THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION
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PATHWAYS TO HIGH-QUALITY JOBS FOR YOUNG ADULTS

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Panel Discussion:

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Closing Remarks:

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. BERUBE: Good morning. It's a very good morning for some of us here. (Laughter) Welcome to -- oh, I know. (Audience groaning) Would you like 90 minutes on where the Red Socks rank among the greatest MLB teams of all time or something else? (Laughter) Okay, I'll put this away. Thank you for joining us here on a Monday morning at the Brookings Institution. I'm Alan Berube. I'm the Deputy Director for the Metropolitan Policy Program here. We're the division that works with cities and regions and states on building a stronger economy that works for more people, which is really at the heart of this morning's discussion.

We're gathered here at a time when the U.S. labor market I think seems really as strong as it has in about a generation. The headline unemployment rate is 3.7 percent, median household income has reached an all time high because, in fact, wages, which really had been stagnant for a long time after the Great Recession have begun to rise again. You're seeing big companies like Amazon raising their wage floors. But the broader rise I think that we see in inequality in the American economy is reflected in the labor market too and in outcomes in the labor market. And that's particularly true I think for younger Americans who are just beginning to find their footing in the world of work. For 25-29 years olds, for instance, you see outcomes in the labor market that vary greatly depending upon factors like race, family income, educational attainment. Just take an example, in 2016 87 percent of 25-29 year olds had a bachelor's degree and were employed, compared to 71 percent of those who had only a high school diploma, and 53 percent of those who lacked a high school diploma. That's about 2 million young people in those latter categories who aren't in work.

And beyond those factors we know -- all of us who are lucky enough to be in this room this room this morning know from our own experiences the other advantages that helped us to get a foothold in the world of work. When I was 15 years old I had an older friend who worked in a restaurant, you know, helped to get me a job there as a bus boy, got me trained as a cook. And this was as a cook in a Mexican

restaurant -- me. No soy Mexicano. The point being that I think sort of having friends and caring adults with connections in the labor market matters a great deal for your ultimate outcomes too.

So the project you're going to hear about today is an effort to really get past the anecdotes and to begin to get to the bottom of what makes a different for young people's chances, not only to get a job, any job, but also to get a good job that puts them on the pathway to family sustaining earnings. And as the authors are going to explain, their focus isn't kids like me, right, kids who had a lot of advantages growing up, but kids who don't have those advantages, kids who need really I think our beset thinking and collective action to make sure we help them reach their potential in an increasingly uncertain and dynamic world of work.

So I want to acknowledge and thank the Annie E. Casey Foundation and State Farm for their interest in and support of this important project. Thank you also to all of our partners at Child Trends for the deep and valuable expertise that you all brought to this project.

So in terms of this morning, you're first going to hear about the report from three of the authors. Those include my Brookings Metro colleague Martha Ross, and Kristin Anderson Moore and Kelly Murphy from Child Trends.

After that, our friend, Isaac Castillo from Venture Philanthropy Partners here in the DC region is going to moderate a discussion about the report's findings with what I know will be a really terrific panel. And I believe everyone's bios are in your packets, if you got one of these on the way in.

And then, finally, our partner and expert, Allison Gerber, from the Casey Foundation, is going to offer some closing reflections to conclude the program.

So thank you again for spending your Monday morning with us, and please join me in welcoming Martha, Kris, and Kelly to the stage. (Applause)

MS. ROSS: Good morning. Thank you, Alan. And thank you all for coming. This has been a very productive partnership with Child Trends. And I'd like to

thank the other co-authors who made this work and this presentation possible, Nicole Bateman from Brookings and Vanessa Sacks and Alex DeMand from Child Trends. I'd also like to thank, as Alan said, the Annie E. Casey Foundation for their support and as well as State Farm.

And before I launch into things, let me give you a brief overview of how the presentation will go. I will talk a little bit about our research question and our data source, then Kris will describe two key definitions, and then Kelly, who I think of as our methodological maestro, will describe our analytical approach and findings. Then I'll come back and discuss the implication and recommendations.

Our research question is to examine how young people find their way to high-quality jobs in adulthood. Kris will describe how we measure job quality, and we put a lot of thought into it. I will add that we focused on job quality at age 29 specifically, or 30 or 31, depending on data, to allow people enough time to finish high school, enroll in college or training, maybe have some detours along the way, and have time to settle into a job that may have career potential and pay enough to live on.

And we also wanted to narrow our focus and look specifically at young adults less likely to enroll in and complete college right after high school because, believe it or not, researchers do not set out to prove the obvious and we were not interested in proving that the best predictor of having a high quality job is to come from a middle class family, go immediately to college, graduate on time, and then launch your career. We wanted to focus on people for whom that path is less accessible and less clearly marked. And Kris will tell you more about how we estimated who those folks are.

Then our goal was to identify whether there were particular education, training, employment, or other experiences in people's teens and in their early to mid-20s associated with getting a high-quality job. And to do that you need data. We use the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997. This is a nationally representative survey of people born between 1980 and 1984. Maybe some of you are in this room. And it was launched in 1997 when the respondents were in their teens. And it has followed them

over time through 17 rounds of questions thus far every year or so, asking a detailed set of questions about their lives and experiences, including education and employment. And next up, Kris will describe how we use this data.

MR. MOORE: Thanks, Martha. Well, what makes for a good job? It isn't any one thing we decided, but an amalgam of positive characteristics. We identified four constructs. Wages matter, of course, but so do fringe benefits, like health insurance and retirement plans. And work hours also matter, with too many hours or too few hours being undesirable. Though what is just right does vary across individuals.

We were able to measure these constructs with data from the NLSY, as Martha said. And, fortunately, the data base also asked a subjective question about job satisfaction. This added dimension allows us to recognize that some people are very satisfied with working long hours, working in the gig economy, or working in a job they love, even though the pay is modest. Coding these four constructs on a common metric though was of course a challenge.

We decided on a common code comprised of three categories, low-quality, medium-quality, and high-quality. For wages, zero is low-quality and it's coded if the respondent's wage on their main job falls below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. One is medium-quality, and that's a wage that falls between 201-399 percent of poverty, while two equals high-quality. That's a wage that falls at 400 percent or more.

Fringe benefits were coded similarly based on the information in the NLSY, which covered whether workers get paid leave, have a retirement plan, or have health insurance. Low-quality, or zero, is coded if they don't get any of these benefits. Medium is coded if they get one or two of these, while high-quality means they have all three kinds of benefits.

Work hours is really tough. We know that fewer hours generally means lower income, while long hours can undermine physical and mental health. So we decided to isolate the extremes. Low-quality was defined as either 1-20 hours or 61 or more hours. Medium-quality was defined as either 21-30 or 51-60 hours, while high-

quality category includes 31-50 hours.

