, recognized by California or the federal government. This initiative also includes industry-valued associate degrees that increase employability or longer-term educational programs aligned with the state's workforce needs.
- LWDBs are required to improve access to post-secondary credentials. Training initiatives must be affordable, accessible, clearly define KSAs, which are meaningful (labor market value) and transferable across organizations, be informed by labor market needs, skill shortages, and areas of growth, and be stackable. Stackable training initiatives provide progressive skills development with multiple entry and exit points, where participants focus on developing specific skills at a time based on their career needs and each training block builds on one another.
- CWDB aims to increase access to “earn and learn” policies, where participants receive compensation while attaining skills for Opportunity Youth who can not afford education or full-time training.
- California has recently invested considerable funds towards increasing the number of (pre-)apprenticeships for Opportunity Youth through the creation of California's Division of Apprenticeship Standards, the California Youth Apprenticeship Committee, and the California Apprenticeship Grant Program, representing the first state-wide initiative targeting apprenticeships for youth. It aims to support pre-apprenticeship programs that provide the additional support and training often needed by Opportunity Youth.





- In an effort to build a cross-system data capacity that aligns programs with labor market trends and needs, as well as aggregates education, training, and performance outcome data, ongoing initiatives are focused on continuing to build upon the Cross-Systems Analytics and Assessment for Learning and Skills Attainment (CAAL-Skills) program. This program aims to unite workforce system partners to generate a holistic, statistically sound assessment of California’s workforce system.
- A Waiver of WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(H)(i) allows up to a 90% reimbursement of on-the-job training (OJT) costs for employers with 50 or fewer employees.

# PROVIDING A MORE PERSON-CENTERED, INTEGRATED APPROACH

A more person-centered, integrated approach focuses on providing integrated services delivery and braiding resources. Through the creation and development of more value-added partnerships at state, regional and local levels, workforce development programs can better serve Opportunity Youth by creating support networks, giving them agency and voice to express their needs and make decisions, tailor service delivery based on their unique needs, and better connect them with other support services. Taking a whole-person approach to providing services, co-enrollment and a common intake system is needed, where service partners are committed to utilizing intake forms that share common elements.

Creating a common platform across providers will enable customers to fill out one application rather than having to provide information to multiple agencies, trigger referrals based on customer needs, and give service providers a better understanding of the youth they serve. Partnerships and alignment across programs and funding streams, including partnerships between CBOs and programs operating through the AJCCs, is vital to providing an integrated approach to serving Opportunity Youth.

- CWDB will continue to invest federal and state funds in the development of HRTPs, High Road Construction Careers (HRCCs), and other initiatives that lead to the placement of participants in state approved pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships. This requires industry engagement in the development of HRTPs, OJT programming, apprenticeship, and WIOA Regional Plans.
- CalJOBS provides an online unified and streamlined intake and case management system, that enables co-enrollment across providers, reduces the duplication of services provided and need for workers to complete multiple applications, triggers referrals to service providers, records federally-required WIOA outcome data and is a resource that helps job seekers and employers to help navigate the state's workforce services—users can easily search for jobs, build resumes, access career resources, find qualified candidates, and gather information on education and training programs.
- In an effort to increase Career Technical Education, CWDB together with three other departments will utilize the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment criteria under Perkins V to encourage greater alignment of a local eligible agency or institution with their local and regional workforce system, which is defined to include all required state and federal program.
- Focus on expand funding for supportive services (e.g., childcare, transportation, counseling) and using a more person-centered to provide service based on individual's needs.
- In an effort to help California's hardest to serve youth populations, the AB 1111 State Funded Grant Program tasked LWDBs to build partnerships with and learn from CBOs, as they are subject matter experts with deep knowledge of relevant communities and service delivery for these populations. This initiative was informed by Accelerator Grant participants to provide these hard-to-serve populations with greater access to the workforce system.
- Continued investment in developing and funding intermediary activities to bring local and regional partnerships together, giving special emphasis to activities that link local service delivery structures with regional skills infrastructures designed to meet regional workforce needs.

In the table below, we summarize some of the most relevant strategies, pathways, programs, and initiatives related to youth workforce development in California. Most of those listed are not explicitly focused on youth, but youth sub-populations are eligible for all of them. These programs and initiatives are largely aligned with the state’s strategy for developing our future workforce.

