

So what is Career Connected Learning anyway?

The problem for youth: Washington's young adults, 18-24, experience the highest unemployment and the greatest difficulty of any age group in getting a job, and keeping it. Unemployment routinely runs twice as great for this age group than for others.

The problem for employers: Even as Washington's youth scramble for employment, thousands of Washington employers report leaving positions unfilled for lack of qualified candidates who have the necessary education or skills. Some jobs require specialized skill sets or training, like operating light manufacturing machines. All jobs require "soft skills," or "work readiness" skills, including being punctual, dressing appropriately, and working as a team, that employers report many youth lack.

There will be 740,000 job openings over the next five years in Washington alone. Career-connected learning has been proven to help young people complete their education goals and find meaningful pathways to employment.

Lack of work experience: Lack of work experience is a key reason why young people lack these employability skills. When young people are unable to land a first job, or gain other forms of career exposure, such as internships or job shadows, it makes it difficult to learn these unwritten but critical skills.

Career Connected Learning comes in many forms: One may be right for you!

While you may not have heard the phrase "Career Connected Learning" before, it is not a new concept. It covers a wide range of familiar options, with community members, educators, and business leaders able to commit to a lot...or a little...depending on their time and resources.

Career Connected Learning can be as simple as:

- A local business person visiting a classroom to talk for 20 minutes about what they do.
- Attending a local job fair to chat about how a business works.
- A half-day job shadow, where a young person learns about an occupation or a business.
- Serving as a mentor to help young people gain confidence about their future.

For those with more time and resources:

- Career Connected Learning can be an internship, where a young person spends structured time several times each week learning about a job or industry.
- In some cases, young people are able to participate in full-fledged apprenticeships, where they are paid while they learn hands-on skills.