

**Bloomberg Associates**

# Workforce Tactical Guide: Supporting Youth, and Displaced and Unemployed Workers

December 2020

Bloomberg  
Philanthropies

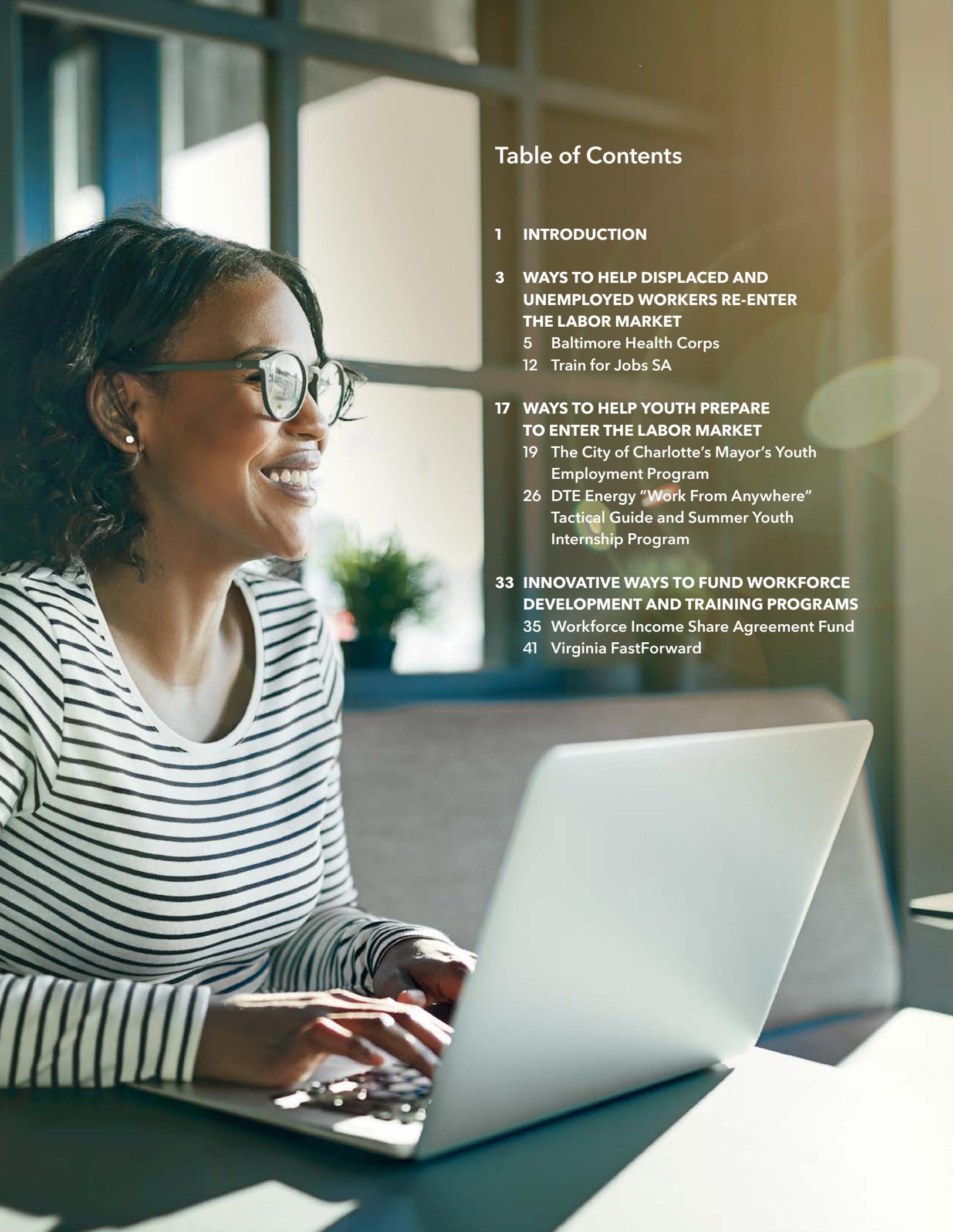
COVID-19  
LOCAL  
RESPONSE  
INITIATIVE

**Bloomberg  
Philanthropies**

**Bloomberg  
Associates**



**Maher & Maher**  
Investment Advisors for Talent Development  
AN IMPAQ COMPANY



## Table of Contents

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **3 WAYS TO HELP DISPLACED AND UNEMPLOYED WORKERS RE-ENTER THE LABOR MARKET**

5 Baltimore Health Corps

12 Train for Jobs SA

### **17 WAYS TO HELP YOUTH PREPARE TO ENTER THE LABOR MARKET**

19 The City of Charlotte's Mayor's Youth Employment Program

26 DTE Energy "Work From Anywhere" Tactical Guide and Summer Youth Internship Program

### **33 INNOVATIVE WAYS TO FUND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS**

35 Workforce Income Share Agreement Fund

41 Virginia FastForward



# Introduction

As communities around the country continue to deal with the COVID-19 public health crisis, it is increasingly evident that the pandemic's impact on businesses and workers will be neither short-term nor predictable as industries and markets experience ongoing volatility. One thing is certain, however. Individuals with in-demand skills will be better positioned to evolve with the changing labor market. For policy makers, economic developers and educators, now is the time to hit the gas pedal on investments in upskilling.

In the [COVID-19 Economic Response and Recovery Roadmap](#), we provided city leaders with a set of 37 actions to support economic recovery in four key areas: small business and neighborhood commercial corridors; business development; workforce development; and data capacity and engagement. Although all four of these areas are key to recovery, we heard from cities around the country that supporting rapid reskilling and reemployment is of paramount importance to their communities.



This Workforce Toolkit for Economic Revitalization extends the reach of the Recovery Roadmap by providing practical, actionable strategies and models in three key areas of workforce development voiced repeatedly as top priorities for U.S. cities and communities:

1. Moving vulnerable workers displaced from hard-hit industries into short- and long-term employment through upskilling and on-ramps to career pathways in growing sectors.
2. Pivoting opportunity youth employment programs to provide quality workforce development services to at-risk youth in the new pandemic environment.
3. Establishing innovative workforce development funding models that think beyond traditional funding streams to build new partnerships and approaches for funding education, training and wrap around services.

This tactical guide is designed to share examples and insights through the identification of key elements and development of case studies for each of these focus areas. As every city is unique and demands a customized set of actions, we encourage readers to fully explore the models through the additional resources provided, consider the components in context, and look for opportunities to tailor strategies to meet the needs of your community.

# Ways to help displaced and unemployed workers re-enter the labor market

In order to respond to rapidly shifting and dynamic market adjustments, re-engaging business leaders, re-examining data, and identifying short-term and long-term action plans has become crucial to meeting both workforce supply and demand needs. Additionally, proactive efforts are being generated by industry themselves, and our efforts to help support these initiatives have required some flexibility in coordination and alignment.

The examples below represent city-led and workforce-aligned efforts to strengthen connection to education, training, and work-based learning opportunities; financial supports; and rapid reemployment that attempts to address the needs of particularly hard-hit communities with a focus on equity and the development of career pathways, as well as impacted industries.

Many local, regional and statewide efforts have sought to address the needs of businesses and workers through a variety of strategies considered promising practices that succeeded in the last economic downturn, aligned with more recent innovations. Most have leveraged existing sector strategy efforts and some have provided employment supports for virtual learning and virtual work initiatives, as well as the transition of workers to new career pathways based on transferrable skill sets.

Some local efforts have included new innovative twists to respond to the specifics of this COVID-related crisis, two of which we are highlighting for you. Each example, to varying degrees, includes the following essential elements:



### Heavy reliance on real time labor market information, partnership alignment, and employer engagement:

All involve rapid assessment of data and realignment to new priorities and hit upon the key promising practice for all workforce efforts – they are industry-aligned or employer-led, and a broad swath of key trusted partners are engaged. There is a clear commitment to high-demand industries and occupations.

### Braiding traditional and more flexible funding sources:

In each case there is a clear effort to align general funds, emergency grant funds and/or philanthropic funds to braid with traditional workforce development formula funding to ensure flexibility and responsiveness to immediate needs.

### Commitment to equity, as well as student and job seeker supports:

These efforts have implemented new tools such as equity frameworks and rubrics in the recruitment and screening process, with a focus on transferrable skills between sectors, assistance to get back into the labor market in a temporary position and financial support to supplement temporary position income so that participants can also study part time to gain new skills. Each incorporates a heavy focus on worker and student wraparound supports such as case management, career navigation, and legal and mental health services.



# Baltimore Health Corps



## Project Name and Location

Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development, Baltimore, MD

## Program Overview

- Temporary employment for over 300 community members
- Focus on career pathways within health care
- Upskilling training available
- Support services for workers

## Overview

In March of 2020, the Baltimore City Health Department, Baltimore City [Mayor's Office for Employment Development](#) (MOED), Mayor's Office of Performance and Innovation, Baltimore Corps, the Baltimore Civic Fund, HealthCare Access Maryland, Bloomberg Philanthropies' Innovation Team (i-team), and Jhpiego, a Johns Hopkins University affiliate, partnered to address the dual need of responding to the public health crisis caused by the pandemic and rapid reskilling and reemployment of the available workforce.

The new initiative, the [Baltimore Health Corps](#), focuses on contact tracing, a method of identifying people exposed to the novel coronavirus, with the intent of preventing and containing transmission.

Program specifics include:

- Training and employment of over 300 residents for immediately available contact tracing related positions, with a focus on helping residents get on long-term career paths.

- Majority of positions are contact tracers, but the project also employs a care coordination team of about 40, which connects residents to needed social services, as well as operations support staff, supervisors, directors, managers, and career navigators to support the temporary contact tracer positions.
- Positions pay from \$35,000 and up to \$80,000 for the highest-level positions, and each includes a stipend to cover health benefits. Most last for eight months.

The project team carefully crafted new rubrics for screening and rating candidates prior to opening the job portal in June. The purpose of the rubrics is to eliminate barriers and bias in the process, while increasing equity and access to disadvantaged populations. These include detailed directions for applicant pre-screening, resume review, group screening and breakout session rubrics, and a rubric for pre-recorded interviews.

Once resumes have been screened through the portal, those that receive middle scores in the rubric are invited to a group interview with behavioral questions, while those that are high-scoring receive a link to pre-record an introductory interview, which will later be reviewed by staff.

The emphasis of the selection criteria throughout the interview process is on customer service and the ability to display empathy, as well as any other transferrable skill sets. This process provides opportunity for those middle scores to still advance in the process, with some being referred to short-term upskilling programs, rather than being immediately referred to other programs and services outside of the Baltimore Health Corps.

Once hired, individuals in contact tracer positions begin two weeks of in-person training, and then their work is conducted from a centralized office building location until they are comfortable and competent with the contact tracing platform, after which they may opt to work from home. New employees are provided with a laptop and cell phone.

The provision of equipment is an equity strategy to ensure that some of those most at risk in the pandemic have the tools they need to be employed. Positions also come with employee supports, provided through MOED, including career navigation, financial empowerment counseling, and free behavioral health and legal services.

For a select number of applicants (up to 100) who show potential but might not yet ready for the contact tracer positions, the initiative offers a four-week community health worker training to help strengthen their candidacy. Completers are recommended to employers for priority recruitment, which serves as yet another equity strategy for upskilling local residents.

## Key Partnerships

The Baltimore Health Corps initiative is driven by critical partnerships. Key partners and their roles include:

- Mayor's Office of Employment Development is the primary workforce agency, providing planning and staff for the recruitment and screening structure, career navigation, and connection to behavioral health support and legal services (offered through Catholic Charities and Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Services).
- The Baltimore Civic Fund serves as the fiscal sponsor and provides assistance with fundraising and funding consolidation that supports streamlined relationships between funders and the city.
- Baltimore Corps conducts recruitment, providing the application website and the recruitment structure.
- Mayor's Office of Performance and Innovation provides strategic and project management support.
- Jhpiego provides operational support to the Health Department, along with acting as a training partner for contact tracers and providing structure for performance monitoring.
- The University of Maryland School of Public Health is evaluating the program and will conduct a process study and summative evaluation. They are working on final outcome measures and supporting the team by providing a summary of performance metrics.
- The Baltimore Innovation Team (i-team) is supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies which awards cities multi-year grants to create highly skilled in-house teams that are dedicated to solving big problems in new ways – from reducing violent crime to revitalizing neighborhoods to strengthening the growth of small businesses.

