

# GENERATION WORK

Launched by the Annie E. Casey Foundation in 2015, Generation Work™ aims to connect more of America's young adults with meaningful employment by changing the way public and private systems prepare them for jobs. Partners in five sites across the nation — Cleveland, Hartford, Indianapolis, Philadelphia and Seattle — are working to align education, employment and support services to help young people develop the skills required to succeed in the working world; link them with employers; and increase advancement and earning opportunities.

By combining employer-facing strategies that are aligned to labor market needs with positive youth development techniques such as hands-on learning and mentoring, the initiative aims to blend services into more cohesive pathways that promote equitable employment opportunities for all young people.

## SEATTLE

In Seattle, the Generation Work partnership is piloting new approaches with a range of educational and workforce organizations to help young adults of color and those living in low-income and immigrant communities attain the necessary skills and credentials to secure jobs that pay living wages in high-growth industries, including science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The partnership is committed to sharing lessons along the way in hopes of establishing more integrated education and employment pathways that lead young job seekers to success.

### Context

Seattle's growing employment sectors need qualified workers. Areas with strong demand include travel and trade, advanced manufacturing, aerospace, communications technology and online commerce.<sup>1</sup>

But educational and linguistic barriers prevent many residents — especially young adults of color and those in the region's growing immigrant community — from entering these industries and gaining the necessary skills and credentials to secure long-term careers and family-sustaining wages.

Generation Work is focused on developing a more targeted set of services to help young adults of color and those for whom English is a second language attain educational credentials, build their skills and connect with sustainable career pathways.

<sup>1</sup> Washington State Department of Commerce. (2017). *Key sectors bring focus to high growth industries*. Retrieved from [www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/key-sectors](http://www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/key-sectors)

## PARTNERS

The core Generation Work leadership group in Seattle includes the following organizations:

- **Port Jobs** is a workforce development organization based at the Port of Seattle/Seattle-Tacoma (Sea-Tac) International Airport. It provides career pathways in aviation, hospitality, transportation, distribution and logistics.
- **South Seattle College's Georgetown Campus** offers apprenticeship preparation and programming for careers in the manufacturing industry.
- **Aerospace Joint Apprenticeship Committee**, a nonprofit, is a registered apprenticeship program for the aerospace and advanced manufacturing industries.
- **Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Employment for Women**, is a nonprofit program that provides pre-apprenticeship training and support for individuals pursuing skilled construction trades.
- **Workforce Development Council of Seattle King County** is a nonprofit that serves as the local workforce investment board and the local workforce funders' collaborative.
- **King County Education and Employment Resources** oversees youth-led outreach and recruitment to education and employment programs.
- **Seattle Education Access**, a community-based organization, provides college navigation and access to postsecondary training for young adults ages 18–29.
- **Community Center for Education Results** is the backbone organization for the Road Map Project — a comprehensive effort to boost student success from early learning to college and career — and the local lead for the Aspen Institute's Opportunity Youth Incentive Fund.
- **Puget Sound Educational Service District** is one of nine regional educational agencies serving school districts and state-approved charter and private schools in Washington.
- **The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction** oversees Washington's K–12 system, including Open Doors Youth Reengagement, a program for students ages 16–21.
- **The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges** oversees Washington's system of 34 public community and technical colleges.

### Seattle's approach

The Generation Work partnership in Seattle is helping educational and workforce development programs tailor their services to the strengths and needs of young people of color and those from low-income and immigrant communities. In its first year, the partnership launched a pilot initiative through Airport University, a program offered by Port Jobs and Highline Community College that prepares individuals for careers at Sea-Tac International Airport.

Port Jobs, a local nonprofit that runs the program, had been working with participants in their mid- to late-30s. With the support of Generation Work, the organization engaged partners in the King County School District and Seattle Education Access to serve younger job seekers who may not have completed high school and are not already enrolled at the college. Airport University now provides targeted support for these young people, including high school

completion and college-navigation services, individualized coaching and career counseling.

Generation Work partners are launching similar efforts in other locations using lessons gleaned from Airport University, including a more integrated aviation and construction program with South Seattle College. With support from the Kaiser Foundation, the partnership also is forming an apprenticeship consortium to help public and private leaders strengthen and coordinate youth-serving programs.

Central to all these efforts is a commitment to equity and inclusion. Through Generation Work, practitioners, frontline staff and employers are gaining a better understanding of how institutional and systemic racism affect youth of color and devising strategies to incorporate young people in the design of their programs and services.

## Challenges

The Generation Work partnership in Seattle combines services from various providers and uses funding from several different public, private and philanthropic sources — all of which have their own requirements, target outcomes and payment structures. This blended approach is a new way of working for the region's education and workforce development programs. Establishing a mutually agreed-upon set of goals and success measures has not been easy and has required time and compromise.

In addition to challenges with alignment, the team is grappling with the best ways to serve the region's increasingly diverse population. A majority of the young people served by Generation Work partners are people of color, immigrants and refugees. Some fled violence in their home countries, and others fear their race and immigrant status will hinder their ability to find and keep employment. Eighty-five percent of young adults interviewed during the first year of Generation Work identified racial discrimination as a primary barrier to employment, both from their own personal experience and observations of siblings, parents or other relatives.

To effectively engage with these young job seekers, staff at several partner organizations have completed training on

trauma-informed care and have developed systems and practices that account for potential language and culture barriers.

## Opportunities and next steps

The Airport University and South Seattle College pilots are part of a broader Generation Work strategy to improve pathways for youth and young adults into living-wage jobs and careers in STEM-related fields.

To make that vision a reality, the partnership will continue pursuing the following activities in the years ahead:

- Strengthen collaboration between government agencies, nonprofits, funders, employers and educational programs.
- Expand and enhance service referrals for young job seekers.
- Facilitate peer learning opportunities to improve practice, influence policy and sustain change.
- Incorporate the interests and opinions of young-adult program participants and employer partners.

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## WHAT IS A RACIAL EQUITY AND INCLUSION (REI) FRAMEWORK?



A RACIAL EQUITY AND INCLUSION (REI) FRAMEWORK helps identify strategies and target resources to address root causes of inequities based on race.



RACIAL EQUITY is the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares.



INCLUSION means authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, decision making and policymaking in a way that shares power.

SOURCE: [www.racialequitytools.org/glossary](http://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary)

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Additional information about REI, Generation Work and early lessons from across the five sites is available in the following resources:

- The Annie E. Casey Foundation. *Race Equity and Inclusion Action Guide: 7 Steps to Advance and Embed Equity and Inclusion Within Your Organization.* [www.aecf.org/resources/race-equity-and-inclusion-action-guide](http://www.aecf.org/resources/race-equity-and-inclusion-action-guide)
- The Annie E. Casey Foundation. *Generation Work: Equipping Young People With In-Demand Employment Skills and Credentials.* [www.aecf.org/resources/generation-work](http://www.aecf.org/resources/generation-work)
- Child Trends. *The PILOT Assessment: A Guide to Integrating Positive Youth Development into Workforce Training Settings.* [www.childtrends.org/publications/the-pilot-assessment-a-guide-to-integrating-positive-youth-development-into-workforce-training-settings](http://www.childtrends.org/publications/the-pilot-assessment-a-guide-to-integrating-positive-youth-development-into-workforce-training-settings)
- The Aspen Institute. *Now Jobs in Young Adult Workforce Programming.* <https://assets.aspeninstitute.org/content/uploads/2018/06/Now-Jobs-In-Young-Adult-Workforce-Programming.pdf>