

Facts and Thoughts behind Youth Career Engagement

A report brief for the WorkReady Closing Ceremony, 2014

Did you know that in our region...

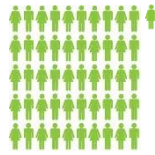
for every 100 9th graders



79 graduate from high school



51 enter college



37 are still enrolled in their sophomore year



29 graduate college within six years¹



- 29% of high school students need help with finishing high school;
- 49% of high school students need exposure to non-college but equally viable paths to careers;
- All high school students need opportunities to explore careers and build work-readiness

This sobering diagram tells us we are not doing enough to keep our region's youth on a path to **meaningful careers and stable employment**. The Gates Foundation research shows that relevancy is the number one reason youth drop out of high school – they do not see the connection between their high school education and their future jobs².

That's where we, the Pittsburgh community of employers, come in. How can we make sure youth see the connection between education and career possibilities? How can we ensure youth have the opportunity to connect with companies who may hire them down the road?

Youth learn to work by working; work experience improves academic and vocational training achievement.

Research, youth, employers, and our daily experience confirm that **workplace learning** is critical for **success** in any **career**. For youth, having a job is not only an important step toward adulthood or prosperity; it is a key component of professional development.

First jobs—even relatively low-skill ones—can teach **valuable competencies** and behaviors. Punctuality, reliability, dealing with coworkers and customers, effective communication, problem-solving, and managing priorities are just a few examples of skills that youth need and can learn on their first jobs. First jobs aid **career exploration** and improve **engagement in learning**. First jobs provide an **important economic advantage**; our data suggest that on-the-job learning boosted, on average, the real wage that 14-18 years old earn by **69%**³.

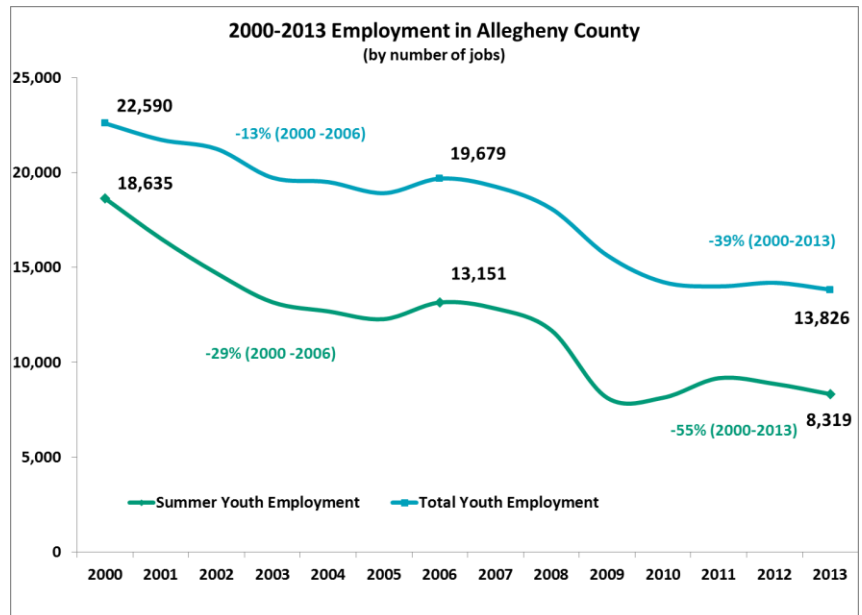
¹ Source: PA Department of Education, 2013.

² Source: Civic Enterprises, 2006. Report Prepared for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

³ Source: Quarterly Workforce Indicators, US Census Bureau, 2013.

The opportunities for youth to learn to work by working are limited⁴

Despite the importance of early workplace learning, the **youngest cohort** of emerging workers has increasingly more **limited** employment opportunities. Since 2000, the level of **youth employment** decreased by **39%** and the number of summer jobs by **55%**. While youth employment has rebounded slightly from the recession, levels are still far below where they were a decade ago.