The full list of partners and funders for this project include:

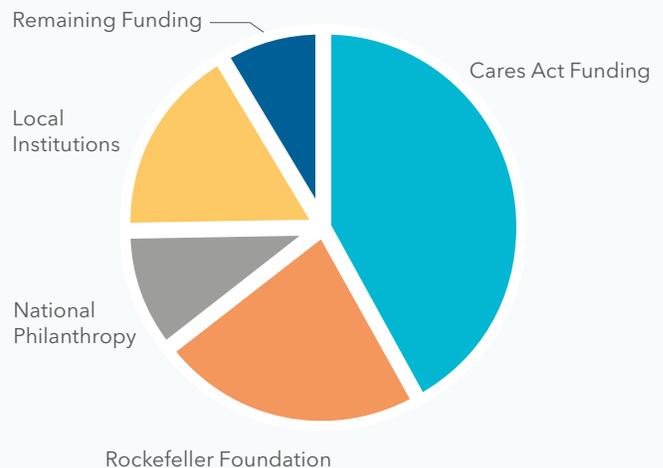
- Abell Foundation
- Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Baltimore City Health Department
- Baltimore Community Foundation
- Baltimore Ravens
- Bank of America
- Jacob & Hilda Blaustein Foundation
- Bloomberg Philanthropies
- BGE
- CareFirst
- France-Merrick Foundation
- Goldseker Foundation
- BACH (Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Health)
- Baltimore City Health Department
- Baltimore Civic Fund
- Baltimore Corps
- Catholic Charities of Baltimore
- HealthCare Access Maryland
- Jhpiego
- Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service
- Mayor's Office of Employment Development
- Mayor's Office of Performance and Innovation
- Univ. of Maryland School of Public Health

## Funding

The total cost of the initiative is \$12.44 million. This public-private partnership was mobilized by a \$3 million commitment from The Rockefeller Foundation through its Equity & Economic Opportunity and Health teams. The City of Baltimore has made a \$4.5 million commitment to support this initiative, tapping into its CARES Act Funds.

Additional private funders and local institutions have contributed more than \$3.6 million in support and include the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield (CareFirst), the France-Merrick Foundation, the Goldseker Foundation, OSI – Baltimore, the PepsiCo Foundation, the Rauch Foundation, the Stulman Foundation, and the T. Rowe Price Foundation. The city will continue to raise the remaining \$1.3 million as the project moves forward.

### Funding Sources



## Key Challenges

### Rapid partnership building

MOED and the Health Department had not previously worked this closely before on a combined effort at this scale. The entire initiative was built on leveraging virtual tools such as Zoom and Webex, from remotely coordinating partnership alignment and communication to recruitment efforts.

Prior to the pandemic, the Health Department had not previously relied on the workforce system for hiring needs, and did report having struggled at various times with recruitment and identifying applicants who meet the needs of a specific position but had not aligned themselves with the workforce system.

Through this new program, the Health Department expressed their satisfaction with the candidates that have been onboarded and working for a few weeks now. Baltimore Corps' work to identify candidates who would be successful in this environment has been pivotal to their success.

The Health Department would recommend to other similar departments that are uneasy at taking on this challenge that it really has been an incredible experience, they are very happy and pleased with the results thus far and are looking forward to continuing the relationship.

### Communicating vision to existing program staff

Developing processes for a large recruitment and placement initiative while not greatly expanding staff numbers (FTEs) could have been daunting to existing staff. Leadership developed a clear plan for weekly recruitment process flow and spoke directly with team members about the importance of the mission and value to the community. As a result of sharing the broader community vision, they were able to engender a sense of shared ownership and buy-in from staff as they launched the program.



### Aligning communication strategy

Aligning a large multi-partner communication plan can be challenging in the best of times. At the outset, the Public Information Officers for each organization came together to engage their pre-existing Joint Information Center (JIC) and worked to align their communication efforts. It had existed prior to the project; and, it was effectively leveraged in a virtual environment to coordinate the rapid building of this effort.

The Health Department took a lead role, along with MOED and Jhpiego, to get the word out to partners, and to the public through public virtual town halls, and at all relevant events held throughout Baltimore City. Additionally, they employed the use of multiple social media outlets, such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Partners met weekly, and shared information frequently across major program components, and continue to check in regularly as needed.

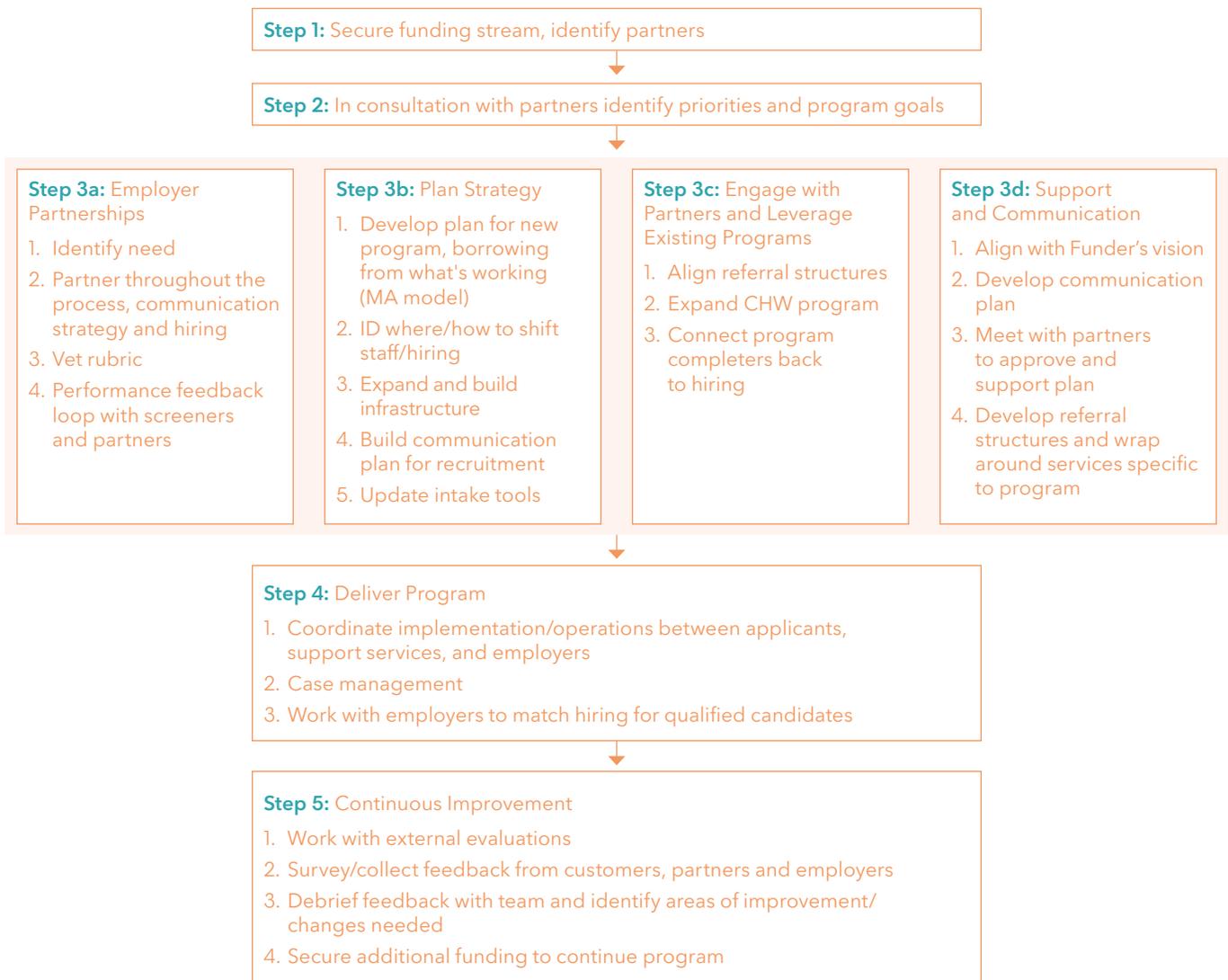
## Summary of Project Impact

The team has received 4,500 applications since the program launched on June 4, 2020. As of November 6, over 200 applicants have accepted offers to join the Health Corps, and nearly 175 have already started their temporary positions with HCAM and the Health Department. To serve these staff, the Mayor’s Office of Employment Development hired five career navigators and placed approximately 100 participants into community health worker (CHW) training through the Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Healthcare.

The program team has contracted with University of Maryland School of Public Health to act as external evaluators. They will track standard workforce metrics as required by their grants but are looking to move beyond the traditional measures. They are also evaluating the public health contracting side of the project, as well as care coordination. The team will also conduct a post-intervention analysis to determine if the Health Corps program led participants to long-term employment within a health care career pathway.

## Adapt This Approach

### Steps to Success



## Cost and Time Commitments

From initial award to program launch, this program took six weeks. The rapid pace was driven by high COVID-19 case volume in the late spring and summer and a recognition of immediate need. The time and resources required to implement this model will depend on a variety of factors including:

- Availability and flexibility of funding streams
- Flexibility of existing team to work overtime and adaptability to shifting priorities
- Existing relationships and coordination with partners
- Community support and outreach strategies

## Dos and Don'ts

**Do borrow from other models and adapt to local context.** The team leveraged the Massachusetts Partners in Health model to develop their contact tracing hiring strategy to allow for an explicit focus on rapid re-employment of the unemployed. They could have focused on quickly hiring the highest level of education possible, but their local commitment to employing dislocated workers with an equity lens required different strategies. The team believes the Baltimore Model is a promising and adaptive approach for other cities looking to expand their contact tracing capacity while addressing their jurisdiction's economic and social needs.

**Do engage employers throughout the process.** Because of the focus on upskilling participants and putting them on the road to clear career pathways in health, the team made the employer partners a part of the entire process – from weekly meetings to keeping them informed of participants' training status. They were, of course, a key partner to the initiative, but their full engagement helped to drive the success of the recruitment process, and, in this way, demonstrated the key benefits of employer alignment. The employers' public health expertise informed the program design and ensured that participants will come out of the program with the skills needed to go into full-time employment within an industry career pathway.



**Do begin with a diverse and connected project management team.** The core team at Baltimore City included workforce experts, epidemiologists, community health work practitioners, and managers across each of the program objectives. Through these diverse viewpoints and early, open dialogue about program aims, the team was able to align its workforce and public health aims towards creating the most effective program possible. The team began by developing a solid operational framework that leveraged existing partnership organizations to support rapid implementation. The larger core project team across partners included leaders from all of the aligned organizations, totaling between 45-55 members.

**Don't rely solely on traditional funding strategies.** Alignment of private funds and CARES Act funds, with a small portion of dislocated worker funds, provided the program team the flexibility to move ahead with recruitment and hiring for positions quickly to respond to urgent demand. Flexible funds also allowed Baltimore to contract for legal and mental health service supports quickly, and to support CHW training.

**Don't rely on traditional hiring strategies.** The Health Department partnered with the workforce team to craft job postings with no education requirements, which opened the process to a wide swath of the community. They also expedited their hiring process by working closely with Baltimore Corps and Jhpiego, employing the use of their existing online platform for screening candidates, and by developing a clear rubric and comprehensive plan for interviewing, training, and hiring.

## Resources

- [Baltimore Health Corps website](#)
- [Baltimore Health Corps job listings](#)
- [Baltimore Mayor's Office of Employment Development website](#)
- [Rockefeller Foundation press release](#)

# Train for Jobs SA



## Project Name and Location

Train for Jobs SA, San Antonio, TX

## Program Overview

- Training stipend of \$15/hr
- Up to \$450 per week
- Up to 10,000 residents by September 2021
- Anticipate 80% receiving wraparound support

## Overview

In May 2020, [Workforce Solutions Alamo](#) (WSA), in partnership with the City of San Antonio and Bexar County, established [Train for Jobs SA](#), a training program designed to quickly upskill dislocated individuals for high-growth industries and occupations.

In addition to free training, participants also receive weekly stipends and significant wraparound services to support successful completion of the program and then placement into a job. The program was made possible through the commitment of the City of San Antonio and Bexar County officials who prioritized workforce development as their leading strategy to guide the city into and through recovery from the pandemic.

The overall goal of the program is to provide economic stability for those who are displaced as well as ensure the talent needed to support local industry is available as businesses begin to recover. Train for Jobs SA aims to serve up to 10,000 San Antonio and Bexar County residents by September 2021.

Eligible participants enroll via phone, and once in the program, complete a skills and career assessment. Participants may then be enrolled in high school equivalency preparation, or short-term, long-term

or on-the-job training, all of which are aligned to in demand occupations in the city's target industries and growth occupations. There are a myriad of training courses available, both on and off of their Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).

Qualified participants are eligible to receive stipends of \$15/hour (for between a minimum of 6 hours and a maximum of 30 hours per week) for actual time spent in an approved training program, up to a maximum of \$450 stipend per week. The stipend is made available for the full length of the training, with a focus on participants attaining new skills or credentials and keeping them engaged after the training to advance on a career pathway.

