

Methodology

Focus group recruitment, process, and characteristics

SSRS, an independent research firm under contract with The Pew Charitable Trusts, designed and conducted 10 virtual focus groups with young adults ages 18-29 living in Philadelphia. The study design and questionnaire were reviewed and approved by the independent Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Southern Maine. (See Appendix A below for the IRB-approved informed consent statement.)

Nine of the 10 focus groups were held from Aug. 4 to Aug. 26, 2025, and a 10th focus group was held on Sept. 29, 2025. Sessions lasted 90 minutes and were held over Zoom. All participants were living within the city limits of Philadelphia. Groups 1 to 8 were specifically recruited to ensure that all participants shared the same age range (18-24 or 25-29), education (college degree or less than a college degree), and employment status (employed in desired field or unemployed/not working in desired field). Groups 9 and 10 were recruited to include a mix of employment statuses and/or education levels.

SSRS partnered with Sago, a qualitative research firm, to recruit participants. For Groups 1 to 9, Sago’s recruitment included recontacting people who had participated in The Pew Charitable Trusts’ 2025 Philadelphia Residents Survey who consented to be recontacted for future studies ([initial findings and methodology accessible here](#)). For Group 10, SSRS recontacted the resident survey participants, and Sago recruited additional participants from its database. A detailed group composition is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Group Composition

Group	Age group	Employment status and field	Education	Number of participants
1	25-29	- Unemployed - Employed but not in desired field	No college degree	3
2	25-29	- Employed in desired field - Employed and have no desired field	No college degree	4
3	18-24	- Unemployed - Employed but not in desired field	College degree or more education	6
4	18-24	- Employed in desired field - Employed and have no desired field	College degree or more education	5
5	18-24	- Unemployed - Employed but not in desired field	No college degree	5
6	18-24	- Employed in desired field - Employed and have no desired field	No college degree	6
7	25-29	- Unemployed - Employed but not in desired field	College degree or more education	5
8	25-29	- Employed in desired field - Employed and have no desired field	College degree or more education	8
9	25-29	Any employment status or field, including unemployed	No college degree	3
10	18-29	Any employment status or field, excluding unemployed	Any education level	9

© 2026 The Pew Charitable Trusts

Table 2 summarizes other characteristics of the 54 young adults, beyond their age, educational attainment, and work statuses that were central to the screening and recruitment. For example, participants were not explicitly screened by gender, race, or ethnicity to match Philadelphia’s citywide population. As a result, the participants happened to be representative of the citywide population on some characteristics but not others, somewhat randomly.

Table 2: Participant Demographics

Characteristic		Count (n=54)
Gender	Female	30
	Male	24
Age	18-24	26
	25-29	28
Race and ethnicity (more than one response allowed)	White	23
	African American	20
	Asian or Pacific Islander	9
	Hispanic	3
	Other	3
Relationship status	Single	33
	Married or living with partner	11
	Separated	1
	Not specified	9
Parent	Yes	5
	No	40
	Not specified	9
Region of Philadelphia	West	12
	Northeast	11
	North	11
	Center City	7
	Northwest	6
	South	5
	Southwest	2
Years living in Philadelphia	1 to 4 years	8
	5 to 9 years	13
	10 to 24 years	17
	25 or more years	7
	Not specified	9
Education	No college degree	25
	College degree	29
Working status	Full time in desired field	20
	Full time in undesired field	9
	Part time in desired field	6
	Part time in undesired field	12
	Unemployed	7
Remote vs. in-person work	Remote	3
	Hybrid	5
	In person	34
	N/A (unemployed)	7
	Not specified	5

All focus groups were conducted in English via Zoom by one of two professional moderators trained in the protocol and lasted 90 minutes. Participants were told in advance they would receive a \$150 electronic gift card, and each person received a card after the session.

At the beginning of each discussion, participants were asked to describe the attributes of a high-quality job in Philadelphia. Table 3 lists each attribute that participants cited and the number who considered it an “essential” attribute. Pew later singled out four that received the most votes.

