



Career Pathways



Americans deserve many pathways to career success and economic mobility. Employers deserve a skilled workforce to help them succeed and grow. Taxpayers deserve a stronger, more competitive economy as a result of their investment in education and workforce development.

Today, nearly the entire country faces a [severe shortage](#) of workers trained for high-paying jobs that don't require a bachelor's degree. Students, families, and employers are [eager to expand pathways](#) to these jobs, and [rigorous research](#) is showing how impactful some training pathways can be. However, there is [enormous variation](#) in effectiveness. As a result, it is crucial that policy lifts up what works and shields students, workers, employers, and taxpayers from what doesn't.

Arnold Ventures' (AV) Career Pathways portfolio develops and advocates for outcomes-focused, evidence-based policies that strengthen Americans' pathways to economic mobility that do not require a traditional college degree.

AV works to produce positive outcomes and maximize value from career pathways for both students and taxpayers.

Direct Resources to Programs that Deliver Results

Career pathways and workforce development policies should direct resources to the highest-impact programs while minimizing bureaucratic complexity and maximizing return-on-investment for learners and taxpayers. Federal policy should support programs that demonstrably help students and workers achieve economic opportunity instead of funding providers based only on short-sighted inputs like enrollment and class time.

Ensure Evidence Guides Policymakers and Training Providers

Policies should invest in innovation, support rigorous evaluations, and promote the use of evidence-based practices throughout education and workforce programs.

Support States in Building Easier-to-Navigate Systems

The growing interest in career education is undermined by fragmentation across K-12, postsecondary, workforce, and related systems, and the plethora of policies and programs. Federal policymakers should make it easier for states to align funding and integrate services, as long as they demonstrate better outcomes.

What are Career Pathways programs?

Career pathways refers to course sequences, job training programs, and other experiences that prepare students for professional success in specific industries, beyond general academic skills. Example training models include **high school-based models** (e.g., school-embedded career academies, career-focused dual enrollment), **postsecondary institution-based models** (e.g., postsecondary career and technical education, short-term certificate programs) and **workforce-embedded models** (e.g., apprenticeships, sectoral training programs). Regardless of model, though, federal policy should ensure that providers deliver strong outcomes for students and use evidence-based practices.

How We Work

AV focuses its strategies, grants, collaborations, and resources in four pillars to identify root causes of problems and implement sustainable, scalable solutions.



Research



Policy Development



Advocacy



Implementation

About Us

[Arnold Ventures](#) is a philanthropy that supports research to understand the root causes of America's most persistent and pressing problems, as well as evidence-based solutions to address them. By focusing on systemic change, AV is working to improve the lives of American families, strengthen their communities, and promote their economic opportunity. Since Laura and John Arnold launched their foundation in 2008, the philanthropy has expanded, and Arnold Ventures' focus areas include education, criminal justice, health, infrastructure, and public finance, advocating for bipartisan policy reforms that will lead to lasting, scalable change. The Arnolds became signatories of the Giving Pledge in 2010.