

Workforce Development and Nutrition Security Report

Overview

Introduction to The Food Trust

Founded in 1992, The Food Trust works with neighborhoods, institutions, retailers, farmers and policymakers across the country to ensure delicious, nutritious food for all. Backed by three decades of research and evaluation, our holistic, community-centered approach to nutrition security weaves together three core programming elements — access, affordability and education — as well as a focus on advocating for public policy solutions. The Food Trust is based in Philadelphia and works locally and nationally to further its mission, serving over 900,000 people each year.

Introduction to Workforce Development

Workforce development initiatives aim to build foundational skills and provide job training to individuals, leading to job placement to meet the needs of employers and workers. Workforce development programs offer training of varying lengths — weeks to years — to prepare people for jobs and careers in a variety of fields. They are funded privately or by government funding, including Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education and Training (SNAP E&T). These funds are managed by the US Department of Labor, State Departments of Labor and local workforce boards. There are key areas of focus in workforce development regionally, including Technology, Infrastructure; Life Sciences; Advance Manufacturing; and Hospitality, which includes a culinary component.

Project Summary

Given The Food Trust's mission, the primary goal of the workforce development brainstorming project was to identify best practices from across the country that pair workforce development and food security. The project included a national environmental scan, literature review, and close to 20 stakeholder interviews with experts in the industry. While the scope of the research was intentionally broad, there was a focus on opportunities related to food, nutrition, agriculture, retail, healthcare, youth and programming for justice-impacted individuals. The information gathered will be used to strengthen existing initiatives that increase food security, and shared more broadly to inform the work of partners in this space.

Informational Interviews

Below is a list of organizations interviewed by The Food Trust during this process:

- Breakthrough Alliance of Colorado (CO)
- Career Source Florida (FL)
- Center for Family Services (NJ)
- Chef Ann Foundation (CA)
- Commission for Agricultural Education Excellence/ PA Department of Agriculture (PA)
- Double Trellis Food Initiative (PA)
- Food Corps of New Jersey/ NJ Department of Agriculture (NJ)
- Greater Kansas City Workforce Development Board (MO)
- National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation
- Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) (PA)
- PA Department of Labor and Industry/ Workforce Development (PA)
- PA Food Policy Council (PA)
- Pasa Sustainable Agriculture (PA)
- PA Workforce Development Board (PA)
- Philadelphia Youth Network (PA)
- Philadelphia Works (PA)
- School District of Philadelphia, Eat.Right.Now Program (PA)
- Uplift Solutions (PA)
- National Reentry Workforce Collaborative

Key Ideas and Themes



Career Exploration Programs



Justice-Impacted and At-Risk Youth Programs



ServSafe® Food Safety Training

Career Exploration Programs (Pre-apprenticeships, Apprenticeships, Internships, and Fellowships)

Overview

Career exploration programs can give people, especially “opportunity youth,” exposure to careers in all aspects of the food system, including agriculture, nutrition education, retail, food preparation and food service. These programs vary greatly in terms of content, length, population and requirements, but have a similar goal of preparing people for a career in food/agriculture. States across the country are looking at service programs as an introduction to career pathways.

Examples of food-related career exploration programs

- [Pasa](#) Sustainable Agriculture’s Diversified Vegetable Apprenticeship, Diversified Vegetable Pre-Apprenticeship, and Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship
- Penn State Extension’s [Butcher Apprenticeship Program](#)
- Center for Dairy Excellence’s [Dairy Herd Manager Apprenticeship Program](#)
- Chef Ann Foundation’s [Healthy School Food Pathway Pre-Apprenticeship Program](#)
- Longwood Gardens’ [Professional Horticulture Program](#)
- [FoodCorps](#), [AmeriCorps](#), [HealthCorps](#). FoodCorps is an AmeriCorps program that trains participants to go into six career pathways (Nutrition & Public Health, Education, Nonprofit Management, School Food Leadership, Policy & Advocacy, Agriculture and Food Production). FoodCorps is active in 17 states, including New Jersey (NJ), but there is currently no program in PA.
- A number of Philadelphia schools (Sankofa, Saul, Fox Chase Farms) offer agriculture-related training for high school youth.
- [CSPG-30](#), Pennsylvania Agriculture Education Certification, is a Certified Agriculture Educator program run through Penn State Extension.
- [C2L-PHL](#) is the School District of Philadelphia’s Career Connected Learning program. This initiative is a collaboration between Philadelphia Works, The School District of Philadelphia, the City of Philadelphia, and JEVS.



