



### 3. Labor Market for Community Change Studies Graduates

The principal reason CLP was created was to develop pipelines of grassroots leaders and community-builders with the passion, knowledge and skills to build strong grassroots organizations and create positive change in communities like their own.

**While preparing leaders and organizers for community-based organizations is central to our mission, since CLP’s inception we have seen it as equally essential to prepare low-income people and people of color for influential staff and leadership roles in other sectors of society – other nonprofits, government and politics, unions and business.** Those entities must be pushed from within as well as from the outside to support significant social change and greatly improve opportunities for people often left behind. Progressive, skilled, and committed people are needed to work within those powerful institutions as well as to lead grassroots organizations because “inside/outside strategies” and collaboration are particularly powerful strategies for fundamental reform.

As we expected when we began our work, most CLP graduates enter careers in the fast-growing nonprofit sector. Other graduates choose careers in the public and private for-profit sectors where there is a strong demand for people of color and others from blue-collar and low-income backgrounds with strong cross-sector skills in critical thinking, problem-solving and strategy, and in bringing people together and building teams to tackle major challenges.

#### **CLP’s Labor Market Analysis:**

As CLP seeks to scale up our national impact, we know that nonprofit employment is projected to continue growing rapidly: According to a study by Johns Hopkins’ Center for Civil Society Studies, **the number of nonprofit jobs is growing at three times faster than jobs in the business sector, and their growth is steadier and less affected by recessions.** **The public sector will also grow rapidly:** the Center for State and Local Government Excellence projects a 4% growth in state government employment and over 7% in local government employment between

2016 and 2026. As we look ahead, we therefore see demand for a skilled community change workforce growing. The CLP Network's programs are well-positioned to help meet that demand.

In its early days, CLP conducted a study of the labor market in Southeast Michigan, where we subsequently helped develop two college pathways in the region. The study focused on nonprofit, for-profit and public sector careers. It consisted of both an analysis of available jobs across sectors, and focus groups with representatives from 75 local community groups, nonprofits, and government agencies which address issues ranging from community health promotion to youth development, neighborhood improvement and economic development.

Focus group participants were asked whether the leadership skills and competencies students acquire in our programs were relevant to their workplaces, whether they would hire our graduates, what additional elements they think our programs should include, and how they would like to be involved with our programs.

Key findings from this DACUM study, *Community Change Leaders in Southeast Michigan: A Study of Workforce Demand and Academic Curricula*, (*posted on CLP's website [www.clpclp.org/publications](http://www.clpclp.org/publications)*) included the following:

- **The Skills and Capacity Gap:** Community partners and potential employers face challenges finding experienced and skilled staff and emerging leaders with the backgrounds, skills, knowledge, and commitment needed to work on the region's most pressing issues. They find it especially hard to find people of color and others who have both first-hand experience with issues of poverty, neighborhood decline, and inadequate services and the needed knowledge and skills.
- **The Demand for CLP Graduates:** The community partners and potential employers expressed a clear demand for and interest in CLP's Community Leadership programs. They indicated the Certificate and Associate Degree would result in an increase in employee earnings. Thirty percent indicated they were not likely to find candidates with these skills in the current local job market. Over 85% indicated there is a need to develop CLP skills within their existing staff, and over 90% reported being interesting in hiring someone with a Certificate or Associate Degree in Community Leadership.

- **Relevance of CLP Skills:** Community partners and potential employers value the cross-sector skills gained by students in CLP programs. The skills learned are applicable to a wide range of community-oriented occupations and job postings requiring skills in team-building, strategic planning and community relations.
- **Value of Applied/Experiential Learning:** The community partners emphasized the importance of applied and experiential learning as well as credentials. Collaborating with community partners to identify specific opportunities for more project- and work-based learning opportunities is an important way to engage practitioners from the field in the teaching and learning process and ensure the courses being offered are closely aligned with specific, community-based issues and work. It also reinforces links between our students and potential future employers.

