

Good afternoon, Chair, Vice-Chair, and members of the committee -

Nursing Assistants, Automotive Service Technicians, Dental Assistants, Computer Network Support Specialists.

What do all these jobs have in common?

They have a median wage of over \$40k-50/yr, currently in high demand AND also projected to grow in the next 10 years, and most importantly, do not require a college degree. Sounds like wonderful proposition, but yet the state has real concerns if it can meet this demand in the future.

My name is Vanan Murugesan, and I'm here to talk to you about **Career Pathways, an initiative that not only solves for our future jobs needs, but also a way to help grow strong middle-class black and brown families in our state.**

As we all know, there is growing amount of youth that feel that college is not the right path for them out of high-school, due to high costs. In these kinds of situation, we can often see these students taking entry-level, service-industry jobs – it's relatively easy to get them, but they typically don't offer long-term wage growth and sustainability for their families and community. We want to short-circuit that experience and tell these youths that there is a better option out there for them.

What we do -

1. we place HS graduates in accredited institutions to earn industry certificates, only focused in high-demand, high-potential jobs.
2. we provide financial support and wrap-around services so that they can just focus on learning.
3. We provide mentorship and internship opportunities for them to learn more about their vocation.
4. We provide soft skills training so to help prepare them for the adult workplace environment.

We believe this is an excellent program that create pathways for black and brown youths to join the middle class and be economic contributors to the state. By our calculations, the average investment for youth is \$30k/yr, and this provides both short-term and long-term benefits. Short-term, we get these kids into something productive and beneficial right after the graduate from high school (and they can avoid those lost years), and long-term, when they graduate, these youths can earn approximately \$200k over a 5-year period, dollars that go back to the state's economy.

Thank you for your time. And happy to answer any question you have on our work.