



Media FAQ – Updated May 2018

1. What is Genesys Works?

Genesys Works provides pathways to career success for high school students in underserved communities through skills training, meaningful work experiences, and impactful relationships. Our program consists of 8 weeks of technical and professional skills training, a paid year-long corporate internship, college and career coaching, and alumni support to and through college. Our goal is to move more students out of poverty and into professional careers, creating a more productive and diverse workforce in the process.

2. What is your vision?

We envision a future when all youth finish high school equipped and empowered with the knowledge and skills required to achieve career success and a lifetime of economic self-sufficiency.

3. How did you get started?

Genesys Works was started in 2002 in Houston, Texas, by Rafael Alvarez, who was a corporate strategist for Compaq Computer. While serving as a board member of a local charter school, Alvarez was struck by the bleak prospects facing economically challenged high school students at a time when companies like his were in need of new sources of talent. An idea for a new social enterprise opportunity emerged: train students in the IT services needed in large companies and place them as outsourced, contracted talent with corporate clients. This would improve the prospects for low-income high school students while introducing a new stream of diverse talent to corporate America. Starting with only 10 students and one corporate partner, Genesys Works has now grown to become a national organization serving over 3,000 students annually with 192 corporate partners in Houston, Chicago, Minneapolis/St. Paul, the San Francisco Bay Area, and Washington's National Capital Region.

4. What problem are you solving?

The disparity between what students are taught in the classroom and what's needed for success in the workplace continues to widen. As a result, millions of entry-level jobs go unfilled each year because young adults lack the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to succeed in these roles. Of more consequence and concern, are the millions of young adults from low-income backgrounds that are shut out of job opportunities due to lack of relevant training and preparedness. Closing these skills and opportunity gaps is an urgent economic and social imperative, and Genesys Works offers a proven solution for students and businesses alike.

5. How is your program structured?

For 15 years, Genesys Works has been changing the trajectory of life for low-income students by enabling them to work and succeed as young professionals while still in high school. We accomplish our mission through four-interlocking components:

- 1) Eight weeks of training in professional and technical skills
- 2) A year-long, paid corporate internship in IT or business
- 3) College and career counseling during their senior year of high school
- 4) Ongoing support for program alumni throughout their postsecondary education and transition to the workforce

We partner with schools and corporations in five major metropolitan areas across the country to move more students out of poverty and into professional careers. The Genesys Works program is intensive in terms of what it asks of its students and what it offers in return. Over the course of 14 months, students spend approximately 1,220 hours in the program through: attending training (160 hours); working at a professional job (1,000 hours); and attending college preparatory and career counseling sessions (60 hours).

6. Who are your students?

Genesys Works has served approximately 5,000 disadvantaged youth since 2002. Students accepted in our program have untapped potential and given their disadvantaged backgrounds, lack access to or knowledge of opportunities that college and professional careers provide. Before entering the program, our students are average academic performers; 75% start with SAT and ACT scores below the national average; 82% are eligible for free or reduced price lunch; 96% are students of color, and 82% are first-generation college students.

7. What are your program outcomes?

After completing the Genesys Works program, 100% of our students graduate high school and are accepted to college. Moreover, 95% enroll in postsecondary education, 84% persist to their second year, and 48% graduate. According to IPEDS Data Center, Black and Hispanic college graduation rates in the metro areas we serve were 25% and 36% respectively in 2014. To date, 70% of Genesys Works program alumni have graduated or are still persisting in college.

The results of our survey of program alumni in 2017 showed that of those students who completed the Genesys Works program at least 5 years ago, 85% reported they are working full-time and 8% reported they are working part-time. The median income of alumni out of the program at least 5 years and no longer in college is \$45,000-50,000. For alumni working full-time, not in college, who graduated from high school more than 5 years ago and are employed in the technology sector, the median salary rises to \$50,000 with almost a third of all alumni in this group earning over \$65,000 per year.

Read more about our 2017 impacts in our [Annual Impact Report](#).

