



NSHSS

Be Honored. Be More.

2018 CAREER INTEREST SURVEY

Discover the most current research on the preferences, attitudes, and goals of high-achieving high school and college-aged individuals in areas of education, employment, international experience, career planning, and social and civic dedication. This focused look at Generation Z offers a useful resource for employers working to engage and retain diverse talent who promise to bring distinct skills and expectations to the workforce.

Career Motivations of
Generation Z



NSHSS
Be Honored. Be More.

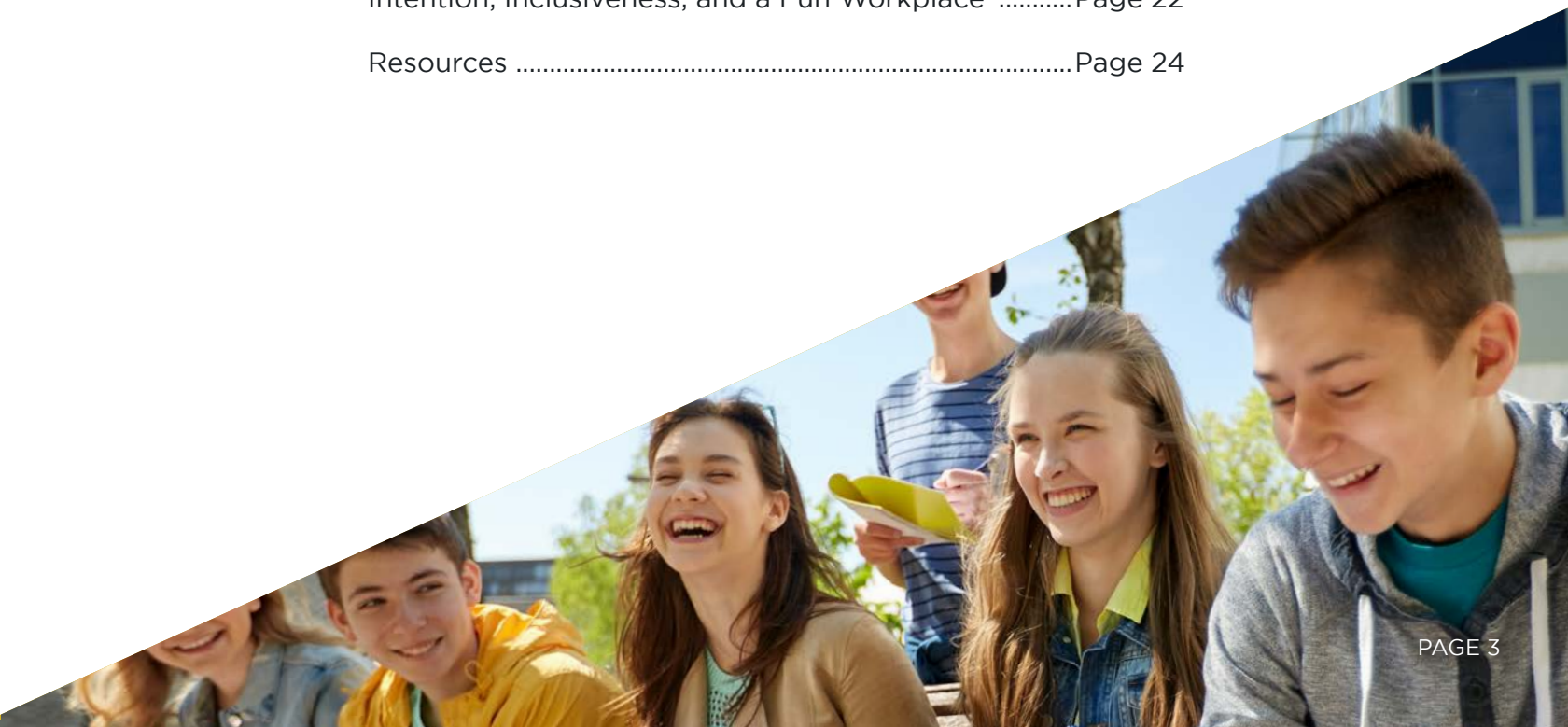
ABOUT NSHSS

The National Society of High School Scholars (NSHSS) is a distinguished academic honor society, recognizing and serving the highest-achieving diverse student scholars in more than 23,000 high schools across 170 countries. With more than 1.5 million members spanning high school to college to career, NSHSS members are academically outstanding emerging leaders in their schools, workplaces, and communities.

