



Dallas Workforce Roundtable

Key Insights and Next Steps

Beyond Hiring: Building Effective Partnerships to Recruit, Hire, and Retain Young Talent

April 30, 2026 | Hosted by NYEC and Dallas Regional Chamber

Purpose

The National Youth Employment Coalition, in partnership with the Dallas College & YearUp United, convened leaders from Dallas College, workforce training providers, and employer representatives to explore how stronger alignment across education, workforce systems, and industry can improve pathways for young adults.

Key Insights

1. The Challenge Spans Hiring, Transition, and Retention

Access to opportunity remains a critical barrier, as many young people still struggle to secure initial entry into the workforce. At the same time, participants emphasized that the challenge does not end with hiring. Supporting young people in successfully transitioning into and staying in the workplace is equally important.

There is a clear gap between the high-touch support provided in education and training environments and the expectations of the workplace. This disconnect impacts both early success and long-term retention, highlighting the need for stronger alignment across hiring practices, onboarding, and ongoing support.

2. Expanding Employer Engagement in Talent Development

Participants highlighted opportunities to further strengthen how employers engage in developing early-career talent. This includes moving beyond traditional hiring practices to more actively supporting talent development through structured onboarding, mentorship, Employee Resource Groups, and transparent career pathways.

These approaches reflect a growing recognition that workforce development is most effective when employers, education, and training providers work together to support both access to opportunity and long-term success in the workplace.

3. Systems Misalignment Is Limiting Pipeline Effectiveness

Fragmentation across K–12, postsecondary, workforce, and employer systems continues to limit access and efficiency. Early pipeline coordination remains a critical gap.

4. Barriers to Participation Persist Across Systems

Situational, dispositional, and institutional barriers continue to limit access to training and employment opportunities, particularly in sectors such as construction.



5. Apprenticeships and Non-Degree Pathways Are Not Fully Accessible

Apprenticeship models are often tied to higher education structures, limiting access. There is also a need to expand pathways that do not require a bachelor's degree.

6. Workforce Systems Must Adapt to a Changing Labor Market

Participants highlighted the need for systems that can respond to evolving workforce demands, including shifts driven by technology and artificial intelligence, and to better prepare young people with adaptable, problem-solving skills.

Insight

Workforce challenges are local and interconnected. No single organization can address these issues alone. Stronger coordination across education, workforce, and industry is essential to building effective and sustainable talent pipelines.

Recommended Next Steps

- **Strengthen Cross-Sector Coordination**
Align partners around shared priorities and use local data to guide decisions
- **Improve Transition from Training to Employment**
Develop shared onboarding practices and align expectations
- **Expand Employer Engagement**
Involve employers in pathway design and early-career development
- **Reduce Barriers to Participation**
Align wraparound supports and simplify access across systems
- **Expand Apprenticeships and Non-Degree Pathways**
Explore flexible models and strengthen employer partnerships
- **Advance Future-Ready Workforce Strategies**
Align training with emerging skills and support adaptability in a changing labor market

Closing

The roundtable reinforced the need to move from fragmented efforts to coordinated, place-based strategies that strengthen pathways, reduce barriers, and improve long-term outcomes for young people.