October 14, 2026

Partnership to Advance Youth Apprenticeship

Erica Simon and Lancy Downs,
New America



PAYA

PARTNERSHIP TO ADVANCE YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP



Agenda

01 Introduction to New America & PAYA

02 Youth Apprenticeship in the US

03 Challenges and Opportunities in the US

04 Q&A

About Us

New America

New America is a non-profit, non-partisan think and action tank based in Washington, DC.

The Center on Education and Labor (CELNA)

CELNA works on topics at the intersection of work and learning, including apprenticeship, community colleges, credentials, and job quality.

Meet the New America Team

New America launched the Partnership to Advance Youth Apprenticeship (PAYA) in 2018, and continues to serve as its lead partner.



Lancy Downs

Senior Policy Analyst



Maegan Godoy

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Ali Simon

Senior Policy Analyst



Erica Simon

Deputy Director



Kmar Sfar

Program Coordinator



Ivy Sullivan

Network Manager



Taylor White

Director

Quick US Numbers

330M
People in the US
Total population

275M
Working-age population
83% of the population

23.5M
Workers ages 16-24
7% of the population

~6.5M
Workers ages 16-19
2% of the population



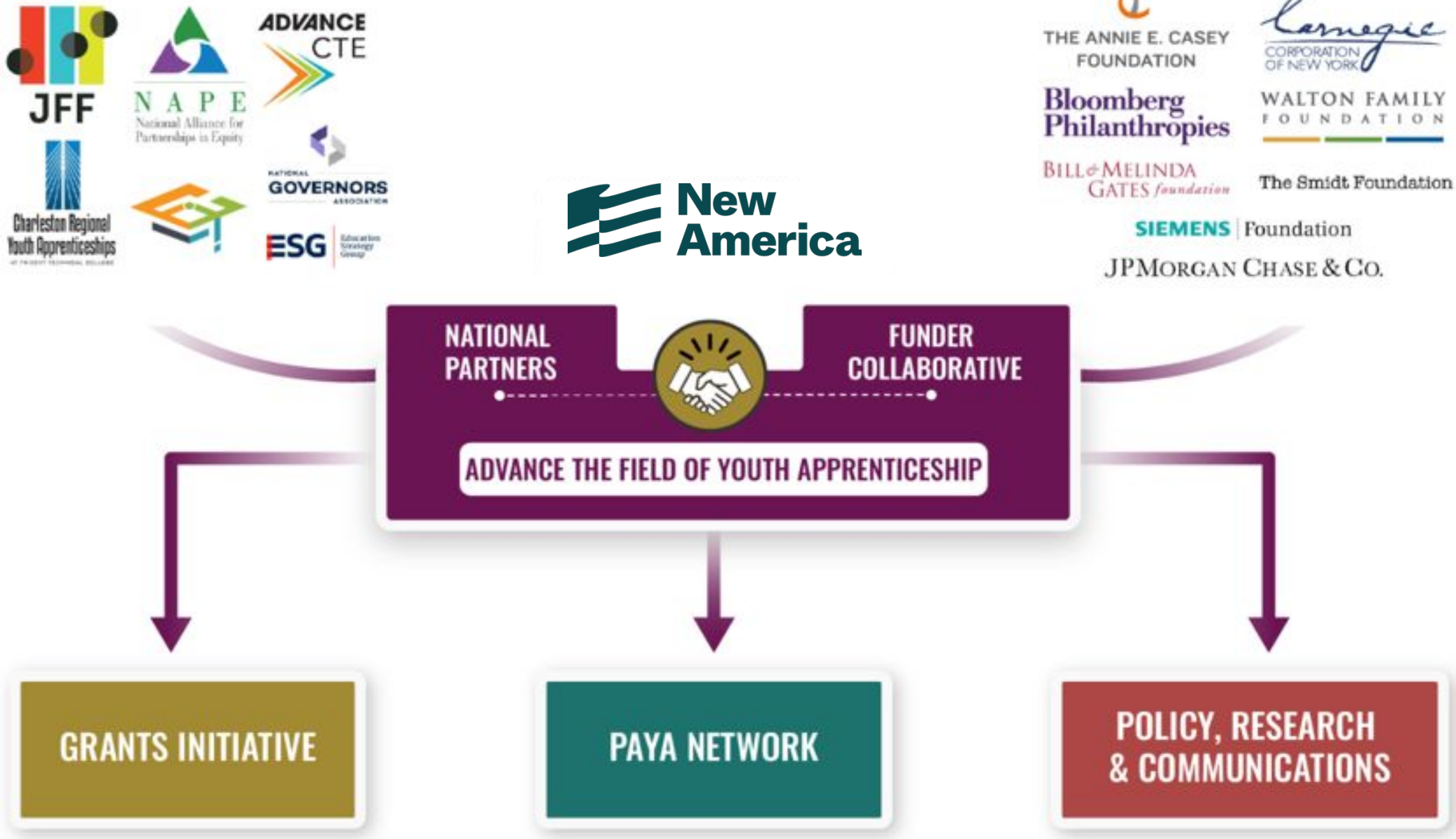
Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, US Census Bureau.

