JobsFirst

Design for Young Adults. Move Everyone Forward.

JobsFirst 2030 Strategic Plan

Overview

Across the U.S., **more than 4.3 million young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 are out of school and out of work (OSOW),** representing 1 in 10 of the country's young adult population.

Another million more are underemployed, in part-time or low-wage jobs that do not lead to economic mobility.

Workforce and education systems are fragmented, fail to provide opportunities across all communities, perpetuate ineffective solutions, and are slow to respond to today's rapidly changing economy.

JobsFirst is building a **movement by design** to unlock pathways to economic mobility by centering local expertise and equipping communities with the structure, tools, and support they need.

THE CHALLENGE

Young adults are a critical signal of economic health. When work, education, and community are not aligned, young adults feel it first. Fragmented infrastructure slows everyone down.

OUR APPROACH

Transformation happens when communities have strong, adaptive, well-resourced workforce intermediaries. JobsFirst brings proven practices and tools to local communities, building the regional infrastructure needed for long-term success. We create the conditions that allow community-inspired solutions to be designed, institutionalized, and scaled locally.

Local Synergy

- We form the "connective tissue" through new intermediaries that align stakeholders to solve the crisis of fragmented workforce systems.

Bold Solutions

- We use our process to incubate and scale solutions that replace structural barriers with paths to prosperity for young adults.

Community-Led Learning

- We learn with and from communities, sharing practitioner-driven insight that shapes how cities and regions invest, operate, and design pathways to opportunity.

OUR GOAL

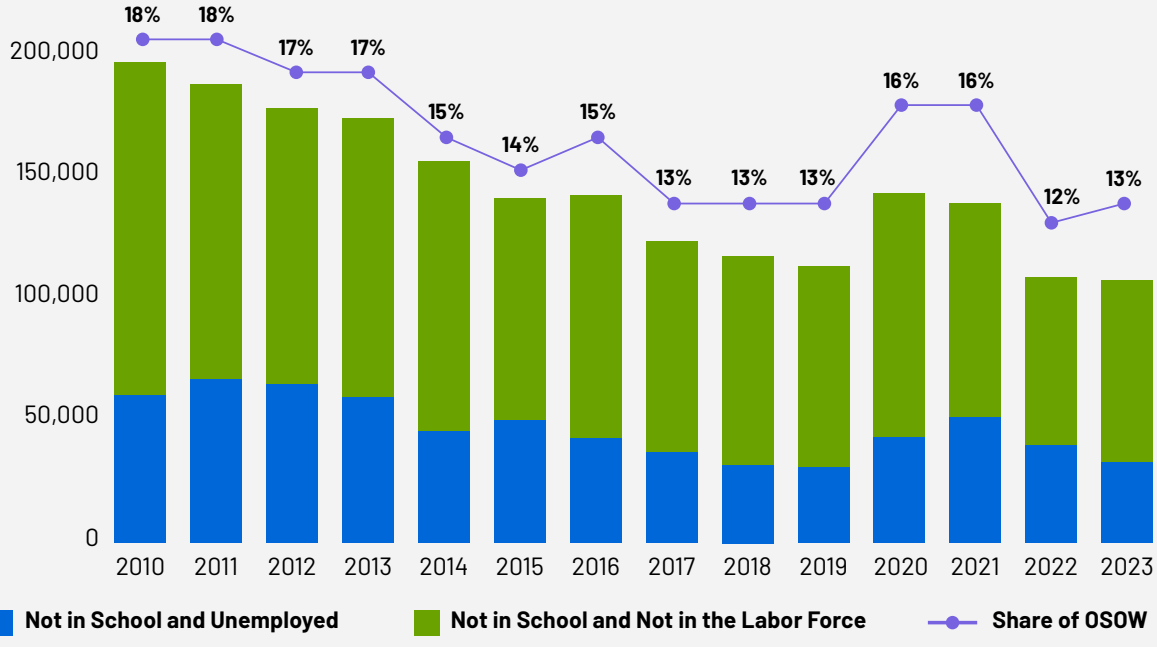
Economic mobility for **50,000 young adults** nationwide, ensuring that talent and drive—not zip code—determine success.

PROOF IN NYC.

