

Glossary of Key Work-Based Learning Terms

High-quality work-based learning is a foundational element of a strong, local, diverse talent pipeline; through these spectrum of opportunities, youth become more prepared to succeed in a career. These agreed-upon work-based learning definitions¹ provide a common understanding and shared language for DC stakeholders and ensure that practitioners and policy-makers alike are all working from the same set of expectations as we strive to ensure that all DC youth have access to high-quality work-based learning.

TERM	DEFINITION	SOURCE(S)
Work-Based Learning	Work-based learning (WBL) is a continuum of experiences and interactions between students and employers or community professionals, typically in workplace settings. WBL provides the opportunity for youth to learn about professions (e.g. Career Exploration activity such as career fairs), build employability skills (e.g. Career Preparedness experience such as an internship), and fosters in-depth, first-hand engagement within the given career field (e.g. Career Launch opportunity such as apprenticeship). WBL is aligned to CTE curriculum standards and instruction. When executed with fidelity, high-quality work-based learning improves career readiness.	Modified from the US Department of Education's Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act - V
Apprenticeship	Apprenticeship is an industry-driven, high-quality career pathway where employers can develop and prepare their future workforce, and individuals can obtain paid work experience, classroom instruction, mentorship, and a portable credential. Apprenticeships typically last between 1-5 years and require 2,000+ hours of training in addition to 144+ hours of classroom instruction. The U.S. Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) takes the basic apprenticeship model of paid on-the-job training and educational instruction and provides additional rigor, standards, and quality.	Modified from U.S. Department of Labor and DC Department of Employment Services
Career Assets	Career assets are the set of tools, skills, experiences, and competencies that an individual has acquired or has access to, that are associated with career readiness and success. According to research by Bain & Company, DC students who acquired career assets while in high school had significantly better outcomes in terms of annual wages and feelings of financial stability, job fulfillment, and optimism about the future. The Bain & Company study identified work-based learning as a primary example of career asset building activities.	DC Policy Center
Career Exploration	Career Exploration is a category of work-based learning that includes opportunities for young people to learn about a variety of professions, fields, and companies. Opportunities are typically targeted toward high school students, and include guest speakers, job shadowing, field trips, company tours, career fairs, etc.	Modified from Bain & Company and Jobs for the Future
Career Launch	Career Preparedness is a category of work-based learning that includes deep work experience and training (usually 2-3 years and 2,000 hours) with aligned classroom experience, for youth to become fully prepared with relevant expertise, experience, and postsecondary credentials and certifications. Opportunities are typically targeted toward youth aged 17+ and include apprenticeships and training to job programs.	Modified from Bain & Company and Jobs for the Future

Career Preparedness	Career Preparedness is a category of work-based learning that includes opportunities for youth that are short (usually 1 month - 1 year, and about 400 hrs) work experiences to build knowledge and employability skills in an identified profession and company. Opportunities are typically targeted toward youth aged 14+ and include internships and pre-apprenticeships.	Modified from Bain & Company and Jobs for the Future
Career Ready	Career readiness involves three major skill areas: 1) core academic skills and the ability to apply those skills to concrete situations in order to function in the workplace; 2) employability skills (such as critical thinking, responsibility, reliability, timeliness) that are essential in any career area; and 3) technical, job-specific skills related to a specific career pathway. When executed with fidelity, high-quality work-based learning improves young-adults' career readiness.	Modified from Association for Career and Technical Education
Early Career Outcomes	Early career outcomes refer to the employment, income, and educational attainment (including degrees, certificates, and credentials) of young adults between 5 to 15 years after graduating from an education or training system.	DC Policy Center
Employability Skills	Employability skills are general skills that are necessary for success in the labor market at all employment levels and in all sectors. These skills, which may be taught through the education and workforce development systems, fall into three broad categories: Applied Knowledge, Effective Relationships, and Workplace Skills. Employability skills are sometimes known as 21st century skills, soft skills, durable skills, or job readiness skills.	U.S. Department of Education DC Department of Employment Services America Succeeds
Good Jobs	A Good Job is a full-time role which 1) is in a high-demand, high-growth sector, 2) provides opportunities for skills and career advancement, and 3) provides a living wage that provides family-sustaining income and benefits (~\$46K ¹ for one adult in DC). ²	Modified from Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program and U.S. Department of Labor MIT Living Wage Calculator
Industry-Specific Skills	Industry-specific skills are the specialized knowledge and expertise required to perform specific tasks and use specific tools and programs in real world situations. These skills are typically acquired through occupational skills training or career and technical education programming.	Modified from the US Department of Education's Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act - V
Internship	Internships give students the opportunity to explore potential careers and apply the learning from their high school or college coursework to a meaningful and relevant on-the-job experience. Internships are designed to give students and recent graduates short-term (typically less than 1,000 hours) experience, and are not necessarily designed to lead directly to a full-time position. Sometimes, internships or other experiential learning positions are built into educational programs, and students receive academic credit for completing them.	Modified from U.S. Department of Labor
Local Talent Pipeline	A strong local talent pipeline is a key product of a system that connects and catalyzes employers and educators (K-12, postsecondary, and training programs) to ensure residents are prepared for, hired into, and succeeding in good jobs within a local economy.	Modified from DC Policy Center and Colorado Workforce Development Council
Postsecondary Plan	Postsecondary planning is a proactive effort beginning as early as middle school to empower students and families with information on postsecondary pathways (two or four-year college, apprenticeship, military, career training program, direct to career), goal-setting, and actionable steps to take to progress toward their postsecondary goals. Several states mandate an individualized postsecondary plan for students per state legislation, however DC does not.	Modified from DC Public Schools , State of Wisconsin , State of Arizona , and State of Colorado

Pre-Apprenticeship	Pre-apprenticeship programs prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a Registered Apprenticeship (RA) or other high-quality apprenticeship program, and ultimately a career. Pre-apprenticeships may last from a few weeks to a few months and may or may not be paid. Pre-apprenticeship programs have varied program elements; however, at the core, places an individual on a pathway to become successful in an apprenticeship. Programs are sometimes, but not always, housed at high schools and community colleges. Sometimes pre-apprenticeship and youth apprenticeship programs are used interchangeably.	Modified from U.S. Department of Labor and State of Maryland
Youth	Ages 16-24	
Youth Apprenticeship⁴	Youth apprenticeship programs start in high school and are specifically designed for youth ages 16-24 to combine academic and technical classroom instruction with work experience through a Registered Apprenticeship (RA), or other high-quality apprenticeship program. They provide the foundation for students to choose among multiple postsecondary pathways – to enroll in college, to enter an apprenticeship program, begin full-time employment, or a combination. A more technical definition of Youth Apprenticeship can be found here .	Modified from U.S. Department of Labor

¹ Definitions will be reviewed and updated as needed on an annual basis.

² This figure is up to date as of June 2023. MIT updates data annually in the first quarter using the best available data as of December 31 of the previous year.