



PATHWAYS FOR
YOUTH EMPLOYMENT:
FEDERAL RESOURCES
FOR EMPLOYERS

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Pathways for Youth Employment: Federal Resources for Employers

In February 2014, President Obama launched the My Brother's Keeper initiative to address persistent opportunity gaps facing boys and young men of color and ensure that all young people can reach their full potential. Across the country, elected officials, business leaders, non-profits, foundations and local school systems are also stepping up to answer the President's call to action to implement their own cradle-to-college-and-career strategies for improving the life outcomes of all young people.

Ensuring that every young adult has the tools and opportunities to successfully enter the workforce is a key component of the My Brother's Keeper initiative. This handbook outlines a number of federal resources available to organizations that offer entry-level opportunities to young adults, including at-risk youth. Many of these resources are available to all employers, including private businesses, non-profits, faith and secular community-based organizations, public agencies, Indian tribes, labor organizations and academic institutions. Additional resources may be available on a state and regional level.

Recruitment, Screening and Referrals

I. One-Stop Career Centers and Youth Councils

Employers interested in hiring youth can partner with One-Stop Career Centers and Youth Councils to recruit and pre-screen job candidates. One-Stop Career Centers offer job referrals and other employment-related services to job seekers. Youth Councils consist of local Workforce Investment Board members and youth policy experts who coordinate regional youth programs and initiatives.

II. Job Corps

Job Corps provides 60,000 young people with hands-on career and academic training every year. Employers can work with Job Corps to gain access to thousands of dedicated entry-level employees with industry-specific training. Job Corps also provides assistance in screening eligible students to help employers select the best candidates.

III. YouthBuild

The YouthBuild program annually provides academic and occupational skills training and leadership development to approximately 10,000 at-risk youth, ages 16 to 24. YouthBuild can also assist employers with recruitment efforts by assessing student readiness, recommending the best qualified candidates, providing a diverse candidate pool, offering a strong post-program placement support system and helping employers demonstrate investment in the community.

Workforce Development

IV. Registered Apprenticeship

Registered Apprenticeship programs offer employers the tools to recruit, train and retain high-skilled workers to help grow their business while improving productivity. The U.S. Department of Labor has developed a playbook on how to leverage over \$50 billion a year in federal funding to help support employer-driven apprenticeships—including resources to offset instructional costs and training wages (www.doleta.gov/oa/federalresources/playbook.pdf). The Department also currently has open a \$100 million American Apprenticeships Grant competition for public-private partnerships, including employer-led, and state and regional consortia, to develop and implement innovative Registered Apprenticeship programs in high-skilled, high-growth industries (www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=270372). Grants will support strategies to increase access to apprenticeship opportunities for underrepresented populations in apprenticeship, including young men and women of color. The deadline to apply for an American Apprenticeship Grant is April 30, 2015.

Financial Assistance

V. AmeriCorps

Each year, AmeriCorps engages more than 75,000 Americans in intensive service. Many organizations partner with AmeriCorps to engage these service members on projects to address priority issues in their communities. AmeriCorps also provides funding to eligible organizations that use service to expand their impact and engage at-risk youth as AmeriCorps members. AmeriCorps initiatives include: Operation AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps VISTA, AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) and Employers of National Service.

VI. Federal Bonding Program

The Federal Bonding Program provides employers with fidelity coverage when they hire at-risk, hard-to-place job seekers, including youth who are of legal working age. The bond covers the first six months of employment and is available at no cost to the employer.

VII. Work Opportunity Tax Credit

The Tax Increase Prevention Act of 2014 retroactively allows employers to claim the Work Opportunity Tax Credit for hiring certain qualifying workers, including summer youth employees, through December 31, 2014. If Congress reauthorizes the Work Opportunity Tax Credit in 2015, employers who hire a summer youth employee in 2015 may be able to reduce their federal income tax liability.



I. One-Stop Career Centers and Youth Councils

Established by the Workforce Investment Act, One-Stop Career Centers and Youth Councils can assist employers in recruiting and pre-screening young people for entry-level positions. One-Stop Career Centers, also known as American Job Centers, are coordinated by the U.S. Department of Labor and offer training referrals, career counseling, job listings and other employment-related assistance to job seekers. Youth Councils are subgroups of local Workforce Investment Boards, regional entities that guide workforce development policy and direct federal, state and local funding to workforce development programs in the area. They include representatives of local public housing authorities, youth services agencies and other youth policy experts. Together, Workforce Investment Boards and Youth Councils coordinate activities and programs to support local youth employment and training. To learn more about One-Stop Career Centers, visit: www.careeronestop.org.

