

# YEAR TO CAREER:

## ACCELERATING CREDENTIALS AND CAREERS IN A REDESIGNED 13TH YEAR

---

The goal of **YEAR TO CAREER**, a program model being developed by JFF, is to **BUILD A NEW, HIGH-QUALITY PATHWAY THAT IMPROVES POSTSECONDARY OUTCOMES FOR OLDER YOUTH, ages 18-26.**

Current pathways to quality employment are too limited and take too long for many young people who are unprepared for college, particularly those from low-income families and communities. Youth looking for entry into well-paying employment after high school typically have two choices. They can obtain a college credential, which can take many years, especially for those needing remediation before they can enter credit-granting technical programs. Or they can seek short-term training opportunities, which are typically disconnected from employer needs or not intensive enough to develop academic and workplace skills needed for career advancement.

---

### YEAR TO CAREER DESIGN

*Year to Career* programs are relatively short-term, intensive, postsecondary experiences (12 to 24 months) that result in career-track employment in high-demand, high-wage occupations with starting pay at or near 80 percent of the state median.

“Fast track” program options like Year to Career are emerging to address the shortage of pathways to quality employment for young people. These programs, which share many characteristics, have an early and encouraging track record. Key design features include:

- **Streamlined and flexible curricula, the integration of remedial instruction into technical classes, and ongoing student counseling and supports;**
- **Strong employer connections, work-based learning, and paid internships; and**
- **College-level coursework needed to pursue an advanced degree or certification in a high-demand occupational area.**

Year to Career models, including the nationally renowned Year Up program, evidence a close partnership between employers and education and training providers. Also, they move young people who need stronger and broader skills relatively quickly through learning and work experiences that attach them to good jobs in growth fields. Most important, these innovative efforts, which usually operate through community colleges or nonprofit agencies, show impressive results for both young people and employers.

## YEAR TO CAREER OUTCOMES

JFF intends to make the Year to Career option an important feature of a new postsecondary landscape, one that responds to the needs of low-income young people and that can, by 2020, double the number of students who achieve postsecondary and career success.

To meet these ambitious goals, JFF has developed a set of five-year outcomes for Year to Career activities:

- **Develop two or three proven Year to Career program designs, with appropriate vehicles to disseminate and scale up these designs;**
- **Work with two demonstration communities or regions that are implementing a portfolio of Year to Career options as a systemic initiative—including appropriate state and local policy supports—to connect young people to career-track employment;**
- **Work with two to three regions or states implementing at least one program design as part of state policy reform to support Year to Career program development; and**
- **Gain endorsements from influential federal and state policymakers, corporate leaders, and major stakeholder groups in the education and employment fields for a policy agenda to expand Year to Career programs.**

## YEAR TO CAREER STRATEGIES

In 2009 and 2010, JFF will lay the foundation for Year to Career development and expansion. JFF is:

- **Conducting a national scan to identify organizations that deliver or could deliver Year to Career designs, including community or employer-based training programs, community colleges, and proprietary schools;**
- **Codifying key features of the program designs;**
- **Conducting research to establish the potential market among employers for these new fast-track programs, particularly among employers offering white-collar apprenticeship opportunities through participation in Year Up; and**
- **Producing a comprehensive “white paper” to promote the Year to Career concept, direct ongoing engagement with key employers and federal, state, and local stakeholders, and inform key audiences about the pressing need for more efficient ways to connect young people to quality employment.**

As the public appetite for Year to Career programs grows, JFF will identify, design, and build vehicles to scale up and transfer Year to Career models to new communities and states. This work will include the identification of intermediary capabilities to execute this new system of pathways, as well as the exploration of an “institute” design, drawing on the lessons from the University Park Campus School Institute for Student Success. JFF anticipates working in communities or regions where a portfolio of Year to Career designs can be scaled up as part of a systemic, economic development effort, and in regions or states where at least one design can be scaled up in conjunction with key state policy support. The scale-up plan will build on and take advantage of the opportunities presented by the current economic climate and resource base: a focus on broad economic development; a connection with stimulus-related resources focused on job creation; and the growth of green technologies.

## FUNDER

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

## FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Terry Grobe, 617.728.4446, [tgrobe@jff.org](mailto:tgrobe@jff.org)



**JOBS FOR THE FUTURE**

TEL 617.728.4446 FAX 617.728.4857 [info@jff.org](mailto:info@jff.org)

88 Broad Street, 8th Floor, Boston, MA 02110

85 Prescott Street, Suite 405, Worcester, MA 01605

2000 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 5300, Washington, DC 20006

[WWW.JFF.ORG](http://WWW.JFF.ORG)