

TOWARD CAREER-CONNECTED LEARNING

Action Priorities for Systems Building,
Coordination and Improvement

NYC Work-Based Learning Coalition
Released February 2024



Introduction

The New York City Work-Based Learning Coalition aims to increase equity, quality, and access to work-based learning (WBL) opportunities that prepare all young New Yorkers for career success and economic security in a rapidly changing labor market. We believe that all young people should graduate high school with a better understanding of the full spectrum of opportunities available to them. All students should have equitable access to these opportunities, and all schools must have the support to provide them.



Through the first year-plus of the Adams Administration, the Mayor and his team have set transformative goals and made important investments to expand Work-Based Learning opportunities grounded in flexibility, choice and coordination for schools and youth-serving providers. These commitments offer a strong foundation and clear value for employers as well as for young people and their families. Our coalition is presenting specific Action Priorities for the Adams Administration to build upon that foundation and create a system that connects and strengthens existing programs and capacity and ushers in a new era of career-connected learning that meets our City's transformative goals.

While the size and diversity of New York City calls for a multi-faceted, multi-agency approach, this complex ecosystem demands flexibility, choice and coordination for it to function equitably, sustainably and with the quality which every young New Yorker deserves. The Action Priorities in this proposal build on the exciting steps the Administration has already taken to expand coordination across city government, specifically the Office of the First Deputy Mayor, the Mayor's Office of Talent and Workforce Development (NYC Talent), the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), New York City Public Schools (NYCPS), the City University of New York (CUNY), and their implementation partners - nonprofit partners (CBOs) and employers can make this a reality.

In the spirit of breaking down silos and encouraging collaboration, the Action Priorities below are organized by theme rather than being directed to individual agencies. The WBL Coalition sees this as the way to create a more cohesive and effective system for supporting work-based learning in New York City.



Action Priorities for continued strengthening the coordination between City Hall, NYCPS, DYCD, and implementing partners:

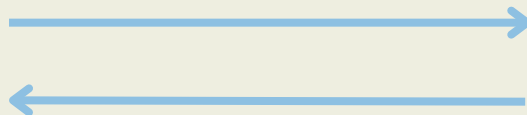
Streamline work-based learning program offerings to make them more coherent to young people, schools, providers, and employers.

Design more coherent and coordinated contracting systems to ensure that funding is adequately provided to CBOs and other agencies prior to the start of WBL activities.

Coordinate recruitment and program timelines between DYCD and NYCPS Work-Based Learning opportunities.

Move towards a single youth payroll system for all WBL.

Determine expansion with a focus on equity and capacity of providers in order to produce quality services for young people. Incorporate feedback from DYCD- and NYCPS-funded providers working in and with schools to determine HOW to expand.



Streamline work-based learning program offerings to make them more transparent to young people, schools, providers, and employers.

Create an accessible and central repository for school leaders, young people, and families to explain how all the current WBL program options/opportunities fit together. This is a first step toward streamlining programs and making them more coherent to young people, schools, providers, and employers. Incorporate teen interns to support these processes to ensure that communication is clear and compelling for young people.

Explain in accessible language to principals, CBOs, families, and coaches how all the programs fit together, not just information on one program. Who is the program for; what are the key deadlines; how do young people access it; what services are provided; and what are constraints on the program given the funding source(s) that need to be taken into account by all partners?

Create coherent branding and sequencing of WBL and youth employment programs across agencies and providers by eliminating legacy program names (e.g. Work Learn & Grow; Ladders for Leaders, Learning to Work), to develop a sequenced continuum of experiences from early awareness, to career exposure and to career facing internships. (see Appendix - page 8)

Set up regular meetings for coordination with implementing partners, and support entities with collaborative expertise to help CBOs coordinate with each other as part of building intermediary functions.

Design more cohesive and coordinated contracting systems to ensure that funding is adequately provided to CBOs and other agencies prior to the start of WBL activities.