**NSHSS
scholars
represent the
most promising
diverse talent
for the emerging
workforce.**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

NSHSS Career Interest Survey	Page 4
Methodology and Survey Pool	Page 5
Getting to Know the New Workforce	Page 6
Themes Shaping Gen Z	Page 8
Education Without Limits	Page 10
The Economics of Education	Page 13
Politics and Purpose	Page 15
STEM Career Aspirations Continue to Thrive	Page 18
Top Employers	Page 20
Intention, Inclusiveness, and a Fun Workplace	Page 22
Resources	Page 24





2018 NSHSS CAREER INTEREST SURVEY

The **2018 Career Interest Survey** is the most current research on Gen Z and offers an encapsulated glimpse into the most formative period of pre- and early professional growth for young people.

Born between 1996 and 2004, this generation ranges from those entering high school to those completing undergraduate college, and accounts for 61 million people in the U.S., which is larger than Gen X and Millennials.^{1,2} It is an emerging workforce that holds great promise, significant expectations, and new challenges.

While Gen Z is entering the workforce with a distinct set of hard and soft skills, we've noticed a growing interest in social justice and activism. This generation has high expectations for themselves, their employment journey, and their employers.

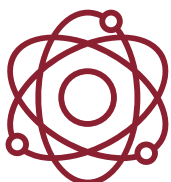
The Career Interest Survey highlights four distinct and notable themes about this emerging group:



**ECONOMIC
SECURITY**



**POLITICS &
PURPOSE**



**TECHNOLOGY
& STEM**



**CAREER
PATH**

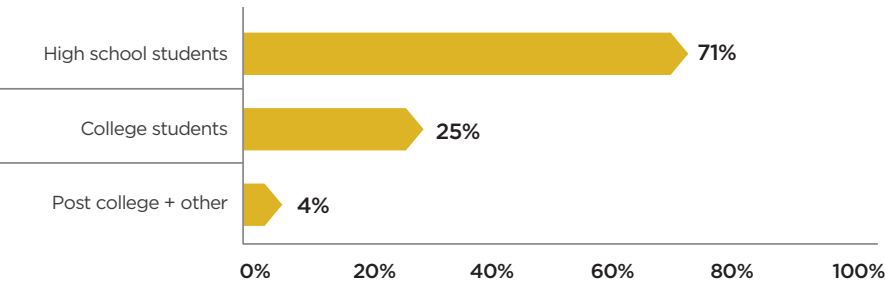


METHODOLOGY AND SURVEY POOL

2018 marks the 11th anniversary of the NSHSS Career Interest Survey. Since 2015, NSHSS has partnered with Hanover Research to produce this study. The report reveals critical findings of the preferences and attitudes of the highest achieving high school students, college students, and college graduates specific to education, career and employment aspirations, and civic involvement. For the 2018 survey, high school students represent 71% of the participants – 40% of whom are current seniors. 49% of respondents are 18 years or younger.

