



CAREER JAM™
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN ACTION!

CAREER JAM 2024 IMPACT REPORT

Humble start. Hard work. Huge vision.



Empowering students to imagine their future.

Our Mission

To deliver a unique and life-changing experience that inspires students, equips educators, supports employers, and empowers communities.

Lead Change

We don't follow the status quo, we choose to lead change.

Be Humble

Consider others, learn from your mistakes, and laugh a lot!

Have Fun

We want to make an impact and have a good time doing it!

Our Values

Don't Settle

We don't rest on our past accomplishments. Deliver value always.

Unreasonable Hospitality

Serve the people we meet and the communities we help with excellence.

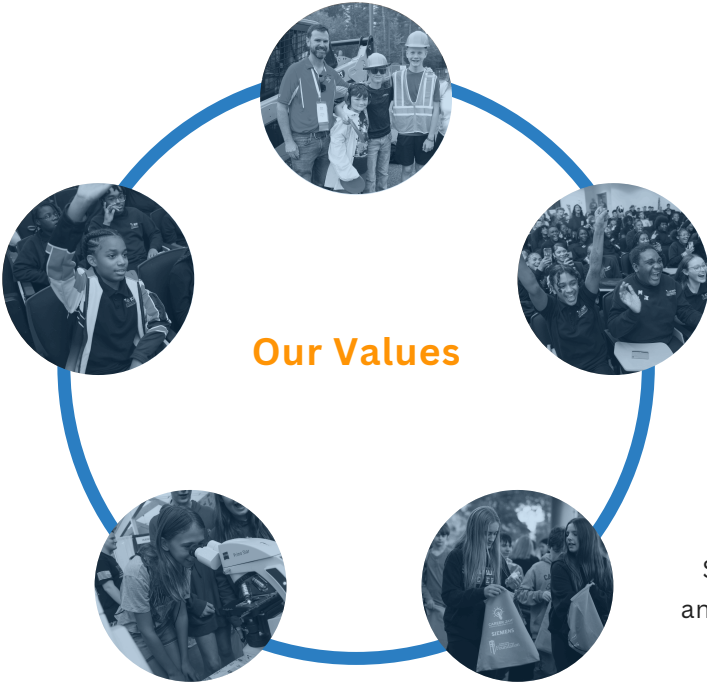


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Letter from the Owner

UNITING AROUND A COMMON PURPOSE

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As the Owner and Chief Community Engagement Officer of Career Jam, it is my pleasure to share our **2024 Career Jam Impact Report**, which highlights the strides made together thanks to the collaboration of supporters across the Capital Region and beyond.

Our vision has always been to put students first by empowering them to imagine their future.

Achieving this vision requires widespread participation and collaboration. Working together is crucial to truly inspire students, equip educators, support employers, and empower communities. Those who have come alongside to build Career Jam's foundation in the Capital Region help us to demonstrate what is possible when committed individuals unite around a common purpose.

Reflecting on the past year, I am filled with gratitude for your support. Whether you contributed as an exhibitor, sponsor, or community partner, your role was essential. Together, we are preparing students for success and strengthening the workforce of tomorrow.

This year was significant for me personally. As many of you know, our founder and my late husband, Ryan Van Amburgh, passed away on Christmas Day 2023. Ryan's incredible vision for creating a lasting impact continues to inspire everything we do at Career Jam. It is an honor to carry his legacy forward through this meaningful work.

Thank you for being part of this transformative journey. I hope this report inspires you and reaffirms the importance of your continued support as we head into 2025. [Humble start.](#) [Hard work.](#) [Huge vision.](#)

With gratitude and excitement for the future,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Aarika Van Amburgh".

