

# AMERICA EMPLOYED

## INSIGHTS FROM EXPRESS EMPLOYMENT PROFESSIONALS



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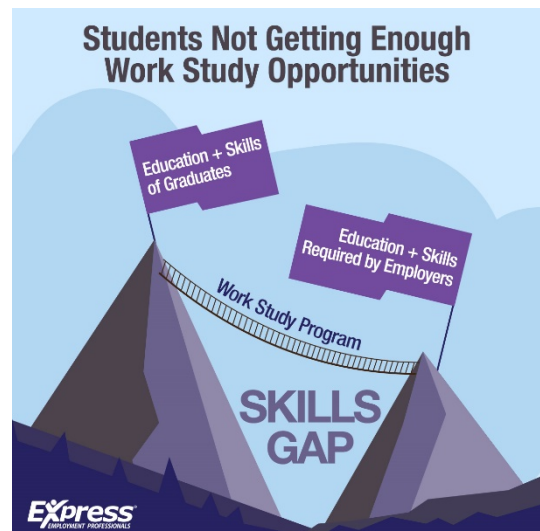
## Students Not Getting Enough Work Study Opportunities

*Closing the Skills Gap Requires Students to get Real-Life Work Experience Early On*

*Better Partnerships with Schools and Businesses Needed*

**OKLAHOMA CITY, Nov. 14, 2018** — In a tight labor market with an increasing number of job vacancies, employers are facing a growing skills gap. Too many young Americans are graduating with degrees and skills that don't match the needs of employers.

An effective way of closing the skills gap is to provide students with real-life work experience before they graduate. Having high school students learn early on about workplace culture, how their educational experience translates into the real world, and what educational disciplines are the most sought, will help ensure students are graduating with the skills and education employers need.



Express Employment Professionals is committed to partnering with local entities to provide early education and work-study opportunities for high-school students to help raise a workforce prepared to fill the shortage of skilled workers.

One way Express helps connect educators with the needs of businesses is through Job Genius, a free video-based program created by Express to successfully prepare students to enter into the workforce. With parent and facilitator guides for teachers, Job Genius explores everything from job market forecasts, post-secondary education requirements and resume creation to career pathing to help students make informed choices for their future.

To help further early intervention workforce education, Express International Headquarters is currently hosting several interns as part of the Cristo Rey Network's Corporate Work Study Program. The network of high schools serves students who are from inner-city economically limited backgrounds and the work-study program allows them to intern one day a week at a local business, earning money towards tuition.

“Not a lot of kids get this opportunity,” said Cinthya Bolado of her internship. “I think it’s going to open up doors everywhere.”

Elvira Quinones, Cinthya’s mother, says Cristo Rey and the opportunity to work is a “blessing.”

“Working once a week has helped her in having a better understanding of the experience of being employed ... and helped her realize the importance of communication skills, time management and how to be more proactive,” she said.

Express franchise owners see the importance of similar efforts in their local communities.

“Our team has started to be more active in participating in high school job fairs,” said Terri Greeno, an Express franchise owner in Crystal Lake, Illinois. “We are educating students, and their parents quite frankly, that you don’t need to have a four-year degree to build a successful and rewarding career. Manufacturers are desperate for people who are hungry to learn and excited to be trained.

“A high school student who has limited economic means or experiences is just as trainable and promotable as other students, as long as they have the work ethic and desire to learn and grow.”

Yvonne Rockwell, an Express franchise owner in Santa Clarita, California, says conversations with young people have to start early.

“We invite youths into our businesses to explore so they can learn more about what we actually do on a day-to-day basis,” she said. “For those who haven’t been exposed to different environments, it’s hard to imagine what a certain career path can look like. By removing the concept of the ‘unknown,’ we have a chance to help a young person see a new opportunity and potential way of life that will provide a strong career and future for them and their families.”

Part of the problem, says Birmingham, Alabama, franchise owner Daniel Morgan is that in-demand skills are “not taught because school has become all about test results. We need better partnerships with schools and businesses.”

In Grand Rapids, Michigan, franchise owner Janis Petrini, agrees.

“Students need to become exposed to actual career options that have potential earlier on,” she said. “Businesses need to start training the workforce that they need.”

Her team visits local high schools to raise awareness.

“In 2018, we have delivered various presentations to hundreds of participants,” Petrini added. “One of the biggest focuses is always on what are the hot jobs right now and the careers of the future.”

The Grand Rapids office is also part of a local program called “Mayors 100 Business,” for which businesses “commit to hiring at-risk high school students and providing them with internships to get real life work experience.”

“Job vacancies continue to outnumber available workers,” said Bill Stoller, CEO of Express. “That means we need to continue drawing more people into the workforce, with an especially strong focus on helping those of limited means recognize and seize the opportunities that are out there. Businesses, educators and community leaders need to work together to remove as many barriers to jobs as possible.”

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If you would like to arrange for an interview with Bill Stoller to discuss this topic, please contact Sheena Karami, Director of Corporate Communications and PR, at (405) 717-5966.

**About Bill Stoller**

William H. "Bill" Stoller is chairman and chief executive officer of Express Employment Professionals. Headquartered in Oklahoma City, the international staffing company has more than 800 franchises in the U.S., Canada and South Africa. Since its inception, Express has put more than 6 million people to work worldwide.

**About Express Employment Professionals**

Express Employment Professionals puts people to work. It generated \$3.4 billion in sales and employed a record 540,000 people in 2017. Its long-term goal is to put a million people to work annually. For more information, visit [ExpressPros.com](http://ExpressPros.com).