Table 3: Essential Attributes of a High-Quality Job

Attribute theme	Number of participants mentioning the attribute as essential
Pay	43
Growth opportunities	37
Work-life balance and boundaries	35
Good health benefits	33
Paid time off (PTO)	24
Purpose/meaning	19
Supportive manager	18
Hybrid/remote schedule	14
Retirement benefits	11
Mentorship	10
Commute	10
Specialized benefits	10
Supportive team	10
Job security/stability	10
Entrepreneurship	9
Flexible schedule	9
Pay growth	9
Stress-free environment	8
Supportive environment	7
Being able to voice my opinion	4
Artificial intelligence (AI) access or learning	3

© 2026 The Pew Charitable Trusts

Participants were also asked to define and discuss career paths, including the importance, difficulties, and facilitators of getting on a career path overall and within Philadelphia.

Minor modifications were made to the moderator guide after the first few focus groups to further refine the line of questioning. The final moderator guide is provided in Appendix B.

All group sessions were video recorded (with participants’ consent) and transcribed with an artificial intelligence (AI) tool, which was then reviewed by a human watching the video, all to ensure accurate reporting of the conversations. The transcripts formed the basis for subsequent analysis that aimed to uncover and extract key themes and patterns that align with the research objectives.

Throughout the accompanying report, direct quotations are provided to illustrate key findings. Attributions indicate the participants' gender, age range, educational attainment (those still pursuing a degree were labeled as no degree), and desired/current field. Some quotes have been edited for clarity.

Focus group limitations and considerations

SSRS made the following disclosure, paraphrased: There are several limitations to this study that should be noted. First, the interpretation of qualitative data is inherently subjective and may be influenced by the perspectives of the researchers conducting the analysis. While SSRS and Pew made efforts to ensure rigor and minimize bias, such as interpreting comments in written form separate from the video, absolute objectivity cannot be guaranteed.

Next, while every effort was made to recruit a diverse sample of participants, qualitative research is not representative of the population and should not be generalized. Findings should be considered illustrative and even directional but are not precise measures of young people's attitudes on the topics discussed.

Finally, throughout this report, terms such as "many," "some," and "a few" are sometimes used to convey patterns observed in the discussions rather than precise counts or percentages. These descriptors reflect relative frequency within the group but should not be interpreted as quantitative measures or as representative of any larger population.

A final consideration is the timing of this research relative to some of the topics discussed. Notably, at the time of the first nine focus groups, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) was slated to introduce extensive service cuts to the transit system due to a funding deficit, impacting regional rail, buses, and trolleys. Several participants discussed this.

Young adult share of labor force

To provide readers with a broad view of the labor force by age, including Gen Z, Pew obtained public-use microdata from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) processed by [University of Minnesota IPUMS USA](#), which enables filtering a population into any desired age group. Pew found the population of Philadelphia residents in the labor force ages 16-29 and the population ages 30 and older, then computed each group's share of all resident workers in each ACS one-year sample dataset from 2000 to 2024. These measurements start at age 16 because that's the age at which Pennsylvania allows minors to work legally with parental consent and is consistent with federal measurements of labor force participation. There is no upper-age limit. (The focus groups started at age 18 for legal consent reasons.)

Young adults moving into and out of the city

To compute the net inflow and outflow of young adults, Pew assembled data on Philadelphia residents by age from two ACS tables—both five-year samples—found at the main Census Bureau website: [B07001](#) ("Geographical Mobility in the Past Year by Age for Current Residence in the United States") and [B07401](#) ("Geographical Mobility in the Past Year by Age for Residence 1 Year Ago in the United States"). Both tables provide population by age groups in small enough increments to match the 18-to-29-year-old segment that Pew was studying.

The population ages 18-29 that moved out of Philadelphia (Table B07401) was subtracted from the population 18-29 that moved into Philadelphia (Table B07001), resulting in a net inflow or outflow figure for the 18-to-29-year-old group. This calculation was performed on four ACS sample periods—2020-24, 2015-19, 2010-14, and 2006-10—to check for consistent patterns, although only the final period (2020-24) is cited in the report.