Finally, the measure of job satisfaction is coded in a pretty straight forward manner. Low-quality is coded when the respondent says they dislike their job or they think it's okay. Medium-quality is when they like their job somewhat, and high-quality is when they say they like their job very much.

So each of these attributes has a score of zero, one, or two, and each is equally weighted. So the measure of job quality is an index that runs from zero to eight. This is our dependent variable, the outcome of interest. It has a decent distribution as you can see here. We think of low-quality as zero, one, or two, and that's 2 percent, 4, or 8 percent. Medium-quality is three, four or five -- most people there -- 9, 17 and 21 percent. And higher-quality jobs are in the 20, 13 and 4 percent for those categories.

Turning to our sample, we wanted to examine the predictors of a good job among young adults from backgrounds that were disadvantaged. Again, we didn't resonate to a notion that there's just one type of disadvantage. So we chose several measures of disadvantage that might characterize the background of a teenager. These include family income, at or less than 200 percent of the federal poverty line, neither parent has a post-secondary degree, or family receipt of public assistance, or the respondent's mother was in her teens when her first child was born. And, of course, to study job quality we needed a sample of young adults who were working. We looked at young adults at age 29. But if they were not working then we looked at age 30 or 31 so as not to boost cases. So our analytic sample is then employed young adults from disadvantaged backgrounds.

This chart notes that most young adults are working, but young adults from backgrounds that were disadvantaged are less likely to be working than those who did not have any of these disadvantages in their background, 79 percent compared with 90 percent. Of course, young adults from disadvantaged backgrounds may work at quite different jobs than young adults who were not similarly disadvantaged. This is of course why we wanted to study good jobs.

And we do find that young adults from disadvantaged backgrounds are not only less likely to be working, but if they are employed they are less likely to have a good job. For this descriptive analysis we defined a good job as scoring six to eight on the job quality index. This chart shows that just 38 percent of employed young adults from disadvantaged backgrounds had good jobs, compared with 48 percent of those were not similarly disadvantaged.

Now, Kelly will provide an overview of our analytic strategy and results.

MS. MURPHY: So to answer a research question, we conducted descriptive analyses, like the frequencies that Kris just shared earlier, as well as a path analysis, which is an extension of multiple regression. And the use of the path analysis allowed us to account for the relationship between each predictor variable and our outcome variable of job quality at age 29, which really enabled us to get at the unique or additive influence of each predictor variable on job quality. And, finally, to address issues with missing data, which is really common in longitudinal research, we used a statistical estimator known as Full Information Maximum Likelihood, or FIML.

We grouped our predictor variable into four categories, education, training, employment, and a broad category that we refer to as demographic or other variables. And we included this last category because research has shown that demographic factors, such as gender, race, ethnicity, cognitive ability, as well as life experiences, such as incarceration or teen parenthood, are all related to later employment outcomes. Thus, by including these factors in our model, we are able to statistically control for their effect on job quality and really get at the more unique effects of various education, training, and employment experiences.

And, as Martha mentioned earlier, we are interested in understanding how a variety of experiences from age 16 all the way through age 27 affected job quality at age 29. And because these experiences look very different at different periods in one's life, we developed three age windows. So we defined our first age window as adolescence, spanning from ages 16-19. And this age window included predictor

variables, such as participation in a career training and technical education program, or CTE program, participation in workforce training programs outside of high school, having a paid internship, and various metrics of teen employment. The second age window, which we refer to as emerging adulthood, spans from ages 20-23 and includes experiences such as participating in a training program, unemployment, and having a paid internship, as well as wages at age 23. And our last age window is young adulthood, which we define as spanning ages 24-27, and includes variables such as highest degree earned at age 27, earning a training certificate by age 27, and unemployment.

And before I move on to the results, I just want to explain two terms that will likely be unfamiliar. And that's because we created them for this analysis. So the NLSY '97 has seven different categories of career and technical education programs, however, due to sample size constraints we couldn't look at each program by itself. So to address this we group the programs into two different categories. So we categorize cooperative education programs, internships, apprenticeships, and mentoring programs as relationship based CTE programs. And this is because their program design makes it likely that students will develop a positive relationship with an adult outside of school. Internships and cooperative education programs strive to place students in workplaces with engaged supervisors who provide guidance and support. And the whole point of mentoring is really to build a supportive relationship.

So we recognize that program implementation and quality varies, and we couldn't be sure how strong the relationships that were developed in these programs actually were, but still in that end we thought threading together this thread of relationships was strong enough to group these three programs together.

The other group includes career majors, tech prep, school sponsored enterprise, and job shadowing. And, the first three are all school based, and while students can and do build strong relationships with teachers, we thought the relationships with an adult outside of school was notable. Job shadowing does take place in the

workplace and involves a relationship with a working adult, but it's typically of a much shorter duration than these relationship based ones and is designed more for career exposure than substantive work over time.

So moving on to the results. As one would expect, cognitive test scores, coming of age during the Great Recessive, experiencing incarceration and unemployment, obtaining a high school diploma or post-secondary degree are all related to job quality at age 29. We found that both teen employment, which we defined as having a job between the ages of 16-18, and participation in a relationship based CTE program significantly predicted higher job quality at age 29. And the positive effects of the relationship based CTE program is particularly notable for two reasons. The first is simply that later job quality was only significantly affected by CTE programs that were relationship based. The second is that although research has generally found that the effects of participation in training programs fade away over time, this result indicates that participation in a relationship based CTE program in high school can effect job quality over 10 years later.

We also found that higher earnings at age 23 was associated with higher job quality at age 29. And given that we controlled for multiple experiences and background characteristics, this finding is notable because it reflects that no matter a young person's education, work history, or cognitive test scores, early good jobs as measured by wages predict later good jobs.

Participation in a training program between ages 24 and 27 was associated with higher job quality at age 29, as was being married or cohabiting at age 27. And interestingly, although we found in the descriptive analyses that being black was associated with lower job quality at age 29, once we controlled for education, employment, training, experiences, and other background variables, the difference was no longer significant. In addition, being Hispanic was associated with greater job quality at age 29 than being non Hispanic white.

Finally, we found that even after controlling for education, employment,

training, and background variables such as cognitive test scores, being female was associated with significantly lower job quality at age 29 than being male.

Now I'll pass it to Martha who will discuss the implications that these findings have for practice and policy.

MS. ROSS: Thank you, Kelly. So what do we do with this information? We have some thoughts. We have four specifically. The first is to strengthen work based learning in high school. In high school CTE programs, internships, apprenticeships and co-ops all allow students to learn workplace skills through working in ways that are difficult to replicate in the classroom. And the recent reauthorization of the federal Perkins legislation should provide more momentum and funding on this front. I should note here that although this recommendation is limited to high school CTE programs, because that's what our data was and I'm trying to be disciplined, there's a strong argument that work based learning is going to be beneficial beyond the confines of high school CTE.