Train for Jobs SA is also a key driver supporting the City of San Antonio's long-term goal of decreasing economic segregation. The program developed and uses an equity matrix questionnaire to identify participants in specific areas who are more at risk and prioritize them for enrollment and additional services.

Up to 80% of program participants are anticipated to receive comprehensive wraparound support such as case management, career navigation, and connection to other Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)-funded services.

## Key Partnerships

Key partners for this project include:

Primary Partners	Outreach	Intake, Assessment, Referral	Case Management	High School Equivalency Training	Short Term Training	Long Term Training	On the Job Training	Stipends	Job Placement
Alamo Colleges		●	●	●	●	●		●	●
Chrysalis Ministries		●	●						●
Family Service		●	●						●
Project Quest		●	●		●	●		●	●
Restore Education		●	●	●	●			●	●
SA Works	●						Employer Engagement		Employer Engagement
WSA	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
City - EDD	●								
City - DHS	●		●						
City - NHSD	●		●						

## Funding

Funding was awarded to the Train for Jobs SA program in the amount of \$12 million, with \$8 million provided by the City of San Antonio General Fund and \$4 million in Coronavirus Relief funding. Although they have received significant disaster grants, this program is separate and fully funded by city and county dollars. Co-enrollment and alignment with WIOA-funded programs is encouraged where appropriate.



## Key Challenges

### Shifting to virtual delivery

Train for Jobs SA is working to improve virtual onboarding and orientation for participants. The project team is piloting online open sessions for orientations and the development of a video tutorial on how to sign up for services, to accompany [the registration site](#).

### Partner referrals and participant awareness

WSA noted that building system and public awareness is an ongoing challenge with any new program, yet it is critical to support referrals into the program. To address this challenge, the WSA team has launched a multi-modal messaging effort, including social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and numerous websites, to increase overall public awareness as well as reach specific populations targeted by the program.

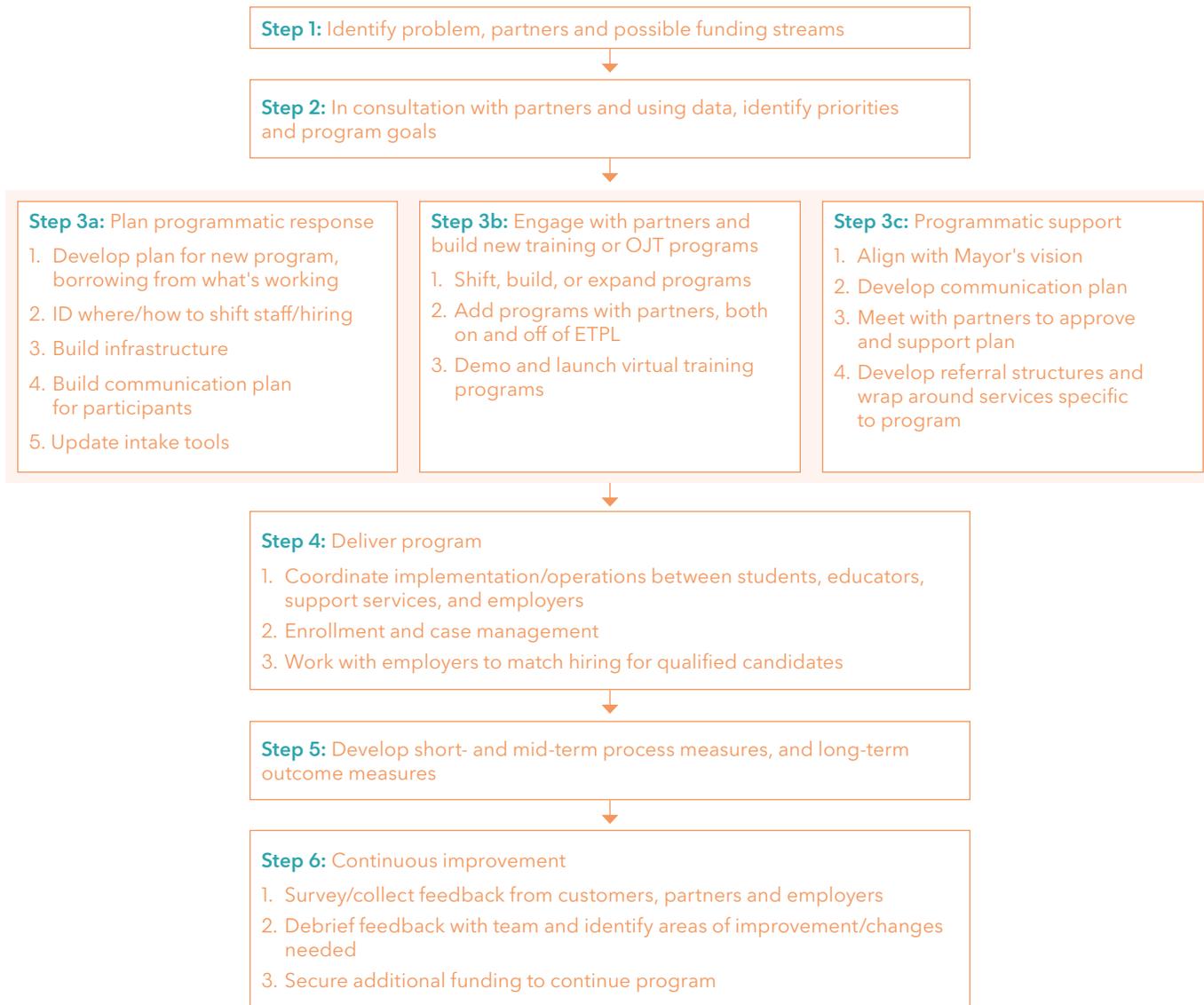
## Summary of Project Impact

With the start of the program in mid-August 2020, and active participant recruitment beginning in September, intake is active and ongoing. The team has developed a set of goals and measures for the project that include by September 2021 an anticipated: 4,000 assessed, 1,750 receiving case management services, 1,400 receiving short-term training, 100 receiving long-term training, 1,500 receiving stipends, and 1,000 placed in on-the-job training and employment. In the first five weeks of the program, 78 participants were placed in short-term training, and 21 in long-term training.



## Adapt This Approach

### Steps to Success



### Cost and Time Commitments

With strong support from the Mayor's office, funding was awarded during the summer and the program began in mid-August. In alignment with citywide equity goals, and more flexible funding streams, they were able to stand up a new, large program in a matter of weeks, and the program launched at the beginning of September. The time and resources needed to implement this model will depend on a variety of factors including:

- Flexibility of funding streams
- Buy-in and adaptability of partners
- Ability to borrow from existing tools and structures
- Availability of staff

## Dos and Don'ts

**Do start – and proceed – with good data.** Prior to COVID, WSA determined high-growth occupations and identified the target industries that aligned with economic development goals for the region. Although WSA is operating under the assumption that many industries will return to previous employment levels post-COVID, they are also using real-time labor market information and job postings (such as Burning Glass and Help Wanted Online data) to monitor monthly shifts and pivot their training investments accordingly.

**Do identify training providers up front.** Provide as many options as possible by broadening the training provider pool and expanding the ETPL. By expanding the list of programs to include short-term as well as long-term, increasing the variety of training to all of the regional industries in demand, and increasing flexibility in training schedules, the program can become relevant for a broader array of participants. Training providers are a critical part of the planning process and can support workforce staff in identifying training gaps more quickly.

**Do focus on program awareness.** Focus just as much on partner and staff awareness as participant awareness in your outreach campaign. Intentionally messaging the availability and value of services provided and quickly establishing an efficient process to drive program referrals will shorten the time frame between program design and participant enrollment.

**Do focus on building trust between local elected officials and the local workforce board.** A key to success of this project has been the positioning of the local workforce development board (LWDB) as a natural leader in the region. The LWDB is seen by local elected officials (LEOs) as a trusted entity with the ability to analyze unemployment data as well as real-time data to help officials better assess the current situation and those most impacted by the pandemic.

### **Do incorporate strategies to reach equity goals.**

The City of San Antonio uses an [equity lens](#) to prioritize investments and policy decisions. As previously noted, Train for Jobs SA uses an equity matrix to target key populations for recruitment and provides extensive support and wraparound services to drive successful program outcomes.

### **Don't rely solely on traditional funding strategies.**

A key to standing up the program in short order has been the ability to identify flexible funding streams that allow financial resources to be implemented quickly and in an innovative manner. The board worked directly with the Mayor's office and other local city leadership to make general fund dollars available to support this program.

## Resources

- [Train for Jobs SA informational site](#)
- [Participant site](#)
- [Workforce Solutions Alamo site](#)
- [San Antonio equity maps](#)
- [San Antonio, TX press release - \\$2 Million Dislocated Worker Upskilling Grant](#)
- [San Antonio, TX press release - \\$450 Stipend for Retraining](#)

# Ways to help youth prepare to enter the labor market

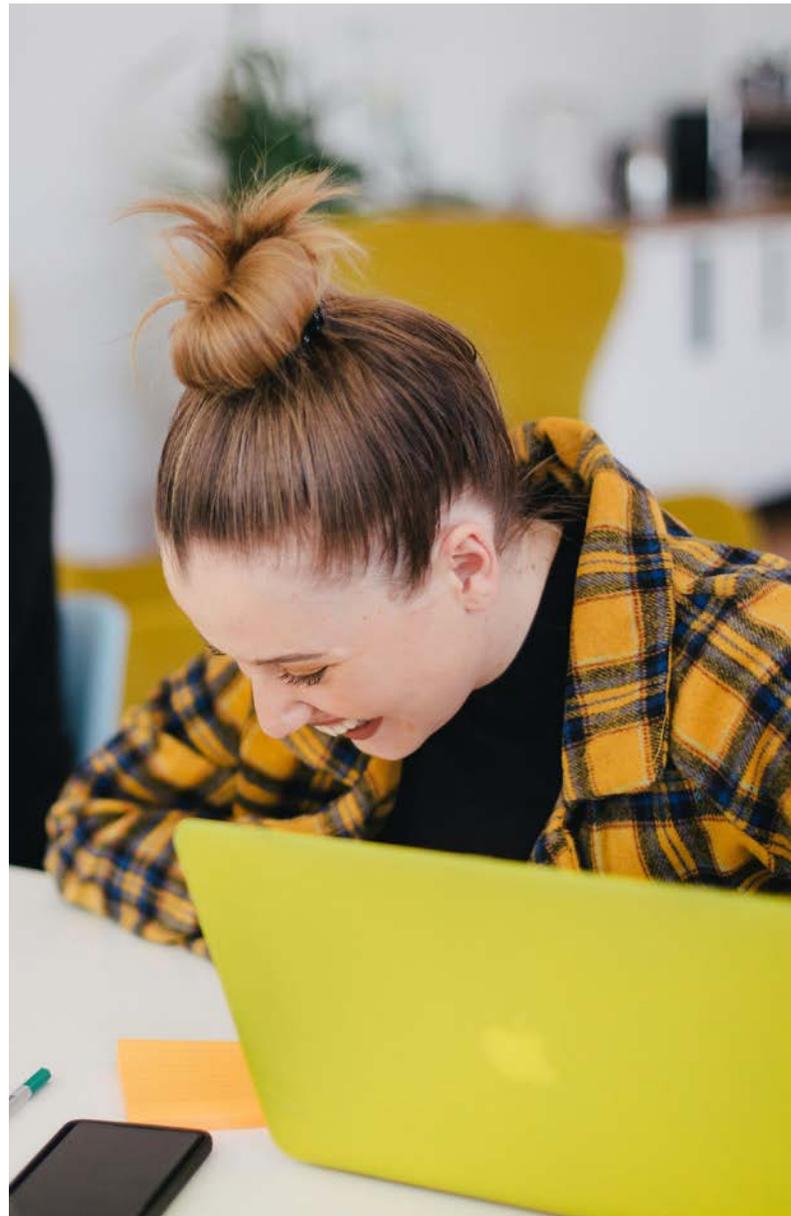
In light of social distancing and COVID-19 regulations, many summer youth programs were canceled and year-round programs significantly curtailed. These programs, however, are critical for underserved populations, both financially and as a means of providing youth with opportunities to develop skills and exposure to careers.

Youth overall have been gravely impacted by unemployment due to COVID-19, with rates generally higher in 2020 than during and after the Great Recession. Minority youth have experienced the greatest impact from unemployment, and youth generally have been disproportionately represented in job losses in industries such as food service, recreation, and hospitality.