Benefits

- One-Stop Career Centers offer Business Services Representatives and other resources to help employers meet their recruitment goals.
- Youth Councils provide employers with access to local youth networks to help fill entry-level, temporary or part-time positions. They also host job recruitment events and can help to pre-screen candidates.

Eligibility

- All employers are encouraged to work with One-Stop Career Centers and Youth Councils to recruit and pre-screen young job candidates.

How to Access

- Find your local One-Stop Career Center or American Job Center by visiting jobcenter.usa.gov or calling (877) US2-JOBS or (877) 872-5627.
- Find your local Youth Council by visiting www.servicelocator.org/youthcouncil.asp.



II. Job Corps

Job Corps is a voluntary career training and education program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor that prepares young people ages 16 to 24 for careers in today's job market. Job Corps serves approximately 60,000 young people each year at 125 centers in 48 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. To learn more about Job Corps, visit: www.jobcorps.gov.

Benefits

- Job Corps saves employers time and money by providing no-cost access to entry-level workers with an average 8 to 12 months of career training and hands-on experience gained through internships with employers in a variety of career areas, including:
 - Advanced Manufacturing
 - Automotive and Machine Repair
 - Construction
 - Finance and Business
 - Health Care
 - Homeland Security
 - Hospitality
 - Information Technology
 - Renewable Resources and Energy
 - Retail Sales and Services
 - Transportation
- Job Corps also provides assistance in screening eligible students to help employers select the best candidates.
- Graduates are highly motivated, have earned their high school diplomas or high school equivalency credentials and have experience working in teams.

Eligibility

- All employers are encouraged to work with Job Corps to recruit and pre-screen well-trained youth for entry-level positions.

How to Access

- Find the nearest Job Corps center by visiting www.jobcorps.gov/centers.aspx, or calling (800) 733-JOBS or (800) 733-5627.



III. Youth Build

YouthBuild is a full-time, alternative education program funded by the U.S. Department of Labor to assist at-risk youth ages 16 to 24 in obtaining high school diplomas or GED credentials while learning job skills by building affordable housing for homeless and low-income people in their communities. Around 10,000 young adults participate in the program each year at over 250 sites in 46 states, Washington, DC and the Virgin Islands. The primary target populations are adjudicated youth, youth aging out of foster care, out-of-school youth and other at-risk populations. To learn more about YouthBuild, visit: www.youthbuild.org.

Benefits

- YouthBuild helps employers with recruitment efforts by assessing student readiness, screening and recommending the best qualified candidates, providing a diverse candidate pool, instituting a strong post-program placement support system that increases student retention and reduces turnover costs, and assisting employers demonstrate investment in the community.

Eligibility

- All employers are encouraged to work with YouthBuild to recruit and screen candidates for entry-level positions.

How to Access

- Find the nearest YouthBuild site by visiting www.youthbuild.org/siteview.



IV. Registered Apprenticeship

The U.S. Department of Labor administers the national Registered Apprenticeship program. Registered Apprenticeship is an employer-driven, “earn and learn” model that combines on-the-job learning with classroom instruction. It is a proven solution for recruiting, training and retaining world-class talent. It also improves productivity, reduces turnover costs and provides opportunities for tax credits and employee tuition benefits in some states. With a network of over 150,000 employers in more than 1,000 occupations, Registered Apprenticeship has already trained millions of America’s workers. To learn more about Registered Apprenticeship, visit: www.dol.gov/apprenticeship.

FEDERAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING INVESTMENTS

Over \$50 billion a year in federal funding is available to help employers launch and sustain apprenticeship programs. The U.S. Department of Labor Federal Resources Playbook for Registered Apprenticeship provides information on how to leverage these funds: www.doleta.gov/oa/federalresources/playbook.pdf.

Benefits

- The U.S. Department of Education’s Pell Grants and Federal Work Study funds, can be used to support a portion of apprenticeship training wages paid by an employer. For more information on how federal student aid programs can support apprenticeship programs, visit: <http://www.ifap.ed.gov/dpclletters/GEN1422.html>.
- Funds from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), administered by the U.S. Department of Labor, can be used to cover apprenticeship and job-related training costs worth up to 50 percent of a trainee’s wages. For more information on WIOA funds, visit: <http://www.doleta.gov/wioa>.
- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is expanding a fast track program for employers to help veteran apprentices access a tax-free monthly stipend of up to nearly \$1,500. To learn more about available benefits for veterans in Registered Apprenticeship, visit: <http://www.doleta.gov/oa/docs/BenefitsVeteransRegisteredApprenticeship.pdf>.
- Construction contractors that employ apprentices from communities served by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, particularly apprentices that are YouthBuild graduates, will receive priority in serving on contracts for more than \$19 billion in annual construction investments. For more information on providing Registered Apprenticeship opportunities for Section 3 residents and YouthBuild graduates, visit: http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=HUD-DOL_FACTSHEET.PDF.