Our Moonshot Goal



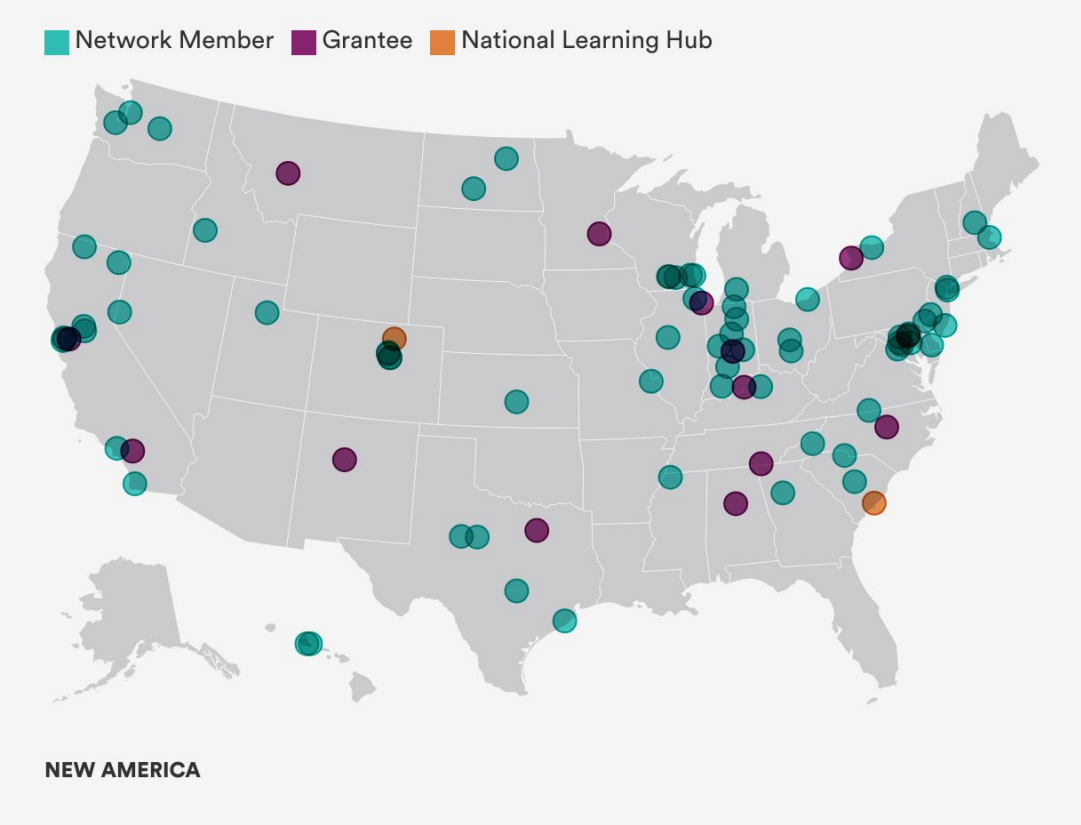
Establish youth apprenticeship as **affordable, mainstream postsecondary option** that leads to more equitable education & employment outcomes for youth at scale.




JFF
NAPE
National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity
ADVANCE CTE
Charleston Regional Youth Apprenticeships
NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION
ESG
New America
THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION
Carnegie CORPORATION OF NEW YORK
Bloomberg Philanthropies
WALTON FAMILY FOUNDATION
BILL & MELINDA GATES foundation
The Smidt Foundation
SIEMENS | Foundation
JPMORGAN CHASE & CO.
NATIONAL PARTNERS
FUNDER COLLABORATIVE
ADVANCE THE FIELD OF YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP
GRANTS INITIATIVE
PAYA NETWORK
POLICY, RESEARCH & COMMUNICATIONS

PAYA's Work

The PAYA National Partners collaborate to:



01 Support place-based partnerships

to increase the number of youth apprenticeship programs aligned to PAYA's Definition & Principles for High Quality Youth Apprenticeship

02 Facilitate learning and innovation

to support the wide-scale adoption of promising practices and enabling policies across a growing field