Sector Strategies, Career Pathways, and/or Initiatives	Description	Youth Eligibility
<a href="#">Workforce Accelerator Fund</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In April 2014, California’s CWDB and EDD launched the Workforce Accelerator Fund in April 2014, an initiative focused on innovating the state’s workforce system.</li> <li>● Workforce Accelerator Fund supports employment opportunities for low-income and disadvantaged groups by funding innovative workforce solutions. It aligns resources and services in the workforce system, emphasizing collaboration, innovation, and systemic change. The aim is to scale effective strategies and integrate them into the workforce system for long-term impact.</li> <li>● Since its inception, the program has funded over \$43 million, supporting more than 209 projects throughout California</li> </ul>	WIOA eligible out-of-school youth
<a href="#">High Road Training Partnerships (H RTP)</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The H RTP initiative began with an initial investment of \$10M to foster industry partnerships in sectors like transportation and healthcare to promote equity, sustainability, and job quality. Aimed at addressing income inequality, economic competitiveness, and climate change, H RTP focuses on developing skills for resilient communities and supporting High Road employers who invest in human capital to create quality jobs.</li> </ul>	Varies by H RTP Project
<a href="#">Breaking Barriers to Employment Initiative</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Breaking Barriers to Employment Initiative aims to enhance existing workforce and education programs by offering services to individuals who face employment barriers. These services are designed to equip them with the necessary skills and competencies for successfully entering and retaining employment, thereby achieving self-sufficiency and economic security. The initiative requires collaboration between community-based organizations experienced in serving the target population and local workforce development boards.</li> </ul>	Youth disconnected from both school and work (among other populations)
<a href="#">Workforce Partnership &amp; Prison to Employment Initiative (P2E)</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Corrections-Workforce Partnership Agreement focuses on enhancing the connection between state workforce and corrections systems. Its primary aim is to facilitate the reintegration of formerly incarcerated and justice-involved individuals into society and the workforce. This partnership seeks to improve their employment outcomes by establishing a systematic collaboration between the rehabilitative programs of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and the state workforce system. A key aspect of this initiative is the incorporation of CDCR into the framework of the State Workforce Plan, ensuring a more cohesive and supportive approach to workforce reentry for these individuals.</li> <li>● As of April 2022, over 5,730 formerly-incarcerated and justice-involved individuals in California have been assisted through P2E funds.</li> <li>● Since 2018, the CWDB has allocated over \$56M for P2E to enhance the reintegration of formerly incarcerated and other justice-involved individuals by combining workforce, reentry, and supportive services.</li> </ul>	Justice-involved teens and young adults (among other justice-involved age groups)
<a href="#">Helping Justice-Involved Re-Enter Employment (HIRE)</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● HIRE is a funding initiative offering around \$50 million for community-based and nonprofit organizations to help justice-involved individuals gain employment.</li> <li>● Its goals are to boost job opportunities and mobility, and provide training and supportive services to enhance employability. HIRE aims to foster collaboration, innovate workforce development, and encourage system changes that sustain beyond the funding period, aligning with the CWDB’s strategic goals.</li> </ul>	Teens and young adults who were previously incarcerated in a local or state correctional facility
<a href="#">California Opportunity Youth Apprenticeship (COYA) Grant</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The COYA Grant program aims to develop and evaluate innovative methods to boost opportunity youth’s involvement in pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs. It also seeks to showcase how these apprenticeships positively affect employment and income for these individuals. The first round of COYA Grants, offering \$25M in funding, is set to open in Jan/Feb 2024.</li> </ul>	Opportunity Youth
<a href="#">Californians for All</a>	<p>“Californians for All” is focused on engaging young adults in volunteer and paid service roles addressing food insecurity, climate sustainability, and education issues at both local and state levels. The program aims to boost career pathways, job readiness, interest in public</p>	

