

**Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Workforce
On Point for College, Inc.
February 26, 2026**

Testimony by On Point for College Inc., Executive Director Samuel Rowser
Dear Chair and Distinguished Members of the Legislature,

On behalf of our students, thank you for the opportunity to testify about transforming our student's lives and our communities by investing \$500,000 in New York's future work force. On Point for College respectfully urges continued and expanded support to strengthen workforce pathways across Central New York and the Mohawk Valley

Since 1999, On Point for College has served as a workforce pipeline partner in our region. We have helped more than 4,900 students earn degrees from two- and four-year institutions, including many SUNY campuses. Today, we are supporting approximately 3,000 students across Onondaga, Cayuga, Oswego, Madison, Oneida, and Herkimer counties. We work primarily with first-generation college students, individuals from low-income households, adult learners, veterans, parenting students, and those seeking a second chance at economic stability.

Higher education and workforce readiness are directly tied to New York's economic future. According to the National College Attainment Network (October 2023), each college graduate contributes an estimated \$2.7 million in lifetime GDP impact in New York State, with an annual GDP increase of approximately \$244,609. Investing in students is investing in New York's long-term economic competitiveness.

As workforce demands rapidly evolve, particularly with growth in semiconductor manufacturing, advanced manufacturing, healthcare, clean energy, information technology, and the skilled trades; our students must have sustained, year-round access to meaningful career opportunities and industry-aligned training.

To meet this moment of historic economic transformation, On Point for College is focused on expanding five key workforce priorities:

Expanding Paid Internship Placements Year-Round

Paid internships are among the most effective workforce development strategies for low-income and first-generation students. While many internships are limited to summer months, our students need consistent income and hands-on experience throughout the academic year to remain enrolled and financially stable. We will expand paid placements across fall, spring, and summer terms; partner with employers to create part-time academic-year opportunities; prioritize high-demand sectors; provide wage subsidies to small and mid-sized employers; and integrate structured professional development. Year-round internships strengthen retention, increase completion rates, and improve transitions into full-time employment.

Increasing Employer Engagement in High-Growth Sectors

Central New York is experiencing transformative economic expansion. We are deepening partnerships with employers in semiconductor manufacturing, advanced manufacturing, renewable energy, healthcare, construction trades, and technology. Through industry advisory input, job shadowing, recruitment events, and customized internship pipelines, we ensure

students understand required certificates, workplace expectations, and advancement pathways; reducing skills gaps and strengthening the regional talent pipeline.

Providing Certificates and Workforce Training Supports

Many students, particularly adult learners and career changers, benefit from short-term, stackable certificates that accelerate workforce entry and wage growth. Expanded funding will allow us to cover costs for industry-recognized certificates such as OSHA, CPR, and manufacturing safety; provide stipends for exams and training materials; partner with SUNY campuses, BOCES, and workforce providers; and integrate professional readiness training. These supports remove financial barriers and increase employability.

Scaling Career Navigation Services

Many of our students balance employment, family responsibilities, and education. We will expand individualized career coaching, resume and interview preparation, labor-market-informed assessments, flexible workshops, and employer partnerships. Our focus is sustainable employment and long-term career advancement.

Strengthening Data Tracking and Workforce Outcomes

We are committed to enhancing data systems to track internship placements and wages, monitor certificate completion, measure job placement outcomes within 6–12 months, and align results with regional economic development goals. Strong reporting ensures transparency and demonstrates return on investment.

We are grateful for the \$200,000 investment from the New York State Education Department in previous budgets, made possible through your support. These funds have directly strengthened our career readiness programming, employer partnerships, and internship opportunities.

To meet the growing workforce demands of our region, we respectfully request an additional \$300,000, for a total investment of \$500,000 in the Assembly Budget. This expanded investment will allow us to scale year-round internships, increase employer partnerships, expand certificate supports, and strengthen measurable workforce outcomes.

By integrating education, certificates, internships, employer partnerships, and career navigation into a unified strategy, On Point for College strengthens both individual economic mobility and regional competitiveness.

Thank you for your continued commitment to workforce development and economic opportunity across New York State.

Respectfully submitted,

Samuel Rowser
Executive Director
On Point for College