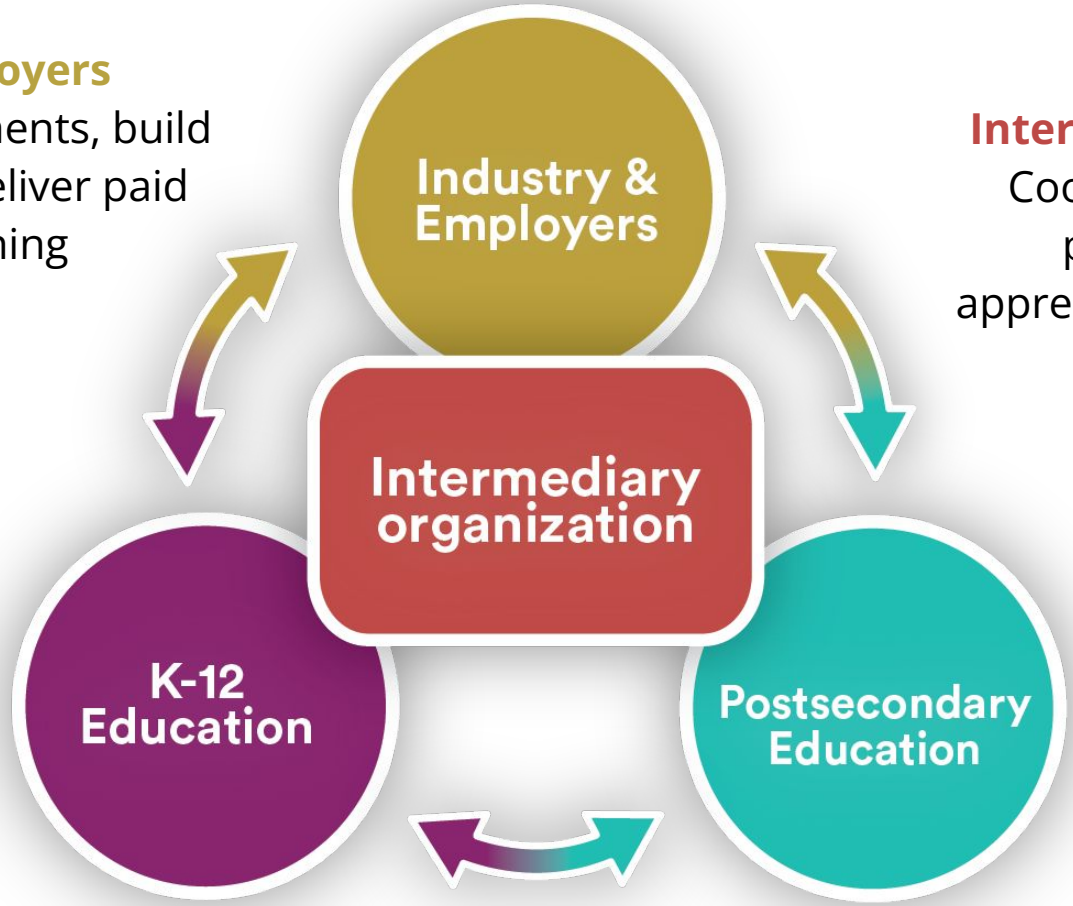
03 Strengthen the case and evidence base for youth apprenticeship

to raise awareness and to mobilize policy, action and investment

Core Partners in Youth Apprenticeship

Industry & Employers
identify skills requirements, build training plans, and deliver paid on-the-job training

Intermediary/Lead Partner
Coordinate the activity of partners to support apprentice & program success



High Schools
design and deliver related instruction and supports, and help students graduate

Colleges & Universities
design and deliver related instruction, assess learning, grant credit and credentials

The Four Core Elements

★ **Paid Experience**
Paid, on-the-job learning under the supervision of skilled employee mentors

★ **Formal Instruction**
Related classroom-based instruction

★ **Skills Assessments**
Ongoing assessment against established skills and competencies

★ **Credentials**
Culmination in a portable, industry-recognized credential and postsecondary credit





What Does Quality Look Like in Youth Apprenticeship in the US?

PAYA Principles for High-Quality Youth Apprenticeship

CAREER-ORIENTED

Learning is structured around knowledge, skills, and competencies that lead to career with family-supporting wages.

EQUITABLE

Learning is accessible to every student, with targeted supports for those adversely impacted by long-standing inequities in our education system and labor market.

PORTABLE

Learning leads to postsecondary credentials and transferable college credit that expands options for students.

ADAPTABLE

Learning is designed collaboratively to be recognized and valued across an industry or sector.

