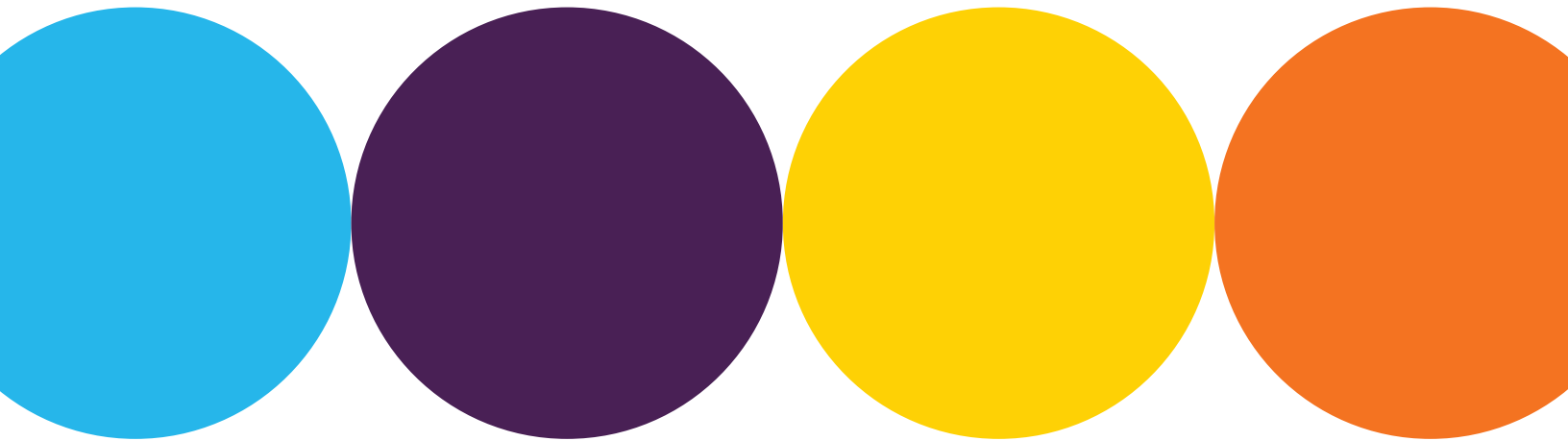


THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR WORK AND LEARNING
ANNUAL REVIEW 2021

Navigating Through Turbulence



MAY 2022

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This Year in Review reflects the work of the entire team at FHI 360's National Institute for Work and Learning (NIWL). The projects profiled below, and the social impact they achieved, testify to the commitment and passion of every staff member. We thank our Director, Lisa Johnson, and staff: Jessica Baker, Pam Carter, Heidi Cooper Comenetz, Caitlin Dawkins, Katie Rose Dailey, Halle Davis, Amy Detgen, Ilona Grant, Teshell Ponteen Greene, Saori Iwamoto, Danielle Woodhouse Johnson, Safal Khatri, Amanda McMahon, Tiffany Nesbey, Kendra Northington, Michele Preston, Mengée Sirleaf, Cherine Smith, Erica Spangler, Lisa Suits, Sanskriti Thapa, and David Williams for NIWL's hard work and dedication to advancing equity and excellence in education and workforce systems.

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Colleagues,

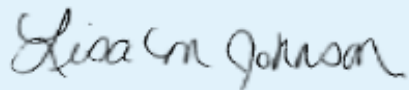
Our nation and the world saw a continuation of the pandemic in 2021, with its impacts on labor markets, supply chains, the economy, and education. Although over 76% of Americans have been vaccinated, new COVID variants continue to cause disruption, returning students to remote learning and limiting their access to education especially in rural and other under-resourced communities. In the wake of these pandemic trends, record numbers of Americans have left their jobs, seeking higher wages, safer working conditions, and better access to childcare.

These unstable conditions highlight the critical need for the National Institute for Work and Learning's programs. Our work with under-resourced populations addresses the urgent social inequities exacerbated by the pandemic. This work is not new for us, but we recognize the opportunity of this historic moment. We have expanded our support of populations with the greatest need, such as tribal communities, youth who are out of school and out of work, and young adults who have been impacted by the justice system. We support women's and girls' pursuit of STEM careers. And we work with those who support these groups, including employees, employers, non-profit organizations, volunteers, and K-12 and higher education faculty and staff, to build strong networks of support that endure beyond our programs' interventions.

And, as ever, our work is based on factual evidence. We use data to plan, deliver, and evaluate our work year after year to ensure continuous improvement. NIWL conducts primary research and rigorous program evaluation to guide workforce and education partners in effectively measuring and improving their programs and policies.

I am excited for what lies ahead for the NIWL in 2022. Through our energy, passion, and expertise, NIWL seeks to improve the lives of people across the U.S. and abroad.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa M. Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

DIRECTOR, FHI 360 NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR WORK AND LEARNING



Overview of the Current Strategic Plan

NIWL focuses on two key drivers of individual well-being – work and learning – to improve lives. Throughout its 50-year history, NIWL’s mission has been focused on issues of equity and access. Our [strategic plan](#) was not crafted during our nation’s current social justice upheaval, but many years ago – demonstrating an early commitment and unwavering desire to address existing inequities and remove barriers to education and employment.

NIWL works with community-based organizations, education and workforce systems, human service agencies, businesses, and industry to advance access, equity, and excellence in education and workforce systems.

In this annual review, we examine our strategic goals and our accomplishments in achieving them.

- ▶ **GOAL 1:** Advance comprehensive, equitable, and accessible education, and workforce systems to prepare individuals to diversify the 21st century workforce
- ▶ **GOAL 2:** Promote data-informed and research-based policies, practices, and models
- ▶ **GOAL 3:** Increase the visibility of NIWL to advance our vision and mission.

