

# Youth Resource Connections

## NEWSLETTER

### Youth Resource Connections

*is a monthly newsletter that provides information, resources, and tools to workforce professionals who work every day to impact the lives of youth and young adults.*

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## Headlines

**DOL Blog: Registered Apprenticeship: 10 Years of Engagement, Expansion and Innovation.** The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) released a [blog](#) about National Apprenticeship Week (NAW) 2024 which included over 2,200 apprenticeship events and proclamations in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and three territories. That's +1,400 events and +800 proclamations, which is an all-time record in the 10-year history of NAW. These events were hosted by ApprenticeshipUSA partners including federal, state and local government agencies, as well as industry representatives, labor and community-based organizations, workforce partners, educational institutions and other related employers.

**Looking for more information and resources to support your youth program?**



Visit the [Youth Connections Community of Practice](#) for the latest training, promising practices, and technical assistance tools.

## Headlines

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**US Departments of Labor, Commerce Release Skills-First Hiring Guide to Help Employers Hire, Promote Workers Based on Skill, Knowledge.** The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) published a guide designed to educate employers about the benefits of using skills-first hiring practices and encourage them to use those practices to build a better, more qualified workforce. The [Good Jobs Initiative's Skills-First Hiring Starter Kit](#) was announced at the White House's "Classroom to Career" Summit, where President Biden and First Lady Jill Biden welcomed nearly 300 education and workforce leaders to announce new actions on workforce, career and technical education, and highlight key achievements of the Biden-Harris administration. The Skills-First Hiring Starter Kit, developed in partnership with the U.S. Department of Commerce, is a short guide to hiring, promotion and management built around worker skills, rather than relying on degree qualifications. To obtain additional information, view the [press release](#).

**HUD Makes \$123 Million Available to Address Youth Homelessness.** The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded \$51.1 million in Youth Homelessness System Improvement (YHSI) Grants to 38 communities across 26 states, Puerto Rico, and Guam. Additionally, HUD released a \$72 million funding opportunity for the Fiscal Year 2023 Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program and supportive services programs. These include rapid rehousing, permanent supportive housing, transitional housing, host homes, and wrap-around services such as education, health, and workforce support to help youth access and maintain housing. HUD Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Community Planning and Development Marion McFadden made the announcement alongside local and tribal leaders in Bemidji, Minnesota. To obtain additional information, view the [press release](#).

**Biden-Harris Administration Launches National Behavioral Health Workforce Career Navigator.** In recognition of National Career Development Day, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), announced the launch of the [Behavioral Health Workforce Career Navigator](#), designed to help current and aspiring behavioral health professionals identify state requirements for a range of behavioral health careers. The navigator supports President Biden and Vice President Harris' commitment to expanding America's behavioral health workforce, a key element of the Administration's [Unity Agenda for the Nation](#).

**ACF Announces the Launch of its New Peer Support Services Survey.** The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) peer support [survey](#) aims to better understand how to strengthen and sustain peer support services offered within social services programs. ACF seeks to learn from existing programs and identify interests and gaps that will guide the development of future ACF resources. Findings from the survey will inform various agency activities, help ACF explore emerging areas of need, and improve their programs to better support those they serve.

## Headlines

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**OFA Releases "Dear Colleague" Letter on Housing Instability.** In recognition of National Homelessness Awareness Month, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families', through its Office of Family Assistance (OFA), released a [Dear Colleague Letter](#) highlighting the ways Temporary Assistance for Needy Families programs operating in states and territories can play a collaborative role in the reduction of homelessness for children and families.

## Featured Program and Participant

### EmployNV Youth Program

**Marcos** joined the youth program in 2022, from a court mandate order. He was confronting challenging barriers such as a justice-impacted background, low income, and basic skills deficiencies. Despite facing ongoing personal struggles and the challenge of resisting old habits, Marcos has shown remarkable resilience and determination since being involved in EmployNV Youth Program. Through consistent participation in the program, including impactful workshops like VR headset training, "Design Your Future," and regular sessions with his career coach, Marcos has made significant strides. He has never had a job and was eager to participate in our Work Experience Program. Marcos and his career coach began prepping for his future WEX opportunity through mock interviews and practicing professionalism through attire and speech etiquette. He has since done exceptionally well on his WEX interview and has been offered the opportunity to complete a Work Experience as a Front Desk Assistant at EmployNV Career Hub which after a month he did exceptionally well. He actively honed in on vital transferrable skills such utilizing his bilingual skills, customer service skills, time management, communication, and organization, which is crucial for his professional growth. This hands-on experience laid a strong foundation for his personal future and future of his family. Additionally, Marcos was excited to take a major step forward by starting Barber training at Expertise Institute. His journey reflects a powerful transformation, as he turned past challenges into opportunities for success and advancement.

