



Louisiana

Work-Based Learning in Action

The state's master plan aims to expand work-based learning experiences, emphasizing high-quality, paid, and credit-bearing experiences.

Louisiana seeks to embed high-quality, paid, credit-bearing work-based learning into higher education programs as part of its Louisiana Prospers master plan. The initiative includes pilots at 19 programs across 15 public colleges, financial incentives for institutions and employers, and outcome tracking through statewide data systems.

Launched in 2019, Louisiana's master plan for higher education, Louisiana Prospers,¹ laid out a goal to strengthen the state's economic growth and quality of life. Part of the state's plan includes increasing the percentage of the working-age population with a credential of value beyond a high school diploma to 60 percent by 2030. Embedding opportunities for work-based learning within postsecondary curricula is also a core focus of the plan.

A recent initiative by the Board of Regents aims to expand work-based learning into postsecondary programs of study where it is not already an existing requirement of the curriculum. Data collection integrated into this pilot will inform how to scale work-based learning adoption across higher education institutions and contribute to the growing field of research for how embedding paid, work-based learning influences the ongoing success of students after graduation.²

- ➔ The state's focus on work-based learning, particularly paid internships, is seen as a crucial strategy to achieve its goal of increasing postsecondary attainment by ensuring graduates are well-prepared for the workforce.



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Louisiana's approach

As introduced in Louisiana Prospers, the Board of Regents is particularly focused on the following strategies:

- Compensation to students
- Campus support from faculty and advisors
- Curriculum alignment
- Exposure to networking opportunities

Incorporation of practices for statewide program implementation strengthens the initiative's potential for success:

- **Incentivize adoption of work-based learning experiences.** Scaled adoption of work-based learning programs will be incentivized by financial rewards incorporated into Louisiana's outcomes-based funding formula.³ Employer participation will be incentivized via tax credits made available to those employing apprentices, interns, and youth workers.⁴
- **Commit to tracking outcomes.** The initiative's selected educational institutions will measure their programs' effect on participating students by collecting data on student completion, satisfaction, learning mindset, and employment outcomes. Louisiana's Foundational Integrated Research System for Transformation, a cross-state department data system for analyzing the linkages between education and employment, will be leveraged to collect and track outcomes information.⁵



PHOTO / UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE

- ➔ Louisiana's state master plan emphasizes high-quality, paid, and credit-bearing work-based learning experiences.

Alignment with goals of state leadership

Louisiana aims to significantly increase educational attainment across the state in order to meet the workforce needs of the future. In addition to the goal of increasing to 60 percent by 2030 the portion of working-age Louisianans with a credential of value beyond high school, the state's master plan aims to expand work-based learning experiences in alignment with national best practices, emphasizing high-quality, paid, and credit-bearing experiences. Additionally, the Louisiana State Legislature passed legislation in 2025 that creates the Task Force on Career Alignment, which will study ways to implement education-to-career counseling. Among its other charges, the new task force will assess and propose strategies to expand work-based learning opportunities.⁶

I Strategy

Preliminary research by the Board of Regents revealed that students who completed course-based work-based learning experiences earned higher starting salaries after graduation than their peers who did not participate, a finding echoed by Strada research,⁷ and this salary advantage increased over time. This prompted the Board of Regents to focus on embedding paid, credit-bearing work-based learning experiences into academic curricula, especially in fields in which it is not currently required. The Board of Regents' validation and scaling strategy includes the following elements:

- **Piloting work-based learning integration at select two- and four-year public institutions.** The Board of Regents launched a request for proposals in 2024 to solicit proposals from public higher education institutions. The board selected 19 degree programs across 15 institutions to receive \$12,000 for development and implementation of work-based learning programs.
- **Requiring evidence-based best practices in proposed models for work-based learning.** The request for proposals provided guidance on program development based on evidence-based models but allowed for flexibility in design.
- **Incentivizing pilot participation and scale.** In addition to monetary support, these selected organizations additionally will receive technical assistance and access to convenings where they can exchange learning with peers. To support adoption and growth of work-based learning programs after this initial funding period and pilot, the Board of Regents will incentivize institutions through financial rewards in the state funding formula,⁸ specifically through its outcomes component. In January 2025, the Board of Regents embedded the new incentives into the funding formula through adoption of a new "experiential learning" metric,⁹ which aims to recognize institutions that educate students via work-based learning coursework. This metric will be measured by student experiential learning credit hours completed. In July 2025, Louisiana's Work-Based Learning Tax Credit Act was enacted. This complementary legislation will incentivize employers by providing a tax credit to businesses employing apprentices, interns, and youth workers. This statewide credit is currently capped at \$7.5 million each calendar year.¹⁰