Given the importance of youth employment, both for financial reasons and to ensuring exposure to the world of work, this toolkit highlights two programs that successfully pivoted to a virtual approach. Successful elements of both programs, to varying degrees, include:

## Major employers are key.

In both the Charlotte Mayor's Youth Employment Program (MYEP) and the DTE Energy Summer Youth Internship Program (SYIP) examples, major employers (both large and growing) played major roles in the success of their respective programs. Due to their size, they are able to dedicate the human resources, and in some cases the financial resources, to providing summer employment opportunities for youth.



### **Commitment to growing talent for industries that are high-demand locally.**

The MYEP and SYIP both focus on industries that are growing locally. The SYIP includes a focus on specifically growing the energy talent pipeline to ensure it has an ongoing supply of talent, while the MYEP program is focused on exposing youth to local opportunities in the city's target industries as a talent development strategy and a workforce retention tool.

### **Robust partnerships improved program funding and programming.**

The MYEP was closely connected to the secondary school system – both for funding and for access to teacher mentors – and the SYIP program had close partnerships with the local public workforce system and a youth-focused non-profit. These partnerships enhanced both programs' ability to pivot quickly from an in-person to a virtual approach.

### **Leveraged virtual technology platforms and software to deliver engaging, relevant content.**

In both examples, the lead organization procured one or more third parties to provide or develop content to use in their virtual internship program. MYEP's solution was totally customized, while SYIP's was more "off the shelf," but in both cases, the use of a blended approach – engagement in a web-based program plus employer-specific activities – allowed the programs to provide a rich, diverse experience.



# The City of Charlotte's Mayor's Youth Employment Program



## Project Name and Location

Mayor's Youth Employment Program (MYEP),  
Charlotte, NC

## Program Overview

- July 6–August 7
- Mondays–Thursdays from 9:30–2:30
- 315 Participants
- 20 Team Leads
- Teams of 4–5
- \$900 Scholarship

## Overview

The Mayor's Youth Employment Program has been connecting youth in Charlotte with local employers since 1986 with a focus on leveraging relationships with businesses and the community to provide meaningful, career-oriented internships for youth. While MYEP had traditionally provided in-person experiences, it was clear early in 2020 that in-person internships were not an option for the over 500 students enrolled in the program.

In March, the City of Charlotte's MYEP team began reimagining what a virtual internship might look like. Through a connection with the Charlotte Executive Leadership Council (CELC), the team contracted with Radius Learning, a company that develops work-based education pathways with the private sector and academic institutions. They immediately began to re-engineer the MYEP's summer experience and were quickly joined by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) and LinkedIn Learning in the effort to identify and secure funding, human capital resources, and learning assets.

Over a period of weeks, the aforementioned partners, also known as the MYEP Virtual Pathways Team, collaborated with leading employers in the region to develop five virtual pathways:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Business & Finance
- Technology
- Innovation
- Healthcare

Charlotte employers shared learning and development content and information on their skills profiles, which Radius then incorporated into five week pathway experiences for MYEP participants. Each pathway included 100 hours of skills-based tasks simulating future jobs and was aligned with an overall project related to a real-world challenge in the community. The MYEP Virtual Pathways Team worked to design experiences so youth felt like they had a job, rather than watching someone else do

a job, in order to create buy-in and opportunities for growth. They also were intentional about designing work-based learning activities through which participants would experience success and have a sense of contributing towards the greater good.

Virtual pathways consisted of:

- Skills development provided in partnership with Radius Learning and LinkedIn Learning
- Work-based adventures to expose participants to the tasks they will face in future roles
- Coaching sessions with team leads from Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
- Industry interactive sessions with representatives from local employers
- Life skills sessions focused on developing confidence and professional habits

The design of each pathway included Radius Learning's [360° Future Skills Fundamentals framework](#) that focuses on the changing skills needed for the next generation of work. Key skill areas include organizational, socioemotional, rational, technological and entrepreneurial. The pathways and the platform were built by Radius Learning in about 90 days.

## Key Partnerships

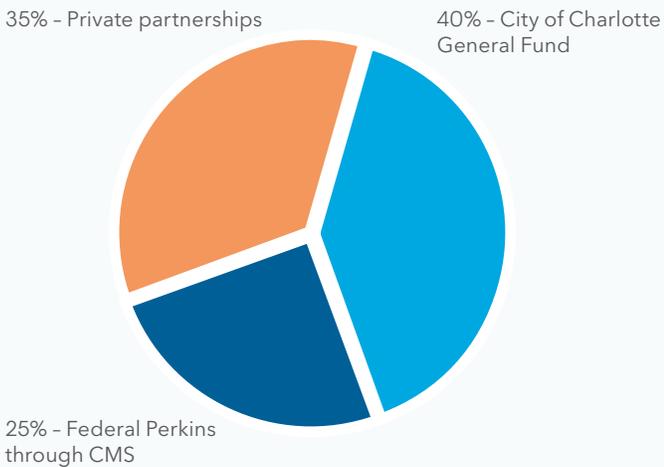
- City of Charlotte Youth Programs administers the program and is one of the funders.
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) CTE provided Perkins funding for 20 Career and Technical Education teachers to mentor youth through the process.
- The curriculum was developed and provided by Radius Learning and LinkedIn Learning.
- Radius Learning built the platform.
- Industry partners included Bank of America, Atrium Healthcare, Siemens, Accenture, Sealed Air, Rare Roots Hospitality, Red Ventures, Balfour Beatty Construction, Corsan, LS3P, Beacon Partners, Cardinal Innovations Healthcare, Project 658, Messer.
- Although the Charlotte Executive Leadership Council did not provide funding for the project, the organization advocated on behalf of the MYEP, which was very helpful.



## Funding

The total budget of the MYEP program was approximately \$474,680 (not including six staff members). Of that, business partners donated approximately \$277,280 for student scholarships. The virtual platform (developed by Radius) cost \$100,000 of which \$72,590 was paid by the City and \$27,140 was paid by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.

### Funding Sources



## Key Challenges

### Leveraging funding streams to pay students.

One challenge identified by the MYEP team was determining how to utilize the various funding streams available to provide monetary compensation to students. The city revised its vendor requirements to allow students to receive scholarships at the end of the program. Youth were classified as "program participants" and staff provided hours completion documentation to the city's Human Resources Department. An additional 100 students were funded through CMS and turned in weekly timesheets.

### Access to technology and the Internet.

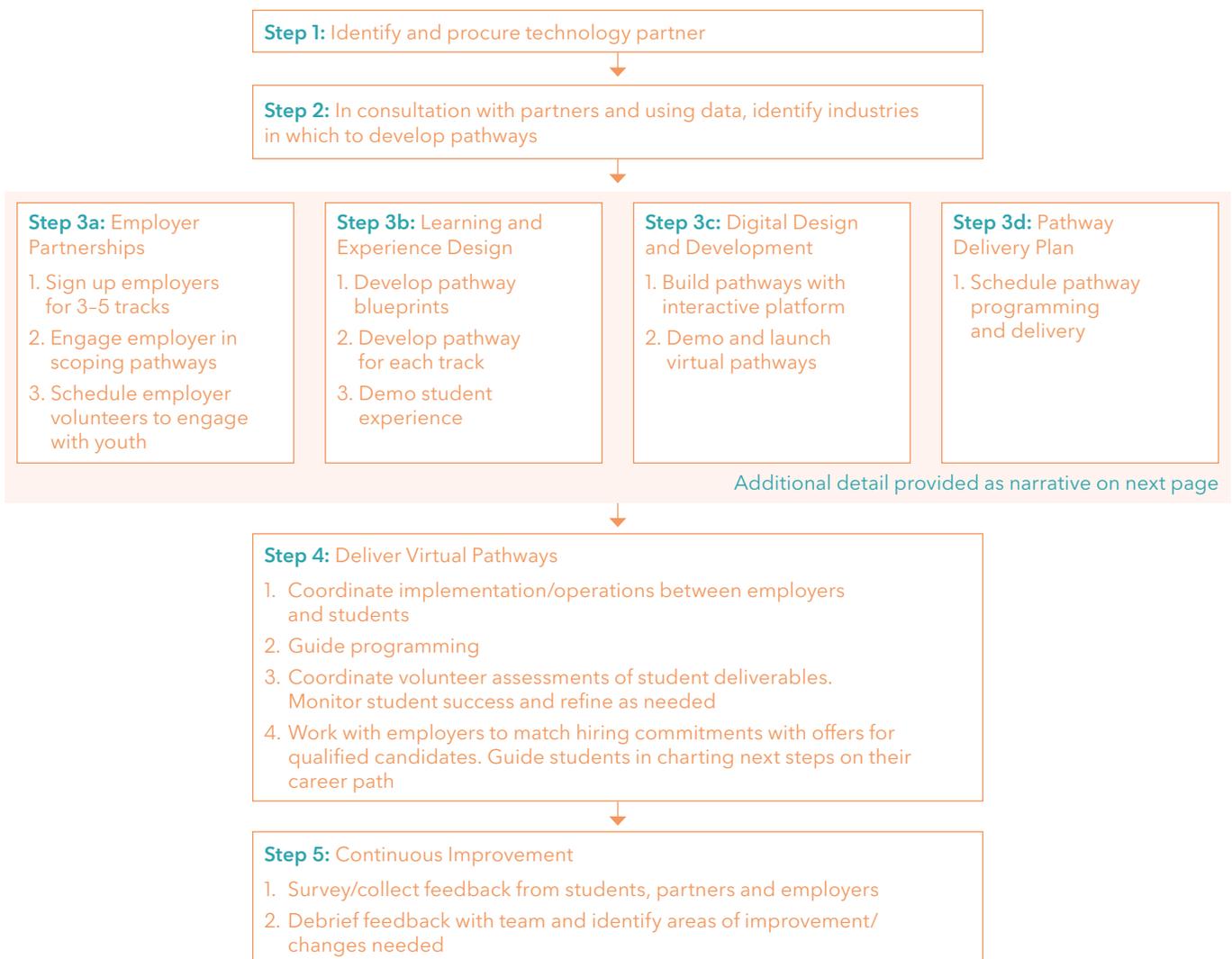
The city leveraged federal Perkins funding provided through CMS and corporate donations to ensure all participating youth had access to a Chromebook and hotspot. MYEP provided hotspots to students who were not enrolled in CMS. Although Chromebook limitations caused some students to experience technical issues when accessing the learning platform, the close relationship with Radius Learning allowed the City of Charlotte and CMS to real-time troubleshoot issues for students. Platform developers now have working knowledge of Chromebook limitations and can develop future content that will work with all available equipment provided to the students.

## Summary of Project Impact

- 50-plus professionals engaged with youth
- 291 youth earned certificates provided by top employers. Youth in the program:
  - Developed new financial technologies with Bank of America
  - Reimagined the city's infrastructure with Siemens
  - Expanded healthcare access with Atrium
  - Developed sustainable innovations with Sealed Air
  - Designed platforms to support small businesses with Accenture

## Adapt This Approach

### Steps to Success



## Steps to Success – Step 3

### Step 3a: Employer Partnerships

#### 1. Sign up employers for 3-5 tracks.

- Develop concepts for 5 tracks.
- Share track concepts with prospective industry partners.
- Scope engagement with executives at prospective employers. Executives communicate hiring challenges and future talent needs.
- Present employers with custom track concepts resulting from scoping sessions.
- Sign up 3-5 employers to lead tracks.

#### 2. Engage employer in scoping pathways.

- Executive assigns a liaison/champion for pathway success.
- Managers share sample tasks and job assignments for target occupations.
- HR shares hiring assessments and candidate criteria.
- Develop pathway and submit concepts for review and collaborative editing with employer.
- Employer sets target outcomes (ideal number of students, potential hiring commitments) for success.
- Employer approves pathway.

#### 3. Schedule employer volunteers to engage with youth.

- Managers upload videos, write welcome messages, and provide introductory letters for each pathway stage.
- Assign managers to coach/engage with student teams at structured touchpoints throughout the program.
- Develop and provide for employer review a schedule of programmed interactions for employees engaged in the delivery of pathway program.
- Schedule 2-3 webinars with SMEs from the company.

### Step 3b: Learning and Experience Design

#### 1. Develop pathway blueprints.

- Develop learning design architecture and refine with team.
- Collaborate with school CTE program to define conditions for student success and scope pathway skills for beginner skill level.
- Develop blueprint for the required number of hours, outlining authentic work-based tasks to be completed at each stage.
- Based on employer feedback, adapt pathway for each track.

#### 2. Develop pathway for each track.

- Define separate assignments and work-based learning tasks for each track based on employer feedback.
- Build in LinkedIn Learning paths to provide interactive content for each track.
- Demo a day in the life of a youth participant to partners and refine based on feedback.
- Submit pathways to partners and employers for collaborative review.

