

Made in Durham

**Phase 1 Action Plan
2014 – 2016**

Approved August 2014

Foreword

Just over a year ago, we assembled a group of CEOs from some of Durham's largest employers, along with public sector leaders from city and county government, workforce development board, secondary and postsecondary education, and civic leaders. The charge: design an education-to-career system for young people in Durham, drawing on recommendations from the 2012 *Made in Durham* report. The Made in Durham Task Force has worked hard together to understand the challenges facing youth and young adults, educators, and employers as they try to make the most of Durham's vibrant economy.

It was sobering work: too many young people who grow up in Durham are not competitive in the Triangle's education and labor market, stymied by entrenched poverty and structural inequities that stem from Durham's complicated history of racial and socioeconomic segregation. Many struggle to find their way through a fragmented collection of institutions and organizations that are working to support young people, but not always working together. As employers ourselves, the Task Force challenged assumptions about why and how businesses get involved in developing the local workforce and what it would take to build stable, mutually productive relationships among employers, educators, and public agencies to ensure young people in Durham are successful in the labor market and that employers benefit from more home-grown talent.

We are convinced that these are long-term issues that require long-term vision. They will not be solved in 18 months, and they will not be solved by simply more programs for youth or more small requests for employer help.

We are now ready to take action and form Made in Durham, a new public-private partnership whose charge is to identify opportunities for collaboration and strategic use of resources where they are needed most; to engage youth and employers; and to stimulate innovation and measure progress so we know where we're going and what we need to do next towards our agreed-upon vision: *that all Durham youth and young adults complete a postsecondary credential and begin a rewarding career by the age of 25.*

Made in Durham is about commitment: committing to questioning our assumptions, acknowledging our history, and being pragmatic even as we are ambitious about our future. We know our readers will have many different perspectives on the challenges facing our youth. Made in Durham will work best if it incorporates the voice and effort of the entire community. We look forward to working with the partners engaged to date and many, many more. We will forge new relationships and strengthen existing ones to ensure every young person who grows up in Durham can make a life in Durham that we can all be proud of. We look forward to implementing this plan with the help of a broad mix of Durham's residents and institutions.

Victor Dzau, President, Institute of Medicine
Chairman, Made in Durham Task Force

Introduction

Each year, Durham employers create thousands of good jobs but too few of Durham's youth and young adults have the skills and experience to compete successfully for those jobs. Roughly 40 percent of our young people are not on-track to complete high school, achieve a postsecondary credential of some kind, or gain employment by the time they are 25. A substantial number will struggle to get there and some will not make it at all. Most disturbing, the victims of Durham's opportunity gap are mostly young men and women of color. This is not a new problem and it won't be solved quickly. But Durham is now poised to invest its people, time and resources in a community-wide strategy called Made in Durham that will ensure our youth ages 14-24 have a sound education foundation and the skills needed to make a successful transition to adulthood and productive work in our knowledge-based economy.

This work will build on important investments that Durham has made—and must continue to make—for Durham's younger children and will ensure that a strong start yields a strong finish. Our vision is to help all young people attain this goal; our basic yardstick of the system's value must be that it works as well for the most disconnected young person as it does for the most privileged. This document lays out a plan for the establishment of a small, nimble Made in Durham organization to coordinate the work of education-to-career system partners dedicated to positive outcomes for Durham's youth and young adults.

In June 2013, the Made in Durham Task Force, composed of Durham business and civic leaders, began the process of reform: the design of an education-to-career system that will give all Durham's youth the quality education, training, and personal support to prepare them for successful adulthood and good jobs in our regional labor market. Supported by an expert Policy Working Group of government, education, and nonprofit practitioners, we reviewed national best practices, analyzed local data, and interrogated our own assumptions about the first steps needed to improve the future of our young people. See Appendix A for a list of Task Force and Policy Working Group members. Our aspirations for and expectations of Durham young people are high:

All Durham youth and young adults will complete a postsecondary credential and begin a rewarding career by the age of 25

Working together, we can create a system where every young person:

- Completes a high school degree or equivalency
- Engages in work experiences that will prepare them for a career
- Enters postsecondary education and completes a credential
- Secures living-wage work

To achieve this goal (and the outcomes outlined in Appendix B), Durham must act swiftly to implement an education-to-career system for youth, guided by five principles of reform.

Five Principles of Reform

1: Weave employment with quality education.