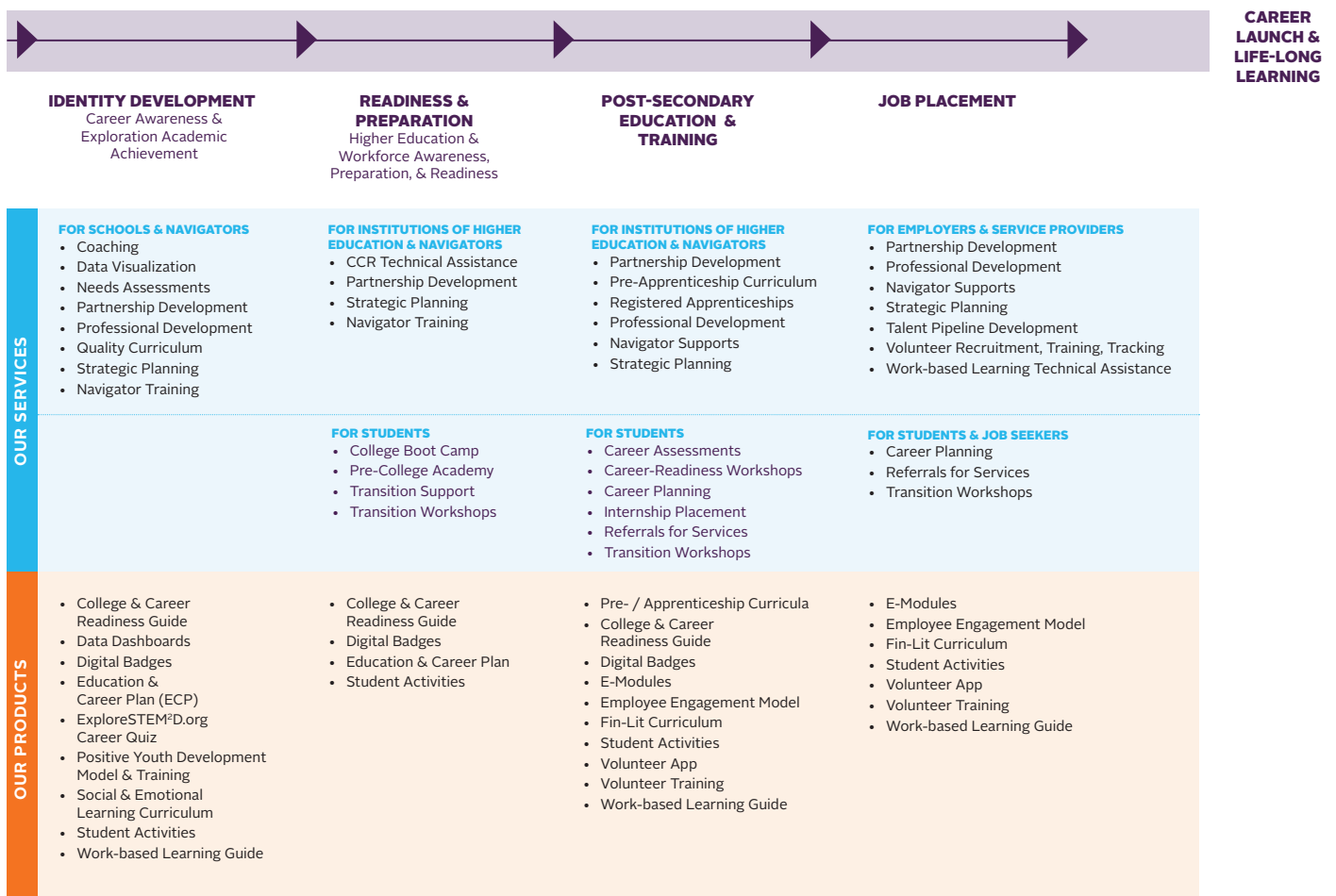
To achieve these goals, NIWL pursues programs and projects focused on college and career readiness and workforce development. We support these efforts through research and evaluation and the provision of technical assistance, including as an intermediary organization. We work in close partnership with corporations as an implementer of their strategic environmental, social, and governance (ESG) goals, as well as with foundations and governments. In this annual review, we discuss our activities and how they help us achieve our goals. This review offers representative projects to demonstrate our scope and the type of impacts NIWL has had in navigating through widespread and continued national turbulence. It is not an exhaustive list of all our active projects in 2021.

College and Career Readiness

Despite a fluctuating economy, labor demand remains strong. As the need for workers rises, the attainment of post-secondary education and career training is becoming more crucial than ever. NIWL is leading advancements in access, equity, and excellence in both education and workforce systems.

The NIWL College and Career Readiness team designs, delivers, and evaluates comprehensive approaches to prepare youth to make informed choices about education and career pathways. We support the college and career readiness journey for youth, beginning with identity development through career launch and life-long learning.

Figure 1. NIWL provides college and career readiness expertise from identity development through career launch





BRIDGE TO EMPLOYMENT (BTE)

inspires young people (14 to 18 years old) to stay in school, excel academically, and elevate their career aspirations.

PROJECT: BRIDGE TO EMPLOYMENT

NIWL partners with Johnson & Johnson (J&J) to manage its global Bridge to Employment (BTE) program. BTE inspires young people 14 - 18 years old to stay in school, excel academically, and elevate their career aspirations. Launched in 1992, BTE helps young people build solid futures and makes learning meaningful, engaging, and relevant. BTE strives to:

1. Increase the number of youth who enroll in post-secondary education
2. Increase the number of youth pursuing a career in the Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, Manufacturing, and Design (STEM²D) sectors.

By the end of 2021, entering BTE's 30th year, NIWL had helped J&J launch BTE programs in 102 communities in 24 countries (including 67 U.S. sites across 14 states) since its inception.

As part of its management role, NIWL provides technical assistance (TA) and ongoing support to local teams comprised of a J&J local operating company, a secondary school(s), an institution of higher learning, and a community-based organization that together implement BTE programming. We work with the local teams to develop customized approaches to best meet the needs of the students and school systems. Our programming centers on:

- ▶ **ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT:** Activities that enhance participants' understanding of STEM subjects and connect these subjects to the real world.
- ▶ **CAREER READINESS AND EXPLORATION:** Activities introduce participants to the world of work, prepare them for professional environments, and show them a variety of career options.
- ▶ **HIGHER EDUCATION AWARENESS AND PREPARATION:** Activities prepare participants to explore, apply for, pay for, and thrive in higher education.
- ▶ **YOUTH LEADERSHIP.** Activities encourage participants to lead locally and globally.