This early research demonstrated the need for a dramatically new approach to preparing people from disadvantaged communities for careers in community-building and leadership. It also helped CLP define the competencies which its students must develop to qualify for community-serving careers in the nonprofit, public and private sectors. This market study guided our planning and early success and has continued to inform our evaluation systems, program development and community partnerships. Our subsequent experience in a range of other settings has confirmed the findings and conclusions of the Michigan DACUM study.

**A large majority of CLP students enter our core classes and Certificate/Degree programs already caring about social issues in their community, but they don't know what they can do to bring about change.** Through our classes and programs, they learn concrete skills, get exposed to community-change careers, and develop a sense of direction and agency as leaders who can effect positive social change.

The findings from a recent CLP alumni survey suggest that our model is working. Of those who are working, **over 60% have found jobs with nonprofit organizations, government agencies, or educational institutions where they can contribute to community change.** These alumni work on a variety of issues, including access to health/mental health, education, community economic development, youth development, immigration, and environmental justice. Alumni have a variety of roles in these organizations, including community

planning, organizing, policy research and advocacy, direct service (e.g., counselors, case managers, peer navigators), and administrative support.

In smaller proportions, CLP students find work in the private sector, including starting small businesses that contribute to community economic development or working in community-facing positions, including community relations, outreach, community reinvestment and research.

However, some also struggle to find meaningful community change-related jobs and end up in jobs unrelated to their interests or goals. The experience of these students demonstrates the need for additional support navigating career pathways and obtaining well-paid student internships and part-time employment which is directly relevant to their career education.

Since many employers require **Bachelor's Degrees**, many CLP community college students enroll in BA programs that continue preparing them to be effective change agents. At the upper division level they prepare for careers in such fields as social work, urban planning, criminal justice, community and public health, public policy and public administration – all of which need people with the cross-sector skills our graduates have mastered. Our Network stresses the importance of creating articulation agreements and other bridges to ease the path for community college graduates to pursue advanced degrees and further develop their competencies in promoting positive community and social change.

### **Cross-Sector Skills and Issue-Specific Knowledge Students Learn and Career Opportunities for Them:**

**Employers from the nonprofit, governmental and private sectors all greatly value the cross-sector skills which CLP students gain. See chapter 11 on Linking Students to Jobs for listing of cross-sector skills businesses look for, as an illustration of how diverse the career opportunities are for CCS graduates.**

In Community Change Studies programs from high school and early community college through their career education, students continually deepen their competencies in the following cross-sector skill areas:

#### **1. Team-Building and Organizational Skills**

- Interpersonal and relationship-building skills.
- Skills in bringing people together, team-building and reaching consensus.
- Skills in leading groups in problem-solving, planning and developing strategies for action.
- Other leadership skills, including skills in taking action, attracting support, reflecting on experience, refining plans for future action, and developing the capacity of others to lead.
- Developing advanced management and leadership skills over time.

## **2. Understanding and Capacity to Act in Diverse Communities**

- Self-awareness, sense of identity and self-confidence.
- Understanding of culture, race, class, gender, power and privilege.
- Capacity for thinking critically and adapting to different contexts.
- Ability to analyze and understand different situations and communities, their culture and the broader economic, social and political environment, institutions, and actors.
- Skills in mediation and developing mutual respect and understanding.
- Skills in “managing”, starting with understanding and “managing” self, being systematic, and following through.
- Preparation for lifelong learning through reflective practice, evaluation and organizational learning.

In addition, as students advance along their education/career pathways and begin concentrating on the specific issues which most concern them, focusing on courses, field assignments, internships and connections related to those issues, they have opportunities to deepen their issue-related knowledge and skills as follows --

## **3. Issue expertise (e.g. jobs, youth development, community health, criminal justice, community development, etc.)**

- Understanding the immediate issue and its root causes.
- Understanding the underlying policy, resource and institutional issues.
- Understanding how key decisions are made on an issue, who makes them, why, and what points of intervention exist.

