



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

- Take five minutes to review the [Executive Summary](#) for this brief. Highlight the main point of each section and key statistics.
- 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?

Spread the word: facts to share during your discussion

- In early 2020, [labor force participation rate](#) was 63%. As of early 2022 it stands at just over 62%, representing 1.4 million fewer adults ages 25 to 54 looking for a job than there were prior to the pandemic.
- As of 2021, [machines handle about 30% of tasks](#) and humans the rest, but that balance is expected to shift to a 50/50 split by 2025.
- In the 1950s, only 5% of occupations required licensure; as of 2020, that percentage is closer to 25-30% of full-time employees, amounting to [29 million U.S. workers](#).

Let's discuss

Below are questions for the group to consider and discuss, or choose your own.

- **Community:** What are the priorities for workforce readiness in our community and state? What actions can we take to create opportunities for the oldest and youngest generations to engage more thoroughly in the workforce?
- **Government:** What is the role of policymakers in addressing unemployment and workforce readiness?
- **Business:** What can be done to promote collaboration between the education and business sectors?

Let's act

1. **Take it local.** Talk to neighbors, friends, or family for their views and perspective on career pathways. Ask high school and college students about their job prospects. Ask current employees about their career pathways. Consider hosting another conversation with these community members.
2. **Explore the impact of legislation related to aging in your community.** On your municipality's website you can find information pertaining to the labor market and workforce development programs. You can search the various departments, agencies, and programs related to these areas on your municipality's or state's website.
3. **Investigate community programs** in your state or municipality. See what is offered through the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#).
4. **Research your elected representatives' positions** on the labor market and workforce development, and their vision for how to tackle related challenges facing Americans and your community. You can find contact information for federal, state, and local government officials [here](#). Your state or municipality's websites will also have information to contact leaders. Try looking at the dropdown menu for a *Government* tab.
5. **Establish a relationship with your legislators.** 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](#).
6. **Consider writing a letter to the editor or an op-ed on your stance on career pathways or workforce development in your local paper.** Learn how on [The Policy Circle website](#).

Next Steps for Your Circle

- **Post a Recap:** Summarize your discussion to share thoughts with members not present, and share planned actions from group members. Designate who will post a meeting recap on your circle page.
- **Decide your next meeting topic.** Want to discuss a related brief at your next meeting? Suggestions include:
 - [K-12 Education](#)
 - [Higher Education](#)
 - [Entitlements](#)
- **Dive Deeper into the issues.** 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. Don't miss our [latest events](#) that help you dive deeper on this issue and more.