Table 1: Bridge To Employment 2021 results

GEOGRAPHICAL REACH	PARTNERS
22 communities 13 countries 6 U.S. states	31 institutions of higher education 26 local operating companies 21 community-based organizations 24 secondary schools 9 independent evaluators
YOUTH	J&J VOLUNTEERS
821 youth <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 57% female• 100% from historically marginalized communities	363 volunteers 3,220 volunteer hours



Figure 2. Online lobby of the virtual meeting platform for the ABTS event

SIGNATURE EVENT: ALLIANCE BUILDING AND TRAINING SESSION

In 2021, NIWL held its second virtual Alliance Building and Training Session (ABTS). This annual event celebrates the achievements, lesson learned, local successes, best practices, and innovation stories from participating BTE sites. We featured volunteers, mentors, site coordinators, current students, and program graduates. Through the creative use of technology and robust documentation and tools, NIWL kept participants prepared and engaged. This year was especially significant because NIWL and J&J kicked off the BTE at 30 celebrations, which will continue throughout 2022.

ABTS 2021

208 attendees from **26** sites in **15** countries participated in this three-day professional development and learning event. An expanded virtual platform enabled new, interactive capabilities, including:

- Main auditorium
- Networking lounge
- Resource room
- Social media wall
- Customized agendas
- Photo booth
- 1:1 video chat

PROJECT: PATHWAY TO SUCCESS

Pathway to Success (Pathways) – a unique, six-year pilot program funded by J&J – is designed to help young people from seven vulnerable communities in New Jersey and Pennsylvania transition to and thrive in college and gain the skills needed to succeed in the workplace. Pathways:

- ▶ Increases the number of young people completing higher education with a STEM²D degree or certificate.
- ▶ Increases the number of young people who exhibit work readiness and core foundational skills.
- ▶ Increases the number of young people who have an internship and are career ready.

NIWL provides customized programming (2200+ hours) and supports in the form of advising, seminars, online forums, and summer institutes, which include a pre-college academy, college bootcamp, professional portfolio showcase, and a full-time, paid J&J internship. Our work became increasingly important during the pandemic, which disrupted higher education instruction and the work-readiness and skill-building experiences of college students; first-generation students were especially hard hit.

WiSTEM²D

STEM²D IS A PARTNERSHIP

WiSTEM²D is delivered around the world by FHI 360, JA Worldwide, the Smithsonian Science Education Center (SSEC), Girl Scouts of America (GS USA), Girls Inc., and the National Society for Black Engineers (NSBE).

Table 2. 2021 Pathway to Success results

YOUTH	J&J VOLUNTEERS
<p>62 participants (18 – 22 years old), including 9 program graduates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% from historically marginalized communities • 80% first generation college students • 70% identify as female • 60% Latinx • 30% Black 	<p>136 volunteers</p> <p>759 volunteer hours</p>
IMPACT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of Pathways graduates earned a BA/BS degree – 89% in a STEM²D discipline. • 73% of Pathways graduates completed their BA/BS degree within four-years, compared to 27% of first-generation students, nationally. • 100% of Pathways graduates obtained a full-time paid internship and acquired essential work readiness skills. • 87% of Pathways participants are enrolled in four-year institutions of higher education, which include successful transfers from two-year community colleges 	

PROJECT: WOMEN IN STEM²D YOUTH PROGRAM

In 2015, J&J launched WiSTEM²D (Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, Manufacturing, and Design). Led by a network of J&J employee volunteers, the global initiative seeks to inspire and support girls and women of all ages in their pursuit of STEM²D studies and careers. A key component of WiSTEM²D is the Youth Program, which engages young people between the ages of five and 18 in experiences that spark their interest in STEM²D subjects.

NIWL supports the WiSTEM²D Youth Program in five ways:

- ▶ **EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT:** Deliver training and technical assistance for the J&J employee volunteers to ensure positive interactions with the youth.
- ▶ **MATERIALS AND TOOLS:** Develop equity-based curricula and resources for volunteers, teachers, parents, and partners to engage youth with STEM²D.
- ▶ **IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT:** Work with J&J and its partners to advance global, regional, and local implementation efforts.
- ▶ **COMMUNICATION:** Provide technical assistance and hosting of STEM²D events to increase program visibility.
- ▶ **RESEARCH AND EVALUATION:** Provide technical assistance, logic model development, reporting, and tracking of STEM²D events held by J&J and its global partners.

¹ Source: "First Generation College Students Graduation Rates," [Resilient Educator](#).



Photo credit: Amanda McMahon.

This year, NIWL facilitated 39 professional development sessions, workshops, and coaching opportunities with more than 250 J&J employees. Our team created a suite of online and print resources, including four eModules (available in English and Spanish), at-home parent guides, outreach materials, and 10 student activities translated into eight languages. We also organized and hosted five communications events in different formats including two Facebook live career panels with J&J women professionals discussing their STEM-related careers ([March](#)); a twitter chat on International Youth Day (August); a [STEM²D Ice Cream Social](#) demonstrating the science of how the dessert is made; and a social media campaign for International Youth Skills Day with youth spotlight video sessions.

Our research team developed and adopted two new protocols that are key to the youth program's accurate documentation and reporting for long-term tracking. The first is the program's ability to engage and track activities with youth from underserved groups and communities. The second is the ability to measure indirect impact for teachers, who are expected to reach a substantial number of students with STEM²D activities for years to come. By the end of 2021, the WiSTEM²D Youth Program reached 1,038,656 youth (of which 605,854 are girls, and 432,802 are boys) in 38 countries.

