

Work Experience Opens Doors

In the aftermath of the Great Recession, and a still tight job market, Washington's young adults (ages 18-24) continue to struggle with high unemployment, putting at risk their long-term economic prospects and potentially delaying traditional milestones such as home ownership, marriage and children. Work experience and internship opportunities can better connect young people to the labor market and living wage careers.



Alliance for Student Success in Education and Training Program (ASSET Bill - HB 1871 & SB 5754)

Key Elements:

- Existing and new community partnerships will organize efforts to increase work-integrated learning opportunities.
- Technical assistance for employers to help navigate regulations and create more youth work opportunities.
- Web-based matching system will link youth and employers on work-integrated learning opportunities.
- Statewide campaign to encourage work-integrated learning opportunities, particularly in STEM fields.
- Focus on at-risk and disadvantaged youth who are in school.

Work-Integrated Learning Opportunities include: paid and unpaid work and internships, apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships, industry professionals advising in educational programs, mentoring, worksite visits, job shadowing and other ways that blur the line between the classroom and the workplace.



Washington State
Workforce Training
And Education
Coordinating Board

"Fifteen percent, or approximately one in six, recent high school graduates are neither working nor enrolled in school in the year following their high school graduation. These disconnected young adults represent a critical lost asset in Washington's economy."

Multiple Pathways for Young Adults:
A Report to the Washington Legislature on

"Without an opportunity to learn critical skills and earn income, youth are less likely to become the kind of health, productive citizens that are crucial to the long-term strength and competitiveness of our nation."

Patty Stonesifer, Chair
White House Council of Community
Solutions
Young Adult Unemployment, December 2012.

"America has a skills gap that can be closed if our nation will do a better job educating and training its youth, including those who struggle on the path to productive work."

General Colin Powell
Opportunity Road: The Promise and
Challenge of America's Forgotten Youth

"The economic consequences of opportunity youth (youth who are not in school and not working) are enormous. To the taxpayer, each opportunity youth imposes a burden which is equivalent to \$235,680 as a current lump sum."

The Economic Value of Opportunity Youth,
January 2012

Community partnerships link employers with youth

In communities such as Mount Vernon, Tacoma, Bremerton, Vancouver and Spokane, community partnerships are linking employers and students together. Here are a couple of examples.

Inspire Washington in Spokane area -- <http://inspirewashington.org/>

Based in Spokane and serving a large section of Eastern Washington, Inspire Washington is a secure web-based community for students, teachers, parents, and employer-sponsored job coaches.

- Students participate in work-based career activities (company tours, job shadowing, summer internships, mentors).
- 50 employers and career coaches added in the last month.
- At local WorkSource centers, Next Generation Zone, community colleges, high schools.
- Started in June 2012 and in November began ramping up recruiting process.



Source: Inspire Washington

nConnect in Vancouver, WA area -- www.nconnectnw.org/

Using a web-based platform, nConnect provides career-related learning experiences to southwest Washington schools and students. This program connects low-income students with professional mentors.

- Provides low-income students with hands-on exposure to STEM careers.
- Students work a 90-hour internship, while earning high school credits.
- Students earn \$500 stipend, get one-on-one case management and career coaching.
- Almost 200 students from 18 different high schools in Clark and Cowlitz counties have completed internships at 50 local participating employers.

See How Work Experience Can Make a Difference

"This internship is important. It gives you really big insight. As a teenager, you really don't think about a career just yet. You think about having a weekend job, like the rest of your friends."

Valerie Elizondo, 18
Whatcom County



See more success stories, including videos at:

www.wtb.wa.gov/OIPstudents.asp



"Working at a real company doing the real work will really give you a taste of what it's like, what the real world is."

Ramon Llanos, owner
Land Development
Engineering & Surveying,
Ferndale, Washington

"Less work experience today leads to less work experience tomorrow and lower earnings down the road. Disadvantaged teens who work in high school are more likely to remain in high school than their peers who do not work. Teens who work more in high school have an easier time transitioning into the labor market after graduation."

Andrew Sum, Center for Labor Market Studies, Northwestern University