

# The New ERA Initiative

● Education ● Resources ● Allies



# We're launching what the North Shore is missing: a coordinated youth workforce ecosystem.

**\$15,000**

average increase in starting salary  
for students with experiential  
learning

**x**

**~2,000**

high school seniors in Lynn and  
Salem each year

**=**

**\$30M+**

**per year**

in potential  
economic mobility  
and regional vitality

## OUR VISION

# A system that outlasts any single program — and works for every single student.



EDUCATION  
ALIGNED OPPORTUNITY

40% → 70%

of Lynn and Salem high school graduates enroll in postsecondary education within one year



RESOURCES  
FOR READINESS

5% → 25%

of North Shore businesses are developing local young talent



ALLIES  
OPENING DOORS

0 → 2,000

mentors trained as youth career navigators

## OUR WHY

**The talent is here.**

**The employers are here.**

**The system connecting them isn't.**

## Rising Urgency

At the very moment our workforce needs young talent most, too many students are leaving school without a clear path forward.

**180,000**

fewer working-age adults in Massachusetts by 2030

**40,000**

workers must be retrained annually to keep pace with change

**<30%**

of Gen Z feels very prepared after high school

## OUR WHY

The talent is here.

The employers are here.

The system connecting them isn't.

# System Disconnect

Without coordination, employers struggle to find talent while young people struggle to find opportunity.



### STUDENTS

Limited exposure to careers and real work experience



### SCHOOLS

Required to do career planning—with little capacity



### EMPLOYERS

Burdened by the complexity of onboarding and supporting youth



### WORKFORCE ORGS

Driven by urgent needs, not long-term talent development

## OUR WHY

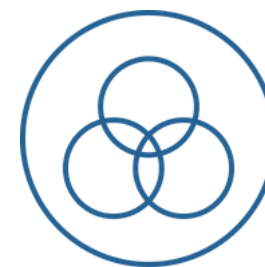
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# Missing Link

Coordination makes the pipeline more efficient—and surfaces talent current systems weren't built to see.



**SHARED STRATEGY**



**REGIONAL STANDARDS**



**DATA & ACCOUNTABILITY**



**TRAINING & CERTIFICATION**



**CLEAR PATHS FROM EDUCATION TO WORK**

## OUR ROLE

# The North Shore needs a youth workforce pipeline.

LEAP will bring together schools, employers, and allies to build a system that works better for everyone.



### EDUCATION ALIGNED OPPORTUNITY

We connect schools and industry so students graduate with experience and employers hire with confidence.



### RESOURCES FOR READINESS

We expand access to the experiences and credentials students need to launch their careers, so employers hire the homegrown talent they want on their teams.



### ALLIES OPENING DOORS

We mobilize a network of navigators who connect young people to opportunity—and the North Shore to economic vitality.

*The work of strengthening LEAP internally and the work of building a more coordinated youth opportunity system externally are not two separate efforts — they are deeply connected.*

*And because this work is already underway, LEAP is not just prepared to participate in this shift—we're positioned to lead it.*

## OUR ROLE

# The North Shore needs a youth workforce pipeline.

LEAP will bring together schools, employers, and allies to build a system that works better for everyone.



### EDUCATION ALIGNED OPPORTUNITY

We connect schools and industry so students graduate with experience and employers hire with confidence.

We will partner with school districts, colleges, and local employers to:

- Strengthen career planning through state framework alignment
- Build and credential the mastery of soft skills
- Expand hands-on, career-connected learning

## OUR ROLE

# The North Shore needs a youth workforce pipeline.

LEAP will bring together schools, employers, and allies to build a system that works better for everyone.



### RESOURCES FOR READINESS

We expand access to the experiences and credentials students need to launch their careers, so employers hire the homegrown talent they want on their teams.

We will partner with employers, workforce agencies, and community organizations to:

- Grow the number of paid internships and other paid work experiences
- Remove financial and logistical barriers to participation
- Expand access to industry-recognized credentials

## OUR ROLE

# The North Shore needs a youth workforce pipeline.

LEAP will bring together schools, employers, and allies to build a system that works better for everyone.



### ALLIES OPENING DOORS

We mobilize a network of navigators who connect young people to opportunity—and the North Shore to economic vitality.