I Implementation and oversight

Key partners for expanding high-quality work-based learning experiences within Louisiana include:

- The **Louisiana Board of Regents** leads the initiative to embed work-based learning experiences into curricula and developing incentives for institutions to participate through the state's funding formulas.
- The **Louisiana Workforce Commission** aligns fields of study with workforce needs and improves student career exploration and navigation.
- **Louisiana's two- and four-year public institutions** are charged with developing Meauxmentum Plans that outline how they will achieve attainment goals. Actions can include participating in the Board of Regents' request for proposals, implementing work-based learning programs, and sharing outcomes data.

- **Regional economic development officers** participated alongside provosts and chief academic officers from each campus in co-developing comprehensive academic plans in which degree programs are aligned with labor market needs. These plans are further informed by regional labor market data reports from Lightcast.

I Measuring success

As of early 2025, the Board of Regents had selected 19 public undergraduate degree programs at 15 institutions to develop work-based learning opportunities with the goal of launching programs in fall 2025. The Board of Regents' impact analysis of the programs, capturing three years of data, will contribute to the growing field of research exploring how embedding paid work-based learning experiences influences the ongoing success of students beyond graduation. Participating institutions will share data on student completion, satisfaction, learning mindset, and employment outcomes. Closely following the programs also will contribute to understanding how the design of various work-based learning programs affects accessibility for students, and, ultimately, their success. The Board of Regents has committed to disseminating findings.

TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Louisiana has developed several tools and resources to support its efforts:

- [Work-Based Learning Guidelines for K-12 Educational Institutions](#) are published by Louisiana's Department of Education Office of Career and College Readiness to define work-based learning and student credit hours.
- [Guide for School Systems and CTE Leaders to Evaluate Work-Based Learning Opportunities](#), a playbook published by Louisiana's Department of Education Office of Career and College Readiness, explains how to evaluate quality workbased learning opportunities.
- A **playbook for how to embed and expand work-based learning within educational institutions** is planned for release from the Louisiana Board of Regents. The guide is scheduled to be completed at the conclusion of the work-based learning pilots across 19 programs and 15 higher education institutions.

Endnotes

- 1 Master Plan. (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana Board of Regents, 2019). <https://www.laregents.edu/masterplan/>.
- 2 "Guidelines for the Submission of Applications to Enhance Work-Based Learning Experiences (WBLE+) for Postsecondary Degree Programs." (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana Board of Regents, 2024). https://www.laregents.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/INSTITUTION-AND-PROGRAM-NAME_RFA-to-Enhance-Work-Based-Learning-Experiences_2024.pdf.
- 3 "Regents Adopts New Outcomes-Based Funding Formula." (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana Board of Regents, January 28, 2025). <https://www.laregents.edu/a012825release/>.
- 4 "Louisiana Enacts Work-Based Learning Tax Credit Act." (Crystal City, VA: Bloomberg Law, July 2, 2025). <https://news.bloombergtax.com/daily-tax-report/louisiana-enacts-work-based-learning-tax-credit-act>.
- 5 Louisiana Revised Statute 17 (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State Legislature, 2024). <https://www.legis.la.gov/legis/Law.aspx?d=1338071>.
- 6 Louisiana Senate Concurrent Resolution 38. (Elkview, WV: LegiScan LLC, 2025). <https://legiscan.com/LA/bill/SCR38/2025>.
- 7 Nichole Torpey-Saboe, Elaine Leigh, and Dave Clayton. "The Power of Work-Based Learning." (Indianapolis: Strada Education Foundation, March 2022). <https://www.strada.org/reports/the-power-of-work-based-learning>.
- 8 "Regents Adopts New Outcomes-Based Funding Formula." (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana Board of Regents, January, 28, 2025). <https://www.laregents.edu/a012825release/>.
- 9 "Louisiana Board of Regents Funding Model Review." (Boulder, CO: National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2024). https://nchems.org/wp-content/uploads/Louisiana-Board-of-Regents-Funding-Model-Review_Final.pdf.
- 10 "Louisiana Enacts Work-Based Learning Tax Credit Act." <https://news.bloombergtax.com/daily-tax-report/louisiana-enacts-work-based-learning-tax-credit-act>.

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