

For Immediate Release

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## **Exploring New Pathways to Success - Research Shows Half of Teens Believe AI and On-the-Job Training Are Most Valuable for Career Development**

*JA/Citizens 2024 Survey of High School Students Reveals Professional Aspirations, Financial Concerns, and Attitudes Toward AI and Technology*

**PROVIDENCE, R.I. & COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo.** – Despite recent headlines, according to new research from [Junior Achievement](#) and [Citizens](#), today's teens are optimistic about their future careers and how the advancement in technology will impact them. The Teens and Higher Education Survey shows:

- 90% of teens are optimistic about their careers,
- 90% know the career they want to pursue,
- 80% of teens feel prepared to acquire new skills from technological advancements, and
- Nearly 40% of teens believe AI will provide new job opportunities, and 30% believe it will have no impact on their ability to get a job.

The research also illustrates how teens are open to non-traditional education paths and believe advanced technology may be more valuable than higher education degrees. Forty-nine percent say a high school degree, trade program, two-year degree, or other enrichment program is the highest level of education that will prepare them for their anticipated career path. Specifically:

- 49% believe learning AI and technology advancements are more valuable than a traditional degree,
- 56% of teens believe that real world and on-the-job experience is more beneficial than obtaining a higher education degree, and
- Of the 90% of teens who know their field of interest, STEM is the top ranked career path

Despite their optimism, teens are still looking for support to reach their goals.

- 33% of teens are concerned they don't have the sufficient skills needed to reach their career aspirations,
- 36% have concerns they won't be able to afford the education or skills development programs needed to reach their goals, and
- 77% of teens say cost plays an important or significant role in where (and if) they will attend higher education.

“As teenagers prepare to transition out of high school into their chosen career paths, we are working to help ensure they have access to the skill-building opportunities, advanced technology training, and experiences needed to help them thrive,” said Beth Johnson, Vice Chair, and Chief Experience Officer, Citizens. “We partner with organizations like Junior Achievement to give young people the confidence and knowledge they need to feel prepared to pursue and achieve their career goals and successful financial futures.”

Both Junior Achievement and Citizens are focused on supporting underserved communities and ensuring that all have an opportunity to be part of the workforce of the future. Junior Achievement's proven lessons in financial literacy, work and career readiness, and entrepreneurship are shown to positively impact the lives of young people by empowering them to pursue their professional and personal goals.

“Despite concerns many have raised about the impact of AI on the future of jobs, these survey results show that most young people see opportunity in this emerging technology,” said Tim Greinert, President of Junior Achievement USA. “JA is doing all we can to fuel kids’ optimism and prepare them to achieve or exceed their expectations when it comes to career and financial independence. Partners like Citizens help JA provide some of the most valuable learning experiences middle and high school students need at a critical time in their lives.”

Building on their long-standing partnership, in 2024 Citizens provided a \$415,000 grant to Junior Achievement USA to support financial empowerment programs that give people the confidence and tools they need to budget, save, invest, and pursue their goals. As part of the bank's Citizens Helping Citizens Manage Money program, Citizens provides funding and volunteer support to help deliver financial education. Last year, volunteers donated 3,363 hours to help deliver Junior Achievement programming in 28 cities.

More information and an executive summary of the survey are available at [this link](#).

### **Survey Methodology:**

The Junior Achievement Career and Higher Education Survey was conducted by Wakefield Research ([www.wakefieldresearch.com](http://www.wakefieldresearch.com)) among 1,000 nationally representative US Teens ages 13-18, between July 24-31, 2024, using an email invitation and an online survey. Data was weighted to ensure a reliable and accurate representation of U.S. teens ages 13-18.

*Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results. For the interviews conducted in this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 3.1 percentage points from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample.*

### **About Junior Achievement USA® (JA)**

Junior Achievement is the world's largest organization dedicated to giving young people the knowledge and skills they need to own their economic success, plan for their future, and make smart academic and economic choices. JA learning experiences are delivered by corporate and community volunteers and provide relevant, hands-on experiences that give students from kindergarten through high school knowledge and skills in financial literacy, work readiness, and entrepreneurship. Additionally, Junior Achievement is expanding its reach to 18-to-25-year-olds to provide young adults with critical life skills, as well as to pre-K youth to ensure children get a

solid head start. Today, JA reaches more than 4.4 million students per year in 102 markets across the United States as part of 12.5 million students served by operations in more than 100 other countries worldwide. Junior Achievement USA is a member of JA Worldwide. For more information, visit [www.ja.org](http://www.ja.org).

### **About Citizens Financial Group, Inc.**

Citizens Financial Group, Inc. is one of the nation's oldest and largest financial institutions, with \$219.9 billion in assets as of June 30, 2024. Headquartered in Providence, Rhode Island, Citizens offers a broad range of retail and commercial banking products and services to individuals, small businesses, middle-market companies, large corporations and institutions. Citizens helps its customers reach their potential by listening to them and by understanding their needs in order to offer tailored advice, ideas and solutions. In Consumer Banking, Citizens provides an integrated experience that includes mobile and online banking, a full-service customer contact center and the convenience of approximately 3,300 ATMs and approximately 1,000 branches in 14 states and the District of Columbia. Consumer Banking products and services include a full range of banking, lending, savings, wealth management and small business offerings. In Commercial Banking, Citizens offers a broad complement of financial products and solutions, including lending and leasing, deposit and treasury management services, foreign exchange, interest rate and commodity risk management solutions, as well as loan syndication, corporate finance, merger and acquisition, and debt and equity capital markets capabilities. More information is available at [www.citizensbank.com](http://www.citizensbank.com) or visit us on [X](#), [LinkedIn](#) or [Facebook](#).