## 11. Linking Students to Jobs

**CCS students need access to information on what kinds of jobs are currently available and likely future trends, especially in the fields they are most interested in.** They also need leads on specific employers with current job openings so they can move quickly to explore those openings. This information is as important to current students who need relevant part-time jobs and internships as it is to graduates wanting permanent full-time jobs.

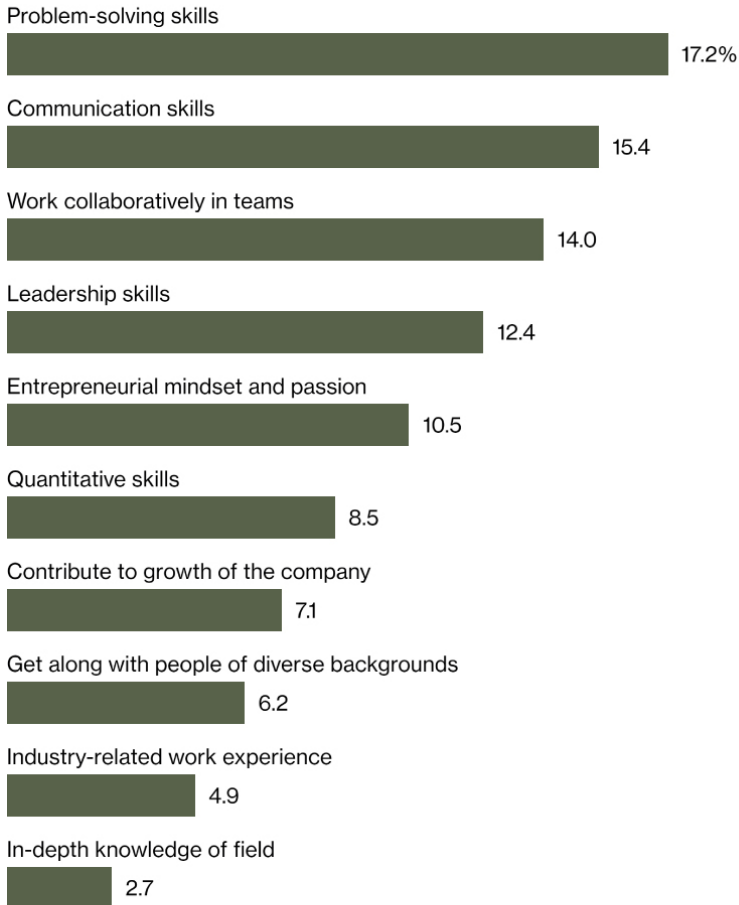
**This labor market information can also be enormously helpful in recruiting students** to enroll in CCS Certificate and Degree programs, as it can demonstrate that this field leads to good entry-level jobs as well as promising long-term careers. Furthermore, these data help college and community partners adapt their courses and experiential learning opportunities so they teach skills and knowledge which lead to available jobs.

Local employment and training organizations usually have access to sophisticated job search systems developed by Burning Glass Technologies or another firm. These provide invaluable information on current job openings, skill and other competency requirements, and employment trends in many fields. It is well worth asking for their help in searching for jobs for which CCS skills, knowledge and credentials would be helpful.

Unfortunately, it isn't easy to track local career opportunities in the extraordinarily wide variety of occupations for which our graduates are prepared. *(See Chapter 3 for Business Week listing of the cross-sector skills MBA recruiters seek.)* Because relevant jobs have many different job titles and use different terms to describe the same functions, a thorough search requires the use of dozens of key search words and phrases. It is therefore tremendously helpful if a college has its own license to a job search system, in-house capacity to develop a CCS-specific search program, and a commitment to provide the CCS program with constant access to the system.

