

# PATHWAYS TO AN INCLUSIVE ECONOMY:

## The Future of Workers Task Force Blueprint



**NYC**



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# LETTER FROM MAYOR ERIC ADAMS

Ever since taking office as the 110th Mayor of New York City, my administration has focused on finding solutions for the challenges faced by everyday New Yorkers. This is the objective that binds together our team’s priorities, from public safety to childcare. It’s also why, in my first year in office, we made historic investments in summer jobs for youth and new career readiness programs in our public schools, and set forth a visionary plan for sustained and equitable economic growth.

In this spirit, in August 2022 I signed Executive Order 22 to overhaul New York City’s historically fragmented and siloed approach to talent and workforce development. For the first time, we set clear responsibilities for job training and employment services within City government, and named a series of priority objectives. City residents should be on track for economically secure careers by age 25, working New Yorkers should earn a living wage, local employers should have access to the local talent they need to thrive, and data should show progress in tackling historic disparities in employment.

Having set that destination, we needed a map. To draw it, the Executive Order called for convening a Future of Workers Task Force charged with setting a Citywide vision for talent and workforce development. Importantly, the Task Force drew upon the creativity and civic spirit of our city’s employers, educators, labor leaders, nonprofit providers, and philanthropic community–on-the-ground-practitioners whose life experiences and perspectives always should inform government actions and priorities.

With this Blueprint, the Task Force has produced an analysis and set of proposed “Strategic Levers” that can help lift New York City to become more inclusive and more prosperous. My team and I are proud and excited to lead the effort to bring this vision to life, and look forward to partnering with our city’s industry, community leaders, workers, students, and families–to get it done.



Eric Adams  
Mayor of the City of New York

# LETTER FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

Many members of the Future of Workers Task Force that we were honored to co-chair have spent years, or even decades, grappling with the questions of how to build a more responsive and effective system of talent development that benefits New York City’s students, jobseekers, workers, employers, and economy. More than a few had served on previous advisory groups, under prior mayors, with a similar charge. Not surprisingly, this prompted the question: “Why is this time different?”

Ultimately, two answers emerged. The first came from the Executive Order that set the foundation for change and gave members confidence that the effort to solve the problems of talent development would not end when the Task Force concluded. Recognizing that theirs was not the first administration to attempt to fix workforce development, Mayor Adams and his team resolved to take a key step that their predecessors had not. In addition to convening the Task Force to define a system-wide strategy, Executive Order 22 explicitly empowered the Mayor’s Office of Talent and Workforce to implement that strategy, as well as to manage key partnerships and relationships and oversee major public expenditures, among other responsibilities. For the first time, it is clear both internally and externally where the buck stops in New York City’s workforce policy landscape.

The second reason that we believe “this time is different” emerged organically as the Task Force conducted its work. New York City’s workforce ecosystem features no shortage of effective individual programs and pockets of excellence in service delivery. What has always been missing is the connective tissue of systems, structures, norms, and culture to fill the space between programs, connect subsystems, and support students, jobseekers, workers, and employers every step of the way.

The Strategic Levers that comprise the heart of this Blueprint represent the best thinking of this group to fill in those missing systemic elements required for sustained public private partnership. Once implemented, they will yield stronger returns on public and private investments in talent development—and, perhaps even more important, break down the silos that have characterized this ecosystem for so long and reduced its efficacy.

We thank Mayor Adams for inviting us to support this effort, and the members of the Task Force for bringing their experience, insights and commitment that resonate through this Blueprint. We look forward to continued partnership in the service of building a talent ecosystem that will support growth and equity for all New Yorkers.

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Chancellor David Banks  
New York City Public Schools

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Carmine Di Sibio  
Global CEO and Chairman, EY

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# OVERVIEW

## Acknowledgements

The findings, analysis, and recommendations of this Blueprint stem from the formal meetings of the Future of Workers Task Force, as well as countless informal discussions and exchanges between Chairs, members, advisors and staff from numerous city agencies over the months following its initial convening last fall. The Task Force met formally six times: three as a full group and three in its five working groups. Sub-groups of the working groups also met to address outstanding concerns, dig deeper into specific research, and to pressure test the recommendations. The Blueprint was compiled by the Mayor’s Office for Talent and Workforce Development with the support of First Deputy Mayor Sheena Wright, Deputy Mayor Maria Torres-Springer, and their teams. Thanks to the New York City Workforce Funders for funding the consulting team of David Fischer, Ally Margolis, Apurva Mehrotra, Diallo Shabazz, and Stacy Woodruff who provided top-notch facilitation and editorial support, and to Delivery Associates for logistical and project management support. This Blueprint was designed by Mayor’s Office of Creative Communications.

## Pathways to an Inclusive Economy

*“We are reimagining our city’s workforce development system from the bottom up, improving education, expanding job training, and creating employment on ramps at every stage of the process so that New Yorkers from all walks of life can benefit.”*

*–Mayor Eric Adams, State of the City Address, January 26, 2023*

**In August 2022, Mayor Eric Adams signed [Executive Order 22 \(EO22\)](#), emphasizing that talent is New York City’s greatest asset and the key to an inclusive economy where prosperity is shared. EO22 set forth six citywide talent objectives:**

- By age 25, young New Yorkers should launch successfully into fulfilling, economically secure careers.
- All New Yorkers in paid employment should earn a living wage.
- Employers should have access to local talent they need to thrive.
- Demographics of the workforce should reflect those of the city’s population.
- Wage and employment data should show progress in reducing inequity.
- Public resources should be efficiently and effectively invested.

To help achieve these objectives, EO22 strengthened the Mayor’s Office of Talent and Workforce Development (NYC Talent), created a Talent and Workforce Development Interagency Cabinet to coordinate the dozens of City agencies and offices with workforce responsibilities, and convened a Future of Workers Task Force. The Task Force, convened between October 2022 and January 2023,



included employers, educators, labor leaders, providers, and civic and philanthropic leaders to create a blueprint for significant system change over the course of the Mayor's term.<sup>1</sup>

This document is that blueprint. Over the course of its deliberations, the Task Force has grappled with the deficits of New York City's workforce system—the information gaps that hamper decision-making and limit accountability, the absence of shared systems and infrastructure to enable collaboration across stakeholder groups, and perhaps above all the lack of shared mission, vision, and culture both within and beyond city government. The alternative vision laid out below, and the recommendations to implement that vision, builds on the City's assets, seeks to address the deficits, and represents the best thinking of the more than 80 leaders who participated in the six meetings and multiple working groups of the Task Force.

## Building a Talent System Worthy of New York City

Since its founding, New York City has evolved to become a center for trade, manufacturing, finance, culture, and information, with each economic identity building upon what had come before. As these changes unfolded across decades and centuries, the economy grew along with the city, and New York staked its claim as “the capital of the world.” Twice already in this century alone—following the 9/11 attacks, and again after the COVID-19 pandemic—the city has come roaring back to defy predictions of its decline. But even as New York City's total economic activity has topped \$2 trillion per year, the rewards of prosperity remain highly concentrated.

We are on the cusp of another dramatic economic shift that offers grounds for both optimism and concern. A convergence of technological and labor market trends, led by but not limited to automation and e-commerce, will transform more than one billion jobs globally by 2030. The good news is that these trends are projected to create more jobs than they destroy: while automation is likely to displace 85 million positions, analysts expect 97 million new jobs to come open in new fields.<sup>2</sup> Even better, many of these will be “good jobs,” paying high wages and requiring commensurately high levels of skill.

The problem, locally as well as nationally, is that our current network of educational institutions, workforce programs, and employers is ill-equipped to adapt to rapid changes to the labor market. Too often, the key institutions that support and rely on talent operate on outdated assumptions, using program models, analytical frameworks, and operating practices that may have worked in the past when there were more jobs that demanded fewer skills and the skills that were required remained relevant longer. Additionally, these institutions do not efficiently match talent to opportunity, leaving employers and jobseekers to navigate an unmapped system.

Evidence that these institutions, practices, and programs are falling short is apparent. Unemployment among Black New Yorkers is now more than nine times that of whites.<sup>3</sup> Nearly

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix on page 38 for a full list of Task Force members.

<sup>2</sup> Bain & Company, “Taking Flight: How to Maximize the Potential of Career-Connected Learning,” Chris Bierly and Abigail Smith, Jan. 25, 2022; online at <https://www.bain.com/insights/taking-flight-how-to-maximize-the-potential-of-career-connected-learning/>.

<sup>3</sup> James A. Parrott and L.K. Moe, “NYC's Unsettled COVID-19 ERA Labor Market: The Case for an Active Labor Market Policy,” January 2023; online at [https://nycetc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/WPTI\\_Active-Labor-Market-Policy\\_0323\\_rv5\\_DR-digital.pdf](https://nycetc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/WPTI_Active-Labor-Market-Policy_0323_rv5_DR-digital.pdf)

1 in every 6 New Yorkers between the ages of 16 and 24 is out of school and out of work. At the same time, countless New York City employers are struggling to fill job openings—yet too few city employers perceive students who attend New York public schools or the City University of New York as their go-to source of talent. Nor are these the only shortcomings. Job quality itself varies wildly, and many positions do not pay a living wage.<sup>4</sup> The demographics of New York City’s workforce reflect multiple inequities in terms of earnings, wealth, ability to work remotely, educational attainment, advancement, race, and gender. Moreover, policymakers and other interested parties do not have full access to the data or information they need to make effective decisions about program initiatives or resource investments across the talent and workforce development system.

However, these significant challenges conceal quite a bit of good news: the past two decades have seen tangible progress in virtually every component of the talent system. Recent successes include increased high school graduation and college enrollment rates in the years before the COVID-19 pandemic, growth in job placements by workforce programs, closer coordination between programs that offer education and those focused on work experience and career readiness, new and effective corporate social responsibility campaigns, and much more. Without question, New York City today invests more money into, and yields a much stronger return on, efforts to educate, train, and place students and jobseekers into employment, compared to twenty or even ten years ago. These accomplishments provide a strong foundation to build upon and should give us confidence for the challenging and critical work ahead. (See Appendix 38 for an overview of NYC workforce reforms in recent decades).

## Five Strategic Levers for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Talent Development System

The Task Force concluded that the many pockets of excellence across NYC’s workforce landscape are obscured and their impact is dampened by interconnected failures at the system level. These include a lack of information and accountability, inadequate codification of best practice, and an absence of coherent, cross-sector leadership. Systemic problems require systemic solutions; the traditional approach of only developing and investing in new program models will not suffice. This “program-rich, but system-poor” ecosystem has produced some valuable results for the jobseekers and employers directly served but does not yield results that scale to meet the needs of NYC residents, employers, and our economy.

The path to economic security, sustained growth and shared prosperity requires coherence, coordination, and collaboration across the City’s educational systems, nonprofits, labor unions, public agencies, community-based organizations, industry associations, employers, and elected officials to support, educate, train, place into jobs, sustain and advance New Yorkers into and through their chosen careers. Funded with public, private and philanthropic dollars, these institutions all contribute to the city’s talent development system. To achieve the outcomes we seek as a City,

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<sup>4</sup> A “living wage” is typically defined as the amount of income necessary for an individual or family to meet their basic needs. New York City does not currently have a standard approach to calculating a living wage for its residents. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology has created one of the more widely used living wage calculators ([see here](#)) which can be used for different household sizes and geographies. The Economic Policy Institute has a [Family Budget Calculator](#) which is also meant to capture the income necessary for families to attain “an adequate standard of living.”

and as outlined in Executive Order 22, requires that these institutions unite as a 21<sup>st</sup> century talent development system that serves New Yorkers well, regardless of their income, neighborhood, race, ability or country of origin.

To reboot our talent development system and create multiple pathways to success for New York residents and employers, the Task Force Recommends that we focus on five strategic levers to encourage and enable an effective talent development system.

