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HERE to HERE Awards \$600,000 in Grants to Institutions Exemplifying the Key Distinguishers of Integrated Work-Based Learning

15 NYC DOE High Schools, CUNY institutions, and CBO partners launch a community of practitioners to share best practices and solutions to advance work-based learning and reimagine NYC's youth talent development system

NEW YORK, NY - Today, [HERE to HERE](#), a nonprofit that champions youth in The Bronx by bringing together business, education, and community leaders to build equitable avenues to lifelong career success, announced \$600,000 in grant awards through their Braided Pathways Fund. The fund recognizes high-quality, existing programs as highlighted by [the Key Distinguishers of Integrated Work-Based Learning](#) (Key Distinguishers).

With support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation, HERE to HERE awarded the grants to 15 New York City public high schools, CUNY institutions, and community-based organization (CBO) partners that are committed to braiding work-based learning into students' academic experiences.

The Key Distinguishers provide guidance and examples of how to achieve the goals of the [New York City Center for Youth Employment's CareerReadyNYC framework](#). Created in collaboration with [more than 100 practitioners](#) across educational and employer settings, the Key Distinguishers have the potential to transform the way New York City's youth talent development system functions by providing guiding principles and practices for high-quality, work-based learning that is integrated into academics. The framework is intended to help everyone along the youth talent development spectrum describe, understand the importance of, and meet shared expectations for high-quality, impactful work-based learning experiences.

"At the City University of New York, we know that the success of our students, our city, and our local businesses are intertwined — even more so as New York rebuilds its economy from the pandemic. That's why CUNY provides our students with the real world skills and networks they will need to succeed in the workforce," said **CUNY Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez**. "HERE to HERE's Braided Pathways Fund elevates the great work happening across our campuses. We see the Key Distinguishers as an important resource to guide integrated work-based learning at CUNY, across New York City, and beyond."

"Our schools go above and beyond preparing our young people for success in life, and work-based learning has provided generations of New York City students with critical opportunities to explore career paths and gain hands-on experience," said **New York City Schools Chancellor Meisha Porter**. "Thanks to HERE to HERE's Braided Pathways Fund, our schools will be able to bring work-based learning opportunities to even more students across the City and prepare them to graduate ready for college and careers."

“In 2019, working closely with HERE to HERE among many other partners within and beyond government, the Center for Youth Employment released CareerReady NYC and the Career Readiness Framework,” said **David Fischer, Executive Director of the NYC Center for Youth Employment**. “Utilizing the Key Distinguishers, these grants from the Braided Pathways Fund will help bring the Framework to life in classrooms, at places of work, and everywhere else learning takes place. We are excited to work with and learn from the grantees in continuing to build out a true ecosystem for career readiness in New York City.”

“Incorporating employer-led work-based learning into our education system provides students with the skills they need to succeed in internships, secure employment and advance in their careers,” noted **Merrill Pond, Executive Vice President, and Jared Giles, Vice President of Corporate Social Responsibility of the Partnership for New York City**. “We thank the Gates Foundation and Deutsche Bank Foundation for committing their financial resources so that Here to Here can lead this important work to support Braided Pathways.”

“Work-based learning is extremely important for me and people like me where we don’t really know what we have set for the future, but want to do great things. It allows for students to feel comfortable getting into the work environment and gaining connections, while still learning everything that they would be learning in high school,” said **Hailey Miranda, a senior at South Bronx Community Charter High School and a Member of the Review Committee**. “It was so great to see all the applications and everyone being so eager to work towards the future, and I hope in the near future it would be impossible to see a school without work-based learning!”

“Congratulations to all our grant recipients! The overwhelming response we received for the Braided Pathways Fund is evidence that NYC public high schools, CUNY institutions, and their CBO partners are ready to lead the way to a new talent development system that effectively braids learning from work into the classroom and creates equitable pathways to family-sustaining careers for all NYC youth,” said **Abby Jo Sigal, founding CEO of HERE to HERE**. “Thanks to the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation, we were able to support some of the best examples of work-based learning happening in NYC today. We’re excited to collaborate with our grantees this year to codify best practices and share their lessons so the important work they’re doing can be replicated across the city.”

“It’s exciting to see HERE to HERE making investments in New York City public schools and expanding opportunities for high school students to participate in work-based learning,” said **Julie L. Shapiro, CEO of the Fund for Public Schools**. “The Fund applauds this effort to support innovation and best practices, improve equity, and set students up for postsecondary success.”