The slow procurement process at New York City Public Schools and the multi-year contracting with DYCD means that public funds are not as nimble as the field currently needs to be to respond to capacity demands and to invite new partners in to build the scale we need. Build opportunities for emergency procurement and expedited review for prospective work-based learning partners so they can more quickly contract to respond to needs in the field.

Once entities are contracted, agencies do not receive payments in a timely manner which often leads to funding shortages in CBOs, staffing shortages, and young people receiving delayed payments if the CBO is responsible for funding youth wages/stipends.

Consider advance payment of any funds that are intended to be passed through to young people or for payroll, so that delays in payments and the lack of individualized supports are not young people's introduction to city systems or the world of careers in New York City.

Coordinate recruitment and program timelines between DYCD and NYCPS Work-Based Learning opportunities.

Policy: Ensure that principal/CBO facing documents and a manual for all school-connected programs are disseminated publicly to both schools and CBOs no later than March for summer and August for the school year, jointly reviewed and published by NYCPS and DYCD

Operational Logistics: Ensure core functions like payroll, distribution of MetroCards, and timing of competing priorities, such as summer school enrollment, are consistent across programs and agencies. Create clear documents describing different systems in one place so school-level staff are not scrambling to learn different systems from different sources.

Information about Program Implementation and Quality: As Executive Order 22 encourages more workforce data sharing across agencies, include WBL providers as an audience to receive data and inform the analysis.

Centralized Timeline: The NYCPS, DYCD and partners should coordinate before the school year to outline important dates for WBL programming (SYEP, WLG, TOP, FutureReady NYC, Modern Youth Apprenticeship, etc.) throughout the school year. Ensure there is a timeline that details the application and enrollment process for prospective schools and participants. This would enable schools and young people to better prepare and plan for their work-based learning experiences.

Determine expansion with a focus on equity and capacity of providers in order to produce quality services for young people. Incorporate feedback from DYCD- and NYCPS-funded providers working in and with schools to determine HOW to expand.

Enable partners to expand services through deepening service provision as well as through expansion on the foundation of high-quality programming. Enable flexibility within funding and contract expectations so partners can expand and deepen service to ensure adequate support to all young people. For example, partners may need to provide additional mentorship, coaching and support to young people or their employer to ensure a successful outcome.

Move towards a single youth payroll system for all WBL.

Coordinate and streamline how young people register and are paid for participation in career-connected opportunities across programs and providers. Currently there are duplicative, parallel platforms and processes for the collection of required documents managed by different entities (e.g., NYCPS payment portal, DYCD CSS, payment through WBL partner organization).

Action Priorities for capacity building between NYC Public Schools (NYCPS), the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) and their implementation partners.

The successful rollout and implementation of increasingly comprehensive career-connected learning opportunities at scale in New York City necessitates continued feedback and input from all stakeholders. This includes both the providers that are working in partnership with City agencies, as well as the young people who the opportunities are intended to serve.

The Action Priorities below outline key action steps that can be taken to fortify the institutional practices of both DYCD and NYCPS. The goal of the recommended courses of action is to improve the way the DYCD and NYCPS complement each other in order for the agencies to have greater capacity to meet community needs. This insight is a product of qualitative data that has been aggregated from the field and the Action Priorities attempt to directly address hurdles that both providers and young people have encountered with the process as presently constructed. Access and equity need to be the drivers of progress when it comes to developing work-based learning opportunities for young people and the Action Priorities below are examples of how to get closer to that goal.

Centralize support and capacity building for principals to better understand the different Career-Connected initiatives and programs available through NYCPS and DYCD, and how to systematize them into their school culture and resource planning strategy.

Engage young people, schools, and implementation providers when designing recruitment, application and enrollment timelines and processes.

Provide guided support to meet the diverse needs of young people, specifically for students with disabilities, immigrant youth, and multilingual learners.

Centralize support and capacity building for principals to better understand the different Career-Connected initiatives and programs available through NYCPS and DYCD, and how systematize them into their school culture and resource planning strategy.

