

Launchpad Overview for Candidates

Launchpad Background:

Launchpad is a new initiative from Building 21 that seeks to directly connect young people to living-wage paying jobs that offer upwardly mobile career opportunities, while providing them with the credentials, skills, mindsets, and experience to thrive in these roles.

Vision: Realize the equitable distribution of opportunity for young people.

Mission: Bring together networks of students, high schools, post-secondary institutions, and employers to co-create new pathways for young people that lead to good jobs in growing industries.

By integrating career-connected learning, authentic work experiences, and the development of “Future Ready” skills, Launchpad will harness the power of connected networks of schools and employers to prepare students to thrive as they transition into full-time work. If we support students to mastery across all future ready skills, support students in their acquisition of job/industry specific skills, create lower-stakes opportunities for students to do real work with real customers at Launchpad Inc., and place them in good-fit living wage roles, then students will be launched into the next phase of their lives, ready to thrive in their first role and along an upward career trajectory in a growing industry.

The students we seek to serve are those in the “middle”—not on a clear track for success in a four-year college but also not in need of significant academic remediation. These students too often struggle to find success in college or in career right out of high school, failing to “latch on” to life trajectories that reflect their potential. These students will leave Launchpad with a “good job” (one that pays a living wage) in a high growth industry with upwardly mobile career opportunities. In order to ensure their long-term success, they will also be equipped with general “Future Ready” skills and mindsets, pathway-specific skills, industry certifications, real world experience, strong networks of professionals in their career area, a portfolio of relevant work, and either an Associates degree or meaningful credit towards a degree—all translating to a significant “leg up” as they launch their careers.

Building 21 Background:

The mission of Building 21 is to empower networks of learners to connect with their passions and build agency to impact their world. Building 21 is a nonprofit organization that is reimagining secondary schooling to meet the needs of all learners. Building 21 partners with school districts to design, launch and operate innovative schools. Our schools are afforded significant flexibility and autonomy by our district partners to pursue our vision for student and adult learning. We also work with schools and districts that are making the transition to competency-based education through our Learning Innovation Network. Our mission is to create a network approach to secondary and post-secondary learning for high school age youth that fundamentally reorients the system to place the learner at the center. www.building21.org

Launchpad Programming at a Glance

Year	Theme	Student Programming	Objectives	Coursework
11	Orientation & Community Building	4-week summer session after 11th grade Weekly and one Saturday per month during the school year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Community/cohort-building → Industry discovery → Future Ready skill-building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career related projects
12	Laying the Foundation	Daily (half-day) at the Launchpad learning facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Community/cohort-building → Industry discovery → Future Ready skill-building → Crucial literacy and numeracy academic skills for the workplace → Exposure to industry skill-building culminating in "mini-certifications" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior capstone project • MATH/ELA • College Classes • Future Ready projects and mini-certifications
13	Building Skills & Competencies	30 hours per week onsite and virtual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Build industry-related technical skills → Accumulate college credits aligned to Future Ready skills → Launchpad Inc work experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Software development essentials • College classes • (Future Ready)
14	Launching Your Career	30 hours per week onsite and virtual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Launchpad Inc work experience → Build specialized industry-related technical skills → Accumulate college credits aligned to Future Ready skills → Placement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced technical • mini-courses (Agile, UI/UX, Python, etc) • College classes • (Future Ready)

Who is eligible to participate?

Launchpad works with 11th graders across partner high schools. Eligible students must be on track for graduation and not on an immediate path to a four-year college.

When do students apply?

Students apply in the fall of their 11th grade year. The application process will open at the beginning of September and close in late October. Launchpad staff will work with partner high schools to manage the recruitment process.

What happens when participants graduate?

Launchpad aims to place all graduates in a living wage job making at least \$35,000 or more. All graduates will receive ongoing support and continued professional development with the intention of ensuring that graduates are in the same or a better job one year later.