Eligibility

- For eligibility information and to view a more comprehensive list of federal resources, visit: <http://www.doleta.gov/oa/federalresources/playbook.pdf>.

How to Access

- To view a Toolkit on Building Registered Apprenticeship Programs, visit: http://www.doleta.gov/oa/employers/apprenticeship_toolkit.pdf.

AMERICAN APPRENTICESHIP GRANTS

The U.S. Department of Labor is currently inviting public-private partnerships to apply for American Apprenticeship grants to develop and implement innovative, high-quality registered apprenticeship programs. This grant competition will help more Americans become apprentices, a proven path to quality employment and the middle class.

Benefits

- Approximately \$100 million is currently available to fund approximately 25 grants. Grant awards are expected to range between \$2.5 million and \$5 million.

Eligibility

- Grantees must focus on helping more employers and workers participate in American Apprenticeships within high-growth occupations and industries, including but not limited to Information Technology, Advanced Manufacturing, Business Services, and Healthcare.
- Applicants should demonstrate strategies to employ and train underserved populations in apprenticeships such as women, young men and women of color, persons with disabilities, low-skilled populations, veterans, including transitioning service members and others.
- To be eligible, the applicant must show evidence of a public-private consortium that consists of at least one each from the following:
 1. **Private Sector:** A business, a consortium of businesses, a business-related nonprofit organization, a joint labor-management organization, a labor organization or a private organization functioning as a workforce intermediary for the express purpose of serving the needs of businesses; and
 2. **Public Sector:** At least one representative from one of the following three types of entities: the workforce investment system; public education or training provider; or a DOL-recognized State Apprenticeship Agency.
- The lead applicant must be a public or non-profit organization that meets the definition of one of the types of eligible entities.
- Participants served through these grants should be at least 16 years old and not currently enrolled in school, or at least 18 years old.

How to Access

- To learn more about the American Apprenticeship Grants, visit: www.grants.gov and search for "American Apprenticeship" or go to: www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=270372. Applications must be received no later than 4:00PM ET on April 30, 2015.



V. AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps is administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) and provides funding to eligible organizations that use service to expand their impact and engage youth as AmeriCorps members. Each year, AmeriCorps engages more than 75,000 Americans in intensive service focused on disaster services, economic opportunity, education, the environment, healthy futures, and support for veterans and military families. AmeriCorps initiatives include: Operation AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps VISTA, AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) and Employers of National Service. For more information on AmeriCorps programs, visit: www.nationalservice.gov/ameri-corps.

OPERATION AMERICORPS

Operation AmeriCorps uses national service to address local problems with a focus on quick results and measurable outcomes. Through this program, tribal and local leaders identify a high priority local challenge in a community that AmeriCorps members can address within two years. Examples include ensuring every third grader is reading on grade level, greatly increasing energy efficiency or ending veterans' homelessness in the community. To learn more about Operation AmeriCorps, visit: www.nationalservice.gov/operation-ameri-corps.

Benefits

- Operation AmeriCorps provides funding to local and tribal governments that engage service members in transformational projects.
- Operation AmeriCorps also allows organizations to request AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps NCCC and/or AmeriCorps VISTA resources in a single application.

Eligibility

- Tribal and local governments—including counties, cities, towns and school districts—and state service commissions are eligible to apply for grants.
- Projects that focus on ensuring that all high school seniors in the community have career or educational opportunities upon graduation receive a higher preference for funding. Other eligible focus areas include: disaster services, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, veterans and military families.
- Preference is also given to applicants that demonstrate strong local support or are part of the Promise Zone or Strong Cities, Strong Communities initiatives.

How to Access

- CNCS intends to make available the next round of Operation AmeriCorps grants after October 1, 2015, depending on the availability of appropriations.

- To contact your local State Service Commission for details on how to apply for Operation AmeriCorps, visit www.nationalservice.gov/about/contact-us/state-service-commissions.
- For updates on AmeriCorps funding opportunities, visit: www.nationalservice.gov/funding-opportunities.