We believe all young people have talent and all can succeed, given an excellent education that is relevant to the 21st century economy. The prospect of an exciting career can go far to motivate students and accelerate their learning, particularly with hands-on practice and workplace exposure from an early age. Made in Durham can help achieve this objective by engaging more employers in education and career training; creating work-based learning opportunities; and developing a system of career pathways leading to high-growth occupations in the Research Triangle.

2: Be relentlessly customer-driven.

An education-to-career system has two customers: young people and employers. Today, we are not organized to deliver fast, efficient, high quality services to either. Over the next several years, Made in Durham partners will put youth and businesses at the center, as we collaborate in planning, delivering, funding, communicating and evaluating our services. Essentially, this is a market-driven system; if youth (as with employers) do not like what is offered and if they have used the product or service and it has failed them in the past, it is unlikely that they will “buy” it again.

3: Track performance, be accountable.

Goals matter. They articulate what we want to achieve, help us measure progress, analyze what’s working, and improve what’s not. We will develop data systems that tell us how individual young people are advancing through education and into good jobs, whether employers are satisfied with our services, and what achievements of Made in Durham partners we should celebrate and expand.

4: Bend, blend, and leverage money.

A central premise of Made in Durham is that the route to sustainability, over the next five years, is to rely less on new funds and use the resources we have more effectively. Working together, we can apply our budgets to Made in Durham goals, pool some monies, and reallocate others to higher priorities. And with this powerful new partnership, we will raise external public, private, and philanthropic funds to test new programs, stimulate innovation, reward high performance, and support strategic activities.

5: Build a purposeful partnership.

We want to improve the life chances of our young people: to expand their horizons, develop their talent, knowledge, and self-confidence, and connect them with the economic opportunities that will bring security and fulfillment in adulthood. Most especially, we want to reach those disconnected youth and young adults—particularly young men and women of color—who will need the extra financial investment and specialized help to rejoin the mainstream and succeed in our competitive labor market.

Attaining our objectives demands joint action and unprecedented collaboration—building on the good programs we already have, and pooling the authority, resources, knowledge, and data of our partner organizations. It will require leaders with the determination and clout to effect educational change and influence business behavior. These new partners will need a safe forum in which to tackle tough issues, debate strategy, and decide the right action. And they must have a small but skilled staff to help them frame issues, manage complex relationships, raise money, and track collective progress. This will be the role of the Made in Durham organization.

Priorities for Investment

This Action Plan describes Made in Durham priorities for investment of time and resources for 2014-16.

Flexible Pathways for Young People with Support for Disconnected Youth

Over the coming years, we will construct a *system* of career pathways that provides a broad base of knowledge and prepares youth and young adults for meaningful careers in the Research Triangle. Each pathway will:

- integrate robust academic learning (emphasizing STEM skills) with soft skills, work experience, and personal support
- be competency-based and sufficiently flexible to allow young people to enter and exit at different points
- focus on a high-growth industry and be co-designed by educators and employers
- serve Durham's disconnected youth as well as those who are already in secondary or postsecondary school

The intent of these career pathways is not to track or block young people, but to open new vistas and possibilities, accelerate learning, provide life skills, and expose them to the disciplines of the workplace. Importantly, each pathway will be designed for *all* youth and young adults who are interested in pursuing a broad career field: this includes young people who are in school, those who have fallen behind, and those who have dropped out or are disconnected from education and employment and want to return to high school or enter Durham Tech. During 2014-16, we will use the NC Education and Innovation grant, awarded to Durham Public Schools (DPS) and reflecting a partnership with Durham Tech, as a *platform* to build the first pathway for technical and nursing occupations in the health and life sciences. Focusing on Southern High School of Energy and Sustainability and the City of Medicine Academy (both strong in this sector), it will extend from DPS feeder schools into high schools, to postsecondary education and training institutions, and into the Triangle's vibrant health industry. Our research suggests that the next sector to pursue in partners' pathway design is Information Technology.

In the next two years, we intend to provide special help for at-risk and disconnected young people in two ways. First, we will develop "on-ramps" to the career pathway in the Health and Life Sciences—a sequence of steps whereby nonprofits and public agencies can help disconnected youth attain the basic competencies required to return to high school or enter further training at Durham Tech or other places. This is a deliberate process, the detailed design of which will be informed by labor market information and national best practice research. Second, we will develop a plan specifically for criminal justice-involved youth and young adults, who often face the highest barriers to employment and include a disproportionate number of low-income young men and women of color. Planning is in early stages, but it is clear that we must have a combination of stronger connections between criminal justice and education programs as well as a greater investment in the kinds of transitional employment initiatives required for young people who are far removed from the labor force to succeed.

