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Employers, Educators, Advocates, and Other Key Stakeholders Including J.P. Morgan Chase, Brooklyn Navy Yard, CUNY, HERE to HERE, ExpandEd Schools Launch “Pathways to Prosperity NYC” Campaign for Inclusive Economic Recovery through Braided Learning

Successful youth talent development approaches that prepare and match young New Yorkers to meaningful careers and build a skilled and nimble local workforce need to be expanded citywide

Education, business leaders and students call for NYC’s post-COVID economic recovery and future growth to include young people of color and be powered by local talent

NEW YORK, NY -- Today, employers, educators, young people and advocates launched “*Pathways to Prosperity NYC: Building a Thriving, Inclusive Economy Powered By Our Students,*” a campaign to improve racial and economic equity and build New York’s talent pipeline by embedding work-based learning approaches into public high schools and colleges citywide. Braiding learning from work into student formal academic learning builds on successful initiatives like the NYC Summer Youth Employment Program as well as other internship and youth apprenticeship programs. With New York City at a pivotal moment in rebuilding its economy, the campaign urges investment in youth talent development to ensure an inclusive recovery and create a thriving economy.

New York City is missing out on the talent of our young people. Only a quarter of young people benefit from the traditional pathways required to find living wage jobs and build successful careers, with Black and Latinx youth left far behind. The way we currently develop talent does not meet the needs of students or employers, resulting in a local economy that instead [recruits talent for high paying jobs from outside New York](#), perpetuating inequality.

Braided learning combines real-world work experience with classroom learning to empower students with the skills and networks critical for future careers. With braided learning, educational institutions and employers share responsibility for talent development and students have multiple pathways to success. Examples of braided learning programs include the Wildlife Conservation Society’s WCS Career Lattice, which brokers pathways to a variety of internship and employment opportunities for young people. Youth apprenticeship, such as those developed by CareerWise New York and Genesys Works, is another promising approach that couples high quality work experience with a student’s schooling.

“The importance and the urgency underpinning the Pathways to Prosperity NYC campaign is that braided learning directly accelerates youth professional development while countering the educational and economic scarring caused in part by the pandemic. Looking forward to

supporting this effort as we collectively work to build a more inclusive New York City,” said **Jesse Jackson, Head of Firmwide Learning & Talent Solutions, J. P. Morgan Chase.**

“New York City has a unique opportunity to be a leader in building a 21st century talent development system that drives the local economy,” said **Judy Dimon, Founding Chair, HERE to HERE.** “By building on the city’s existing assets--such as employers from wide-ranging industries and successful models of braided learning--and supporting strong partnerships between educators, employers, and students, we can drive economic growth, reduce inequality, and create a vibrant economy that works for all New Yorkers.”

“Young people in the Bronx offer a wealth of talent, but New York City can do a better job of ensuring that our students have the opportunity to use it,” noted **Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr.** “By better connecting school and work, we can empower our youth and supercharge our economy.”

These opportunities empower young people to get a better understanding of their interests and see how they can contribute in real-world settings. Young people of color, who may have less access to professional networks than white students to get connected to employment opportunities, can build their own network of mentors and role models -- ultimately leveling the playing field.

“Now, more than ever, CUNY students need to connect their academic journey to the real world of work, so they can build the skills they need to succeed and contribute to our economic recovery. But we also know the students face what they see as a tradeoff between work and furthering their education. Braided pathways offer students the chance to earn money and credit for work experiences that are part of their program of study. CUNY is excited to be a part of expanding and enhancing those efforts for the benefit of our students and New York City's economy,” said **Angie Kamath, University Dean of Continuing Education and Workforce Programs, CUNY.**

“Given how dynamic and ever-changing today's work environment is, we need a new approach to talent development to ensure young people are well equipped to enter the modern workforce. This will require employers to actively partner with educators to weave real-life and work-relevant experiences into the classroom,” noted **David Ehrenberg, President & CEO, Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation.**

The “*Pathways to Prosperity NYC*” Campaign will build awareness and support for youth talent development in this pivotal moment to ensure that young people of color and their futures are a central component of the City’s economic recovery. By bringing this winning approach to youth talent development across the City, advocates, educators and employers in the Campaign hope to provide the tools, professional contacts, and opportunities necessary to enter into successful, sustaining careers to every young person in New York City.

“Work-based learning is the opportunity to not just show what you are capable of, but having the opportunity to learn in the process and knowing that you will be placed on the right path,” said **La'Toya Beecham, Junior at Health Education and Research Occupations High School in the Bronx, Student Policy Advisor at HERE to HERE, and a member of Teens Take Charge.**

“Braided pathways offer so much more than the sum of their parts--they amplify young people's opportunities to thrive academically, socially, professionally and personally. ExpandedED Schools stands ready to help unite this vast and dynamic ecosystem of community partners, employers, schools and others to develop our phenomenal New York City talent,” said **Saskia Trill, President & CEO, ExpandedED Schools.**

Additional support for “Pathways to Prosperity NYC”:

“Great Performances is committed to nurturing students’ curiosity and enthusiasm for careers in the food industry,” said **Liz Neumark, Founder and Chair, Great Performances.** “Investing in internships and other work-based learning programs is a win for employers looking to expand the strength and diversity of their hiring pipeline, for students who are exposed to New York City’s diverse career opportunities, and for educators looking to prepare students for family-sustaining careers.”