AMERICORPS STATE AND NATIONAL

AmeriCorps State and National provides grants to organizations that engage AmeriCorps members in direct service or capacity building to address local and national challenges. Members serve as mentors, tutors, home builders, counselors and community liaisons, among other roles. To learn more about AmeriCorps State and National, visit: www.nationalservice.gov/programs/americorps/americorps-state-and-national.

Benefits

- Grantee organizations gain access to AmeriCorps members who can help address unmet community needs by expanding services, building capacity, developing partnerships, leveraging resources, creating sustainable programs, recruiting and managing volunteers.
- AmeriCorps State and National funds can support member living allowances and a portion of program operating costs, including supervision, administration and oversight. First-time grantees are required to match at 24 percent for the first three-year funding period.

Eligibility

- Non-profits, faith and secular community-based organizations, public agencies, Indian tribes, labor organizations and institutions of higher education are eligible to apply for these grants.
- In the most recent round of funding, CNCS prioritized applications with programing that expands opportunity for all young people, consistent with the goals of My Brother's Keeper.

How to Access

- CNCS intends to make available the next round of AmeriCorps State and National grants after October 1, 2015, depending on the availability of appropriations.
- For updates on AmeriCorps funding opportunities, visit: www.nationalservice.gov/funding-opportunities.

AMERICORPS VISTA

AmeriCorps VISTA offers organizations the opportunity to engage service members in a year of full-time service to address issues related to poverty through building organizational capacity. To learn more about AmeriCorps VISTA, visit: www.nationalservice.gov/americorps-vista.

Benefits

- Organizations that serve as AmeriCorps VISTA sponsors can work with AmeriCorps VISTA members to create and expand programs designed to improve literacy, expand job opportunities, reduce homelessness and improve health services. Members also build capacity by managing projects, writing grants and mobilizing volunteers.
- AmeriCorps VISTA provides health coverage, payroll services, training in project management and leadership, liability coverage, child care for income-eligible members, FICA and assistance with recruiting members.

Eligibility

- Public, private or faith-based nonprofit organizations, as well as local, state and federal agencies, can become AmeriCorps VISTA sponsors.
- Project sponsors must be able to direct the project, supervise the service members and provide necessary administrative support to complete the goals and objectives of the project.

How to Access

- Contact the state office where the proposed project is located by visiting: www.nationalservice.gov/about/contact-us/state-offices.
- There is no required match for new project sponsors, but there is the option to cost-share.

AMERICORPS NATIONAL CIVILIAN COMMUNITY CORPS (NCCC)

AmeriCorps NCCC is a full-time, team-based residential program for young people ages 18 to 24 that provides organizations with human capital surge capacity for short-term infrastructure, education, environmental and other projects. To learn more about AmeriCorps NCCC, visit: www.nationalservice.gov/nccc.

Benefits

- AmeriCorps NCCC teams assist organizations with a range of short-term projects from revitalizing a community park to creating special reading areas for children in libraries.

Eligibility

- Non-profits—secular and faith based—local municipalities, state governments, federal government, national and state parks, Indian tribes and schools can request assistance from AmeriCorps NCCC teams.
- Project sponsors are responsible for providing project oversight and housing.

How to Access

- Organizations requesting the assistance of AmeriCorps NCCC teams for a project must submit a project application to the regional campus that covers your state. The regional campus can pro-

vide assistance in completing the application, developing a work plan and preparing the project sponsor for the arrival of the team. For application instructions and a list of AmeriCorps NCCC regional campuses, visit: www.nationalservice.gov/nccc and click on “Sponsor an AmeriCorps NCCC Team.”

EMPLOYERS OF NATIONAL SERVICE

In September 2014, President Obama launched Employers of National Service, an initiative that connects national service alumni who have served through AmeriCorps or Peace Corps with leading employers from the private, public and nonprofit sectors to create recruitment, hiring and advancement opportunities. Over 1 million Americans have participated in either AmeriCorps or Peace Corps. To learn more about Employers of National Service, visit: www.nationalservice.gov/special-initiatives/employers-national-service.

Benefits

- Through this initiative, employers gain new access to a dedicated, highly qualified and mission-oriented pool of potential employees.
- Participating employers can also have their job opportunities highlighted via promotional channels that reach a vast network of talented job seekers.

Eligibility

- Any company, organization or agency can become an Employer of National Service.