Generational Waves in the Labor Force, 2000 Through 2024 (Figure 1)

Generational cohorts are not scientifically defined; rather, they have been developed by marketing and opinion researchers as a way to obtain a generalized understanding of the views of people who were born in and aged over the same period. The starting and ending points are based on year of birth, not month or day, which means the age range of each cohort is inaccurate for part of a given year. The descriptions of each cohort, like all generalizations, do not necessarily apply to every cohort member. This report uses a definition of Generation Z and preceding cohorts developed by Pew Research Center. (See Table 4.) The Center has provided a [description and discussion of its methodology](#). The Center has not firmly defined the beginning and final birth year of the newest cohort, Generation Alpha, which is not discussed in this report.

Table 4: Birth Year Range of Generational Cohorts

Age range is shown for 2025, when Pew conducted the focus groups

Generation	Starting birth year	Ending birth year	Total years	Rough age range in 2025
Greatest Generation	1901	1927	27 years	98-124
Silent Generation	1928	1945	18 years	80-97
Baby Boom generation	1946	1964	19 years	61-79
Generation X	1965	1980	16 years	45-60
Millennial generation	1981	1996	16 years	29-44
Generation Z	1997	2012	16 years	13-28

Source: Consensus of Pew Research Center and other researchers

© 2026 The Pew Charitable Trusts

The 18-to-29-year-olds recruited for this report in 2025 mostly fell within the consensus definition of Gen Z in 2026, which was ages 14-29. That was less true for 2024, when the latest census data was available for measurements and when Gen Z was ages 12-27. For that reason, time series and other charts in this report are clearly labeled as representing either Gen Z (which grows older each year) or the 18-to-29-year-old category (which is the same each year).

To track the changing sizes and shares of Gen Z and other generations in Philadelphia’s civilian labor force, Pew obtained ACS data from IPUMS USA. The ACS microdata contains a “birth year” variable for many individuals, although not all. For records with a birth year shown, Pew segmented them into generational groups based on the starting and ending birth years, as shown above. For records where birth year was blank, Pew subtracted the person’s given age from the survey year to obtain an approximate birth year, then used the same process to assign them to a generational group. These steps were done for each annual ACS dataset from 2000 through 2024. All of those steps resulted in an estimated total Philadelphia population of each generational cohort for each year from 2000 through 2024.

Using those population totals each year, Pew then disaggregated the Philadelphia residents between those who were or were not “in the civilian labor force,” an ACS variable that covers many labor situations of city residents ages 16 and older, including individuals employed on payroll full time or part time, self-employed full time or part time, working as a contractor or gig worker, or unemployed and looking for work. Individuals’ jobs were not necessarily located in Philadelphia; a sizable portion commuted to jobs outside the city.

Full-Time Workers Lacking Health Insurance in Philadelphia, 2019-24 (Figure 2)

Using IPUMS USA data, five-year estimates, Pew found the number in each age group who were in the civilian labor force (employed or looking for employment); had worked at least 30 hours in the previous week; and had health insurance coverage of any kind, including from a family member, parent, Medicaid, or federal insurance exchange. (See the Census Bureau’s [definition of healthcare coverage categories](#) surveyed by the ACS.) For each age group, the number lacking coverage of any kind was divided by the total number of workers, resulting in the percentage of the total who lacked insurance. This measurement used a multiyear

period for greater data coverage and reliability, which necessitated using the static age groups rather than changing generational cohorts.

Share of Workers Ages 18-29 in Major Sectors by City, 2024 (Figure 3)

Using IPUMS USA data, one-year estimates, for 2024, Pew found the population belonging to Generation Z versus all other cohorts who reported being in the civilian labor force and whose employment fell into one of 20 industry sectors according to the North American Industrial Classification System, at the two-digit level. The number in each sector was divided by the total number of workers in each cohort to arrive at a percentage in each sector. Philadelphia's four largest percentage figures (those in double digits) were compared with the same four sectors in other major Northeastern cities—Boston, New York, Baltimore, and Washington—and the country overall, for geographical context.