Examples of culinary training programs

- The School District of Philadelphia's [Career and Technical Education \(CTE\)](#) culinary training programs for high school-age youth
- [Philabundance's Community Kitchen](#)
- [Opportunities Industrialization Center](#) (OIC)
- [Double Trellis Food Initiative](#)
- [Careers through Culinary Arts](#) (C-CAP), a national culinary program for teens
- Camden's [Cathedral Kitchen](#), a culinary training program serving residents of South Jersey
- [Community Kitchen Pittsburgh](#)

Tips and Recommendations

- There is a state-defined process guiding the launch of apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs. In PA, the Department of Labor has staff who can help guide the process of starting a new apprenticeship program, which typically takes 1-2 years to launch.
- Employer partners are an essential part of the success of apprenticeship programs, as apprenticeships are required to lead to job placement.
- Pre-apprenticeship programs are easier to initiate, but need to feed into apprenticeship programs or jobs.
- Most apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships are focused on High Priority Occupations (HPOs); however, organizations that develop an apprenticeship program in PA can have a new job industry added to the high priority list, if the need is determined.
- Funding for career exploration programs varies. To be eligible for WIOA funding, programs must be registered and approved by the state and guarantee job placement. In Philadelphia, Philadelphia Works manages the administration of WIOA funds for pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs.
- There are few apprenticeship programs that focus on nutrition and agriculture education. The Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior (SNEB) has [developed competencies for nutrition education](#), which could be used to develop this type of program.



Programs for Individuals Impacted by the Justice System and At-Risk Youth

Overview

There is increasing interest across the country in workforce development programs that focus on pre-release or those re-entering the workforce after being impacted by the justice system.

Examples of workforce development programs for justice-impacted individuals

- [Breakthrough Alliance of Colorado](#)
- [Uplift Solutions](#) has worked closely with Brown's ShopRites in Philadelphia to place justice-impacted individuals at local supermarkets.
- The Food Trust has been piloting ServSafe® training, and job training and placement in the restaurant industry with pre-release participants and those who have returned to their communities, in partnership with the Philadelphia Department of Prisons' Office of Sustainability on State Road and Philadelphia's Office of Reentry Partnerships.
- [National Reentry Workforce Collaborative](#) (NRWC)

Tips and Recommendations

- Foundational skills (soft skills) are an essential component of all workforce development programs, including support for navigating and reentering communities after incarceration.
- In PA, Philadelphia Works funds programming for incarcerated individuals, returning citizens and justice-impacted individuals.



ServSafe® Food Safety Training

Overview

There is a need for food service workers at a variety of locations, including restaurants, fast-food operations, institutional kitchens and food stores. Food service managers, food batch workers, butchers and meat cutters are on the [Pennsylvania High Priority Occupations list](#). While it is not required for everyone to have ServSafe® certifications in these jobs, it is helpful for people working with food to understand proper food handling and storage. It is also an added credential for workers applying for positions that include handling food.

Examples of ServSafe® Food Safety Training

[ServSafe®](#) Manager or Food Handler certifications

Tips and Recommendations

- There is no shortage of entry-level food-related positions (supermarkets, fast food, restaurants), and these jobs can be a good starting point for people who need job experience. Full-time union jobs can be more difficult to attain, yet a part-time or entry-level job can lead to these jobs.
- The biggest challenges to maintaining jobs in the food industry are low wages and high turnover. Additionally, a common practice in food retail is to hire many part-time workers who are not offered benefits, rather than fewer full-time positions that offer benefits. This raises concerns over whether these employment opportunities are quality jobs that support livable wages and sustainable employment.



Other Ideas and Recommendations

- Stakeholders emphasized the importance of employer-driven workforce development, which speaks to the development of programs in partnership with employers, or informed by their needs.
- A natural connection between workforce development and nutrition is offering nutrition education and food access programs to participants in existing workforce development programs.
- Many employers are happy to provide on-the-job specific training. What most employers state they want is someone who is reliable (employers defined this as someone who shows up for work and is on time) and has good communication skills with fellow employees, supervisors and customers. Many workforce training programs provide soft-skill development as a key part of their workforce training, as well as support related to other social determinants of health.
- Stakeholders placed a strong emphasis on the importance of partnerships as critical to the success of workforce development initiatives.

Workforce Definitions

- **Career pathways:** A [career pathway](#) is a schematic or mapped series of manageable education and training steps toward industry-aligned skills, credentials and career advancement. Each step is designed to prepare people for employment while providing a clear pathway to the next level of education and training within an industry. Pathways may also include necessary credentials and supportive services.
- **Employer-driven workforce development:** Developing programs in partnership with employers or informed by their needs.
- **Justice-impacted/involved:** Justice-impacted is a broad term, and means anyone who is at risk of being incarcerated or has been formerly incarcerated; has had a sibling, parent or extended family member involved in the justice system; or has in some other way been affected by law enforcement to the point where such an involvement has altered their life.
- **Quality jobs:** The definition of quality jobs has been debated, but tends to include the following attributes: livable wage, access to benefits (health, transportation, childcare), growth opportunities and job satisfaction.
- **Opportunity Youth:** [Opportunity Youth](#) are young people between the ages of 16-24 who are disconnected from school and work. This developmental time period, emerging adulthood, has great potential for individual growth through exploring independence and life opportunities.