

Youth CareerConnect Grants

Building America's Next Generation Workforce

To compete in today's global economy, America's students need deep knowledge and skills that will prepare them for college and the jobs of the future. Yet far too many of America's students are not meaningfully engaged or motivated in their academic experience while in high school. Many high school graduates lack exposure to learning that links their work in school to college and careers—especially in the critically important fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Moreover, many of America's international competitors offer students a more rigorous and relevant education in their middle and high school years.

In his 2013 State of the Union address, the President laid out a new vision for America's high schools, proposing funding to scale up innovative high school models and partnerships with colleges and employers so that all students graduate better equipped for the demands of a high-tech economy. Today's global economy requires new approaches to teaching and learning in America's high schools to foster problem solving and analysis, to support creativity and collaboration, and to connect student learning directly to the real world. A 21st century education and workforce system must challenge students to do meaningful work inside and outside of the classroom, encouraging the persistence, engagement, and achievement that will put all students on track for college and careers.

Today, as part of achieving the President's goal of redesigning high schools to ensure students are prepared to succeed in post-secondary education and in a competitive workforce, the U.S. Department of Labor is collaborating with the U.S. Department of Education to make \$100 million available for Youth CareerConnect grants to provide high school students with the industry-relevant education and skills they need for a successful future.

The Youth CareerConnect grant program is designed to encourage America's school districts, institutions of higher education, the workforce investment system, and their partners to scale up evidence-based high school models that will transform the high school experience for America's youth. Youth CareerConnect schools will strengthen America's talent pipeline through:

- **Integrated Academic and Career-Focused Learning:** Grants will provide students with education and training that combines rigorous academic and career-focused curriculum to increase students' employability in in-demand industries and prepare them for employment, post-secondary education, long-term occupational skills training, or registered apprenticeships.
- **Work-Based Learning and Exposure to the World of Work:** Strong partnerships will provide work-based learning opportunities. In addition to actual work experience, youth participants will also participate in field trips, job-shadowing, or other types of opportunities that provide students with exposure to different career paths and prepare them for the world of work.
- **Robust Employer Engagement:** Employer partners will provide work-based learning and mentoring, creating a path for students to in-demand industries and occupations

including those in information technologies, advanced manufacturing and other science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields . Employers will also work closely with schools on professional development and training for staff to drive the sustainability of the program over the long term.

- **Individualized Career and Academic Counseling:** As an integral part of the program design, students will be provided with individualized career and academic counseling experiences to strengthen their career and post-secondary awareness and explore opportunities beyond high school.
- **Integration of Post-secondary Education and Training:** Students will participate in education and training, while they are still in high school, that leads to credit toward a post-secondary degree or certificate and an industry recognized credential, where appropriate.

The Department of Labor will use up to \$100 million in revenues from the H-1B visa program to fund approximately 25 to 40 grants for individual or multi-site projects. Grants will be awarded to local education agencies, public or non-profit local workforce entities, or non-profits with education reform experience. All grantees will have to demonstrate a strong public/private partnership, and must include, at a minimum, a local education agency, a local workforce investment system entity, an employer, and an institution of higher education. Applicants are encouraged to reach out to employers, foundations, and others in building their applications and leveraging the federal investment. At a minimum, applicants will also be required to provide a match of 25 percent of the grant award. Awards are anticipated to be made in early 2014 for program implementation to align with the 2014-15 school year.

This announcement builds on the President’s broader agenda to strengthen education to better prepare young people for college and careers:

- The Administration’s efforts to redesign high schools were unveiled in the 2013 State of the Union address and FY2014 Budget Proposal, in which the President called for \$300 million in new funding at the Department of Education to transform the high school experience for America’s youth through a whole school redesign effort. This effort, currently before Congress, would challenge high schools and their partners to rethink teaching and learning and put in place learning models that are rigorous, relevant, and better focused on real-world experiences.
- Today’s announcement also builds on ongoing efforts by the U.S. Department of Education to reform America’s Career and Technical Education system through a reauthorized Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE) Act, aiming to leverage change in the federal government’s \$1 billion investment each year to usher in a new era of rigorous, relevant, and results-driven CTE programs.

To apply for funding, please visit www.doleta.gov/ycc