The Braided Pathways Fund was created to promote best practices by work-based learning practitioners, prioritize student career success, demonstrate and elevate exemplars of the

braided pathways model, and mobilize others to coalesce around set criteria to guide effective engagement in work-based learning. The list of grantees include:

- [Comprehensive Youth Development](#) and [Innovation Diploma Plus](#)
- [Emerging Leaders Program](#) for their work with a portfolio of Bronx high schools
- [Futures and Options](#) and [Central Park East HS](#)
- [Health, Education, and Research Occupations High School](#)
- Brooklyn South High School Superintendentcy
- [Hyde Leadership Charter School](#)
- [James Baldwin School](#)
- [LaGuardia Community College, CUNY](#)
- [NYC Makerspace](#), in partnership with [City College of New York](#) and [Duro UAS](#)
- [Reel Works](#) and [Hostos Community College](#)
- [South Brooklyn Community High School](#)
- [The City University of New York, College of Staten Island](#)
- [The Door](#) and [Broome Street Academy Charter High School](#)
- [The Laboratory School of Finance and Technology](#)
- [The Urban Assembly Charter High School for Computer Science](#)

The awards also mark the formation of a Community of Practice, a learning opportunity targeted to NYC-based high schools, CUNY institutions, and CBOs that would benefit from learning and sharing strategies to improve and expand work-based learning opportunities to benefit more students and employers. Members of the Community of Practice will include the 15 grantees, plus up to ten additional applicants who will receive a nominal honorarium in recognition of their participation. The Community of Practice will offer members the opportunity to learn with their peers, share and highlight their own approaches, improve their practices, receive coaching from H2H staff and experienced members, and design solutions to shared challenges facing the youth talent development field. Together, HERE to HERE and the Community of Practice will produce new case studies, playbooks, and research to highlight best practice and needed policy supports for integrated work-based learning across NYC.

“Our high school students thrive in experiential learning environments. Authentic learning experiences create connections between the classroom and the real world and give students the opportunity to develop agency in shaping their futures. Developing critical career and life skills through braided learning aids students in garnering a better understanding of their personal and professional identities, preparing them for post-secondary success. This critical support from the Braided Pathways Fund for our new Career Passport Program is game-changing for our students. They will gain access to robust professional networks and a world of career development opportunities that will inform their future success,” noted **Valarie Hunsinger, Director of Development and Marketing, Hyde Leadership Charter School.**

“For decades, a CUNY education has helped scores of New Yorkers land careers and enter the middle class. But as we look around us, there is no denying that many communities of color do not have equity to access high-paying, family-sustaining careers. Work-based learning not only

exposes students to possible careers, it gives them access to networks and mentoring that are essential to getting ahead in today's economy. We are thankful to have our LaGuardia Community College Jobs Direct program elevated by the Braided Pathways Fund and to share our learnings with our peers to advance the field," said **Sunil Gupta, Vice President, Adult & Continuing Education, LaGuardia Community College.**

"As New Yorkers, any investment in our young people is an investment in the future of our city. For too long we have relied on schools to do all the work in preparing our young people for the working world, when we all know, 'it takes a village.' We are thrilled to be selected for the Braided Pathways Fund and look forward to collaborating with our partners City College of New York and Duro UAS in equipping our young people with the skills they need to thrive in their careers." said **Mohamed Haroun, Director, NYC Makerspace.**

This slate of awardees highlights and uplifts practices in different education settings and across NYC with the potential to impact nearly 60,000 young people at 21 educational institutions and provide models for all NYC schools and students. 11 of the 15 grants went to high schools or CBOs with a dedicated high school partnership, while four grants went to CUNY programs or CBOs directly partnering with a CUNY program. Six grants were to highlight exemplary practice, and nine were to support the design of a new model to integrate work and academics.

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About HERE to HERE

[HERE to HERE](#) champions young people by working to redefine the systems that unfairly burden Black and Brown students as they pursue their career ambitions. We understand that the issues are complex and interrelated. That's why we create effective partnerships, prioritize the thoughts and opinions of young people, and mobilize people and organizations—demonstrating how our collective efforts to create a just and inclusive talent system will create lasting change. We believe the talent of young people fuels our economy and our world. How we reinvent these systems determines our future.