Investing in Skills to Improve Worker Outcomes: Lessons from the South

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Organized by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis

The Connecting Communities® audio conference series is a Federal Reserve System initiative intended to provide timely information on emerging and important community and economic development topics with a national audience. The audio conference series complements existing Federal Reserve Community Development outreach initiatives that are conducted through our regional Reserve Bank offices and at the Federal Reserve Board of Governors in Washington, D.C.
Thank you for attending today’s session. How to join (remember, this session is being recorded):

- Call-in number: 888-625-5230
- Conference code: 7440 5273#
- Webinar link: [https://www.webcaster4.com/Webcast/Page/584/31618](https://www.webcaster4.com/Webcast/Page/584/31618)

You have two options to ask questions today:
*These questions may be part of the recorded archive for this session.*

- Email us at: communities@stls.frb.org.
- Type your question into the chat box of the webinar.

An archived recording of this session will be available on the **Connecting Communities®** website shortly after the session ends. Please visit [https://bsr.stlouisfed.org/connectingCommunities](https://bsr.stlouisfed.org/connectingCommunities)

In connection with this session, you can find a variety of additional resources on this topic available at [www.fedcommunities.org](http://www.fedcommunities.org). We encourage you to browse through this site and to contact your regional office if you would like additional information on any of these items.
Legal Notices and Disclaimer

The information, analyses, and conclusions set forth are those of the presenters and do not necessarily indicate concurrence by the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, the Federal Reserve Banks, or members of their staffs.
The Community Development (CD) function within the Federal Reserve System – consisting of individual departments at each of the twelve Federal Reserve Banks as well as at the Board of Governors – promotes economic growth and financial stability for low- and moderate-income (LMI) communities and individuals through a range of activities, including:

- **Convening stakeholders**, including practitioners, financial institutions, nonprofits, governmental agencies, and the philanthropic and private sectors,

- **Conducting and sharing research** to examine economic challenges facing low- and moderate-income communities and attendant policy implications; and,

- **Identifying emerging issues**.
Today’s Presenters and Agenda

**Presenters:**
- Meredith Covington, Community Affairs Manager, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis (moderator)
- Sam Evans, Senior Community Affairs Specialist, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis
- Allison Gerber, Senior Associate, the Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Melissa Johnson, State Policy Director, National Skills Coalition

**The following will be discussed:**
- “Building a Skilled Workforce For a Stronger Southern Economy” Report: How funders and grant makers can support quality middle-skill jobs and opportunities for partnership
- The Annie E. Casey Foundation’s efforts to connect young people – particularly youth of color – with the knowledge and experience necessary to succeed in today’s job market.
- National Skills Coalition’s Southern Skills Policy Initiative
Building a Skilled Workforce For a Stronger Southern Economy

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WHY A SKILLS AGENDA FOR THE SOUTH?

Most jobs in the South are middle-skill jobs.

THE MIDDLE-SKILL GAP ISN’T INSURMOUNTABLE

MOST SOUTHERN JOBS ARE MIDDLE-SKILL JOBS, BUT NOT ENOUGH WORKERS ARE TRAINED TO THE MIDDLE-SKILL LEVEL

High-Skill Jobs
High-Skill Workers
Middle-Skill Jobs
Middle-Skill Workers
Low-Skill Jobs
Low-Skill Workers

OPPORTUNITY YOUTH

SOUTHERN STATES LEAD IN THE SHARE OF YOUTH 16 TO 24 YEARS NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL OR WORKING

PERCENT OF YOUTH NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL AND NOT WORKING, POPULATION 16-24

- 8%
- 9% - 11%
- 12% - 13%
- 14% - 17%

National KIDS COUNT
A skilled and thriving economy must be an inclusive economy.
A ROADMAP TO SOUTHERN SKILL-BUILDING

1. Use workforce development strategies, such as sector partnerships and work-based learning as economic development tools

2. Invest in communities to implement high-quality workforce development strategies at the local level

3. Establish job-driven financial aid programs available to a wide range of students

4. Form middle-skill training pathways and include comprehensive supportive services

5. Create state data systems that provide accountability
VEHICLES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE ROADMAP