Coordinate summer school enrollment with participation in summer career experiences, so no child is held back from chances to build skills and economic security because they have to repeat a class.

Publish all guidance about summer job opportunities across all agencies and disseminated via both DYCD and NYCPS channels so school staff and implementation partners can coordinate appropriately on the ground and are not scrambling to understand policy changes.

Budget for CBO support to schools in planning and coordinating WBL activities.

- Offer support for more CBOs through the NYCPS contracting system (Multiple Task Award Contract Solicitations, MTACS) to deliver services via school funds
- Offer support for data privacy and internship payment information

Engage young people, schools, and implementation providers when designing recruitment, application and enrollment timelines and processes.

Incorporate feedback from youth, families, program providers throughout the process:

- Design feedback sessions with incoming and former program participants; e.g. SYEP participants likely have suggestions on receiving Metro cards, payroll.
- Many providers ask that payment cards be sent to them and then disseminated to youth, rather than directly to youth. This would ensure young people are paid on time, even if their living situation is transitional. DYCD has not responded to this request, but it would ease things logistically, administratively, and humanely, improving equitable pay and ensuring young people receive payments in a timely manner.
- Include youth as paid interns throughout the planning and implementation process to ensure that processes are truly accessible.

Recommendations from Teens: Create an accessible website that matches students with their identified interests. The website could have a short, personality quiz-like questionnaire to determine students interests. Prospective youth should be able to know the multiple jobs available to them; there should be a section in the program application that lets the individual know of their options and have a chance to pick their top five. Young people should be involved in the design and implementation of the website to make sure it is accessible and youth-friendly.

Establish program guidelines and policies that allow flexibility and innovation in collaboration with NYPS, DYCD and their implementation partners.

Coordinate and support the dissemination of career-connected programs via both NYCPS and DYCD channels. Furthermore, develop professional development and resources to ensure that school staff and DYCD partners are equipped to support young people through the enrollment process. Publish all guidance about summer job opportunities in partnership with NYCPS, disseminated via both DYCD and NYCPS channels to both sets of stakeholders so school staff can coordinate appropriately on the ground and aren't scrambling to understand policy changes.

Provide increased supports for Students with Disabilities

Provide increased supports for WBL providers (schools staff, SYEP staff, CBOs, etc...) who are providing services to students with disabilities to ensure that participants receive high-quality accommodations and supports throughout the WBL process.

- Increase the funding per participant for WBL providers who support students with disabilities in their programs. This would help enable them to hire professionals with expertise in working with students with disabilities, and provide additional supports to participants and families.
- City agency partners must build partnerships with WBL providers who have expertise in designing WBL opportunities for students with disabilities to ensure that career-connected learning experiences are appropriate and supportive.

Ensure that Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) transition planning includes providing access to work-based learning opportunities. IEP teams must collaborate with WBL providers to ensure students with IEPs are working on their transition goals during WBL programming.

Provide increased support for immigrant youth and multilingual learners.

Support multilingual populations in navigating summer and school-year programs from start to finish - including applications, pay cards, etc.

- Support schools, SYEP Providers, nonprofits and employers in designing culturally and linguistically responsive experiences for immigrant youth and multilingual learners. This should include city agency-led training and coaching for schools, contracted partners and employers to work with this population.
- Translate all resources including the online application into at least the top ten languages spoken by NYC families.
- Identify and expand partnerships to organizations and CBOs that serve immigrants, documented and undocumented.

Recommendations from Teens: "As a soon to be senior in high school, I wanted to work during summer so I applied to SYEP. I sent a message to ask what documents I needed. They answered: 'For work authorization you need a United States passport or alien registration card.' I asked 'what if I don't currently have any of those documents,' and they responded 'I'm sorry we can't enroll you unless you have one of those.' I was feeling sad, SYEP was the only summer plan that I had. I even neglected other options because I really thought I was going to be in SYEP. But due to the fact that I don't have a green card I won't be able to have opportunities like others. Now I have to find other jobs and make new summer plans."

