



**THE DEBRUCE FOUNDATION
AGILE WORK PROFILER
HELPING INDIVIDUALS
EXPAND CAREER PATHWAYS**
*Research Findings on Attitudes and
Behaviors of Youth and Adults*

OCTOBER 2019

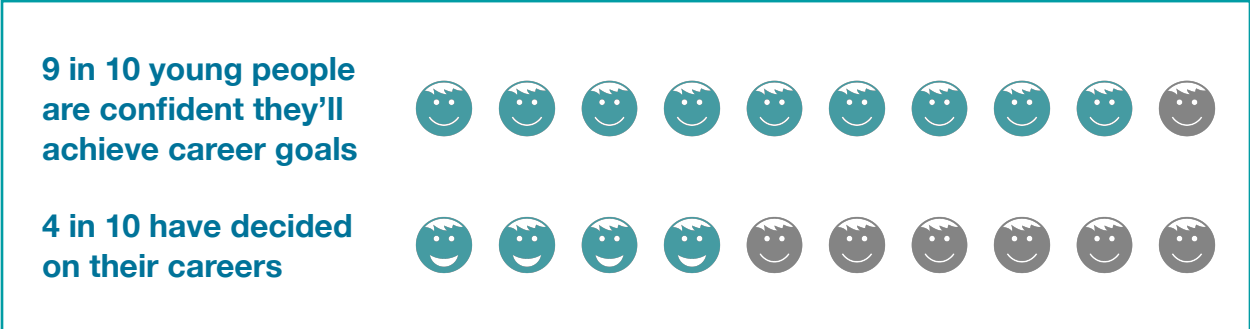
RESEARCH BRIEF

The DeBruce Foundation recently commissioned extensive public opinion research into the **Agile Work Profiler** and broader issues facing young people and career development. This research included both quantitative (survey) and qualitative (focus group) work and focused on young people (ages 16-24), but also included research among parents and influencers (guidance counselors).

YOUTH ARE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THEIR FUTURES, BUT THERE'S A DISCONNECT

According to the study, nine in ten young people (88%) are confident they will achieve their career goals. An even greater proportion (91%) reported believing they will be as or more financially successful than their parents. They are truly optimistic about their future.

However, only 41% of all youth surveyed have decided on their careers. Two-thirds (64%) of young people have considered two or fewer careers. This narrow scope of career consideration is concerning because trends show they will hold an average of 12 different jobs throughout their working life.¹



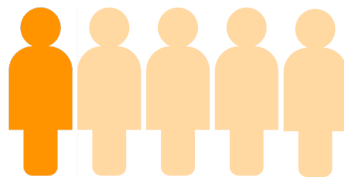
¹ National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019

MANY YOUTH WILL NOT COMPLETE COLLEGE, THOUGH THEY INTEND TO DO SO

Another instance where youth expectation does not reflect the current reality lies in college completion: Seventy percent (70%) of youth in the study are either in college or plan to go to college. National data shows, however, only about half of them will actually complete a four-year degree.²

TOO MANY YOUTH ARE DISENGAGED FROM THE CAREER PREPARATION PROCESS...

Thirty-three percent (33%) of youth have little to no idea of what to do to prepare for a career. Still more concerning are the 18% of youth in the study who have not really spent time thinking about their career at all.