Table 3. Additional STEM²D accomplishments

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	YOUTH PROGRAMMING	MATERIALS & TOOLS
14 workshops 25 coaching sessions 275 volunteers trained 4 eModules <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to Encourage & Engage Girls in STEM Creating a Positive STEM²D Identity The Importance of Role Models Being Student Centered 	273 STEM ² D events 5 communication events 86,145 average social media views per communication event (Shares, comments, likes etc.)	10 student activities translated into 8 languages (Spanish, Russian, French, Chinese, Italian, Portuguese, German, Korean) Volunteer Playbook to support employee engagement

02

Workforce Development

Workforce development is a people-centered approach to improving economic stability and prosperity that addresses barriers to participation in the labor market. Barriers can consist of education requirements, licensing and certification restrictions, criminal record prohibitions, background checks, and others. Typically, workforce development strategies occur in two forms: place-based approaches that address the needs of people in a specific labor market location, and sector-based strategies that focus on sharpening and matching workers' skills to in-demand jobs and local employer priorities. In both cases, successful workforce development strategies utilize strong community networks, and they take a comprehensive approach to workers' needs.

PUBLICATION HIGHLIGHT



The approaches explored in this 2021 [publication](#) serve to better understand the system that exists, and to help imagine a more supportive, more efficacious, and more equitable alternative, particularly for young adults ages 18-24 with justice involvement.

² The Compass Rose Collaborative is 100% funded by the Department of Labor in the amount of \$4.5 million. No other sources of funding support this program.

PROJECT: COMPASS ROSE COLLABORATIVE

Funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, NIWL's [Compass Rose Collaborative](#) promotes inclusion and integration of young people impacted by the justice system into societal, educational, and workforce systems.² NIWL researches and implements promising and data-driven practices that support the family, economic development, and social self-sufficiency of young people 18-24 who reside in communities that are characterized by high-crime rates and people experiencing poverty.

The Compass Rose Collaborative has demonstrated a sustainable program model that benefits program participants, their local communities, and the nation. It does this through:

- ▶ program participants becoming self-sufficient through work or school enrollment and gaining the skills to navigate adulthood.
- ▶ local implementation partners forging lasting community partnerships that leverage local resources to serve young people.
- ▶ encouraging youth voice in program design and implementation through our Young Adult Leadership Council.
- ▶ documenting effective practices and replicating them in other communities.

Through the Compass Rose Collaborative, NIWL and its community partners are significantly improving the lifelong education and career achievements of the young people engaged in the program.

This year, young people were engaged by local service providers to address their basic needs and mental health. Many were placed into occupational skills training, post-secondary education, and employment to make meaningful contributions to society, form connections with their communities, and build fulfilling, self-sufficient lives.

WE ARE PROUD OF THESE KEY RESULTS

780

young adults received services to support reentry, education, and work

700+

hours of training and technical assistance (TTA)

A small or only a 1.5% recidivism rate among program participants, compared to 40% national rate

1.5%

8

Urban Cities

1

Rural City

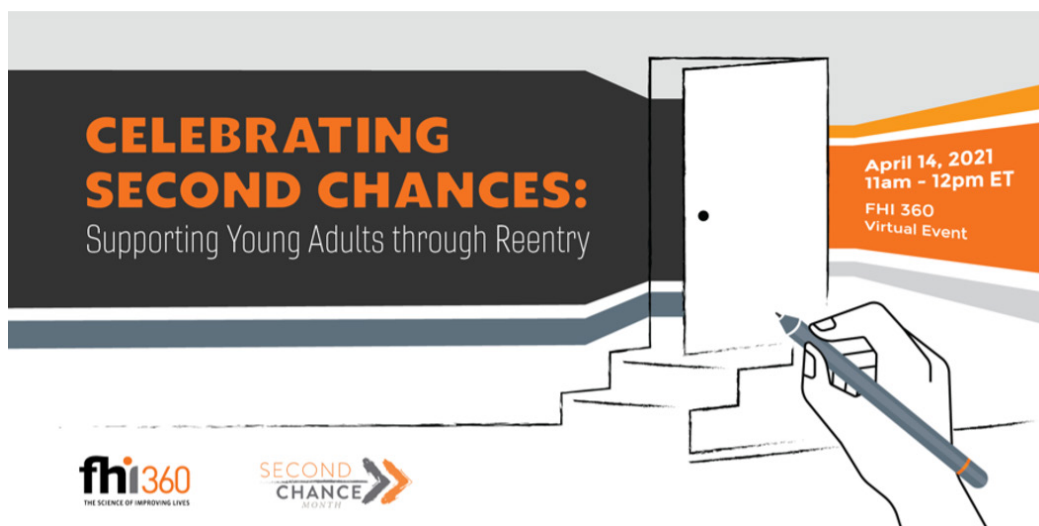


Figure 3. FHI 360 and NIWL hosted our own virtual Second Chance Summit

SIGNATURE EVENT: SECOND CHANCE SUMMIT

In April 2021, NIWL participated in Second Chance Month, a nationwide awareness event and partnership of over 600 businesses, congregations, government agencies, and community organizations that host events around second chances. Following incarceration, individuals should have the opportunity to fully integrate back into society. During Second Chance Month, we recognize and celebrate all those who, having made mistakes, are committed to rejoining society and making meaningful contributions. FHI 360 and NIWL hosted our own virtual [Second Chance Summit](#) featuring Marcus Bullock, CEO of Flikshop, as the keynote speaker, and a panel of justice experts who discussed the findings of our [New Justice Paradigm](#) report and options for justice system reform.

PROJECT: YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONER APPRENTICESHIP (YDPA)

Apprenticeships provide training for a career by enabling a worker to learn the craft, skill, or trade under the supervision and mentorship of more experienced workers. Data suggest:

- ▶ individuals who complete an apprenticeship program have an average starting salary of **\$72,000**.
- ▶ **92%** of apprenticeships retain their employment after they complete their apprenticeships.
- ▶ apprentice graduates achieve a lifetime earnings advantage of over **\$300,000** compared to peers who do not complete an apprenticeship program.³

The NIWL YDPA is a registered apprenticeship with the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). Our [apprenticeship program](#) is designed to instill essential job readiness skills and build core competencies related to becoming an effective practitioner in a variety of positions aimed at developing youth. Under the NIWL YDPA program, young people can obtain nationally recognized credentials through a paid work experience and classroom instruction.

³ Office of Apprenticeship. Apprenticeship.gov. <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/>

The program uses individualized learning, group workshops, and performance tasks to provide educational content and learning opportunities for apprentices of all backgrounds through a standardized online curriculum.

