

TURNING OPPORTUNITY INTO ACTION



Today, Opportunity Nation released a plan (<http://bit.ly/1zIgufu>) to tackle the youth unemployment crisis by rallying public, private and nonprofit sectors to help in the charge. Employers are a big piece of the solution to help young Americans understand and gain the skills needed in the labor market to find a path to good jobs and economic success. The National Network of Business and Industry Associations (National Network) is helping realize this goal.

25 business and industry associations, which represent sectors that will account for 75 percent of job growth by 2020, have come together to build new learning and workforce development approaches that prepare students for the jobs of today and tomorrow, while providing workers opportunities for continuous learning. The National Network envisions a world in which students and workers have clear pathways to learning and working in meaningful careers, and employers have a skilled workforce focused on performance, growth and opportunity. Failure to act now could mean 30 million new jobs (and 4.7 million open jobs today) will go unfilled, 5.8 million young people will remain out of school or out of work, businesses will close due to a lack of available, qualified employees, and 7,000 young people will continue to drop out of high school every day.

CONNECTING LEARNING AND WORK: EMPOWERING WORKING LEARNERS

Innovations in technology, continual economic shifts and changing cultural priorities have created a national community of “working learners” – people who work and learn at the same time and are key to empowering businesses for the future. Working learners weave learning opportunities throughout their careers and lives to upgrade their skills, acquire new competencies and apply them across multiple jobs and industries. They navigate transitions between “learning” and “work,” achieving better economic opportunity and quality of life.

The National Network is leading the charge to connect the worlds of learning and work and help our nation’s youth succeed as working learners. We are acting across several fronts to create more opportunities for individuals to gain the economic and social capital needed to succeed. This includes access to learning and credentials that matter, meaningful connections to employers and work experiences, and ways to build skills of economic value throughout their lifetimes.

OUR 3-POINT PLAN

1. Help young people gain on-the-job experiences and harness the power of learning through work

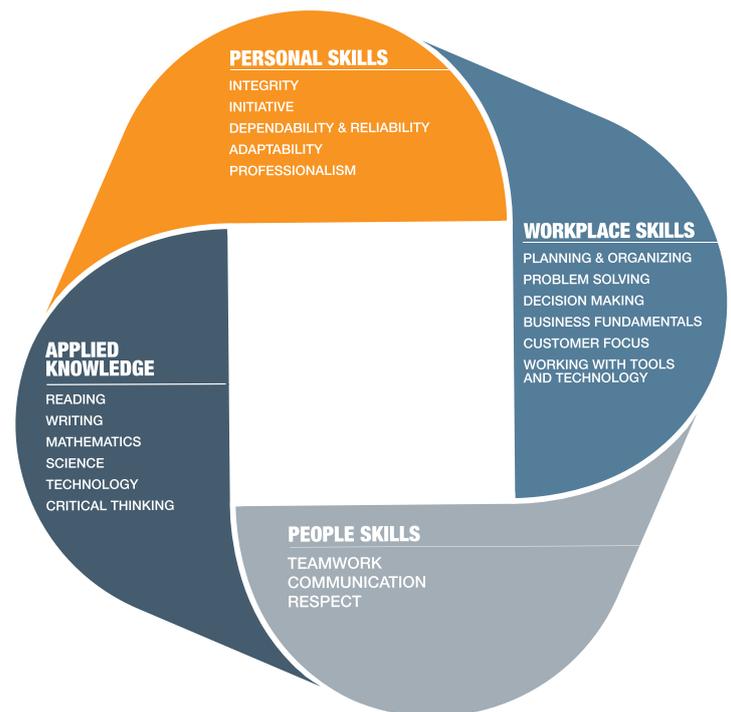
We can ensure more young people are ready for the demands of work by expanding business-led work-and-learn opportunities. Through models like internships, apprenticeships, mentoring and job shadowing, employers can help young people gain and demonstrate necessary “hands-on” skills and behaviors to be better prepared for the workplace. The National Network is promoting work-and-learn models that are mutually valuable for working learners and businesses. We are calling on businesses to offer more of these opportunities. We developed initial tools to help them do just that.

Find out more: <http://bit.ly/1AvAfL2>

2. Ensure that young people gain the right competencies and credentials

Young working learners can expect to have an average of 15 jobs throughout their lifetimes. As new markets emerge, industries evolve and young people take more self-directed approaches to navigating their career paths. This means that working learners and employers both benefit when employers provide support for transitions among learning opportunities and work. One way employers can do this is by helping students, workers and learning providers understand the skills and credentials needed to access and advance in jobs. The Common Employability Skills framework is a first step in providing transparent information about the foundational skills all individuals need for workplace success in the jobs of today and tomorrow, no matter where they work. Additionally, the National Network is identifying industry recognized credentials that have real labor market value for students, workers and employers.

Explore resources: <http://bit.ly/1wj7EDE>



3. Hire young people for the skills and competencies they possess

Recruiting, screening and hiring solely based on degrees or years of experience continually causes employers to miss well-qualified talent. Businesses can better adapt to how working learners are pursuing and preparing for jobs by valuing knowledge, skills, abilities and behaviors they bring to bear. The National Network is calling on employers to use competency based human resources practices to tap more qualified young people and working learners for in-demand jobs. **Find out more:** <http://bit.ly/1DZCOYB>