Aarika Van Amburgh
Owner & Chief Community Engagement Officer of Career Jam



Aarika and Ryan Van Amburgh at Lake George, NY



Aarika and Ryan Van Amburgh on a family vacation in Maine



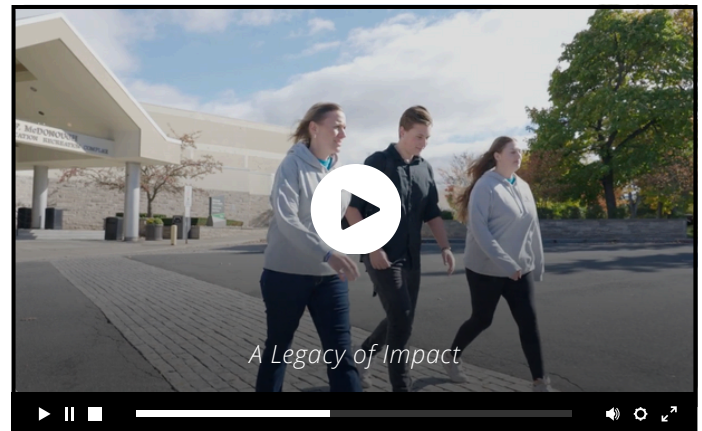
Van Amburgh family at Yankee Stadium.

CARRYING RYAN'S LEGACY FORWARD

Despite battling cancer since 2015, Ryan Van Amburgh lived a life dedicated to serving others, often helping them discover their purpose and take their next steps. His passion for empowering students and transforming workforce development led to the founding of Career Jam.

Determined to expand his impact, Ryan established The Student First Project, Inc., a nonprofit created to support and sustain Career Jam's mission. Remarkably, it was publicly launched just days before he passed away on Christmas morning 2023. [Click here to read the initial appeal letter.](#)

The Student First Project exists to transform students' lives by prioritizing their needs, aspirations, and potential. Every student deserves equal access to quality education and opportunities, regardless of their background or circumstances. By supporting this initiative, you honor Ryan's legacy and help lay the foundation for programs that will empower students to thrive.



Ryan Van Amburgh, a humble and hard-working man of bold faith, left an indelible mark on countless lives and his community. His legacy continues to inspire and will undoubtedly impact generations to come. [Click here to watch the video to learn more about who he was and the lasting impact of his work.](#)



Humble start.

THE HISTORY OF CAREER JAM

2017

Career Jam launches in Saratoga County as a key strategic workforce retention initiative for Saratoga Economic Development Corporation (SEDC).

950 8th and 9th graders
40 local employers

2018

After a successful launch, a new venue is chosen to accommodate the increased interest and capacity.

1,800+ 8th and 9th graders
50 local employers

2019

Career Jam is proven to be a successful and market-driven initiative. A new venue is chosen again as school and employer interest increases regionally.

2,000+ 8th and 9th graders
70 local employers

2021

Like many during the pandemic, we had to reimagine our program delivery and launch a virtual experience. Our mission remained to inspire students to imagine their future.

4,100 8th and 9th graders
80 local employers

2022

Career Jam returned to live, in-person events and over 24 school districts engaged with hands-on skills demonstrations.

3,300+ 8th and 9th graders
80 local employers

2023

The team executes its first Career Jam Launch for 10th-12th graders at Schenectady High School and expands to four events in the Capital Region.

6,200 students total
3,800 8th and 9th graders
2,400 10th-12th graders
80 local employers

2024

Career Jam continues to expand offerings with a second Career Jam Launch (10th-12th) event in the Capital Region, as well as two Career Jam Explore (8th + 9th) events in partnership with Hudson Valley Community College.

3,600 students total
2,450 8th and 9th graders
1,150 10th-12th graders
80 local employers

IMPACT RECAP

Delivering regional impact since our founding in 2017

 **22,000**
students impacted since 2017

 **6,241**

students participated in a student exploration survey to help benchmark career related activities and future interests of the Capital Region's future workforce

**survey launched April 2022*

 **80**

exhibitors from diverse career pathways engaged with students through hands-on demonstrations

 **29**

school districts participated in Career Jam in 2024, representing ten NY State counties

Hard work.