	service, and community engagement. In 2024, California's 13 largest cities will receive funding to further these efforts by creating new roles within local workforce development programs.	
<a href="#">Opportunity Young Adult (OYA) Career Pathway Program</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The EDD, with the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, is offering \$16 million in WIOA funds for the OYA Career Pathway Program (2023-24). This program aims to improve job outcomes for young adults aged 18-28 by providing quality jobs, career growth opportunities, and comprehensive support, including case management.</li> </ul>	Young adults aged 18-28
Equity and Special Populations Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Equity and Special Populations program, with \$11,451,835 for 19 awards, aims to improve job equity for those facing employment barriers from February 2022 to March 2024. It focuses on developing job strategies, fostering industry partnerships, and providing work-based learning for California's vulnerable populations, with training programs to enhance workplace skills, employee retention, and earnings.</li> </ul>	Young adults, and others affected by COVID-19
Equity Target Population Fund Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Equity Target Population Fund Program, with \$8,236,606 for 10 awards, aims to enhance job equity and outcomes for underserved populations from April 2023 to March 2025. It supports projects in sectors offering living wage careers, focusing on building industry partnerships and innovation for effective job placements and skills training to improve employee retention and earnings.</li> </ul>	Justice-involved or disconnected young adults (among other populations)
Employment Social Enterprise (ESE) Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Employment Social Enterprise (ESE) program, with \$11,327,163.73 funding for 8 awards, aims to integrate participants into the workforce, focusing on employment in supportive settings to enhance work experience, skills, and access to services like housing and mental health. Overall, the program seeks to improve job retention and earnings potential.</li> </ul>	Justice-involved or disconnected young adults (among other populations)
2022 Quality Jobs, Equity, Strategy, and Training Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In July 2022, DOL announced a grant aimed at long-term economic recovery post-COVID-19, focusing on employment equity and resilience in individuals, communities, and industries. The EDD applied for and received this grant, securing \$13,491,103 to fund workforce development services. The grant supports 18 local/regional projects and runs from September 26, 2022, to September 30, 2024.</li> </ul>	
Disability Employment Grant – Demand Side Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From July 2021 to June 2024, the DOR and DDS have a \$20 million fund to enhance employment rates for people with disabilities. California's Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) focuses on recruitment campaigns and training, while DDS expands work opportunities for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities.</li> </ul>	
LA World Airport's (LAWA) Informative Courteous Approachable Responsive Efficient & Effective (iCARE) Pilot Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From May 2022 to June 30, 2023, the DOR, in partnership with the South Bay Workforce Investment Board (SBWIB) and LAWA iCare, aims to provide 100 work-based learning experiences. Participants enrolled in both DOR and SBWIB programs will gain work experience as customer service representatives at the airport, with a focus on supporting persons with disabilities. This pilot project is set for a year with the possibility of renewal.</li> </ul>	
Student Training and Employment Program (STEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launched in summer 2018, the STEP program, established by DOR in collaboration with various partners, will continue providing job preparation, workplace readiness skills training, and work-based learning for students with disabilities until June 30, 2023.</li> </ul>	
DOL Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apprenticeship Building America Grant Program: Categories for expanding youth RAP opportunities and creating equitable RAP pathways through pre-apprenticeship.</li> <li>Growth Opportunities: REO funds for youth and young adults in the criminal legal system.</li> <li>Pathway Home 3: REO funds for pre-release services for incarcerated individuals over 18.</li> <li>Workforce Pathways for Youth: National nonprofits, requiring partnerships w/WIOA agencies, employers, &amp; education agencies; challenges of school collaboration during COVID.</li> </ul>	

It is important to note that there are other funding sources and initiatives aimed at specific groups of Opportunity Youth. For instance, the Department of Child and Family Services targets Foster Youth, investing significantly in relevant initiatives. Expansion of the [NextUp Program](#) (funded by Prop 98 with \$30 million), for example, offers comprehensive services to foster youth students at 60 community colleges in California. Additionally, Prop 98 allocated \$15 million (increasing the total to \$25 million) to the Rising Scholars Program, supporting justice-involved students at community colleges. While this report doesn't cover all details, a holistic approach to serving Opportunity Youth should consider these and other targeted services and funding sources.

# INNOVATIVE PRACTICES FOR YOUTH SPEARHEADED BY LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS



Now that we have provided an overview of the public youth workforce development strategy, programs, and the diverse funding streams that sustain them, we shift our focus to the localized application of these resources and strategies and how these elements are harnessed at the community level. In alignment with the federal and state workforce development strategic directions, there has been an overall shift in LWDB youth strategy to focus on reducing inequality and improving long-term outcomes through training and education and access to quality jobs and career opportunities. Integrating the vast literature on youth workforce development by government, academic, and community-based organizations, we spotlight some of the forward-thinking practices to serving Opportunity Youth, highlighting initiatives adopted by LWDBs that redefine and elevate the support provided to young adults.

