

A large, semi-transparent blue-tinted image of the Statue of Liberty. The central column of the statue is replaced by a dense, vertical stack of various New York City skyscrapers, creating a visual metaphor for the city's skyline and workforce.

# **Equitable Recovery for Young Adults:**

An Agenda for Young Adult  
Workforce Development  
in New York City

**October 2021**



## **About JobsFirstNYC**

JobsFirstNYC creates and advances solutions that break down barriers and transform the systems supporting young adults and their communities in the pursuit of economic opportunities. Our innovative approach to developing new partnership models has helped shape public policy, private philanthropic investments, and the best practices of employers, colleges, service providers, high schools, and others. Over the last 16 years, JobsFirstNYC has worked with more than 160 organizations in communities across New York City to build innovative solutions that connect young adults to economic opportunities.

## **About this Paper**

*Equitable Recovery for Young Adults: An Agenda for Young Adult Workforce Development in New York City* provides a set of citywide policy priorities rooted in the real needs of young people, the perspectives of on-the-ground practitioners, and the literature on successful policies and interventions. It details the changes needed to quickly connect young adults to employment now and to effectively prepare them for the future of work in a rapidly shifting, increasingly virtual economy. It builds on JobsFirstNYC's comprehensive, system-level view of the City's young adult workforce ecosystem. Finally, it proposes an actionable, realistic, and timebound framework to foster citywide systems change in the young adult workforce development field.



# Executive Summary

JobsFirstNYC and young adult service providers across New York City are more committed now than ever to ensuring that all young adults, and especially those who are out of school and out of work, have the resources, skills, and opportunities they need and deserve to find success in work and in life. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed and exacerbated many inequities, from health outcomes to economic outcomes. Research has shown that young adult workers in New York City are 35% more likely to have lost work than all other workers since the pandemic began and that young adults and people of color were disproportionately employed in the city's hardest-hit industries.<sup>1</sup> The latest data from labor market analytics firm Chmura shows that 1 in 4 young adults were out of school and out of work in 2020, totaling over 183,000 individuals.<sup>2</sup> The pandemic has also accelerated the future of work, namely increased remote work and the displacement of workers by automation.<sup>3,4</sup>

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✓ **Throughout this document, priorities identified or emphasized by young adults are noted in purple.**

**New York City needs to act swiftly to reduce the number of out-of-school, out-of-work young adults; to connect these young adults to training, education, and work opportunities; and to advance these young people along educational and career pathways. To this end, this report outlines six recommendations for the city that were informed by a diverse coalition of young adult workforce development and education stakeholders and young adults:**

 **RECOMMENDATION 1: Collaboration**

Encourage and reward collaboration across young adult workforce programs and providers.

 **RECOMMENDATION 2: Focus on Equity**

Prioritize economic mobility and pathways to prosperity for historically under-resourced and disproportionately harmed communities.

 **RECOMMENDATION 3: Employer Partnerships**

Significantly expand partnerships with employers and industry groups to create employment and career pathway opportunities.

 **RECOMMENDATION 4: Continuum of Services**

Create a seamless continuum of integrated services across education and youth workforce development institutions.

 **RECOMMENDATION 5: Youth-Centered Strategies**

Design youth-informed solutions that center young adults, their experiences, and goals.

 **RECOMMENDATION 6: Capacity Building**

Build the capacity of workforce providers to deliver high-quality, culturally competent, market-aligned services to young adults.

**To enact these recommendations, JobsFirstNYC calls for a \$770 million increase in annual investment by the city. This proposed funding, further detailed below, would support sectoral training, bridge programs, and subsidized employment; expanded high school career development opportunities; preventative mental health services; and a range of capacity-building and system-strengthening projects, including a longitudinal data system and increased training for public agencies overseeing and administering workforce programs.**

**Table 2. Proposed Annual Investment Increase**

# \$770 Million Call To Action

<b>\$100 million</b>	<b>\$150 million</b>	<b>\$357 million</b>	<b>\$105 million</b>	<b>\$58 million</b>
Bridge Programming	Sectoral Training	Subsidized Jobs	High School Degree Attainment and Career Preparation	Capacity Building and System Enhancement







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For more information:

Email us at  
[info@jobsfirstnyc.org](mailto:info@jobsfirstnyc.org)

Call us at  
(646) 876-6835

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