UNH Extension Grit to Grow Summit

The UNH Extension Grit to Grow Summit brings together teens, educators, community partners, and industry leaders to explore the future of New Hampshire's workforce. Through hands-on learning, shared experiences, and direct engagement between youth and professionals, the Summit creates a collaborative space where young people can discover pathways for their future while leaders gain valuable insight into the next generation of talent. This multi-day experience strengthens connections, expands opportunities, and supports statewide efforts to grow a thriving, prepared, and engaged workforce.

For Teens as Future Workforce Members

Teens today face many questions about what comes next—career, college, or living on their own. While opportunities are abundant, they can also feel overwhelming. To support youth as they navigate these decisions, leaders from education, community organizations, and industry formed the **New Hampshire Grit to Grow Collaborative**, a group dedicated to creating resources and experiences that help young people explore their future pathways.

Supported by the Collaborative, the **UNH Extension Grit to Grow Summit** is a multi-day experience that exposes teens to a wide range of academic and career options. Participants engage directly with entrepreneurs, skilled trades professionals, higher education institutions, and non-profit organizations from across New Hampshire. These interactions offer practical insight into workforce needs, educational pathways, and the skills required for future success.

To meet the different needs of youth exploring their "future me," the Summit offers two participation options:

- **Two-Day Experience:** Includes an overnight stay and expanded opportunities for social connection and peer learning.
- **One-Day Experience:** A full day of interactive learning with industry, education, and community leaders.

For Industry, Education, and Community Leaders

Understanding the evolving interests and concerns of the next-generation workforce is an ongoing challenge. The Grit to Grow Summit provides leaders with a valuable opportunity to engage directly with teens who are actively exploring their career and education pathways. By participating in this collaborative, multi-day experience, leaders gain

firsthand insight into what motivates young people and how they make decisions about their future.
Through workshops, shared learning sessions, and direct exposure to teen perspectives, industry and community partners strengthen their ability to anticipate workforce needs, support education-to-career pipelines, and contribute meaningfully to New Hampshire's future talent development.

Industry, Education, and Civic leaders can participate in several ways:

Facilitate & Share

Professionals may lead sessions that create high-engagement learning experiences for teens. Facilitators may also showcase their organizations' opportunities during the two-day Career and Education Expo.

Engage & Share

Professionals who prefer not to facilitate can join teens in shared workshop experiences designed to better align future workforce needs with workplace expectations. These participants may also share organizational opportunities at the Expo.

Table Share

The two-day Career and Education Expo offers a chance for employers, educators, and community organizations to highlight career pathways, training programs, and available resources.

Summit Experience Breakdown

Day 1 — Engaged Future Leader Experience

Day 1 is reserved for teens registered for the **Engaged Future Leader** track and begins at Lakes Region Community College. Participants take part in interactive workshops focused on self-discovery, career exploration, and leadership development. Sample sessions include:

- **"Paying My Bills and My Starbucks Habit"**
  Teens work with financial advisors to explore strategies for managing finances now while planning for future goals.
- **"Telling My Story: Sharing My Passion to Figure Out What's Next"**
  Teens reflect on their experiences and interests with guidance from UNH alum and Granite Goodness Podcast creator Andy DeMeo.
- **"Entrepreneur in the Making: Being My Own Boss Sounds Good"**
  Teens learn what it takes to start and sustain a small business through examples and insights from NH-based entrepreneurs.

After a day of learning and collaboration, participants head to the Inn at Mill Falls in Meredith, NH, for an evening of connection and fun, including a lakeside cookout, time to explore downtown, and a dance party at the Inn.

Day 2 — Youth & Workforce Connection

Day 2 focuses on building direct connections between teens and workplace professionals. Through panels, skill-building workshops, and employer-led sessions, participants explore the qualities of a "Beyond Ready" employee. Industry and education partners gain practical insight into what motivates the emerging workforce and what supports teens need to thrive in New Hampshire's industries. The Career and Education Expo opens at **3:00 p.m.**, offering additional opportunities for engagement as exhibitors highlight career trajectories, early work experiences, and educational pathways.

An **Evening Networking Event** from **6:30–7:30 p.m.** brings together Collaborative members and leaders from industry, education, and government to strengthen partnerships and build connections that support the state's talent pipeline.

Day 3 — Community Career Expo & Professional Development

Day 3 features an enhanced job fair paired with targeted sessions for business, education, and community leaders. Highlights include:

- A forum examining challenges in recruiting and retaining a skilled, work-ready talent pipeline
- Focused sessions on effectively engaging youth within organizations, including strategies for onboarding and early exposure
- A Career & Education Expo open to community members (18+), featuring job openings, training pathways, and opportunities for deeper engagement

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For more information on the Grit to Grow Summit or join the Collaborative please contact Kate.Korbas or visit https://extension.unh.edu/new-hampshire-4-h/pathway-experiences/workforce-readiness/4-h-grit-grow-collaborative