



# Building Healthy Communities through Civic-Led Work-Based Learning

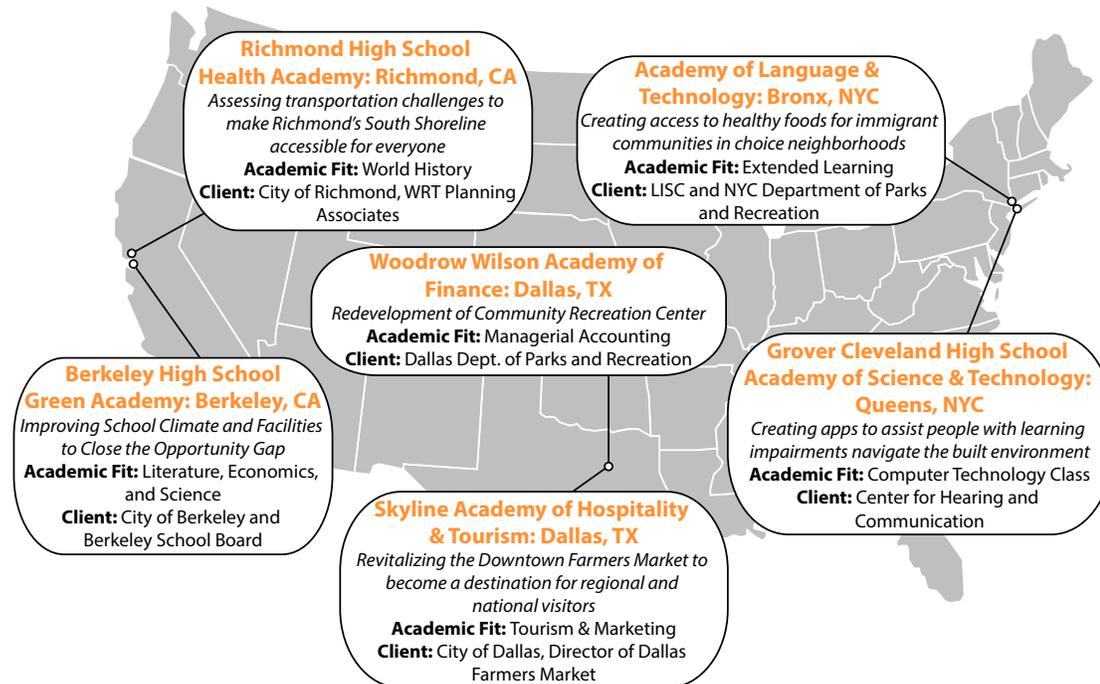
## School-Based Career & Community Preparation

### Overview

Work-based learning (WBL) is a core component of the college and career strategy that is shaping efforts to improve secondary education in cities across the nation. WBL can include not only classic internships and “co-op” placements but also school-based enterprises and other activities in which students produce goods or provide services for other people. Discussions to date have not fully recognized the particular importance of the civic sector as a site for WBL. The civic sector, including public agencies and nonprofit organizations, is vital to both a strong economy and a healthy democracy. Whether or not a student is interested in future employment in this sector, WBL in public and nonprofit agencies provides opportunities for all students to develop career-readiness skills such as critical analysis of complex problems, collaborative teamwork, and communication. Unlike work experience in other sectors, WBL offers unique opportunities for students to acquire knowledge of and skills for civic engagement.

“As an in-school work based learning experience, Y-PLAN gives me new avenues to make my projects more valuable to my students and community. What’s changing is a focus on civic mindedness. The opportunity to make a real connection and contribution is something that brings additional value for students and the community.”  
-Y-PLAN Instructor, Grover Cleveland NAF Academy of Science and Technology

## Y-PLAN Projects in Action



The National Academy Foundation, in collaboration with other organizations involved with the Linked Learning approach to college and career preparation, has described a continuum of WBL experiences, including a “career practicum” that complements academic and technical coursework to prepare a student for both college and careers. The following overview offers a model of civic WBL – the Y-PLAN – in action, aligned to the WBL continuum.



## Y-PLAN Methodology & Practicum: Career Preparation *Learning through Work*

Created and directed by the Center for Cities + Schools (CC+S) at the University of California, Berkeley in 2000, Y-PLAN is an award-winning model of civic-led work-based learning reaching over 2,000 students, educators and civic partners nationwide. Through practical experience with community and civic leaders, businesses, university students, schools and other community members, students develop the skills and knowledge necessary for success in career and postsecondary education as they to work together to develop solutions to authentic, community development challenges. Y-PLAN follows a flexible yet well-structured process of critical inquiry aligned to 21st Century Learning, and the professional and academic standards within the Work-Based Learning Continuum. CC+S offers student materials, training and tools for academy and pathway teachers to prepare students for the demands of college and career through work.

**The Y-PLAN experience is differentiated by:**

- Direct interaction with partners over time
- Application of skills transferable to a variety of careers
- Substantive activities that are valuable beyond the classroom
- Equal importance given to learning for the student and benefit to the partner

**As a result, students will demonstrate:**

- Collaboration
- Critical thinking & Problem Solving
- Creativity & Innovation
- Communication
- Community Contribution