- 1. Empower the Workforce Development Board (WDB)**, to catalyze a reimagined talent system that performs four key roles: Strategist, Convener, Manager, and Champion to make progress towards achieving the citywide talent goals.
- 2. Expand and Support Apprenticeships** as a tested and proven approach to positioning talent for success, training workers to meet employer needs, and efficiently matching talent to opportunity.
- 3. Launch the NYC Talent Investment Fund** for public and private funders to jointly invest in promising program models and services that fill critical system needs and demonstrate best practice.
- 4. Establish Shared Impact Metrics** to articulate and report system-level outcomes and measure progress toward strategic citywide goals including addressing historic employment and wage disparities.
- 5. Build an Employer-Facing “Front Door”** as part of the City’s Talent Portal to better match talent to opportunity, encourage employer engagement in talent development, and facilitate a more user-friendly experience for partnering employers.

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<sup>5</sup> Under the current leadership of Chancellor David Banks and Chancellor Felo Matos Rodriguez, both NYC Public Schools and CUNY are increasingly leveraging existing educational funding to support student career success and future economic security.

<sup>6</sup> Defined on the NYC Workforce Data Portal website as “resume help, interview workshop, job referral, etc. [...] vocational and employment-based training, industry credentials, job skills development, or academic opportunities. This does not include activities such as registration, enrollment, assessment, or brief orientations (for example, those shorter than one hour).”

## Defining New York City’s Talent Development System

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The Future of Workers Task Force intentionally takes an expansive view of talent and workforce development, focusing on developing talent while students are enrolled in New York City Public Schools, upskilling and supporting lifelong learning of adults, and prioritizing populations who face historic employment and wage disparities. It defines talent and workforce development services as including programs and activities that help students, jobseekers, and workers prepare for or directly secure employment, job retention or career advancement, as well as those that help employers fill their current and projected future talent needs. Services for students, jobseekers and workers can range from initial career exploration in middle school, to helping adult jobseekers utilize online job search functions, to delivering lifelong learning opportunities and advanced skills training for career changers or incumbent workers looking to advance. Services for employers can include helping them fill open positions, retraining current workers to meet new needs, or supporting managers and HR departments with policies and practices that improve worker retention and performance.

New York City invests approximately \$800 million annually for a broad set of talent and workforce development programs offered across dozens of City agencies and offices. This total does not include the vast majority of funding to NYC Public Schools and CUNY for their degree programs which combined account for more than \$30 billion per year.<sup>5</sup> With that \$800 million, government agencies responsible to New York City or State either directly provide or, in most cases, contract with nonprofit and for-profit organizations to deliver workforce services. Several of these agencies



These five levers together establish the necessary infrastructure for sustained partnerships that will drive system change and foster the continuous improvement necessary to address system deficiencies and adapt quickly to emerging opportunities. These are cross cutting, interrelated structures and resources intended to make multiple programs and subsystems more effective while building the coherence and consistency of the full talent development system.

Two core insights that emerged over the course of the Task Force’s meetings underlie the five levers. First, the major stakeholder groups of the city’s talent ecosystem—education, employers, funders, government, and providers—must build and invest in the infrastructure necessary to sustain partnership and strategic alignment. This commitment to infrastructure is especially important in a city the size and scale of New York. Without such infrastructure, we continually wrestle with diseconomies of scale including pervasive silos and fragmentation.

**Second, in addition to thinking and acting collectively, each stakeholder group must go beyond “business as usual” to change aspects of its institutional practices and incentive structures:**

- **Educational institutions** must prioritize student career success outcomes, including a significant expansion of “earning and learning” opportunities beginning in high school—not simply push students toward completing the next course, grade, or degree without considering what skills, professional networks, and experiences will best position them to flourish in the labor market.
- **Employers** must examine their recruiting, hiring, retention, and advancement practices to achieve the well-documented benefits of a diverse team of workers. This requires their understanding of all of the dimensions required to build a truly inclusive and equitable workplace culture.

manage federal funds that are specifically targeted to specific populations and types of programs.

These investments fund services include exploration to help students and jobseekers better understand their own potential career interests and the labor market; career development services<sup>6</sup> that include resume help, interview workshops job referrals, and job placements; vocational and employment-based training, industry credentials, job skills development, or academic opportunities; and paid internship, apprenticeship, and other short-term work opportunities. These investments serve almost 500,000 New Yorkers in any given year.<sup>7</sup>

Beyond the public sector, the workforce ecosystem includes nonprofit and other organizations that directly provide services (whether via City contracts, philanthropic grants, or fee-for-service arrangements), private funders from the philanthropic and corporate communities whose organizational giving combines to total approximately \$80 to 90 million per year, employers who individually and collectively engage with programs and services as both partners and “end-users,” advocates who support more and better workforce services, and researchers. Importantly, and in keeping with the vision Mayor Adams articulated in Executive Order 22, the Task Force drew its members overwhelmingly from the non-government groups.

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<sup>7</sup> The NYC Workforce Data Portal has data sharing agreements with five City agencies – Department of Parks and Recreation, Department of Small Business Services, Department of Youth and Community Development, Human Resources Administration, and the New York Public Housing Authority. It does not include any other agencies or Mayoral Offices. Nor does it capture NYCPS or CUNY students unless they also participated in workforce programs. For full methodology, please visit the NYC Workforce Data Portal at <https://workforcedata.nyc.gov/>.

- **Funders** must make a conscious and collective effort to avoid further fracturing the system by resourcing duplicative efforts or investing in bespoke program models that cannot be scaled to ease systemic pain points. They need to develop way to incentivize collaboration, invest in intermediaries, and braid together different funding streams.
- **Provider organizations** must seek opportunities to collaborate with other organizations, leveraging their respective strengths to maximize the limited resources available.
- **Government** must set conditions and target investments to enable all stakeholders to collaboratively fulfill their roles within the system using its funding power and convening authority to help cohere the system and align workforce services to larger economic development and equity goals.

The Task Force believes that these five levers respond to these key insights and when implemented will produce the collective result needed to make progress on the citywide talent objectives. They are interconnected and interdependent. For example, the Workforce Development Board (WDB) is intended to oversee the Talent Investment Fund as well as other critical resources, support development of the employer-facing front door, advance citywide apprenticeship goals, and maintain a public-facing dashboard of the Shared Impact Metrics. Each of the levers has important implications, and offers substantial potential value, for multiple stakeholders across the talent development ecosystem.

The next section of this Blueprint explores these levers in detail. The Blueprint concludes with a set of success conditions and benchmarks for the vital work ahead.



# STRATEGIC LEVER 1: EMPOWER THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

## WHY NYC SHOULD DO THIS

Two common and longstanding complaints about New York City's talent development system—both shared by the Task Force—are that the system does not produce shared results that reflect the quality of its component parts, and that the work happens in silos. As we note throughout this Blueprint, there are a number of reasons why these problems have persisted across the years, including misaligned incentives, failures of communication, diseconomies of scale, and lack of needed infrastructural elements. Serving to perpetuate all these issues has been the absence of a “center of gravity” within the ecosystem: one entity designed to speak with, and for, stakeholders across the system, broadly empowered to play a leadership role on strategy, resource development, conflict resolution, and more.

The importance of such an entity is no secret. In fact, federal policymakers have highlighted the need for this function, and even required local areas to create it as a condition of receiving funding for workforce services, through successive major pieces of legislation over the last 40 years. Under the current Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), local areas must convene and sustain a Workforce Development Board (WDB), with certain required members including a chair from the private sector.

But while New York City does have a WDB, it has never enjoyed the necessary authority to play the leadership role envisioned under WIOA. That this disempowerment persisted under a very ideologically and stylistically varied series of mayors suggests a failure to appreciate the importance and potential value of the Board, an unwillingness to cede authority, or both.

*The Future of Workers Task Force urges Mayor Adams and City leadership to truly empower the WDB to provide coherent leadership across New York City's talent development system. The Task Force believes that doing so will unlock far-ranging improvements across the talent development landscape. Indeed, many of the other recommendations within this Blueprint envision a direct role for the WDB, from creating a Talent Investment Fund (see Strategic Lever 3) through which public and private funders can braid resources to drive program approaches aligned to newly defined design guidelines, to publishing Shared Impact Metrics through which the public and the Board itself can hold policymakers accountable for system performance, to catalyzing a broad set of stakeholders to exponentially increase apprenticeships. An energized and reconstituted WDB will bring together key stakeholders from across the city's workforce community—employers, training providers, educational institutions, funders, union leadership, community-based organizations and more— around a common agenda and a shared set of goals.*

**Based on a scan of national best practices and its own deliberations, the Task Force suggests the Board play four vital roles:**

- 1. Strategist.** The WDB will define system priorities to develop and connect talent pipelines that lead to career success and economic security for students, jobseekers, and incumbent workers while helping employers fill their current and future talent needs. Examples of the Board's Strategist role include:

- Soliciting input from employers, the nonprofit community, and other stakeholders to help shape responses to major federal competitive funding opportunities that could yield tens of millions of dollars to support workforce services in New York City;
  - Determining ways to accelerate the expansion of apprenticeship.
- 2. Convener.** The Board will bring together key stakeholders through full quarterly meetings, standing and ad hoc committees, and other specific events and venues to shape and refine the agenda for the talent development ecosystem. In its Convener role, the WDB will:
- Establish standing committees focusing on areas such as Youth Services and Data and Impact, including members drawn from beyond the Board.
  - In partnership with key stakeholders, identify strategies to improve job quality for occupations critical to the city's health and prosperity.
- 3. Manager.** The WDB will conduct oversight of all workforce programs and expenditures as well as overall system performance, tracking and reporting on progress toward clearly stated goals aligned to overall strategy, and addressing problems as they arise. Ways in which the Board will fulfill its Manager responsibilities will be to:
- Develop and publish a regular Dashboard of Shared Impact Metrics (see p. 15): key indicators measuring progress toward system goals, including those defined in Executive Order 22,
  - Ensure all programs to share data are using the Workforce Data Portal.
  - Ensure that talent and workforce development nonprofits who contract with the City are paid in a timely fashion
- 4. Champion.** Individually and collectively, Board members will amplify system priorities, utilize and promote public workforce services, spread word about program and partnership opportunities, and advocate for needed state and federal policy changes. Examples of the Board's Champion function would be its members:
- Leading seasonal hiring campaigns to connect out-of-school/out-of-work young adults to summer or winter work opportunities.
  - Expanding apprenticeship to serve more occupations and people who face barriers to employment.
  - Mobilizing key stakeholders to develop and advocate for a shared policy agenda.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Discussions with Future of Workers Task Force members and other high-profile stakeholders made plain the single most important success condition for a re-energized WDB. It must have a meaningful role and real authority, reinforced by consistent support from the Mayor and other top City leaders, as well as reciprocal buy-in from high-profile participating employers, funders, and other leaders beyond the public sector. The current WDB, which includes several members serving on the Task Force, has done as much as it can without a clear mandate from the administration, but has lacked the authority or profile to address the systemic issues described in this Blueprint.



## Transforming the Workforce Development Board

	Current State	Future State
<b>Membership</b>	Low-profile; varied engagement	High-profile with members making and keeping specific commitments related to talent and workforce development, serving on/leading committees, assisting in securing resources, and mobilizing additional champions to contribute to meeting citywide objectives.
<b>Authority</b>	Limited to responsive sign-off on City expenditures related to WIOA	Broad and proactive regarding WIOA and competitive funding opportunities; advisory on other federal streams (TANF, Perkins et al)
<b>Committees</b>	Two standing (Executive, Youth) and several dormant	Multiple standing committees (see below) as well as ad hoc working groups responding to specific opportunities and challenges
<b>Staffing support</b>	1.5 FTE from NYC Talent; not highly focused on WDB activities	At least 5 senior FTEs within Talent as well as distributed support from City agencies across the Interagency Talent Cabinet

**The Task Force believes that the WDB’s specific responsibilities must include:**

- Setting broad policy direction and goals in workforce development, and beyond just the scope of WIOA
- Raising additional resources, including public dollars through advocacy and applications to state/ federal funding opportunities, and private resources through engagement with corporate and philanthropic partners including for the Talent Investment Fund
- Publishing information on system performance, including a dashboard of Shared Impact Metrics and an annual report providing a narrative account of progress
- Informing development of shared criteria to inform RFPs, using the Design Guidelines described elsewhere in this Blueprint (see p. 26)
- Continuously engaging with community stakeholders, including youth, low-wage workers, and other groups that utilize public workforce services to understand performance quality and identify and address shortcomings.