Earnings of 16-to-29-Year-Olds in Northeast U.S. Cities, 2005 Through 2024 (Figure 4)

Using IPUMS USA data, Pew computed the median earnings of workers ages 16-29 in each of five major Northeastern U.S. cities as found by one-year ACS estimates for 2005, 2010, 2015, 2019, and 2024. All figures were adjusted to 2024 dollars using the Bureau of Labor Statistics' [CPI Inflation Calculator](#), enabling normalized and comparable “real” amounts across each period. In the IPUMS data, workers were defined as being employed at least 35 hours per week in any sector or capacity, and their earnings were defined as representing any income earned in the preceding 12 months from wages or salary paid by an employer or earned from one's own business or farm. (See income [definition at IPUMS](#).)

Cost of living

Pew obtained cost of living indices for Philadelphia and four other major Northeastern U.S. cities (Boston, New York, Baltimore, and Washington) for 2005, 2015, and 2025, produced by the Council for Community and Economic Research (C2ER) and published at [coli.org](#). C2ER measures the variation of prices between select cities and the nation each year based on prices for a set of items that often change from year to year, making it possible only to compare a city's cost of living to those of other cities and the nation in one given year. Pew calculated the ratio of Philadelphia's cost-of-living index to indices of the other cities in 2005, 2015, and 2025, then observed whether the ratios grew or shrank over those years, to determine whether Philadelphia kept pace or not with the other cities on the cost of living.

Educational attainment

Using IPUMS USA data, five-year estimates, for the 2020-24 period, Pew found the number of residents ages 25-29 versus all older residents who had attained one of five possible levels of educational attainment, including a bachelor's degree or higher. The number for each age group was divided by the total population of residents at that age. This measurement used a multiyear period for greater data coverage and reliability, and as a result could not use the generational cohorts. The starting age of 25 is standard for educational comparisons.

Commuting and working from home

Using IPUMS USA data, five-year estimates, for the 2020-24 period, Pew found the number of residents who primarily used one of 11 possible modes of commuting to work, breaking them down by age groups 18-29 versus 30 and older. (See transport to work [definition at IPUMS](#).) The number of users of each mode was divided by the total population of working commuters in each age group to arrive at the percentages using each mode.

Appendix A: Consent Statement

Participant Consent Form for The Pew Charitable Trusts

What is this all about?

- The Pew Charitable Trusts (Pew) has asked SSRS to conduct focus groups to explore what meaningful jobs and careers look like for young adults in Philadelphia. The results from this study will help Pew to understand what the opportunities and barriers are for young adults to enter the job market and build careers in Philadelphia.

How do I participate?

- The focus group will be held virtually over Zoom and will last about 90 minutes.
- There will be about six to seven other people in the discussion with you, all of whom are young adults living in Philadelphia.
- Researchers from Pew, as well as staff from SSRS, may be observing this discussion.

What will you ask us in the focus group?

- During the discussion, you will be asked to talk about your views on high-quality jobs and career pathways.
- We ask that you not share any information that is discussed in the focus group with anyone else.

Do I have to do this?

- Your participation is voluntary. This means you are not required to participate and that you can skip any questions you prefer not to answer.

Are there any benefits or risks to me?

- This study is being done for research only. There is no direct benefit to you, but you will be helping the study team to understand the perspectives and experiences of young adults in Philadelphia.
- The risks of being in this study are minimal.
 - While we will encourage everyone who participates to respect each other's privacy and keep what is shared in the group confidential, we can't, however, guarantee that this will happen.
 - It is conceivable that participants may become emotionally upset by being asked to think about their career paths and any challenges they might have experienced.

How will you protect my information?

- We will be video recording the session. These recordings will be transcribed and used to produce a final report. The final report may include direct quotes of what you said, but we will not tie your name or your identity to the quotes.
- SSRS will protect all of the information you share by storing it securely. We will not share your full name or contact information with Pew. We will not link any of your answers to your personal information.
- We will destroy all of the information from the focus groups after the study is completed.
- We are required to follow all ethical and privacy practices in coordination with the Institutional Review Board to protect your information.