This robust study performed during the spring of 2018 captures the voices of more than 16,000 high school and college-aged individuals. It represents every ethnicity, and garnered participation from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories of American Samoa, Guam, Micronesia, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

PROFILE



The higher rate of female respondents correlates with the gender balance in high schools and colleges. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, of the 2.9 million youth aged 16 to 24 who graduated from high school between January and October 2017, about 1.9 million (66.7%) were enrolled in college in October. Women were more likely to be enrolled in college (71.7%) than men (61.1%).³



GETTING TO KNOW THE NEW WORKFORCE

The results of the 2018 Career Interest survey highlight some interesting conclusions about Generation Z. They have been shaped in powerful ways by connectivity, economic uncertainty, and globalization. In some ways, these factors empower the students with skills and aspirations that will be useful to employers. In others, they create unique challenges for the students and for their future employers.

One of the most prevailing factors impacting these young people is their state of constant connectivity. More than digital natives, these students have grown up with a mobile device in hand. They're always connected to others and to information, and they're highly fluid communicators. Nonetheless, some employers are concerned that this very state of mobile connectivity is resulting in underdeveloped personal/social "soft" skills.

With ready access to almost limitless information, this generation also possesses a breadth of relevant knowledge and skills. Generally, they show a real desire to do a good job, coupled with an inherent expectation of work/life balance.⁴ Some studies caution that the “dark side” of those high expectations and internal drive may create unreasonable expectations about their professional growth trajectory, making it difficult for employers to meet those expectations.⁵

Indeed, for some companies, this newest addition to their workforce may mean integrating the distinct ideas and work styles of as many as five generational demographics.⁶ Successfully moving these young people into the workforce will take first knowing them and taking a genuine interest in what they care about, and then channeling their incredible potential into positive impact.



THEMES SHAPING GEN Z DECISION-MAKING & WORLDVIEW

When assessing the driving factors behind the promising young adults of today, four main themes emerge: economic security, politics and purpose, technology and STEM, and career path. First, it's immediately clear that they care about the timely sociopolitical issues of the day; #NeverAgain, #MeToo, #BlackLivesMatter and #ClimateChange are not 'someone else's cause' but personal reflections of the worldview of a generation motivated by purpose. Also personal are the views they have on how work and career should play in their lives.

Second, Generation Z hold themselves and their employers to high expectations, anticipating that they will find themselves in meaningful employment within six months of college graduation. They are also a fiscally pragmatic group, having grown up amidst the lasting economic impact of events like the Great Recession and the Student Debt Crisis that have taken real tolls in the lives of their families and friends. They feel the financial pressure of the era they are born into, and are making plans accordingly.

Third, Generation Z is a generation born into technology. They live their lives with instantaneous and persistent communication loops available across endless devices. As a generation born into a world of technology, they are the first to report a distinct shift toward STEM-related fields of study.



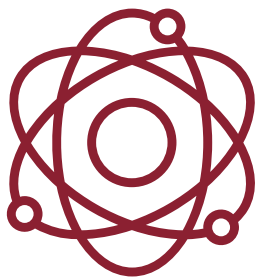
ECONOMIC SECURITY

Because their parents/guardians (and perhaps older siblings) weathered not only the Great Recession but also the Student Debt Crisis, they are saving money at a younger age. Participants in the study communicate feeling financial pressure. Almost all of them (88%) seek grants or scholarships, and more than half (53%) take on student loans. Evidence shows that 35% plan to start saving for retirement in their 20s, and more than 10% started as teenagers.⁷ This pragmatism translates to their approach to school, career, and even philanthropy.



POLITICS & PURPOSE

Generation Z is described as fundamentally rational across many areas, and activism follows that theme. They describe themselves as very interested in social justice. They are civic-minded and politically interested. Many say they have experienced issues like bullying, gender inequality, and racial inequality. Virtually all cite awareness and care about timely social issues of race relations, police brutality, gun violence, and more. They use their mobile connections to give their voices to these causes against the juxtaposition of polarizing politics, "fake news," "witch hunts," trolls, and more. It's a confusing era, and the tumultuous U.S. political and geopolitical climate is unavoidable, which may point to why 83% of all respondents plan to be somewhat or very involved in politics in the coming years. That said, they are shaping history as a committed, vocal generation.