#### 3. Demo student experience.

- Present experience to select youth participants and get feedback. Refine.
- Build assessment systems for managers to provide feedback to students at key stages.
- Schedule interactions between students and managers to align with pathway content.
- Demo pathways to partners as time allows prior to program launch.

### Step 3c: Digital Design and Development

#### 1. Build pathways with interactive platform

- Define essential features for each track.
- Test features on platform.
- Scope virtual experience and interactive elements.

#### 2. Demo and launch virtual pathways.

- Upload each pathway onto the platform and demo to partners. Test IT infrastructure.
- License team subscriptions for tools to assign to students.
- Launch virtual pathways for students to access.

### Step 3d: Pathway Delivery Plan

#### 1. Schedule pathway programming and delivery.

- Schedule the complete set of interactions between students, industry partners, and volunteers.
- Work with partners to define conditions for a successful experience for each stakeholder.
- Develop, refine, approve pathway management (outcomes strategy) plan.

## Cost and Time Commitment

The MYEP team was able to reimagine this program within 90 days due in large part to their partnerships with CMS and major employers in the region as well as its ability to rapidly procure the services of a learning technology partner.

Additionally, because this was a city-run program, the City of Charlotte Youth Programs staff were able to bring to bear their own staff time to redesign the program. For cities interested in duplicating this model, the time and resources required will depend on a variety of factors including:

- Existing relationships and coordination with partners and employers
- Ability to leverage third party vendors to quickly design and develop programming and/or other needed program elements
- Availability of staff to redesign the program
- Funding flexibility

Although Charlotte was able to pull this off in 90 days, MYEP leadership noted that additional planning time would have benefited their model and likely allowed for the inclusion of additional pathways and participants.



## Dos and Don'ts

### Do act early:

- Begin to reimagine how to provide services via an asset-based approach.
- Identify elements and infrastructure currently available to your program.
- Think about what additional elements, infrastructure, and technology would be nice to have (virtual learning platform, funding for stipends, additional staff support, alignment with in-demand industry sectors, etc.).
- Identify partners with similar missions and initiatives who may be interested in collaborating. Use your connections across your economic ecosystem to help identify industry partners who can contribute (monetary, work-based learning assistance, etc.).
- Come to the table with ideas. Be willing to listen to ideas of others. Look for common ground that can help you develop a plan.

**Do evaluate proven models**, such as the [Swiss Apprenticeship system](#) that seek alignment between education and employment.

**Do identify virtual work-based learning experiences** that are flexible and offer access to future employment.

**Do find partners who can deliver online learning platforms** that track activity, hours, and progress.

**Do think about scale** and how this project can be scaled up for multiple participants or year-round learning.

**Do reach out to local school systems** to see how goals can be leveraged.

**Don't assume funding streams can all be used in the same way.** Creative thinking and problem solving may be needed to identify which program components each funding stream can support and how to ensure documentation requirements are met.



## Resources

- [MYEP Program Overview and related materials](#) (application, FAQ)
- [2020 MYEP Closing Ceremony Video](#)
- [Radius Learning Spotlight on Charlotte](#)

# DTE Energy “Work From Anywhere” Toolkit and Summer Youth Internship Program



## Project Name and Location

DTE Energy “Work From Anywhere”  
Toolkit and Summer Youth Internship  
Program, Detroit, MI<sup>1</sup>

## Overview

DTE Energy (NYSE: DTE) is a Detroit-based diversified energy company serving more than 3 million electric and natural gas customers in Michigan. Since 2017, DTE has worked directly with the city of Detroit on a variety of workforce and talent development efforts that align with the company's aspirations to be a “Force for Growth” and promote prosperity in the communities where DTE's 10,000-plus employees live and serve.

This includes projects that move the organization closer to achieving DTE's “Employment and Education” goals including:

- Closing the digital divide impacting Detroit schoolchildren
- Providing FIRST Robotics sponsorships
- Hosting and participating in workshops and educational programs
- Providing training and work-based experiences that include internships and cooperatives

DTE believes internships offer a win-win opportunity for the company to share knowledge with the next generation of leaders and position youth for future success in a learning environment that also fills DTE's talent pipeline with motivated, prepared candidates.

As a result of this commitment, DTE traditionally employs or sponsors 1,500 students annually: 850 interns on-site and 650 students through the DTE Energy Foundation that are supported through programs such as [Grow Detroit Young Talent \(GYDT\)](#), a summer program that serves 8,000 youth.

In early 2020, when it was clear the COVID-19 pandemic would greatly impact its summer intern programs, DTE leaders knew they needed to find a way to sustain these opportunities for students. DTE leaders formed an emergency planning team comprising experts who had worked together to tackle big workforce and talent challenges for more than three years.

A key partner in this effort was the [Detroit Employment Solutions Corporation \(DESC\)](#), the City of Detroit's workforce agency and one of 16 Michigan Works! agencies statewide. The team met weekly to transition its on-site internship approach into a full virtual program. Team members knew converting internship programs to a virtual or “work from anywhere” office needed to include new and creative ways to complete meaningful work, collaborate with leaders and co-workers, and stay socially connected without meeting in person.



As a result of these efforts, DTE reimagined the structure of its programs, and provided a corporate contribution in March 2020 of \$1,000,000 for stipends for their career pathway interns, and the deployment of virtual work experience platforms. DTE's Workforce Development team also developed a [Work From Anywhere Toolkit](#) to aid other companies moving to virtual internships.

In the summer of 2020, DTE served more than 500 interns, including 86 high school students. Stipends for high school students ranged from \$11 to \$13 per hour during a six-week experience with engaging activities and training designed to build employability skills.

Youth virtually connected with mentors daily and had opportunities to connect with their peers the same way. They also engaged with two web-based platforms as part of their internship program: 1) [Educational Data Systems, Inc.](#) (EDSI) provided a variety of virtual instructor-led training specific to the energy industry, using a project-based approach through cohorts of students to provide practical application of skills; and 2) [Virtual Job Shadow](#) provided career exploration opportunities.

## Key Partnerships

- DTE Energy provided internal in-kind support from across the company to ensure the success and sustainability of the program. Multiple business units worked to develop the toolkit, provide IT hardware and support, and mentor and engage youth throughout their internships.
- Grow Detroit's Young Talent (GDYT) is a citywide summer jobs program that trains and employs young adults between the ages of 14 and 24 for up to 120 hours.
- Detroit Employment Solutions Corporation (DESC) is the City of Detroit's workforce agency and reports to the Mayor's Workforce Development Board, which was established by the Mayor of Detroit. DESC is also the lead agency for Detroit at Work, which provides job placement, search, training, career advisement and other supportive services to tens of thousands of Detroiters every year. DESC was instrumental in the redesign of the program.

## Funding

DTE and the DTE Foundation provided extensive financial and in-kind resources to support the Summer Youth Internship Program and a corresponding toolkit:

- The toolkit was funded through in-kind and repurposed DTE corporate funds and developed in partnership with several DTE business units.
- The DTE IT department set up a mobile laptop and hotspot assignment and support center to ensure all summer interns could successfully access virtual opportunities.
- The DTE Foundation provides \$600,000 every year to fund program operations and student stipends for career pathway interns that work at companies across the region and are registered with Grow Detroit's Young Talent.
- DTE dedicates two full-time employees to run its high school intern program; other staff helped as needed to support the transition to a virtual design. During the six-week program, four employees dedicated approximately 25% of their time to support the program.
- DTE provided funding to GDYT at the end of 2019 to support the purchase of the Educational Data Systems, Inc. (EDSI) and Virtual Job Shadow platforms used for the internship program.



## Key Challenges

### Virtual connections pose challenges to initial relationship building.

In the beginning, students took a bit longer to feel comfortable connecting with their mentors and DTE staff. DTE's Workforce Development team worked to develop engaging programming with interactive segments each day including Motivational Mondays, TikTok Tuesdays, Wellness Wednesdays, and Interactive Thursdays. Mentors and staff also checked in with each student twice daily to build rapport with the students.

### Virtual programs still need to help interns develop professional skills, while simultaneously introducing them to the workforce.

Interns need structure that supports both needs, so the program was designed with virtual work, virtual job shadowing, career awareness, essential skills training, mentorship, and networking components in mind.

- 67% of the program focused on work within assigned business units
  - Job-specific work exposure
  - Virtual mentors
  - Capstone project
- 33% of the program focused on career development
  - Office and skilled trades training
  - Motivational speakers
  - Virtual tours

### Students' home environments may not be ideal for a virtual internship approach.

The program recognizes that students may join from challenging remote work environments or homes that are not ideally suited for remote work. Specific challenges included lack of air conditioning; a private, quiet place to work; and or home environments where students were uncomfortable sharing on camera. Purchasing virtual backgrounds for students can help students feel comfortable to turn on their camera while at home. Program mentors and leaders recognized this, focused on wellness of the student and worked to maintain engagement with students through daily check-ins and interactive programming in spite of these challenges.

## Summary of Project Impact

DTE reports the following outcomes:

- 95% of the 500 youth transitioned to virtual operations
- 86 high school students (16-18 years old) served
  - 100% transitioned to a virtual internship
  - 80% completion rate
  - 300+ hours volunteered by mentors

DTE is committed to continuous improvement and asked all 500 students to complete surveys at the beginning and the end of the program. Of youth who participated:

- 83% found it easy/very easy to transition to virtual work
- 96% agreed/strongly agreed they developed meaningful connections

- 81% rated their workgroups as highly or generally available and responsive and their leaders at 71%
- 81% reported an excellent experience with their mentor
- 60% prefer combination of virtual and on-site work
- 24% prefer on-site work
- 14% prefer virtual
- 88% said the program fully met expectations or exceeded expectations

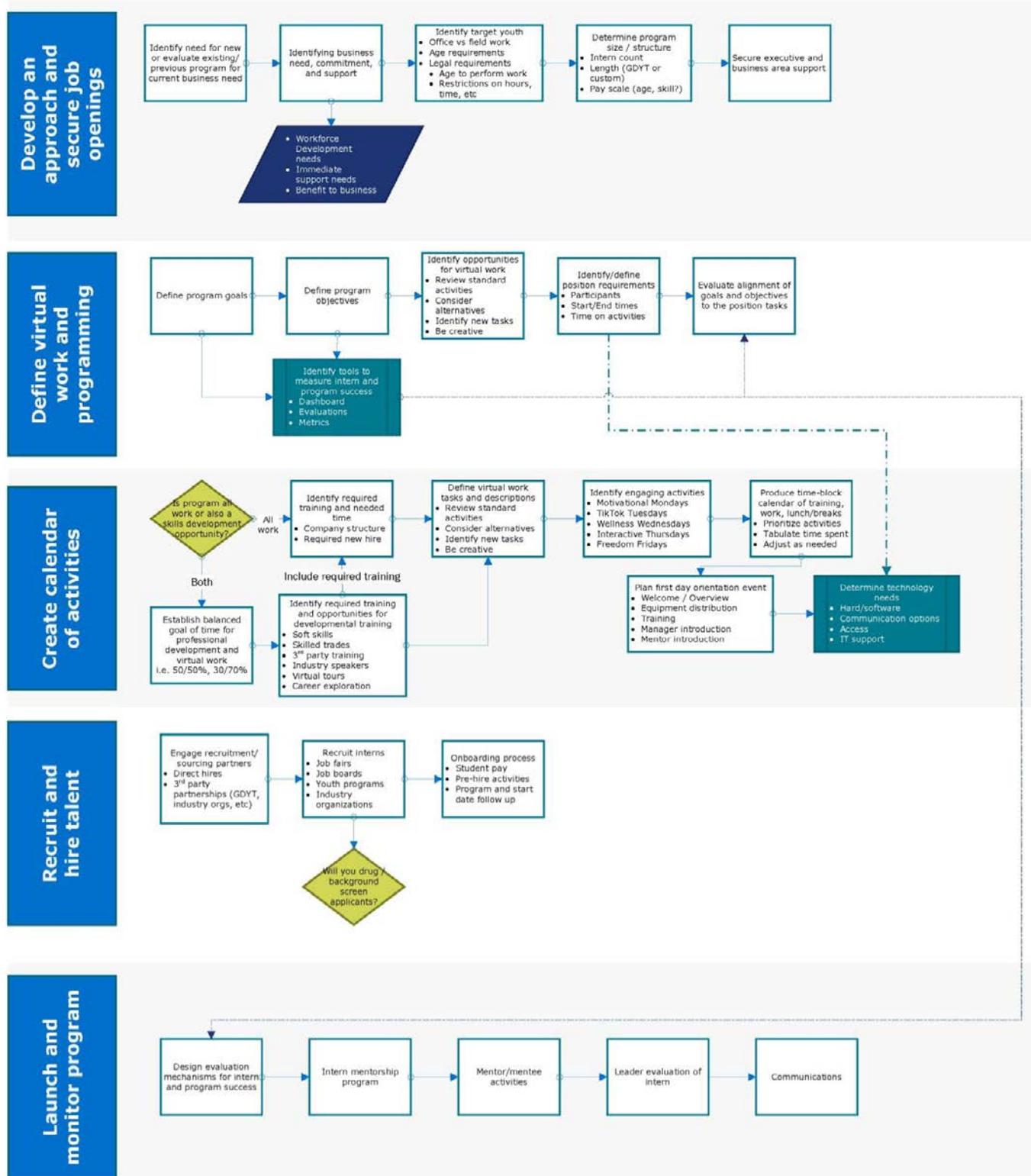
DTE expects that next year will see a hybrid approach and intends to use the feedback and data collected to improve the program and prepare for next year.