## Business Week, May 23, 2020

### MBA Recruiters rank in order of their Priorities



Source: Bloomberg Businessweek Best B-Schools 2019 Survey of Recruiters  
Percentages show the number of times a quality is prioritized 1-5 in a survey

Another complication is that many intriguing jobs with small and medium-sized nonprofits are never posted in local papers or on major job boards and data bases. Therefore, it helps greatly to develop working relationships with potential employers for our students and graduates. The following measures are helpful:

- Developing a strong student **recruitment strategy** which focuses on **dramatizing the very large and promising job market for students with CCS skills, knowledge, and interpersonal strengths, including providing**

**concrete illustrations of jobs now available for positions like those listed later in this chapter.**

- Recruiting and screening students who are particularly likely to pursue careers in the field, including students recommended by local employer groups,
- Involving employers in defining the job and skill needs and designing the program, perhaps as members of an ongoing advisory committee;
- Recruiting mentors from potential employers to encourage and support students as they proceed along the pathway,
- Inviting potential employers to be guest speakers and discussion leaders,
- Allying with coalitions or trade associations with members who are potential employers and helping them expand job listings,
- Fostering the development or expansion of those associations so they link the college to more employers.

Another important strategy is to assist potential employers to create well-paid internships and relevant part-time jobs. Most of our students must earn income by working part-time and, for at least short periods, full-time, typically in jobs which offer neither relevant experience nor good pay and benefits. Our students need access to both good incomes and jobs or paid internships which help them develop their experience, knowledge and skills in change-related fields. Unfortunately, relevant paid internships are few and far between.

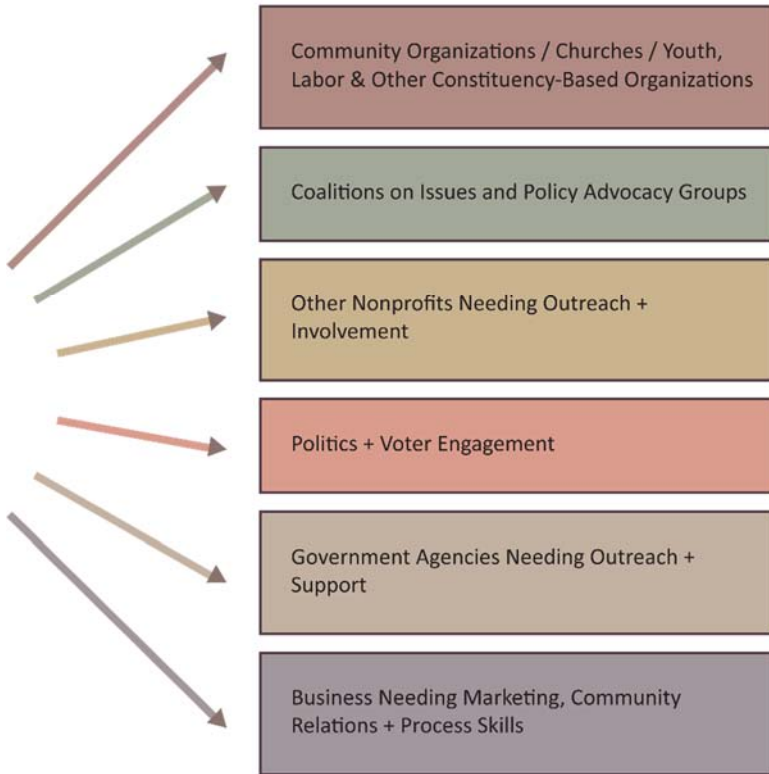
Finances are obviously a major reason for poor college retention and graduation rates. For these reasons, CLP is giving high priority to expanding internships and relevant job opportunities by:

- Seeking federal policy changes to increase set-asides of College Work Study positions for students enrolled in our programs and needing income and experiential education through community work.
- Seeking substantial private resources for internships which are directly relevant in developing community change knowledge and skills.
- Exploring expanded collaboration with Americorps, including the possibility of arranging for part-time positions under Americorps' Wofford Program so our students can earn while learning.