With competencies rooted in youth development, the YDPA opens up career pathways to jobs focused on the holistic development of young people. These positions include social service and the youth services field such as case managers, program coordinators, outreach workers, youth advocates, behavioral interventionists, and more. While aiming to help apprentices gain essential skills to become youth development specialists, the apprenticeship equips participants with an intentional and pro-social approach to positive youth development.

The NIWL apprenticeship is delivered through nine learning modules focused on 29 core competencies. With the expected intake of the first student cohort of the program in early 2022, YDPA is looking forward to attracting employers and students to the program.

MICHIGAN JUVENILE JUSTICE FACILITY SCHOOLS

- Children's Village, Oakland County
- Pioneer Work & Learn Center, Tuscola County
- Youth Center School, Kalamazoo County
- Macomb County Juvenile Justice Center School, Macomb



WHAT'S A DIGITAL BADGE?

A digital badge is a micro-credential and a form of micro-certification earned by demonstrating competence in a specific skill. The validation of skillsets and knowledge can be added to an online profile that is linked to resumes, college transcripts, job application and social media sites such as LinkedIn. NIWL offers digital badges in communication, teamwork, public speaking, mentorship, and leadership.

PROJECT: MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

NIWL began a collaborative project with the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Career and Technical Education, designed to enhance the career and technical educational program offerings for teachers within Michigan's juvenile justice facilities. NIWL's technical assistance specialists in justice, education, workforce, community development, and research and evaluation, provided training and technical assistance to 34 teachers and direct service staff at four Michigan juvenile justice facility schools. NIWL presented a general introduction to STEM²D and digital badges, both of which, if implemented in youth facilities, could open doors to employment or further education for returning young people.

NIWL and its peer organizations have long recognized there is an inverse correlation between education and recidivism; namely, that individuals who receive high quality educational services are less likely to recidivate.⁴ Earning education credentials is also associated with higher rates of employment and increased earning potential and equip youth to integrate into educational programs.

Table 4: Michigan Department of Education training results

DIGITAL BADGE TRAINING	SPARKING STEM ² D TRAINING
34 Attendees	29 Attendees
71% understand more about digital badges	87% agree the training taught the importance to engage youth with STEM ² D
72% agree/strongly agree they would like to implement a digital badge curriculum	75% agree the training taught STEM ² D youth programming tips and strategies

⁴ Vera Institute, diZerega & Chochos, 2020



Research and Evaluation

NIWL conducts research and rigorous program evaluation using quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches. Our current research and evaluation services guide workforce and education partners in effectively documenting program implementation progress as well as measuring the effectiveness of programs and policies.

PROJECT: TIWAHE: INTEGRATING FAMILY, COMMUNITY, AND SOCIAL SERVICES

The U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) invited six American Indian and Alaska Native communities to participate in a five-year pilot of the Tiwahe Initiative. The pilot provided communities with funding to assess their own needs and design models to support the health, safety, and well-being of families who are rooted in their respective cultures. The communities - Red Lake Nation, Fort Belknap Indian Community, Pascua Yaqui Tribe, Spirit Lake Nation, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, and the Association of Village Council Presidents - each designed and implemented an integrated service delivery model to increase access to family and social services, improve links to appropriate prevention, intervention, and treatment opportunities, improve case management services, and support coordination among social service providers.

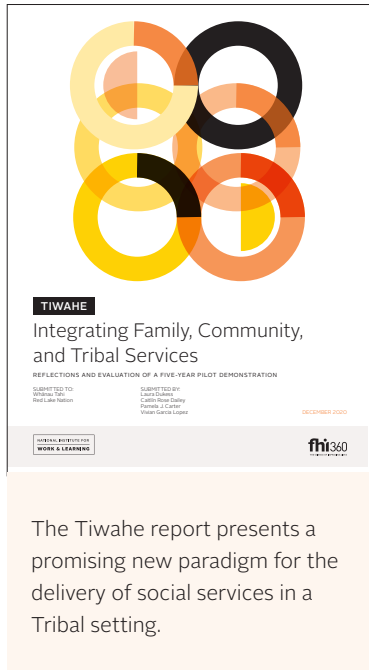
As evaluators of the initiative, NIWL gathered and shared stories of Tiwahe communities' innovations, experiences, and impact to inform decisions about continuing, expanding, and improving the Tiwahe initiative. The findings examined the overlapping and interweaving levels of collaboration among families, social service agencies, tribal governments, and the federal government, all in service of tribal and family well-being.

The impact was profound for some Native American families. For example, Tiwahe provided funding and flexibility so that Red Lake Nation could give a local mother food, supplies, and the support she needed to keep her children at home with her and avoid having them placed in foster care. In Fort Belknap Indian Community, tribal leaders placed a young man in a culturally based alternative to incarceration, starting him on a path to healthier living. Through the Tiwahe Initiative, the communities delivered social services that integrated their traditional values to empower the people they serve. Leaders in Spirit Lake Nation told us that their social services clients are getting more responsive care and more empathy.

The results are powerful: In Red Lake Nation, the number of Chippewa children placed in 72-hour protective holds by child services declined from 185 to 20 over three years. With a staff of 82 mental health providers, up from 22 just a few years ago, the Children and Family Services department now offers culturally specific, trauma-informed mental health care with intergenerational supports that help prevent child separation in the first place. In the Fort Belknap Indian Community, the youth recidivism rate dropped below the national average of about 62 percent (after three years) to just 24 percent.⁵

⁵ "Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 34 States in 2012: A 5-year Follow up Study". U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, July 2021. https://bjs.ojp.gov/bjs_pub/rpr34s125yfup1217/Web%20content/508%20compliant%20PDFs/rpr34s125yfup1217_sum.pdf

PUBLICATION HIGHLIGHT



The Tiwahe report presents a promising new paradigm for the delivery of social services in a Tribal setting.



FHI 360's project report concluded that there was ample evidence to support the value of continuing and expanding the initiative. Evaluation data and analyses underscored how the successes the Tribes experienced under Tiwahe had potential for even broader impact among American Indian and Alaska Native communities. According to Whānau Tahī, the Māori-led New Zealand social enterprise that advised Tiwahe on applying indigenous frameworks for integrated community care, NIWL's evaluation is now breaking new ground in gaining support for Tiwahe to become a permanent tribal program.

