

## SkillUp Washington Generation Work Initiative

### **Partnership Meeting Notes March 23, 2016**

SkillUp Washington held its next Generation Work meeting at the Georgetown campus of South Seattle College. Partners from CCER, Port Jobs, South Seattle College, Seattle Goodwill, Pacific Associates, the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County, Seattle Education Access, Educurious, Pioneer Human Services, YouthCare, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Seattle Foundation were in attendance. The meeting focused on the following key questions:

1. What core aspects of systems thinking and systems change should we consider for Generation Work?
2. What systems need to change in order to meet our goal to increase access to multiple pathways to employment for at-risk young adults 18-29 in Seattle-King County?

### **How to Make Toast**

Generation Work partners participated in large- and small-group discussions about the design, resources and capacity building needs of their current and future system-building efforts for the initiative. This discussion was framed by an interactive exercise – “How to Make Toast” – that was utilized in the January Generation Work kick-off meeting in Baltimore. Generation Work partners from SkillUp, CCER, Port Jobs and the Puget Sound ESD found the resulting discussion in Baltimore valuable enough to replicate the exercise so that all Generation Work partners could participate.

Group comments emerging from the discussions included:

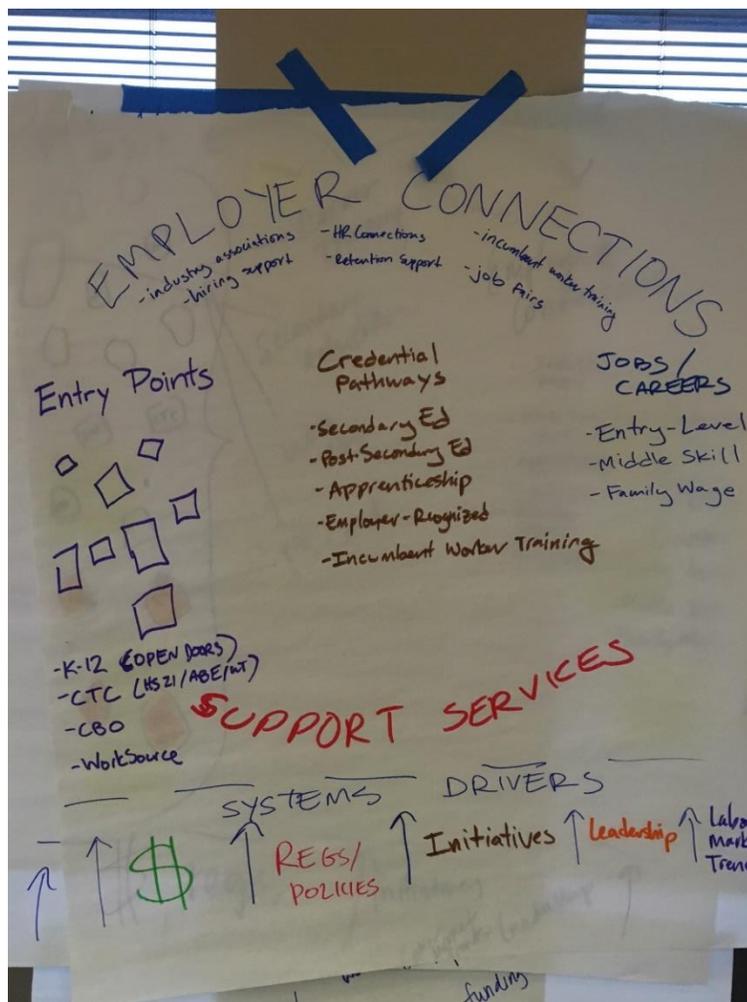
- Youth-driven work is important to ensure that youth leaders/alumni are able to lead, inform and support Generation Work sector pathways.
- Collaboration is not the same as cooperation – it is not enough to work side by side – also need to know when it is most needed to align and leverage resources.
- Everybody has a little different idea of what comes first on a pathway, what is most important, who does what, and who wants to do what. The mapping exercise is helpful to uncover misunderstandings, and is helpful to recover and include “riches” in the provider landscape that could most help Generation work students.
- People wonder is the youth at the center of a pathway – if it is open entry, open exit what does this mean to a pathway? How does the pathway reflect that if things don’t work for young adults that they can return and know where to return?
- The “How to Make Toast” exercise shows how everybody has a different starting point and perspective. Sometimes sector pathway work is less effective because people see their role or the role of others differently, don’t understand how and when to access partner resources or don’t know when the resources are depleted or could be more strongly connected.
- Incorporating the voices of youth and employers will be critical to move this forward. There are likely opportunities to align current and past work to elevate their feedback without duplicating efforts. Looking at past comments from previous focus groups and interviews will help identify more targeted questions for topics that have not been previously covered.