✓ Set a bold goal for increasing the number of skilled adults

✓ Create a cross-agency “Skills Cabinet”
About the Annie E. Casey Foundation

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private philanthropy that creates a brighter future for the nation’s children by developing solutions to strengthen families, build paths to economic opportunity and transform struggling communities into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow.
Population Focus

Young people most likely to become disconnected from opportunity, family and community:

10 million
Young People of Color in Low-Income Families

7 million
Young People in High-Poverty Communities

4.6 million
Young People Who Are Parents

703,000
Young People Involved in the Child Welfare System

3.4 million
Young People Involved in the Justice System

Goal: prevent youth from becoming disconnected and support the 4.9 million who already are.
Young People Need Multiple Pathways to School and Work

Supportive Policies and Systems

- Youth Leadership & Social Networks
- School & Career Navigation
- Skill Building & Job Readiness
- Work-Based Learning
- Apprentice-ship & Employment

Destinations
- Career Opportunities
- Family-Sustaining Wages
- Improved Well-Being

Basic Needs
- Financial Education and Aid
- Social-Emotional & Academic Supports
- Post-Secondary Prep and Bridging
- Community College & Credentialing

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Southern Skills Policy Initiative

Melissa Johnson
State Policy Director
National Skills Coalition
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Southern Skills Policy Initiative

• **Overview:** One-year assistance effort with teams in 5 states to advance policies to build a skilled workforce

• **States**
  – Georgia
  – Mississippi
  – North Carolina
  – Tennessee
  – Texas
• Policy Focus:
  – Policies that prepare more residents for skilled jobs by making it easier for people with low incomes to **afford postsecondary training**

• Policy Advancement:
  – Georgia’s General Assembly **extended the time** that college students can earn the HOPE scholarship from 7 to 10 years after high school
Mississippi

• Policy Focus:
  – Policies that help more parents build their skills while supporting their families by providing childcare assistance to workers in pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs

• Policy Advancement:
  – Mississippi Low-Income Child Care Initiative convened workforce development and human services leaders to discuss how childcare and skills training can grow the state’s skilled workforce
  – Mississippi agencies are now planning to ask workers about childcare needs when they’re pursuing training at the state’s American Jobs Centers
North Carolina

• **Policy Focus:**
  – More equitable pathways and *work-based learning opportunities* for skilled careers for students and workers of color and other underserved populations

• **Policy Advancement:**
  – North Carolina Justice Center released a report, *“Making Youth Apprenticeships Equitable and Effective: Lessons From North Carolina,”* which will serve as the *basis for outreach to coalition partners* around further advancing at least one skills policy proposal
• **Policy Focus:**
  – Policies that address the *non-academic and advising needs* of working students so they can succeed in postsecondary training, as well as opportunities to promote *apprenticeship, work-based learning*, and postsecondary training that responds to industry needs

• **Policy Advancement:**
  – State *quadrupled its investment* in the Tennessee Higher Education Initiative to $1 million
  – Increased investment will *expand career and technical education and postsecondary education in correctional facilities*
Texas

• **Policy Focus:**
  – Policies that *expand apprenticeship* and *work-based learning* opportunities for both adults and young people

• **Policy Advancement:**
  – Texas *legislature created the Commission on Texas Workforce of the Future*, which will develop recommendations to ensure that the state is developing a qualified and skilled workforce, including ways to increase work-based learning opportunities for underrepresented workers and small and midsize companies
Questions?
You have two options to ask questions today:

1. Email us at: communities@stls.frb.org.
2. Click the “Ask Question” button in the webinar.
Thank you to today’s presenters and to all participants for joining this session.

Next steps:

- All session materials are available on our web site and in the next few days we will post an audio file of today’s session.
- If you have topical suggestions for future sessions, or any questions about this program, please feel free to contact us at communities@stls.frb.org
- Information about future sessions will be posted on our website along with archived materials from past sessions: https://bsr.stlouisfed.org/connectingCommunities
In connection with this session, you can find a variety of additional resources on this topic, available at www.fedcommunities.org.

It provides an array of practical resources to help you in your role as a community development professional, whether you work involves supporting people, places, the policy and practice of community development, or small business development.