Community partnerships across service providers facilitate a whole-youth approach to service delivery, opening pathways to providing more comprehensive and easily accessible wrap around services. They also help better leverage available resources by avoiding duplication of work done by other providers and through knowledge sharing and collaboration. Service provider partnerships can help youth learn about and access additional resources and feel more supported overall.

**1** Though this effort does not focus on a community of service providers, the Los Angeles YouthSource Peer-to-Peer Counseling Program is an illustrative and inspiring example of how two traditionally siloed government departments/services came together to bridge the LA County Department of Mental Health and local workforce development agencies. Responding to the needs of youth customers, the City of LA LWDB determined that: (1) there is a need for greater access to mental health services for among their youth customers due to experienced trauma and other barriers, (2) there is a shortage of mental health service providers, and (3) their youth customers prefer receiving support in a safe environment (e.g., from peers and in community-based settings). Applying an existing waiver, LA was able to create an “earn and learn” opportunity for youth, that pays youth to participate in a total of 500 hours of training to become certified as Medicaid-reimbursable providers. Once certified, they could be employed through the county’s Department of Mental Health. Taking a worker-centered and sector-bridging approach, they created this innovative program that not only increases access to much-needed mental health services among youth but provides paid certification training opportunities that creates career pathways and helps Medicaid address workforce shortages.

**2** Another example is an initiative to increase partnerships with CBOs and other providers and generate more funding by braiding resources, or combining funds from two or more resources together to implement a specific initiative. NOVAworks, directed by the Novaworks WDB (which works on behalf of a consortium of eight jurisdictions in the Silicon Valley area) similarly takes a whole person approach to providing services by braiding unrestricted funds with WIOA dollars. This has made possible providing ample support to youth, conducting deep assessments, and providing services for as long as is needed for each individual. This initiative has leveraged funding sources to better serve their local community in Northern California, dispelling preconceived views and resulting in unprecedented outcomes among some youth populations with the highest barriers.

# LWDBS CAN BETTER MEET THE NEEDS OF LOCAL YOUTH POPULATIONS BY INCREASING LWDBS' CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY AND THE ACCESSIBILITY OF SERVICES.



Please note that parts of this best practice overlap with the previous one. This would foster a better understanding of youth needs, barriers and goals by building relationships with local CBOs and other youth-serving organizations who serve as subject matter experts of local youth populations, investing in more in-depth, individualized case management, or conducting youth customer assessments to learn about their needs, perspectives and experiences. Information collected from these efforts can shape program design, content, and implementation (see LA example above).

**1** Increasing community engagement facilitates opportunities to connect to the local population by promoting the Monthly Workforce Development Board meetings which are open to the public. One California LWDB, Merced Workforce Development Board, took it a step further by moving the Monthly LWDB meeting regularly to different locations, that varied in the area they were located and type of organization, from college classrooms to shop floors. Increased connection to the local community sparked insightful discussions with community members. As a result, the board was able to better align policy initiatives with services and tailor workforce development initiatives to meet the unique needs and experiences of the local community, rather than rely on biased, uninformed perceptions.

**2** The Imperial County Workforce Board is taking a “meet people where they are” approach. In addition to its several physical AJCC locations, it has a mobile unit to bring workforce staff and resources to community members from rural areas who struggle to access services due to lack of transportation. The LWDB has continued investment in this effort, with the addition of computers, internet connectivity, and other resources to bring the workforce development services and resources directly to customers. This represents an innovative approach to tackling accessibility issues by bringing services to those in need, providing personalized, whole-person support.





**LWDBs are expanding training and education to meet employer needs as part of the state's H RTP.** Although many of the initiatives under this program serve adults and youth, there should be an increase of investments in sector-based career pathway initiatives that focus specifically on Opportunity Youth, as they have unique needs compared to the adult population.

**1** NPower California was a recipient of CWDB's Breaking Barriers to Employment Grant program, which funds initiatives that supplement current workforce development efforts by providing additional training and resources needed to obtain, retain, and thrive in quality, living-wage jobs through collaborative partnerships with CBOs experienced in serving target populations. NPower provides veterans, veteran spouses and low-income young adults in Los Angeles with critical resources needed for successful employment in the technology sector. Through tuition-free training and certificate programs on technology fundamentals, cybersecurity and cloud computing, they are able to create pathways for youth into California's technology workforce. NPower California currently serves the Los Angeles, San Francisco and Sacramento regions and is recruiting for its Spring 2024 Tech Fundamentals cohort.