Perhaps as important as what the Board is empowered to do is who will do it. In public policy as in so much else, perception helps shape reality, and the perception of the WDB’s importance will depend to a great extent upon the individuals who agree to serve or otherwise support its work. By federal statute, a majority of members, including the Chair, must come from the employer

community; those members should represent a diversity of economic sectors and personal backgrounds while holding decision-making roles within their organizations. Their non-employer counterparts should include recognized field leaders from the nonprofit community, philanthropy, educational institutions, and organized labor, as well as government. The WDB must be capacious enough to reflect and represent the full range of institutional perspectives across the talent development ecosystem, yet small and coherent enough to build a culture of trust and engagement. And, as Mayor Adams says, “to get stuff done.”

**Toward that goal, and to accomplish the responsibilities set forth above, the WDB should maintain a number of standing committees. In addition to an Executive Committee composed of leading WDB members from the private sector, City government, the nonprofit and philanthropic fields, education, and labor, these should include:**

- **Data and Impact** (see sidebar right), to leverage the institutional expertise of key stakeholders and leading researchers to inform board priorities and support the ecosystem including review of ongoing occupational and labor market analysis, and determining and reporting on the metrics that matter most for making progress on the citywide talent objectives in EO22.
- **Fundraising and Resource Allocation**, to identify opportunities, build the value proposition for, and work with partners to submit for philanthropic, federal, state, and philanthropic grant proposals.
- **Small and Mid-Sized Business**, to ensure that the overwhelming majority of New York City employers with fewer than 100 workers are seen, served, and supported by public programs and systems that too often have overlooked them in the past.
- **Youth Services**, focused on helping to prepare and position young New Yorkers for career success and economic security as well as identifying new models and opportunities toward achieving that objective.
- **Reskilling Adults**, to prioritize and help support programs serving adult jobseekers and incumbent workers as well as the employers looking to partner to train and upskill talent.

## Data and Impact Standing Committee

Without exception, the five Strategic Levers the Task Force have identified will require better information than New York City currently has available. Ongoing data analysis is necessary for the WDB to carry out its Strategist and Manager roles, the Design Guidelines and Impact Metrics to enable continuous improvement and to make smart decisions.

Yet responsibility for data has been both everywhere and nowhere within city government and the broader field. In a real sense, we don't even know what we don't know: rarely if ever can City officials, or for that matter private funders, speak with authority about the long-term labor market impacts of different interventions.

The WDB can take a long step toward grounding practice in data and evidence by creating and robustly supporting a Data and Impact Standing Committee (DISC). Supported by a dedicated research team housed in NYC Talent, the DISC will convene leading researchers and analysts from government, industry, and the nonprofit community. It will help define both the Design Guidelines and System Impact Metrics, and serve as a critical connector to and validator of those metrics for the workforce community at large. Importantly, the DISC will assess and advise on better utilization of existing resources such as the New York City Workforce Data Portal and state-level Wage Record Data—resources that offer vast potential to deepen our understanding of services and impacts but have gone largely unmined.

### Specific responsibilities of the DISC should include:

- Regularly reviewing the Shared Impact Metrics (see Strategic Lever 4)

Additional committees and ad hoc committees will also form to address specific populations, industries, issues, initiatives, and opportunities as needed. For example, the WDB could create an ad hoc committee to explore how nonprofit organizations that provide workforce services can more effectively attract, fairly compensate, and retain high quality staff. Importantly, WIOA authorizes WDBs to appoint members to Committees who do not formally serve on the full Board. In this way, the WDB can and should engage a much wider selection of voices in the vital deliberations of these Committees. NYC Talent will work with the Interagency Talent Cabinet to staff the WDB and its committees.

## NEXT STEPS

An empowered and reinvigorated Workforce Development Board can catalyze a more effective, equitable, and accessible talent and workforce development system. The first three steps toward achieving this goal will be for the Mayor's Office to reconstitute the Board with an infusion of new membership, and make two public commitments: to honor its leadership role on setting system strategy and to provide sufficient staffing support through NYC Talent and the Interagency Workforce Cabinet to support the WDB, including its committees and ongoing operations.

The new Board should be up and running no later than mid-2023, with the mayor having ongoing engagement with the group. By articulating a clear set of priorities for the following 12 months, with specific activities for all four of the roles described above, the WDB should be able to make an immediate and meaningful impact. Its efforts will directly help to align and guide the work of Talent and City agencies, in close partnership with educators from pre-k through college, nonprofit organizations that provide workforce services, employers that both help shape workforce talent and utilize it through hiring, and the private funders who will have a strong new partner to cultivate innovation and help maximize the field's impact.

- Identifying relevant highlights or concerns illuminated by the data
- Advising relevant staff on featured analyses and contextualization for data dashboards and impact reports
- Providing feedback on how Shared Impact Metrics can be contextualized/made actionable to specific stakeholder groups
- Flagging unintended consequences of data and analyses emerging from the city

**As noted above, WDB Committees can include representatives not on the formal Board. With this in mind, the DISC should convene data, research, and labor market experts from the following entities:**

- City agencies and Mayor's Offices with significant workforce responsibilities, e.g. Small Business Services, Youth and Community Development, Human Resources Administration, Economic Development Corporation, Management and Budget, Economic Opportunity
- Educational institutions including NYC Public Schools and CUNY
- Nonprofit providers and community based organizations
- Research centers specializing in labor market intelligence and program evaluation.
- Employers and Industry associations
- Private foundations

# STRATEGIC LEVER 2: EXPAND AND DIVERSIFY APPRENTICESHIPS

*Today I'm proud to announce that we will connect 30,000 New Yorkers to apprenticeships by 2030... This is on-the-job experience with an opportunity for permanent employment in high demand careers.*

*—Mayor Eric Adams, State of the City address, January 2023*

## WHY NYC SHOULD DO THIS

Spurred by the initial findings of the Task Force, Mayor Adams issued a call to action in his 2023 State of the City address for NYC to support 30,000 apprenticeships citywide by 2030. To achieve this goal will require the active participation of industry, unions, education, nonprofits, communities, and families as well as state and federal policy makers. It also will require a comprehensive reconsideration of how our city positions young people and reskilling adults for jobs and careers in a very dynamic and competitive labor market.

In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the “college for all” movement took hold in the U.S., partially in response to the ugly history of tracking young people, often low-income as well as Black and Brown students, into vocational training. Additionally, the changing labor market suggested that an increasing number of jobs would require fewer manual skills and more complex problem solving and communication skills. Without much analysis of the implications, coupled with a growing higher education industry, we as a country doubled down on college, focusing the vast majority of our education resources on getting people to and through college. College became the dominant pathway to a promising career, and other pathways to good paying jobs such as apprenticeships—a centuries-old model of positioning people for careers—fell into relative disfavor, outside of a handful of mostly unionized sectors such as construction.

As years passed, however, it became clear that a college degree was no guarantee of securing a good job. In fact, it didn't even necessarily position young people well for entry level positions. Too many college graduates, particularly those who are Black, Latino, and low income, are not finding their diplomas sufficient to launch into economically secure careers. And rather than reducing inequality, it made things worse: high-income students

## WHAT APPRENTICESHIP IS—AND ISN'T

Even among workforce providers, not everyone uses the term “apprenticeship” to mean the same thing. Many different types of education and training models such as work-based learning, career and technical education (CTE), and even rotational training programs are often incorrectly framed as types of apprenticeship. In particular, stakeholders frequently use “apprenticeship” and “internship” loosely if not interchangeably. Without a common understanding of what these terms mean, policymakers, funders, and employers are all too likely to talk past each other.

The Future of Workers Task Force defines apprenticeship as an established training program model that pays participants as they learn in both classroom and workplace settings, leading to an industry-valued credential and permanent employment at a family-sustaining wage. Ways in which apprenticeships are distinct from

were six times more likely to complete a college degree than students from low-income families, and twice as likely compared to those from middle-income homes.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, prompted by the surge in college enrollment, employers increased their degree requirements for many positions, putting low-income jobseekers at a further disadvantage.<sup>9</sup>

With evidence mounting that college alone is not enough to position promising talent for success, many educators, employers, nonprofits, policymakers, students, families, and jobseekers began thinking more holistically about the factors and conditions that position people for career success and employers for accessing the talent they need. The result has been a shift toward models that incorporate classroom training as one element in balance with work experience and an explicit focus on skills development—all hallmarks of apprenticeship.

Apprenticeship addresses several key issues for jobseekers and employers alike. For one, apprenticeship is work: apprentices earn wages while they learn skills, so participants are much less likely to leave an apprenticeship for financial reasons compared to other training programs. Second, a structured apprenticeship concludes with the participant having earned a credential or series of credentials that employers value, along with transferable skills. Third, the model enables employers and workers to respond more quickly to shifts in technology or market conditions.<sup>10</sup> Finally, apprenticeship is structured such that apprentices are positioned to build professional networks with colleagues, teachers, and supervisors that they can leverage throughout their careers.

While apprenticeship has been around for centuries, its modern form explicitly aims to address certain historical challenges. Among these is its historic focus on highly unionized economic sectors such as the building trades and healthcare. Another barrier has been the resistance of postsecondary educational institutions—which, after all, largely sustain themselves through traditional college enrollment—to offer academic credit for workplace experience. Finally, apprenticeship through the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century largely was characterized by the same shameful patterns of racial exclusion that blocked the path of most non-whites toward good jobs and economic security. Modern apprenticeship programs consciously work to overcome all these barriers.

internship include longer time frames (1-4 years depending on the apprenticeship occupation vs. a period of 1-3 months for an internship), guaranteed pay and certifications, and—most important—the presumption that the experience will lead to permanent employment. To put it simply, apprenticeship should be understood as one step along a specific career path, while internship is presumed to be a self-contained experience that generally increases a participant's work readiness and hopefully helps sharpen their subsequent career planning.

While internships are distinct from apprenticeships, thoughtful policy can and should connect them. In fact, to scale apprenticeship in the way the Task Force envisions will require both focus and expansion of other work-based learning experiences, including internships, that prepare potential apprentices for the more specific, and more demanding, experience of apprenticeship. New York City policymakers should carefully consider how high-quality paid internships that already incorporate a learning component, such as the FutureReady NYC and CTE Industry Scholars programs run by NYC Public Schools, and Work Learn & Grow administered by DYCD, might be positioned to serve as explicit pre-apprenticeship experiences.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/25/opinion/college-graduation-gap.html>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.hbs.edu/managing-the-future-of-work/Documents/dismissed-by-degrees.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> It takes time for employers to understand the changes in the economy or technology and their impact to the skills they will need their employees to have. Additionally, it takes time for educational institutions and training providers to translate those changes into their curriculum and programs, especially of an accrediting agency is involved for a degree. On the job training, such as apprenticeship, has less friction.

The recent momentum toward apprenticeship has seen the U.S. Department of Labor and a growing number of states and cities conduct research, develop strategic plans, and launch broad initiatives to expand apprenticeships in partnership with employers, educational institutions, and workforce provider organizations. Some of these efforts have reached New York City, including the Jobs Council Apprentice Network supported by the New York Jobs CEO Council and the Career Readiness and Modern Youth Apprenticeship launched by NYC Public Schools. Additionally, the City's Project Labor Agreements with the construction unions' goal to leverage as many dollars as possible through Community Hiring, and receipt of a Good Jobs Challenge award from the U.S. Economic Development Administration to support Pathways to Industrial and Construction Careers (PINCC) program collectively create apprenticeship opportunities for jobseekers from low-income communities, Human Resource Administration clients, and NYCHA residents. New York City boasts an increasingly robust landscape of agencies, employers, and training organizations developing new apprenticeships and a growing appreciation of their importance in meeting the needs of jobseekers, employers and the economy.

