Youth Apprenticeship Messaging during COVID-19

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Tips about Communicating During the COVID-19 Pandemic

- Above all, people are looking for clarity, honesty, and reliable information.
- Conversations that had previously occurred in person or at events has now moved almost exclusively online. Stay connected with your community on social media, web platforms, and email. (See “Further Your Youth Apprenticeship Program with an Online Communications Strategy” for tips on getting started.)
- It’s important to acknowledge the exceptional time we are in. Messaging you may have sent a few months ago may now appear as being indifferent to the challenges people are currently experiencing.
- Don’t stay silent. It’s OK to acknowledge that you don’t have all of the answers yet, and people understand that plans are in flux and may change from week to week. Provide transparency into your process to those who are affected. What discussions are you having? Why are you making certain decisions? This will help your stakeholders feel connected to your program and build or maintain trust.
- Keep your (virtual) door open. Let people know how they can reach you. Keep an updated list of talking points that reflect your latest decisions and communications so you feel prepared to answer questions with consistent messaging.
- Consider new strategies and technologies to stay in touch with and engage your stakeholders. Information sessions, interviews, and application prep sessions can be moved online. Virtual office hours and town halls can provide flexible opportunities for stakeholders to collaborate, ask questions, and receive information.
Youth Apprenticeship Talking Points

Why is youth apprenticeship an important topic during the COVID-19 crisis?

- With the COVID-19 crisis resulting in historic unemployment and unprecedented economic uncertainty, youth apprenticeship is more important than ever.
- Recessions hit young people hard and recoveries reach them slowly. In recessions, youth unemployment tends to be much higher and more persistent than overall unemployment, as young people are crowded out of quality entry-level jobs.

How are youth apprenticeship programs responding right now?

- Youth apprenticeship is an excellent youth connection strategy now and for our upcoming economic recovery. In some communities, youth apprenticeship programs are serving as the first points of contact for youth whose education and work are being disrupted by COVID-19. Intermediaries are establishing new protocols to remain connected to apprentices; coordinating with education partners to ensure a smooth transition to online learning; liaising with employers whose teams (including apprentices) are now working remotely. These valuable connective functions will minimize disruption and accelerate the pace at which young people and employers can adapt to economic change.

How can youth apprenticeship be a strategy for economic recovery?

- Youth apprenticeship is also the right economic mobility strategy for the long-run. Longer-term education and training programs connected to good jobs are essential in economic recoveries. Youth apprenticeship ensures:
  a. Students do not have to choose between school/taking on debt or immediate income in a tough labor market
  b. Students remain engaged in a program that will support their longer run economic outcomes – preparing for full-blown careers when recovery comes.
- Well-designed youth apprenticeship programs can address critical challenges that students, schools, and employers will face in the recovery. Youth apprenticeship provides young people affordable pathways into college, paid work experience, and the mentors and networks they will need to compete for quality jobs in the future.
- Youth apprenticeship can advance systems change in education and work, making these systems more resilient for the future. Even in the early days of the crisis, we are seeing the importance of new labor market institutions that sit between education and work, the benefits of competency-based instruction, and the need to improve access to and the integration of technology within our traditional systems for learning and work.