**Providing a person-centered approach equips Opportunity Youth with the skills and support they need, while empowering them to be active participants in determining their future.** This entails building trust and giving youth agency to express their needs, interests, and goals, providing ongoing support even after being hired, creating a support network around the youth, giving them a voice and agency in their career development. Recently, several initiatives have focused on re-defining how we view and serve Opportunity Youth.

**1** The new **Work-Ready!** initiative spawned from a collaboration between Solano County Office of Education, school districts, Chambers of Commerce, and Workforce Development Board offers critical skills for college and career success. It offers students enrolled in high school or college an opportunity to participate in a three-week work readiness skills course, which include strong work ethic, self-motivated, critical thinking and problem solving, collaborating efficiently with others, having positive attitude at work, time management, customer service, workplace communication, and respecting differences and value diversity, to become Work-Ready! certified. Students participate in work-based learning experiences, which through partnership with local employers, include internships, pre-apprenticeships, job shadowing, site visits, mentorship and more. This initiative expands previous efforts in several ways: (1) brings together different government agencies which are typically siloed, (2) broadens the scope of training to other needed soft skills, several of which tap into social emotional learning skills, (3) provides other ways for employers and professionals to get involved, through job talks, site visits, job shadowing and mentorship, (4) provides Work-Ready! Certification upon completion of the training opportunity, (5) focuses on in-school youth, which are typically underserved under WIOA.

**2** LA County has developed a **Metro Transportation School** in South Los Angeles that creates career pathways for students to transit-oriented careers. This is part of LA Metro's cradle-to-career initiative, which focuses programs that create a pipeline of qualified workers to fill expected workforce gaps, as is the case with LA Metro with almost 50% of workers eligible for retirement in the next five years. The school will target youth aged 12–18 years old who are currently in or at risk of entering the county's child welfare system, probation/juvenile justice system, or homeless services. The training curriculum is focused on developing science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) skills. LA Metro has taken a holistic, worker- and sector-focused approach to workforce development by providing at-risk youth with training and support to create career pathways and address future workforce needs by increasing the pool of skilled workers available.



## OUTSTANDING WDB SPOTLIGHT: TWO LWDBS EXCEPTIONAL AT SERVING YOUTH

There are many high-performing LWDBs that do an exemplary job serving youth. Two distinct examples of ingenuity and adaptability within this broader framework are the youth-serving systems in the City of Los Angeles and Fresno County. Each, though unique in its demographic and economic context, exemplifies the transformative potential of tailored youth workforce initiatives. It's important to note that other LWDBs, such as Riverside and North Central, are also doing an outstanding job but additional research is needed.

### SPOTLIGHT 1: CITY OF LOS ANGELES WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Since its inception in 2012, Los Angeles has made significant strides in its youth system, particularly with the launch of the redesigned OneSource and the collaboration with the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). This effort introduced thirteen YouthSource Centers in low-income areas to help young people with educational attainment and career preparation. These centers were especially focused on regions with high dropout rates, providing resources for continued education and higher education pursuits.

Los Angeles stands out as a leader in developing an innovative and effective youth-serving system, largely due to initiatives like the Los Angeles Performance Partnership Pilot (LA P3). LA P3 is a transformative approach that integrates resources across education, workforce development, and social services, supporting the youth of Los Angeles comprehensively. Central to LA P3's strategy is collaborative partnerships among city government, school district, and community organizations, focusing on meeting the diverse needs of Opportunity Youth.

LA P3's service delivery is tailored to address specific challenges faced by youth, including re-engaging dropouts and offering career and educational pathways. These programs are inclusive, ensuring accessibility for all youth, including those from marginalized communities. Public-private partnerships under LA P3 have been instrumental in enhancing the capacity and sustainability of youth programs, with the private sector contributing innovation and resources.



Furthermore, LA P3 has driven system-level changes through policy advocacy and best practices implementation, shaping a more equitable youth-serving system in Los Angeles. The tangible outcomes of LA P3 include increased school retention rates, higher educational attainment, and successful workforce transitions for youth.

In the LA:RISE program, individuals work in transitional jobs at employment social enterprises and receive training and services from workforce development agencies like WorkSource Center, YouthSource Center, and America's Job Center of California. After this phase, they are placed in private or public-sector jobs, or in vocational training programs. Each individual is then paired with a retention partner for up to a year to support their transition to self-sufficiency and address any emerging barriers.