8. What is your economic impact?

The Genesys Works program trains our nation's urban youth for a successful future, while providing them an income source to help support their families today. The amount earned by these students while in high school will be more than \$100 million, putting much-needed income into the hands of some of the poorest families in the cities we serve. The economic impact doesn't end there, as these individuals will go off to college and join the economic mainstream, generating hundreds of millions of dollars in economic earnings for themselves and benefiting local economies through increased taxes, consumer spending, and significant reductions in otherwise required social services.

9. What is your social return on investment (SROI)?

A [recent social return on investment](#) study (SROI) conducted by Columbia University calculated a \$13.46 economic return to society for every \$1 invested in the Genesys Works program, a powerful testament to the value of its programming. The primary benefit of Genesys Works comes from students' higher rates of college enrollment and completion, and a greater ability to obtain meaningful employment given their internship experience. Our students earn four-year degrees at 3.5 times the rate of the comparison group. The median income of program alumni working full-time who are no longer in college and graduated from high school at least five years ago is \$40,000-50,000.

10. What is your impact on the education system?

Genesys Works is changing the conversation about college and career-readiness as educators increasingly recognize the value of meaningful paid internships as a tool for bringing rigor, relevance and supportive relationships into the education system. By working with our school partners, we're expanding learning beyond the classroom and into the professional workplace. Through intensive training and year-long internships, students develop essential 21st century skills—such as communications, collaboration, and problem-solving—that are necessary for success in today's working world. Students are guided and supported in their work by caring adults who connect career interests with postsecondary education and career planning.

11. How is your program valuable to businesses?

Genesys Works fosters a true partnership with the companies who employ its students. Our corporate partners receive capable and highly-motivated interns who learn valuable job skills while also boosting companies' cultures. Our students work at their job every afternoon for a year, becoming valued team members while also bringing fresh energy and diversity to the workplace. They also provide management experience for full-time employees who do not yet have direct reports. Employees can make a significant impact on our students by acting as mentors and helping guide them through the professional world – and life.

12. What differentiates your organization from others doing the same work?

The Genesys Works program is unique from other high school internship programs for many reasons:

- Our internships are year-round instead of summer only. This allows us to invest the first two months (160 hours) into rigorous technical and professional skills training, and develop the tools, confidence and mindset needed for students to provide real value to companies. The year-long internship allows and encourages companies to provide further training into areas or technologies particular to the business. Students learn more than they ever could in a traditional classroom. The longer timeframe also allows students to earn school credit (e.g. 100% of students in Houston earn school "co-op" credit).
- Genesys Works internships are managed throughout the year through a collaboration between our full-time staff and our client partners. Whereas traditional high school internships place students in the workplace doing administrative duties and provide little to no oversight, at Genesys Works we pair each cohort of 20 interns to both a full-time Genesys Works professional and a corporate supervisor.
- Genesys Works internships are paid and students earn on average of \$10,000 their senior year in high school.
- Genesys Works training and internships allow and promote the development of impactful relationships. In addition to mentoring our students during the internship, our corporate employees volunteer in other ways to help students with their professional development, such as conducting mock interviews during training, providing additional college counseling, and organizing networking events for alumni.

13. Who are your program partners?

We work with 140 School Partners in: Houston (Houston, Alief, Spring Branch and Sheldon Independent School Districts); Twin Cities (Minneapolis Public Schools); Chicago (Chicago Public Schools); San Francisco Bay Area (San Francisco, Oakland, and San Jose Unified School Districts); and National Capital Region (Fairfax County Public Schools, DC Public Schools).

We work with 185 Corporate Partners in eight cities. Examples include: 3M, Accenture, AIG, AT&T, Best Buy/Geek Squad, Blue Cross Blue Shield Minnesota, Cargill, Deloitte, Ecolab, GE, General Mills, Houston Methodist Hospital, JPMorgan, Kirkland & Ellis, Medtronic, PG&E, The Private Bank, Salesforce, St. Jude Medical, Sysco, Target, Texas Children's Hospital, TransUnion, Travelers.