Overall, however, New York City has a long way to go before it is well positioned to dramatically expand its apprenticeships. A key limiting factor is the absence of a cross-sector citywide strategic plan or coordinating body to align efforts, tackle policy barriers, increase efficiencies, ensure equitable access, and promote apprenticeship growth in scale as well as to new industries. A second limiting factor is the current statewide regulatory framework on apprenticeship, which fails to fully engage NYC employers who are operating established or emerging apprenticeship programs that are not yet registered.

*With this in mind, the Task Force calls for a public pledge to make New York City the "apprenticeship capital of the country."* Fulfilling the audacious goal Mayor Adams has set will require new investments, supports, and measures—essentially, building a citywide system and culture of apprenticeship. Included in the count toward 30,000 would be youth apprentices, union-sponsored apprenticeship programs, and apprenticeships for adults directly sponsored by employers with their training partners.

## IMPLEMENTATION

To build a citywide apprenticeship system, the City needs to 1) launch an Apprenticeship Accelerator; 2) define a set of threshold criteria for experience that fit the definition of a NYC Apprenticeship; 3) develop a public awareness campaign to re-brand apprenticeships for the 21st century; 4) identify policy obstacles facing employers, educational institutions and providers interested in creating or expanding apprenticeships; and 5) rally stakeholders around the citywide apprenticeship goal set by Mayor Adams.

### **The Task Force recommends that NYC utilize the following seven criteria to support the strategic expansion of apprenticeship:**

1. A focus on in-demand cross-sector occupations (see sidebar below) promising economic mobility in industries critical to NYC's economy, and access to multiple career pathways.
2. Involvement of private and/or public sector entities as apprenticeship sponsors.
3. An integrated system that supports apprenticeships for high school students, college students, out-of-school/out-of-work young adults, and upskilling adults.

4. A classification system aligned with the “Registered Apprenticeship” model in use by both the U.S. Department of Labor and New York State Department of Labor.
5. A process to identify and engage existing “unregistered apprenticeships” to explore the option of converting them to registered apprenticeships while not precluding employers from developing or expanding high-quality unregistered apprenticeship programs.
6. A framework that embraces diversity, equity, inclusion, and access principles to support recruitment and retention of racial and ethnic minorities, women, low-income individuals, individuals with disabilities, and other vulnerable populations.
7. A supported option of earning college credits and completing an applied associate degree during the apprenticeship.

**As the Apprenticeship Accelerator looks to expand apprenticeship opportunities for New Yorkers, it should focus on three additional strategic objectives:**

- **Increasing diversity in apprenticeship**, including by considering an “inclusive apprenticeship” model that encourages apprenticeship sponsors to incorporate diversity, equity, inclusion, and access (DEIA) principles. Achieving this goal requires significantly improving access to apprenticeship, both in industries that have traditionally relied on apprenticeship as well as new industries open to utilizing apprenticeship as a talent pipeline strategy.
- **Identifying on-ramps to apprenticeship**, with a focus on creating pre-apprenticeship pathways that incorporate current models such as the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) and career and technical education (CTE) high schools. To effectively scale apprenticeships will require a robust, expansive, and well-coordinated sequence of work-based learning experiences.

## OCCUPATIONS AS AN ORGANIZING FRAMEWORK

New York City can more efficiently structure its talent development system by embracing occupations as a key focus for economic forecasting, examining job quality, and preparing students and jobseekers for careers. Jobseekers, employers, talent development providers, and policymakers in New York City would benefit from a regularly updated, clear-eyed view of which occupations are powering our economy. This shift would help the field focus on delivering critical transferable skills, career pathways, and addressing job quality. Jobseekers could look for opportunities beyond one industry or sector. Employers could seek talent without poaching talent from their competitors or partners.

Occupations represent a bundle of skill sets that encompass multiple job titles both within and across sectors, and provide jobseekers with a much wider set of both immediate employment and long-term career opportunities. Among the many occupations beyond the traditional trades that align to apprenticeship training are entry level roles in human resources, informational technology and software, project management, business operations, finance, accounting, sales, design, customer service, teaching, and social support services. Workers and jobseekers with training and credentials to fill any of these roles are well positioned to find employment and advance in promising career pathways across a myriad of industries. Offering the prospect of entry into a range of sectors, the occupational framework is particularly well suited to informing the development of apprenticeships that position talent for success in-demand occupations.

The first step in shifting to an occupation framework will be to conduct analysis of what occupation clusters are driving the most important sectors of New York City’s economy, such as finance, technology, healthcare, media, construction, transportation, and hospitality. The analysis will include high-level review of employment and wage numbers; attributes of current workers in the occupation including demographics and educational/

- **Converting unregistered to Registered Apprenticeship programs and building new Registered Apprenticeships**, by working with sponsoring organizations and the New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL), which regulates apprenticeships. This effort will likely include growing the number of intermediary organizations that design and support apprenticeships for specific industries, occupations, and populations.

In addition to private-sector apprenticeships, the City as the single largest employer in New York City has the opportunity to lead by example and address its own talent needs. With a significant percentage of city workers projected to retire this decade on top of the current high vacancy rate at multiple agencies, public sector apprenticeship could serve as a viable recruitment strategy cooperatively supported by government administration and labor unions.

## NEXT STEPS

The most immediate task in front of city stakeholders looking to build an apprenticeship system is to identify the people and groups who will do this work as well as the resources and staffing for the Apprenticeship Accelerator. The Accelerator would focus on expanding apprenticeship to more diverse populations, occupations, and industries; providing technical assistance for apprenticeship programs and as-needed support for employers; tracking data at the program, industry, and citywide level; convening and coordinating stakeholders; growing the number of apprenticeships that register, including work with the New York State Department of Labor to expedite necessary processes; helping to secure funding for costs related to program startup and maintenance; and developing a shared policy agenda. Priorities for the Accelerator should include facilitating wraparound support services for apprentices to improve their retention and completion outcomes and focusing on small and mid-sized businesses and Minority/Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBES) to bolster their capacity to sponsor, support, supervise, and benefit from having apprentices.

Public perceptions of apprenticeship must evolve as well, toward an appreciation of this model as a path toward stable careers and economic security in the information

certification attainment; the sectors in which the occupation is well represented; understanding which of the occupations provide a living wage on day one, serve as a springboard to one, or are static; and the career paths the occupation culminates or feeds into. Policymakers and provider organizations would then take these target occupations and create plans to build the competencies of apprentices in those fields. Focusing on occupations will also give policymakers a clear picture of what percentage of jobs that power our economy don't provide a living wage and are static so we can develop strategies to address the quality of those jobs.

Centering occupations in workforce preparation is an idea that has been around for centuries. It is the foundation of the modern Swiss apprenticeship system, known as VET (Vocational Education and Training), which serves approximately two-thirds of Swiss youth through a blend of classroom learning and paid work experience across 240 distinct occupations.<sup>11</sup> CareerWise New York, a nonprofit that supports paid apprenticeships for several hundred young New Yorkers, has defined a methodology for creating competency plans based on the Swiss model. It includes identifying the career continuum for selected occupation clusters, defining the core skills needed at each stage along that continuum as well as any non-degree credentials that employers value for each stage, and engaging subject matter experts to review their findings and conduct a deep-dive analysis of skills and tasks that can be completed for each competency.

Shifting to an occupational framework can provide a shared understanding across all parties in the workforce space—jobseekers, educators and providers, funders and government, and employers—about the premises, methods, and goals of specific programs and services. Getting everyone on the same page should yield closer matches between what employers are looking for, and what jobseekers can bring to the table. Making the process more transparent in this way also can be a powerful input to advance equity by enabling more historically underrepresented groups to meet the clearly defined criteria for a range of job titles and career paths.



economy of the 21st century. Toward this end, the City and its partners should develop a citywide campaign aimed at employers, jobseekers, schools, parents, and students to communicate how apprenticeship programs are already transforming the career trajectory for New Yorkers in industries such as information technology, marketing, healthcare, and finance. By 2030, every New Yorker should know apprenticeships provide family sustaining wages, lead to multiple career pathways, and includes opportunities to earn a college degree. Such a campaign should aim to brand the benefits of apprenticeship as an exciting, viable, and respected pathway to career success and economic security in multiple industries.

Supported by NYC Talent, the Workforce Development Board can convene an Apprenticeship Accelerator advisory group to drive progress on the steps above and launch the Accelerator. Additionally, NYC Talent should conduct or oversee a landscape analysis of current registered and unregistered apprenticeships in New York City to start mapping present capacity against projections for in-demand jobs and occupations that offer pathways to economic security. As we seek to meet Mayor Adams’s goal of 30,000 apprenticeships by 2030, the Workforce Development Board should also support and measure the growth of not only apprenticeships in New York City but also the diversity of people and industries benefitting from apprenticeship.



# STRATEGIC LEVER 3: LAUNCH A TALENT INVESTMENT FUND

## WHY NYC SHOULD DO THIS

As New York City has never truly had a coherent strategy for talent and workforce development that begins in preK-12 education and continues through individuals' working lives, it should come as no surprise that there has never been a shared approach to funding and investments. Typically, funders make decisions based on their own strategic priorities and organizational values. The sheer scale of the population, the need, and resources of New York City often means that these investments often serve hundreds, even thousands or tens of thousands, of participants. Funder autonomy can also help foster important innovation and the ability to adapt quickly to labor market changes or shocks to the system, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

But this almost unlimited flexibility comes with a high cost. The absence of coordination serves to reinforce existing silos as well as ignore the underlying systemic issues that the Task Force has identified as key flaws in NYC's approach to talent development. It leads to missed opportunities to share learnings and best practices, achieve synergies by leveraging other funds, and make progress toward reaching citywide objectives. This is the dynamic that led the Task Force to agree with observers who characterize New York City's talent development landscape as "program-rich but system-poor."

For New York City to achieve the Citywide objectives in EO22 will require synchronizing public and private investments with a keen focus on scaling what works while tackling historic employment and wage disparities. In philanthropy, it is often suggested that flexible private money innovates by funding pilots, while public money takes what is learned from those pilots to bring programs to scale. Over the past 20 years, however, New York City's government has both directly launched program innovations—sometimes seeking philanthropic dollars to do so—and turned to philanthropy to help fill gaps in programming left by federal and state funding cuts. At the same time, worthwhile pilots that might merit

## THE NYC WORKFORCE FUNDERS SECTORS INITIATIVE

New York City is home to a robust and active set of philanthropic organizations that regularly invest in workforce programs, services, and research. Convened in 2001, the New York City Workforce Funders includes member organizations whose annual giving totals approximately \$80 million to support workforce programs, research, and advocacy. A subset of the Workforce Funders dedicates a small portion of their annual giving to a shared fund, which over the years has awarded about \$16 million in grants to support capacity building, policy advocacy and research, and pilot programs.

In 2004, the NYC Workforce Funders launched a more formal collaboration with City government through the Department of Small Business Services, which had recently taken oversight of federally funded workforce programs for adults and dislocated workers. This partnership bore fruit with the New York City Sectors Initiative, a \$3.2 million collaboration in which the Funders collectively contributed \$1.4 million against \$1.8 million in public funds. Operating over a period of several years, the Sectors Initiative ultimately helped pave the way for sector specific Workforce Career Centers, the Industry Partnerships beginning with the New York Alliance for Careers in Healthcare (NYACH), and countless smaller training and placement programs with an explicit sector focus.<sup>1</sup>

being brought to scale have not grown to reach more New Yorkers with workforce needs. The time is past due to develop a new paradigm where public and private funders co-design and co-invest in promising programs and initiatives with a focus on strategies to scale, incentivize institutional or system change, or both.