**LA:RISE involves several partners:**

- **Social Enterprises:** Businesses offering transitional employment and comprehensive support to those facing employment barriers.
- **Workforce Agencies:** Providers of workforce development and job readiness training, supporting individuals from the start of their employment journey through to job placement.
- **Youth-Focused Partners:** Specialized WorkSource and YouthSource Centers providing transitional employment and support specifically for young adults.
- **Retention Providers:** Organizations focused on helping people stay employed by offering wrap-around support and resources.

**Key features of LA:RISE include:**

- **Job Readiness Assessment:** A tool ensuring potential employees are job-ready.
- **CalJOBS:** A data tracking system improving communication and case management among LA:RISE partners.
- **Beyond Co-location:** Integration of WorkSource Center partners and America's Job Center of California partners into the social enterprise sites for seamless case management.

REDF, as the lead program manager, provides technical assistance to LA:RISE partners.

Overall, these initiatives in Los Angeles showcase a commitment to innovation, collaboration, and systemic improvement in serving the city's youth, positioning it as a model for other cities.





## SPOTLIGHT 2: FRESNO REGIONAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

The Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board (FRWDB) represents a joint partnership between the City of Fresno and Fresno County, enabling the integration of city and county resources for workforce development. A key aspect of FRWDB's mission is to serve as the primary resource for human capital in Fresno's growth sectors. They achieve this through managing WIOA-funded services via Workforce Connection One-Stop Centers and Young Adult Services Providers (AJCCs). We hope that this report provides information and resources to youth providers and serves as a catalyst for developing new partnerships and leveraging resources

FRWDB's organizational structure is unique among LWDBs. It provides oversight and direction for workforce initiatives, implemented through its Adult Council, Youth Council, and Skill Development Council. Each council reports back to FRWDB, ensuring a cohesive strategy. The Youth Council plays a pivotal role in administering WIOA-funded youth services through the Young Adult Services Program (YAS), coordinating efforts across the community, and forming robust partnerships with local entities to bolster career and academic readiness among youth.

The YAS program, specifically targeting young adults aged 14-24, focuses on pathways to education, training, and personal development. It extends beyond typical WIOA services, emphasizing youth leadership, empowerment, and engagement. The "Academic Excellence" model within YAS incorporates various services, including academic and career assessments, career goal development, guidance from Academic Career Advisors, mentorship programs, and leadership development.

Further highlighting its youth-focused approach, FRWDB established a Youth Commission, comprising 16 youths aged 15-21, with eight voting and eight non-voting members. These members represent Fresno's diverse communities, with appointments from city council districts and the mayor. The commission aims to involve young people in decision-making, especially in areas impacting youth within Fresno's jurisdiction.

# SPOTLIGHT 2 CONTINUED: FRESNO REGIONAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD



## **FRWDB HAS SUCCESSFULLY EXCEEDED ALL WIOA YOUTH TARGET OUTCOMES. CURRENT INITIATIVES OF THE BOARD INCLUDE:**

- A \$150,000 Workforce Accelerator Fund (WAF) 7.0 grant.
- The Fresno County Forestry Corps, a collaboration with Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission, focuses on training young adults in forestry skills and environmental restoration.
- The Construction Pre-Apprenticeship Pipeline for Ex-Offenders (CPP), a \$250,000 project in partnership with other regional workforce boards, provides training for ex-offenders in the construction industry.
- The \$685,849 Prison to Employment (P2E) initiative, collaborating with regional boards and other organizations, aims to facilitate the reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals into society and the workforce.
- A \$500,000 Summer Training and Employment Program for Students (STEPS) targeting in-school students with disabilities, offering pre-vocational training and work experience.

These initiatives reflect FRWDB's comprehensive approach to workforce development, focusing on youth empowerment, skill development, and targeted assistance for various community segments.



## . LOOKING AHEAD: POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS

We hope this report sheds light on California’s public workforce development system, the current needs of California’s youth, and exemplary practices of LWDBs serving youth. As highlighted in this report, the California public workforce system as a whole is focused on creating a thriving, equitable economy where all Californians have access to education, training, and career opportunities. Countless government and community-based organizations work to drive policy, develop and administer programs and initiatives, generate funding, and provide support and other services to remove barriers, address inequities, and improve the upward mobility of Opportunity Youth. Though each of these organizations play an important role, there is limited knowledge of and partnership with other organizations that strive to achieve similar goals. Yet, creating equitable access to education and employment for Opportunity Youth requires a comprehensive, holistic approach, as outlined in Assembly Concurrent Resolution 16 (ACR 16).