ABOUT CAREER JAM

Career Jam is a social enterprise offering impactful, market-driven career exploration for students of all abilities, fostering empowerment, community growth, and economic development. We prioritize collaboration, delivering effective programs to build sustainable workforce pipelines. Committed to continuous improvement, Career Jam emphasizes data-driven outcomes to help communities plan and execute 21st-century skill-building initiatives, ensuring prosperity and streamlined career pathways for all.

DATA-DRIVEN OUTCOMES

In partnership with Siena College Research Institute, Career Jam leverages student survey data to align workforce demands with future talent supply. By benchmarking, measuring impact, and refining our programs, Career Jam fosters collaboration among educators, employers, and communities.

PREP RALLY

Upon arrival at Career Jam, students enter the high-energy Prep Rally, [powered by Ten80 Education](#). This engaging experience prepares them for the exploration floor with employer trivia, career cluster insights, and helpful tips for confidently engaging with exhibitors and discovering future career opportunities.



Cindy W. from Ten80 Education leads building challenge during prep rally



Students engaging with exhibitors on the exploration floor.

EXPLORATION FLOOR

Students transition to the exploration floor to engage with up to 100 exhibitors through hands-on activities. They connect with businesses, trade organizations, and educational programs, gaining insights into career pathways and industries. This experience helps them discover local opportunities and explore future interests. Schools can also opt for lunch and a guided campus tour.

MEET THE CAREER JAM TEAM



Aarika Van Amburgh
Owner, Chief Community Engagement Officer



Meagan Masti
Chief Operating Officer



Keith VanVeghten
Event Manager



Deborah Hedley
*Office Administrator
Communication Specialist*

Spring 2024 Events

CAREER JAM LAUNCH

In Partnership with the Albany Job Fair

Albany Job Fair

On April 17, 2024, we hosted our first Career Jam of the year in collaboration with the Albany Job Fair in Latham, NY at The Holiday Inn Express & Conference Center. There were over 100 local employers, 30 of which were providing direct entry opportunities for local high schoolers or recent graduates. 250 students collective from New Lebanon CSD, Cohoes CSD, Watervliet CSD, KIPP Capital Region Public Schools, and Catholic Central School participated in the event.



Students from Catholic Central engaged in the prep rally with DJ Intel Hayfield



Students learning about the Air Force at the Albany Job Fair

“Career Jam helps my students figure out their career interests! They love getting to meet real professionals working in their respective fields.”

MADLYN DEGLER, SCHOOL COUNSELOR
WATERVLIET CSD

CAREER JAM LAUNCH

Hosted by SUNY Schenectady County Community College

SUNY SCHENECTADY COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE



Students participating in a fun money counting challenge with Nicole R. from Pioneer

On May 30, 2024, we hosted Career Jam Launch (10th-12th graders) at SUNY Schenectady County Community College, bringing nearly 1,000 students together for an immersive career exploration experience. In collaboration with the Schenectady City School District, the event showcased over 40 employers representing a diverse array of career clusters and featured hands-on demonstrations, engaging students with local industry leaders.

Interactive tours of SUNY Schenectady's Mobile Training Labs were a major highlight! Leaders, Dr. Steady Moono, President of SUNY Schenectady, and Dr. M. Carlos Cotto, Jr., Superintendent of Schenectady City School District, praised the event for its role in inspiring youth to pursue diverse career pathways. Career Jam continues to connect students with tools and opportunities to build their futures. [Watch the recap video.](#)



Students in SUNY Schenectady's Mobile Training Lab for healthcare.