*The Future of Workers Task Force urges the City and philanthropic funders to combine resources to create a Talent Investment Fund as a vehicle for collaborative co-investment of public and private dollars based on shared criteria, informed by the Design Guidelines for Talent Development, and with a focus on best practice that can scale. This Fund would serve as the clearest indication that the City and its private sector partners—corporate and philanthropic funders—are truly “walking the talk” of shared commitment to building a more coherent talent development system in New York City.*

**Beyond what the Fund would mean for its funders, the Task Force believes that a Talent Investment Fund would benefit the larger workforce community by:**

- Creating a known resource to support new program models and system-infrastructure assets that address either specific challenges within otherwise successful programs, or gaps in the overall workforce system.
- Increasing transparency for practitioners, policymakers, and funders by virtue of creating a clear, public, and high-profile competitive process for grant awards.
- Encouraging a wide range of providers and funders toward both innovation and alignment to the Design Guidelines to advance and update best practice.
- Enabling public and private funders to leverage the joint learnings and investment criteria to influence and direct their other talent and workforce investments outside of the fund.
- Yielding insights into policy and practice opportunities and barriers that the larger talent development system could collectively pursue and address.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

A crucial first step for the Talent Investment Fund will be to identify which sources of funding are available for joint investment, from both public and private perspectives. On the public side, some funding streams that come to the City from state or federal programs such as WIOA might offer flexibility. On the private side, New York City philanthropies and employers have a history of pooling

**CODIFY WHAT WORKS THROUGH SHARED DESIGN GUIDELINES**

One problem the Task Force identified was that New York City’s talent development stakeholders lack not only a shared set of objectives but also a collective understanding of best practice. To address this gap, stakeholders should come together to confirm Design Guidelines that define and codify best practice for educational institutions, workforce providers, employers, and on-the-job training opportunities. The Data and Impact Committee of the Workforce Development Board is a logical venue to discuss the Guidelines

Ultimately, the Guidelines can help more New Yorkers explore, prepare, launch, and advance into their careers and employers to identify, hire, and train talent. Talent development champions—nonprofit providers, postsecondary programs, middle and high schools, unions, industry associations, funders, government agencies, and others—can use these guidelines to fund, educate, employ, and provide experiences in the following ways:

- Build a shared understanding among funders of what does—and does not—constitute effective programming, experiences, and institutional practice

resources for shared strategic priorities, as with the NYC Workforce Funders (see sidebar above) and the Change Capital Fund, a collective of 20 organizations across the private sector, philanthropy, and government, has awarded more than \$30 million to over 35 community-based organizations focused on increasing affordable housing and strengthening economic opportunity and mobility for low-income New Yorkers. Additionally, several national foundations have expressed interest in pooling resources to advance talent and workforce strategies that could scale with public and employer support.

The next step would be to set parameters for awards. The Task Force began discussion around a series of Design Guidelines (see sidebar) intended to help policymakers and funders recognize and support quality work at the program, initiative, and organizational levels. These should serve as the basis for investment criteria by which the Talent Investment Fund evaluates and awards grants. A suggestion that arose over the course of the Task Force's meetings was to identify gaps within otherwise effective programs, such as the need to subsidize or provide support services for low-income participants in career exploration, preparation, launch, or advancement programs that could get them on a path to career-track work and economic security and align with citywide objectives outlined in Executive Order 22. Another direction might be to invest in new programs that align with other directions set out in this Task Force Blueprint, such as expanding apprenticeship or targeting populations that have historically wrestled with significant employment disparities such as people with disabilities.

As with many of the Strategic Levers noted in this Blueprint, NYC Talent would have responsibility for developing, staffing and supporting the Talent Investment Fund. The Fund should link to the Workforce Development Board as well as with other external partners such as the funding collaboratives, industry associations, and research institutions to provide additional support and further strengthen alignment across these stakeholder groups.

- Develop criteria to use for evaluating RFPs and making funding decisions
- Align reporting and other requirements across funders to ease the administrative burden on grantees
- Provide a framework for further research around program quality

The Task Force developed a preliminary set of Design Guidelines that fall into two areas: Organizational Attributes and Career Success Criteria. Organizational Attributes focus on the characteristics related to the organizations such as a high school, post-secondary program, or employer that play key roles in designing a program, work experience, or institutional practice. They emphasize collaborative design, partnerships, staffing and infrastructure, and data and accountability. Career Success Criteria focus on what the work experience, program, or institution needs to provide to ensure that all the talent development needs of the student, jobseeker or worker are met. They incorporate an explicit participant focus, credit for learning from work, social capital development, and transferable competencies.

Ultimately, the Design Guidelines should serve a similar role for talent development programs that LEED Standards and Green Communities Criteria have had for sustainable commercial buildings and affordable housing, respectively: helping to codify a framework for quality and catalyzing exponential change in the field. To this end, the Task Force believes it would send a powerful positive signal for the Talent Investment Fund to utilize the Guidelines as they consider a first round of awards to strengthen NYC's talent development system. For more information on the proposed Design Guidelines, see Appendix p. 38.

## NEXT STEPS

To move forward on developing a fund, NYC Talent should research and develop possible co-investment strategies, looking across NYC for relevant examples as well as at other workforce development boards across the country. Additionally, NYC Talent should work to secure public funds that would be available to match private dollars. While securing resources, NYC Talent should develop a potential fund structure including governance, investment criteria, and data reporting, laying out a strong case for public and private investment.

One challenge to realizing a Talent Investment Fund that the Task Force uncovered is the need to build the trust across key stakeholders around core questions of values, commitments, and relationships which is critical to agreeing on goals, braiding resources, and sharing decision making about investments. Developing and executing a public-private Talent Investment Fund is a way to build and sustain trust.

Through the process of the Future of Workers Task Force itself, funders and City administrators have had opportunities to find common ground regarding their goals for workforce services, develop a shared understanding of what has impeded performance in the past, and consider how best to move forward on building a co-investment mechanism to fund opportunities that will demonstrate best practice and help to make best practice common practice. The next step is to secure funding commitments, and then to operationalize it in ways that will improve the system for all New York City students, jobseekers, workers, and employers.



# STRATEGIC LEVER 4: ESTABLISH SHARED IMPACT METRICS

## WHY NYC SHOULD DO THIS

A truism of any thoughtful organization or system is that “you manage what you measure.” At a system level, New York City traditionally has focused on program level metrics and has struggled to connect those to overall system performance. For example, to measure career readiness and success, we often rely on academic results such as test scores or graduation rates. What we have learned based on the data is that a bachelor’s degree, while providing a wage premium and increased mobility, doesn’t necessarily result in a jobseeker successfully launching into an economically secure career or earning a living wage.<sup>13</sup> It is time to determine more robust leading indicators specific for career success.

Too often, we lack the terms and tools to answer even some basic questions related to the overall performance of programs that support talent development—including the actual cost of services, how well or poorly they serve different populations, the varying performance of the provider organizations that operate them, or how well they align to the needs of employers and the overall economy. While some impressive information resources exist, most prominently the [NYC Workforce Data Portal](#), current assets are not sufficient even to measure the system as it exists now, much less progress against the six objectives set forth in Executive Order 22 (EO22).

To capture workforce system progress relative to EO22 objectives will require both new metrics, and new tools to compile and analyze the data that comprise those metrics. More broadly, NYC must develop a shared information infrastructure that will enhance our collective ability to recognize quality performance of the system as a whole: whether services are reaching and delivering value for individuals and groups with significant barriers to employment, understanding how strategic partnerships could have greater impact, creating a methodology to examine and compare the actual cost of services, and how well our collective investments align to the needs of employers and the overall economy, and much more. Without shared metrics focused on the career success of New Yorkers and talent needs of employers, talent development stakeholders currently make the best decisions they can based on very limited knowledge.

**Understanding the objectives of EO22 as the desired destination for New York City’s talent development ecosystem, the Task Force urges the City to invest in a dedicated team to work in partnership with key stakeholders to develop, collect, analyze, and**

### FROM COMMON METRICS TO SHARED IMPACT

New York City is not entirely new to measuring workforce programming. During the administration of Mayor Bill de Blasio, the Mayor’s Office of Workforce Development (since renamed NYC Talent) partnered with the Mayor’s Office for Economic Opportunity and several City agencies providing workforce services to standardize a set of commonly defined performance measures. Through this process, these entities finally got on the same page regarding how the City defined terms such as “full-time job.”

<sup>13</sup>

**disseminate broadly Shared Impact Metrics. Workforce system stakeholders should use these new system-level data and tools to:**

- Set and track shared priorities.
- Design and disseminate evidence-based best practices.
- Use data to better direct resources.
- Break down silos, improve practice, and address gaps.
- Promote further system changes needed to achieve citywide objectives.

To name just a few examples of how Shared Impact Metrics could offer value, providers could adjust their portfolio of training programs in response to changing employer demand or compensation patterns, funders could shift resources to more directly address areas of need or underperformance, and employers could adjust hiring practices and how they engage with the public talent system in response to concerns related to representation.

## IMPLEMENTATION

NYC Talent should engage the Interagency Talent Cabinet and the Data and Impact Standing Committee (DISC) of the re-launched Workforce Development Board (WDB) as well as leading research institutions to develop the Shared Impact Metrics. (See Strategic Lever 1 for an overview of the WDB.) Additionally, staff and leadership from these entities will need to establish the requisite data-sharing agreements with City agencies, New York State, and partners outside of government that own or compile existing metrics, and to work together to identify and establish plans for obtaining additional sources of data and/or addressing the quality of sought-after but less than robust data.

Once the stakeholders have agreed upon Shared Impact Metrics, an important step will be to determine the form and frequency of how they will be shared with the public. EO22 calls for the Talent Cabinet to deliver an annual report on “the state of talent and workforce development in the City.” NYC Talent and the WDB should additionally develop a Dashboard, to be updated on a regular basis, featuring the Metrics.

Available on the NYC Workforce Data Portal, these 13 measures utilize raw data from those agencies, as well as administrative records requested from New York State, to come up with unique numbers of clients served, full- and part-time job placements, academic and training enrollment and credential attainment, job retention after placement, continuity in employment, and wages earned both before and after program participation. With these indicators, the system can now answer basic questions such as how many individual clients received services or were placed into employment, including how the overall numbers break down by sex, race/ethnicity, and age.

While the data captured in the portal offer a descriptive picture of holistic system outcomes, they do not fully speak to the aspirations set out in Executive Order 22. For instance, there is no current measure that captures employer engagement with the public talent development system. Additionally, much of the data captured within the portal has never been seriously mined to answer important program-level performance questions such as how different kinds of services impact participants' subsequent employment and earnings outcomes, or system level questions including what are the most common pathways for participants who utilize multiple programs over time. Nevertheless, the portal represents an encouraging example of how to develop and collect shared data; what we can collectively define and understand in tracking system performance; and serve as a strong foundation on which the City and its partners can build Shared Impact Metrics.

For the Dashboard and reports to be meaningful and effective, they will need to incorporate both short-term indicators that address distinct milestones and capture developments in something close to real time (leading indicators), and system-wide indicators that inevitably will require more time to accrue (lagging indicators). The First Set Of Metrics Will Be Of Value To Providers, Employers, And Individual Program Participants, While The Second Will Hold More Meaning For Policymakers, Researchers, And Funders Charged With Taking A Longer-Term View Of System Performance. This Combination Of Leading And Lagging Indicators Should Help Make The Data Actionable, Including Through Technical Assistance/Capacity Building, Case Studies And How-To Guides, And Relatable Examples.

## NEXT STEPS

The Work Of Defining Shared Impact Metrics—The Measures By Which New York City Will Assess Its Own Performance Toward The Goals Articulated In Eo22—Must Be Collaborative And Comprehensive. As Noted Above, The Wdb’s Disc, The Talent Cabinet And Other Key Stakeholders Must Have Strong Input And Need To Feel Confident In, Value, Contribute To And Use These Metrics.

### **Specific Next Steps In This Process Include:**

- Establishing Shared Definitions Of Key Terms.
- Identifying Existing Quality Data Sources And Tools From Which Select Metrics Can Be Drawn.
- Developing Dashboard Template And Report Format.
- Securing Requisite Permissions/Data Agreements Where Relevant.
- For Data Not Currently Available Or Of Questionable Quality, Determining Feasibility Of Accessing And/Or Improving Data For Future Inclusion In Dashboard/Reports.
- Expanding Data Collection For The Nyc Workforce Data Portal To Additional Workforce Programs And Agencies And Tapping The Interagency Talent Cabinet To Collectively Build A Research And Usage Agenda Around The Data.