The second recommendation is to keep pushing on college access and increase efforts on college completion of both associate's degrees and bachelor's degrees with a strong focus on quality and equity. We're not talking about diploma mills or reducing rigor or screening out students who are judged less likely to succeed. We're talking about how schools can redesign their programs and allocate their resources so that when they enroll students they have a clearly defined goal, plan, and capacity to graduate those students that includes proactive advising, financial aid, and assistance with emergencies, restructuring course offerings so that the path to degree is clear and user friendly, greater alignment with high school, including dual enrollment and early college, in which high school students take college courses, and bridge programs to help prepare students for college level work if necessary.

Third is on ramps to employment, particularly for teens and young adults without post-secondary credentials. Here I'm going to quote someone because it's always a relief to find someone who says what you were thinking, only better. So she

said, "In friendlier economic times we could largely rely on tossing young people into the economy as a way of socializing them and welcoming them into adulthood and responsibility. That option has now ended." So that quote is from Lauren Resnick in a book called "Transitions in Work and Learning".

These on ramps can take different forms. They can be work based learning in high school, just what we discussed, as well as stronger career exploration and advising. Guidance counselors in high schools, this is not typically part of their job description, and they're already pretty overloaded. And for older youth past high school or for those who have left high school, these programs are more likely to be offered by nonprofits or community groups, perhaps post-secondary institutions, and they will involve work readiness, academic and skills training, as well as mentoring, paid employment or stipends in support of services.

For each of these recommendations, though, it's important not to fall into the trap of mistaking access for quality. Access to work based learning in high school is not sufficient. It has to be good work based learning. That takes legwork. Access to job training is insufficient, it has to be good job training. That also takes legwork, purpose, and clarity.

And, lastly, I would not be a researcher if I did not say this, we would like to see more research and action into the idea suggested by our CTE finding, that relationships matter. This is not a new insight, but this insight is not always reflected in program design and staffing in the funding of youth employment and training programs. What would it look like if a core principle of every youth employment and education training program was to build a positive supportive relationship between a young person and a caring adult. Howe would you do it, what would the effects be, how would you measure it? And not just measure it from a research point of view, but how would the program measure it so they can see how they're doing and tweak their program along the way.

In conclusion -- I could opine further (laughter) ---- but believe it or not we

have something better planned. We have put together an absolutely terrific panel and these folks are going to share their experiences and knowledge about setting young people up for success. (Applause)

MR. CASTILLO: Good morning, everyone. How's my audio? (Audience responds) Okay, good. Thank you very much. So, again, I want to congratulate the authors on this paper, which has a lot of really useful and necessary findings for our field when we're talking about youth development and what it takes to improve the lives of all youth, particularly youth that are defined as disadvantaged.

What I wanted to do with this panel today is give you a little bit of a view based on the expertise of the various panelists of what a youth may experience as part of this journey when they are in high school and ultimately when they get to the age of about 27-29, when in theory they have "made it" and are set up for the rest of their lives. But before I start into sort of the meat of that, I really wanted to get a good sense of where our panelists came from and also emphasize the importance of our first jobs.

And so my first question to all of the panelists is to tell us what your first or your primary job was in high school and how that has shaped your career going forward. And so I'll model this by starting and saying that my first job was washing concrete trucks for a construction company. And that taught me the importance of being part of a team and understanding that what may seem as a trivial and not important task can have very, very large ramifications on the success of a larger project.

Cynthia, why don't you tell us about your first job or your high school job?

MS. GROSS: So my very first job was in 2011 when I was a junior in high school. I was a hostess at a restaurant, turned server, I guess. It really taught me a lot about responsibility and to not just think about myself, but that I was representing a company, and to just see the bigger picture I guess.

MR. CASTILLO: Farhana:

MS. HOSSAIN: So I was a cashier at a local coffee shop and at the same time a camp counselor over the summer. So my first jobs I interacted with the

larger humanity for the first time outside of my home and school. So the first thing is, of course, interacting with strangers meant learning how to communicate with a wide range of people and their communication styles and a skill that's never not necessary. The other thing that I would say was important was the importance of communicating what you want very early on. In the camp there were various types of opportunities to lead projects related to arts or sports or, you know, music, and if I wanted what I wanted to do I had to speak up. So the importance of speaking up.

MR. CASTILLO: Great. Thank you. Enid?

MS. RAY: So my first job was in a camp. I was an archery instructor. And what I learned from that job was all the things I didn't want to do in the future. (Laughter) That I really did not like the population of seven to eight year old kids. (Laughter) That putting arrows in their hand and arming me just with a bow and a whistle to try to control them was perhaps not a good idea. So I took the job because there was a bonus at the end if you made it through the camp you got $1,000. So it also helped me understand that I was motivated by those good job standards, including the pay.

MR. CASTILLO: And hopefully everyone survived, right, Enid?

Pat?

MS. McGUIRE: Well, there's a theme here, because my first job was as a camp counselor too, but in the typical style of Catholic religious nuns before risk management became know to us, this was a day camp run by nuns outside of Philadelphia. And when I arrived at the camp I was told that I was in charge of the horses. I had never been with a horse before (laughing) and I had to teach kids riding. So I learned how to take care of the horses, I learned how to take care of the children and make sure they didn't get trampled, and I did a lot of cleaning up after the horses, which has served me well in my job since then. (Laughter)

MR. CASTILLO: And I really wanted to thank all the panelists for sharing. I really wanted to start off with that because I do think it reflects the importance of the first and early jobs that this entire very seasoned experience panel has, and even

the continuing effect it has on all our professional lives. And to think about how you have youth and young adults today who may not have that kind of experience, who may not be able to take that first step, and how that can be a barrier to them getting long-term career success.

So I wanted to transition the panel a little bit now to talking about those three age groups and those pathways that were mentioned and highlighted in the research. And I actually wanted to start with Cynthia, because she is the one who has most recently lived this on this panel, and have her talk about her mindset and her journey. You finished high school, what did you think you wanted to do with your life at that point and what were your options, and what was sort of your pathway for those first couple of years after high school?

MS. GROSS: I really had no idea what I was doing after high school. A four year university wasn't really an option for me financially. So I just worked a couple -- or several jobs trying to balance work and school, because I was going to Montgomery College part-time. Yeah, I was really lost. I didn't know what I was doing.

MR. CASTILLO: And Farhana, Enid, Pat, is that a typical experience for many young adults?

QUESTIONER: Yes, I think that's absolutely true, that many young people are not quite sure what they want to do. They're undecided and so they have to experiment a lot.

QUESTIONER: So I'm going to put some numbers to that. Like the 6 year completion rate at 2 year universities is under 40 percent and about 60 percent of people who go to community college have to work more than 20-25 hours a week, which means that financial need is a pressing concern for community college students and their pathway in trying to figure out what they want to do next. And this is a completion factor as well.