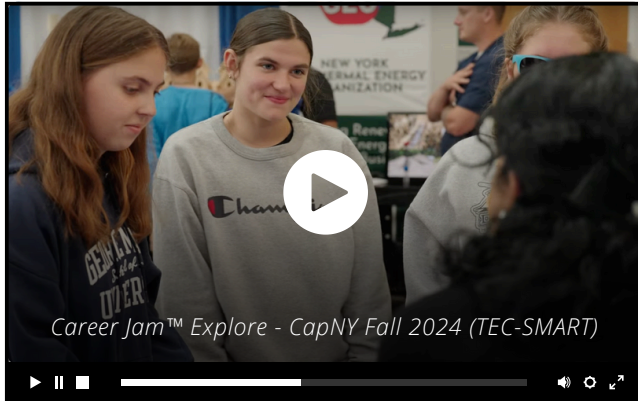
Fall 2024 Events



CAREER JAM EXPLORE

Hosted by TEC-SMART, HVCC North Campus

Career Jam Explore, held at Hudson Valley's North Campus, TEC-SMART, on Friday, October 4 offered over 500 8th and 9th graders an engaging, hands-on introduction to diverse career paths.



Thanks to generous support from Saratoga County, 420 students from six Saratoga County schools attended for free. The event featured local businesses showcasing skills from all 16 career clusters, empowering students to explore future opportunities and supporting workforce development in the region.



Students thanking Saratoga County for supporting them to attend the event.

CAREER JAM EXPLORE

Hosted by Hudson Valley Community College

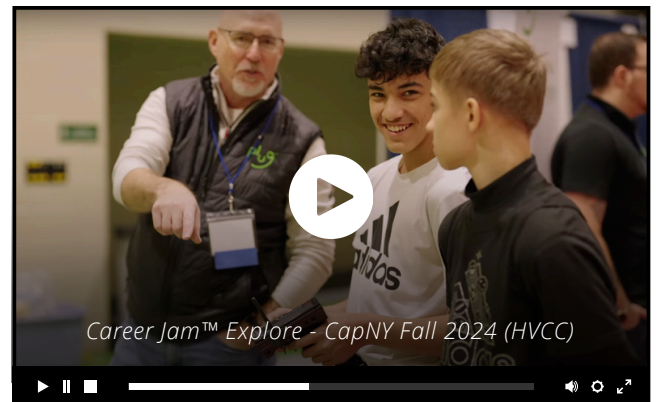


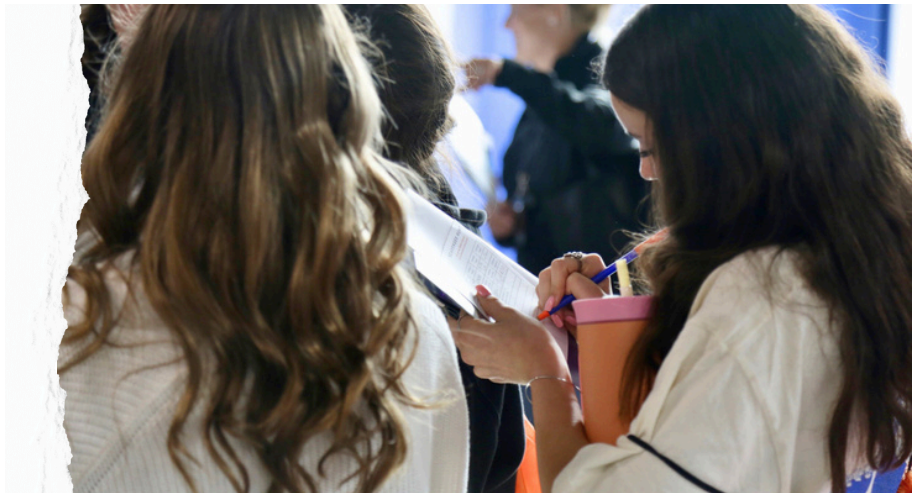
Siemens representatives awarding a student for winning the clean energy challenge

Career Jam Explore hosted at Hudson Valley Community College on Wednesday, October 16, 2024, engaged over 1,900 8th and 9th graders from Rensselaer County and beyond in dynamic, hands-on career exploration activities. Siemens, our Community Impact Partner, was instrumental in supporting this event, which highlighted diverse career pathways and brought students together with local industry leaders to explore future opportunities. Career Jam Explore cultivates early career awareness and empowers students to make informed education choices that align with high-demand career fields.