TECHNOLOGY & STEM

Gen Z has grown up with a mobile device in hand. They gather facts in an instant and communicate almost entirely and constantly through screens. Even as STEM integrates into mainstream education, and despite unprecedented opportunities and salaries, 2.4 million STEM jobs will go unfilled in 2018.^{8,9} This generation seems poised to shift the tide. Close to three-quarters of recent college graduates report having majored in a STEM-related field.



CAREER PATH

This group says they expect to work hard and progress quickly. They hold equally high expectations for themselves and from their employers. For most of the students in the 2018 survey, the path to a desired career winds from college to graduate school (76%), international travel (62%), and internships (73%). Almost all (75%) expect that by six months post-graduation, these carefully amassed skills will have earned them a coveted position in their field. And at a minimum, what they're seeking from those positions in established large enterprises (62%) or small businesses (46%) are excellent standard benefits, a fair salary, and genuine work/life balance. It's also worth noting that parents have a very real influence on career decisions as well. Whether due to the need to contribute to family finances, cultural norms, or personal reasons, the trend is real. When asked how involved their parents or guardians are in their *career decisions*, 94% were involved at least minimally, with 33% saying they are very involved.

Through these four themes, we begin to understand that today's graduates are seeking security, purpose, a meaningful career, and balance. By and large, they are doing it with a sense of pragmatism, caution, and even some anxiety. Companies that can account for these influences, aspirations, and worldviews stand the best chance of attracting and harnessing the grit, focus, and talent of these young, highly-motivated people.

EDUCATION WITHOUT LIMITS

The number of young adults entering the U.S. workforce with an associate's, bachelor's, or master's degree continues the steady rise reported since the 1920s.¹⁰ In the 2018 Career Interest Survey, 71% of respondents are current high school students, and 25% are currently in college.

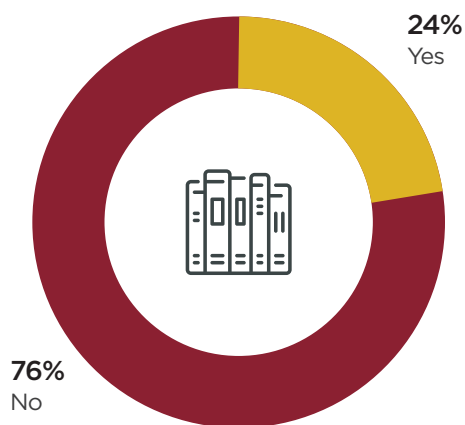
In 2018, 24% of NSHSS scholars report they are the first in their families to attend college. The average has held consistent since 2015.

The educational priority continues to span genders, ethnicities, and regions in the general population, with traditionally underserved demographics gaining access to higher education in rapidly growing numbers.

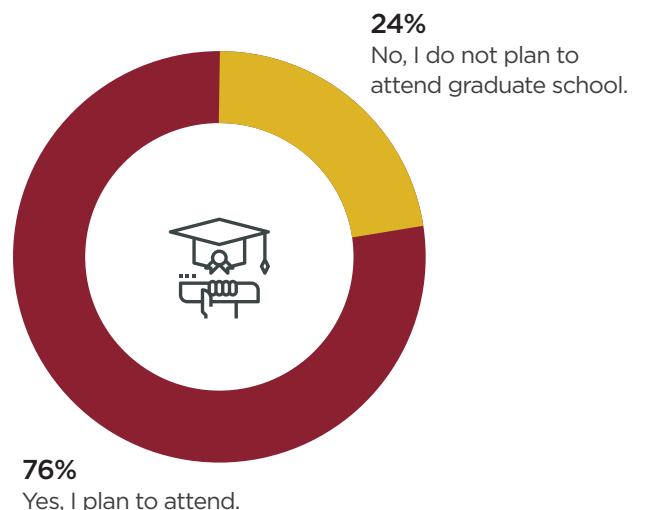
Further validating the cultural/communal value of higher education, there seems to be a correlation between families with a history of higher education and rates of graduate school. 76% of NSHSS scholars report an intent to pursue a graduate degree.

