

Pathways Models

The breadth of the opportunity agenda is reflected in emerging state and local pathway programs. State examples highlight approaches by governors of different political parties, while the local examples highlight how organizations from many different sectors have united to build the new programs.

These programs include student-employer apprenticeships and internships, career and technical education, dual enrollment in high school and postsecondary institutions, job placement and training, career academies, boot camps for acquiring discrete knowledge and skills, and student staffing and placement services. Each reflects the importance of students acquiring knowledge and creating and leveraging social networks. Importantly, these programs are **faster and cheaper** pathways to jobs and careers than traditional education settings.

State Models

Delaware Pathways was established in 2014 by then-Democratic Governor Jack Markell to provide college and career preparation for students ages 12 to 19, providing them with school-to-careers pathways aligned with state and regional economic needs.

Middle-school students learn about career options and then take career-related courses when they become high school sophomores or juniors. High school students can take college classes at no cost to families, serve as interns, and earn work credentials. Beginning in the summer before senior year, students participate in a 240-hour paid internship that lasts through the academic year.

The program engages K-12 educators, businesses, postsecondary education, philanthropy, and community organizations. For example, Delaware Tech is the lead agency that arranges work-based experiences. United Way coordinates support services for low-income students. Boys and Girls Clubs and libraries provide after-school services.

Delaware currently offers pathways in fields like advanced manufacturing, engineering, finance, energy, CISCO networking, environmental science, and health care, focusing on so-called middle-skills jobs such as master electricians and dental hygienists.

More than 20,000 students are enrolled in the programs, more than half of the state's high school students. Many also take career-related courses at institutions of higher education and earn credit that can be applied to an associate's degree or other academic certificates.

The United Way of Delaware and the Rodel Foundation of Delaware have coordinated fundraising for the pathways program. Rodel is a supporting organization of the Delaware Community Foundation and as such can solicit and accept grant funding for the program, including state and federal dollars and corporate and private foundation support. The goal is for 60 percent of the funding to come from public sources and the balance from private sources.

Former Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam, a Republican, established the [Drive to 55 Alliance](#) in 2015, a partnership between the private sector and nonprofits intended to equip 55 percent of Tennesseans with a college degree or training certificate by 2025. Its five programs create partnerships among school districts, postsecondary institutions, employers, and community organizations.

[Tennessee Promise Scholarships](#) provide support for tuition and fees after other aid has been applied (so-called last-dollar support) for high school graduates attending community or technical colleges, including linking scholarship recipients with private sector volunteer mentors and nonprofit partners. A sister program, Tennessee Reconnect, offers last-dollar grants for adults to earn an associate's degree or technical certificate, tuition-free.

[Tennessee Pathways](#) promotes a college and career approach to K–12 schools and grants a Tennessee Department of Education [pathways certification](#) to programs with strong alignment among high school programs, postsecondary partners, and regional employment opportunities. The SAILS program is for high school students who did not reach the ACT college readiness benchmarks in mathematics. It provides in-person and online learning so students can complete math modules for postsecondary credit so they don't need remedial math in college.

The [Tennessee Labor Education Alignment Program](#) (LEAP) is directed to four-year postsecondary institutions. It links them with employers so colleges can offer programs aligned with actual employer workforce needs. Linking all these programs together is an online portal called [CollegeForTennessee](#), providing planning tools for career and college for students, counselors, and educators.

All five programs are supported primarily by funds from the state's budget supplemented by dollars from the federal Carl D. Perkins Career Technical Education Act. Additional support comes from national and Tennessee-based foundations and individual donors.

Both Tennessee and Delaware are members of the Pathways to Prosperity Network, a collaboration of states and regions launched by Jobs for the Future, to develop college and career pathways.

Local Models

A growing number of civic entrepreneurs are creating innovative middle and high school designs that integrate schools and students with employers and work. They also create novel forms of social capital for young people by initiating new relationships that expand their knowledge and social networks. These programs combine habits of mind and association to lay a durable foundation so that young people have the knowledge and relationships that help them pursue opportunity. Here are seven examples.

School district, charter school, and university partnerships. [Wiseburn School District](#) in Los Angeles County and its partner [Da Vinci Charter School](#) have over one hundred business and nonprofit partners offering students programs that include internships, mentorships, workshops, boot camps, and consultancies, including student mental health and counseling services.

Students can also pursue associate's or bachelor's degree programs through UCLA Extension and El Camino College or [College for America](#). The K-12 program is supported by public dollars from per pupil allotments and other state and local program support. Postsecondary Pell grants are used to support tuition and other allowable expenses. Some small support is received from foundations and individual donors.

Charter school and university partnerships. In Boston, [Match Public Charter School](#), in partnership with [Southern New Hampshire University](#), assists students with college completion and career placement, including student coaching and mentoring and accredited associate's and bachelor's degrees. The program includes comprehensive career services like job searches and support through the hiring process for up to two years after graduation.