Curtis Lumber representative showing students how to use their building software.





SHAPING TOMORROW

Insights from Siena College Research Institute, Student Exploration Survey

The Siena College Research Institute, a leader in survey research, developed the Career Jam Student Exploration Survey in collaboration with the Career Jam team. This tool assesses students' skills, interests, and aptitudes, offering personalized career insights. Administered in classrooms, the survey results are expertly analyzed and presented in user-friendly reports for partner school districts. These reports support schools in improving career readiness, guiding students toward future paths, and shaping workforce development strategies. In total, **1,051 students** in 8th-12th grade representing 21 schools participated in the Career Jam Student Exploration Survey in 2024. Students' individual survey results were used to prepare them for the Career Jam event.

TOP CAREER CLUSTERS OF INTEREST

"A" Students


- Business, Management & Administration (28%)
- Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (27%)
- Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security (23%)

"B" Students

- Arts, A/V Technology & Communications (21%)
- Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security (19%)
- Business, Management & Administration (19%)

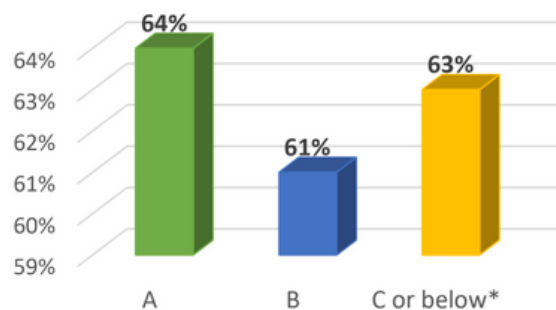
"C or below" Students

- Business, Management & Administration (21%)
- Architecture & Construction (17%)
- Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources (16%)



63% of students report participating in career preparation activities, either awareness or exploration. The most common place to participate in these activities is in a class.

Career Preparation Participation by Average Grades



CAREER JAM INSIGHT

Students' primary career awareness and exploration activities are happening at school. This highlights the need for schools to actively connect students with local businesses and provide resources to help them explore a variety of career pathways aligned with their interests.



CAREER JAM INSIGHT

Career Jam events serve as a cornerstone for career exploration, offering students a wealth of opportunities to make informed decisions about their futures. By connecting with working professionals and exploring a variety of career pathways—all in one place—students leave inspired, equipped, and ready to imagine their next steps.

In our 2024 Student Exploration Survey, students highlighted their top activities for building career awareness and exploring pathways:



TOP CAREER AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

- Completing a career survey
- Conducting research
- Listening to guest speakers



TOP CAREER EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES

- Participating in class projects
- Engaging in community service
- Conducting industry research

93%

of students said they have spent time talking with someone about their plans after high school.

72%

of students said that their parents are the biggest influencers of their future plans.



CAREER JAM INSIGHT

It is important that parents/guardians are looped into the conversation when students are participating in career exploration activities at school so that they can have informed conversations about their student's future.

Responses to self-exploration questions about interests, skills, traits, and aptitude were combined into scores for each of the 18 career clusters. Students received information on clusters with high or moderate scores.

42%

of students plan to stay or return to the Capital Region in the future to live and work



TOP 3 INTERESTS

- Work with my hands
- Be the leader in a group
- Learn new skills



TOP 3 SKILLS

- Being competitive
- Being part of a team
- Solving problems



TOP 3 TRAITS

- Determined
- Adventurous
- Caring



32% plan on moving away

24% plan on moving away for school, then returning

18% plan on living in the area



CAREER JAM INSIGHT

This data underscores the value of programs showcasing Capital Region careers, inspiring students to envision a future here and fostering local talent retention.



