



## **Mentoring, Career Exploration, and Workforce Development Legislative Principles**

Effective approaches for mentors to help support youth in career exploration and skill development should consider the following:

- Mentors can support youth in career exploration and early employment experiences around two major roles: providing social-emotional support and hands-on skill development
- Successful programs often involve partnerships between some combination of nonprofits, educational institutions, and private employers. Increased funding for these types of programs can help them address logistical challenges, such as transportation and the scheduling of workplace learning times, that can maximize outcomes.
- Both in-person and online mentoring programs can be effective in supporting career exploration. These programs generally hold promise in promoting outcomes relevant to supporting the career trajectories of youth, including orientation toward distinct career or occupation paths, development of career interests, and improved self-efficacy within specific fields of interest.
- Early career exploration, especially efforts to directly expose children to work environments and let them experience what certain careers are really like, can help build career identity from early ages. It can also offset the stereotypes and feelings of exclusion that prevent marginalized youth from considering certain career paths and bolster their academic performance by tying school success to career goals at younger ages.

As such, the mentoring movement is presented with the following opportunities to effectively contribute to this work:

- Partner with schools and employers to support internship and work-based learning programs to provide training, mentoring, and work experience to high school students
- Partner with out-of-school time programs to provide group mentorship and support for career exploration and skill development programming
- Expand training for adult employees to take on mentoring roles so that youth are exposed to a web of supportive relationships and expanded career networking opportunities
- Support innovative, specialized/technical, project-based employer models that teach youth skills, such as managing budgets and timelines, managing multiple roles and tasks simultaneously, and effective communication and teamwork.
- Funding can also be used to train all adults in these spaces to take on mentoring roles so that youth are exposed to a web of supportive relationships and expanded career networking opportunities.
- Support additional research on the best practices of career and workplace mentoring.

