

High school graduation is the starting line

Students learn to work by working, but their opportunities to do that are shrinking. In Allegheny County, teen jobs fell 36% from 2000 to 2025 while total employment fell 4%. Fewer students are graduating with real work experience and most who do are in three industries. Schools can help fill this gap with career-connected learning.

24,005

jobs held by workers ages 14 to 18 in Allegheny County, 2025 average

36%

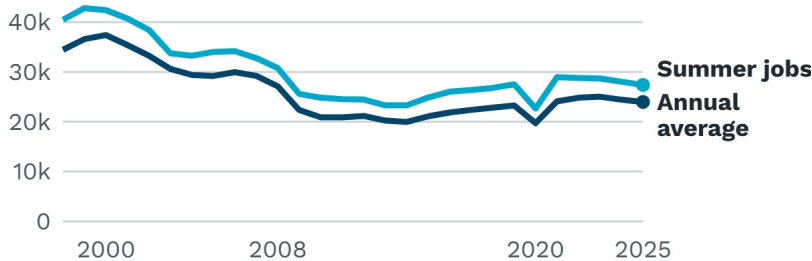
fewer teen jobs than in 2000. Less than one-fifth of the 2000 to 2011 loss has returned.

2 in 3

teen summer jobs are in food service, retail, or recreation

YOUTH LEARN TO WORK BY WORKING

Fewer students reach graduation with work experience



Jobs held by workers ages 14 to 18. From 2000 to 2024, the county's population ages 15 to 19 fell 9% while teen jobs fell 35% (population: Census 2000; 2024 ACS one-year estimate).

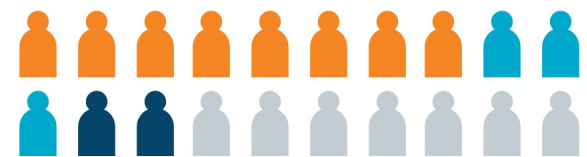
GRADUATION IS THE STARTING LINE

What school leaders can do

- Build career-connected learning into the school year: internships, job shadowing, and CTE partnerships.
- Expose students to fields where few teens work, like health care and manufacturing, so they apply critical thinking, collaboration, and communication in more settings.
- Make sure every student graduates with options and clear next steps: apprenticeship, certificate, associate or bachelor's degree, military, or employer training.
- Connect students to Learn & Earn and other youth programs, and treat learning as something that continues after graduation.
- Contact Mayada Christiansen, mchristiansen@partner4work.org.

EXPOSURE TO MORE FIELDS

Most working teens are in three industries



Food service 38% Retail 17% Arts and recreation 10% All other 35%

Teen jobs, summer 2025. Health care, manufacturing, construction, and professional services together employ 13%. Jobs help establish the problem-solving, teamwork, and communication skills all employers need, but teens need intentional exposure to more fields to see how those skills transfer.

Career Ready Allegheny

A regional hub, operated by Partner4Work, that connects students, educators, and employers for career-connected learning. Educators can find resources aligned to Career Education and Work standards and a directory of local businesses ready to host work-based learning.

Find out more at careerreadyallegheny.org.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Quarterly Workforce Indicators, Allegheny County, release R2026Q3. Employment: jobs held at any time in the quarter (EmpTotal), all employers; summer = third quarter. Industry: all employers, Q3 2025.