



American Workforce Policy Advisory Board

Working Group: Developing a Campaign to Promote Multiple Pathways to Career Success

Background

Too often, workers, parents, and policymakers have assumed that a traditional university degree is the best, or only, path to a fulfilling career. Yet, America's economy is rapidly changing. Employers recognize that employee knowledge and skills are critical for performing high-wage, high-skill jobs. Students and workers should be aware of the potential advantages of multiple career pathways that provide skill development opportunities through innovative learning models.

The two cornerstones of an enduring national campaign to promote alternative pathways are:

- the creation of a large-scale, yearlong advertising campaign; and
- sustained advocacy across a wide range of key stakeholders.

Recommendation to be submitted to the National Council for the American Worker:

- **Develop a Private Sector-led National Campaign to Raise Awareness of and Promote Multiple Pathways to Well-Paying Jobs for All Americans.**

Advertising Campaign

The ad campaign would drive strong awareness among individuals aged 16-20 who have not embarked on a pathway, as well as mid-career working adults who might benefit from a different pathway. Through population-specific messaging, creative, and media vehicles, the campaign would:

- Inform 16-20 year-olds and those who influence them regarding the multiple pathways available to secure well-paying jobs and successfully navigate the rapidly changing nature of work. Counter perceptions that a traditional college education is the only or primary vehicle for career success. Convey that there are new, innovative learning models providing multiple avenues for career success, opportunity, and economic and social mobility.

- Educate mid-career working adults, including those underemployed, where industry is rapidly changing, regarding the multiple pathways available to them to secure well-paying jobs and successfully navigate the rapidly changing nature of work. Challenge perceptions that employers only value degreed talent or are only interested in hiring “next gen” employees. Convey that gaining necessary skills and earning valuable credentials is now more accessible than ever and that lifelong learning is not only possible, but essential, as the needs of employer’s change.

The ad campaign would consist of a series of digital, social, TV, and radio spots celebrating stories of diverse individuals who have continued their education beyond high school using multiple pathways to develop skills aligned with high-demand fields such as IT, healthcare, retail, advanced manufacturing, and others.

The Working Group believes a successful campaign would include the following key components:

- **A Call to Action:** Provide individuals with the tools and resources for success through a campaign website hub that includes information on non-traditional pathways such as:
 - Apprenticeships, on-the-job training, work-based experiences, early exposure, employer and union-sponsored training, public/private training partnerships;
 - Newer learning models, such as competency-based education and experiential learning;
 - Sub-degree/micro-credentials/industry-based certificates/badges; and
 - Technology-driven learning, including online education.
- **Measurement:** Ensure there is continuous evaluation to measure for effectiveness and the ability to quickly analyze data and assess progress. Key measurements would include:
 - Campaign awareness among the target audience nationally;
 - Increase in awareness of non-traditional postsecondary education and training options available;
 - Increase in interest in enrolling in non-traditional postsecondary education and training programs;
 - Traffic to and engagement with campaign website; and
 - Enrollments in non-traditional postsecondary programs offered.
- **Funding:** Funding for the campaign would come from a combination of sources, including pro bono creative, media placement, and public relations services. It will be led by the private sector (i.e., outside the government).

Stakeholder Advocacy

The second cornerstone of the national campaign would be a widespread mobilization of key career pathway stakeholders to encourage policymakers, business and education leaders, and

other social influencers to support, promote, and permanently expand multiple career pathways options for young adults and mid-career working adults.

The elements of stakeholder mobilization, working in tandem with the ad campaign, would include:

- Alliances with third party business and labor groups, trade associations, education organizations, worker training leaders, and others to drive awareness and action;
- Aggregating and curating stories, advertising materials and templates, data, and resources to help guide individuals in pursuing career pathways; and
- Activating influential voices in policy, media, and culture to champion multiple career pathways.