PLANS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Are you (or will you be) the first in your family to attend college?



Do you plan to attend graduate school?
Non-graduate students only



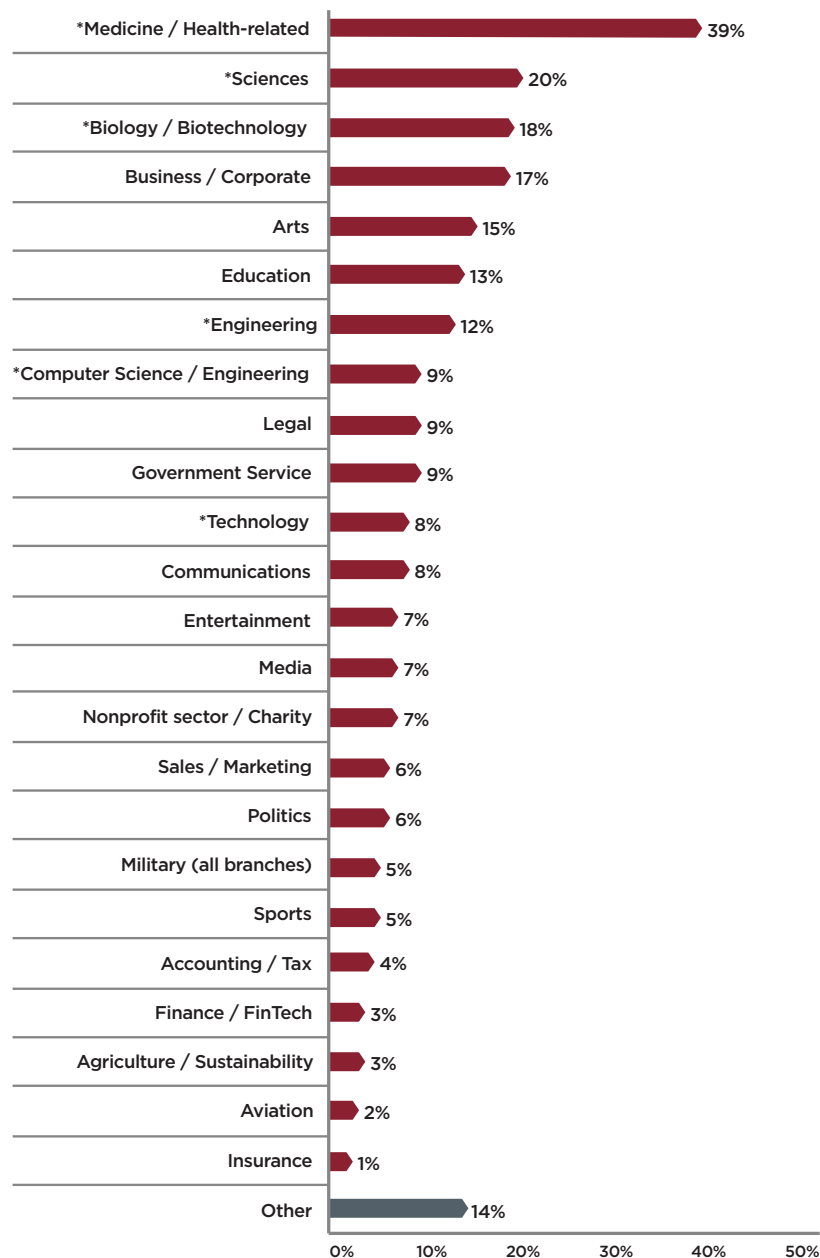
Career goals continue to influence college and graduate school plans. In particular, STEM-related study tracks dominate current and planned majors and graduate programs. In fact, 76% of current high school and undergraduate level respondents say they plan to attend graduate school, with 32% pursuing medical school and another 17% seeking an advanced science degree.