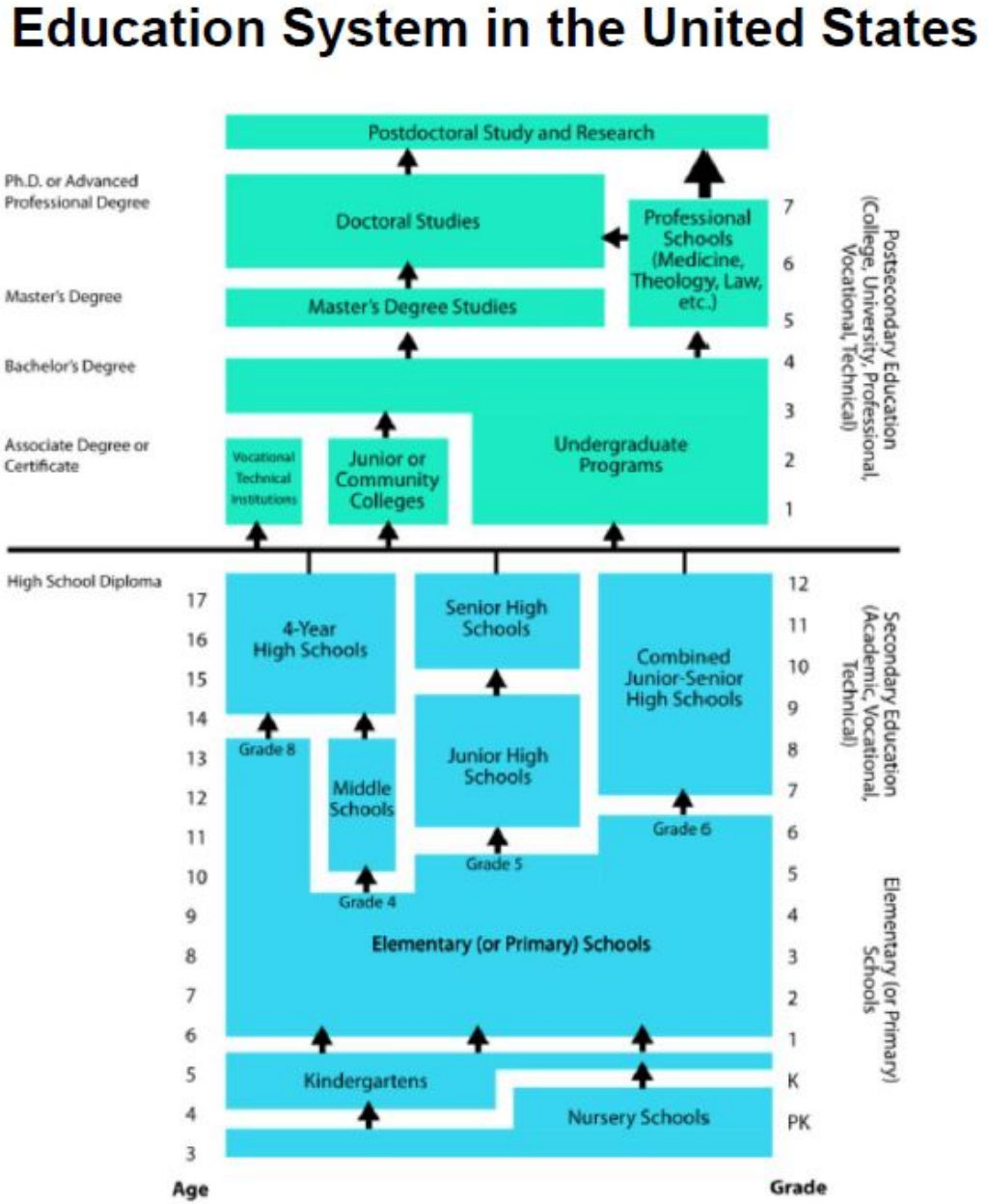
ACCOUNTABLE

Student, employer, and program outcomes are monitored using transparent metrics to support improvement.