Progress that **travels.**

IMPETUS	In 2006, more than 200,000 young adults in NYC were out of school and out of work (OSOW). JobsFirst NYC was founded to bridge public and private systems and change that trajectory.
STRATEGY	Through a collaborative process to identify challenges, incubate solutions, and advance what works, we provided the infrastructure for New York City to align work-, education-, and community-based systems.
IMPACT	The numbers show what alignment can do. In 20 years, young adults who are OSOW dropped by nearly half—from more than 200,000 to 110,000. More than 30,000 people have participated in over 40 initiatives and cross-sector partnerships, reshaping systems around practice, policy, and funding.
GROWTH	JobsFirst is building and strengthening workforce intermediaries and funder collaboratives in communities beyond NYC, turning one city's proof point into a movement across the country.

Count and Share of Young Adults Who are Out of School and Out of Work (OSOW) in New York City



Source: American Community Survey Public Use Mircodata for 2010 to 2022; JobsFirstNYC

THE OPPORTUNITY

There are many communities where a neutral workforce intermediary is the missing ingredient for change.

Our initial analysis with The Bridgespan Group assessed **3,200 U.S. counties,** identifying high-need, high-potential regions—from Cleveland to Phoenix—ready for a JobsFirst intermediary.

Young adults move ahead when systems move together.

THE JOBSFIRST PROMISE

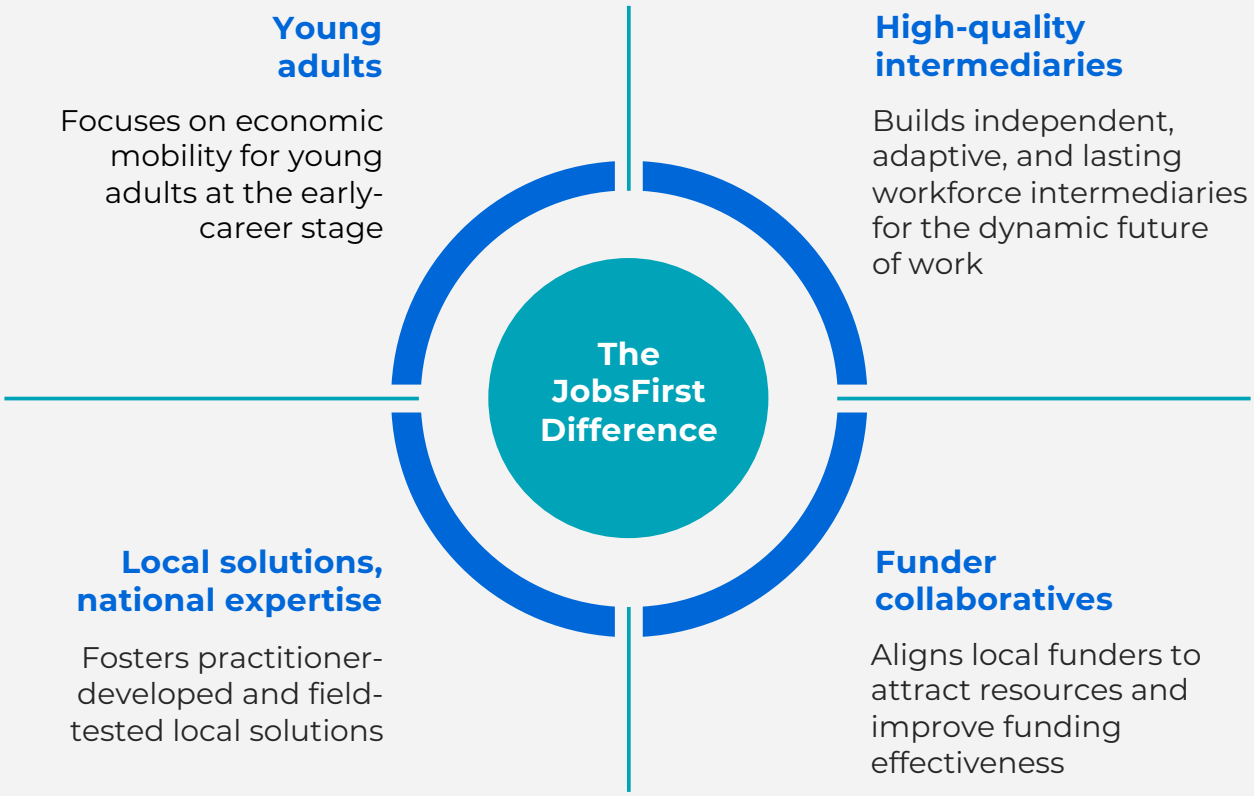
We provide the infrastructure for cities and regions to align their work, education, and community systems. We replace fragmentation with collaboration.

