

THE SUJEETH FOUNDATION

Unlocking the Value of Education

A white paper for school partners on Career Circles:
what the program is, how it works, and why it matters.

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THE PROBLEM

A Degree Alone Isn't Enough

College works. Bachelor's degree holders earn 66% more per week than high school graduates.

But **the transition from degree to career is broken**. Half of college graduates end up in jobs that don't require a degree.

Here are the numbers your students are facing:

<p>66%</p> <p>Earnings boost with a bachelor's degree (weekly)</p>	<p>52%</p> <p>Graduates underemployed within a year of finishing</p>	<p>\$39.5K</p> <p>Average student loan debt per borrower</p>
<p>43M</p> <p>Federal student loan borrowers in the US</p>	<p>\$29,910</p> <p>Average total annual cost, public in-state</p>	<p>31%</p> <p>Workers who say they're engaged at work</p>

The earnings data comes from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024.

The underemployment figure comes from the Burning Glass Institute and Strada Institute, 2024.

The debt number comes from the US Department of Education, Federal Student Aid, 2025.

The cost of attendance figure comes from the College Board, 2024–25.

The engagement number comes from Gallup, 2025.

Borrower data comes from the US Department of Education, Federal Student Aid.

Students invest four years and tens of thousands of dollars. Then they graduate without knowing how to write a resume, network into a role, or talk about themselves in an interview. That's not a failure of intelligence. It's a gap in preparation.

We built Career Circles to close that gap.

WHAT WE DO

Career Circles: The Program

Career Circles is a six-week mentorship program. We partner with colleges and universities to run small groups of six students, each led by one trained mentor. The groups meet once a week. Each week covers a specific job search skill. Content is provided. We handle mentor training and curriculum. Your institution manages enrollment.

The program is free for students. We provide all materials and pair them with a mentor who has professional experience in the fields they're targeting.

6 Students per circle	1 Trained mentor per group	6 Weeks, once a week
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What Students Actually Do Each Week

Week 1	<p>Self-Assessment</p> <p>Students build trust within the group and develop a personal narrative. They identify values, strengths, and goals. Framework: Brené Brown's work on vulnerability and authenticity.</p>
Week 2	<p>Research & Exploration</p> <p>Students map their interests to real career paths using Ikigai (the intersection of what you love, what you're good at, what pays, and what the world needs). They use AI tools to explore roles and start reaching out to professionals.</p>
Week 3	<p>Resume & Online Presence</p> <p>Students build a base resume tailored to their target roles and set up or improve their LinkedIn profile. No generic templates.</p>
Week 4	<p>Networking</p>

	Students practice John Stepper’s “Work Out Loud” method: share your work, help others, build genuine professional relationships. Not transactional networking. Real connections.
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Week 5	Applications & Interviews Students develop application strategies for specific roles. They practice STAR storytelling for behavioral interviews. They run mock interviews with feedback from the group and mentor.
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Week 6	Follow-Up & Negotiation Students learn how to follow up when they don’t hear back, how to evaluate offers, and how to negotiate. The group reflects on what worked and what didn’t.
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The curriculum draws on Angela Duckworth’s research on grit, Simon Sinek’s purpose-driven frameworks, Eric Ries’s lean experimentation approach, and Daniel Pink’s work on regret and decision-making. These aren’t motivational posters. They’re practical tools students use to build a job search strategy that holds up.

WHY IT MATTERS

The Cost of Doing Nothing

Underemployment isn't just a student problem. It's an institutional one. When graduates can't find work that matches their degree, it shows up in alumni surveys, retention data, and enrollment trends. Parents and prospective students notice.

Most career services offices are stretched thin. They're serving thousands of students with limited staff. Career Circles doesn't replace career services. It supplements them with something career services rarely has the bandwidth to offer: sustained, small-group mentorship over multiple weeks.

What's Different About This Approach

Most career programming is one-off: a resume workshop, a networking event, a career fair. Students attend, collect a handout, and move on. Nothing sticks because nothing is sustained.

Career Circles works differently. Six students meet the same mentor, every week, for six weeks. They build trust. They give each other feedback. They hold each other accountable. The mentor doesn't lecture. The mentor facilitates.

We teach students to treat their job search like a series of experiments. Test a hypothesis. Get feedback. Adjust. Try again. That mindset shift is what separates graduates who land aligned roles from those who settle.

THE PARTNERSHIP

What Working With Us Looks Like

We designed this program to be turnkey. Here's how the partnership works:

We Handle	You Handle
Mentor recruitment and training	Student enrollment and communication
Full curriculum and weekly materials	Point of contact for coordination
Meeting Space (Remote)	Feedback to help us improve
Program data and reporting	
Ongoing mentor support	

Our Track Record

114 Students served last year	1 Partner school	50%+ Student engagement goal
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We publish our financials. We share program data. \$25 puts one student through the full six-week program. We're not asking you to take a risk. We're asking you to try a proven model.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Agency, Not Dependency

Everything we do is built on one idea: students have more power over their career outcomes than they think. We call it agency. It's the belief that you can shape what happens to you through deliberate choices and sustained effort.

We don't guarantee jobs. We can't. What we do is teach students a process for finding work that fits. We give them a mentor who's been through it. We put them in a small group where they can be honest about what's hard. And we show them that the job search itself is a skill, one that gets better with practice.

Agency shows up as setting clear goals, developing a growth mindset, cultivating grit, and taking initiative. It's what turns a graduate from someone waiting for an opportunity into someone creating one.

Career Circles doesn't work because of a proprietary methodology. It works because six students and one mentor show up consistently, do the work, and hold each other to it.

NEXT STEPS

Start a Conversation

If you're interested in running Career Circles at your institution, we'd like to talk. Not a sales pitch. A conversation about what your students need and whether this program fits.

We're a small nonprofit. We move fast, we're flexible on logistics, and we care more about getting the program right than growing for its own sake.

Get in touch

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sujeeth.org

409 students served. 1 partner school. Published financials.

SOURCES

- [1] US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Education Pays, 2024
- [2] US Department of Education, Federal Student Aid Portfolio, 2025
- [3] College Board, Trends in College Pricing and Student Aid, 2024–25
- [4] US Department of Education, Federal Student Aid, Average Debt Statistics, 2025
- [5] Burning Glass Institute / Strada Institute, Talent Disrupted, 2024
- [6] Gallup, State of the Global Workplace Report, 2025