Moving all youth successfully through these pathways will require both careful coordination and creativity, involving those public and community-based organizations that excel in supporting young people with low educational attainment and problems related to health and substance

abuse, poor housing, dependent care, and court involvement, all of which can derail their progress.¹

Priorities for 2014-16:

1. Establish a Pathway Advisory Group, fall 2014, composed of faculty, staff and employers, to help plan, deliver, and evaluate the health and life science pathway across institutions, and appoint a Career Pathway Manager to lead this work, also fall 2014;
2. Appoint Health and Life Science Sector Specialist (see below) to help increase substantially the number of students in the health and life sciences career pathway with relevant work experience, fall 2014;
3. Align programs and curricula within health and life sciences pathway from DPS to Durham Tech, DWDB, NCCU, and nonprofits included in the “on ramps” for the more disconnected youth, starting fall 2014;
4. Convene expert group to design and implement a pilot project to provide intensive education and employment for criminal justice-involved youth and young adults, drawing on national best research and expert local practitioners, fall 2014.

Engaged Employers

An education-to-career system depends on active business involvement. Without employers there are few jobs, little work-based learning, and no skills standards or credentials with value in the labor market. Made in Durham is based on the premise that the better we meet business needs, the better we will prepare our young people for careers in the regional economy. This means we need business to provide strategic leadership, guide technical training, enrich CTE curricula, provide internships, summer jobs, and mentors, and tell us how well Made in Durham is performing.

Our objective is to build a strong business case and improve the way we attract and meet employer needs. We intend to do this incrementally, sector by sector, beginning with the health and life science industry. Our aim is to streamline our outreach and engagement of employers, rationalize the services that we offer across our public institutions, and increase our capacity to respond fast and flexibly to business demand.²

Priorities for 2014-16:

1. Increase our information about the Research Triangle labor market by sharing and upgrading our technology, engaging university and Chamber expertise, and providing practical reports on employment and skill needs to Made in Durham partners and frontline staff, starting winter 2015;
2. Appoint a Health and Life Science Sector Specialist to analyze sector needs, mobilize industry leaders, expand work-based learning opportunities, and support an employer advisory group for HLS career pathway, beginning fall 2014;
3. Conduct campaign to increase the number of private sector summer and year round jobs for Durham’s YouthWork program, beginning winter 2015.

¹ This section draws on the January 29, 2014, and March 19, 2014, Made in Durham memos, “Recommendations for Building a Health and Life Sciences Career Pathway” and “Recommendations for Building a Prototype Pathway in Health and Life Sciences.” Both are included in Appendix C.

² This section draws from the April 29, 2014 MID memo, “Employer Engagement,” included in Appendix C.

Young People as Leaders

Young people know the individuals, programs, and activities that have contributed most to their growth and development. Engaged as co-designers, they can provide the end-user perspective that administrators cannot. Made in Durham needs the knowledge and expertise of youth and young adults as important partners in our leadership, research, program development, and evaluation. And youth will benefit by developing skills and first-hand experience in leadership, systems change, and program design.

This year, a Made in Durham youth group was convened to design our youth engagement strategy. Based on their research of how other communities have involved young people, the group has developed a plan that will be implemented in the fall of 2014. It will include young people across our 14-24 age group and from all backgrounds; it will also include and actively work with members of other youth groups including the BECOMING Youth Council and the Durham Youth Commission.³

Priorities for 2014-16:

1. Establish a Made in Durham core group of 25 young people, representing Durham's diversity, and provide the staff support to facilitate activities; outreach builds on earlier design network and begins fall 2014. Work in close collaboration with members of other youth groups including the BECOMING Youth Council and the Durham Youth Commission;
2. Provide skill development in methodology for youth-led research, program monitoring, and evaluation, and directly link youth-generated ideas to program design, ongoing;
3. Invite two youth representatives to serve as members on the Made in Durham Board of Directors; youth involved in the first phase of work will provide input until permanent representatives are appointed in spring 2015.

Data to Drive Our Work

The lack of consistent and easily accessed data on the performance of young people towards education and employment outcomes in Durham has been well documented. We have many data systems but none is connected in a way that allows us to track young people across institutional boundaries, or to provide the information needed to improve joint programming or measure Made in Durham's outcomes against the goals that we have set. Our most immediate challenge is to establish baselines, set quantitative goals, and begin to hold ourselves accountable for those goals. We will measure our progress in the following categories of achievement for youth and young adults:

- Completes a high school degree or equivalency
- Engages in work experiences that will prepare them for a career
- Enters postsecondary education and completes a credential
- Secures living-wage work

Appendix B shows Made in Durham's expected outcomes.⁴

³ This section draws on the January 17, 2014, and March 11, 2014, MID memos, "Youth Engagement" and "Avoiding Redundancy—Youth Engagement." Both are included in Appendix C.