Community Impact Partner

SIEMENS

MAKING A BIG DIFFERENCE

Siemens, a global leader in innovation and infrastructure, proudly partners with Career Jam™ as Community Impact Partner to inspire the next generation of innovators.

At Hudson Valley Community College alone, Siemens engaged nearly 2,000 middle and high school students, showcasing careers in engineering, energy management, technology, and construction. Situated in a region where Siemens leads Smart Infrastructure projects, this event highlighted real-world applications in sustainability, energy efficiency, and intelligent building design.

By demonstrating the exciting potential of careers within the built environment, Siemens aims to ignite curiosity and empower students to envision themselves shaping sustainable, technologically advanced spaces of the future. This partnership reflects Siemens' commitment to fostering local talent and advancing community impact.

“Our goal was to ignite students' curiosity and inspire them to see buildings through a new, meaningful lens. We hope they will pursue careers that will play a vital role in shaping the sustainable, intelligent environments of tomorrow.”

SHADRACH TREAT, MARKET LEAD
SIEMENS SMART INFRASTRUCTURE

Thank you Siemens for partnering with Career Jam to impact thousands of students in the Capital Region of New York!



EMPOWERING IMPACT

Career Jam's top sponsors are catalysts for change, driving initiatives that empower students and strengthen communities. Their generous contributions fuel bold actions and lasting impacts, ensuring brighter futures for the next generation of leaders.

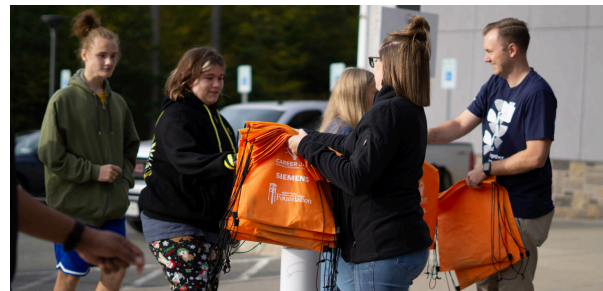


Saratoga County remains a valued partner in bringing Career Jam Explore to 8th and 9th graders at HVCC's North Campus, TEC-SMART. In 2024, they funded free attendance for 436 Saratoga County students, playing a key role in the event's success. [Watch this video to hear from Steve Bulger, Saratoga County Administrator.](#)

“Saratoga County is a big supporter of Career Jam. We think it is a great opportunity to provide students the view into different potential careers down the road.”

STEVE BULGER
SARATOGA COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

PIONEERSM



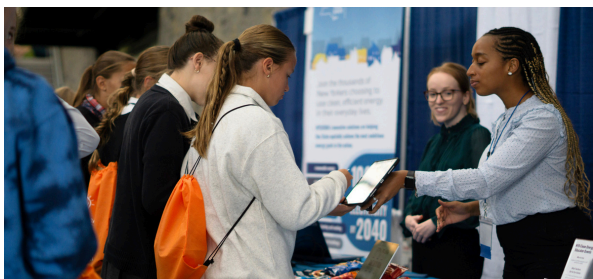
As a 2024 Industry Leader sponsor, Pioneer supported Capital Region events by enabling 136 high school students to attend the Career Jam Launch at the Albany Job Fair. Their volunteers participated in all four CapNY events, contributing time and effort to ensure their success, exemplifying their commitment to both Career Jam's mission and the community.

“Pioneer is honored to partner with Career Jam, as our collaboration empowers the next generation of leaders, creating meaningful career opportunities and aligning with our mission to drive community growth and success for Capital Region youth.”

THOMAS AMELL
PRESIDENT & CEO OF PIONEER



Crisafulli Bros. Home Services was an Industry Leader sponsor in 2024 and connected with thousands of students in the region at the Career Jam events. Their commitment to community aligns seamlessly with Career Jam's mission to empower students and build stronger communities.