OUR SOLUTIONS AREAS

Work: Identify, design, and advance practices and policies that achieve better outcomes for employers and workers.

Education: Build equitable pathways to postsecondary education and career opportunities.

Community: Build economic opportunities in neighborhoods.



Our **Strategic Priorities**

FY26–FY30

A shared framework that **aligns local action without flattening sector expertise.**

THE FIVE PRIORITIES

Build New Local Infrastructure
Establishing workforce intermediaries and workforce funder collaboratives as Local Drivers in 5 communities.

JobsFirst's Centralized Coordination
Equipping the movement by design with the capabilities and talent to support workforce system modernization and expand locally lead impact.

Leverage AI to Accelerate Impact
Equipping partners with insights to design solutions for an AI-exposed labor market.

Building on our successful human-centered AI partnerships with leading tech companies and others to leverage AI to accelerate impact. We are expanding this purpose-centered AI workforce development architecture to support regional leaders' transition from fragmented planning to real-time, synchronized implementation.

Deepen Innovation
Investing in JobsFirst NYC's 20 years of impact through practitioner-developed solutions to build a Center of Excellence.

We will continue scaling proven approaches that improve regional access to economic mobility, such as our sectoral employment, school- and place-based partnerships..

Fundraise for Scale
Raising the growth capital needed to realize the vision.

The **Repeatable Design**

Economic mobility requires a coordinated ecosystem. We build infrastructure that aligns schools, employers, philanthropy and government, establishing a new national standard for workforce intermediaries.

Progress happens when communities move together. Every new site strengthens the whole, scaling a model where local insight becomes bold, repeatable progress.

OUR 5-STEP PROCESS

1	2	3	4	5
INVESTIGATE	**IMAGINE**	**INCUBATE**	**IMPLEMENT**	**INTEGRATE**
We listen and learn first.	**We ideate community-inspired solutions.**	**We grow ideas into an outcome-driven action plan.**	**We launch and continuously refine new ways of working together.**	**We evaluate our performance, assess what's next, and advance what works.**

THE MOVEMENT TODAY

Modeled on JobsFirst NYC's 20 years of impact, in 2025–2026 we incubated local solutions in communities where independent workforce development infrastructure was the missing ingredient:

National: We launched **JobsFirst** to manage growth, provide technical assistance, and maintain shared impact across all sites.

Northeastern Pennsylvania (NEPA): Working across four counties with local anchor partner Scranton Area Community Foundation, we established **JobsFirst NEPA** and the **NEPA Workforce Funder Collaborative**.

- JobsFirst NEPA strengthens local coordination through repeatable design, common tools, and shared learning.
- NEPA Workforce Funder Collaborative is an expanding 12-member network of local investors powering regional workforce solutions. By coordinating resources and shared learning, we drive workforce improvements at a scale no single organization can achieve alone.

Southern Nevada: Partnering with Workforce Connections and New Ways to Work, we are establishing **JobsFirst Southern Nevada** to connect over 20,000 young adults to careers from Clark County's 42,000 young adults who are out of school and out of work.

Invest in **50,000 paths** to economic mobility.

FY26–FY30

- Build the infrastructure that connects city and regional partners and goals.
- Ensure talent and drive—not zip code—determine success.
- Shape a future where all young adults and their communities have the power, autonomy, and support to achieve economic mobility and feel valued.

We provide a clear, proven way to co-invest in local progress.

TOTAL 5-YEAR INVESTMENT:

$49.3 Million

OUR IMPACT ROADMAP

1 Incubate and accelerate high-quality workforce intermediaries and funder collaboratives in 5 communities over 5 years

2 Strengthen workforce ecosystems through collaboratively shifting practice, funding, and policy

3 Show population-level improvement to put 50,000 more young adults on the pathway to economic mobility

Join the movement by design.

The future of work and our economy requires connecting young adults to opportunity.

Contact us to learn more about how we can put JobsFirst to work with you.

jobsfirst.org