

Long Island Workforce Development Action Plan

Nine Actions for a More Resilient Long Island Workforce

LONG ISLAND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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Read the action plan

Long Island already has an extensive network of employers, educators, workforce organizations, labor partners, and community-based organizations working to prepare residents for careers and meet employer needs.

This Action Plan identifies nine practical ways to better connect those efforts to expand access to economic opportunity, help employers develop and retain talent, and strengthen the long-term resilience of Long Island's workforce.

The Long Island Workforce Action Plan is a result of a collaboration among

- **JP Morgan Chase**
- **The New York Community Trust**
- **Long Island Association**
- **Institution for Workforce Advancement**
- **James Lima Planning + Development**
- **Regional Plan Association**

It is informed by research and engagement through the Long Island Workforce Development Roundtable and broader stakeholder engagement and research.

Why This Action Plan?

Long Island has significant economic strengths: nearly 2.9 million residents, approximately 1.4 million nonfarm jobs, high household incomes, and an extensive workforce development ecosystem. But those assets are not translating evenly into economic opportunity or growth.

The region faces a high cost of living, uneven access to quality career pathways, changing employer skill needs, an aging workforce, and rapid technological change. Although Long Island has grown its job base, its economic output is growing more slowly than the state's; closing that gap starts with training Long Islanders for the higher-skill jobs that drive greater growth.

The goal of this Action Plan is twofold: help more Long Islanders, particularly those facing barriers to economic opportunity, access stable, well-paying career pathways, while strengthening the workforce employers need to remain competitive, adapt, grow, and create good jobs.

Long Island at a Glance

- **1.4M** Nonfarm jobs
- **5.0% vs. 2.7%** Unemployment among residents with only a high school diploma compared with those holding a bachelor's degree or higher
- **91%** Of private firms employ fewer than 20 workers
- **More than 1 in 3** Full-time, year-round workers earn less than the approximately $65,000 a single adult needs to meet basic living costs on Long Island

Building a More Resilient Workforce

Research for the Action Plan found that Long Island does not simply need more workforce programs. It needs stronger connections among existing programs, employers, educators, and communities.

The Plan prioritizes careers that provide a living wage, are accessible without requiring a four-year college degree, and are projected to grow. It also recognizes that successful careers require both transferable foundations such as digital fluency, communication, adaptability, and common technical skills and the specialized training that employers, unions, and expert providers are best positioned to deliver.

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Nine Actions For Long Island

1. Internship Toolkit
Make high-quality internships easier for employers to offer.
Create adaptable, project-based internship templates that help employers provide meaningful work experience without requiring every business to design a program from scratch.

2. Training Blueprint
Help employers with limited capacity build effective training programs.
Translate successful employer training practices into modular frameworks that can support onboarding, foundational technical training, and employee upskilling.

3. Digital Knowledge Exchange
Bring changing workplace technologies into the classroom.
Connect educators with employers so instruction better reflects digital tools, artificial intelligence, and evolving workplace practices.

4. Workforce Program Inventory
Make Long Island's workforce resources easier to navigate.
Create a shared regional resource connecting residents, employers, educators, and training providers to programs, supports, and career pathways.

5. Training Accessibility Fund
Reduce the barriers that prevent people from completing training.
Provide flexible support for transportation, childcare, lost wages, and other costs that can make participation and completion difficult—particularly for vulnerable residents.

6. Professional Standard
Build the essential skills employers consistently value.
Connect young people with mentors and practical experiences that strengthen communication, reliability, problem solving, adaptability, and workplace readiness.

7. Career Advantage
Help young people understand the long-term value of quality careers.
Show how wages, benefits, advancement opportunities, and career stability contribute to long-term economic mobility—not just starting pay.

8. Workplace Immersion
Give students meaningful exposure to real workplaces.
Create structured opportunities for young people to experience industries firsthand, understand workplace expectations, and explore potential career pathways.

9. Trades Career Awareness & Readiness
Expand high-school exposure to skilled trades and technical careers.
Pilot structured coursework that introduces students to skilled-trades careers, training pathways, and employers before graduation.

Read the action plan

What Success Looks Like

Success means more than launching new programs. It means building stronger connections across Long Island's existing workforce ecosystem so that residents can find, complete, and advance through quality career pathways, and employers, community-based organizations and other training institutions of different sizes can more easily participate in developing the workforce they need.

The nine actions are intended as practical starting points to test solutions, measure outcomes, learn from implementation, and scale what works.

Put the Action Plan Into Action

RPA and its partners are recruiting employers and workforce partners for the funded Training Blueprint pilot, which will develop and test adaptable training curricula based on workforce development needs and successful best practices.

Help shape a model that can make high-quality training accessible to more residents and easier for more Long Island employers to deliver.

Interested?

Scan to learn more and get involved.

With Special Thanks

This Action Plan was informed by the experience, expertise, and perspectives of the Long Island Workforce Development Roundtable.

We thank the employers, educators, workforce organizations, community-based organizations, labor representatives, public-sector partners, and other regional leaders who contributed their time and insight throughout this process.

Roundtable members helped identify barriers to employee success, inform the research, test potential strategies, and highlight opportunities to strengthen outcomes for workers and employers across Long Island.

Long Island Workforce Development Roundtable Participants

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