Not surprisingly, these reports line up with expected career paths of NSHSS scholars.

EXPECTED CAREER PATHS

In what type(s) of field do you expect to work in the future?

**Denotes STEM fields*



Percentages may add up to over 100% as respondents could select multiple options.



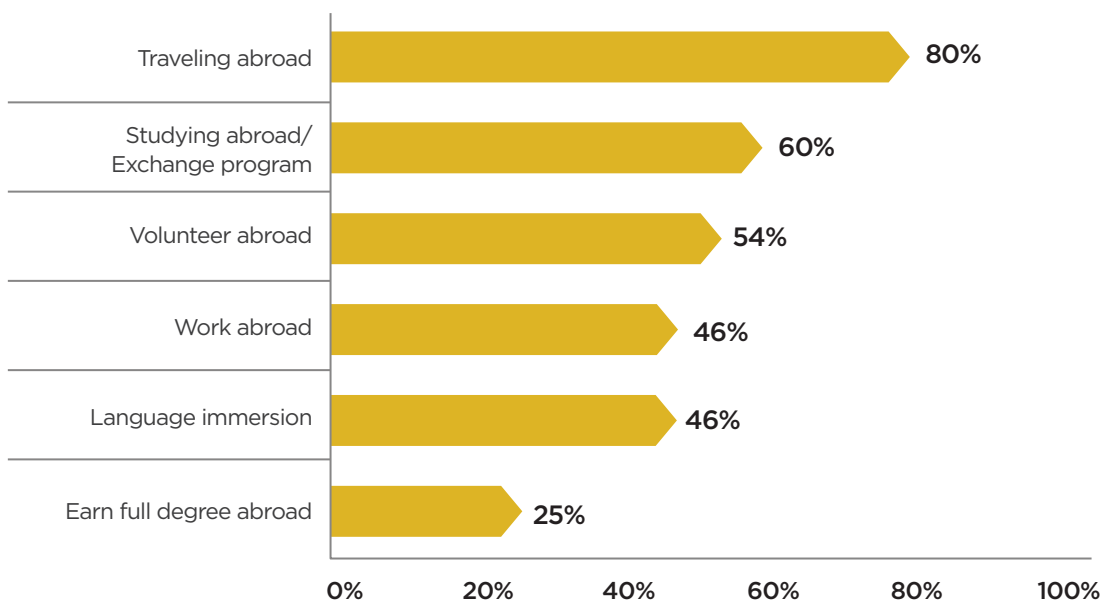
GLOBAL EXPERIENCE IS STILL IMPORTANT

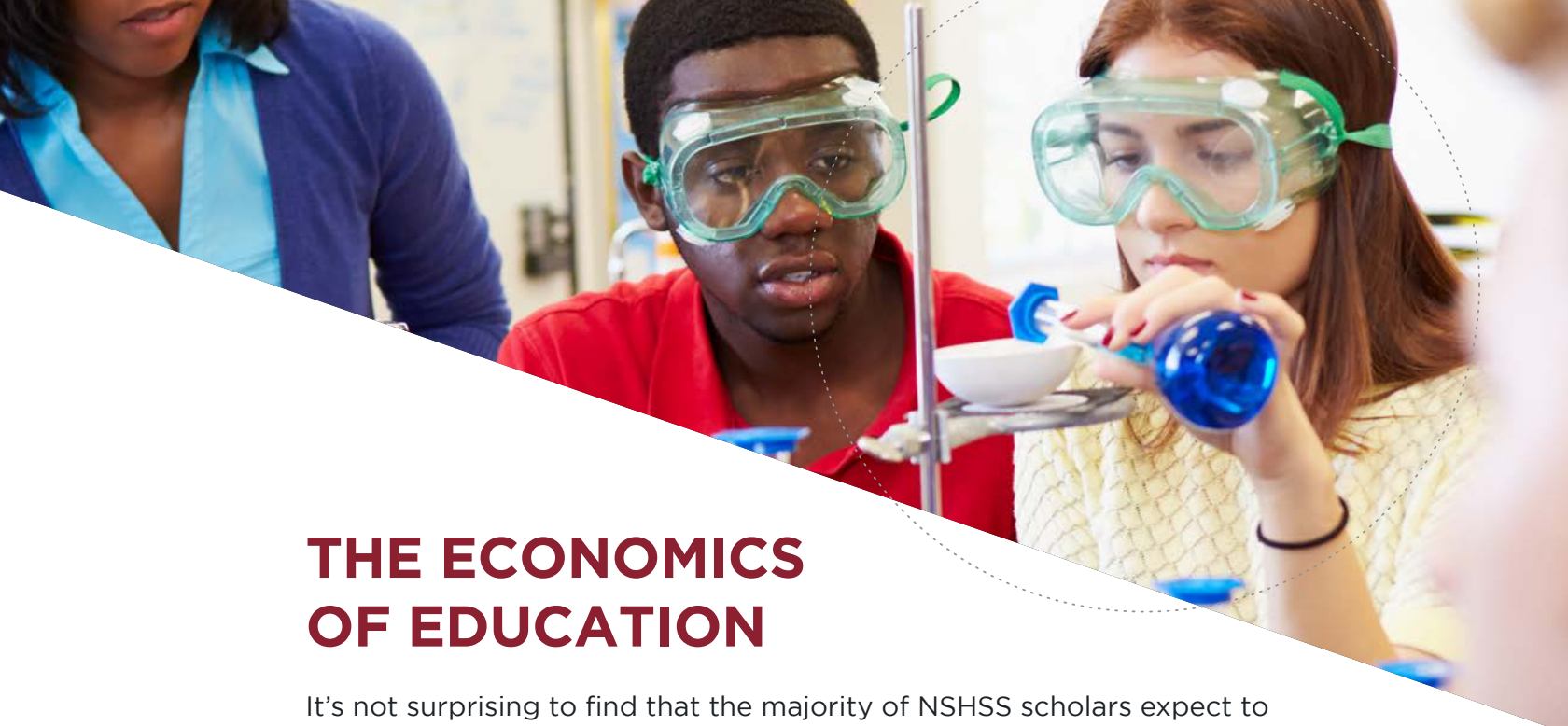
International experience plays a similarly important role in career preparation. Almost two-thirds (62%) of NSHSS scholars indicate an interest in gaining international experience as part of their educational journey. While this is down slightly from 2017 (64%), the percent of students who are factoring international experience into their education correlates very closely with the kinds of employers they say they aspire to work for someday – more than 60% of the Top Ten Preferred Employers are global entities.

For those who are very interested, interested, or think they may be interested in gaining international experience, most are planning to gain it via travel, study or volunteerism.

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES

To what extent are you very or extremely interested in the following types of international experiences?





THE ECONOMICS OF EDUCATION

It's not surprising to find that the majority of NSHSS scholars expect to get a full-time job either before graduating from college or within six months of graduation. They are preparing for that pathway in a couple of core ways, most commonly through their area of study and through relevant internships (73%). Their expectations are high.

While employment during their time in high school or college may be pertinent to their career goals, the motivation seems to be predominantly economic.

A vast majority reports that they are contributing to their college tuition through a salary earned from a job in college (70%) and/or through personal savings (49%).

This finding reiterates other research about the different ways in which Millennial and Gen Z demographics approach their educational financing.