MS. RAY: And I think from my perspective in terms of the group of young people that I work with, that sense of loss of direction can start much earlier,

especially in the disconnected disengaged youth population. So in Connecticut there's over 40,000 disconnected disengaged youth, many of whom don't see a pathway and that starts really early. So they're kind of out of the parameters that we're talking about even in the research. So it's interesting to think about the developmental arc of when young people kind of figure it out.

MR. CASTILLO: So let's use that as a transition. And, Farhana, I wanted you to talk a little bit about sort of your experience and your research in high school career and technical education programs. What have you seen that has worked, what do you think is good guidance in light of the research that we just heard about to improve the quality of high school CTE programs?

MS. HOSSAIN: Sure. So the research presented here today aligns with a prior evidence on CTE and employment strategies for high school students, and it advances the research base. You know, CTE programs have the potential to bolster mobility for disadvantaged students, but their design and implementation matters. And those with more structured employer partnerships where students receive significant amount of work based learning opportunities and have time to build relationships with their supervisor who can recommend them, who can act as a network for them going forward, those types of relationships are more likely to produce better outcomes.

As a researcher I have to -- the most rigorous and causal evidence that we have available for high school programs is for career academies. And these are small learning communities within high schools that combine academic and occupational training and work based learning with structured employer partnerships in specific sectors like health or finance or IT. So an RCT done a few years ago now found long lasting impact on earnings, especially for young men of color. And they demonstrated the value of structured employer partnerships in the high school setting.

Interestingly, the career academies did not have an impact on high school graduation or post-secondary outcomes. Their impact was on earnings, even eight years later, which, you know, having a post-secondary credential and a high school

diploma, as this new research affirms, obviously affects the probability of high-quality jobs in the long run. And it's likely more important in today's economy than when the study was completed.

So in light of that, you know, there are a couple of things I wanted to touch on. Since career academies and the CTE field has evolved from just vocational education to something more dynamic and a lot more multifaceted, there are lots of different types of CTE programs now. And states have been -- most of the innovation and policy action have happened on the state level.

And two things, one is CTE programs are now far more tied to post-secondary credentials and creating pathways into two year or four year or training programs out of high school rather than just employer partnerships. They're far more focused on understanding sectoral opportunities in terms of the economic trends and looking at where labor market growths are going to be. There are also in the past, you know, there is variation in CTE programs in terms of addressing the needs of employers and goal of economic competitiveness as opposed to the needs of participants and the goal of equity in education. And I think the current crop of more effective CTE programs are bridging the gap between the two a lot more effectively.

So like California. In California the Partnership Academy Program emphasized equity by requiring that at least 50 percent of participants be students who meet at-risk criteria while also encouraging the growth of CTE programs that correspond to employment sectors. That wasn't always the case in the past. There were more stringent screening criteria for CTE programs because employers wanted a certain type of employee.

And in New York, as an example, the Summer Job Program there has been piloting different types of employer focused internships during the summer for more vulnerable youth populations, like youth coming out of foster care or youth coming out of juvenile justice connections.

So to sum it all up, the rigorous research -- as Martha said, I wouldn't be

a researcher if I didn't say it -- there's still a lack of rigorous evidence around exactly what type of programs produce long-term outcomes, but there are promising initiatives that really take into account -- labor market trends that take into account how to work with employers more intentionally, how to engage private sector employers more intentionally to build high school pathways.

MR. CASTILLO: Right. Thank you, Farhana. And I think one of those promising organizations and service delivery methods is Our Piece of the Pie, which is Enid's organization. So, Enid, you mentioned earlier about having to have different pathways and different opportunities for youth, because even in high school you may have students that fall off a given path.

Tell us a little about OPP's work and how you work with students while they're in high school or if they've dropped out of high school or are recent high school graduates, to get them connected to the labor market.

MS. RAY: So we work with young people ages 14-24 who are disengaged, on the verge of dropping out, or completely disconnected a year or more from high school or formal schooling. So part of the question for the panel and how we think about this work is that there are two spheres of operation. There's the work that can happen in high schools and fabulous things, like learning academies, but what happens when young people can't access or don't access? What are we creating in the community to continue to support what is a very viable workforce? So that's what OPP does. And centric to our model is the youth development specialist, which you heard about in the research. It's an adult that connects with young people, that helps them overcome their barriers, that provides them real time -- as in now -- supports, emergency housing, mental health, so that they can stay on that pathway.

I'm going to date myself by saying we develop what I call the TripTiks for our young people. Those of you -- before the advent of GPS (laughter) know that there was a place that we back in the day, as my kids say, used to go and you could get everything mapped out if you were driving across country. And what we've learned in our

work at OPP, and you see it in ways now, that there can be the straight route, there can be the route you take when there is too much traffic, still get you to the same place, and there can be the scenic route. So no one route is the same for every young person. So the work of OPP is really to create those opportunities that emphasize earning and learning. We're under about $9 million in terms of our budget, but about $2 million of that money goes right back into wages for youth, into the greater Hartford community.

So many of us are earning and learning right now. We're sitting here, we're learning about new research, and we're earning where we work. Well, why can't we do that for young people?

MR. CASTILLO: Thank you very much. So sometimes, even when you have your TripTiks, the road is closed and you have to take a completely different route. And so, Cynthia, I wanted to talk to you about your journey. You mentioned that you started thinking about and attended Montgomery College, but for a variety of reasons that didn't work out and you transitioned to another example of a very successful job training program, Per Scholas.

So I wanted us to hear from you sort of what was going on your life, what allowed you to make that transition, and tell us a little bit about the program.

MS. GROSS: So Per Scholas is an IT training program. They give you the opportunity to get several certifications. I went for my A+ certification. Initially I went because I was just not making enough money at any of the jobs that I was working at. At times I was working two jobs at the same time and still could not survive off of that. So actually earlier this year I was talking to a friend who did a program like Per Scholas, but it was in Virginia. And he brought it up to me, yeah, it's a great opportunity, it's completely free, you just have to dedicate 10 weeks to it. And I was like, wow, that's kind of a long time, but in the end it will pay off, which it has been.

So the certification that I went for, I had to go for 10 weeks. It was Monday through Friday from 9-5. And it was a lot of work. So I applied in April and literally the next day after I applied I got a call from Melissa, who is actually here in the

audience today, and she asked me if I was interested in coming in for an interview. And I went the very next day, I took the test, I got in, and she told me, oh, well, you can start on Monday, that's when the next course starts. And I was like, my job, I can't just leave my job. So luckily I didn't have like any major bills to pay, so I could save enough money until the next course started and that's when I started the course. And here I am, how many months later is that now -- five months later -- four. And I worked now at New America as a desktop support engineer, which is pretty awesome. I love my new job. (Applause)

MR. CASTILLO: Full-time job, right, Cynthia?