NIWL collects evidence in support of two Cherokee Nation language preservation programs

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) awarded Cherokee Nation two language preservation grants. First, for Cherokee Nation's Teacher Bridge Program—which sought to increase the number of Cherokee-speaking teachers—NIWL conducted the first round of data collection, analysis and reporting to deliver to the program its first annual internal evaluation report.

Second, Cherokee Nation's Institute of Excellence project is a master apprentice program designed to increase language fluency among Cherokee speakers. NIWL conducted data collection and a document review, followed by focus group discussions and a summary report. Both projects run for three years and finish in 2023.

PROJECT: BUILDING A FINANCIALLY CAPABLE GENERATION

Building a Financially Capable Generation is a global financial education program sponsored by JA Worldwide and the Hong Kong Shanghai Bancorp (HSBC). The goal of the program is to provide activities for students to increase their knowledge and skills around money and banking to support lifelong financial health and well-being. The program does this through providing instruction on topics that include savings, setting financial goals, managing debt and budgeting; an app that allows students to learn through playing a game; and an Innovation Challenge for which students apply their learning in a group setting. JA Worldwide implemented the project in 13 countries across North America, Europe, Middle East, and Asia in partnership with 265 volunteers who engaged 6,990 student participants in grades 6-12.

**RESEARCH AND EVALUATION
TEAM MEMBER'S PAPER
APPEARS IN NATIONAL
JOURNAL**

NIWL research and evaluation team member, Amy Detgen published a paper in Career Development Quarterly in September 2021. Her paper, "[Efficacy of a College and Career Readiness Program: Bridge to Employment](#)" explores the power of relationships in college and career readiness preparation.

Read her FHI 360 Search for Evidence [blog](#).

Congratulations Amy!

NIWL conducted the program evaluation to assess the impact of *Building a Financially Capable Generation* on student knowledge, attitude, behavioral intent, and self-efficacy related to financial capability. It also assessed the perception of volunteers, educators, and staff regarding program implementation and effectiveness.

Table 5: Data collection activities

EVALUATION ACTIVITY	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
Student surveys	5775
App Quest quizzes	1902
Volunteer surveys	141
Volunteer interviews	28

NIWL Research Team members had the opportunity to talk with JA volunteers across the globe—from Mexico and Egypt to Malta and Malaysia—to obtain their suggestions for how to improve the program. The team prepared a final report summarizing the evaluation findings and gave a presentation to JA and HSBC leaders in July 2021. In 2020, NIWL formalized its communication function by establishing a permanent communication position. At the strategic level, we conducted a communication audit – leading to a communication strategic plan, established metrics, and key messages to guide overall product development.

PROJECT: PENNSYLVANIA GEAR UP-3

Gaining Early Awareness for Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) is a U.S. Department of Education discretionary grants program. In 2021, NIWL provided data collection services, as well as formative and summative evaluation reports for Pennsylvania State GEAR UP, serving the school districts of Allentown, Harrisburg, and Norristown.

The seven-year GEARUP grant implemented a comprehensive strategy to enhance academic improvement and early college awareness among low-income, youth at risk, and their parents in specific school districts in Pennsylvania. GEAR UP provides services to a cohort of middle school students through high school graduation, and into their first year of post-secondary education. The program included youth who enrolled in the seventh grade in the 2014–2015 school year. As a subcontractor to the Pennsylvania State Systems of Higher Education (PASSHE), NIWL's research and evaluation team brought its methodological expertise in program evaluation and assessment, and the use of research in scaling and sustaining effective programs and practices.



Implementing Corporate Philanthropy

Businesses have engaged in philanthropy and community outreach for generations, typically making financial contributions in response to a natural disaster or local funding drive, as well as contributing to other ‘worthy causes’ where they are located. Today, communities and activists are encouraging businesses to be more proactive and direct their resources to larger, more sweeping societal issues. The companies that take this on require a clearly articulated investment strategy backed by longer term commitments.⁶

An example NIWL is seeing in the sector is an increase in corporate volunteer programs where employees tutor or mentor students from under-resourced school districts to increase their graduation rates, prepare them for higher education, and learn about a variety of career paths. Our work with Johnson & Johnson, a Fortune 100 company, serves as a model in this space. The challenge for corporations becomes how to manage decentralized programs active in many communities at once, as well as ensure program excellence and consistency across sites while allowing for local customization.

In 2021 NIWL collaborated with two more Fortune 100 companies’ philanthropic arms —the GE Foundation and Converse—to implement global youth development and employee volunteer programs. Their philanthropic interests include engineering and creative arts and design, respectively. Each company believes that by lifting up the world’s youth, we will build a pipeline of community leaders and problem solvers for the future. NIWL provides a range of services guided by the funders’ goals and objectives.

PROJECT: GE FOUNDATION’S NEXT ENGINEERS

In the largest corporate partnership ever awarded to FHI 360, the GE Foundation pledged up to \$100 million over 10 years beginning in 2021 to implement [Next Engineers](#), a global college readiness program to increase diversity in engineering. Next Engineers [announced](#) its four locations – Greenville, SC, Cincinnati, OH, Johannesburg, South Africa, and Staffordshire, England – in October 2021.⁷

Through instruction and hands-on activities, Next Engineers introduces students, ages 13 to 18, to the field of engineering, providing them with educational and career opportunities they may not otherwise experience. The free, out-of-school program engages students in three ways:

- ▶ **ENGINEERING DISCOVERY**, which builds engineering awareness for students, ages 13 to 14, through exploratory activities and demonstrations led by GE volunteers.
- ▶ **ENGINEERING CAMP**, week-long camp experiences that immerses students, ages 14 to 15, in the engineering process as they work with professional engineers to solve design challenges inspired by real-world scenarios.
- ▶ **ENGINEERING ACADEMY**, a three-year program in which students, ages 15 to 18, complete a series of immersive design challenges, career coaching, and college-readiness workshops. Graduates of the Academy who are accepted into a university engineering program will receive scholarship support.

⁶ Guerriero and Ditkoff, “When Philanthropy Meets Advocacy”, *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Summer 2018.