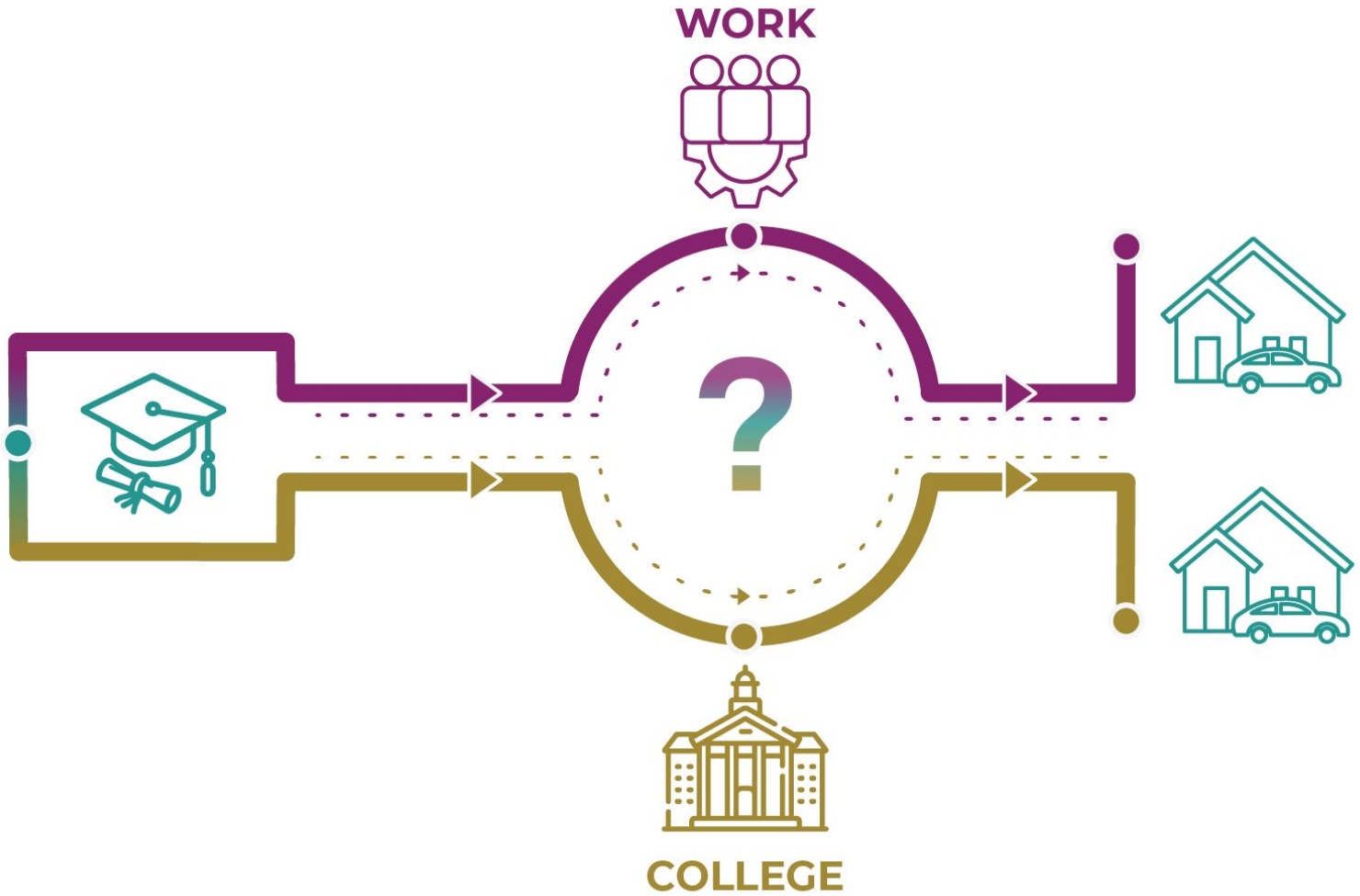
The Transition Challenge for Youth

A Single Track

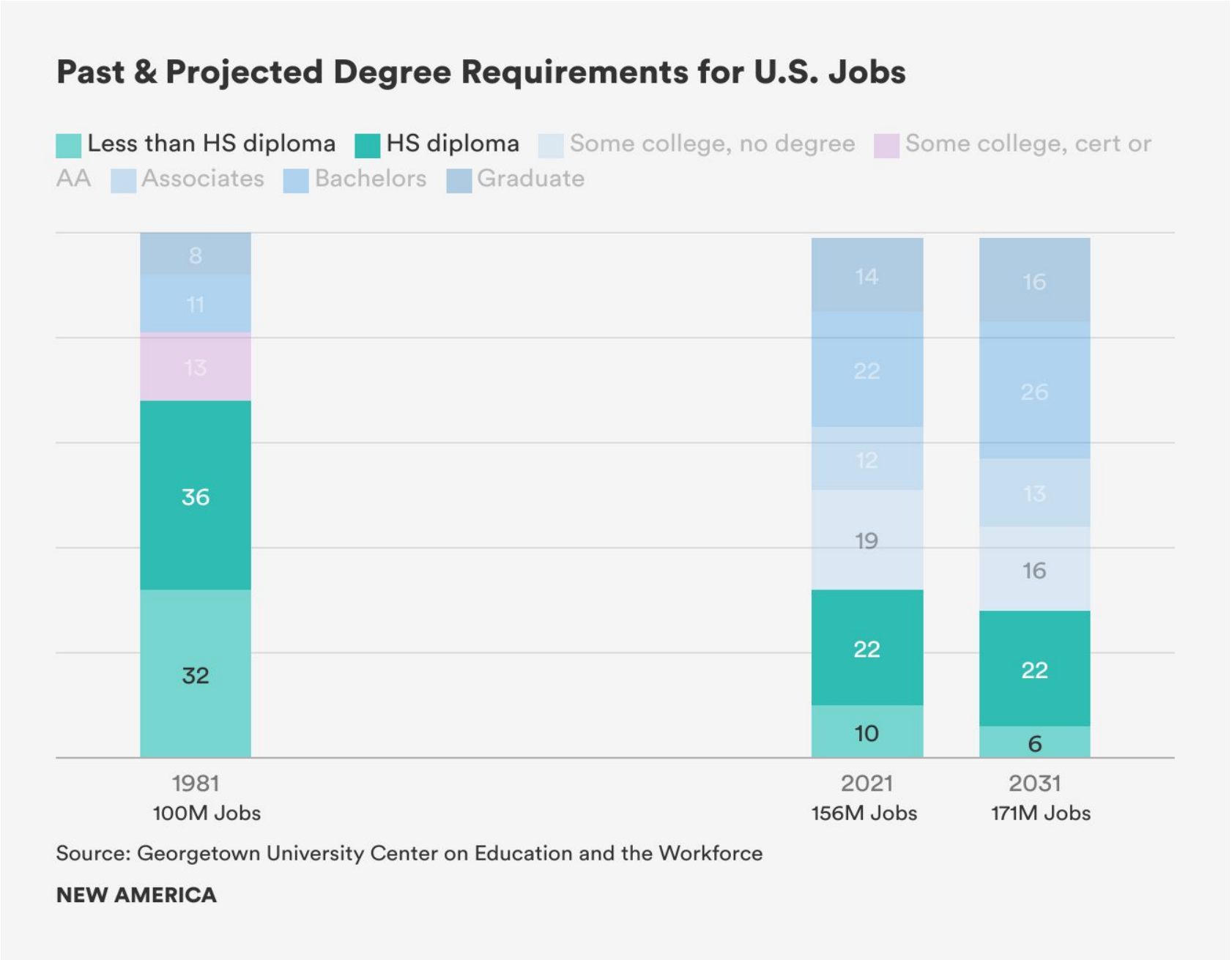
- No clear track for vocational education
- Limited on ramps and off ramps
- Permeability challenges
- Career and Technical Education within academic tracks.



