



THE POLICY
CIRCLE®

Creating Career Pathways

Discussion Guide

Let's review

At the start of each discussion, review the conversation ground rules for returning and new members alike to set the stage for active participation by all. You may want to use a timer as you go around the room. And don't forget to decide who will take notes and post a discussion recap.

- **Be open and curious:** Everyone has a unique perspective, so be prepared to hear a different point of view. Listen first, and focus on the facts.
- **Be respectful and engaged:** Be sure that everyone has a chance to speak before adding a second comment or perspective. Encourage each other's participation.
- **Be focused and concise:** Keep the conversation centered on the issue and the brief.

The "Table-it" Rule: If the group has gone off-topic but the area is of interest, the group can table the conversation and save it for another time to be addressed in a different manner.

Let's begin

*Each member is invited to answer the following questions in a **two-three minute reaction** to the brief.*

- Introduce yourself, and share what "lens of care" did you wear when reviewing this brief (e.g. personal, professional, community, state, nation, global)?
- What did you find most interesting or surprising from reading the brief? What matters?

Let's discuss

Pick 2 or 3 questions that resonate with the group and discuss, or choose your own.

- In your opinion, what is the priority in regards to creating career pathways?
- Were there some points with which you strongly agreed or disagreed? Was there a perspective that was missing?
- What is the role of policymakers in addressing unemployment and workforce readiness?
- What is the role of the private sector in developing the workforce it needs to succeed?
- What actions can we take to create opportunities for the oldest and youngest generations to engage more thoroughly in the workforce? Where does vocational training fit in this equation?
- How can we make sure programs like Opportunity Zones and Social Impact Bonds create lasting impact in distressed communities?

Let's act

Spread the Word: Some Facts to Share

- As of June 2019, the labor force participation rate was 62.9% ([BLS](#)).
- As of May 2019, there were 7.3 million unfilled jobs in the U.S. ([BLS](#)).
- Nearly 23 million Americans between the ages of 25 and 54 are not counted in the labor force ([US News](#)).
- According to [McGraw Hill's 2018 Workforce Readiness Survey](#), only 41% of college student respondents feel prepared for their careers.
- There are still 4.5 million people ages 16 to 24 (about 1 in 9) who are neither working nor in school ([Measure of America](#)).
- According to a [CNBC news report](#), employees age 65 and older constitute the fastest-growing segment of the American workforce.
- In distressed populations, 21.9% of adults do not have high school diplomas, and 41.5% of prime-age adults are not working ([EIG](#)).

Engage Locally

- *Learn more:*
 - **Research how employment opportunities affect your community** politically, socially, and economically.
 - On your state or municipality website, look for an “employment” dropdown menu. Alternatively, try searching for “*employment*” in the search bar.
 - Reach out to your local high school, your workplace, or your community leaders to see what initiatives or local programs exist or need championing to connect youth and other adults to new career pathways.
 - **Consider interacting with elected representatives of your local chamber of commerce.**
 - Research your elected representatives' positions on employment, such as their votes on relevant bills or positions on career-related policies like occupational licensing.
 - Look into whether the local chamber of commerce rewards companies that create internships or apprenticeship programs.
- *Reach out:*
 - Explore what organizations, legislators, and journalists you could contact to ask questions, learn more and get engaged.
 - If you have trouble finding the information you are looking for on your municipality's website, consider contacting agency or department heads. You can find the contact information for federal, state, and local government officials [here](#).
 - The Policy Circle offers a number of resources for engaging on the local level. Learn how to write a letter to the editor on [The Policy Circle website](#).
 - It's easy to establish a relationship with your legislators. Start by introducing yourself. You can also learn to write to your representatives or set up a meeting with a legislator on [The Policy Circle website](#).

Post a Recap/Dive Deeper:

- Summarize your discussion to share thoughts with members not present. Who can post a meeting recap on your circle page?
- Decide your next meeting topic. Want to discuss a related brief at your next meeting?
- This brief is part of the Conversation Series:
 - Five That Impact Business. Other briefs in the series include:
 - [Free Enterprise](#), [Economic Growth](#), and [Government Regulation](#)
 - Five That Impact Your Wallet. Other Briefs in the series include:
 - [Higher Education](#) and [Taxation](#)
- Dive Deeper into this area. If this is an area you would like to pursue further, consider taking possible steps to influence policy. The Policy Circle offers resources for [developing a message about your issue](#) and [organizing a petition](#) to amplify your voice and raise awareness.