### Interested in sharing a new practice or innovative approach that you're trying in your area?

The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) is interested in sharing strategies from across the country to promote peer learning and replication. If you would like to be considered for featuring in an upcoming newsletter, please email your organization, program name and brief description of the practice or approach to the ETA Division of Youth Services at: [youth.services@dol.gov](mailto:youth.services@dol.gov).

## Funding & Other Opportunities

**YSA Invites Applications for its Youth Stop Hunger Innovation Grant.** Youth Service America (YSA) in partnership with the Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation is accepting applications for its new Youth Stop Hunger Innovation Grant. The grant is designed to encourage youth ages 5 to 25 to devise and implement sustainable hunger-relief programs in their community. Twelve awardees will receive \$2,500 grants. [read more](#). **Deadline: December 8.**

**Captain Planet Foundation Invites Applications for its Project Learning Garden Project.** The [Captain Planet Foundation](#) is accepting applications for its Project Learning Garden program. The program provides opportunities to support inquiry-based, immersive learning experiences in STEAM education for students of all levels and ages. In conjunction with applied principles of project-based learning. The gardens provide teachers and students with outdoor laboratories full of natural phenomena to be observed, explored, questioned, and investigated. Schools located in Atlanta, Boston, Indianapolis, Minneapolis, Nashville, New York City, St. Paul are eligible to apply. [read more](#). **Deadline: December 21.**

**Wildhorse Foundation Invites Applications from Northwestern Tribes.** The [Wildhorse Foundation](#) will award up to \$30,000 to eligible organizations managed by the [Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation](#) in support of projects focused on the arts; cultural activities; education; environmental protection; gambling addiction prevention, education, and treatment; historic preservation; public health; public safety; and salmon restoration. Eligible organizations located in the following areas include: Morrow, Umatilla, Union, and Wallowa counties in Oregon; the Tribes Ceded Territory in Washington, which is most of Benton, Columbia, and Walla Walla counties; and Native American Tribal government agencies or Native American charitable organizations, with its principal office and base of operations within the State of Oregon. [read more](#). **Deadline: January 1, 2025.**

**Helen Diller Family Foundation Invites Applications for its Diller Teen Tikkun Olam Awards.** The Helen Diller Family Foundation is accepting applications for its [Diller Teen Tikkun Olam Awards](#). The awards are designed to honor Jewish teens who demonstrate remarkable leadership and civic engagement through projects that embody the values of *tikkun olam* ("repairing the world"). Up to 15 recipients will be awarded \$36,000 each to further their project or for their education. Eligible candidates must be teenagers (13-19 years old) who self-identify as Jewish, live in the United States, are not compensated for their work, currently serving in a leadership role on a project or initiative aimed at repairing the world. Projects may have any focus, from raising money to hands-on interactions to larger systemic-change initiatives. Projects can have a local, national, or global focus benefiting the Jewish or general community. Applicants can create a new project or contribute to an established initiative if they demonstrate a significant leadership role in an existing organization or project. [read more](#). **Deadlines: Nominations: December 2024; Applications: January 9, 2025.**

## Funding & Other Opportunities *(continued)*

**NYLC Invites Applications for its Service-Learning Youth Leadership for Service-Learning Excellence Award.** The National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC) is accepting applications for its Service-Learning Youth Leadership for Service-Learning Excellence Award. This award recognizes K-12 service-learning programs and projects that demonstrate outstanding youth leadership. Youth teams representing K-12 service-learning programs in which the service-learning is tied to the school curricula may apply. This \$1,000 award will be presented in the spring at the National Service-Learning Conference. Award winners will be provided free travel, lodging, and registration to attend The National Service-Learning Conference (March 26-28 in St. Paul, Minnesota). [read more](#). **Deadline: January 15, 2025.**

**American Mathematical Society Invites Applications for its Young Scholars Program.** The [American Mathematical Society](#) is accepting applications for its Young Scholars Program. Awardees will receive grants up to \$15,000 in support of summer mathematics programs in the United States for mathematically talented youth. The program aims to nurture those that are interested in mathematics by aiding summer programs that provide high school students with opportunities to engage with mathematics in a way that builds curiosity and confidence. Eligible programs must have existed for at least one year, preferably longer. [read more](#). **Deadline: January 22, 2025.**

