

# READY CONNECTED SUPPORTED:



**BECOMING YOUNG. EMPLOYED. SUCCESSFUL.**

## Why Ready, Connected, Supported?

The current state of youth (un)employment speaks for itself: 1.8 million young Americans (ages 16-24) want to work, are actively searching, yet still can't find a job. This means that the unemployment rate for young people is more than double the national unemployment rate.<sup>1</sup>

For young people, connecting to the world of work during this important period can strengthen their confidence and ties to the labor market and set them on a secure and fulfilling career pathway. Focusing on young people in the workforce is also a win for employers, who can tap into a broader pool of talent.<sup>2</sup> Tackling youth unemployment also benefits the economy and society—broadening the tax base, boosting spending power, and reducing financial reliance on families and government programs.<sup>3</sup>

That's why the YES Project: Young, Employed, Successful—a national youth employment campaign launched by

America's Promise Alliance—is working to support and grow our youth workforce so that **every young person seeking a job can find a job.**

To set the foundation for the YES project, this initiative teamed up with nonprofits, researchers, and employers to articulate just what young people need to succeed in the workplace. This collective effort pinpointed three conditions for workplace success and career development: readiness, connection, and ongoing support.

## What is Ready, Connected, Supported?

The "Ready, Connected, Supported" framework is the backbone of the YES Project. The framework provides a shared approach from which everyone from employers and public officials to community leaders and young people themselves is driving action toward increasing youth employment.



<sup>1</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2019). Labor force statistics from the current population survey. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat31.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> Canner, N., Carlton, A., Halfteck, G., & Irons, J. (2015). Impact hiring: How data will transform youth employment. New York, NY, San Francisco, CA: Rockefeller Foundation, Incandescent, Knack. Retrieved from <https://assets.rockefellerfoundation.org/app/uploads/20151222091528/Impact-Hiring-How-Data-Will-Transform-Youth-Employment.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Belfield, C. R., Levin, H. M., & Rosen, R. (2012). The economic value of opportunity youth. Washington DC: Civic Enterprises. Retrieved from [https://aspencommunitysolutions.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Economic\\_Value\\_of\\_Opportunity\\_Youth\\_Report.pdf](https://aspencommunitysolutions.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Economic_Value_of_Opportunity_Youth_Report.pdf); and Lewis, K., & Burd-Sharps, S. (2015). Zeroing in on place and race: Youth disconnection in America's cities. Measure of America of the Social Science Research Council. Retrieved from <http://src-static.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/MOA-Zeroing-In-Final.pdf>

## READY

When young people are ready, they are equipped with the skills, education and credentials, and commitment to lifelong learning necessary to excel in the workplace. To thrive, young people need a combination of technical skills that are relevant for their chosen career pathways; social, emotional, and cognitive skills (such as the ability to solve problems, collaborate, and demonstrate persistence) that allow them to achieve complex tasks or objectives; and career management skills, such as adaptability and understanding of how one's own interests and strengths fit with career paths and the labor market.

These readiness skills are essential for young people to adapt to changes in their lives and the world of work as they continue to pursue their goals.

**“Being ready isn’t about one’s state of mind when the whistle blows or as the curtain goes up. Being ready is about the work that goes on in practice and rehearsals leading up to the big game or opening night.”**

–Gabe Abdellatif, Youth Member, APA Board

## CONNECTED

When young people are connected, they can access and engage with the systems and institutions (e.g. school, workplaces) and opportunities and experiences (e.g. career development and work-based learning) that facilitate positive career-related results, like landing their first job or securing a promotion. Being connected also means that young people have access to relationships and networks, including but not limited to, individuals with high social capital relevant to their career needs and goals.

Connectedness includes ongoing and active engagement with the world of work and one's own career. This means that young people must actively engage in their career development through exploration, decision-making, commitment, implementation, and adjustment.

**“Building your network is important in helping you reach your personal and professional goals. When starting my first company OpportuniMe, I didn’t have any knowledge on entrepreneurship or business, but I met mentors who helped me get it off the ground.”**

–Miracle Olatunji, Northeastern University Student, Author and Creator of OpportuniMe

## SUPPORTED

When young people are supported, they have the range of relationships and resources they need to be successful leading to and through employment. Young people require various forms of support such as direct assistance with their basic needs (housing, transportation, food) that allow them to better navigate their career opportunities. They also need access to information; mentorship, emotional support, and constructive feedback; and healthy learning and work environments.

The key is having a comprehensive web of support, filled with caring relationships across contexts that provide an array of assistance tailored to each young person's unique strengths and needs at each stage of their career development. Such a web of support comes from a variety of sources, like mentors, teachers, parents, supervisors, and neighbors.

**“I think that one of the major things that I felt from Year Up is support because coming from a family where no one went to college, and going to Howard right after high school, no one was there to walk the journey with me. Not even financially, but just in general. Year Up provided me mentors and coaches who wrapped their hands around me after I dropped out.”**

–Niaya Williams – Year Up Alum and Project Manager at the Center for Machine Learning



The YES Project is a national initiative launched by America's Promise Alliance that brings together youth, employers, and a diverse network of stakeholders and advocates working to support and grow our youth workforce so that every young person seeking a job can find a job. The YES Project builds on the successes of America's Promise's GradNation campaign, which is focused on improving the high school experience and increasing the national graduation rate so that young people are ready for what's next.

**For more information, visit us at [www.americaspromise.org/yes](http://www.americaspromise.org/yes).**

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