After the focus group, you will receive a \$150 electronic gift card for your participation in the discussion.

If you have questions about the study, please contact Paula Armendariz at 484-240-2069. If at any time you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant, need information, want to provide feedback, or experience a research-related injury, please contact the University of Southern Maine's Office of Research Integrity and Outreach at 207-780-4517 or usmorio@maine.edu. Information for participants:

<https://usm.maine.edu/orio/irb-information-for-research-participants>.

Appendix B: Young Adult Focus Group Moderator Guide

Introduction and ground rules (7 minutes)

Hi, I'm [NAME] from SSRS, a research organization based in Glen Mills, Pennsylvania. I want to start by thanking everyone for taking part in this discussion. We will be together for about 90 minutes.

SSRS is working with The Pew Charitable Trusts to explore what meaningful jobs and careers look like for young adults. We are conducting a series of group discussions with young adults all around Philadelphia to explore your ideas around jobs and careers.

Before we get started, I want to go over some highlights from the consent document that you each received.

- Your participation in this discussion is voluntary, which means you are not required to be here. As such, you can stop or leave the discussion at any time. You can skip any questions that make you feel uncomfortable or don't want to answer. Just let me know.
- Everything you say in this conversation will be kept confidential, which means we will never use your name or your company's name in anything we write about this study. When preparing our report, we might include a quote of something you said, but we will not attach your name to the quote.
- We would like to video record the discussion so that we have an accurate record of what was said when we do our analysis. The recordings will be used to generate a transcript from the session to help us write our report.
- **[IF OBSERVERS ARE PRESENT:]** We have some observers today from our research team. All observers will maintain your confidentiality in the same manner that I will. Throughout the discussion, I will check in with them to see if they have any follow-up questions they'd like me to ask.
- At the end of this discussion, you will each receive a \$150 electronic gift card as a thank you for your time tonight.

Does anyone have any questions about the information I just shared?

Great! Let me just go over a few ground rules to make sure our discussion flows smoothly today.

- I have a list of questions I'd like to ask, but I'd like this to be more like a group discussion rather than a Q&A session. You don't need to answer every question I ask, as long as I get the chance to hear from each of you at various points during the session. You don't need to direct all of your comments to me; rather, feel free to comment on what each other says. You don't need to raise your hand when you want to speak; just jump in.
- Please keep yourself unmuted during our conversation—that will make it easier for you to jump in and participate. But if there are noises in the background, please mute yourself for that moment.
- I know we all have busy lives and a lot going on. But to make this conversation the most successful, I kindly ask that you silence your cellphones, close out of your email, and keep your focus on this discussion.
- I want to make sure I get a chance to hear from everyone, and I want to try to keep things pretty even, so if I notice you are speaking first a few times, I might ask someone else to go first. Or if I haven't heard from you in a while, I might ask you to jump in.

Introduction (5 minutes)

Let's start by going around the room and having each of you introduce yourself.

- Please tell me your first name only, what part of Philly you live in, and something you enjoy doing in your free time.
- **[MODERATOR GOES FIRST TO MODEL THE BEHAVIOR]**

I'd like to tell you a little bit about how tonight's conversation will flow. First, we'll talk about what a quality job means to you—overall and in the city of Philadelphia. Then we'll talk about career pathways and what that means to you, again overall and then specifically in Philly. Then we'll round out the discussion with a few other topics toward the end. I'm really interested in hearing your own personal viewpoints on these topics, but if you want to also share what your friends or other people you know are saying about these topics, please just make it clear whether you're talking about yourself or about other people you know.

Quality jobs (25 minutes)

Goal: Gauge personal attitudes toward what a high-quality job means, including income, benefits, salary growth, location, content of the job, etc. Explore specifically what a high-quality job in Philly means to participants.