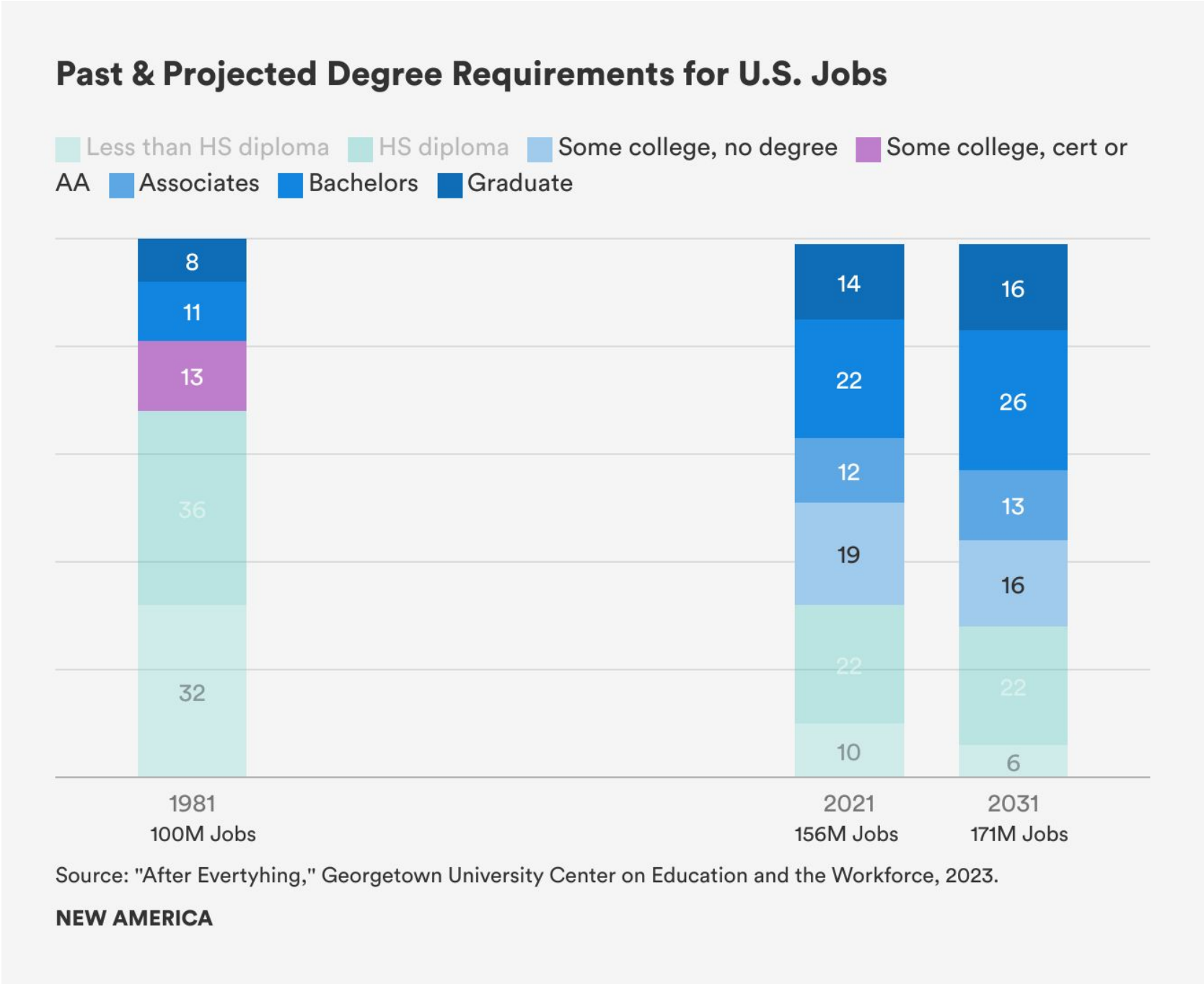
Fewer Options



The share of jobs for people without postsecondary education has shrunk dramatically since 1981.



While the share of jobs that require a postsecondary credential has more than doubled to 71%.



Employer Challenges

Employers report they can't find and keep talent

- Job vacancies
- Classroom training leaving graduates underprepared for real jobs
- High turnover costs
- Lack relationships with potential sources of new talent



Youth Apprenticeship As a Solution

Young adults need affordable, reliable post-secondary options and work experience.

...and...

American employers need strategies to reach new pools of talent.