MS. GROSS: Yeah, full-time.

MR. CASTILLO: Benefits?

MS. GROSS: Yes.

MR. CASTILLO: Right. Tell me a little bit about the -- you emphasized that the training itself is a lot of work. You're talking 10 weeks, 8 hours a day, 5 days a week, unpaid, right?

MS. GROSS: Yes.

MR. CASTILLO: And so you mentioned saving up to be able to take advantage of this opportunity. When you and I talked earlier, you talked about some of your friends, some of your classmates who had to work at the same time going through this training, and not everyone has the opportunity to attend these types of trainings that are unpaid. Tell me what you observed from those individuals and how hard they had to work and the decisions they had to make.

MS. GROSS: Honestly, I have no idea how some of my classmates were able to work at the same time, because you were going to school all day, you weren't getting paid, and then you still had to go home and study for the next day. And you had like tests every day and you had to maintain a certain GPA to stay in the course. You couldn't be late more than three times, you couldn't miss more than one day. But mind you, everything was free. The tests are free too. They seemed stressed. I was

stressed, so I can only imagine how stressed they were. But they pulled through, we all passed.

MR. CASTILLO: So I'd like to ask the rest of the panel if you in your professional experiences, or personal experience, have witnessed or observed situations where our young adults have had to make decisions between making income and pursuing and finishing these types of job training programs and what it takes to get these individuals through these situations.

MS. HOSSAIN: So my brother graduated from the same Per Scholas program as Cynthia. In his case he had a supportive family member (laughter) willing to vouch for him, because I believe you have to provide some sort of proof, right, that in those 10 weeks someone will support you and you'll have some income and housing stability in order to complete the program. So in my personal life that was just -- we are lucky to have the family support so that my brother could do that and recognizing that it's not just an individual's ability, it's not just -- you know, the support structures that are around them matter immensely to undertake some of these more rigorous high-quality programming.

MS. RAY: I think, you know, what you're hearing too is typology of person that is at stability level to be able to take advantage of the opportunity. That's not the case of all the youth that we see at OPP. You know, some of them we work a lot to get them stabilized. They may have a high school diploma but they've been taking care of a family member or they already have children. And so we are working on those things that quickly become the disruptors in workforce and that employers often have little tolerance for.

We do have a program though that's an advanced manufacturing program that's an associate's degree certification. I am amazed at the supports that we provide as an organization, from transportation to lunch when students are on campus -- because they're there all day. So if their money is going to childcare they're not going to have money to eat during the day -- to, you know, steel toe boots, and what I call right on

time supports. An emergency fund that we have at the agency for when your insurance is about to expire. And it's the only transportation you have, but you can't make the full payment, then we gotcha.

So that's all that it takes when young people aren't at that basic level of stability to be able to take advantage. Now, note I didn't say "ability", I didn't say "promise", I said "stability".

MS. McGUIRE: Well, and all of the above for college students as well. We see exactly the story every single day up at Trinity, where the majority of our students are from the most low income neighborhoods in the District of Columbia, median family income of about $25,000. And there are students who may this morning have decided that they can't afford to come to school today because they're baby needs something extra and they have to buy something for their baby, or they did not realize that the car was out of gas and they're unable to come. It's small barriers to life that the rest of us take for granted. It's not intellectual capacity, it's not desire to be successful. They have that in triplicate, but it's all of these small financial barriers. Family. Family is a big issue. Being a single mom or a single dad is a huge issue and providing support for that -- there are supports for single parents in the communities. We worth this Gen Hope, which is a wonderful organization supporting teen parents in college, but I don't know what's out there to support teen parents or young parents in the workplace, for example.

So we have a lot of talk about support in academic institutions. Employers probably need to come to school and learn how to do that too.

QUESTIONER: I think there's this bias in our society too that once your 18 you're an adult, right. You should be able to handle it all, you should be independent, you can go on adulting now. And we fail to understand that that only comes about for many of us through the support of our families and communities. So when you don't have that, you know, it becomes very difficult. And most of us are adulting in process, right, we're not full-fledged at 18, we're not full-fledged even at 20 or 24 sometimes. Those of us who have -- here, I just sent two to college and I heard, be ready, because

they're going to come back. So those of us who have returning youth in our households know that it takes a long trajectory. But we don't allow the most vulnerable youth in our society to get a pass on that and to get some compassion on that piece.

MS. HOSSAIN: I also wanted to add that some of these programs are also just an entry into a field that requires more training and more education. A lot of these career path initiatives are all about sequencing training so that you can enter and then you have to go get more training if you want to advance up. And in that case, private sector employers, or employers in general, need to be supportive in providing the time and the support that some of these entry level employees may need to advance.

My brother is struggling with that right now, is that he needs to find a part-time program to be able to move up the ladder, but then he has to work at the same time. He was very glad to get the job with the certification, but that's not the end of the pathway.

MR. CASTILLO: And I think, Cynthia, when you and I talked, you mentioned one of the things you really liked about Per Scholas was that they supported you for getting your first certification, but talk to me about the support that continues afterwards as well.

MS. GROSS: So after I got the A+ certification and then I worked at my first job for at least 30 days I was able to get access to certain resources and study tools to get my next cert. And Per Scholas pays for the next two certifications.

MR. CASTILLO: No cost to you, right?

MS. GROSS: Yeah, no cost to me, which is awesome.

MR. CASTILLO: So we've heard a lot about the first two age ranges of a young person's journey, what was called adolescence and emerging adulthood in the research, but I want to transition to young adulthood and really bring in Pat here.

The world has changed. We're no longer in a world where you finish high school, you go directly into a four year college and then your life is set if you get your degree. 2018 is a different world. Can you tell us a little bit about what a typical student

who does get the opportunity to go to a two or four year college looks like now, and what we as a society can do better to support their journey?

MS. McGUIRE: Right. And thank you for that. I love this study by the way. I'm going to make my faculty read it because it's everything we're talking about at Trinity and it's what higher ed needs to be talking about today.

We are not your mom's or dad's or granddad's colleges and universities today. And higher ed needs to come out of its shell and talk more about the fact that traditional and lead institutions are a very small piece of the pie. The majority, more than 75 percent of students who attend college today have what we used to call nontraditional characteristics, but we don't use that anymore. These are the traditional students today -- about 25 percent are parents while they're in college, more than half are over the age of 25, many, many are working full-time or part-time, and the way they define going to college is not fall and spring, but it's continuous enrollment across a period of time in order to earn many different kinds of credentials. We have to stop talking -- I hate the terms two year and four year schools. They are so outmoded. We should just retire those terms. Colleges are about credentialing, and we providing degrees primarily, associate, baccalaureate, master's, doctorates. We also provide certificates and credentials in between time.

