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HERE to HERE Launches “Community of Practice” Working Group to Advance Youth Talent Development, Strengthen NYC Workforce

Community of Practice Brings Together DOE High Schools, Six CUNY Institutions and CBOs Braiding Learning through Work into Educational Pathways to Create a Thriving, Inclusive Economy

NEW YORK, NY -- [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, launched the [Braided Pathways Community of Practice](#), a working group of local high schools, six CUNY colleges, and community-based organizations (CBOs) engaged in work-based learning to share best practices, problem-solve, and work together to expand these opportunities for New York City youth and strengthen New York City’s economic recovery. Braiding learning from work into educational pathways enables young people to build 21st century skills and professional networks. Ultimately, these programs create a competitive local workforce and a more equitable economy. The Community of Practice includes Brooklyn STEAM; Health, Education, and Research Occupations High School; Bronx International; James Baldwin School; CUNY’s Lehman College; the College of Staten Island; the City College of New York; LaGuardia Community College; and 18 other organizations.

Funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York and Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation, 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 practices and needed policy supports for integrated work-based learning across NYC.

“We are thrilled to launch a new learning community that will be central to scaling up proven work-based learning programs and creating an equitable economy for all New Yorkers. Together, by sharing ideas, opportunities and best practices, the Community of Practice will increase access to work-based learning and cultivate even deeper, more meaningful opportunities for young people,” said **Abby Jo Sigal, founding CEO of HERE to HERE**. “Thanks to the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation and Carnegie Corporation of New York, we are able to elevate and expand braided pathways across New York City, ensuring that our young people have a more level playing field in pursuing family-sustaining careers.”

“The City University of New York is proud to be an essential part of the Braided Pathways Community of Practice, partnering with public high schools and community-based organizations across the city to help create opportunities for our youth so they can become the 21st century workforce that New York City needs,” said **CUNY Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez**. “This new initiative by HERE to HERE will further complement important work being done at CUNY campuses throughout the University, as we all strive to create a more equitable New York.”

“Work-based learning is a critical factor in the success of New Yorkers looking to launch rewarding, well-paying careers,” said **Lauren Andersen, CUNY University Dean of Industry and Talent Partnerships**. “With so many great institutions at the table sharing best practices, this represents a tremendous opportunity to double down on what works and surface additional chances to strengthen the crayons-to-careers pipeline.”

“Young people across New York City deserve the chance to thrive in postsecondary careers and should have a range of opportunities to choose from. This learning community will bring us one step closer to strengthening work-based learning citywide,” said **Harini Venkatesh, Executive Director, CTE, Office of Postsecondary Readiness, NYC DOE**. “As our city looks to rebound its economy, investing in these pathways will be essential for students and businesses alike to ensure an equitable and inclusive recovery.”

“Having seen first hand how scaling up the CDOS Option 1 pathway has improved career outcomes for students across New York State, I’m excited by the promise the Community of Practice offers to push this work even further,” said **Carlos Moreno, Co-Executive Director of Here to Here founding partner, Big Picture Learning**. “By providing even more students with opportunities to learn both in the classroom and on the job, New York’s continued economic recovery has the potential to be more equitable.”

“We are proud to support the urgent work of establishing an equitable system for youth talent development in New York City by creating a community of practice where promising models can be refined, tested, and scaled. Every young person deserves a viable pathway toward a family-sustaining career in a field that aligns with their interests,” said **Saskia Levy Thompson, Program Director, New Designs to Advance Learning, Carnegie Corporation of New York**.

“The goal of educational institutions isn’t simply to help students graduate; it is to prepare them with the professional skills, work experiences, and networks necessary to launch into family-sustaining careers,” said **Angie Kamath, Dean of the NYU School of Professional Studies**. “The 26 members of the Community of Practice are not only positioning young people for future economic security, they also are reinventing educational pathways to embrace practical learning that happens outside of the classroom. We at NYU SPS highly value this weaving of learning from work into traditional academics.”

Community of Practice includes the following high schools, CUNY institutions, and CBOs whose leadership shares a commitment to student career success:

- Comprehensive Youth Development and Innovation Diploma Plus

- Emerging Leaders Program + Bronx High Schools
- Futures and Options and Central Park East HS
- Health, Education, and Research Occupations High School
- HE3AT on behalf of Brooklyn South High School Superintendent Michael Prayor
- 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 & Arete Education
- The Urban Assembly Charter High School for Computer Science & HYPOTHEkids
- Bronx Academy for Software Engineering
- Bronx International
- Bronx Leadership Academy 2
- Bronx Recovery Corps at Lehman College, CUNY
- Brooklyn STEAM/Brooklyn Navy Yard
- DreamYard
- Eagle Academy Foundation
- Fannie Lou Hamer High School
- Friends of Wheels
- Guttman Community College, CUNY
- South Bronx Community Charter High School

"Work-based learning is an essential lever for economic growth and equity citywide and we are thrilled to be part of this working group," said **David Ehrenberg, President & CEO, Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation**. "Transforming the way we prepare young people for the world of work begins in the classroom through partnerships between educators, CBOs and employers. Together, we can build stronger career pathways for every young New Yorker and power economic growth with local talent."

"Preparing young people to be career-ready today means pairing classroom learning with real-world work experience. At Hostos, we are continually striving to expand and refine the ways we ensure our students graduate ready to take on successful careers. That's why we're excited to join our peers in the Community of Practice and collectively learn and define what it means to provide high quality, work-based learning for New York City young people," said **Peter Mertens, Interim Dean of Continuing Education and Workforce development at Hostos Community College**.

"The Eagle Academy Foundation is grateful to be part of HERE to HERE's Community of Practice. In a society where young men of color must fight for their lives every day to be deemed worthy, graduating from high-school and obtaining college acceptance is simply not

enough. To truly give our young men a fighting chance, we must ensure that they are learning to navigate and succeed in the workplace as early as possible. Collaborations like HERE to HERE's Community of Practice, allow organizations like ours to scale our work with middle & high schoolers by engaging with and learning from innovative partners within our field. This allows us to further our goal of removing barriers faced by young men of color by making them aware of the multiple pathways available and empowering them to define success on their own terms," said **Donald Ruff, Director of College Planning & Post-Secondary Opportunities, The Eagle Academy Foundation.**

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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.

About CUNY

The City University of New York is the nation's largest urban public university, a transformative engine of social mobility that is a critical component of the lifeblood of New York City. Founded in 1847 as the nation's first free public institution of higher education, CUNY today has seven community colleges, 11 senior colleges and seven graduate or professional institutions spread across New York City's five boroughs, serving over 260,000 undergraduate and graduate students and awarding 55,000 degrees each year. CUNY's mix of quality and affordability propels almost six times as many low-income students into the middle class and beyond as all the Ivy League colleges combined. More than 80 percent of the University's graduates stay in New York, contributing to all aspects of the city's economic, civic and cultural life and diversifying the city's workforce in every sector. The University's historic mission continues to this day: provide a first-rate public education to all students, regardless of means or background.