⁴ This section draws on the November 19, 2013 and January 24, 2014 MID memos, "Recommendations for a Made in Durham Data Strategy" and "Durham's Labor Market Information System." Both are included in Appendix C.

Priorities for 2014-16

1. Establish cross-sector data working group, composed of users and analysts, to guide the creation of a data system for Made in Durham and advise on which state and local systems should be built on - or bridged - to track individual and aggregate progress, fall 2014;
2. Contract with expert researcher to help establish baselines essential for tracking performance and progress in education and employment categories, winter 2015;
3. Use the health and life sciences pathway to test what data needs to be collected for ongoing real time performance monitoring, program evaluation, and organizational capacity building;
4. Develop an annual community “report card” for consultation with partners on how Made in Durham should communicate progress, first report card issued fall 2016.

Investing for Return

Budgets are tight at federal, state and local levels. If we are to achieve better results for Durham’s young people we must find ways to increase efficiency and flexibility, improve program and policy alignment, focus on performance and return on the investment. This year, Made in Durham made a start with a preliminary scan of spending data from more than 70 public sector programs. While this first analysis was necessarily crude, it revealed two important facts:

- There is much less funding and fewer services available for 20-24 year olds, particularly those in greatest need
- Most funding for disconnected youth and young adults goes to incarceration or probation rather than investment in prevention

Understanding return on public investment and opportunities for reallocation of funds will depend on regular collection and analysis of data across institutions and programs. A rigorous annual review of this kind would stand Durham in good stead: increasingly, this information is required for competitive grants by philanthropic and public funders.

Spending the money we have better is important, but it will not be enough to support the longer, more intensive programs that will be needed by disconnected young people. Nor will it be sufficient to position Made in Durham as a national model in youth and employer engagement; test new program strategies; construct durable data systems; develop the leadership and staff capacity of partner organizations.

To do this, Made in Durham must expand the existing pie in two ways. First, we must build a “fundraising machine” on behalf of our partners that allows us to research and write collaborative proposals quickly, drawing on the strength of our common vision and collective expertise. The \$1.2 million Education and Workforce Innovation grant this year exemplifies the tangible benefits of this new way of working.

Second, we believe that local corporate and philanthropic foundations could get better results for their investment if they joined to establish a Made in Durham Performance and Innovation Fund. Relatively small injections of flexible monies, used strategically, can leverage existing funding and provide the financial incentives to accelerate institutional change, enrich good programs and fill gaps in youth and employer services would also.⁵

⁵ This section draws on the October 17, 2013 MID memo, “Fiscal Asset Mapping,” which is included in Appendix C.

Priorities for 2014-16

1. In 2015, deepen, refine, and repeat the fiscal mapping analysis, including non-financial resources;
2. Formalize process of collaborative grant seeking and proposal preparation;
3. Develop feasibility plan for a Performance and Innovation Fund, fall 2015.

Strategic Leadership

Made in Durham is not a program or a project. Rather it is a joint effort of Durham's public, private and community leaders to build an education-to-career *system* that will give every young person the academic and work skills needed to succeed in his or her chosen career path. This is a complex endeavor involving some 15 state and local education and public institutions, over 10 nonprofit organizations, along with hundreds of employers and business organizations.

Made in Durham's success will depend largely on the caliber of its leadership and its skill in managing the moving parts of the system. In considering the organizational construct needed to get the job done we first established the attributes that an existing or newly-created organization would need. We believe Made in Durham must be:

- A strong, employer-led public/private partnership
- A neutral convener and skilled broker of ideas and solutions
- Independent—supported by elected officials but free of political influence
- Respected by business, community, and youth leaders
- Able to coordinate and integrate the discrete systems and programs
- Able to use policy levers, advocate new strategies and demonstrate effective practices
- Known for independent thought and objective analysis
- An entrepreneurial and agile opportunity-seeker

After examining several options for an organizational home for Made in Durham, we determined that a new, purpose-built nonprofit is required. To launch it efficiently, the Task Force asked MDC and FHI 360 to collaborate in incubating the new entity during its first 12 months of operation.⁶

Priorities for 2014-16

1. Incorporate Made in Durham as an independent 501(c)3 by fall 2014;
2. Recruit permanent employer-led board of top business, public, community and youth leaders, with a commitment to partnership and Durham's youth by fall 2014;
3. Raise public and private funds to support two years of operation;
4. Appoint executive director by winter 2014 and temporary and core staff by spring 2015.

