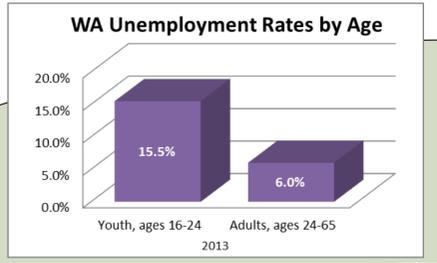


# Connecting Washington's Youth to Work-Based Learning

Since the Great Recession, Washington's young adults have continued to struggle with high unemployment, putting their long-term economic prospects at risk.

1) Over 15 percent of Washingtonians aged 16-24 were unemployed in 2013, nearly double the rate of those aged 25-64. Youth unemployment in Washington is a persistent problem that worsens during economic downturns.



6) During WIOA planning, Washington identified a critical need to improve the interaction between talent-development agencies and industry partners, who often feel overwhelmed by the variety, complexity, and scope of government organizations incorporating work-based learning into their missions.

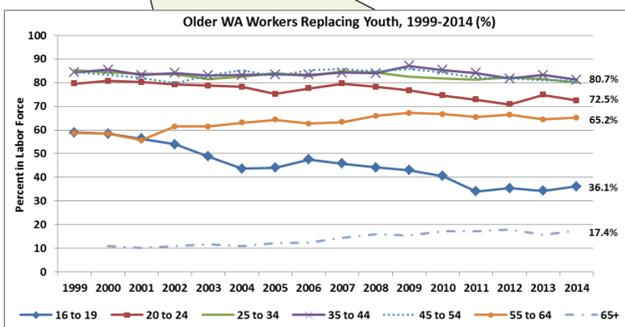
# 15%

## THE CHALLENGE

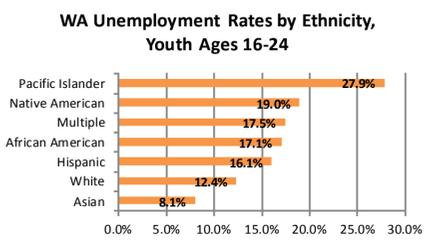
Building stronger partnerships between government, business, labor, and nonprofits to connect youth with work-based learning opportunities in STEM industries facing critical skills gaps.

# \$53,000/yr

5) Roughly half of all Washington STEM jobs are available to workers without a four-year degree, paying an average of \$53,000 a year, 10 percent higher than jobs with similar education requirements.



2) Lack of work experience is a key reason why young people lack employability skills such as punctuality, dressing appropriately, and working as a team. Since 2000, the labor participation rate among Washington's teens has plummeted by 25 percent, the largest decline in participation among any age group.



3) Unemployment rates for minority young adults in particular are significantly higher than the general population of young adults.



4) Washington is fortunate to be the home of many cutting-edge, innovative leaders in STEM fields. The Workforce Board's recent analysis of industry skill gaps found a critical need for qualified technicians and skilled STEM workers in Advanced Manufacturing, Utilities, Transportation, Mining, and other technology-driven industries. STEM fields are second only to healthcare as the state's fastest growing occupational category.

## Two Strategies Addressing this Challenge

### 1. Develop a Web-Based Matching Portal for Work-Based Learning Opportunities

ASSET (Alliance for Student Success in Education and Training program) is Washington's proposed online, centralized clearinghouse that matches businesses interested in offering a work-based learning opportunity with students seeking them. The NGA Policy Academy provides an opportunity to leverage statewide interest in work-based learning to carry through on a project that has enjoyed long-time support, including in legislation sponsored by Governor Inslee, but previously lacked resources to take this idea to completion.



#### Strengthening Partnerships

The Association of Washington Business and Washington State Labor Council have committed to populating the portal with industry matches, working with their members to keep opportunities up-to-date.



#### Building Connections

The portal will link schools and youth service providers to local workforce development councils, who would serve as "caretakers" of the web portal in their respective areas.



#### Innovating New Solutions

Our team has already approached industry partners to sponsor a Hack-a-Thon event: an intensive competition to help create a user-friendly, secure, and effective online portal.

### 2. Convene an Industry Engagement Panel

Washington's NGA Policy Academy Team is convening an Industry Engagement Panel composed of Core and Home Team members to identify how our state's talent development pipeline can deliver better value. The panel will advise our NGA Policy Academy Team on:

- Making work-based learning programs and policy more transparent, accessible, and understandable for businesses.
- Aligning and coordinating "disconnected parts" across systems to meet the needs of businesses.
- Enlisting other businesses and industry associations as partners in identifying, developing, implementing, and investing in solutions to meet their skills needs.



#### Field Guide

The Industry Engagement Panel will develop a guide to building successful work-based learning programs, how to work with students, and tips for navigating the state's labor laws.