As Chapter 3 describes, Community Change Studies education prepares graduates for jobs in six major sectors of the economy. These are illustrated in the following diagram –



## Continuing the Pathway to Employers Needing Leadership and Organizing Skills and Knowledge



As students look ahead, they should understand how their education in Community Change may relate to job possibilities tackling issues they care about most. The following listing provides background on careers on several key issues and illustrates the range and potential of job opportunities which experts in creating positive change helps open for graduates.

The following are examples of job titles in different issue areas and sectors of the economy which need the knowledge, skills and values CCS graduates develop.

### **Health and Mental Health - Implications of Current Trends for Community Health Careers:**

- The Coronavirus Pandemic crisis illustrated the growing importance of having skilled outreach workers and community health educators, especially in communities with high levels of density, poverty, and preexisting conditions and limited access to health care.
- Costs are driving hospitals and insurers to worry more about whether communities are healthy places for their patients; this is increasing concern about the “social determinants of health”, including poverty, inadequate services, opioid use; they need staff who are skilled in understanding and addressing the patients’ community conditions, attitudes, concerns, patterns of behavior.
- A major example of this growing concern is the insurers’ pressure on hospitals to reduce rehospitalization; this requires that they move back into healthy communities.
- Community residents know their health needs but don’t have the proper jargon to influence providers; they need training so they can speak in terms which enable them to have an influence (e.g. Social determinants of health).
- Larger hospitals have the capacity to do more to create these conditions.
- At a minimum, this increases the need for community health workers, caseworkers, improved service.
- Major health institutions like Kaiser, teaching hospitals and educational institutions often see themselves as anchors in the community and begin to hire locally, help local businesses, build housing, improve neighborhoods on their perimeter.
- Under the Affordable Care Act, hospitals must develop “Community Benefits Agreements” detailing how they are benefitting nearby communities; these can either be limited to local marketing or they can involve extensive interaction with their neighbors; Massachusetts General, Trinity Health and Kaiser are leaders on this.
- There is growing concern with patient-reported outcomes so providers can increase their understanding of what’s really happening to people; they need to increase feedback and may hire people with organizing skills to conduct neighborhood surveys, facilitate focus groups, or serve on community advisory panels.
- Community health workers are also needed for
  - Community health centers which are growing with Republican support because they reduce reliance on entitlements; they need staff whose understanding and skills prepare them to reach, educate and empower patients from different cultures.

- Community mental health centers.
- They are good at organizing an impact on an entire segment of the population and meeting their needs, e.g. Substance abuse recovery workers.
- Lead paint and other environmental hazards.
- Planned Parenthood needs staff who excel in working with people and organizing them to advocate for their rights; especially needs people of color for these positions.
- Organizations working with AIDS/HIV patients often hire organizers and outreach workers to reach out to and provide services the patients.

### **Jobs Related to Climate and Environment:**

The growing climate crisis and the need to great expansion in community-focused outreach education and the promotion of conservation, weatherization, and other measures indicates that this field will grow rapidly over the next decade. Passage of some version of the Green New Deal and other support for green jobs also seems quite likely. The following list is only the beginning of the career possibilities in this field.

- Community organizer/outreach workers/community educators.
- Campaign researcher.
- Environmental advocate.
- Community-based advocacy advisor.
- Project coordinator for environmental organization.
- Rural development director.
- Public interest attorney.
- Executive Director.
- Post-disaster workers.
- Community developers.

### **Criminal Justice and Reform Jobs:**

The Trump Administration's law and order approach threatens funding for many of the activities for which our graduates would be especially well prepared. Nevertheless, the following trends are positive for the long-run because they are effective ways of addressing crime and violence.