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Benefits of Youth Apprenticeship

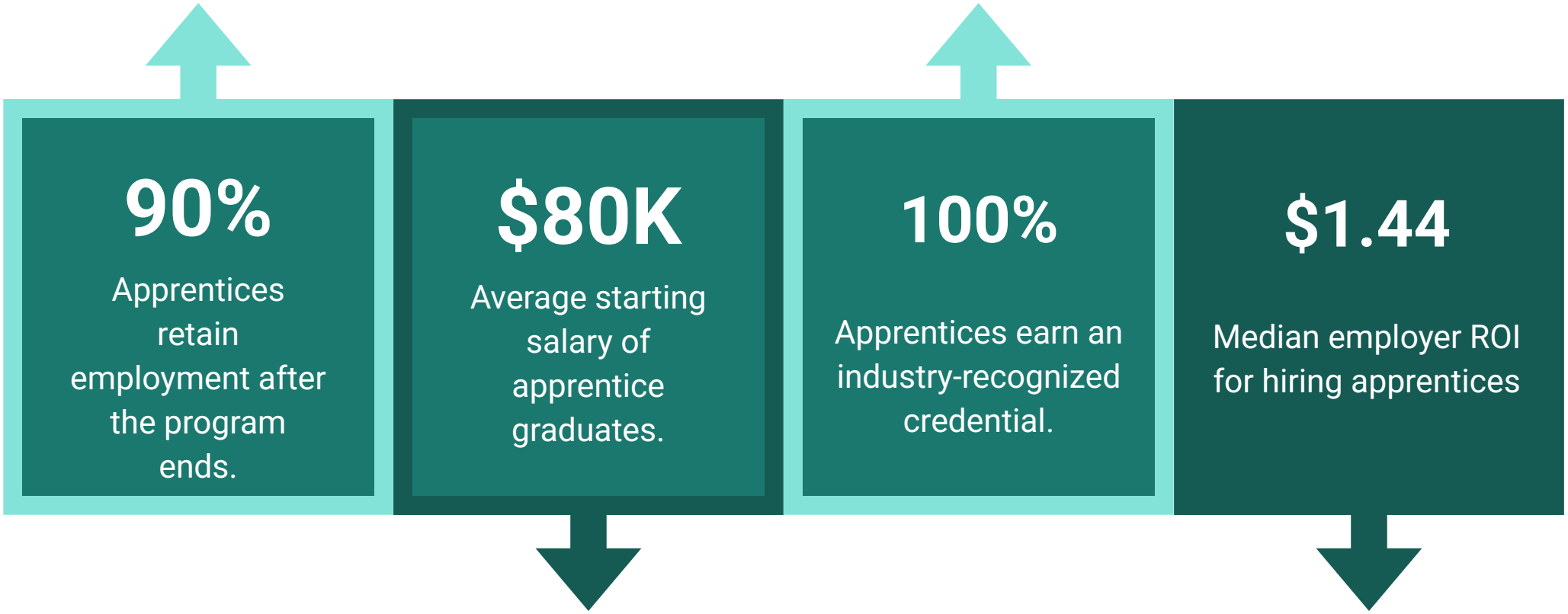
For Apprentices:

- ✓ HS Diploma
- ✓ Low-to-no cost training
- ✓ Credential & transferable credits
- ✓ Work experience
- ✓ Mentors & networks
- ✓ And, usually, a **job**

For Employers:

- ✓ Access to new, more diverse talent pools
- ✓ Invest in local talent
- ✓ Direct influence on skills & competencies learned
- ? Improved retention, job satisfaction, etc.