As a 2024 Innovation Sponsor, NYSERDA continues to champion the future workforce by highlighting career pathways in clean energy. At the Career Jam prep rally, they featured their 'Empowered State' trailer from the Roadtrip Nation program, showcasing students connecting with clean energy professionals to explore innovative methods for preserving natural resources.



GlobalFoundries was an Innovation Sponsor in 2024 and a huge supporter of the Capital Region Career Jam events. Their bunny suit challenge during the Career Jam prep-rally has become a fun staple of the events as students race the clock to get dressed in the suits.

GlobalFoundries was one of our featured sponsors at the TEC-SMART event on October 4. [Check out the recap video here.](#)

“At GlobalFoundries, we believe in investing in our community and educating students for the jobs of the future. Career Jam events are a special way to achieve this. The hands-on activities provide students with opportunities to play, think, and ask questions. This curiosity opens the door for us to demonstrate that they can begin careers in semiconductors either after college or directly out of high school.”

CHRISTINE MCLEAR
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT LEAD,
GLOBALFOUNDRIES

REGENERON

CURTIS LUMBER



Regeneron and Curtis Lumber served as Student Success Sponsors, showcasing their companies to tomorrow's workforce while actively engaging with students through hands-on skill demonstrations. Curtis Lumber further captivated students with VR technology, offering an immersive look into careers in the trades.



At each event, we have a photo op for our top sponsors and workforce collaborative members, highlighting our shared commitment to bringing Career Jam to the Capital Region. These events are a true community effort, requiring substantial support to make them possible for thousands of students each year. Workforce collaborative members play a vital role, supporting fundraising efforts, connecting businesses and schools to promote attendance, and helping secure essential partnerships.

Thank you Capital Region Workforce Collaborative!





Huge Vision.

ADDRESSING WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

Career Jam is tackling some of the most pressing issues facing students, families, businesses, and educators, head-on:

Problem: The Skills Gap

Many students are graduating without the awareness or readiness to meet the demands of today's industries, leaving businesses struggling to fill critical roles.

Our Solution: Career Jam bridges this gap by connecting students with higher education, internships, and direct-to-workforce opportunities. Through interactive, hands-on experiences, students explore career pathways and prepare for in-demand fields.

Problem: A Growing and Changing Economy

The economy is evolving rapidly due to technological advancements and emerging industries, but workforce preparation has not kept pace.

Our Solution: Career Jam exposes students to future-focused opportunities in fields driving economic growth. By aligning with the needs of local industries, we prepare students to navigate a dynamic labor market while supporting regional economic sustainability.

Problem: Limited Career Exploration for Students

We often hear, "We just don't know what we don't know." Many guidance counselors, teachers, students, and their families lack access to the information and resources needed to make informed decisions about next steps after high school.

Our Solution: Career Jam's immersive experiences

where students interact directly with colleges, employers, and industry leaders brings clarity and confidence to students and those guiding them, showcasing pathways from higher education to skilled trades and beyond.

Problem: Regional Workforce Needs

Local businesses face labor shortages, threatening the strength of the Capital Region's economy and beyond.

Our Solution: Career Jam stays rooted in serving our community by aligning education with industry demand. Our events strengthen the local talent pipeline, ensuring students are prepared to meet workforce needs while bolstering the regional economy.

Problem: A National Challenge

The workforce readiness gap is not just a local issue—it's a national one, affecting economic growth and sustainability across the U.S.

Our Solution: While maximizing our local impact, Career Jam is preparing to scale our proven model. By expanding into other areas of New York State, the Northeast, and eventually nationally, we aim to inspire tens of thousands more students and strengthen the national economy.

Conclusion

Career Jam is more than an event—it's a movement to connect students with their futures while strengthening the workforce and economy. By working together, we can empower students, equip educators, support employers, and create thriving communities. Join us as we continue to tackle these challenges and build a stronger future for everyone.