⁶ This section draws on the September 5, 2013, October 18, 2013, and March 19, 2014, MID memos, "Leadership and Governance," "Leadership and Governance of an Education-to-Career System," and "Incubation of Made in Durham." It also references the January 28, 2014, report from the Task Force's Leadership and Governance Subcommittee. All four documents are included in Appendix C.

Conclusion

The work of Made in Durham to date is the work of a partnership. The Task Force has worked long and hard to set out an agenda for an education-to-career system for Durham's youth. The approach to this work has been truly collaborative—as evidenced by the countless hours of work by both the Task Force and the Policy Working Group. In addition, as noted in our Acknowledgements, we have been joined by so many others.⁷ This collaborative approach is the only way we can make the change we need for Durham's youth. We hope you will join us.

Acknowledgments

We're grateful to the City of Durham, Durham County, Durham Public Schools, Durham Technical Community College, and several private individuals and organizations for their financial support of Made in Durham. We have benefited from the good thinking and time of many individuals and organizations throughout this effort. While we fear omitting someone who has contributed to this effort (and apologize if we do so), we want to acknowledge the generosity of the following people whose insights have been enormously helpful to the work to date.

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⁷ Acknowledgements section will be included in the print version of this document.

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Appendix A: Task Force and Policy Working Group

Made in Durham Task Force

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Appendix B: Measuring Progress Toward Our Overarching Vision

Made in Durham is a private/public partnership committed to ensuring all Durham youth and young adults complete a postsecondary credential and begin a rewarding career by the age of 25.

- Complete a high school degree or equivalency
- Engage in work experiences that will prepare them for a career
- Enter postsecondary education and complete a credential
- Secure living-wage work

Components of Overarching Vision	Every young person completes high school degree or equivalency	Every young person engages in work experiences that will prepare them for a career	Every young person enters postsecondary education and complete a credential	Every young person secures living wage work
Corresponding Measures⁸	<p>Number and percentage of Durham young adults with a high school degree or equivalency</p> <p>Rate and number of high school dropout</p>	<p>Number of sponsored work-based learning placements for young adults, ages 14-24</p> <p>Number of Triangle employees and employers actively engaged in an education-to-career strategy</p>	<p>Number and percentage of young adults who hold a postsecondary degree or credential</p> <p>Rate and number of court-involved 16-24 year olds who attain a credential</p>	<p>Employment Retention Rate for young adults, 14-24</p> <p>Employment Rate for Young Adults, ages 20-24</p> <p>Rate and number of court-involved 14-24 year olds who attain and retain employment</p>

⁸ We are pursuing agreements that would enable us to track the success of young people by following cohorts of Durham students through the education-to-career system, disaggregating for particular target populations.

Appendix C: Task Force Memoranda

Overview

This appendix includes thirteen memos prepared for the Task Force between July 2013 and April 2014. These memos were prepared by MDC staff with substantial input from Policy Working Group members and, in some cases, members of Task Force subcommittees. They detail national best practice research as well as assessment of current practice in Durham related to each Made in Durham work strand. Each memo also includes recommendations for next steps for the Made in Durham partnership, many of which are reflected in the foregoing action plan.

1. **Recommendations for MID Overarching Goal, Cohort, and Progress Measures;**
July 18, 2013
2. **Leadership and Governance;** *September 5, 2013*
3. **Leadership and Governance of an Education-to-Career System;** *October 18, 2013*
4. **Fiscal Asset Mapping;** *October 17, 2013*
5. **Recommendations for a Made in Durham Data Strategy;** *November 19, 2013*
6. **Youth Engagement;** *January 17, 2014*
7. **Durham's Labor Market Information System;** *January 24, 2014*
8. **Recommendations for Building a Health and Life Sciences Career Pathway;**
January 29, 2014
9. **Report from Leadership and Governance Subcommittee;** *January 28, 2014*
10. **Avoiding Redundancy—Youth Engagement;** *March 11, 2014*
11. **Incubation of Made in Durham;** *March 19, 2014*
12. **Recommendations for Building a Prototype Pathway in Health and Life Sciences;**
March 19, 2014
13. **Employer Engagement;** *April 29, 2014*