Integrating and building on California’s public workforce system strategic goals and innovative initiatives, we highlight some opportunities and next steps to achieve this goal.

### **Generating Momentum Around a Unified Effort to Create Local Communities of Service Providers that Focus on Opportunity Youth**

- Building strong local communities of service providers, including CBOs, K-12 schools, community colleges, fostercare, homeless, workforce development, policy advocates, and members from target populations, that have a shared vision for and coordinated response to the needs of Opportunity Youth by better leveraging available resources. Through knowledge sharing and collaboration, providers can better serve youth through better promotion of services and by being more in-touch with the needs of local youth.

### **Expand Career-connected Training and Education to Meet the Needs of the Youth Workforce**

- Education and training is key to leveling the playing field and reducing employment inequities. To address this challenge, it is crucial to enhance collaboration between educational institutions, community organizations, and workforce development agencies to expand access to relevant training opportunities for young adults. Further, it is essential to integrate comprehensive job readiness training, by broadening our definition of necessary skills to include social emotional learning skills, and consider the interests and career goals of Opportunity Youth. Additionally, there needs to be greater access to apprenticeships, work opportunities with on-the-job training, and career opportunities. This can be achieved through partnerships with local businesses, youth organizations, and career counseling services to provide workshops and mentorship programs. An example of this is Workforce Pathways for Youth, which provides new grant funding for programs creating career pathways for out-of-school youth. Explore by clicking [here](#).



## Scaling Effective Sector-Specific Training

- Training programs focused on sector-specific employment, particularly in rapidly growing industries, have demonstrated success. Key aspects of these programs include initial skill and motivation assessments, readiness training for careers, comprehensive support services, connections with employers, and specialized occupational training. While these programs significantly boost earnings for participants, expanding them sustainably, maintaining their quality, and managing costs present challenges. An example of this is the City-Corps Partnerships program that focuses on service and green opportunities. Explore by clicking [here](#).

## Shift to a more Youth-Centered Approach to Youth Workforce Development

- By re-focusing on the potential that Opportunity Youth can offer employers, labor market needs, their communities, and the economy, the approach to youth workforce development will shift to identifying ways to uplift youth and leverage their valuable human capital.
- Serving Opportunity Youth should entail giving youth agency and voice, engaging and empowering them to be active participants in their career development. As young adults often struggle with identifying potential career paths and making informed decisions about their future, the workforce development system should prioritize providing career exploration resources, including career counseling services, job shadowing opportunities, career mentors, leadership opportunities and access to industry-specific information.
- Echoing the recommendations of countless entities, offering comprehensive wrap-around services for Opportunity Youth, including mental health, childcare, housing, and more, needs to be a top priority for service providers. Despite ongoing initiatives, there continues to be inadequate support for youth transitioning out of various systems, such as foster care or juvenile justice, who face unique challenges in entering the workforce successfully. It is imperative to provide targeted support services, such as counseling, education planning, and job placement assistance, to ensure a smooth transition into the workforce for these young adults.
- Several resources for implementing a positive, youth-centered approach to providing services are available:
  - i. Local Action Guide: Expanding Workforce and Career Development Pathways for Opportunity Youth, COYN. Available [here](#).
  - ii. Positive Youth Development 101: A Curriculum for Youth Work Professionals. Available [here](#).
  - iii. Positive Youth Development, youth.gov. Available [here](#).
  - iv. Workforce Development Guide for Opportunity Youth, National Mentoring Resource Center. Available [here](#).
  - v. Empowering Young People in the Workplace; Urban Institute. Available [here](#).



### **Increase Opportunity Youth's Social Capital Through Networking and Mentorship Opportunities**

- Education and training are needed to equip Opportunity Youth with the interpersonal and technical skills needed for employment, but they are not enough. Professional networks and mentors play crucial roles in career development and advancement by guiding and supporting youth. The workforce development system should establish mentorship programs, internships, and apprenticeships in collaboration with local businesses. Further, it's imperative that Opportunity Youth belong to or at least have access to communities that support them, including connections with other Opportunity Youth and networking groups consisting of mentors and business leaders. This would enable young adults to garner support, build valuable connections and gain practical experience in their desired career paths. This report by Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program provides insight into work-based learning. Available [here](#).