⁷ In November 2021, GE announced a corporate restructuring splitting the company into three separate operating companies focused on aviation, healthcare, and a combination of renewable energy, power, and digital businesses. GE’s corporate philanthropy is under review, including Next Engineers.

As the global management partner, FHI 360's NIWL and Global Education department collaborate on implementing Next Engineers. For its part, NIWL coordinates and supports community partners in each city, provides communication and web portal support, trains, and equips GE volunteers worldwide to facilitate the three programs above, prepares the activities and curricula, and more.

Engagement in Next Engineers across the four inaugural sites during the first quarter, following the launch in October:

Table 6. Next Engineers results from October 2021 through December 2021

22 Engineering Discovery Events were hosted

49% Engineering Discovery Event attendees were girls

12 Schools hosted Engineering Discovery Events

2,128 Students served

112 GE Volunteer engagements across Discovery Events

4 Cities 3 Countries reached

PROJECT: CONVERSE ALL STAR PROJECTS (ASP) ASSESSMENT

Since 2019, Converse has taken a grassroots approach to engaging 2,000 18- to 25-year-old young adults from more than 27 cities around the globe — the Converse All Stars. With grants, professional development, and mentoring from Converse employees and creative professionals, All Stars build community and champion change through community impact projects. In one inspiring example, All Star James set out to grow a music collective and a company — Outer Voice Records— that will amplify South Asian American voices that are missing from the popular music scene. With advice from Converse executives and music industry managers brought in on Converse's mentoring team, James hopes Outer Voice Records will become “a career for me and for the people that we brought on. We're planting the seeds for very much a long term... [And] it's because of some of the pillars of the [All Stars] program that we were encouraged that we could really lean into our identity.”

Converse engaged NIWL to conduct an external assessment of process and progress in the ASP in its pilot stage. The goals of the assessment were to:

- ▶ **ASSESS** perceptions, experiences, and responses to participation in the ASP 1.0 pilot program.
- ▶ **IDENTIFY** the internal successes and challenges of implementation of the ASP 1.0 pilot program in the operational and technical domains.
- ▶ **CAPTURE** the qualitative perceptions of individuals participating in ASP 1.0, highlighting their experience in the pilot and the personal and professional growth stemming from participation.
- ▶ **RECOMMEND** modifications to the design of the ASP 2.0 program to address findings from the pilot.

Through interviews and surveys of All Stars and their Converse advisors, NIWL found that ASP provided effective resources and opportunities to All Stars and that scaling up would require a stronger program infrastructure and additional supports for the Converse employees who are engaged as mentors. NIWL's recommendations are assisting Converse with shaping the launch of ASP 2.0.



Looking Ahead

The NIWL team believes 2022 will be another remarkable year for the new or continuing work that our funders and partners have invited us to do with and for them. They recognize NIWL's excellence in workforce development, college and career readiness, and research and evaluation, as well as the importance of engaging seasoned implementers for global corporate philanthropic initiatives. Each of these projects is grounded in our commitment to increase equity, promote social justice, access, and opportunity among people living in marginalized communities.

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

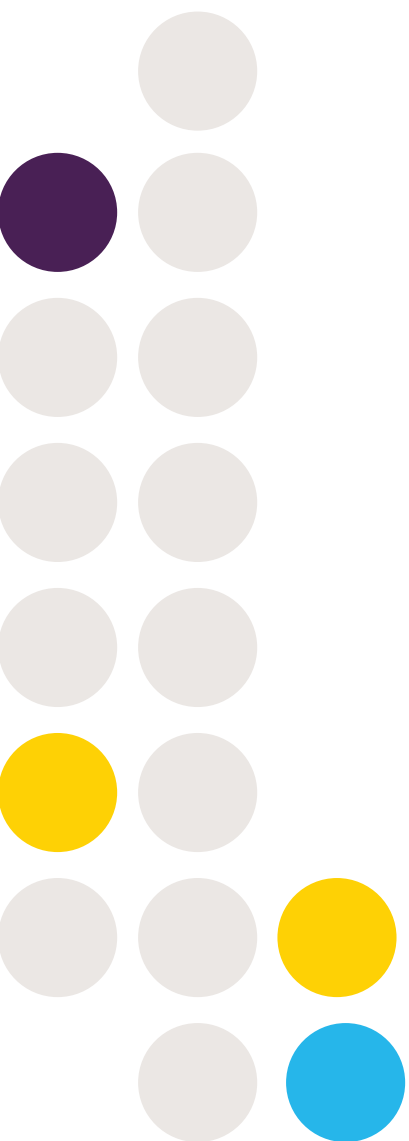
BRIDGE TO EMPLOYMENT TURNS 30 YEARS YOUNG. Throughout 2022, NIWL will feature past and present students, J&J volunteers, best program practices, BTE sites, and their stories. We invite you to explore BTE's full 30-year history through an [interactive timeline and oral history](#). We applaud J&J for their continued commitment and are excited to celebrate 30 years and cannot wait to see what the future holds!

NIWL INNOVATING FOR YOUTH AND THEIR NAVIGATORS. In 2022, NIWL will release a number of cutting-edge college and career readiness tools. Youth and navigators (adults who support youth) work in tandem on a career exploration journey in the new Career Awareness series, which includes five youth-facing eModules and a parallel web-based training series for navigators. Ready 360 is an education and career planning and advising package; a virtual platform and digital tools allow youth to continuously update and track their plan. And, finally, Champions for Change – a three-part workshop series comprised of self-paced eModules and real-time, facilitated discussion and reflection sessions – will help youth and navigators explore diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) concepts while championing for change in their local communities.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

NIWL RECEIVES FIRST DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE GRANT AWARD. Under this DOJ Second Chance Act award, NIWL will have the opportunity to serve 100 people who are incarcerated at Mecklenburg County Detention Center, providing occupational skills training leading to an industry-recognized credential, reentry services, and job placement. NIWL and the National Center on Institutions and Alternatives (NCIA) in North Carolina have designed the Post-Release Employment Program (PREP) to support the successful reintegration of individuals returning from jails or prisons into their communities. PREP will be deployed in Charlotte, NC—a city struggling with significant rates of poverty and crime—through a partnership with community organizations and local employers. PREP is specifically designed to fast-track participants from being behind bars to being employed within six weeks or less. Two-thirds or more of their employment training will be completed pre-release.