"Our work has shown us time and again that young people not only learn from both school and work experiences, but they learn more when these efforts are brought together," said **Marjorie Parker, President and CEO of JobsFirstNYC.** "We hear from employers that they want more local talent, and we know firsthand that the best way to support them in bringing our economy back, while also ensuring that all young people can be a part of this recovery, is to expand policies and practices that braid education and employment."

"We have an unprecedented opportunity to fundamentally reimagine our workforce systems and create an equitable pipeline for young New Yorkers. Building up our local youth talent pipelines ensures that young New Yorkers can confidently pursue jobs that might originally have seemed out of reach," said **Jose Ortiz, Jr., CEO of the New York City Employment and Training Coalition.** "An equitable recovery and path to economic growth must begin with strong partnerships between our local high schools, CUNY and the City, direct service providers, employers, as well as through key initiatives including Pathways to Prosperity NYC."

“New Visions for Public Schools works to support schools in our core network to support students and their caregivers so that students graduate high schools with a postsecondary plan that includes best fit education, training or employment and the skills and experiences to succeed in that plan. We know that braided pathways, which connect school to meaningful work experiences are essential to ensuring that students graduate ready to enter college and career pathways and can make teaching and learning more engaging and relevant, and should be a key part of every school's approach to student success,” said **Jennie Soler-McIntosh,**

VP Community Engagement and Postsecondary Pathways, New Visions for Public Schools.

“Children's Aid has had long-term partnerships with schools across the city to provide the range of academic and social-emotional supports that students need to succeed. Braided pathways, which also incorporate meaningful work experiences, open students' experiences beyond the walls of the classroom, broadening their skills and interests, which will also benefit their schools and communities,” said **Sandra Escamilla, Executive Vice President, Children's Aid Society**.

“These are challenging times, and we must do all that we can do to ensure that students have the ability to acquire the skills, experience, and credentials necessary to succeed as they move forward in their postsecondary journeys,” shared **David Adams, CEO, Urban Assembly**. “The Urban Assembly is committed to advancing social and economic mobility for our students through initiatives like Pathways to Prosperity NYC. We will ensure that students acquire the necessary career readiness and social-emotional skills needed to thrive in today's ever-evolving workforce.”

“Genesys Works believes that the talent gaps local employers face can be addressed by better connecting our vast pool of local talent--our youth--to real opportunities for success. Our internship program allows students to learn and earn, empowering them to build deep work experience and a professional network during high school, while delivering meaningful work for employers and building their talent pipelines. These internships braid the learning of the classroom and the office together, which transforms young people's outlook on their futures,” said **Mike Gross, Executive Director, Genesys Works New York City**. “Instead of considering education and employment as separate, sequential steps in the lives of our youth, we need to shift mindsets to focus on the greater benefits of bringing them together.”

“For over 25 years PENCIL has been focused on connecting students to success, and success requires business professionals, educators, and students coming together through mentoring, internships, and other opportunities that braid learning with work,” said **Gregg Bethell, President, PENCIL**. “But success shouldn't be limited to a few students; it should be available to all. That's why we support Pathways to Prosperity NYC and the effort to reimagine NYC's youth talent development system.”

“Reimagining NYC's talent development system is key to addressing some of the biggest challenges facing the city today. By centering the solution on young people in collaboration with employers, educators, and community leaders, New York will be poised to unleash untapped potential and create an economy that works for all New Yorkers,” stated **Dr. Edward Summers, President and CEO, The Thinkubator**.

“All youth need the opportunity for meaningful employment before they leave high school. To ensure job opportunities are both available and accessible, Youth Jobs Connect is building YouthXJobs, a digital platform where young people in NYC and across the US can find jobs and

career services in one central, user-designed experience. This platform will enable braided learning to ensure that youth are better prepared for life after high school and allow them to earn while they learn," said **Mitali Chakraborty, CEO & Founder at Youth Jobs Connect**. "Enabling BIPOC youth with sustainable skills, networks, financial independence, and opportunities that align with both their interests and the demands of the future of work, ensures they are meaningfully included in the economic recovery and given the tools to build and shape their lives."

"Internships are life-changing experiences," said **Laurie Dien, Vice President/Executive Director for Programs at the Pinkerton Foundation**. "We support more than 5,000 paid high school internships annually and this is what we hear visit after visit, year after year. For example, when we asked one young man whether his internship would influence what he would study in college, he replied that the experience made him want to go to college. Enlightening young people about the purpose of school by tying it to work experience is critical to their future and New York City's future."

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ABOUT PATHWAYS TO PROSPERITY NYC

Pathways to Prosperity NYC: Building a Thriving, Inclusive Economy Powered By Our Students is a public awareness campaign that brings together employers, schools, educators, young people and non-profits focused on improving racial equity and New York's talent pipeline by strengthening career pathways for young people across New York City. An effective youth talent development system must work for all students, contribute to employers' success, and benefit the regional economy. Our current system fails to do this, with young people of color disproportionately left behind. Through an integrated braided learning approach, educational institutions and employers share responsibility for talent development and students have multiple pathways to success. Learn more at heretohere.org/Initiatives/Pathways-to-Prosperity-NYC/.