1 in 5 youth

have not really spent time thinking about their career at all

...BUT MOST ARE TAKING AT LEAST SOME STEPS

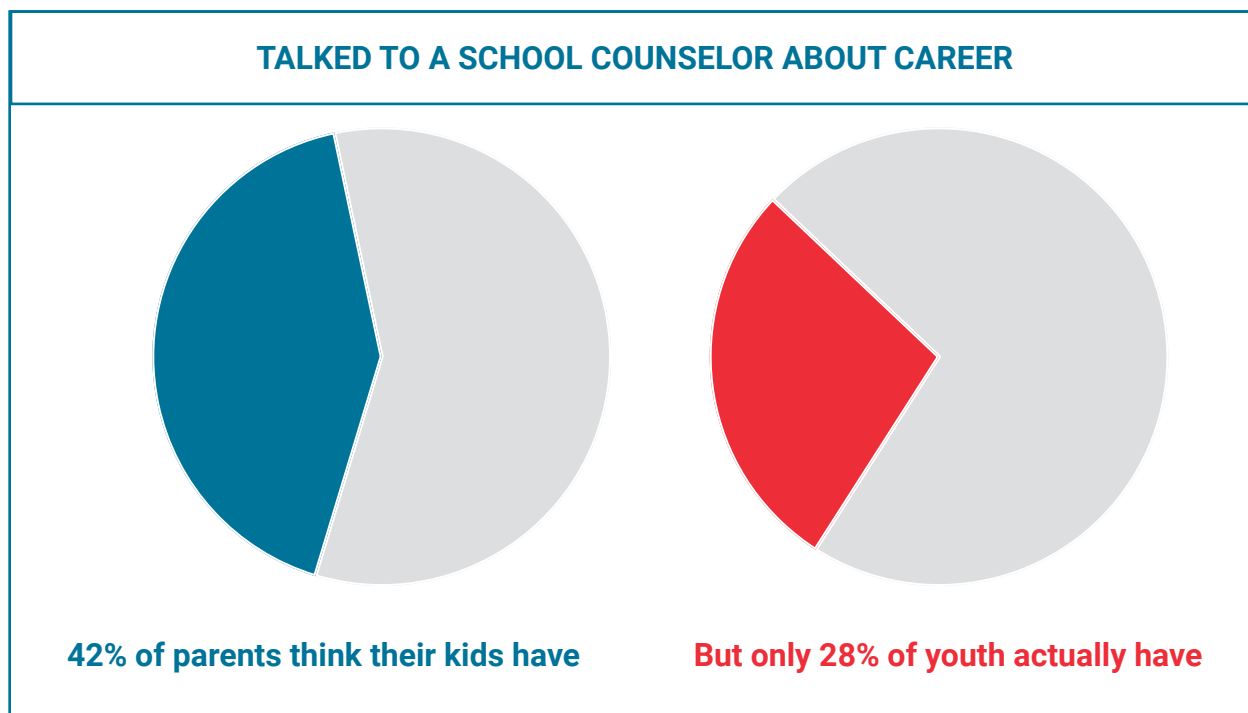
In spite of the narrow scope and creeping uncertainty among youth, most have done some real work toward figuring out a career. A majority have talked to parents, and about half have researched careers and potential earnings, talked to their friends, and figured out what kind of training and education are needed for whatever occupations they are considering.

Almost half of youth have already taken a career aptitude test (45%). A large majority (79%) of those who have taken a career aptitude test say it was at least somewhat helpful.

² Based on US Census

PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN MAY NOT BE ON THE SAME PAGE

Forty-six percent (46%) of surveyed parents with teenaged children say they have talked to them about careers “a lot.” That number jumps to 70% among parents whose children are in their 20s. More mothers have talked to their kids a lot (59%) compared to fathers (42%).



In other areas, big disconnects emerge between parents and kids. **Parents overestimate their kids having taken certain career-preparedness steps** – most notably, 42% believe their child has talked to a guidance counselor, but only 28% of youth say they actually have. On the other hand, **parents underestimate how much independent research their kids are doing online**, from researching careers or salaries to taking a career aptitude test, as well as the extent to which youth rely on their friends when it comes to talking through their career goals.

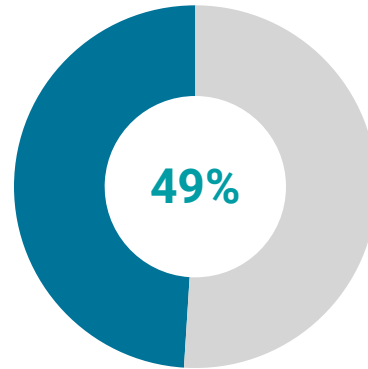
INEQUALITY IS ENTRENCHED IN THE CAREER PREPARATION PROCESS

The research also spotlights a broader economic problem in our country: a cycle of inequality.

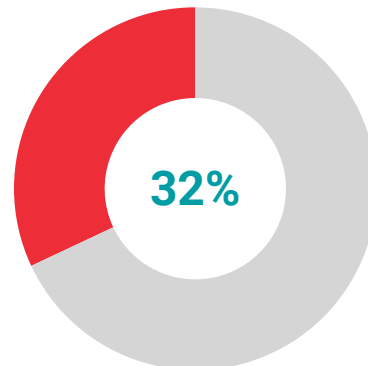
Youth who are in college or say they intend to go to college are twice as likely to talk to a guidance counselor as youth who do not intend to go to college. Whether or not their high school teachers and counselors were actually helpful also differs by those who plan to go to college and those who do not: 69% of college-bound youth say their teachers and counselors were “very helpful” or “somewhat helpful”, compared to only 57% of youth not intending to go to college.

