



Building Pathways  
to **Employment**  
and **Economic**  
**Self-Sufficiency**

2017 ALUMNI SURVEY SUMMARY

Survey of Genesys Works alumni reveals program participants are achieving college and career aspirations against all odds, improving the economic status of their families and becoming strong economic contributors to the communities we serve.

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A nonprofit social enterprise, Genesys Works provides pathways to career success for high school students in underserved communities through skills training, meaningful work experiences, and impactful relationships. By giving students the opportunity to succeed in a professional work environment while still in high school, they begin to see that a path to a professional career and economic self-sufficiency is within their reach.

The current hiring landscape shows that the primary path to a well-paying job in the modern economy is through education (Carnevale et al., 2016; Dadgar & Weiss, 2012; Jacobson & Mokher, 2009; Duke & Strawn, 2008). According to the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, 65% of jobs in the year 2020 will require postsecondary credentials with 35% requiring at least a bachelor's degree (Carnevale et al., 2013). As a result, examining the educational status of Genesys Works alumni is key to understanding their prospects for achieving career success.

In the fall of 2017, Genesys Works conducted its third annual survey of program alumni for purposes of evaluating program outcomes and the extent to which Genesys Works has succeeded in helping youth from underserved communities attain a professional career and reach economic self-sufficiency. Of the 2,400 alumni who received the survey, 1,194 responded, yielding a response rate of 49%. Results from the survey provide clear evidence that the Genesys Works program is accomplishing its mission of connecting motivated youth with skills training and meaningful work opportunities, putting them on the path to career success and economic self-sufficiency.

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## PROGRAM MODEL

Through comprehensive professional and technical skills training, meaningful work experiences, and college and career coaching, Genesys Works helps students see that a professional career is within reach and provides them the opportunities they need to achieve their career goals. Over the course of 14 months, students spend approximately 1,200 hours in training, in a professional job, and attending approximately 60 hours of college preparatory and career counseling sessions. Students complete the program with increased confidence, in-demand job skills and elevated career aspirations.

Students participate in four interlocking program components:

- An 8-week technical and professional skills training program preparing them for the workplace
- A paid, year-long internship during senior year where students earn an average of \$10,000
- College and career coaching as students navigate college and career pathways
- Ongoing alumni support to help students achieve college and career success

Programming is implemented in a culture of high expectations focused on rigor, relevance, and relationships; student training is rigorous, the work performed is relevant to career interests and employer needs, and the relationships built with the workplace managers, co-workers, program staff, and fellow students, play a critical role in student persistence and success.

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## STUDENT PROFILE

Within the Genesys Works student population, 96% identify as students of color, 82% participate in a Free or Reduced Lunch Program and 82% are the first in their families to attend college. Prior to participating in Genesys Works, these students are on-track to graduate high school, but less likely to enroll or complete a postsecondary degree. Genesys Works believes that once students have been given an opportunity to succeed in a professional job, they will gain the confidence and skills they need to continue on the path to a professional job and economic self-sufficiency.

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## ALUMNI SURVEY REVEALS CORRELATION TO FURTHER EDUCATION, ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE

The Genesys Works program is making an impact on the educational and economic outcomes of its students:

- According to National Student Clearinghouse data, 95% of students enroll in college and 70% have graduated or are still enrolled in college.
- The median income of program alumni working full-time, no longer in college, and graduated from high school at least 5 years ago is between \$45,000 and \$50,000.

- The fact that a majority of alumni have opted for fields that tend to have high labor market returns, such as STEM-related fields, suggests that they are on the right trajectory for attaining career success.
- Of those students who completed the Genesys Works program at least 5 years ago, 89% report they are working full-time, up from 82.3% last year.

### Education

- 95% of Genesys Works alumni opted to go to college, with the vast majority (82%) being the first generation in his/her family to enroll in college.
- 66% of alumni received some kind of grant/scholarships to finance their education.
- Genesys Works students are pursuing a degree or entering the workforce in STEM-related fields at a higher rate than their peers – 40% of alumni opted for STEM majors (Computer Science, Information Systems/IT, Math and Science, Engineering, and Health).
- 69% of Genesys Works alumni worked while in college. 15% of alumni who are still in college work full-time to pay for college and 54% work part-time.
- Genesys Works alumni carry less debt than the national average. 66% have student loans, with the average debt at \$15,000 versus \$25,550 national average debt.

### Salary Data

- The median income of program alumni working full-time, no longer in college, and graduated from high school at least 5 years ago is between \$45,000 and \$50,000.
- Of those alumni working full-time, not in college and graduated from high school more than 5 years ago, nearly half (47%) earn \$50,000 and above.
- 23% of alumni who work full-time and are not attending college earn the same or more than both parents combined, with 46% earning the same or more than at least one parent.

