



## City of Lake Charles: Creating Career Pathways

The National Resource Network partnered with the City of Lake Charles, Louisiana, in November 2016 and produced a report on creating career pathways for youth. The document quantifies the impact of investing in improvements to K-12 education, offers several funding scenarios, and provides recommendations for the city to pursue.

Lake Charles' energy-related industries announced nearly \$100 billion in proposed projects in the Southwest Louisiana region; \$32 billion worth of industrial contracts have been signed and construction started, resulting in a projected need for up to 31,000 temporary skilled workers for the construction phase and up to 18,000 permanent positions. These new jobs offer unprecedented opportunities for qualified local residents. Recognizing that providing the youth of Calcasieu Parish with the skills to access and succeed in the region's key growth industries is a critical need and vital for the region's economic competitiveness, the city engaged the Network to support their efforts to align the area's workforce development and education initiatives to industry needs.

To gain a thorough understanding of the current CTE programs available to Calcasieu Parish public school students, the Network team reviewed current documented policies and procedures related to the District's career readiness initiatives. The team analyzed student achievement data, student demographic data, and participation data. The Network considered the various opportunities that exist for students in Calcasieu Parish outside of school to gain important career readiness skills and enrichment.

The Network team worked with the funding partners (City of Lake Charles, Calcasieu Parish Police Jury, and Calcasieu Parish School Board) to identify a broad cross-section of community stakeholders to make up the Career Pipeline Steering Committee. The Steering Committee consists of representatives from the funding partners, higher education, nonprofit and support service organizations, and community stakeholders.

The Network also conducted a gap analysis of regional workforce needs and K-12 career-readiness initiatives. To identify disparities in access, the Network analyzed youth participation rates and facilitated focused conversations and recommendations addressing equity and access. Working with the Steering Committee, the Network facilitated the creation of a sustainable comprehensive data-informed Career Pipeline framework designed to increase equity and access to opportunities in high-wage, high-demand industries

To support community investment in career and technical education initiatives, the Network analyzed the economic impact of improvements in K-12 education that lead to success in local high growth industries. Based on the numbers of youth between the ages of 16 and 24 that are not in school and not working (although willing and able to work), youth disconnection costs Calcasieu Parish taxpayers approximately \$39 million per year. Community efforts to support college and career readiness are well worth the investment.

To learn more about this engagement, please contact Network staff at [info@nationalresourcenetwork.org](mailto:info@nationalresourcenetwork.org).