High school counseling does not represent the only distinction between youth in the study who are in or intending to go to college and youth in the study who did not or do not intend to go to college. One in two (49%) of those planning to attend college indicated they know what career they want next, compared to only one in three (32%) of those not planning to attend college. **Additionally, seventy-four percent (74%) of those planning to attend college reported an idea of what to do to prepare for a career, compared to fifty-five percent (55%) of those not planning to attend.**

KNOW WHAT CAREER THEY WANT

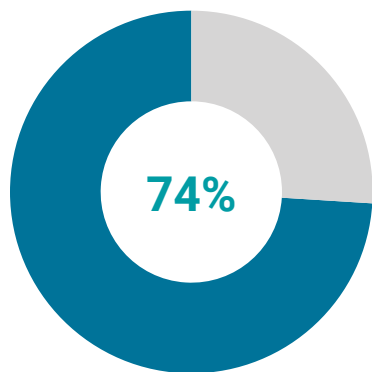


Youth (16-24) planning to attend college, in college or college graduates



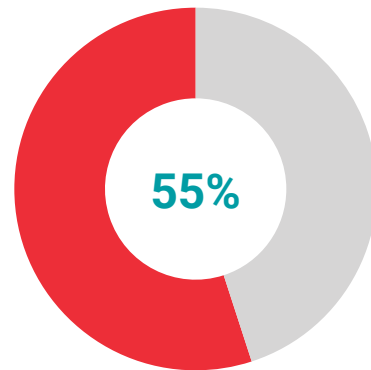
Youth (16-24) NOT planning to attend college

KNOW HOW TO PREPARE FOR A CAREER



**74% of students
planning to attend college**

vs.



**55% of students
NOT planning to attend college**

The study shows the most disadvantaged youth are also the youth least likely to use a career preparation tool like the Agile Work Profiler. On the other hand, the most privileged youth in the study were also the most likely to have already used a career preparation tool like the Agile Work Profiler.

Specifically, 47% of college juniors or seniors describe themselves as very likely to take the Agile Work Profiler after reading a description of it. For high school students not planning on attending college, this number drops to 22%.

The specific causes of these differences between youth intending to go to college and youth making other plans are likely varied and are not fully captured by this study. It is reasonable to assume, however, that access and exposure play a role.

This presents a challenge and an opportunity in advancing our mission to expand pathways to economic growth and opportunity. The most underserved populations are the ones who stand to benefit the most from tools like the Agile Work Profiler but less likely to access them. The DeBruce Foundation will commit to meeting this challenge, increasing our efforts to target and reach young people most in need of support, providing access and exposure to free tools.

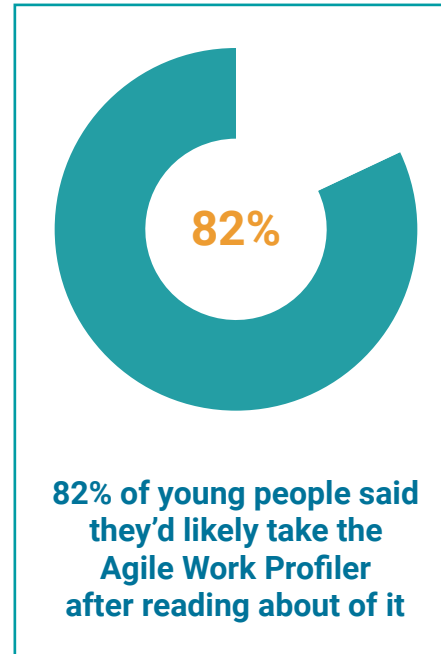
HOW THE AGILE WORK PROFILER CAN HELP

In short, the **Agile Work Profiler** captures and channels the ambition of young people in our country. The DeBruce Foundation created the Agile Work Profiler based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (more information below). The Agile Work Profiler is most easily described as a career assessment. The survey does not intend to match people to jobs, but is expected to encourage exploration of a variety of career options.