How to Access

To sign up to be an Employer of National Service or request additional information, contact employers@cns.gov. A commitment to be an Employer of National Service could include the following:

- Explicitly indicating in relevant job announcements an interest in recruiting AmeriCorps members and returned Peace Corps volunteers. (For example, include “AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, and other national service alumni are encouraged to apply.”)
- Providing an opportunity for job applicants to identify themselves as AmeriCorps or Peace Corps alumni. (For example, placing a check box on your employment application that asks a question along the following lines: “Did you serve in an AmeriCorps, Peace Corps or another national service program?”)



VI. Federal Bonding Program

The U.S. Department of Labor provides fidelity bonds to employers who hire at-risk, hard-to-place job seekers, including youth who are of legal working age. To learn more about Federal Bonding, visit: www.bonds4jobs.com.

Benefits

- Federal bonds are available at no cost to the employer and can be issued for at-risk workers of legal working age, full or part-time, including youth, persons with poor credit, individuals with a criminal record, recovering substance abusers, welfare recipients, individuals dishonorably discharged from the military and adults who lack a work history.
- Bonds cover any type of stealing— theft, forgery, larceny and embezzlement—during the first six months of employment. Federal bonding does not cover liability due to poor workmanship, job injuries or work accidents.
- Employers are reimbursed for any loss due to employee theft of money or property without a deductible. The typical bond amount is \$5,000 with larger amounts issued on a case-by-case basis.
- Federal bonds can be issued by local One-Stop Career Center staff and do not require employers or job applicants to submit or sign paperwork.

Eligibility

- All employers are encouraged to apply, including private employers, non-profits, faith and secular community-based organizations, public agencies, Indian tribes, labor organizations and academic institutions.
- Self-employed individuals cannot be bonded.

How to Access

- Find your local One-Stop Career Center by visiting jobcenter.usa.gov or www.bonds4jobs.com/state-coordinators.html, or calling (877) US2-JOBS or (877) 872-5627.



VII. Work Opportunity Tax Credit

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a federal tax benefit administered by the U.S. Department of Labor that was retroactively authorized through December 31, 2014 by the Tax Increase Prevention Act of 2014. It allows employers to reduce their federal income tax liability if they hired individuals from certain target groups in 2014. Employers of summer youth employees living in Empowerment Zones, for example, are eligible to reduce their liability by as much as \$1,200 per youth.

If Congress retroactively enacts this tax credit again, employers could be eligible for similar tax benefits in 2015. To be eligible during the authorization lapse, employers must have submitted the required WOTC forms for certification within 28 days of the new employee start date. Even though Congress has previously approved retroactive certifications, there is no guarantee that this will happen again or that new hires during the hiatus will be certified for the tax credit. To learn more about the WOTC, visit: www.doleta.gov/wotc.

Benefits

- Employers can receive tax credits when they hired from the following target groups in 2014:
 - Summer youth employees living in Empowerment Zones
 - Unemployed veterans (including disabled veterans)
 - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients
 - Designated residents living in Empowerment Zones or Rural Renewal Counties
 - Vocational rehabilitation referred individuals
 - Formerly incarcerated individuals
 - Supplemental security income recipients
- Allowable tax credits ranged between 20 and 40 percent of a new employee's first-year wages, up to the maximum permitted for the target group to which the employee belonged.
- There was no limit on the number of workers an employer could hire to qualify for the tax credit.

Eligibility

- All organizations are encouraged to apply, including private employers, non-profits, faith and secular community-based organizations, public agencies, Indian tribes, labor organizations and academic institutions.

How to Access

The WOTC application process involves six simple steps with limited paperwork. The forms listed below can also be found online at www.doleta.gov/wotc.

- 1.** Obtain certification from a State Workforce Agency that the new hire is a member of a WOTC target group (www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/opptax/State_Contacts.cfm).
- 2.** Complete page 1 of IRS Form 8850 by the day the job offer is made and page 2 after the individual is hired (<http://www.irs.gov/uac/Form-8850,-Pre-Screening-Notice-and-Certification-Request-for-the-Work-Opportunity-Credit>).
- 3.** Complete one of the following DOL Employment and Training Administration (ETA) forms:
 - a.** www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/opptax/PDF/WOTC_ETA_Form_9061.pdf
 - b.** www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/opptax/PDF/eta_form_9062_cert.pdf
- 4.** Submit the completed and signed IRS and ETA forms to your State Workforce Agency within 28 calendar days of the employee's start date.
- 5.** Receive final determination from the State Workforce Agency.
- 6.** File for the credit with the IRS.