### **Increase on Initiatives Focused Specifically on Homeless Youth Population**

- Homeless youth or those who experience housing instability are particularly vulnerable to disconnection and barriers to employment and education. Yet, initiatives specifically targeting homeless youth are limited and AJCCs are to some extent disincentivized to serving homeless youth. This hard to reach, hard to serve population needs additional funding.

### **Increase the Number of LWDBs that Have Youth Councils**

- As evidenced with the WIOA performance data, LWDBs with Youth Councils receive more youth funding and are more effective at serving local youth populations. Youth Councils are more effective at creating collaborations among youth providers and leveraging available resources across the community. Further, this targeted effort often results in them being more connected to their youth populations and there being greater opportunities for youth to participate in and lead community efforts.



## **Enhanced Investment in Proven Workforce Initiatives**

- Enhancing funding for effective workforce programs is crucial. This encompasses a variety of educational and training programs, including higher education courses (both for credit and not for credit), WIOA-funded pre-employment training, and practical learning methods like apprenticeships. While these programs vary in effectiveness, areas like technical fields and non-liberal arts degrees often yield positive outcomes. However, challenges such as inconsistent quality and insufficient funding, particularly in public education, need addressing.

## **Tackle Barriers to Workforce Participation**

- Multiple barriers hinder workforce participation in the U.S., such as criminal histories, disabilities, substance dependence, and high childcare costs. These issues disproportionately impact less-educated and certain racial groups. Tackling these barriers requires a multi-pronged strategy, including policy reforms, support services, and potential incentives for employers to hire and support these groups.

## **Provide Subsidized Employment for Challenging Groups**

- Providing subsidies for the employment of hard-to-employ groups in either the private or public sectors can boost employment rates. This approach may involve financial incentives for employers. However, it's important to structure these subsidies to ensure they contribute to lasting employment and skill development, not just temporary job placements.

## **Increase Sector-specific, Integrated Approach to Workforce Development**

- Relevant research underscores the importance of understanding local economic strengths and job market needs, ensuring tangible returns for both employers and workers, employing comprehensive and demand-driven training methods, preparing participants adequately before training, and centrally coordinating the workforce development process. This requires collaboration across government, industry, and educational institutions to identify and target key sectors and professions, aligning training closely with market demands.

Overall, a strategic and evidence-based approach is crucial in youth workforce development to effectively cater to diverse labor market needs and break down systemic employment barriers.

# CONCLUSION



As we reach the conclusion of this report, it's important to recognize and build upon the remarkable strides California has made in youth workforce development. The state's initiatives offer a blueprint for creating a robust and dynamic workforce, ready to meet the challenges of a rapidly evolving global economy.

California's investment in technology integration and STEM education positions its youth at the forefront of digital and scientific innovation. These efforts are not just about imparting skills but about nurturing a culture of adaptability and forward-thinking. The state's focus on career technical education (CTE) is equally noteworthy, providing practical, hands-on training that aligns with the needs of local industries, ensuring that the transition from classroom to career is both seamless and relevant.

The inclusivity of California's programs ensures that these opportunities are not limited to a select few but are accessible to all young Californians. This approach is vital in harnessing the diverse talents and perspectives that fuel innovation and drive economic growth. Apprenticeships and mentorship programs further enrich this landscape, offering real-world experience and valuable professional networks.

However, the journey doesn't end here. It's a call to action for continuous improvement and expansion. We must keep striving to enhance these programs, ensure their accessibility, and adapt to new economic realities. Stakeholders across the spectrum – educators, industry leaders, policymakers, and communities – must collaborate to keep the momentum going.

In conclusion, California's approach to youth workforce development is a testament to what can be achieved with vision, commitment, and collaborative effort. The state is not just preparing its youth for jobs but is empowering them to become the architects of their own futures and contributors to a thriving, diverse economy. Let's take inspiration from California's efforts and commit to investing in and innovating our youth workforce programs, for in these young minds and hands lies the key to our shared future.

Resources and appendix available [here](#).



# YOUTH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN CALIFORNIA

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Thank you to the Stuart Foundation for their ongoing support of COYN and this report.

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