We will partner with employers, educators, and youth-serving organizations to:

- Recruit, train, and certify career navigators and employers
- Align partners around shared standards
- Build shared data and accountability systems

## OUR ROADMAP

# From parallel programs to a unified pipeline.

## Phase 1: Build the Infrastructure

2026–2029

### Build the Foundation

Formalize the model of the coalition, decision-making structure, and develop a sustainable revenue model. Establish ready-to-work and ready-to-hire certification standards for students and employers and career navigators so the network grows with quality built in.

### Expand Access

Expand access to career mentoring, work-based learning, paid internships and industry-recognized credentials. Remove the financial and logistical barriers that keep capable students on the sidelines.

### Connect the System

Roll out career navigator training for community mentors and youth workers, and a ready-to-work program for middle and high school students. Launch shared data, accountability goals, and tools.

## OUR ROADMAP

# From parallel programs to a unified pipeline.

## Phase 2: Prove the Model

2030–2033

### Grow What's Working

Increase the number of paid placements and credentialed youth. Turn early wins in Salem into a scalable model. Lay the groundwork for Lynn expansion.

### Widen the Network

Expand the certified employer and career navigator network in Lynn. Build the partnerships and shared standards that make coordination possible at scale.

### Make the Case

Strengthen shared data and accountability tools and demonstrate measurable improvements in career readiness and placement outcomes. Show funders, employers, and communities what a working pipeline actually looks like.

## OUR ROADMAP

# From parallel programs to a unified pipeline.

## Phase 3: Scale the System

2034–2036

### Grow the Map

Expand the model in Lynn. Think about how to adapt what's worked to new contexts.

### Make It Last

Formalize the long-term governance structure and diversify revenue through public contracts and employer partnerships, so the system doesn't depend on any single funder to survive.

### Share What Works

Build the tools, data, and documentation that capture LEAP's model in action—so the ecosystem we've built can inform and inspire others when the time is right.

OUR ASK

# Fund alignment. Watch the *system* go further.



SCAN TO DONATE



## FAQ

# Why New ERA?

New ERA is how LEAP moves from running programs that band-aid a broken system to playing a lead role in building a system that outlasts any one of them. It coordinates the regional talent pipeline while expanding economic mobility for young people.



## FAQ

# Why Now?

The timing has never been better—or more urgent. Massachusetts faces 180,000 fewer working-age adults by 2030, while educational priorities are shifting toward career readiness and funders are increasingly prioritizing collaborative, systems-level work.

LEAP will continue serving 500+ students directly while using New ERA to redesign programs for scale and build the system that holds it all together.



## FAQ

# What about the other work LEAP is doing now?

LEAP will keep doing what it does best: partnering directly with students in Salem and Lynn on their career development so they graduate ready and with a real plan for what comes next. But **the work of strengthening LEAP internally and the work of building a more coordinated youth opportunity system externally are not two separate efforts — they are deeply connected.**

Many of LEAP's top strategic priorities and most pressing internal needs mirror what the broader community needs as well: clearer roles and responsibilities, engagement of more partners and volunteers, stronger data and accountability systems, less duplication, and more consistent support for young people over time. New ERA builds on that alignment. It allows LEAP not only to strengthen its own programs and infrastructure, but also to help create the kind of coordinated education-and-career ecosystem that makes student success more likely and less dependent on luck.



## FAQ

# Is this restricted funding?

New ERA gifts are unrestricted and go directly toward what works: paid internships, career-connected learning, employer engagement, and the systems that coordinate them.

This investment strengthens the systems and partnerships that drive long-term economic mobility for young people across the North Shore.



## FAQ

# Isn't this work already happening?

Good work is already happening across the North Shore. New ERA coordinates it so the results are greater than the sum of their parts. Shared standards, aligned access points, and clear pathways take every organization's work further.



## FAQ

# What happens if we don't make this shift?

Fragmented efforts continue. Students graduate without a clear path. Employers keep looking elsewhere for talent. North Shore leaves its own potential on the table.



## FAQ

# How will success be measured?

- Growth in paid internships and early-career placements
- Increased access to industry-recognized credentials
- Expansion of certified employers and career navigators
- Education and workforce systems moving in the same direction
- Long-term career outcomes for participating youth