College is also a place where a lot of the supports that we're talking are provided institutionally. So one of the things we try to say to students in high school, don't be afraid to think about coming to college because, in fact, you're going to have a lot of help along the way to get to that career that you want to get to. And, by the way, many people will say the first problem many low income high school students have is well, you know, it's too expensive. There is a college for every student in America and we can make it affordable, and many of us do. I mentioned our students at Trinity, we're 85 percent Pell grantees. We figure out how to help students pay for college and we provide a great deal of support.

There's a couple of things colleges need to do. First of all, we need to

blow up the myth of traditionalism. It is killing us in many ways. And all you read about college and all of the -- there's media here -- all the headlines are about Harvard today, right, who gets into Harvard. Well, you know, Harvard is this teeny tiny pea compared to the ocean of higher education. So we should worry less about Harvard and worry more about broad access higher education.

The second thing we have to do as colleges and universities is stop acting like the notion of P20 is a bad idea. And what do I mean by that? We're all educators, we all should be working together from Pre-K all the way through the highest degree levels you can obtain. At Trinity we have had many dynamic discussions recently with the DC public schools, with some of the charter schools, with other institutions about how we can build stronger bridges. We do find that there are preparatory issues that defeat the desire of students to get into their careers. And I'm going to cite an example of a stumbling block. So we get a lot of students coming to Trinity who want to be nurses and they are so driven by the idea of being a nurse, but then they realize they have to take calculus and they have to take chemistry and they have to take anatomy and physiology. And suddenly that dream falls apart because they are ill prepared for these courses at the collegiate level.

So part of the discussion we're having with DC public schools and other schools is how can we get into at least high school, if not middle school, to begin to prepare students academically for the career pathways they want to pursue. What a nurse may need might be different from what an IT specialist may need, although everybody needs math and reading and writing. And we've talked about how to build a career pathway bridge so that by the time those nursing students get to us they're not daunted by the idea that they really have to do math. Some of the students don't know that being a nurse means you have to touch people, for example. Many, many low income students do not have professional role models in their lives, not just in their families, but in their lives. They have no idea what these careers or professions look like. They've heard about them, but they just do not know the day to day practical experience

of that.

So colleges and universities have to do that. The second thing we have to do is get over this four year education thing. Do you know there's 30 million people in this country who started college and have not completed -- 30 million. You read all about colleges having a swoon because their enrollments are going down, meanwhile 30 million of our former students are out there who need to come back. Cynthia is going to come back to college some day. I have no doubt about that. She will find a way back because at some point she's not going to want to be on the help desk, she's going to want to manage all the people on the help desk, and then she's going to want to run the company. She's going to want to be the president of New America some day. So we're going to get her back to college. And that's lifelong learning. We should talk more about lifelong learning and less about four year degrees or two year degrees or what you do when you're 18.

I'm okay with students not going to college when they're 18. Many students are ill prepared to start college right out of high school, but there is this problem with the drive for college access in high schools. We've been through about 20 years of the college access movement and it's great to say that colleges should be more open to a broader array of students, but if the students are not ready it's unfair to them. It dashes their hopes in many ways. Have a structured couple of gap years where students actually work is not a bad idea at all. Colleges should be helpers in that.

The final thing is, we do internships too and we also have realized that the students who are engaged in employer relationships while they're in college are far better students and far likely to graduate because they see what's waiting for them at the other end. And most of our students have their full-time jobs before they graduate because they've been so motivated to get that done.

So bravo for this report, we love it.

MR. CASTILLO: Go ahead, Enid.

MS. RAY: You know, I just want to add two pieces that highlight what

happens then when students go into post-secondary. Part of what we deal with on the relational piece with the youth development specialist is the reaction of family, family that's so important in supporting a young person. When that young person then begins to walk a path that's unfamiliar to them, it is a lot of pressure. All the sudden they may be losing the breadwinner, the person who's there during emergencies, and that pressure only increases. And we see a lot of our students saying, miss, I can't go because things are falling apart at home without me.

So we don't expect that in our traditional frame of college is the time of joy, exploration, and living your best life. For many of our young people it really becomes a time of anguish because they're navigating two worlds.

The other piece that I would highlight too is the employer engagement. And I want to give a shout out to the gen work that's happening with Annie E. Casey. And for OPP, we spend a lot of time with employers coaching them on how to be supportive and more flexible with our young people so that that first tardy doesn't mean that you're out, so that the time that you forget your steel toe boots at home because you were dropping a sibling off at school and then trying to get to your internship is a moment where the employer says, look, you're not ready. So what we try to do is cultivate through the YDS that relationship with employers so that they also have a partner in us to figure out, okay, how can we hold accountability but also create a successful environment.

MR. CASTILLO: Thank you. So before we turn to questions from the audience, I wanted to ask each of the panelists to share any last or parting thoughts given that we have an audience full of fellow researchers and program practitioners and policy makers and just a variety of people in the audience. Are there any sort of last parting thoughts you'd like to leave about the research, about your experience working with this population?

I'm going to start with Cynthia and go down the line.

MS. GROSS: I guess I'd like to say that I wish that when I was in high

school I had more knowledge on the options that are out there. Like I wish I knew about the program when I was 18 and I would have been somewhere else today. But, whatever. Here I am today. (Laughter)

And I also would like to say that, yes, Pat, I do plan to go back to college. I just needed to get in a better place first to get the funds to go back. But I wish that I knew when I was 18 that it's okay to not go straight to college and to not have everything together, because it would have made me feel a lot better.

MR. CASTILLO: Farhana?

MR. HOSSAIN: The thought that I'd like to end with is that it's disadvantaged youth is a heterogeneous population with different types of needs, different family structures, different abilities, and, as Enid said, those who are connected to an institution often -- we know how to work with them, but often those who drop out -- even though high school graduation rates are rising, they're at a record high, there's still a huge number of youth without a high school diploma, there are still a lot of out of school, out of work youth who are not connecting to community colleges or programs like Per Scholas. And we need solutions for those youth as well, and figure out how to work with them a lot better than we currently do.

MR. CASTILLO: Okay. Thank you. Enid?

MS. RAY: I think my piece comes from a very personal place, because when I look at the students involved in the study, I meet those criteria as a young person. I'm not in the age range, but those were my criteria when I was growing up.

So I will leave you with what I say to my staff all the time at OPP, be the adult you needed at that point in time when you were a young person. And that means all of us then have a role. It's not just the agencies, it's the people in the community, it's our churches, it's our basketball leagues. And we can engage folks in the very basics of information exposure and opportunity for our young people. So be that adult.

