



Youth Workforce Readiness

America's young people face an ever-changing labor market and an uncertain educational outlook. While COVID has severely impacted the country's progress in youth workforce development, most available programs were only aimed at older youth, missing a critical window of essential skill development. Boys & Girls Clubs provide youth starting as early as age six with access to programs and experiences that help youth explore their interests, develop their skills and apply their knowledge to real-world work experience.



Every dollar invested in Boys & Girls Clubs **returns \$9.60** in current and future earnings and cost-savings to their communities.

Out-of-school time programs like the ones offered at Boys & Girls Clubs will be critical as youth-serving providers aim to make up for significant unfinished learning, skills building and the social emotional development impact caused by the pandemic. Clubs help youth develop the essential skills to navigate the 21st century workforce, provide career exposure, skills training for first jobs and connect youth with internships and jobs. Programs utilize local and national partnerships in the business and nonprofit sectors to enhance the economic potential of young people over their lifetime and help employers fill critical gaps in their workforce.

According to BGCA's 2021 Alumni Study:

63% of alumni report that the Club helped them learn about different jobs and careers.

90% of alumni feel that they have the skills needed to be successful in a job.

By expanding the reach and scope of youth development programs that impact more than 10 million school-age children and teens, programs can support and build a diverse and skilled workforce that is ready to contribute and strengthen the country's economy.

Youth Workforce Readiness Act (YWRA)

The Youth Workforce Readiness Act of 2021 (S. 1696/H.R. 3342) would establish a competitive grant through the Department of Labor's Employment & Training Administration for national out-of-school time organizations to support local youth-serving affiliates that provide programs focused on four pillars that support youth workforce readiness:

ESSENTIAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT (6-18 YR OLDS)

Learning experiences to build essential soft skills that support social-emotional development, such as communication, critical thinking, problem solving and collaboration.

CAREER EXPOSURE (6-18 YR OLDS)

Building community business partnerships to provide career discovery opportunities through mentors, career assessments and planning, and insights into both traditional and nontraditional fields.

EMPLOYABILITY & CERTIFICATION (13-18 YR OLDS)

Practice interviewing, resume writing, financial literacy and industry certifications in specific areas that will help youth land their first job.

WORK-BASED LEARNING (15-18 YR OLDS)

Opportunities to apply skills in real-life, hands-on work experiences through local community business partnerships.



Policy Ask

We ask Congress to co-sponsor the Youth Workforce Readiness Act ([S.1696/H.R.3342](#)) and support its passage as part of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act reauthorization.

Boys & Girls Club Workforce Readiness Success

Boys & Girls Clubs of America has the reach, scale and experience to prepare today's youth for success in tomorrow's workforce by teaching essential skills including good judgment/decision-making, communications and collaboration which employers named as the most in-demand competencies in the labor market. According to Boys & Girls Clubs of America's 2021 National Outcomes Report:

53% of graduating Club members expressed an extremely high interest in STEM

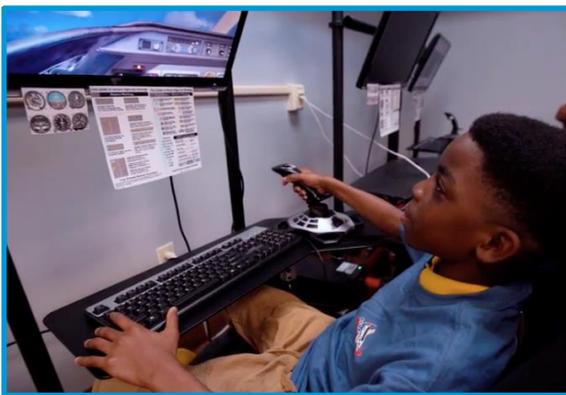
65% of Club members feel they have the skills needed to be successful at a job, compared to only 25% of youth nationally who believe they have the skills necessary to secure a job

Success Stories

When the **Boys & Girls Club of Lawrence, KS** had outgrown its old facility and needed to build a new one, its long-time partner in the Lawrence School District offered a piece of land next to its Lawrence College and Career Center. The Center offers hands-on career and technical education opportunities to juniors and seniors and allows them to earn college credits while still in high school. On the same campus, the Peaslee Technical Training Center allows Club teens to enroll in subsidized courses and earn certifications as nursing aides, emergency medical technicians, heating and air conditioning technicians, automobile mechanics and more. The Club teen center also offers state-of-the-art spaces for STEAM projects, performing arts, audio and video production, culinary arts and gardening.



The **Boys & Girls Clubs of Broward County, Florida** developed a Workforce Development Initiative designed to promote the development of critical employment skills among youth through research-informed youth development practice, training and experimental learning opportunities that lead to first job readiness and a plan for pursuing postsecondary and/or career aspirations. The program increases teen's employability through career exploration, mentorship, credential opportunities, soft skills training, technical skills training and career experiences. The initiative includes a focus on financial literacy, career assessment and a customer services program. Core partners include GAP, WaWa, McDonalds, Publix, Taco Bell, Jiffy Lube, Miami Grill and JAE Restaurant group.



The **Boys & Girls Clubs of West Alabama** recognized the need for youth workforce programming to meet the needs of area teens and launched a new program called Learn & Earn. The goal of the program is to help teens overcome obstacles for employment in a job that could turn into a career right in their home state. The program includes a driving program targeted at Club members in the most rural and low socioeconomic region of the state which helps youth get their driver's license in order to expand their ability to get work. Students were able to access Driver's Ed and ACT prep through the program. The combination of academics and Driver's Ed was extremely popular with both students and parents.

For any questions please contact Alex Knapp, Policy and Advocacy Director at aknapp@bgca.org.