**Air Midwest Invites Applications for its NEA Big Read Grants.** Air Midwest is accepting applications for its National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Big Read grant program. The program awards grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000 to organizations to help bring communities together around the shared activity of reading and discussing the same book. In addition to funding for purchasing the books themselves, each grant recipient is provided with resources to help them succeed. [read more](#). **Deadlines: Intent to Apply: January 23, 2025; Applications: January 30, 2025.**

**Changemakers Invites Applications for its Time for Change Youth Challenge.** Changemakers is accepting applications for its Time for Change Youth Challenge 2024. This Challenge is a chance for young people nationwide to share their bold ideas, connect with other innovative kids, and tackle problems that matter to them. Students in grades K-12 who attend First Book-eligible schools (any Title I-eligible, Tribal, or Military Base school) are invited to enter. Final prizes awarded in K-5th, 6th-7th, and 8th-12th grade categories include 15 \$1,000 grants and 2 Grand Prize \$5,000 grants. [read more](#). **Deadline: January 30, 2025.**

## Funding & Other Opportunities *(continued)*

**ED Accepting Applications for its American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services.** The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services within the U.S. Department of Education (ED) has published the [November 6 Federal Register](#). This notice invites applications for fiscal year 2025 for funding under the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services. The purpose of this program is to provide grants to Indian Tribes to provide vocational rehabilitation services, including culturally appropriate services, to eligible American Indians with disabilities who reside on or near Federal or State reservations, consistent with such eligible individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice, so that such individuals may prepare for, and engage in, high-quality employment that will increase opportunities for economic self-sufficiency. Applications may be made only by Indian Tribes (and consortia of those Indian Tribes) located on Federal and State reservations.

**Deadline: March 6, 2025.**

## Resources

**National Apprenticeship Resource Hub.** This [website](#) launched by the Urban Institute during National Apprenticeship week, houses a comprehensive collection of apprenticeship standards and national occupational frameworks for those looking to develop their own program.

**Ensuring Educational Stability and Success for Students in Foster Care.** This joint [non-regulatory guidance](#) issued by the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services supports state educational agencies, local educational agencies, and child welfare agencies working with students in foster care. This guidance supersedes the guidance issued in 2016.

**Federal Pell Grant Program of the Higher Education Act: Primer.** This [report](#) released by the Congressional Research Service describes the Pell Grant program and highlights key differences between AY2023-2024 and AY2024-2025.

**Broad Recovery, Persistent Inequity Youth Disconnection in America.** This [report](#) released by the Measure of America of the Social Science Research Council discusses youth disconnection. This decade-long research project includes statistics that calculate the share of out-of-school, out-of-work young people annually, for the nation overall as well as for different places and groups. The data has helped raise awareness of the challenges such young people face, investigate the main drivers of youth disconnection, make recommendations about how to improve the choices and opportunities available to this group of young people, and rally a variety of actors around a shared definition and understanding.

## Resources

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**Workforce Development: Reimagining and Modernizing How to Connect Workers with Good Jobs.** This [article](#) published by the Center for American Progress addresses how reimagining workforce development in the United States will require modernizing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and looking outside of the federal workforce system at other complimentary policy options and levers to increase opportunity and outcomes for more students and workers.

**The Role of Continuing Disability Reviews in Child Supplemental Security Income Program Participation Patterns.** This [article](#) released by the Social Security Administration examines how child Supplemental Security Income (SSI) participation is affected over time by variation in the frequency with which the Social Security Administration conducts medical continuing disability reviews (CDRs). The authors find that the characteristics of child SSI recipients are not greatly affected by CDR volumes, few children return to SSI following a CDR cessation, and varying CDR frequencies can explain the majority of child SSI caseload changes in recent years.

**The Effects of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 on Vocational Rehabilitation Engagement, Employment, and Work Incentive Use Among Supplemental Security Income Recipients Aged 14–24.** This [article](#) released by the Social Security Administration explores the extent to which the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 and preemployment transition services (pre-ETS) access affected employment-related outcomes for youths with disabilities who receive Supplemental Security Income payments. Understanding whether pre-ETS help students transition from high school to better postsecondary education and employment opportunities is critical because a successful transition can improve a young person's future employment prospects and earnings, health-related quality of life, and well-being. Moreover, evidence on the effectiveness of transition support programs for this population is limited (Urdapilleta and others 2020).