Duet, an online career-counseling service, receives fee-for-service income from Southern New Hampshire University for counseling and other student support services. Students receive federal student aid through Pell grants to pay for postsecondary education costs. Private dollars supplement these revenue streams. Duet projects that when enrollment doubles from its current 400 students to 800 students, the program will no longer need private dollars.

Catholic school and corporate partnerships. [Cristo Rey](#) is a network of 35 Catholic high schools in 22 states that integrates four years of academics with work experience through its corporate work-study program. This separate nonprofit places students in an entry-level professional job at one of their 3,400 corporate partners for five days a month. Forty percent of students are not Catholic and 98 percent are students of color. Students earn 60 percent of tuition through employment, with the balance coming from fundraising and a small family contribution. In some states, Cristo Rey is able to access public dollars from K-12 school choice programs.

Public-private partnerships. The Atlanta business community, Fulton County Schools, and Junior Achievement created [3-D Education \(3-DE\)](#), a public-private partnership. This project-based learning approach includes a six-week case study beginning in eleventh grade that pairs students with coaches in off-campus industrial and professional settings. Examples of the workforce pathways they offer students include business and technology, entrepreneurship, marketing and management, and financial services. Support for 3-DE operational costs come from local philanthropies, with all school-related program costs paid for by the school district's per-pupil allocations.

Citywide partnerships. In New Orleans, the education, business, and civic partnership [YouthForce NOLA](#) works with open enrollment charter high schools, offering career exposure and work experiences, soft-skills training, coaching for students, and paid student internships for seniors. This is followed by 90 hours of work placement in a career pathway where opportunities include biology and health sciences, digital media and IT, and skilled crafts like architecture and water management. It also has a family engagement program educating parents about the career pathways program. Financial support comes mostly from philanthropic organizations, though local government support pays for workforce youth intern stipends.

Postsecondary expansion. Southern New Hampshire University recently purchased the Indianapolis-based [Kenzie Academy](#), a venture-funded technology and apprenticeship program for young people, including high school graduates, formerly incarcerated individuals, and those with master's degrees seeking new jobs. The academy offers credentialed online programs in software engineering and UX Design with an apprenticeship in Kenzie Studio, the company's consulting arm. To make the programs accessible, students have an income-sharing agreement that delays tuition payment until they have a job paying at least \$40,000. The program is now a nonprofit operating division of SNHU.

Technology support. Finally, many communities use technology platforms to build virtual mentoring opportunities and networks between students and community partners. Examples include [CommunityShare](#), [Imblaze](#), and [Nepriis](#). All these programs use online networks and resources to connect community members, industry professionals, parents, and organizations with educators who want to create real-world learning opportunities for their students.

Non-School Models

Innovative career pathways also are springing up outside of the K-12 system to diversify young adults' career options after high school.

Two-year, four-year college collaborations. [Come to Believe Network](#) is a two-year commuter community college program with its own full-time faculty and year-round calendar. It is housed and hosted by a four-year institution that provides shared resources such as facilities, back-office services, library and other academic supports, and career services. It offers associate's degrees and provides students with such support services as meals, laptops, tutoring, and career development. Counselors help students explore careers and pursue job searches. They also work with employers to recruit students seeking work experience and employment. Students earn degrees prepared for the workforce or a four-year institution with little or no debt.

Statewide programs. [Building Futures](#) is a Rhode Island Registered Apprenticeship program that works with 29 public, private, and nonprofit organizations on apprenticeships in such fields as construction, health care, manufacturing, commercial fisheries, information technology, and marine trades. It partners with the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, Department of Transportation, and Office of Civil Rights. Employers co-design programs with Building Futures staff and fund student training, with a focus on individuals from low-income backgrounds. The program includes work placement and wage progression. Apprentices earn a credential accepted by industries and employers across the United States.

Postsecondary partnerships. [CodePath](#) is a national nonprofit that prepares underserved populations for technical careers. It partners with over 50 universities and 50 companies to offer no-cost coding courses, mentorships, and career support. CodePath supplements college-level courses with campus-based and online computer science courses, taught by tech company instructors, with about half offered for academic credit. Students undertake projects based on industry problems. Training ends with a virtual summer course, which prepares students for technical interviews with top companies.

Stand-alone nonprofit. [Generation USA](#) is the American affiliate of [Generation](#), founded by McKinsey & Company. It prepares, places, and supports individuals in pathways programs for jobs in IT, healthcare, and customer service. The nonprofit partners with employers and community colleges to design and deliver four- to 12-week programs free to students. The program is designed for the unemployed, underemployed, and those facing job displacement, with priority given to Black and Latinx applicants, women, and those without a four-year degree.

The nonprofit's [Rising Talent](#) program offers students extra support and one-on-one guidance. Virtual career advising sessions provide students and alumni with one-on-one coaching.