Traditional summer job opportunities do not fully stimulate exploration of interest, skills and talents for Pittsburgh’s breadth of careers

The majority (67.5%) of current summer employment opportunities are concentrated in **just three industry sectors**: Hospitality, Retail, and Recreation.

Key industries that not only offer a range of viable career pathways but are also in need of a sufficient pipeline to replace aging workers—e.g. **Manufacturing, Energy, Construction, Finance, and Healthcare**—seem unable to provide the level of summer job opportunities that would expose large numbers of high school students to in-demand careers.

WorkReady® Pittsburgh, a 6-week corporate internship program for Allegheny County youth ages 16-21, seeks to address these gaps in youth summer work experience.

WorkReady® Pittsburgh engages leading employers in Healthcare, Finance, Communications, Technology, and other key industries to develop their youth pipelines and provide **meaningful work experience** to our region’s next generation of workers.

	2013 Summer Jobs	% of Total
Accommodation and Food	3,119	38%
Retail Trade	1,449	17%
Arts and Recreation	1,407	13%
Other Services	463	6%
Administrative Services	340	4%
Healthcare	299	4%
Construction	296	4%
Government	294	4%
Education	218	3%
Management of Companies	151	2%
Real Estate	125	2%
Manufacturing	114	1%
Prof. and Tech. Services	107	1%
Transportation	90	1%
Information	80	1%
Wholesale Trade	67	1%
Finance and Insurance	29	0.3%
Agriculture	10	0.1%
Utilities	8	0.1%
Grand Total	8,319	100%

What is WorkReady® Pittsburgh?

Employers looking to attract the next generation of prepared and committed professionals need to engage youth **NOW** by offering real-world work opportunities in key industries through programs like **WorkReady® Pittsburgh**.

WorkReady® Pittsburgh provides qualified and motivated youth with positions at **top corporations** in and around Allegheny County.

In 2014, **more than 40 youth** spent 16 hours per week in a corporate placement and attended a 4-hour professional development seminar each Friday. The program provides youth with exposure to the corporate world and **emphasizes the connection between school, career opportunities and economic success**.

How can you help engage youth and ensure the youth pipeline is ready to meet the demands of local employers?

- **Open doors for youth** at your company and in your networks; youth learn to work by working!
- **Mentor** young people in your community to help them understand what opportunities lay ahead and why it is critical to do well in school.
- **Commit to WorkReady® Pittsburgh 2015!**

For more information, contact Aleina Smith, WorkReady® Pittsburgh program manager, at alsmith@trwib.org or (412) 552-7090

Thank you to WorkReady® Pittsburgh 2013 and 2014 Employers

AIReS
Allegheny County Economic
Development
Allegheny General Hospital
Allegheny Health Network
Allegheny Intermediate Unit
Best of the Batch Foundation
Blind and Vision
BNY Mellon
Calgon Carbon
Clear Channel Communications
Citizens Bank
dck World Wide
FedEx Ground
Fifth Third Bank
Giant Eagle, Inc
Habitat for Humanity
Jones Day
KPMG
MARC USA
PA CareerLink®
Peoples Natural Gas
Pittsburgh Penguins
PNC Bank
Presbyterian Senior Care
Schneider Downs
Three Rivers Workforce Investment
Board
United Way of Allegheny County
UPMC Health Systems
West Penn Hospital
Xerox Corporation

About Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board

As the leader of Pittsburgh/Allegheny County's public workforce system, Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board (3RWIB) works to ensure that the current and future needs of businesses and job seekers are met. 3RWIB educates the public with advanced labor market analytics; oversees and funds workforce programs for adults, dislocated workers, and youth; and implements new, innovative solutions to systemic challenges through programs including Pittsburgh Works, the New App for Making in America, and WorkReady® Pittsburgh.

Nationally recognized for innovation and distinguished as Gov. Tom Corbett's WIB of Excellence for 2014, 3RWIB bridges the gap between looking for work and companies in need of talent.

www.TRWIB.org

Centre City Tower, Suite 2600 ▪ 650 Smithfield Street ▪ Pittsburgh, PA 15222
tel 412.552.7090 fax 412.552.7091 email info@trwib.org