**LifeSet Evaluation Baseline Data Analysis: Supporting Evidence Building in Child Welfare.** This [report](#) released by the Office of Planning, Research & Evaluation, Office of the Administration for Children & Families within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services shares early findings from an evaluation of the LifeSet program in New Jersey. The evaluation used a randomized controlled trial design to learn whether LifeSet produces better outcomes than services as usual for young adults in extended foster care. This report provides a description of young adults randomized in the study and an initial analysis of baseline equivalence using child welfare administrative data. We also present early findings on the treatment group's enrollment in LifeSet, including enrollment rates and characteristics of treatment group young adults who enrolled in the program.

## Resources

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**Pathways to Work Clearinghouse - Evidence Snapshot: Education.** This [brief](#) released by the Office of Planning, Research & Evaluation, Office of the Administration for Children & Families within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services describes the effectiveness of programs that were identified by the Pathways Clearinghouse as using education as their primary service. It summarizes what we know about these programs and their impacts so Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and other program administrators, policymakers, researchers, and the general public can apply the evidence to their context and the questions that matter to them.

### Upcoming Webinars/Webcasts

On December 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Employment and Training Administration will host a webinar entitled: **Leveraging New Funding and Strategic Planning for Sustainability.** During the webinar attendees will learn how YouthBuild programs have successfully utilized various funding sources, such as Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act youth dollars and discover innovative funding streams to consider. The webinar will also cover planning considerations to inform a long-term sustainability plan and offer guidance on how to prepare for additional funding. To register for the workshop, click [here](#).

On December 12<sup>th</sup>, the National Youth Employment Coalition will host a virtual workshop entitled: **Demystifying Financial Literacy for Youth.** This workshop aims to help youth workforce partners understand how to make financial literacy more accessible for the communities they serve. To register for the workshop, click [here](#).

On December 17<sup>th</sup>, the National Youth Employment Coalition will host a monthly Q&A session with the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Division of Youth Services (DYS) entitled: **Ask Away with the U.S Department of Labor.** During the Q&A session the DYS team will be there to answer questions attendees might have on policy, performance metrics, eligibility, waivers, and more. To register for the session, click [here](#).

On December 19<sup>th</sup>, the National Youth Employment Coalition will host a workshop entitled: **Apprenticeships and the Space Industry.** This workshop will explore the various apprenticeship opportunities available to young people interested in pursuing a career in space-related fields. The workshop will also cover the various certifications and preparatory steps young people need to take to break into the space industry through apprenticeships. Participants will gain an understanding of the different types of apprenticeships available in the space industry, including those in aerospace engineering, satellite technology, mission control, data science, and more. To register for the session, click [here](#).



## Resources

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### Past Webinars/Webcasts

On November 13<sup>th</sup>, MDRC hosted a podcast entitled: **Supporting College Students in Rural Areas**. During the podcast, speakers discussed how both college-going and college completion rates are far lower in rural areas than in other geographical settings. To learn what works to help rural students enroll in and complete college, MDRC, supported by the Institute of Education Sciences, has launched the National Rural Higher Education Research Center. The center will work with college systems to conduct eight research studies in two regions: the South and the Mountain West. Speaker Leigh Parise talked with Alyssa Ratledge, research associate at MDRC, about the research questions the Center addressed in response to the needs of rural practitioners and policymakers.

On November 21<sup>st</sup>, the Employment and Training Administration hosted a webinar entitled: **Apprenticeship Opportunities for Individuals Reentering Their Communities Post-Incarceration**. This webinar provided the reentry community with a comprehensive overview of apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities tailored for individuals reentering their communities post-incarceration. Experts shared insights into innovative programs and strategic partnerships that enhance skill development and career readiness, empowering participants to secure stable and sustainable employment. To view an archive of the webinar, click [here](#).

## Upcoming Events

**January 20, 2025.** [Martin Luther King, Jr., Day of Service](#).

**February 3, 2025.** [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's 21st Prevention Day](#).

**March 26-28, 2025. Saint Paul, MN.** National Youth Leadership Council's [National Service-Learning Conference](#). This conference will bring together youth, educators, policymakers and more who are dedicated to improving education, strengthening communities, and building youth leadership with service-learning.

**May 12-14, 2025. Minneapolis, MN.** National Youth Employment Coalition's [2025 Annual Forum](#). This national conference unites youth practitioners, policy makers, youth leaders and stakeholders dedicated to improving the lives of opportunity youth and young adults.



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**We welcome your  
input.**

Please let us know how these newsletters might be improved to better serve your needs. If you have comments, contact the Employment and Training Administration's Division of Youth Services at **(202) 693-3030** or e-mail: [youth.services@dol.gov](mailto:youth.services@dol.gov).

The Department of Labor (DOL), Employment and Training Administration (ETA) does not take responsibility for non-endorsed DOL/ETA resources included in the newsletter.