MS. McGUIRE: Thank you. I don't know how far and wide Brookings intends to disseminate this report, but this would be -- I'm looking around the room and

thinking this report should be shared with the greater Washington board of trade, with the federal city council, with certainly the mayor and our city council here in DC. It also should be shared with the American Council on Education and all of the major higher ed associations. This is very valuable research; it speaks to issues that we're dealing with across sectors. The business community is talking about it, the higher ed community, and we should have some kind of convening where all those communities come together. And I think Brookings would be ideal to do that. So shout out to you.

MR. CASTILLO: Thank you, Pat. I'm going to use moderator's prerogative to ask one final question of Cynthia, and that is so pretend that this room is filled with high school students, what would your message to those high school students be? Because I think it's important for everyone to hear that.

MS. GROSS: I guess I'd just say what I was saying earlier, where to not feel discouraged if a four year university is not an option for you coming out of high school. And I'd also say that that's not the only path for everybody. Everybody has a different path that was meant for them.

MR. CASTILLO: Okay. Thank you, Cynthia. We'll go ahead and get set up to take a few questions from the audience. So we've got some microphones that are going to be run to you and we'll go ahead and take questions that way for about 10 minutes, maybe a little bit more.

Yes, go ahead if you've got the mic.

QUESTIONER: Hello. Good morning, everyone. Nora Carroll from Emergent LLC. In terms of pathways and workforce preparation, is anyone integrating prior learning assessment techniques which have been used in the institutional environment, but in my view have way more applicability outside of that.

Thank you. Who want to comment?

MS. McGUIRE: We certainly do at Trinity. We give up to 30 credits for prior learning in a portfolio process. But I don't know what employers do or if certification programs do.

MS. RAY: I think the way we use it in our organization is trying to pinpoint what might be a good match for a young person. One of the challenges in this work is that we've gotten very good at defining industry interests. So we have a track in advanced manufacturing, allied health, business, but what happens if you're not interested in that? What happens if you are returning from incarceration and you need rapid employment? So that's where we do rapid certification and matching based on prior experience interest.

MR. CASTILLO: Go ahead, Farhana.

MS. HOSSAIN: You can probably speak to it better than I can, Cynthia, but I know that Per Scholas and other programs like that also use prior learning assessments, including assessments that test for problem solving in addition to obviously the literacy, numeracy assessments as well. But I know that there is involved assessment processes and in certification programs like that.

MS. GROSS: Yes, we took -- I forgot what test it was. It was similar to like the ASFAB test kind of. I'm not really -- it was really easy, it was like a basic math and reading test.

MR. CASTILLO: Next question? You've got a mic coming. Yes, go ahead.

QUESTIONER: My name is Tom Tock. I run Future out at Georgetown. So a couple of speakers have warned us to be careful to not fall into the trap of stressing access to CTE programs rather than focusing on the quality of such programs. So how do we set standards for CTE programs and how do we ensure that they meet them?

MR. CASTILLO: Any one of the panelists? Farhana, go ahead.

(Laughter)

MS. HOSSAIN: Once again, I'll repeat that the current research base has a lot of gaps around exactly how to do that, but in the high school level at least, the -- and I'm more familiar with New York City CTE programs because I've worked with them closely. Things like ensuring that classes are taught by certified CTE teachers, that the

employer partnerships are managed by folks with business skills, employing job developers. I know that New York City CTE programs, especially for their Summer Job initiatives, they are employing workforce intermediaries, which was one of the recommendations in the Brookings paper as well, that kind of -- it's like the dual customer model where they understand the needs of the businesses as well as the needs of the population that they're serving and try to do more effective matches to jobs.

So a lot of initiatives like that are under way, but in terms of causal evidence of what produces long-term outcomes is still fairly narrow.

MS. RAY: And I think the way we approach it from the nonprofit sector, that's where Gen Works, that initiative has been very helpful to OPP and others in Hartford, which is really looking at common practice, looking at quality standards, and the sharing and highlighting and measuring across the city of efforts so that we can fill that void of what is quality for us, what does advance practice and going to scale mean in our community.

MR. CASTILLO: We can take a couple of more questions. If you've got a microphone -- there you go.

MS. BROWN: Hi. My name is Janet Brown. I'm with the Office of Disability Employment Policy at the Department of Labor. I was wondering about the role of disability in the studies and the work that you've been doing with young people who may have had an IEP or 504 in high school and what accommodations or supports are helpful.

MR. CASTILLO: Go ahead, Pat.

MS. McGUIRE: Yes, that is a very important question. And here again at the institutional level, whether it's high schools or colleges, we have many formal processes to assess students and to provide accommodation in whatever way they do. I can speak at the collegiate level. We see many, many students coming with previously undiagnosed learning differences, for example. And a student will be in a class and she'll be struggling with something and our team of advisors and counselors will work with her

and suddenly discover oh, we can help you learn this in a different way. So that's another example of how having an institutional structure for education really can help a student who might have a need for some kind of additional support accommodation, untimed tests or, you know, has visual impairments that -- sometimes they may not even know what their impairment is until they're in professional hands.

We've talked with our local public schools. This is a hard issue in school. The student has the individual education plan, the IEP, and the schools are not allowed to share that with the colleges. And I sure wish there was a way to correct that because we would be even better prepared to help students when they start college. So many students do not want to share if they do have an IEP, and what happens in the first year -- you now, the first year is the marker for college completion. If a student stops out in first year, that is a much more likely risk of never completing. If they complete first year, they're much more likely to complete. And we have found that the number one barrier is attendance, and attendance is driven by many of the issues we're discussing, but also either an undiagnosed or an unreported need for accommodation. And so we try to work on that.

MS. HOSSAIN: And a lot of nonprofits that serve out of school population for GED actually suffer from that lack of documentation sharing because schools can't share that information.

MS. RAY: One of the ways we overcome that is in our assessment, you know, really helping young people identify what have been their barriers to learning. So digging a little. The other way that we work on that issue is advocating and working with young people to be advocates for themselves once they're in a training situation or they're going back for post-secondary, especially young people aging out of the foster care system. You know they get the message, you're 18, you're an adult, sign here. And we're like, no, don't sign, because there are services and supports that are there that you're entitled to help you be successful.

MR. CASTILLO: So I think we have time for two more questions. Okay,

right here in the front.

QUESTIONER: I'm Fred Alton and I'm retired. My question is, you are working at the level of direct service provision, do you have any guidance for public policy in terms of fostering your goals?

MR. CASTILLO: Go ahead, Pat.

MS. McGUIRE: Absolutely. (Laughter) You know, so much of this gets back to funding. And for too many students who find funding daunting to think about -- let's call it post-secondary education, whether it's a credential or certificate program. Cynthia talked about how important it was the program was free, but there are programs that cost money. And there's a serious problem with the federal financial aid system that we don't have time to get into, but one of the problems is it is built on the old norm of college being four years and going in traditional semesters. And students who need support the most are not going to go the traditional way. So those who need the most help are least likely to be able to really take full advantage of federal financial aid. That's one.