Nadilka (Veronica) Hernandez, International High School for Health Science, Expected graduation 2023

The Time is Now

The problem we are highlighting here is itself the result of a major step forward: at least a dozen of these programs listed in appendix (page 8) have launched in the last five years. City leaders, including multiple teams at NYC Public Schools, the Department of Youth and Community Development and the City University of New York, deserve great credit for creating and resourcing these programs, as do the mostly community-based provider organizations that have delivered them.

Even so, this proliferation of new options has made a system already difficult to navigate even more challenging for young New Yorkers and their families, as well as the city's employers. The next step is to create common paths and "use cases" that can provide clear signposts and accessible supports. For example, it would be helpful to identify next-step opportunities for high school students in school-based programs such as Future Ready who want to better understand postsecondary education options or access a wider range of work-based learning opportunities, or to name resources for young adults who have earned their High School Equivalency and are weighing options for additional education, training, and/or employment. This is all the more true for undocumented youth, who hold the same aspirations but whose pathway options may be more limited based on their status.

A related opportunity would be to map all publicly supported programs against "age and stage" developmental milestones, along the lines originally laid out in the Career Readiness Framework included City's 2019 CareerReady NYC report. Educators, advisors, administrators, and nonprofit staff all would benefit from a more clearly defined developmental pathway that both emphasizes the skills and experiences young people broadly need, and names the programs through which they can build those skills and refine their own identities as workers, citizens, and leaders.

The Work-Based Learning Coalition would welcome the opportunity to partner with interagency coordinating entities, including the Workforce Development Board and Mayor's Office of Talent and Workforce Development in launching a student-centered design process to create these resources and help to clarify the system. We deeply believe that doing so would further highlight the excellent work underway, and serve our shared goals of ensuring that every young New Yorker has access to the experiences and support needed to achieve career success, economic security, and choice-filled lives.



Appendix

Navigating the world of youth employment programs in New York City can be a daunting task for Participants. With multiple agencies involved in providing these programs, each targeting specific student demographics, with their own employer partners and funding streams, the landscape can be confusing and overwhelming for young people, schools and employers. The New York City Public Schools, the Department of Youth and Community Development, and the City University of New York are just a few of the agencies responsible for running these programs, each with their own contracted providers managing the programs. This complexity can make it difficult for young people to understand the range of offerings and determine which program is the best fit for them, as well as how to apply. We can do better. The sample list of programs across agencies listed below underscores just how complicated the current landscape is for young people and the need for a more effective, efficient, and coherent approach across New York City.

