

Emerging Workforce Initiative

Organizational Goals and Activities

Mission

Founded in 2009, the Emerging Workforce Initiative builds the capacity of communities, schools and families to prepare *all* youth and young adults for the 21st century workforce.

Vision

Teaching the next generation the skills to meet ever-changing personal, economic and social challenges is every community's most important collective responsibility. It is a long-term and complex process that involves young people, parents, educators, employers and decision makers at every level. When *each* young person is well-prepared, employers find a capable and available workforce, communities have engaged and productive citizens, and individuals maintain stable and self-sustaining jobs. It is this vision of workforce preparation for *all* young people that drives the work of the Emerging Workforce Initiative, Inc.

Activities

To achieve its important mission, the Emerging Workforce Initiative, Inc:

- 1. Conducts research on education and workforce issues;*
- 2. Identifies and promotes effective strategies that prepare young people for work;*
- 3. Builds the capacity of communities and programs to implement these strategies.*

1. Research the Issues: The Emerging Workforce Initiative, Inc. addresses the ongoing need for objective and accessible information on workforce preparation and education issues. The organization conducts research and produces reports that address a variety of relevant questions:

The Status of the Emerging Workforce

- How well prepared is the emerging workforce overall?
- What are the challenges in preparing the emerging workforce?
- What global trends should be guiding the way we prepare the emerging workforce?
- What organizations, agencies, institutions, or businesses contribute to the preparation of the emerging workforce and what successful strategies do they use?

Employer Perspective

- What skills will employers need?
- How well do employers work with schools to communicate their workforce needs?

Education Pipeline

- How could schools better assess and document that students have needed skills?
- How could schools increase their capacity to graduate students with needed skills?

Success of Young Adults

- Do young people have the skills they need for work and life? How do we know?
- What strategies are effective in helping young people develop needed skills?
- Why do some young adults drop out of school? What would help them stay?
- What types of skills translate to increases in social mobility and decreases in poverty and health risks for individuals and communities?

2. Promote Effective Strategies: The Emerging Workforce Initiative, Inc. evaluates workforce preparation strategies and promotes those that help communities and programs to:

- Understand the skills employers, the community and individuals needed;
- Maintain a highly responsive education and training programs and systems that teaches these skills;
- Monitor how well its young people are mastering needed skills.

The Emerging Workforce Initiative, Inc. evaluates workforce preparation strategies and promotes those that help young people to:

- Understand the communities they belong to and impact;
- Know about the jobs needed in their community;
- Develop the skills to be successful life-long learners;
- Make plans for success and see them through.

3. Build the Capacity to Implement Strategies: Understanding the issues affecting the emerging workforce and identifying effective strategies in workforce preparation are essential steps in making a long-term impact. The Emerging Workforce Initiative, Inc. also works to implement the most effective strategies at local, state and national levels. The organization conducts capacity building activities that are adapted to local or regional needs and available resources. These activities include:

- Training professionals, parents and policy makers;
- Developing funding for starting or expanding programs;
- Evaluating existing programs;
- Creating tool kits and curricula; and
- Building new collaborations between workforce preparation entities.

Scope

The following definitions describe the scope of the organization:

The “*emerging workforce*” is defined by the Initiative as youth and young adults, approximately 14 to 24 years of age. The Initiative works to ensure this future workforce is actively involved in educational and work activities that prepare them for high-demand career pathways.

The Initiative focuses its efforts on “*at risk youth and young adults*” - individuals who struggle with workforce preparation due to homelessness, foster care or juvenile justice system involvement, academic difficulties, parenting responsibilities, physical or mental disabilities, or disconnect from opportunities. Young people confronting these and related issues, approximately one in three of all emerging workers, will likely experience significant and life-long difficulties in the workplace without innovative and sustained assistance.

Overcoming barriers to employment is difficult and anticipating which skills young people will need in their future provides additional challenges. The Initiative is committed to assisting young people prepare for the “*21st century skills*” needed locally and globally. Some of these skills are familiar and ubiquitous, yet increasingly complex: communication, problem solving, reading, team work, and time/project management. Other 21st century skills will require specialized training in fields that are still evolving: finance, environmental sustainability, health care, energy and technology. The Emerging Workforce Initiative assists programs and communities to support the development of general and specific workplace skills.

In its work, the Initiative builds the capacity of a variety of “*local, state and national workforce preparation entities*” including: primary and secondary schools and systems, colleges and universities, community-based “second chance” and adult literacy programs, vocational education schools and programs, industry and trade unions, professional associations, businesses, workforce and economic development entities, organizations serving individuals with additional barriers to success, families, parents and young people themselves. The specific “*capacity building activities*” are described below.