## Adapt This Approach

DTE developed a detailed 31-page [toolkit](#) as a resource to help other organizations create a successful and efficient virtual internship program. The following map was developed by DTE to outline the development process:

### Work From Anywhere Summer Youth Internship Program: sample process for development



## Cost and Time Commitment

DTE and the DTE Foundation provided extensive financial and in-kind resources to reimagine its Summer Youth Internship Program and develop the corresponding toolkit. Additionally, DTE's ability to leverage the expertise of multiple divisions (IT, HR, Communications, etc.) within its own company contributed greatly to its success.

For companies interested in duplicating this model, the time and resources required will depend on a variety of factors including:

- Existing internship program or experience with providing internships as part of a city-run program
- Commitment and support from company (both financial and in-kind)
- Relationships and coordination with external partners
- Availability of funding
- Availability of staff to design, implement, and run the program as well as serve as mentors.



## Dos and Don'ts

**Do consider the high level of internal/in-kind resources that need to be committed both to organize the virtual internship program and mentor participants.** The number of internships offered can be scaled, though, to match the available stipend and in-kind resources.

**Do leverage the internal planning skills of your organization.** DTE specifically capitalized on its internal consulting and planning skill set to redesign its programs.

**Do look for ways to strategically partner with external organizations, identify areas where your missions align and engage leaders with a passion for outcomes.** DTE was highly engaged with its local workforce agency and tapped into the experience of that organization and other non-profits.

**Do communicate regularly with leadership and partners.** Maintaining constant communication is important to ensure everyone is on the same page and working effectively and efficiently.

**Do identify one or two big companies to guide/drive your city's broader summer youth program,** then ask the city's leaders to bring in other companies for additional support. Include corporate giving and tax incentives in your "what's in it for me" message.

**Do use a competitive procurement process to identify vendors.** Even if it is a fast process, this is valuable for ensuring that you buy a competitively priced product or service.

**Do ensure your programming is developmentally appropriate.** Youth can't sit in front of a computer all day and stay engaged!

**Do remember "purpose" is more important than "process."** Be flexible and don't let procedural issues become barriers to success.

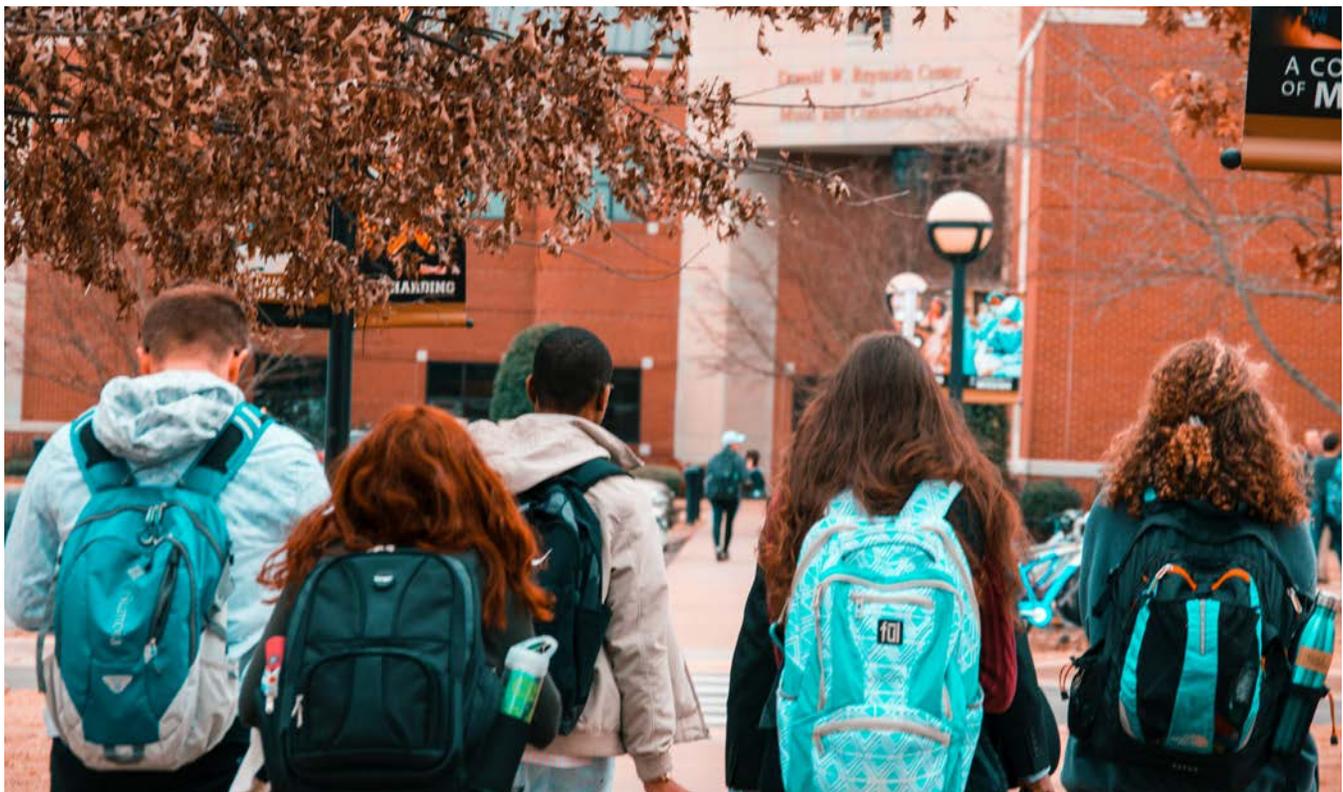
**Do expand your network of partners to the state and national levels.** This provides opportunities to share your good work and also learn new approaches and strategies from other parts of the state and nation. DTE, specifically, is involved with the Michigan Energy Workforce Development Consortium, the Center for Energy Workforce Development, the Michigan State Department of Education and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

**Do ensure you are focused on your company's internship hiring timeline and discuss with your partners well in advance of the timing needed to source students.** It can be overly burdensome or difficult to align your internal processes with external deadlines so it's important to closely evaluate timelines and collaborate/adjust as needed.

**Don't expect 100% student completion.** Some students face challenging personal situations and home environments, and some will experience unexpected situations, e.g., needing to complete summer school due to pandemic-related disruptions in the spring, and may also have more than one job.

## Resources

- [DTE Work From Anywhere Toolkit](#)
- [DTE-Produced Video Featuring Students & Mentors](#)
- [Michigan Energy Workforce Development Consortium \(MEWDC\)](#)
- [Center for Energy Workforce Development](#)



# Innovative ways to fund workforce development and training programs

Cities and regions across the country are looking to act upon what the data clearly shows: that investment in middle-skill attainment pays huge economic and social dividends by supporting business expansion and the movement of vulnerable citizens into the middle class. Paying for those investments, however, is increasingly challenging given the consistent decline in federal job training funding over the last several years coupled with decreased tax revenue due to the current recession.

So why make these investments now when funding is tighter than ever and leadership and staff are stretched thin responding to COVID-related crises? The answer is clear: because these investments are part of the long-term solution to managing current and future economic volatility.

But how do communities pay for it? The two case studies in this section provide examples of alternative ways, beyond traditional federal funding, to identify and structure financial investments in skills training that leads to credential attainment. Both have been highly successful in early implementation stages, and leadership for each model note the investments made through these programs over the last few years have left their cities in a better position to respond to the economic downturn. Each example, to varying degrees, includes the following essential elements:



### Tapping into new funding sources:

In San Diego, that meant establishing and leveraging strong connections with the philanthropic community to “seed” an Income Share Agreement fund that pays for tuition up front for students who will then “pay it forward” for future students. In Virginia, the General Assembly has injected state funding into a program to “share” tuition costs with students.

### Accountability:

Both of these examples show the value of students and, in the case of Virginia, education providers having “skin in the game.” In Virginia, students pay only one-third of the tuition cost up front. Community colleges receive the second and third thirds from the General Fund upon student completion of the course, and successful credential attainment, respectively.

### Focus on equity and inclusion:

Although each of the case studies do involve some payment by students, both have intentionally sought out and included mechanisms to not only ensure access for those with the greatest financial need, but to target them as primary participants in the programs.

### Prioritization and initiative:

Neither of the examples highlighted in this section would have ever been designed or launched if the stakeholders had simply accepted the reduction in federal resources as “the new normal” and scaled back their workforce development programs accordingly. In Virginia, a few champions in the state legislature understood the clear evidence for investment, pushed for a plan and then ushered it through to codification.

In San Diego, an idea initially heard during a conference presentation sparked the design and implementation of a program recognized as so innovative that it has already received foundation funding to support the sharing of outcomes and technical assistance to help other cities potentially replicate the model.



# Workforce Income Share Agreement Fund



## Project Name and Location

Workforce Income Share Agreement Fund, San Diego, CA

## Overview

In 2019, the San Diego Workforce Partnership (SDWP) established a new model for expanding access to training in high-growth industries called the [Workforce Income Share Agreement Fund](#). An Income Share Agreement (ISA) is an alternative way to pay for education, where there are no upfront costs to the student.

Instead, the student agrees to pay a small proportion of their income after landing a job above a minimum income threshold. This threshold also means payments stop if income falls below the identified wage or the individual experiences a period of unemployment. Not only is there a strict cap on the maximum that students repay, each dollar repaid replenishes the fund for future students.

This innovative financing mechanism increases equity by basing access to funding on competency, need and motivation rather than traditional indicators such as credit scores, savings rates or educational achievement. While the specific terms vary slightly depending on the program, students will pay back between 6% and 8% of their income for 36-60 months.

The San Diego Workforce Income Share Agreement Fund provides \$6,500 in funding per student and is inclusive of education and wraparound services. Students may pay up to 1.8X the cost of the contract, a max of \$11,700, based on their individual earnings. Students repay between 6%-8% of their income, based on the program once they earn above \$40,000 per year. Income determination excludes public assistance, disability benefits, alimony/child support and social security, but does include pensions.

The model offers access to [UC San Diego Extension](#) certification programs lasting 9-15 months in fast-growing technology fields with career readiness, mentoring and job placement support. As well as receiving instruction from industry professionals at UCSD Extension, participants in the program also have access to extensive career counseling, placement and supportive services.

Current UCSD Extension eligible programs are in the business management and information technology sectors. A complete list of programs, including targeted careers and starting salary, are available at UCSD Extension's ISA [site](#).

## Key Partnerships

Like most innovative models, success of the Workforce Income Sharing Agreement Fund required broad and deep collaboration. Key partners for this project include:

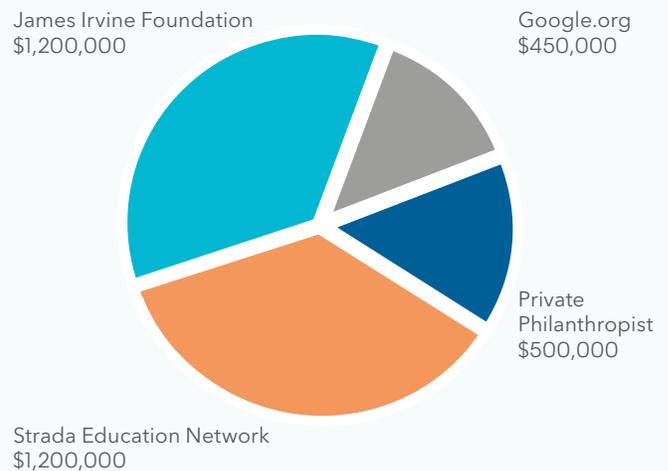
- Workforce Partnership, which launched and manages the implementation and coordination of the initiative through dedicated staff resources.
- UC San Diego Extension which serves as the education provider.
- Google.org, the James Irvine Foundation, Strada Education Network and a private philanthropist contributed the start-up resources needed to launch the fund.
- Vemo Education, a contracted partner who services the fund by processing payments through an online portal, alongside related customer service support.
- Local technology executives and businesses who engaged in a variety of ways from helping inform the design of the program to providing support to students through mentorship, internship and job placement opportunities post-graduation.