Program Names	Funding Agency	Student Qualification	Program Timeline
Advance and Earn	DYCD	Participants must be 14-24 years old and a resident of one of the five NYC boroughs. Must provide employment authorization documents.	Year-round
Career Connect NYC	NYCPS	Participants must attend an eligible NYCPS school to enroll in the program.	Summer
CareerLaunch	CUNY	Student enrolled in an A.A.S. programs can apply for an apprenticeship through CUNY.	Year-round
SYEP CareerFirst (NYCHA)	DYCD	Students must be 14-24 years old and reside in a contracted NYCHA housing community. Must provide employment authorization documents.	Summer
CBO-led Internship (i.e., Robotics Challenge at NYC First)	Privately Funded	Eligibility criteria is determined by the organization.	Year-round/seasonal
CR Modern Youth Apprenticeship - WBL Activities	NYCPS	This program is offered at school with the CR Modern Youth Apprenticeship initiative. Students must provide employment authorization documents.	Year-round
Cultural Organization (i.e., Science Research Mentorship Program at American Museum of Natural History)	Privately Funded	Eligibility criteria is determined by the organization.	Year-round/seasonal
SYEP Emerging Leaders	DYCD	Students must be 14-24 years old and a resident of one of the five NYC boroughs. Must provide employment authorization documents.	Summer
Employer-led (i.e., Google Interns)	Employer Funded	Eligibility criteria is determined by the organization.	Year-round/seasonal
Future Ready - WBL Activities	NYCPS	This program is offered at school with the FutureReady NYC initiative.	Year-round
Industry Scholars Program	NYCPS	Students must attend an eligible NYCPS school to enroll in the program.	Year-round
SYEP Ladders for Leaders	DYCD	Students must be 14-24 years old, a resident of one of the five NYC boroughs and have a GPA of 3.0 or above. Must provide employment authorization documents.	Summer
Learn and Earn	DYCD	Students must be 14-24 years old and a resident of one of the five NYC boroughs. Must provide employment authorization documents.	Year-round
Learn To Work	NYCPS	Students must attend an eligible NYCPS school to enroll in the program.	Year-round
SYEP Map to Success	DYCD	Students must be 14-24 years old and a resident of one of the five NYC boroughs. Must provide employment authorization documents.	Summer
SYEP Sector-Focused	DYCD	Students must be 14-24 years old and a resident of one of the five NYC boroughs. Must provide employment authorization documents.	Summer
Summer Enrichment Program	NYCPS	Students must attend an eligible NYCPS school to enroll in the program.	Summer
Summer Select	NYCPS	Students must attend an eligible NYCPS school to enroll in the program.	Summer
SummerBridge	NYCPS	Students must attend an eligible NYCPS school to enroll in the program.	Summer
Supplemental WBL Experience Funding	NYCPS	This program is offered at CTE schools for students enrolled in NYSED approved CTE programs.	Year-round
SYEP - CareerReady	DYCD	Students must be 14-24 years old and attend CareerReady SYEP school. Must provide employment authorization documents.	Summer
SYEP - Community-Based	DYCD	Students must be 14-24 years old and a resident of one of the five NYC boroughs. Must provide employment authorization documents.	Summer
SYEP Pathways Program	DYCD	Students must be 14-24 years old and attend SYEP Pathways Program school.	Summer
TOP	NYCPS	Offered at all NYCPS schools, students must have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) to participate.	Year-round
Traditional Job (i.e. Starbucks)	Employer Funded	Eligibility criteria is determined by the organization.	Year-round/seasonal
Train and Earn	DYCD	Students must be 14-24 years old and a resident of one of the five NYC boroughs. Must provide employment authorization documents.	Year-round
Work Learn Grow	DYCD	Students must be 14-24 years old and a resident of one of the five NYC boroughs. Must provide employment authorization documents.	Year-round
Worksite-organized (i.e., Apollo Theater)	Employer Funded	Eligibility criteria is determined by the organization.	Year-round/seasonal



New York City Work-Based Learning Coalition

The New York City Work-Based Learning Coalition is comprised of nonprofits, educational institutions, young people, practitioners, advocates, families, employers, and thought leaders committed to increasing equity, quality, and access to work-based learning opportunities for New York City's youth. We aim to increase equity, quality, and access to work-based learning (WBL) opportunities that prepare all young New Yorkers for career success and economic security in a rapidly changing labor market. We believe that all young people should graduate high school with a better understanding of the full spectrum of opportunities available to them. All students should have equitable access to these opportunities, and all schools must have the support to provide them.

New York City Work-Based Learning Coalition Members

Advocates for Children of New York • Beam Center • Big Picture Learning • Brooklyn Navy Yard • Campaign for Children NYC • CareerWise New York • Coalition for Multiple Pathways to a Diploma • David Fischer • DreamYard • Education Video Center • Ellen Baxt • Expanded Schools • Futures and Options • Goddard Riverside • Hellenic American Neighborhood Action Committee (HANAC) • Henry Street Settlement • ImmSchools • Internationals Network for Public Schools • JobsFirstNYC • Lucy Friedman • NAF • New York Immigration Coalition • New Visions for Public Schools • Nonprofit Staten Island • PENCIL • Per Scholas • SolarONE • South Bronx Community Charter School • Teens Take Charge • The Hispanic Federation • The Pinkerton Foundation • The Student Success Network • The Urban Assembly • uAspire • United Activities Unlimited • United Neighborhood Houses • Young Invincibles