The second piece is at the local level, for example, we've talked about the school to college partnerships and pathways, something like the IEP or things like dual enrollment and all, and I think dual enrollment is great, I think early college is great. But there is little funding and little structure to make this happen short of self-directed initiative. We're talking with DCPS, they've been asking us to do enrollment but there's no funding for it. And if you want a good program you have to pay the instructors. It all can't be volunteer service. There's too much volunteerism and not enough policy that supports the programs that we're talking about.

So both at the federal level, the state and local level, we need more attention paid to this.

MS. HOSSAIN: One thing that I wanted to highlight in this conversation is also the role that nonprofits like OPP play. You know, nonprofits deliver most workforce and training -- obviously, especially for youth who are out of school, out of work

-- and we need to do a better job or change the paradigm around how they are funded. More often than not we're not funding the full cost of providing services. And Enid can speak, of course, more to that. You know, we need to structure contracts and procurement policies that reflect the outcomes that we want.

And I'm going to pass it over to Enid to speak a little more about that.

MS. RAY: One of the challenges is piecing together a system wherein the funding isn't coming to you in a systematic way, and then having to respond to outcomes that only look at success as being completion of X. You know, we have a culinary program that we really want to get stackable certifications, so customer service, food safe, and on and on. Well once you get a food safe certificate in our community you can actually start as a manager in Shake Shack, and then they provide training to you. But in our funding paradigm that isn't seen as a success because that student didn't complete. So I have to dual recruit to know that a portion of my students who start will not finish because they actually get employed. Isn't that crazy? Like you walk around feeling it's crazy making.

There are a number of issues that our young people experience that are truly policy driven. And we're working on many of those, especially in the JJ -- juvenile justice arena. Returning youth from incarceration often land with no license, no copy, or proof of their social security, which means that they can't enroll in many of our federally funded programs until they get that. Why is it that those systems, who are talking at the governor's cabinet on a system level, can't make that happen? So that's a simple one. To me it's like a no brainer, but apparently it's very hard how to figure out how to get someone an ID, when, by the way, you know who they are because they are in a federal institution.

MS. HOSSAIN: Also we talked a lot about the importance of adult relationships in youth programs. We talked about the employer relationship piece, but especially in the workforce programs or training programs or education programs, youth have to complete those programs to reap the benefits of those programs. And research

does show that for completion and engagement purposes those relationships are super important. We need to -- and that's why turnover in the nonprofit sector is important. You need to have funding and policies in place that develop talent so that youth can build those lasting relationships. But in a lot of youth serving programs staff turnover is a huge issue due to funding issues, due to capacity issues.

So all of these structural issues are tied to how we implement and develop programs. So capacity building in the nonprofit sector is a huge issue.

MR. CASTILLO: And I think I would be remiss if I didn't also highlight, even though it's not as sexy, policy makers also need to fund the research to further develop the evidence base around what works. So we need more studies like one, but they don't happen for free. They need to be funded and supported at the policy level, local, state, national, international, so we have a better sense of what is going to work for the next generation of workers. Because what is going to work now is not the same thing that has worked 20, 40, 60 years ago. And the research base needs to be funded and supported at the policy level so we can keep finding out what will work.

I think we have time for one last -- oh, I've been told that our answers (laughter) -- so I'm going to actually thank our panelists very, very much. (Applause)

And it gives me honor to introduce Allison Gerber, who is going to go ahead and close out this session today for us. So thank you.

MS. GERBER: Good morning. So my name is Allison Gerber and I'm a program officer with the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The Foundation is a national philanthropy dedicated to building brighter futures for America's children. And I contribute to that work through lots of thinking and funding research and policies and programs related to -- not surprisingly given our topic today -- employment.

And so as I was thinking about what I might say to you today, I said to my significant other, I asked him what he would want to hear at the end of a really nice presentation with lots of good data and good stories from young people and practitioners, and he said well I would want to know how I could be funded by the Annie E. Casey

Foundation. (Laughter) And then he said, but that might not be what you would want to talk about. But it did help me think about a good way into what I would want to say.

And I would say that so as a program officer there are kind of two basic ways you start a conversation with a prospective grantee, and one is the kind of usual way that leads to a lot of strong work, and that is I have a project idea and that grantee has a great project and you go on to fund it and it's really -- and then there's the other more iffy way that you can get to a project, which is where the funder starts with I have an idea. And they're iffy because like why would I substitute my judgment for the good judgment of all of the folks doing this work. And it leads to some spectacular failures, but in the case of this project, I think it led to some spectacular innovation.

We said to Martha, like we have this question at Casey and it's something like how can we find momentum points or experiences that are likely to help young people get on a pathway to a good job? How would we know, what could we support early in the pipeline. And she went away and she talked to Alan and she talked to the folks at Child Trends, and she came back and said have you ever heard of this data set. And we said no. (Laughter) Well, it might be able to inform this question and it's kind of a boondoggle because it hasn't really ever been analyzed and these things haven't been done. And we thought, perfect, that's kind of where we belong, with the messy stuff.

And I think the results are actually really spectacular in a way that I just want to lift up. Some of them are the typical things that people probably expected to hear, high school completion, post-secondary credential. But some of them really are starting to create that evidence base for the common wisdom that we've been hearing from practitioners that really are around positive relationships with caring adults. You know, how do we begin to put some structure around that, around high-quality work based learning, around teen employment.

And I think that although Farhana did a great job of kind of pointing out that the evidence base maybe really doesn't reach those really rigorous standards, it's a

beginning and it's an opening, and it's a place where we can begin to support really good practice through evidence. And I think that's really critical.

And so I just want to say that for Casey I think what we would seek to do with this, and what we're doing in our work, is to really understand what Martha lifted up about what is quality. You know, what does good work based learning look like? How do you define a strong mentoring relationship? You know, what is early paid work experience that is more likely to help a young person get on that pathway to a high-quality job? And I would say, as a former public workforce administrator, you know, I would like to see our public policy makers interrogate those questions, to push less towards one more slot for one more summer youth employment, to push kids back less onto that same pathway that didn't work for them the first time and to really do some of the things that I think this panel lifted up.

I mean what did Pat say, blow up our traditional pathways? That's a great one. To rethink those funding models that Enid and Farhana and Pat pointed to that kind of support young people in a different way. I mean ultimately I think what we want is we want more Cynthias and I think we want more pathways for Cynthias that work for our young people and for folks to be successful.

So we're very pleased to have supported this work. It was really a privilege. And I thank Martha and I think Alan and I thank the folks at Child Trends, and Kris and Kelly for kind of going through this boondoggle with us. We know that that data analysis wasn't fun, but I think it yielded some really important information that I know that we'll be acting on and that I hope others in this room are able to act on.

So thank you. (Applause)

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CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

Carleton J. Anderson, III

(Signature and Seal on File)

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