## Funding

To date, Workforce Partnership has raised \$3.35 million from philanthropic sources to support ISAs. Funders include the Strada Education Network, Google.org, James Irvine Foundation, and a private San Diego philanthropist.

In terms of costs, as noted previously, Workforce Partnership budgets \$6,500 per student, which is the face value of the ISA and is covered by the fund. When students need additional support services, such as childcare or transportation, Workforce Partnership leverages other existing programs through co-enrollment. The Workforce Partnership Income Share Agreement Fund currently does not include Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) or other federal funding.

### San Diego Workforce Partnership Income Share Agreement Fund



## Key Challenges

### Lack of a regulatory framework:

A regulatory framework does not currently exist at the federal policy level, and there is much debate in the market regarding whether or how existing federal and state consumer protection laws that apply to loans, such as the Truth in Lending Act, the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, the Holder Rule, and usury laws, legally apply to ISAs. Without proper guardrails, regulatory ambiguity increases the risk of opportunities for predatory contracts.

In lieu of federal policy, Workforce Partnership collaborated with other workforce boards to develop a set of student-centric [Statement of Principles](#) that all workforce development ISAs should include. The core promise of the ISA model is shared opportunity. In an ISA, education providers and participants have a single, shared benchmark for success: stable employment at a living wage. Every component of a workforce development ISA program should further this promise.



### Local Workforce Boards may not be structured to receive funding from diverse sources:

ISAs can enable their users to consider a diverse set of funding sources from private philanthropy to public dollars or investment capital. Depending on the workforce board's legal and governance structure (e.g., 501c3, government entity,) the board may not be set up to accommodate all types of funding.

This should be analyzed up front to determine if, based on the needs of the program, the funding sources will be restricted to only those that the existing entity can receive or if a partnership or the establishment of a new legal entity may be needed to accomplish the board's goals.

In the case of Workforce Partnership, the organization is a 501c3 that is able to accept both public and private philanthropic funding but not return-seeking capital from impact investors. While the current ISA fund does not include impact capital, Workforce Partnership quickly understood that its future needs might, and partnered with a separate legal entity, called Workforce Ventures, positioned to blend capital sources and provide fund management.

## Summary of Project Impact

The program currently has 181 signed ISA contracts, with 89 students in training programs. The 34 students scheduled to graduate this December will join the 29 participants that have already graduated the program in 2020. Of 181 signed ISAs, 87 are women, 130 are people of color and 118 are first-generation college students. Workforce Partnership plans to enroll 200 additional students during 2021 and scale up enrollments in 2022 and beyond, with a goal to support 1,000 new participants in ISAs annually by 2025.

## Adapt This Approach

Workforce Partnership received a grant to test, document and amplify good practices for the application of ISAs as innovative workforce training financing models, and has since established the [Outcomes Center](#), which serves as a hub for tools, resources and learnings around new and innovative outcomes-focused funding models. The steps below

are also outlined in an [ISA Development Lifecycle](#) located in the Outcomes Center, which includes additional detail, suggestions and strategies that correspond with each step. Visit this tool and others in the Outcomes Center to support local adoption of this model.

### Steps to Success

#### Step 1: Identify your targeted participants and stakeholders

- Determine who you are trying to help, why they need help and how the ISA will help them
- Define partners that are critical to success (CBOs, education, policy makers, employers)



#### Step 2: Design your ISA program

- Identify what the ISA will fund (education only or other services too)
- Engage legal guidance and regulatory stakeholders to understand considerations and requirements
- Consider all services needed for success and how they will fit together
- Identify the terms of the ISA contract
- Establish underwriting requirements that ensure equity and access
- Develop the ISA contract with clear and transparent disclosure tools
- Determine what and how you will procure and what procurement guidelines must be followed



#### Step 3: Determine your fund operating model (subsidized, evergreen, return-seeking)

Considerations: Model should be participant-centric (focus on access, protection for participant and fund sustainability), explore braided funding options through co-enrollment, federal or employer reimbursement, etc., and ensure all fund costs are identified



#### Step 4: Implementation

- Develop procurement documentation (cost estimate, scope of work, eligibility, special clauses, etc.)
- Educate and engage board to support approval
- Implement a marketing and recruitment strategy
- Establish origination (method by which an applicant applies for a new ISA and servicing agency processes)
- Enroll, continuously engage and support students with consultation and wraparound services (when needed) through program completion
- Place students into employment
- Program completers employed at or above minimum income threshold pay back into the fund



#### Step 5: Evaluation

- Develop evaluation strategy (logic model, scope, budget, procurement if needed)
- Capture promising practices
- Perform monitoring and evaluation (data collection, reporting, tracking lessons learned, etc.)



## Cost and Time Commitments

Because of Workforce Partnership’s reliance on philanthropic giving to seed the fund, and the model’s “pay it forward” feature, ISAs themselves, are not necessarily expensive. The level of staff time required, and time overall, to stand up and implement the model will depend on a variety of factors including:

- Existing relationships with philanthropy – the ability to leverage existing relationships to identify potential funders will greatly impact the time and effort required to fund the model.
- Depth of established partnerships with education and the business community.
- Ability to commit staff to an in-depth lead role to oversee the communication, organization and execution of the work required to usher the model through the implementation process.
- Type and duration of support that will be provided to participants as part of the ISA product; programs providing education only may require a very different model from those including active case management and other wraparound services.

## Dos and Don’ts

**Do focus the program’s efforts.** The most successful ISA programs are those linked to a clear, locally connected use case rather than a broad set of national concepts. Moving into the design phase without articulating a clear need can waste time, increase costs, and make buy-in difficult. Workforce Partnership targeted “workforce credentials for in-demand fields in the San Diego market which provide quality jobs above \$40,000, currently have underrepresentation by women and minorities, and are not eligible for federal loans or Pell grants.”

**Do customize.** Effectively matching the components – income thresholds, certifications, repayment provisions, etc. – to the unique needs of students and business in the community is essential to success.

**Do seek guidance** from expert legal counsel to ensure compliance with state and federal laws as well as engage in a dialogue directly with relevant regulators about the program’s intentions, structure and terms. This process can vary dramatically between different legal jurisdictions and programs. The best stage at which to begin seeking legal counsel is when the program has a clear mission and initial design in place (but before finalization). Legal and financial support for this model requires

expertise in income share agreements and impact funding (if part of the funding model), which may not be available at the city or county level due to their relatively new status. Workforce Partnership noted that seeking out and contracting for those services supported their ability to make informed and expedient management decisions.

**Do carefully consider the terms of the ISA.** An ISA is fundamentally a contract. Core terms of an ISA contract include the payment cap, payment term and payment window, income share and income threshold and APR cap. The interplay between these terms can dramatically influence not only the participant's repayment requirements but also the types of capital best suited to the program. For example, impact investment capital seeking a 6% return in the short term would not be well aligned to a design predicated on a low APR cap with a multi-year repayment window. To model a desired set of terms, see the Workforce ISA [Modeling Tool](#).

**Don't give up control.** To achieve buy-in and avoid re-work, it is crucial early in the process to engage those who may be affected by the decisions or can influence the implementation of decisions. However, while engagement is key to ensure there will be a market for the ISA product once launched (e.g., education providers will use it, participants will sign it), boards are encouraged to retain control of ISA design to ensure that guardrails for participant protection are strong, even if contracting out aspects of service delivery.

## Resources

- Specific [terms](#) of Workforce Partnership's ISA payment model
- Income Share Agreement [basics](#)
- Key [feasibility considerations](#) when designing an ISA to determine if the program is a good candidate for this model
- A [framework](#) to help workforce agencies build ISAs centered around quality jobs
- An [ISA Development Lifecycle](#) for developing an ISA lifecycle
- Workforce Partnership's [Outcomes Center](#)

# Virginia FastForward



## Project Name and Location

FastForward Program, Virginia

## Overview

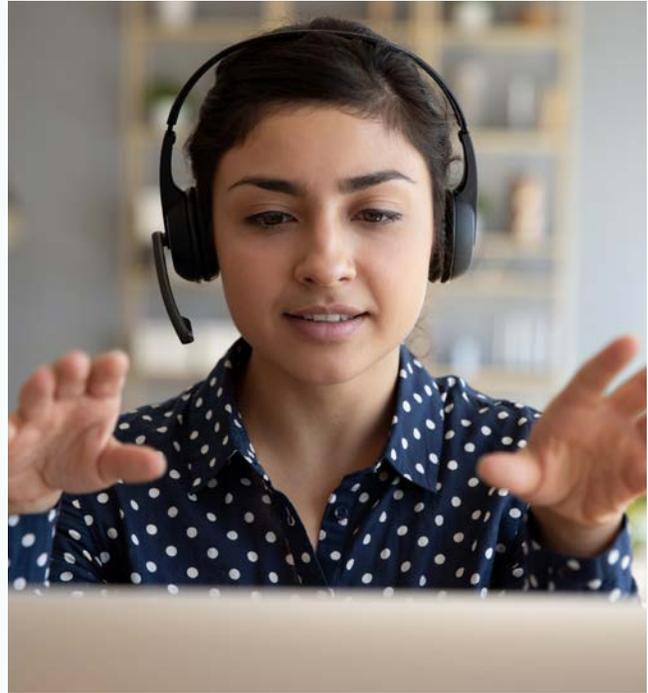
In 2016, the Virginia Assembly codified the [New Economy Workforce Grant Program](#), which was quickly rebranded FastForward by the Virginia Community College system. FastForward provides a pay-for-performance model for funding noncredit workforce training that leads to a credential in a high-demand field.

FastForward program specifics:

- Courses are 6-12 weeks, on average, and designed so students can continue working while earning a credential.
- Program is delivered by Virginia's Community Colleges and is designed to help students enter and advance in a career pathway. Some credentials stack based on skill (e.g., basic and advanced), while some stack to allow the student to become a more well-rounded job candidate (e.g., Certified Clinical Medical Assistant, EKG Technician, Phlebotomy Technician). Some programs may offer a short internship or externship before graduating and can also propel the student towards an associate degree.
- Costs vary, but the average out-of-pocket cost is \$1,100, and financial assistance may cut costs even more.
- A career coach at the local community college helps participants explore training options, pursue financial aid for the up-front payment (if needed) and access wraparound services such as transportation and childcare. This additional support is critical as many of FastForward's students face multiple barriers. Over half of FastForward students are minorities; students are twice as likely to receive SNAP/TANF benefits as other college students; and over 70% have dependents to support.
- The program offers in-person and online training programs for [40 high-demand careers](#) in the following industries: logistics and transportation, healthcare, welding and manufacturing, skilled trades, information technology, business and customer service and education.

FastForward payment points:

1. Students are required to pay one-third of the total cost of the program upon enrollment. Students may use third-party funds, such as noncredit financial aid, training vouchers or employer payment to cover this cost.
2. If the student completes the training, the state provides one-third of the cost of the program, up to \$1,500, to the institution. If the student does not complete the program, then the student is required to pay this portion of the total cost.
3. If the student satisfactorily completes the workforce credential (after completing the training), the institution receives the remaining one-third of the cost of the program up to \$1,500. The combined maximum award to an institution is \$3,000 for completion of training and a credential.



## Key Partnerships

Leadership in Virginia noted that the launch and initial implementation of FastForward primarily involved the following partners:

- [VCCS](#), comprised of state, system-level leadership and staff and individual colleges – the system-level staff who develop statewide policy and infrastructure (e.g., statewide website that directs interested potential students to their local college) to ensure key consistencies in implementation, and the 23 community colleges in Virginia that operate the program at the local level.
- [State Council for Higher Education in Virginia \(SCHEV\)](#), responsible for administering the program, conducting periodic program assessments, collecting student data, and making final decisions on disputes between eligible institutions and grant recipients. SCHEV also handles the financial management of the program including reimbursing colleges for successful student outcomes.

- [The Virginia Board of Workforce Development](#), which provides on a bi-annual basis a list of high-demand occupations for potential inclusion as certification programs in FastForward.

As the program has matured and demonstrated success, additional partners have come to the table including:

- Workforce partner programs such as WIOA, SNAP and TANF that are interested in FastForward as a training option for their participants. Local community colleges are working in pockets of the state with local program providers to define processes for collaboration and co-enrollment.
- Industry associations that quickly saw the benefit of a new pool of talent skilled up with industry-recognized competencies and credentials. These groups work with local colleges to inform program design and curriculum development and have even helped pay for training costs when the FastForward program funds ran low.