- “Violence interrupters” or conflict mediators – who work with young people, here about pending problems, intervene when there’s an explosive incident, possible gang violence, retaliation, etc.; they rechannel and redirect the energies in positive ways.
- Police/community relations staff.
- Staff for community organizations and youth development groups, helping them strengthen the community’s social fabric and ability to deal with violence.
- Work for law firms which are searching for plaintiffs on cases involving mass incarceration and criminal justice issues; the Innocence Project supports those firms.
- Police Reform Organizing Project.
- Work with returning citizens/”justice involved” organizations; including programs designed to build on the frequently great desire by ex-prisoners to ‘give back to their communities” and study criminal justice, the legal system, work with nonprofits and public agencies.; e.g. “Bronx Corridors” which is tied to a university professor and works with returning citizens, vets, immigrants and disaffected youth; they develop and work on issues.
- Paralegals working on community issues.
- Youth workers.

- Major reforms in government and institutional decision-making – transparency, open process, budgeting, right to submit community proposals, etc.
- Organizing and pressure from the Community, and key elements for that strategy (e.g. involvement of many people, educated leaders, clever strategy and a campaign approach, etc.; as well as such strategies as lobbying, use of the media, litigation, coalition-building, and inside/outside strategies which can supplement organizing).
- The need for sustainable, effective ongoing organizations with a range of strengths so there could be continuing influence – What is required? What are the basic elements of an effective, continuing, sustainable organization?
- The need for the “Community” to be able to develop alternative plans, programs, etc. -- What does this require in skills, access to professionals, resources, etc.?
- The need for capable, responsive groups to deliver services, do community development, increase participation and ownership, nurture individuals, provide training, etc. – What does this require?

## Appendix F: Possible details in a Memorandum of Understanding

**The MOU** should spell out the roles, responsibilities and authority of each partner. Those provisions should lead to clarity on the following points –

- Identification of which future decisions require involvement of and **sign-off** by each actor, the decision-making process, and measures for conflict resolution.
- The involvement of each party in periodic **evaluation** of the program and decisions on what adjustments should be made in response to the formal evaluation and other developments.
- The process for initial **curriculum development**, the involvement of each party, and whether both must sign off.
- The respective roles, responsibilities and authority of the **Coordinator and the lead faculty member**.
- Provisions on the hiring of adjuncts, co-teaching, involvement of on-site mentors and other measures to **involve practitioners in teaching**, and specifics on their role in curriculum development.
- How practitioners and the community will be involved in developing and implementing plans to **proactively recruit** low-income students and students of color who are interested in preparing for a career in

community change, including involvement of community-based organizations, nonprofits, and individual “spotters” in this effort.

- Involvement in integrating **experiential learning** -- especially experience in low-income communities with mentors -- with reading, classroom work, reflective practice and testing.
- Joint designing of **field placements including internships** with local groups to ensure (1) the groups benefit from the placements, (2) students come well-informed about the group and prepared to carry out the assignment, and (3) when feasible, group have assurance of a constant flow of students to assist the placement group with maximum continuity.
- Joint designing of the curriculum to include **“theory” and “practice”**, develop the students’ “knowledge” and “skills”, and be designed to develop the students’ vision and values as well as their critical thinking, strategic, and practical competencies.
- The curriculum will include a series of **“high impact educational practices”**, including cohort learning when possible.
- The **financial arrangements** including issues of released time for faculty, compensation for adjuncts and others helping with the educational program, office space and equipment at the college, the minimum number of students required to make the program feasible, plans for targeted financial assistance, work study, mentoring, tutoring and/or developmental education for these students; assistance in fundraising and or providing direct financial support for community partners so they can devote adequate time to the pathway.
- How various **public relations** issues will be handled, including visibility and billing for the respective partners, how the partnership will be described, and other measures to ensure that each partner gets credit for their work.
- The MOU should permit the nonprofit actor(s) to work with other institutions of higher education. This will enable it to expand its ability to reach and benefit students in various regions, from different racial, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, and levels of experience, etc., and will reduce the nonprofit’s dependence upon a single institution.
- The parties should **fundraise** for the program separately and together, involving its own fundraisers and sources of outside advice and assistance. They should be transparent and helpful to each other on all matters of finance.
- The possible set-aside of Community Work Study and/or Wofford Program slots to students in Community Change Students.