1. Let's start by talking about what a high-quality job means to you. I'm going to start a whiteboard, and let's do a group brainstorm. Tell me what features you associate with the idea of a high-quality job, and I'll add them to the board. After we've heard from everyone, you'll have the opportunity to add your reactions to the list.

[PROBES IF NOT MENTIONED:]

- What kinds of benefits are important to you?
 - How important are retirement benefits to you?
 - How about health benefits?
 - How about vacation time?
 - How important is the balance between the salary and the benefits? (In other words, at this stage in your life, would you rather have higher pay and worse benefits, or somewhat lower pay and great benefits?)
 - How important is it that the salary be high right now versus offering you salary growth opportunities if you stay at the job?
 - What about opportunities for growth/promotions? How fast do you want to see that?
 - What about the work itself being meaningful/interesting to you versus being in it for the money?
 - What about the pace or stress level of the job?
 - What about the hours of the job and being flexible?
 - What about the role of AI and technology in the job? (Do you see that as a positive or a negative?)
2. **[IF NOT MENTIONED]** One thing we haven't talked much about yet is entrepreneurship, gig work, self-employment, and side hustles. How does this type of work fit into your notion of a high-quality job?
 - Would you be interested in starting up your own business? Why or why not?
 - Would you be interested in doing gig work if it paid what you want? Do you consider gig work to be a high-quality job?

3. Now that we have this amazing list put together, let's take a moment and have everyone use the "stamp" feature on the whiteboard—put a star next to the things that are the most important to you personally in a job. **[DISCUSS TOP STARRED ITEMS]**
4. Thinking about all of the features of a high-quality job that we've been talking about, what are some of the challenges or obstacles that get in the way of finding a high-quality job?
5. Let's look at our whiteboard in one additional way for a moment. How would your answers be different if we were focusing just on what a high-quality job looks like in the city of Philadelphia? What explains those differences in your mind?
 - a. What kinds of high-quality jobs do you associate with Philly?
 - i. What industries or sectors do you think offer the most opportunities in Philly?
 - b. Are there any kinds of high-quality jobs that interest you that aren't really available in Philly?
 - i. What industries or sectors do you think offer the fewest opportunities in Philly?
 - c. What are some of the challenges or obstacles that get in the way of finding a high-quality job in the city?
6. To round out this part of the discussion, if you could wave a magic wand and create the perfect job for yourself, would it be based within Philadelphia? What would it look like?

Logistical preferences for jobs (15 minutes)

Goal: Explore deeper feelings about work preferences in terms of logistical aspects like job location, commute times, safety, and the extent to which an ideal job can be found in Philly.

1. Let's go a little deeper into some of your logistical preferences for an ideal job.
 - a. What are your preferences for the location of where you work, like being able to work remotely or hybrid versus going in every day?
 1. Would you decline a job if it required you to be in person every day?
 2. How do you think your preferences might change in the future?
 - b. What about the actual location of the job, like being in the city, being close to where you currently live, being within a public transportation ride, etc.?
 1. What are your ideal preferences for how you get to work, like by car, bus, train, ride-sharing, etc.?
 2. How long is too long of a commute? (30 minutes? 45 minutes? 60-plus minutes?)
 3. What if your employer paid for the commute? How might that change what you're willing to do?
 - c. What about the physical location, like being in an office versus a cubicle, versus not having a specific place to work from every day?
 - d. What about the safety of the location of the job?
 1. Are there certain neighborhoods or locations that seem so unsafe to you that you wouldn't take a job there?
 2. Would you take a dream job in a place that you consider to be unsafe?
 3. What if the location is in a neighborhood that is starting to get better from a safety perspective?
2. When you think about your ideal job, do you picture it being in the city of Philadelphia? Why or why not?
 - a. Do you think you can have the job you want and stay in Philadelphia long term? Why or why not?

Career pathways (15 minutes)

Goal: Explore perceptions of careers versus jobs and what a career pathway looks like. Explore the value participants place on being on a career path, what obstacles they face, and what career paths in Philadelphia look like.