## Funding

Funding for the FastForward program comes from the Virginia General Fund, which is primarily state-level tax revenue appropriated by the Virginia General Assembly. In the first year, the Assembly appropriated \$4 million. That funding, which was awarded for training on a first-come, first-serve basis, quickly ran out and the Assembly stepped in with an additional \$1 million in the first year (totaling an annual investment of \$5 million).

Annual appropriations have increased significantly each year with the evidence of positive outcomes driving increased interest by businesses and students:

2016	\$5 million
2017	\$7.5 million
2018	\$9 million
2019	\$13.5 million

It is also important to note the program receives an additional \$3 million from the general fund annually to help low-income students pay up to 90% of the first one-third (or up-front) tuition payment. Students eligible for those funds are generally below 200% of the poverty level or on SNAP or TANF benefits. Local career coaches are also working with partner programs, such as WIOA, to cover tuition costs when available and allowable.



## Summary of Project Impact

FastForward has demonstrated success both in terms of outcome measures and participant satisfaction. More than 37,000 Virginians have enrolled in FastForward training programs to date, with a completion rate of more than 90%. More than 19,000 credentials have been earned since 2016, and one in four graduates saw an 85% increase in salary post-credential. In addition, graduates report key indicators of success, including:

- 67% have paid vacation
- 68% have employer-paid medical insurance
- 86% are satisfied with their job duties
- 83% report being satisfied with their work schedule
- 75% are satisfied with their pay
- 85% are happy with their job stability.

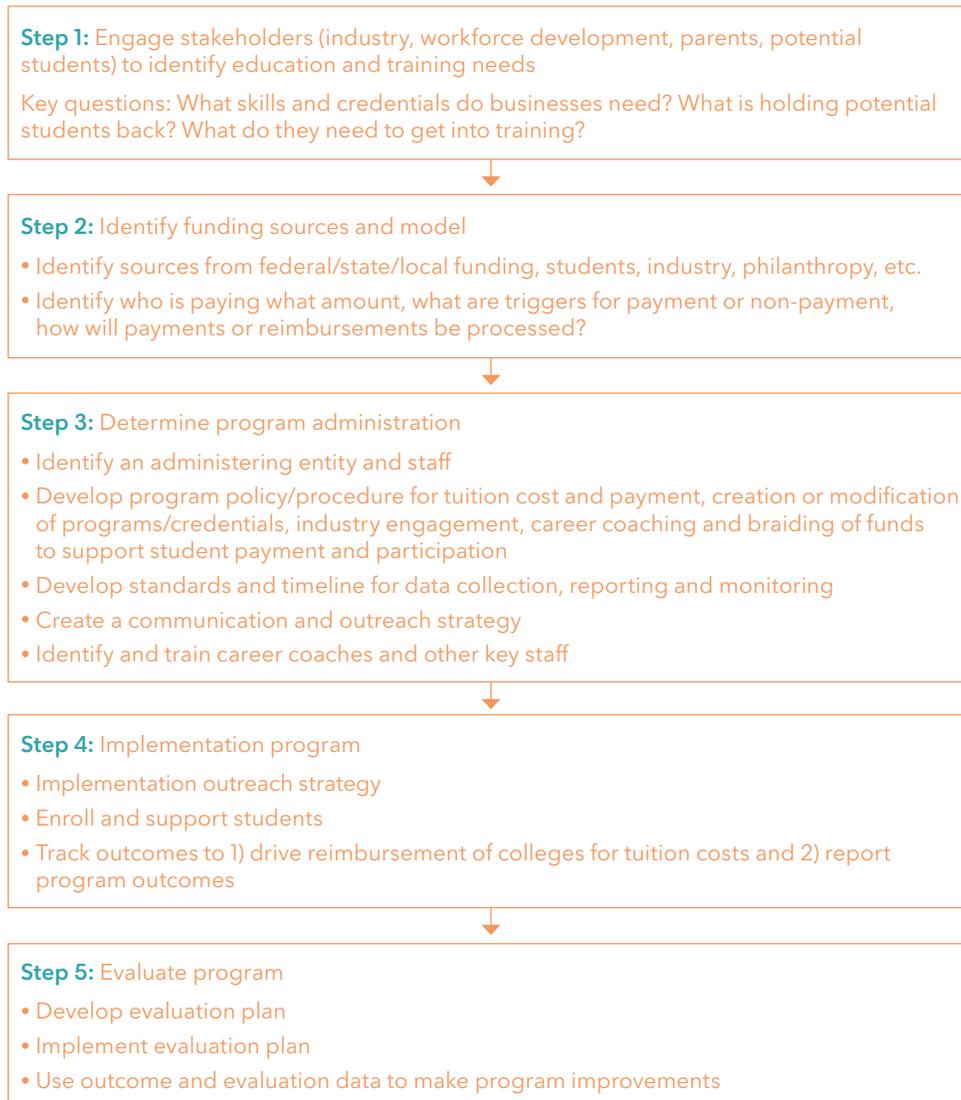
The FastForward team is also working on using wage data to calculate an increase in tax revenue and overall return on investment for the program.

### Additional Impacts:

- FastForward is now in the DNA of what the colleges do – it is no longer an “add on” program. The success of the program has led to a much greater focus, on both the non-credit and credit side of the college, on the critical importance of embedding credentials into degree programs to drive strong employment outcomes.
- FastForward has also been used as a tool to respond to the economic shifts in labor demand due to COVID-19. Several colleges quickly established or ramped up enrollment in programs such as personal health testing and phlebotomy to meet the rising need for healthcare workers with specific skills.

## Adapt This Approach

### Steps to Success



### Cost and Time Commitments

FastForward leadership identified the program as very staff-intensive to stand up, which was especially challenging as the allocation did not include funding for additional staff. Initially, 15-20 VCCS staff were focused on implementing the program, but they are now down to two staff full-time. The FastForward team noted, however, that it should be much less complicated to implement at a city level as leadership can control its own guidelines, policy, etc. and will not have to ensure consistency across a statewide system.

FastForward was also implemented relatively quickly – in less than six months – due to a mandate from the Virginia Assembly. Leaders noted, however, that if afforded more time, they would have further explored up-front partnerships and additional wraparound services to offer at the beginning of the program. Those partnerships have evolved over time and, consequently, improved the program. The time required at a city level would likely be dependent upon the depth of existing relationships with the education and business communities.

## Dos and Don'ts

**Do be intentional around identifying partners and their roles.** FastForward leaders noted that a city should ensure that the roles of the local education provider, WIOA partner, city workforce office and local economic development are ironed out before launching to ensure an efficient and collaborative implementation.

**Do align with industry associations.** These relationships support conversations that help align credentials with desired skills and lead to helpful business practices, such as mentioning specific desired credentials in job postings. Partnerships with industry can also lead to financial investments from businesses if city funding runs low.

**Do identify and leverage all potential partner resources.** All partners have needs, but they also have resources, some of which may not be readily apparent. For example, in Virginia, local community colleges have access to a higher education equipment trust fund that can help pay for equipment costs associated with hands-on instruction.

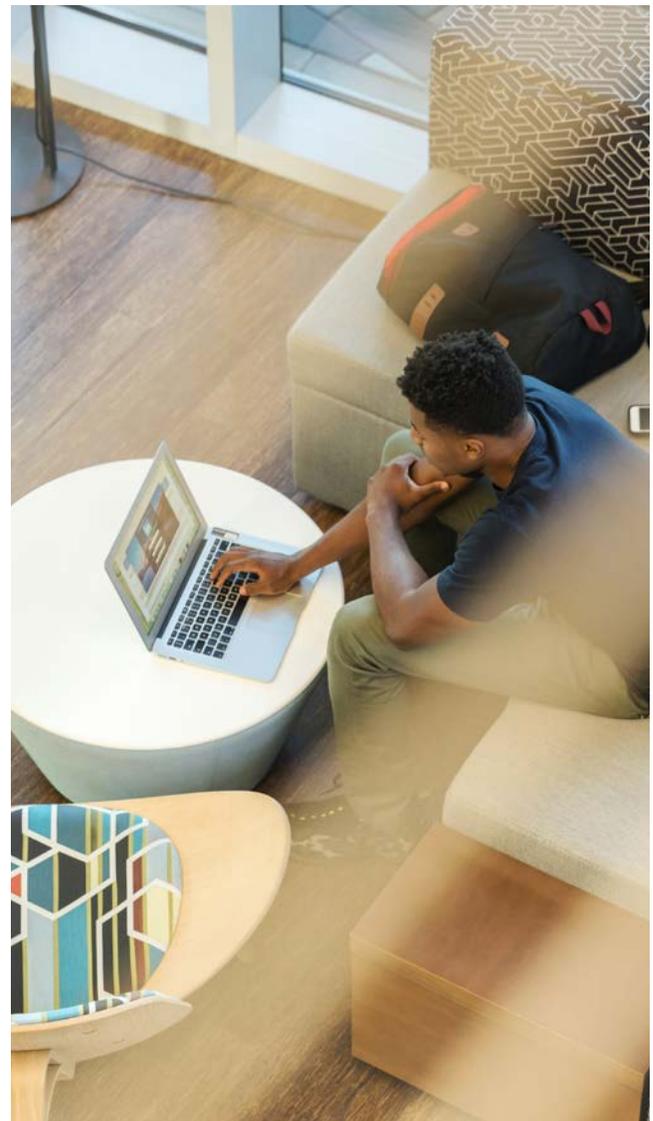
**Do connect the college's academic credit side with the non-credit side** to maximize options for the students to advance along a pathway without duplicating effort.

**Don't involve your industry partners in the "bureaucratic side" of running the program.** Shield business from any public partner issues that include administration, red tape or discussions regarding "turf." They should see one unified system of partners working together for common goals.

**Don't focus on weeks and hours when defining programs.** What matters are the competencies and skills obtained, and ensuring alignment with employer demand. The length and structure of the program can be flexible to meet the needs of the students and business.

## Resources

- [FastForward: Credentials for a Career that Matters](#)
- [Workforce Credentials: The Pathway to Virginia's New Middle Class Report](#)
- [National Skills Coalition: Middle Skill Jobs By State - Virginia](#)
- [New Economy Workforce Credential Grant Fund and Program - State Law](#)



<sup>1</sup> Please note that this is a "living" document regularly updated based on new information. Printed or downloaded-static versions of this document may be outdated. Additionally, this document is for informational purposes only and does not constitute any business or legal advice of any kind. "Work from Anywhere" is intended to mean anywhere within the state of Michigan for DTE. Some information provided may not be applicable to other businesses, organizations, or employers. Entities outside of DTE Energy are strongly encouraged to consult with legal counsel to thoroughly evaluate whether any of these measures are appropriate prior to implementing any of these ideas.

## About Bloomberg Philanthropies' COVID-19 Response

Bloomberg Philanthropies' multi-pronged COVID-19 response supports public health professionals and local leaders around the world in their efforts to mitigate the health, economic, and social consequences of the pandemic. Our response includes immediate support in low-income and middle-income countries most at-risk, resources for mayors and other local leaders, and support for social services and cultural organizations in the communities where the Bloomberg L.P. and Bloomberg Philanthropies team lives and works.

- Globally, we are funding rapid-response efforts – including equipment and training for frontline healthcare workers – in Africa and other low-income and middle-income countries around the world. We are also supporting vulnerable refugee populations around the world.
- In the U.S., we are working with New York Governor Andrew Cuomo to launch a COVID-19 contact tracing program to help control the infection rate of the disease. We've also created a robust platform through our COVID-19 Local Response Initiative to support mayors and other local leaders.
- In New York and London, we've helped launch funds to support local cultural and social service organizations affected by the pandemic, and provided funding to feed frontline healthcare workers in 16 NYC hospitals.
- We are also supporting research, including studies at Johns Hopkins University and NYU Langone Health.

Learn more about our efforts at [bloomberg.org/covid-19-response](https://bloomberg.org/covid-19-response)

## About Bloomberg Associates

Bloomberg Associates is the philanthropic consulting arm of Michael R. Bloomberg's charitable organization, Bloomberg Philanthropies. Founded in 2014, we work side by side with client cities to improve the quality of life for residents, taking a strategic, collaborative, and results-oriented approach to make cities stronger, safer, more equitable and more efficient. Our team of globally recognized experts and industry leaders has worked with cities across the globe on hundreds of projects in order to ignite change and transform a dynamic vision into reality.



**Bloomberg  
Philanthropies**

**Bloomberg  
Associates**