2025 Events + Beyond

IMPACT IN OUR COMMUNITY

In 2025, we will serve thousands of students in the Capital Region through these impactful events:

Career Jam Launch

On May 28, 2025, Career Jam Launch at Siena College will offer high-energy, hands-on activities tailored for grades 10th-12th. Students will connect with colleges, employers, and industry leaders to explore post-high school opportunities, including higher education, internships, and direct-to-workforce pathways, gaining valuable insights to prepare for their futures.

Career Jam Explore

In October 2025, Career Jam Explore will return to TEC-SMART and Hudson Valley Community College, introducing students in grades 8th-9th to career opportunities through engaging, hands-on activities. These experiences spark curiosity and help younger students begin exploring potential career pathways in the Capital Region and beyond.

These events inspire students to imagine their futures while building meaningful connections to their community and workforce.

FUTURE PLANS FOR GROWTH

Career Jam's vision is both ambitious and deeply rooted in service to our community. As we grow, our focus remains on creating transformative experiences for as many students as we can in the Capital Region while staying connected to the workforce needs and economy:

- **Maximizing Local Impact:** We are committed to refining and enhancing our local events, ensuring that Career Jam continues to serve the Capital Region with excellence and aligns with community needs.
- **Expanding Our Reach:** With a vision to inspire tens of thousands more students, we are preparing to bring Career Jam to new areas of New York State and the Northeast, extending opportunities for students and communities alike.
- **Building for Sustainability:** To support our growth, we are strengthening our resources, infrastructure, and team, ensuring that Career Jam can thrive while staying true to our mission of empowering students and supporting the workforce of tomorrow.

BRING CAREER JAM TO YOUR COMMUNITY



It starts with you!

Are you a champion for Career Jam in your community? Reach out and let us know you are interested.



Workforce Collaborative

Form a group of community leaders who are committed to bringing the event to your area.



Businesses



Sponsors



Schools

Connect and Raise Funding

Secure a Community Impact partner in your region and explore municipality funding.



Thank you to our
generous sponsors!

COMMUNITY IMPACT PARTNER

Siemens

MUNICIPAL SPONSOR

Saratoga County

HOST VENUE SPONSOR

SUNY Schenectady County Community College
Hudson Valley Community College

INDUSTRY LEADER SPONSOR

Crisafulli Bros
Pioneer

INNOVATION SPONSOR

GlobalFoundries
NYSERDA

STUDENT SUCCESS SPONSOR

Curtis Lumber
Regeneron

INSPIRE SPONSOR

First New York Federal Credit
NSH
Rifenburg Construction, Inc.
Workforce Development Institute

WORKFORCE SPONSOR

The College of Nanotechnology, Science, and Engineering
CSARCH
LaBella
Plug Power
STS Steel
Turner Construction

2024 PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Augustine Classical Academy
Ballston Spa CSD
Broadalbin-Perth CSD
Burnt Hills - Ballston Lake CSD
Catholic Central School
Cohoes CSD
Corinth CSD
Coxsackie-Athens CSD
East Greenbush CSD
Galway CSD
Glens Falls CSD
Guilderland CSD
Jefferson CSD
Kipp Community Charter School
KIPP Troy Prep Middle School
Loudonville Christian School
Margaretville CSD
Mohonasen CSD
New Lebanon CSD
North Colonie CSD
Notre Dame - Bishop Gibbons School
Saratoga Central Catholic School
Saratoga Springs CSD
Schalmont CSD
Schenectady CSD
Shenendehowa CSD
St. Anne Institute
Stillwater CSD
Watervliet CSD



JOIN CAREER JAM IN 2025!



Events



Exhibit



Schools



Sponsor

Career Jam would not be possible without our family, friends, community, and business volunteers, who dedicate countless hours to this incredible work. We are deeply grateful for their passion and enthusiasm as they join us in empowering students to imagine their futures.



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