The Disc, Staffed By A Dedicated Research Team Based At Nyc Talent And Working Closely With The Interagency Talent Cabinet, Should Assume Ongoing Responsibility For Keeping The Metrics Updated And Relevant To Evolving Workforce And Labor Market Needs And Trends.



# STRATEGIC LEVER 5: BUILD AN EMPLOYER-FACING “FRONT DOOR”

## WHY NYC SHOULD DO THIS

On a day-to-day basis, New York City’s talent development system is made up of innumerable relationships between institutions and organizations that provide education and training services, and employers who are hiring and/or want to help develop talent. Often, these engagements begin when the provider organization, such as a community-based organization or a school, reaches out to the employer asking if they are interested in the services the provider offers. The services might include direct job placement, engagement in work-based learning, or other forms of participation with programs the organization offers. Other times, employers reach out in search of job candidates for in-demand positions, to diversify their team, and/or as part of their corporate social responsibility efforts.

While this approach has the benefit of facilitating direct relationships, it lacks efficiency and can undermine the possibility for greater impact. For one, too often employers get barraged with outreach from a range of providers, each of which has strong incentives through contracts and/or grants to constantly find new employer partners. At the same time, many other employers might not be contacted at all. It also limits the program and service options available to employers to whatever the provider conducting the outreach has to offer at the time. An important related issue is that this norm contributes to a dynamic of fierce competition among providers to protect “their” relationships with employers. Finally, this haphazard yet redundant mode of engagement makes it difficult for City policymakers to get a complete picture of which employers are engaged, how they are engaged, and what services are of greatest interest and value to them.

A more effective approach would be to create another possible starting point for the interaction: shifting from what a provider can offer, to what an employer wants and needs. To help facilitate this change, the Task Force urges the City to create a user-friendly online “front door” through which any employer will be able to access all participating workforce development programs and services. Through this functionality, employers could indicate their interests—starting with whether they are looking to hire full-time new workers, bring on seasonal or part-time talent, engage with education programs, access volunteer opportunities for their current workforce, or something else. As they respond to a series of prompts regarding their interests, location, and capacity, the site will direct them toward providers that can effectively respond to their needs.

## UNDERSTANDING THE CYCLE OF TALENT DEVELOPMENT

A comprehensive talent development system provides jobseekers, whether one is newly entering the labor market or shifting careers later in life, with an overlapping set of experiences, that are informed and supported by industry. Access to and success in these experiences also requires ensuring and supporting foundational literacy skills as well as the wrap-around supportive services that many jobseekers require. The Future of Workers Task Force developed an initial taxonomy of these career success experiences based on best practice and research.<sup>14</sup> The proposed taxonomy includes the four categories below:

CAREER EXPLORE	CAREER PREPARE	CAREER LAUNCH	CAREER ADVANCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities to better understand the labor market, and how one's interests, talents, and skills can translate into a promising career.</li> <li>• Education, skills training, and work experience offerings tend to be shorter in duration and ideally are widely available beginning in middle school, in libraries for adults, and online</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More targeted opportunities employment services, job training, employer-valued certifications, professional connections, and specific skills critical to entry level occupations.</li> <li>• Opportunities may be paid and/or for credit, embedded in curriculum or an internship, or as part of a shorter-term pre-apprenticeship training.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work experience leading to a full-time job that meets threshold criteria for an apprenticeship but may or not be State or federally registered.</li> <li>• Opportunities include a meaningful, high quality, on-the-job experience, aligned classroom learning which results in a competitive candidate for an in-demand occupation with a valuable credential beyond a high school diploma</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities to continue to build skills and competencies valued in the labor market and advance beyond entry-level positions into higher paying roles.</li> <li>• Opportunities enable workers to gain additional professional connections and skills, so they are better positioned to pursue and secure advancement opportunities</li> </ul>

Employers and industry associations play critical roles in each of these four categories, in partnership with educational and training organizations. Effective talent development systems build the infrastructure and leverage technology to provide clear, efficient ways to utilize industry's knowledge, time, and other resources for each of the above categories to optimize labor market outcomes.

Partnering with Employers to intentionally build out opportunities across these four categories will help New York City keep up with the demand for skilled talent given rapidly changing labor market and if the projections that demand for talent will outpace supply prove correct.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> This taxonomy builds on the **Career Ready NYC** developed by practitioners, analysts, and educators as well as **Career Connect Washington's** work to categorize the different levels of intensity and preparation of career connected learning programs.

<sup>15</sup> Gad Levanon, "This is what happens when an unstoppable force meets an immovable object: US Labor Market Outlook," The Burning Glass Institute, March 2023.

Engagements facilitated through this online functionality will render the system more transparent to employers, in terms of what services are available across the full breadth of providers and programs. Further, as these interactions are logged, they will comprise a database of great value to policymakers by illuminating what programs and services employers are most interested in, including within specific geographies and economic sectors. The result will be a more responsive and accountable system of talent development services. Conversely, educators, nonprofit providers, funders and policy makers will gain a clear picture of where on the talent development continuum from career exploration to career preparation to career launch to career advance employer engagement is lacking, forcing them collectively to consider strategies on how best to address those gaps.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Fulfilling a commitment that Mayor Adams made last year in *“Rebuild, Renew, Reinvent: A Blueprint for New York City’s Economic Recovery,”* New York City is in the process of building online tools to better facilitate individuals’ and employers’ access to a wide range of city services including a Talent Portal.<sup>16</sup> A jobseeker “front door” launched in late 2022, with an employer version to follow. NYC Talent is working in close partnership with the Mayor’s Office of Economic Opportunity and the Office of Technology and Innovation to build out a Talent Portal.

In designing the employer front door, the City will need to be responsive to a broad set of employers—not only those who are currently engaged with the talent development system, but also employers who are unaware of available services, or who have walked away after unsatisfying experiences. One priority should be to ensure value for smaller businesses (fewer than 100 employees), which comprise 98 percent of the more than 200,000 businesses in New York City, and account for more than half of private sector employment within the five boroughs.<sup>17</sup> Historically, these firms have found it particularly difficult to access public workforce services—and in many cases, contracted providers looking to achieve outcome goals under their contracts or grants are less likely to seek partners whose small size means a lower volume of job openings. The Workforce Development Board’s Small and Mid-Sized Businesses Committee should have strong and ongoing input into the development and evolution of the “front door.”

In discussing the employer-facing front door over the course of its meetings, Task Force members raised several important cautions. For one, it should not attempt to be “all things to all people.” Rather, members suggested that the City identify a specific niche and build out capacity to address a targeted challenge. Further, the act of building and launching the employer-facing functionality is only the first step: it must be carefully maintained. If the information available through the site is not current, accurate, and comprehensive, employers will not continue to utilize it.

One additional question is how the site should capture existing relationships between providers and employer partners. Recognizing the challenges of sharing this kind of information at scale, the Workforce Development Board and NYC Talent along with the Interagency Talent Cabinet should convene providers, educational institutions, and employers to determine what actions, assurances, and accountability measures will best facilitate cooperation among all parties.

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<sup>16</sup> *“Rebuild, Renew, Reinvent: A Blueprint for New York City’s Economic Recovery,”* March 10, 2022, City of New York, p. 42

<sup>17</sup> City of New York, “Small Business First,” 2015. Online at <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/smallbizfirst/downloads/pdf/small-business-first-report.pdf>

## NEXT STEPS

A user-friendly employer-facing front door offers great potential value for New York City's talent development system. It could positively change how talent and workforce development services here are understood, accessed, and delivered. Ideally, employers will quickly come to utilize the portal and find that it offers value for them with easily accessible, frictionless services. For their part, providers could come to view the portal as additive to their efforts, both directing their current employer partners to use the tool and recognizing that it will enable a much larger pool of potential partners on the employer side to learn about and access the programming they offer. Over time, "job developers"—a stressful role within provider organizations often characterized by high turnover and fierce competition—would evolve into "relationship managers," with higher quality services the result.

To achieve this outcome will require careful, thoughtful design as well as effectively managing the expectations of all parties. In collaboration with allied groups such as the New York Jobs CEO Council and the Partnership for NYC as well as the Chambers of Commerce, other industry associations, and various Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), NYC Talent at the behest of the Workforce Development Board should facilitate a series of design thinking sessions to fully develop the front door. A first step would be to define its scope and focus, followed by determining technical specifications and understanding current platforms as well as their related resource and system needs. This process also should include iterating over time to expand its reach, grow its usage, and maximize its long-term value.



# CONCLUSION

The Task Force concludes with great optimism for the future of New York City's talent and workforce development system. This optimism stems from confidence that these five strategic levers will catalyze an effective, continually improving system that positions NYC jobseekers and employers for success. We also believe that the spirit of constructive problem-solving and willingness to collaborate that characterized this effort will not only sustain but build through the challenging but gratifying work to come.

Several conditions must be in place to help ensure success. Perhaps most importantly, as the Task Force winds down, three additional entities must pick up where it leaves off: NYC Talent, the Interagency Talent Cabinet and the Workforce Development Board. The first two must lead the charge within city government, while the Board is where all talent development stakeholders must converge, cooperate, and coordinate to champion the changes critical to achieving a talent development system that works for NYC residents and businesses.

Undergirding all of that must be the sustained political commitment of Mayor Adams and top City leadership, who can do two things. First, they can continually reinforce the message that equitable access to jobs and careers remains a priority at City Hall. Looking at cities with a strong culture of talent development, we know sustained political messaging is a constant. The idea must be that contributing to the public talent development ecosystem is both an expectation and a privilege. Second, although the Task Force took pains to develop actionable recommendations that do not carry exorbitant short-term costs, the strategic levers named here will require targeted investments. Pretty much without exception, they are investments in systems, which means investment in people to run those systems. City leaders must commit to finding those resources, whether through local investment, pursuit of state or federal funds, partnership with private funders, identifying and leveraging current excess staff capacity and expertise, or—most likely—all of the above. Finally, each of the stakeholder types represented on the Task Force—employers, educational institutions, unions, nonprofit providers, advocates, industry associations, philanthropy, community based organizations—as well as public agencies, need to commit to building and leveraging the strategic levers as the infrastructure that can transform our many programs into a robust system that serves all New Yorkers well and results in a truly inclusive economy. We must do so with and in support of jobseekers as well as their families and communities.

**Moments of possibility for real reform do not come around very often, nor do they last very long. This Blueprint hopefully speaks to every interested party within this ecosystem, representing the stakeholders who helped shape this plan as Members. But what really fulfills the promise of reform is quick, substantive action. By winter 2024—a year after the Task Force last met—the City should have:**

- A fully active Workforce Development Board with strong committees including the Data and Impact Standing Committee
- Embarked upon its campaign to make NYC the apprenticeship capital of the country, including an Apprenticeship Accelerator focused on achieving the goal of 30,000 apprenticeships citywide by 2030

- Made a first set of awards through the Talent Investment Fund, utilizing the Design Guidelines
- A public Dashboard of Shared Impact Metrics as well as the annual report called for in EO22
- Established an employer-facing “front door” connected to a larger citywide talent portal

Two common sentiments expressed during Task Force meetings were that our talent is New York City’s greatest asset, and that all systems are perfectly set up to produce the results that they yield. The heart of our work over these last five months has been to identify how New York City’s array of talent development stakeholders, processes, programs and norms can create and support the infrastructure for the sustained partnership required to ensure every New Yorker is well positioned for career success and every employer has access to the talent they need to grow and thrive. If we do that, then we all benefit from the shared prosperity that will ensue. We conclude our work with a strong belief in this city’s collective ability to do better by its workers and employers—and an urgent call to get it done.



# APPENDIX

## Future of Workers Task Force Invited Members

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Chancellor of the City University of New York, Félix Matos Rodríguez

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# APPENDIX

## A Short History of NYC Workforce Reform

### Overview

The Future of Workers Task Force is not the first effort New York City has made to reform and strengthen aspects of its talent development system. Notwithstanding the significant challenges the Task Force identified over the course of its deliberations, the city's earlier attempts led to very real progress in a number of areas, from career-focused education to adult job placement. Both in terms of what was accomplished and what was left undone, these previous efforts set the stage for the work of the Task Force.

