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National Skills Coalition Call for Applications for Work-Based Learning Academy

National Skills Coalition will be launching a Work-Based Learning Academy to support five state teams in developing state policy proposals and advocacy strategies to expand work-based learning to low-income communities. Applications for participation are currently being accepted, and are due March 1, 2018. The Academy will officially launch in May 2018 and run until June 2019.

I. What is the Work-Based Learning Academy?

Work-based learning is an issue of increasing interest among state policy leaders, spurred by \$90 million in federally funded grants, attention to apprenticeship by the previous and current Presidential administrations, and state-level technical assistance projects by organizations like the National Governors Association. While some states have adopted policies to support apprenticeship, few have policies aimed at expanding work-based learning opportunities for low-income, adults and out-of-school youth.

National Skills Coalition defines work-based learning as an activity that combines instruction at a worksite during paid employment with classroom education, and that culminates in an industry-recognized credential.

National Skills Coalition recently issued a work-based learning policy [toolkit](#) for disadvantaged adults and out-of-school youth. This toolkit identifies key policies that states can adopt to expand work-based learning to these populations. National Skills Coalition will be launching a Work-Based Learning Academy to support five state teams in the advancement of state work-based learning policies for adults and out-of-school youth from NSC's toolkit.

NSC's Work-Based Learning Academy will focus on helping state teams develop and advance state-level policies in the following areas:

- State grant programs to fund work-based learning intermediaries or opportunities to modify existing state sector partnership grant programs to help partnerships become work-based learning intermediaries
- State policy guidance to help local workforce development boards use WIOA out-of-school youth funds to support intermediaries that can broker work-based learning opportunities and services for out-of-school youth
- State-established support fund to provide support services such as case management, child care, transportation, and other assistance to low-income people to prepare for and succeed in work-based learning and other policy mechanisms for aligning child care, transportation, and apprenticeship training funds



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- State-level financial incentives to help employers establish new apprenticeship programs and hire apprentices from low-income communities
- Tuition waivers for apprentices' postsecondary classroom instruction and a requirement that such instruction articulate with certificates and degrees

II. What Will the Academy Involve?

Developing and implementing a plan for advancing a work-based learning policy in your state.

Over the course of the Academy, each state team will develop a work-based learning policy proposal for their state, based on the general policy areas listed above in Section I, and will implement an advocacy strategy for getting their policy proposal adopted by state policymakers or agencies. "Policies" can include state legislation, an executive order, a budget item, or a policy requirement or guidance adopted by a state agency.

Faculty and Technical Assistance. Each state team will be paired with a leader from the field to act as their "faculty advisor." These faculty will have expertise in one or more of the issues identified as a priority by state teams. Faculty will act as a coach to the state team and help them to develop a specific policy proposal and identify advocacy action steps for getting it adopted. State teams will be able to confer with their advisor at key points through the duration of the Academy. NSC staff will also be available to assist with policy and advocacy technical assistance.

Academy Meetings and Peer-Learning. NSC will host five Academy meetings in total: three in-person meetings and two virtual meetings. All team members are expected to attend in-person and virtual meetings and will be responsible for covering their own transportation and lodging for the in-person meetings. While exact dates for all meetings are yet to be selected, the Academy and meeting schedule is as follows:

- March 1, 2018: Applications Due
- April 2018: Academy participants announced
- May 2018: In-person kick-off meeting
- October 2018: In-person meeting as part of NSC's Skills in the States Forum
- January 2019: Virtual meeting
- March 2019: Virtual meeting
- June 2019: In-person closing meeting

Generally, these meetings will be structured to:

- Bring state policy context and resources to Academy members by covering topics such as: apprenticeship and work-based learning best practices and how state policies can support and scale those practices; emerging trends in state policy so that state teams



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have a better sense of the work-based learning state policy “landscape”; and effective advocacy and communications tactics.

- Share faculty’s and national partners’ in-depth knowledge on particular practices and policy issues
- Provide a forum for cross-state sharing and strategizing
- Identify common themes, issues, opportunities and challenges, and lessons learned

Selected state teams may also have the opportunity to present their work at NSC’s 2019 Skills in the States Forum (slated for October 2019).

III. Who Should Apply?

Interested teams should consist of three to five people from different organizations statewide. Team members cannot be from the same organization. Teams can include representatives from community-based organizations, policy research and advocacy organizations, community and technical colleges, state and local government agencies, workforce intermediaries, labor organizations, business representatives, chambers of commerce, and other organizations serving or advocating on the behalf of low-income communities. Please note that because of the Academy’s focus on policy and advocacy, practitioners serving on teams should be prepared to act as policy advocates. We plan to choose teams from five states to participate.

Teams should meet the following criteria:

- One or more members with state policy advocacy experience
- Agreement on which work-based policy issue the team will work on as part of the Academy. Policy issues must be aligned with NSC’s work-based learning toolkit and/or the list of policy items included in Section I of this announcement.
- One or more members with knowledge of their state’s workforce development and postsecondary training policy landscape
- A lead team member/organization with the capacity to be the point of contact with NSC and the faculty advisor, and well as organize team meetings
- All team members should have the ability to commit to attending all in-person meetings (travel and lodging to be covered by participants) and the ability to represent their organization’s position on policy issues and in advocacy activities



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IV. How to Apply

Teams should work together to submit an application no longer than 3 pages in length that includes answers to the following questions:

- What work-based learning policy from the list in Section I are you most interested in pursuing in your state and why?
- What are the opportunities and challenges you expect to encounter at the state level on this issue?
- What does your team hope to gain from the Academy?
- How does your team meet the criteria described in Section III?
- What is your plan for working together to develop and execute an advocacy strategy? Please include individual roles and responsibilities.
- Who is the lead team member who will be the point of contact for NSC and responsible for convening conversations between academy meetings?
- Separately, please include bios for each team member, including relevant state policy and advocacy experience (does not count towards 3-page limit).

Applications should be submitted by March 1, 2018. Please send application materials to Rachel Hirsch, State Network Manager, at rachelh@nationalskillscoalition.org.