Impact for Apprentices + Employers



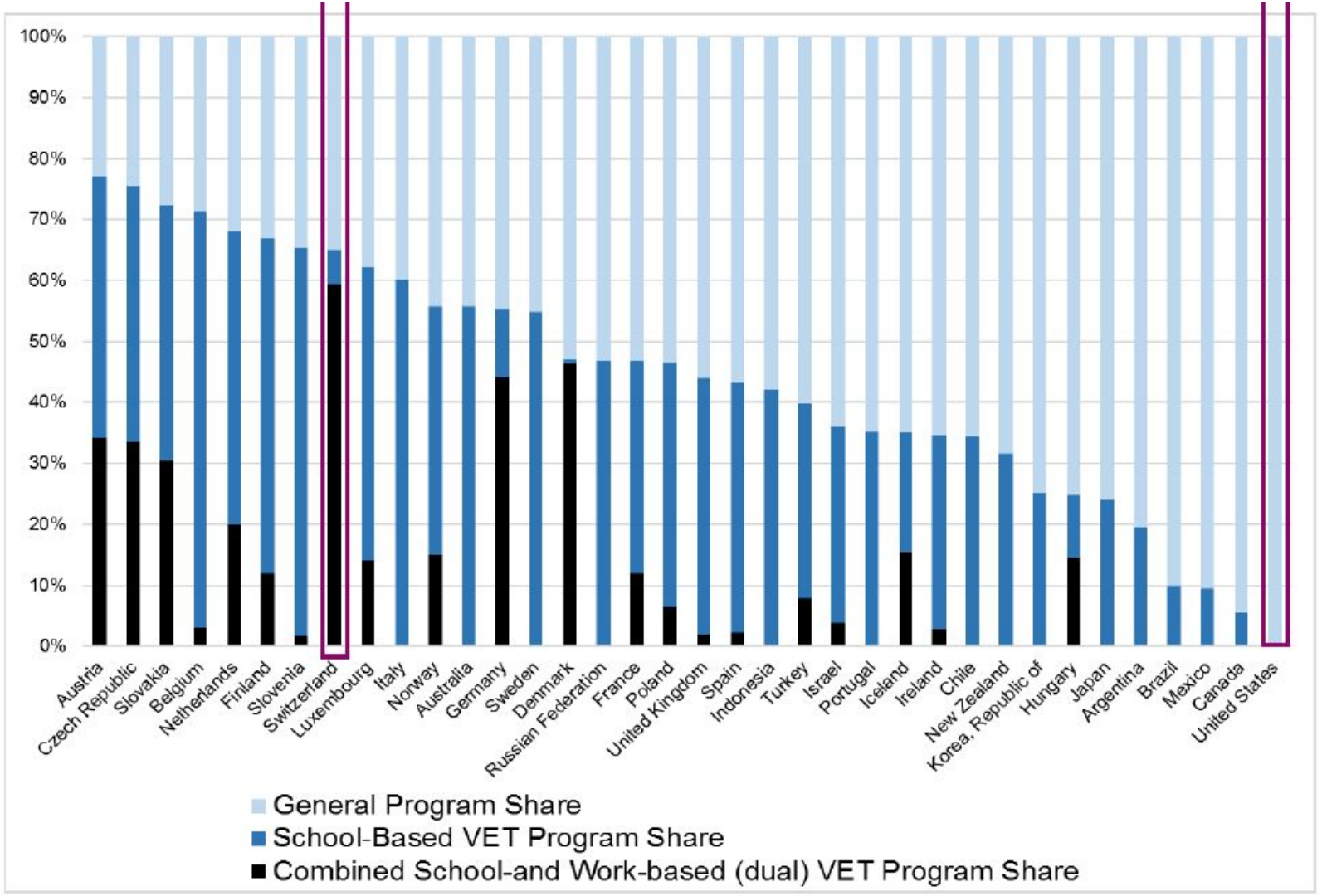
Source: US Department of Labor (1-3); Abt Associates (4)

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Questions?

Appendix

School & Work-based Programs Across the World



Source: Own graph for OECD (2015) data for upper secondary education 2004-2012

Youth apprenticeship ≠ internship!

- Internships can be anything!
  - Not well-defined
  - More about exposure than true training

- YA is a structured, defined model
  - Designed to prepare young people for careers and/or further education

PAYA

PARTNERSHIP TO ADVANCE YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP

PAYA is a multi-partner national initiative that works to expand access to equitable, high-quality apprenticeship opportunities for high school age youth.

ADVANCE CTE

CW

Charleston Regional Youth Apprenticeships
AT TRIDENT TECHNICAL COLLEGE

ESG

JFF

NAPE
National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity

NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION

New America

State Examples

Kentucky | Tech Ready Apprentices for Careers in KY (TRACK)

- For CTE concentrators in high school, led by the state of Kentucky
- Partnership between state department of education's CTE office and KY's apprenticeship agency
- Employer selects CTE courses for related instruction
- State supports include:
  - Administrative support for employers
  - Articulation agreements between K-12 & postsec institutions
  - Incentives for districts to include YA outcomes in their accountability measures

Wisconsin

DWD

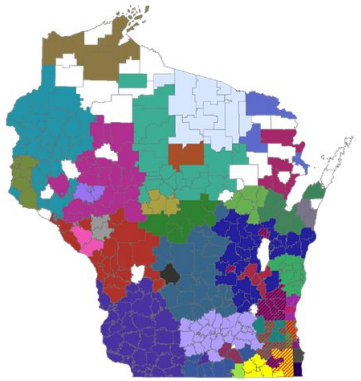
Department of Workforce Development

State System Lead

- Department of Workforce Development (DWD)
- Provides system & program infrastructure to local consortia

Local Implementation

- 40 consortia anchored by range of leads, recognized by DWD
  - LEAs, associations, chambers, NGOs, etc.
- Funded w/bi-annual state grants. For ’26-’28:
  - $1,100 per YA
  - 50% local match
  - Min. 25 YA



WI’s YA Model

- **Length**: 1 or 2 years (450-900 OJT hours)
- **Registration**: State approved model
- **RTI**: primarily HS CTE
- **Industries**: 16 industries, 83 pathways (2024-5)
- **Credentials**: Certificate from WI DWD, plus any IRCS or post-secondary credit

PAYA By The Numbers

Phase 4 (August 2024 to April 2026)

Grants	**22** Grants to the Field	**1.8M** Value of P4 Grants	**2066** Youth Enrolled	**476** Employer Partners
PAYA Network	**104** Active Network Members	**27** Learning Engagements	**19,500** Youth Enrolled	**14,000** Employer Partners
Policy, Research, Comms	**45** Blogs, briefs & reports published	**46** Thought Leadership Engagements	**1,900** Newsletter subscribers	**360** Attendees at NYAS

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