Over the 20 years before Mayor Eric Adams took office, the Bloomberg and de Blasio administrations both restructured training and employment services and gradually raised City investment in targeted areas. To an extent, these changes began to evolve the system away from a “rapid attachment” approach to job placement toward strategies that emphasized employer demand, priority economic sectors, and more holistic approaches to serve students, jobseekers and incumbent workers. Over the same period, both the NYC Department of Education and City University of New York have taken steps toward greater prioritization of students' career readiness as part of their educational missions.

This short and high-level overview of recent workforce history considers not just employment and training programs, but related developments in education, social services, and philanthropy over the past 20 years. One conceptual change the Task Force hopes to cement is that “workforce development” encompasses all these inputs and activities; to build and sustain a high performing talent development system, all must be aligned and harmonized.

### 2002

- Mayor Michael Bloomberg takes office and shifts responsibility for workforce programs back to the Department of Employment, from which Mayor Rudy Giuliani had shifted it to the Human Resources Administration (HRA). Public assistance programs, including job training and employment services under the federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program, remain at HRA.
- The Department is charged with quickly bringing NYC into compliance with the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA), by spending down accrued funds and opening additional mandated one-stop centers.
- Mayor Bloomberg gains authority over local K-12 schooling, and renames the former Board of Education as the NYC Department of Education (DOE).

## 2003

- Mayor Bloomberg moves to eliminate the Department of Employment.
- Workforce responsibilities are divided up between the Department of Small Business Services (SBS), responsible for programs and funds serving adult and dislocated workers, and Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), responsible for programs and funds serving youth and young adults.<sup>1</sup>
- SBS also houses the federally required Workforce Investment Board. (WIB)

## 2004

- The New York City Workforce Funders, a collaboration of more than 40 foundations that formed in 2001 to coordinate grant-making and set strategy, partner with SBS to create the NYC Workforce Innovation Fund, which will support new pilots in the workforce space.
- Workforce Professionals Training Institute founded to provide technical assistance for organizations providing job training and employment services.

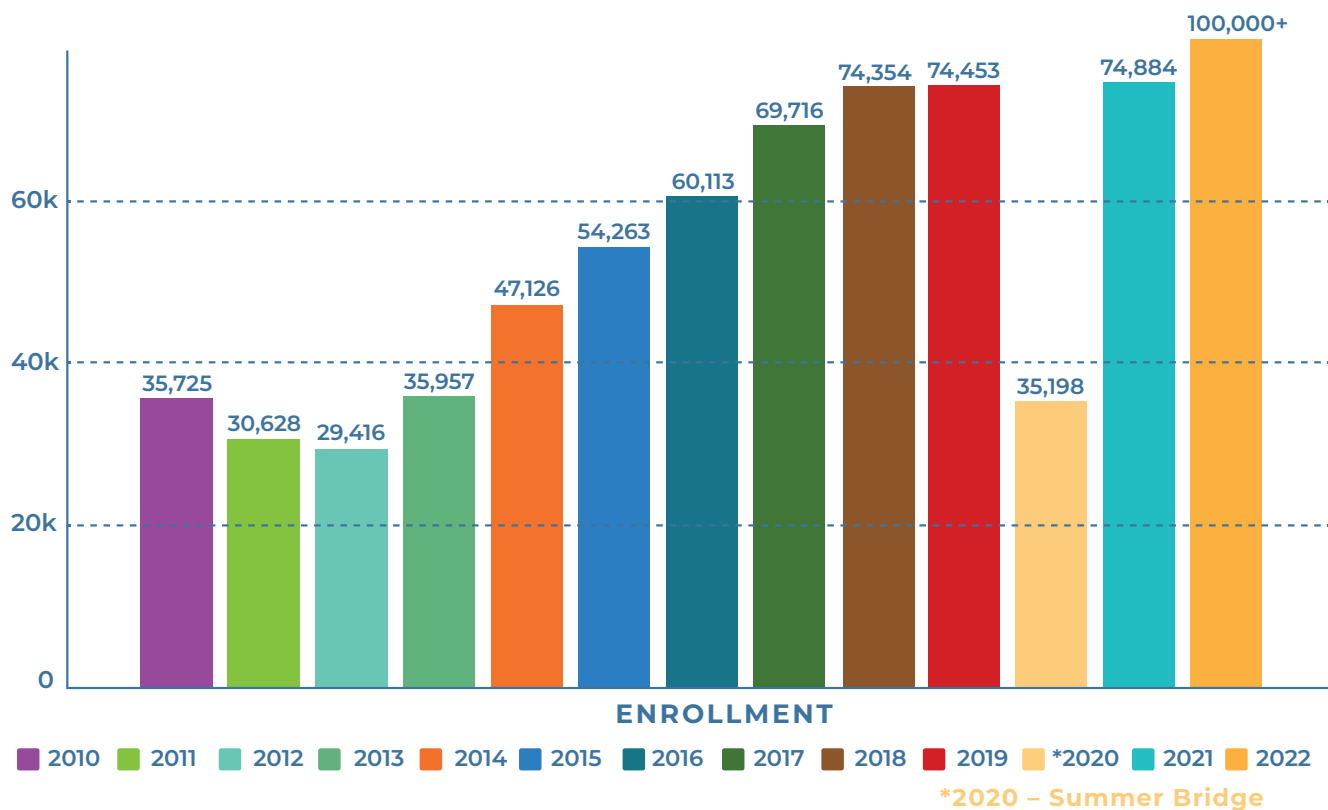
## 2005

- Community Service Society of New York releases “Out of School, Out of Work... Out of Luck?”, a groundbreaking analysis of “disconnected youth” that elevates the issue locally and nationally.<sup>2</sup>

## 2004-2009

- NYC achieves federal compliance with WIA as SBS refines its demand-driven job placement model through one-stop centers and sector-specific strategies.
- DYCD begins to modernize the decades-old Summer Youth Employment Program, successively launching online participant application, enrollment and timekeeping, and worksite application.
- HRA continues to operate a rapid-attachment model of employment centers through its Back to Work contracts, keeping public assistance caseloads lower but otherwise leaving participants to churn through mostly low-wage, high-turnover jobs.





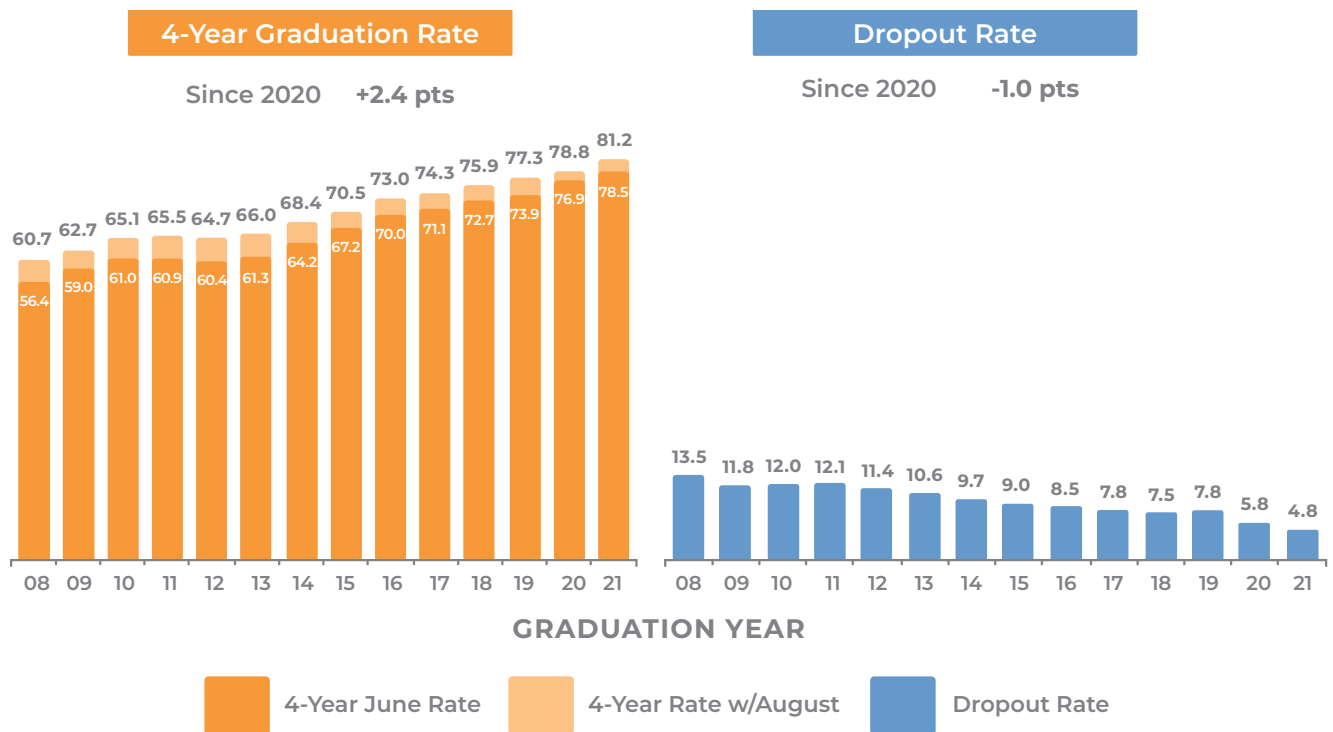
Under the administration of DYCD, the Summer Youth Employment Program more than doubled between 2010 and 2021, before reaching a new high in 2022 with support from Mayor Adams (DYCD, SYEP 2021 Annual Summary)

## 2007

- Mayor Bloomberg launches the Center for Economic Opportunity, which invests heavily in new workforce programming including sector-focused one-stops, post-placement job retention, programs specifically serving ex-offenders, etc.
- JobsFirstNYC is founded to advocate for, conduct research relating to, and help develop innovative programming to serve out-of-school/out-of-work young New Yorkers.
- New York City Council launches Jobs to Build On, through which the Consortium for Worker Education supports an extensive network of workforce providers in placing low-income New Yorkers into employment.

## 2008

- NYC Department of Education publishes a comprehensive plan centering Career and Technical Education (CTE) as an education reform strategy.<sup>3</sup> During the Bloomberg administration, the number of CTE schools roughly triples as hundreds of programs gain state approval.
- CUNY Labor Market Information Service is created as a joint investment of Workforce Investment Board and NYC Workforce Funders.



The Department of Education has seen sustained improvements in its graduation and dropout rates over multiple mayoralty and through crises including the Great Recession and the COVID-19 pandemic (DOE, “New York City Graduation Rates, Class of 2021 (2017 Cohort)”)

## 2009

- The Great Recession strains public budgets, though the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act temporarily infuses resources into the workforce system; this investment supports NYC’s first focus on common workforce metrics, the Human Services Data Project.

## 2010-11

- Recognizing that workforce programs are siloed within city government, three Bloomberg administration deputy mayors form the Deputy Mayors’ Workforce Cabinet and begin convening agencies to discuss shared interests.
- As part of that work, a cross-agency team pulls together the first comprehensive workforce report published by City Hall, titled One System for One City.<sup>4</sup>
- The Workforce Funders and SBS launch the first industry partnership, the New York Alliance for Careers in Healthcare as a public/private partnership

## 2012

- CUNY convenes a Jobs Task Force that calls on the school to center partnerships with industry and career development for students.<sup>5</sup>

## 2013

- The Bloomberg administration creates the Office of Human Capital Development (OHCD) by combining the staff of the WIB with the Mayor’s Office of Adult Education.