## Generation Work maps

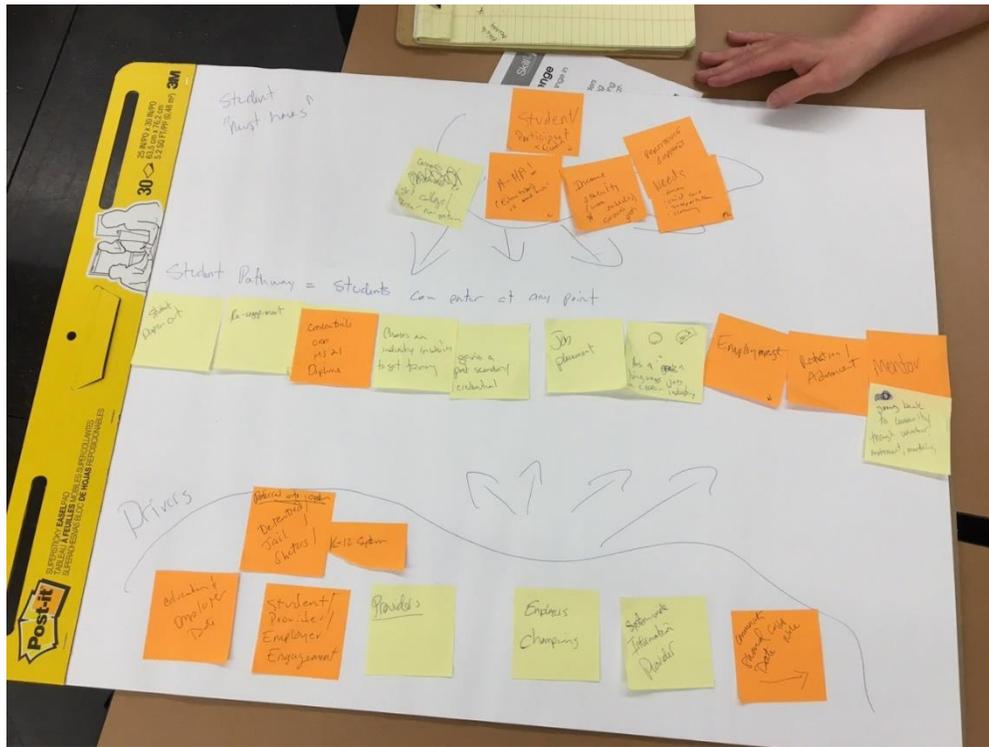
The “How to Make Toast” exercise culminated in maps highlighting the systems that need to change in order to increase access to multiple pathways for jobs for young people 18-29 in Seattle/King County. SkillUp will work on incorporating all of these maps, along with follow-up feedback from Generation Work partners, into a “master map” that will be referenced along with the Generation Work strategic framework.

Common themes emerging from the maps include:

- There are foundational efforts that occur at every step of a pathway. These include: employer engagement, student engagement, navigation, employer advocates and communication;
- The resources need to include sufficient strategies to recruit, assess and support the persistence of students through training and for a while after they get a job.
- There are diverse sets of policy drivers affecting available pathways, including funding, policy changes, leadership, and the labor market and economy;
- The multiple projects, initiatives, and funding targeting this population are in need of more opportunities to “link” and coordinate the disparate players and organizations involved;
- The ultimate goal of this work is to promote agency and interdependence, exemplified by living wage jobs in career pathways;
- It is important to think about this “system” from the perspective of both young people and employers to help make things more lean, coordinated, and transparent.







### What comes next?

SkillUp will begin work on drafting a Memorandum of Understanding for Generation Work as well as a draft of the strategic framework for the initiative. SkillUp will also begin identifying opportunities to strengthen re-engagement and career pathway pipelines across the region, which will serve as a follow-up of sorts to the How to Make Toast mapping exercise at the meeting. This will include identifying tools or protocols used for career and education planning, as well as follow-up persistence efforts related to school and work so as to promote lean systems which limit duplication and identify gaps. This will also help inform next steps regarding youth and employer focus groups and/or interviews.

Given the number of smaller meetings that will occur over the next 4-6 weeks, the next large Generation Work meeting will most likely occur on June 1, prior to the quarterly Roadmap Opportunity Youth Advisory Group meeting. SkillUp will send along additional information regarding this meeting shortly.

In addition, SkillUp is bringing a small group of Generation Work partners (City of Seattle, King County, Educurious, United Way, Port Jobs, South Seattle College) to the Bay Area to learn more about their Youth Jobs Plus initiative and efforts around 100K Opportunities. Information from this trip will be shared at the next meeting as well.