The Agile Work Profiler is intended to achieve the following outcomes for those who take it:

- **Increase self-awareness**
- **Affirm skills and interests**
- **Inspire actionable career exploration and preparation steps**

These outcomes will both empower and provide a starting place to make informed career decisions.



OVERWHELMING POSITIVE RESPONSE TO THE AGILE WORK PROFILER

The good news is that The Foundation's study also uncovered a resoundingly positive response to the Agile Work Profiler. Every participant who took the Agile Work Profiler applauded the tool. Parents said they would recommend this tool to their children. Guidance counselors could envision themselves using the Agile Work Profiler with their students. Eighty-two percent (82%) of young people said they would be likely to take the test after reading a description of the Agile Work Profiler.

"I FELT IT WAS ACCURATE COMPARED TO THE QUIZZES YOU TAKE IN SCHOOL. MINE WAS DEAD ON."

— Youth Participant

Both the qualitative and quantitative research demonstrate this tool is different from other career assessment tools and of value to the individual. People appreciated the fact that this test only takes ten minutes, is accessible and easy to understand, and that The DeBruce Foundation provides this tool for free.

THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE AGILE WORK PROFILER

The Bureau of Labor Statistics has identified approximately 60,000 jobs comprised of various work activities. The DeBruce Foundation distilled these work activities into ten themes that are named "Agilities." The ten Agilities are present in all occupations, but in different degrees and necessary aptitude. The Agile Work Profiler measures one's view of their interests and abilities in work activities to determine their current prioritized Agilities. Agilities are not fixed and can be developed over time. The Agile Work Profiler was created by The DeBruce Foundation as a part of its mission to expand pathways to economic growth and opportunity.

**"I CAN APPLY
SOME OF THIS TO
MY RESUME OR
LINKEDIN PROFILE.
I CAN SHOW MY
EMPLOYERS."**

– Youth Participant

[ACCESS THE AGILE WORK PROFILER AT WWW.AGILITIES.ORG.](http://WWW.AGILITIES.ORG)

RESEARCH DESIGN

Qualitative

Greenberg Quinlan Rosner (GQR) conducted four live focus groups in the Kansas City area among a diverse group of young people (two groups ages 16-24), parents (one group of parents who have children ages 16-24), and influencers (one group of guidance counselors and advisers who work with teenagers or young adults), on June 24th and June 25th, 2019. The youth groups were divided by lower and upper income.

Quantitative

GQR conducted an online survey of 700 young people (ages 16-24) in Kansas City and other similar Midwestern metropolitan areas. Thirty-five percent (35%) of interviews were conducted among people of color. GQR also completed a survey of 300 parents of young people (ages 16-24) in Kansas City and similar Midwestern metropolitan areas.

Because the online sample is based on those who initially self-selected for participation in the panel rather than a probability sample, no estimates of sampling error can be calculated.



ABOUT THE DEBRUCE FOUNDATION

At The DeBruce Foundation, our mission is to expand pathways to economic growth and opportunity. The DeBruce Foundation is geared toward helping individuals unlock their potential and find new career pathways and provides tools at no cost. By developing solutions such as the Agile Work Profiler, we can change how people pursue careers. By partnering strategically, we increase experiences and exposure to widen career opportunities. We strive to develop young people, through initiatives such as the DeBruce Career Corps, making sure to get their input on major decisions.

A Note from The DeBruce Foundation

There is a need for The Agile Work Profiler, and people believe it can provide value in their lives. This research indicates a tremendous opportunity to impact youth who haven't yet decided on a career path and may not know where to start.

The Agile Work Profiler helps individuals harness the power of self-awareness and achieve deeper insights into their own strengths and interests. It inspires action for their future career pathways. After taking the Agile Work Profiler, individuals can see how their unique skill sets can apply to many different careers.

Being self-aware, affirmed and ready to take action is a great first step to being informed career decision-makers. Youth and adults can build on this with experiential learning opportunities, such as internships.

Having learned youth who may have the most to gain with our intervention are less likely to use tools like the Agile Work Profiler, The DeBruce Foundation will commit to meeting this challenge. We will increase our efforts to reach people who can benefit from this resource. Our hope is more people will take the Agile Work Profiler at www.Agilities.org and discover more about themselves as the first step to expanding their career pathways.

LEARN MORE AT WWW.DEBRUCE.ORG