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION EXTENDS INITIAL GRANT. With a contract modification from the Michigan Department of Education, NIWL will extend the pilot project described above to support more youth in juvenile facilities.



RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

PENNSYLVANIA AWARDS NIWL GEAR UP. NIWL's Research and Evaluation team has been asked to continue its important work evaluating the GEAR UP college and career program in several Pennsylvania school districts. The new PA GEAR UP will support evaluation services for three school districts in Pennsylvania, specifically Norristown, Pottstown, and Allentown. The work will follow the 2022 7th grade cohort through graduation and in to the first year of higher education. Our role as evaluators will be to report on programmatic challenges, progress to performance targets, and an overall impact evaluation of the program.

J&J ENGAGED NIWL TO EVALUATE TWO WISTEM²D PROGRAM PILLARS.

The Research and Evaluation (R&E) team will work with J&J's Youth Pillar to:

- ▶ measure the engagement of J&J volunteers and partnering organizations in various events that engage students in STEM²D topics. These include events and activities conducted by J&J regional champions, 14 employee resource groups and eight STEM functions within J&J.
- ▶ conduct an annual study of select sites to evaluate the program's effectiveness, in comparison to the stated goals and objectives.
- ▶ conduct annual case studies to showcase the various types of activities and events that are conducted by J&J volunteers and partners to promote STEM²D to female students.

NIWL's R&E team will work with J&J's WiSTEM²D University Pillar to:

1. measure the engagement of J&J volunteers and partnering universities in a range of events that promote college success among university students. These include events and activities conducted by J&J volunteers from 50 potential campuses.
2. measure student perceptions about the program using event exit survey data.

NIWL AND THE NATIONAL INDIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION TEAM UP TO EXPAND THE TEACHER WORKFORCE IN RURAL, NATIVE-SERVING SCHOOLS.

An award from Kellogg USA is expanding the teacher and paraprofessional workforce in rural Native American-serving schools. NIWL will combine NIEA's community engagement strategies with NIWL's content knowledge in college and career exploration and readiness, teacher preparation, and workforce development to forge and support interest in paraprofessional and teaching pathways.

CORPORATE PHILANTHROPY

CONVERSE ENGAGES NIWL TO REVIEW OVERALL SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY IMPACT STRATEGY. This new work involves working alongside Converse to review their overall theory of change for affecting social and community impact and Converse's approaches for achieving and measuring strategic goals. NIWL is interviewing and surveying Converse employees and non-profit partners to understand how the company's social and community impact pillars should align with youth and community priorities, Converse business needs, and employee interests. NIWL will also develop a monitoring, evaluation, and learning framework to determine the impact of investments and support decision making for Converse's social and community programs.



NIWL SEES COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AS A STRATEGIC GOAL


Active communication, engagement with stakeholders, and promotion of our work advances NIWL's third strategic goal: increase the visibility of NIWL to advance our vision and mission. This goal speaks to NIWL's commitment to share and to collaborate. NIWL publishes its work to disseminate its research findings, analyses, and program best practices for others to use in their own programs, research, and policymaking. Engagement with stakeholders is in our DNA, and sharpening our outreach and collaboration enhances our visibility and our partners' as well. We promote others' pioneering work in the areas of work and learning as readily as our own.

In 2021, our work was guided by a strategic communication plan rooted in metrics and centered on key messages that shape our communication products. At the tactical level we stepped up our use of internal and external communication channels, launched campaigns around core issues and publications, and positioned our program managers as thought leaders in their fields. For example, in 2021, we secured speaking engagements or interviews at such diverse fora as STEMher Magazine (Women in STEM); US Attorney for DC Community Engagement (juvenile justice/reentry); Michigan Department of Education (capacity building for educators in a justice setting); Smithsonian Advanced Programs Institute (STEM careers); Health and Human Services Youth Working Group (NIWL apprenticeship program) Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs (Workforce Development).

During 2021, NIWL participated in the National Indian Education Association's annual conference and exhibition. There, we engaged with Native educators, principals, school administrators, elders, and others on the conference subject of "Native Control of Native Education." NIWL team members, Pam Carter, Katie Rose Dailey, Lisa Johnson, and Caitlin Dawkins presented on their evaluation and justice work.

In collaboration with FHI 360's corporate communications team, NIWL created photo essays of two of our Compass Rose programs, the National Center on Institutions and Alternatives (NCIA) in Baltimore MD, and Phoenix Youth and Family Services in southeast AR. Photos of counselors, young adult participants, civic leaders, and case workers enable us to bring to life their incredible journeys, successes, and milestones.

In all our work, we strive to bring visibility to the first-person stories from the young adults we serve in our programs. We seek to highlight youth leadership, their wisdom, their coping strategies during COVID-19, and their feedback to our programs and to the adults that manage them. We raised youth voices through blog posts, Q&A's, videos interviews, youth profiles, and more. We feel privileged to share their stories.



Appendix: NIWL Current Supporters and Partners

The National Institute for Work and Learning has been privileged to work, over our 50-year history, with many leading-edge organizations with whom we share common interests in advancing work, learning, and quality research to improve lives. We thank them for their support.

In 2021, the National Institute for Work and Learning has been privileged to work with many leading-edge organizations with whom we share common interests in advancing work, learning, and quality research to improve lives. We thank them for their support.

FOUNDATIONS

Annie E. Casey Foundation

GE Foundation

Johnson & Johnson

CORPORATIONS, NON-PROFITS, AND GOVERNMENT ENTITIES

America's Promise Alliance

Center for Law and Social Policy

Cherokee Nation

Converse

Girl Scouts of America

Girls Inc.

Greater Washington Urban League

JA Worldwide

Michigan Department of Education

National Indian Education Association

National Reentry Workforce Collaborative

National Youth Employment Coalition

Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education

Smithsonian Science Education Center

United States Bureau of Indian Affairs

United States Department of Education

United States Department of Labor

United States Department of Justice

Whanau Tahī Limited/Red Lake Nation