1. We've been focusing so far on high-quality jobs, but let's shift gears now and talk about careers. In your mind, what is the difference between a career and a job?
2. When you hear the phrase "career path," what does that make you think about?
 - a. What are the benefits of being on a career path, and what are the downsides?
3. How important is it to you personally to be on a career path? **[PROBE to understand why it is or is not important.]**
 - a. Would you say you are on a career path right now?
 1. **[If yes:]** What makes you say that?
 2. **[If no:]** How interested are you in pursuing a career path?
 - b. Is there a time in your life when you think it might be more important for you to be on a career path than it is today? What makes you say that?
4. What are some different ways that you, your friends, or people you know have gotten started onto a career path these days?

[PROBES IF NOT MENTIONED]

- What role does education play? **[PROBE to understand the role of a high school diploma/GED versus certificate programs, trade schools, or vocational programs versus a college degree]**
 - What about getting a job through family or friends?
 - What about public training programs (like Job Corps or AmeriCorps)? Can they lead to a good career path?
 - What about getting a union-supported job?
 - How can self-employment lead to a career path?
 - What about gig work?
5. What are some challenges that you or your friends have faced in getting on a career path? **[LISTEN FOR: education, access, finding a good first job, lack of experience, etc.]**
 6. Thinking for a moment about Philadelphia specifically, what career paths do you associate with the city, if any?
 - a. Which do you not associate with Philly?
 - b. Are there certain barriers or challenges to getting on a career path in Philly?

7. When you think about your career path, do you picture it being in the city of Philadelphia? Why or why not?
 - a. Do you think you can have the career path you want and stay in Philadelphia long term? Why or why not?
8. If you could wave a magic wand and create the perfect career path for yourself in the city of Philadelphia, what would it look like?

Skills/competencies (15 minutes)

Goal: Explore what skills/competencies are desired and barriers to skill acquisition.

Now I'd like to shift the conversation to talk about building skills. This could be job-related skills, personal growth, or anything you think helps you move forward in life or work.

1. What's a skill you really want to learn or get better at right now?
 - What is your strategy for learning that skill?
 - What resources are you turning to in order to learn the skill?
 - What are some of the barriers or challenges that might be getting in the way of you learning the skill?
2. More generally speaking, what are some of the barriers or challenges that young people have in trying to build up their skills?

[PROBES IF NOT MENTIONED:]

- Lack of money/time
 - Not knowing where to begin/lack of access to the resources
 - Physical barriers like strength or mobility
 - Personal barriers like mental health/personality type
 - Ethical or moral barriers
 - Lack of motivation/grit
 - Demographic barriers (like a woman trying to make it in a traditionally male job and vice versa)
3. If you wanted to develop or improve a skill, where would you turn? Why that source over others?

[PROBES IF NOT MENTIONED:]

- Family or friends who have the skill
 - TikTok, YouTube, other social media sources
 - Manager, co-workers, or other colleagues in your field
 - Boot camp, certificate programs
4. If there was one thing that would make it easier for people your age to build the skills they want, what would it be?

Personal life (5 minutes)

1. Our last topic today is to explore any personal factors that might affect the types of jobs or career paths that people seek out. This could be things like the cost of housing, access to a car or public transportation, availability of childcare, physical or mental health conditions, taking care of family

members, or other things like that. Can you think of any personal factors that impact the way you think about jobs or careers?

[LISTEN FOR:]

1. Length of commute from where you live
2. The cost of housing near where you'd like to work
3. Affordability or availability of childcare
4. Work/life balance
5. Having a partner or spouse who is also earning income
6. Physical health issues that you experience
7. Mental health issues that you experience

2. How do these personal factors affect the types of jobs or careers that you pursue?

Wrap-up and reflections (5 minutes)

1. Thinking about everything we've discussed today, what is one thing you wish employers understood about what matters most to the younger workforce in Philadelphia?
2. What is the most important thing that businesses and leaders in Philadelphia could do to make the labor market more attractive to young adults?

Thank you for your time today!