### Value of Genesys Works

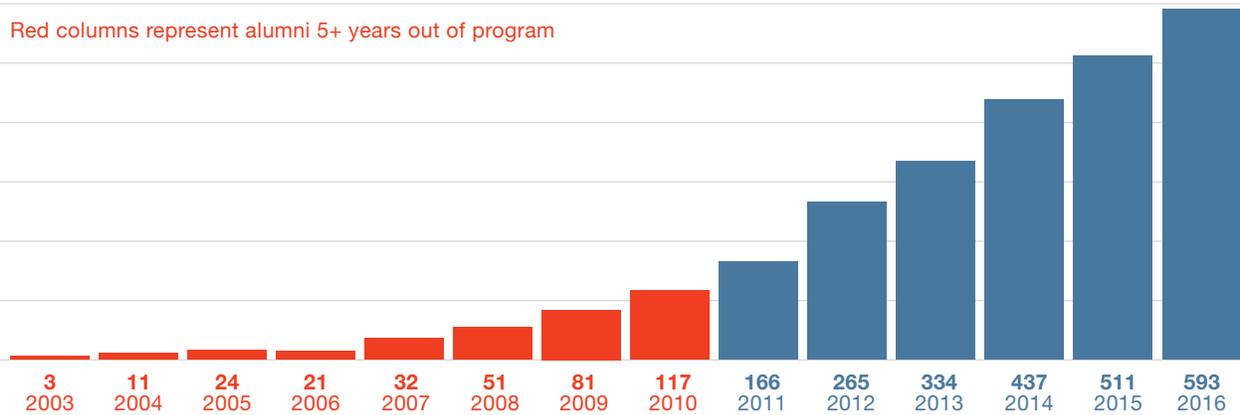
- 99% of alumni would “highly recommend” Genesys Works to their friends and family.
- 9 out of 10 alumni felt Genesys Works helped them advance their educational or career goals.
- 94% felt their high school internship was valuable and 90% felt their relationship with their supervisor was valuable.

## SUMMARY

The third annual survey of program alumni continues to show significant positive outcomes for Genesys Works students. Most importantly, survey findings validate the Genesys Works program model and, based on these findings, it is reasonable to infer that a **majority of alumni are on the right trajectory for achieving career success and financial self-sufficiency**. Alumni are **earning more at a younger age than the national median** and are **choosing fields that tend to have high labor market returns** and low unemployment rates, suggesting that they are on the right trajectory for attaining career success. The chart below shows the growth of Genesys Works' alumni base.

### Alumni by Year of High School Graduation

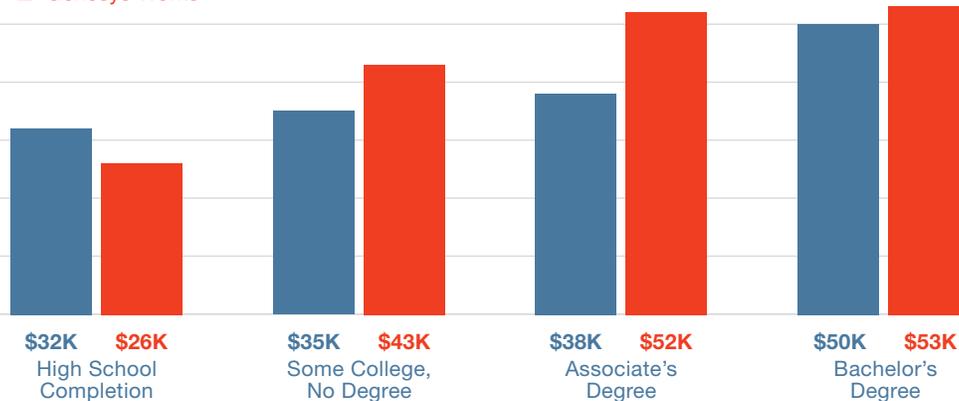
Red columns represent alumni 5+ years out of program



While a majority of Genesys Works alumni completed high school less than five years ago, the survey provides valuable insight on the value of skills training and internship participation. The most relevant outcome for the Genesys Works program is alumni salary data since it is the most direct measure of whether alumni have reached economic independence. As the chart below shows, Genesys Works alumni are earning more than their peers, including both overall national averages and their socio-economic peer group.

### Mean Annual Salary (Age 25–34)

■ National ■ Genesys Works



Survey results clearly provide evidence that the Genesys Works program is accomplishing its vision of *equipping and empowering high school students in underserved communities with the knowledge and skills required to achieve career success and self-sufficiency*. Genesys Works students are achieving career aspirations against all odds, improving the economic status of their families and becoming strong economic contributors to the communities we serve.

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## ABOUT GENESYS WORKS

Genesys Works is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides pathways to career success for high school students in underserved communities through skills training, meaningful work experiences, and impactful relationships. Program graduates enter and thrive in the economic mainstream with the knowledge and work experience required to succeed as professionals. This mission is accomplished through an 8-week skills training program, a year-long paid corporate internship, and guidance and coaching from high school through college, and into the workforce.

Starting in 2002 with only a few students, Genesys Works has grown to become a national organization serving nearly 4,000 students annually in five metropolitan areas: Houston, Twin Cities, Chicago, the San Francisco Bay Area, and the National Capital Region. Learn more about Genesys Works at [genesysworks.org](http://genesysworks.org).

*2017 Genesys Works Alumni Report prepared by Nidhi Mehrotra, Ph.D. The full report is available upon request.*

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