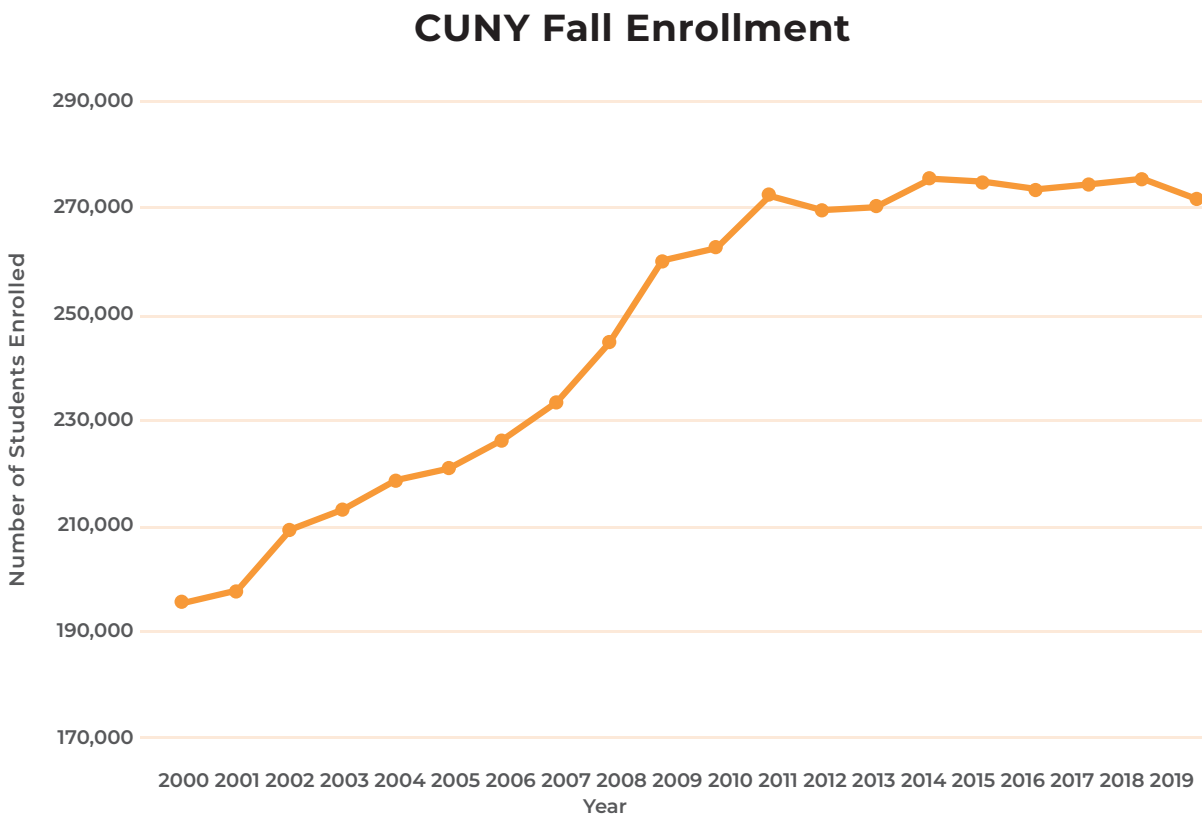


## 2014

- Mayor Bill de Blasio takes office and recreates OHCD as the Mayor’s Office of Workforce Development, appointing Katy Gaul-Stigge as Executive Director.
- Mayor De Blasio convenes the Jobs for New Yorkers Task Force, which meets throughout the year and produces a report titled Career Pathways: One City, Working Together that fall.6 The report endorses a sector approach and calls for more investment in training and education.

## 2015

- Acting on a recommendation of the Career Pathways report, the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City creates the Center for Youth Employment (CYE) to grow, improve, and align career education, training, and employment programs for youth.
- City Council first funds Work Learn & Grow—a year-round complement to SYEP—to be administered by DYCD



*Student enrollment across the CUNY system rose sharply through the decade of the 2000s before leveling off at over 270,000 before the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily reduced matriculation (CUNY Office of Institutional Research and Assessment)*

## 2016

- The de Blasio administration and City Council reach an agreement to baseline SYEP to serve 50,000 young New Yorkers each summer as part of the FY2017 budget, contingent upon a Task Force convening to make recommendations to systematize and raise quality of the program.

## 2017

- The Youth Employment Task Force releases its report calling for more standardization of SYEP along with operational changes and closer alignment to education.<sup>7</sup>

## 2018

- The New York City Workforce Funders release “The Workforce Agenda for NYC,” a comprehensive analysis and critique of NYC’s still-siloed workforce ecosystem with far-ranging calls for reform.<sup>8</sup>

# New York City Workforce Funders

Annual Survey of Giving for Workforce Development in New York City by Workforce Funders Members (2004 – 2017)

Year	Reporters	Direct to Adults	Change	Direct to Youth	Change	All Direct Services	Change	Intermediaries	Change	Intermediaries	Change
2004	20	\$11,034,404	n/a	\$	n/a	\$15,900,404	n/a	\$2,509,500	n/a	\$18,409,904	n/a
2005	16	\$15,471,250	40.2%	\$8,004,000	64.5%	\$23,475,250	47.6%	\$1,651,480	-34.2%	\$25,126,730	36.5%
2006	20	\$14,932,500	-3.5%	\$14,763,745	84.5%	\$29,696,245	26.5%	\$3,622,500	119.3%	\$33,318,745	32.6%
2007	24	\$19,606,850	31.3%	\$15,045,045	1.9%	\$34,651,895	16.7%	\$5,730,794	58.2%	\$40,382,689	21.2%
2008	23	\$20,875,500	6.5%	\$16,965,500	12.8%	\$37,841,000	9.2%	\$6,081,500	58.2%	\$43,922,500	8.8%
2009	26	\$22,702,125	8.8%	\$12,695,599	-25.2%	\$35,397,724	-6.5%	\$6,204,950	2.0%	\$41,602,674	-5.3%
2010	26	\$24,329,829	7.2%	\$12,223,000	-3.7%	\$36,552,829	3.3%	\$3,739,500	-39.7%	\$40,292,329	-3.1%
2011	26	\$25,858,875	6.3%	\$22,355,820	82.9%	\$48,214,695	31.9%	\$3,625,492	-3.0%	\$51,840,187	28.7%
2012	28	\$28,445,708	10.0%	\$25,667,558	14.8%	\$54,113,266	12.2%	\$4,225,000	16.5%	\$58,338,266	12.5%
2013	25	\$27,929,683	-1.8%	\$28,691,570	11.8%	\$56,621,253	4.6%	\$8,059,568	90.8%	\$64,680,821	10.9%
2014	23	\$29,365,683	5.1%	\$33,886,958	18.1%	\$62,252,772	11.7%	\$8,504,312	5.5%	\$71,757,084	10.9%
2015	25	\$25,223,286	-14.1%	\$34,242,833	1.1%	\$59,466,119	-6.0%	\$11,870,000	39.6%	\$71,336,119	-0.6%
2016	28	\$25,709,087	1.9%	\$31,611,069	-7.7%	\$57,320,156	-3.6%	\$8,601,350	-27.5%	\$65,921,506	-7.6%
2017	32	\$28,217,869	9.8%	\$36,138,733	14.3%	\$64,356,602	12.3%	\$12,372,267	43.8%	\$76,728,869	16.4%

The New York City Workforce Funders nearly quadrupled their collective total giving between 2004 and 2017. Staff estimate that the Funders continue to contribute approximately \$77 million per year. (NYC Workforce Funders)

## 2019

- CYE along with DOE, CUNY, DYCD, and a set of external partners releases “CareerReady NYC,” a comprehensive plan to support holistic career readiness that features the Career Readiness Framework, a guide to what experiences youth should have and what skills they should master at different ages and stages of development.<sup>9</sup>

## 2020

- In the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, SYEP is canceled, then relaunched as SYEP Summer Bridge featuring unprecedented collaboration with the nonprofit provider community and engagement with the private sector through new project-based learning partnerships.
- The NY Workforce Recovery Strategy Group releases “Recovery for All” report calling for equity as the strategic cornerstone of efforts to rebound from the pandemic-driven recession.<sup>10</sup>

## 2021

- Disconnected Youth Task Force staffed by CYE and including more than a dozen City agencies as well as outside partners releases NYC’s first comprehensive plan to serve out-of-school/out-of-work young adults (OSOW, also known as disconnected youth or Opportunity Youth)<sup>11</sup>
- NYC Opportunity launches the Workforce Data Portal, informed by the City’s Common Metrics framework established in the 2014 Career Pathways report.
- Invest in Skills NY, a collaborative including JobsFirstNYC, the New York Association of Training and Employment Professionals and the NYC Employment and Training Coalition, releases “Follow the Money: Understanding New York City’s Workforce System Funding,” detailing 75 funding streams administered by 21 city agencies to provide services related to employment and training.<sup>12</sup>

## 2022

- Mayor Eric Adams takes office and commits to an unprecedented expansion of SYEP, serving 100,000 young New Yorkers with paid summer work-based learning experiences
- Schools Chancellor David Banks declares career pathways as “the north star goal” of the K-12 system and creates an Office of Student Pathways.
- The administration releases “Rebuild, Renew, Reinvent: A Blueprint for New York City’s Economic Recovery,” which includes pledges to reimagine the public workforce system and build holistic K-16 and adult workforce strategies for priority sectors.<sup>13</sup>
- New York City wins an \$18.6 million award from the federal Economic Development Authority to launch NYC PINCC (Pathways to Industrial and Construction Careers), a comprehensive workforce program to connect public assistance recipients to high-wage, unionized jobs with career pathways.
- Mayor Adams signs Executive Order 22 establishing the renamed Mayor’s Office of Talent and Workforce Development with lead responsibility for the workforce system, and convening the Future of Workers Task Force.

## Takeaways

When Mayor Michael Bloomberg took office in 2002, New York City's workforce system was adrift, with no clear mission, no system infrastructure, no coordination, no alignment to demand, and no focus on high need populations. Likewise, public education was devoid of even basic accountability, let alone a focus on helping students succeed in the world beyond school, and barely half of high school seniors graduated each year. At the same time, the philanthropic community was only beginning to organize.

During Bloomberg's three terms, adult workforce programs run by SBS embraced a demand-driven and increasingly sector-focused approach, and began to place tens of thousands of New Yorkers into jobs each year. On the youth side, DYCD began to modernize SYEP, and newly won mayoral control of public schools set the stage for dramatic increases in high school graduation and expansion of career and technical education programs within DOE. DOE and CUNY set up systems to track post-high school outcomes and programming such as College Now, and CUNY took important first steps toward centering career readiness within its programming. Meanwhile, the member organizations of the New York City Workforce Funders sharply raised their combined giving, partnering with each other and the City to launch innovative projects like the NYC Sectors Initiative and helping to fill the resource gap left by federal disinvestment.

The administration of Mayor Bill de Blasio created the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development and Center for Youth Employment to raise the quantity, quality, and connectedness of workforce and career readiness programming on the adult and youth sides respectively. Youth programming was a particular focus of investment, as Mayor de Blasio and City Council effectively doubled SYEP and baselined the program while DYCD continued to innovate new models and build closer partnerships with DOE and other City agencies. Two reports produced by the City—*Career Pathways: One City Working Together* (2014), and *CareerReady NYC* (2019)—set out compelling system visions, complemented by the Workforce Funders' release of *The Workforce Agenda for NYC* (2018). Over de Blasio's two terms, the high school graduation rate, college readiness rate, and dropout rate all continued to improve. CUNY enrollment rose steadily until the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, which also reversed a decade-long decline in the number of Out-of-School/Out-of-Work young adult New Yorkers.

In the year-plus since Mayor Eric Adams took in office, workforce has emerged as a higher priority than ever before. The administration's economic blueprint centered workforce reform, the Mayor worked with City Council to expand SYEP to serve 100,000 young New Yorkers with paid work experience, and Schools Chancellor David Banks has named career readiness as his top priority. Perhaps most importantly, Mayor Adams has made structural changes that his predecessors would not or could not, investing the renamed Office of Talent and Workforce Development with clear authority and responsibility to set policy and exercise accountability over the public workforce system. That Office, and the Interagency Talent Cabinet it has convened, will partner with a reinvigorated Workforce Development Board to implement the vision the Task Force has set out in this Blueprint.



