

# Reviving the American Dream by Using Career Development to Prepare All Young Adults for Career Success

## Breakout Session Overview

The purpose of the conversation at your table is to identify *bold action strategies* that could elevate career development into the national dialogue, showcase the impact of career development, and successfully scale up quality career development programs and services.

Themes. Each table has been assigned one of three themes to discuss during each breakout session. Each participant will take part in two breakout sessions, which means you will have the opportunity to discuss two of the three themes. The themes are:

**Opportunity:** In order to mobilize national efforts to create lifelong access to quality career development programs and services, it is important to identify the opportunity career development brings to our communities. *Opportunity* refers to identifying ways that career development improves life outcomes for youth and adults. Different stakeholders (educators, employers, tax paying citizens, etc.) have similar as well as unique needs that career development can address such as the need to increase attainment of post-secondary degrees, relevant workforce certifications, and/or training/education that enable one to secure or maintain employment in occupations that offer livable wages.

**Innovation:** It is also important to identify innovative career development programs and services that demonstrate how these programs and services can leverage valued outcomes. What are the promising programs and services that need to be studied in more depth and/or considered for scaling nationally? What can we do to encourage development of more innovative strategies?

**Infrastructure:** Finally, once there is a shared belief that career development is central to our national interests, the key challenge is identifying strategies for “scaling-up” access to quality career development programs and services and to insure lifelong access to these programs and services. What are some bold actions we should consider?

Formulating Bold Ideas. The process for exploring and identifying action strategies will begin with the table facilitator initiating introductions. In addition to describing the work you do and your experiences in relation to career development, please identify the question(s) you hope to discuss in relation to the theme. Once introductions have been completed, the facilitator will share the consensus about the questions to discuss and identify how much time will be given to each question.

The Notetaker at each table will be asked to capture the specific ideas, proposals and actions that emerge from the discussion. Following the Convening, the Steering Committee will review the collection of ideas to develop a “Call to Action” draft prospectus that will be shared with attendees for comment.

## **Questions to Discuss and Sample Ideas to Consider**

### **Opportunity**

**Question 1:** How can career development programs and activities effectively engage the broader community -- such as parents, retirees, youth-serving organizations, advocacy groups, Chambers of Commerce and/or state agencies? Sample ideas include:

- Implement a parallel career development process for families
- Include retirees as mentors
- Establish an inter-agency, cross-sector task force to manage and advocate for career development programs and services
- Work with Chambers of Commerce to support career development efforts

**Question 2:** How can efforts to increase career literacy skills be embedded throughout the K-12 curriculum, academic and student life programs in higher education, and within programs and services offered by organizations/agencies serving disconnected youth and/or adults? Sample ideas include:

- Create a whole school/college/agency implementation strategy for career development programs and services
- Engage in project based learning strategies that result in career development competencies
- Identify ways to provide “academic credit” for achieving competencies rather than relying solely on *Carnegie Units* (e.g., seat time in a class).

**Question 3:** How can career development address the needs of Opportunity Youth (i.e., disconnected, out of school/work youth aged 16-24)? Sample ideas include:

- Build capacity among existing youth-based organizations using WIOA funding to promote career development
- Connect with Workforce Development Boards and other youth-serving organizations that rely on WIOA funding to build their capacity to engage in quality career development programs and services.

**Question 4:** How can existing federal and state policies support the design and development of quality career development programs and services? Sample ideas include:

- Ensure that all students should have an effective personalized career and education plan (also referred to nationally as individualized learning plans or ILPs).
- Make continued allocation of federal Pell Grants dependent on higher education offering personalized career and education plans to grant recipients.
- While securing federal support for these plans through Pell Grants, ensure that local and state stakeholders are the primary drivers behind implementation to avoid federal mandates to the states and fears that these plans will become a “check the box” activity rather than a process that promotes individual self-determination.
- Establish robust state accountability systems for career development that enable an assessment of the return on investment

## **Innovation**

**Question 1:** How can we improve the career counseling profession? Sample ideas include:

- Encourage business to provide funds for certified career counselors in every school and to identify tasks that counselors should include in their duties
- Encourage Chambers of Commerce to generate the funds for a certified career counselor to serve as a liaison between schools and business
- Improve counselor practice to incorporate career development skills and strategies in schools, higher education, youth-serving organizations and one-stop job centers.
- Have Workforce Investment Boards and their American Job Centers provide current labor market information to counselors

**Question 2:** How can technology be used to facilitate career development programs and activities? Sample ideas include:

- Use online career information systems
- Improve technology in order to more effectively connect the talent pipeline to industry – thereby increasing access to work-based learning and other training opportunities
- Leverage “Facebook” & “Google” models
- Create a universal eportfolio so that the individual can transfer to other online career systems
- Explore ways to use technology to effectively connect rural communities to industry

**Question 3:** What are some examples of how employers are supporting career development efforts? Sample ideas include:

- Ask the Chamber of Commerce and lead Employers to convene stakeholders and showcase exemplars

**Question 4:** What role can research play in advancing state efforts to allocate resources to support implementation of career development programs and services? And what are the key research questions that need to be answered? Sample ideas include:

- Define the characteristics associated with quality career development programs and services
- Describe the return on investment – economic and life impact – of allocating resources for career development programs and services
- Identify best practices from international career development systems
- Establish a Career Success Metric – e.g., job placement in a chosen career pathway.
- Expand longitudinal measures of the impact of career and workforce development to include a wider range of economic outcomes (ex: earnings, weeks employed, employed in jobs commensurate with degree vs. underemployed).

## **Infrastructure**

**Question 1:** How can we ensure personalized career and education plans are implemented with fidelity and quality? Sample ideas include:

- Gather and disseminate existing national and state toolkits for implementing career development (e.g., toolkits and implementation guides)
- At K-12 level, advocate for a whole school implementation strategy that enables teachers to deliver career development curriculum within advisory meetings
- Provide retirees with training to become career mentors in collaboration with youth serving agencies, schools, and industry.
- Empower adults to become caring/encouraging mentors

**Question 2:** How can career development programs and services improve post-secondary completion rates? Sample ideas include:

- Require all students at the Post-Secondary level to complete a “Career Development” course, preferably in their first semester
- Embed career development programs and services throughout the post-secondary academic and student service areas
- Continue the use of personalized career and education plans at the post-secondary level

**Question 3:** How can we improve the quality and use of industry-recognized credentials? Sample ideas include:

- Require knowledge of industry certifications as part of career counselor certifications

- Mandate students earn at least one industry certification prior to graduating from high school if those certifications are used in the student's career pathway.
- Provide academic credit for credential related courses
- Ensure accreditation of credentials to ensure quality

**Question 4:** How can we scale-up effective work-based learning opportunities?

Sample ideas include:

- Use technology to manage employer work-based learning
- Scale up summer internships by providing State incentives (ex. Tax Breaks, etc.)