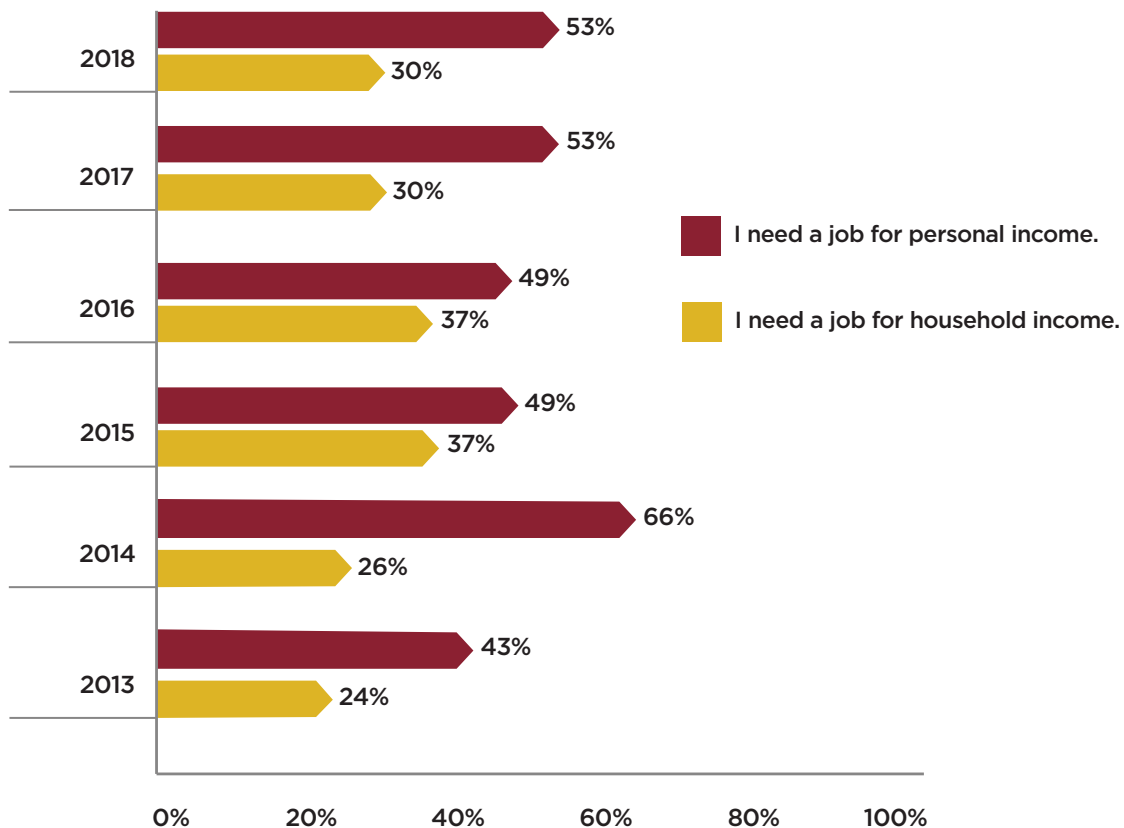
In 2018, students also expressed a very real sense of needing employment to contribute to the cost of their education (70%), though a small percentage (15%) actually said they were working to contribute to tuition payments.

The Millennial mindset was to attend the best college possible. Many paid with loans and are now burdened by school debt. Gen Z has witnessed the student debt crisis and seems to be putting more focus on paying as they go.

Nearly all of the NSHSS survey respondents (83%) said that they *need* a job while in school. Most cite personal income (53%) as the reason, though a surprisingly large number cite a need to contribute to their family or household income (30%). When asked if they *have* a job, however, only 43% replied in the affirmative – and of those, only 7% actually earn money that contributes directly to their household or family finances.

REASONS FOR EMPLOYMENT DURING COLLEGE YEARS

From 2013-2018



When we look through this economic lens, it appears that this generational cohort feels financial pressure, yet they're reasonably optimistic. In this current environment of low unemployment, the majority of students expect they will have a job within six months of graduation (48%) or even before graduating (27%). In 2017, 67% of respondents expected to get a full-time job in their field within six months of graduating – and almost half (41%) thought they would have a job at the time of graduation, though only 29% actually did.

POLITICS AND PURPOSE

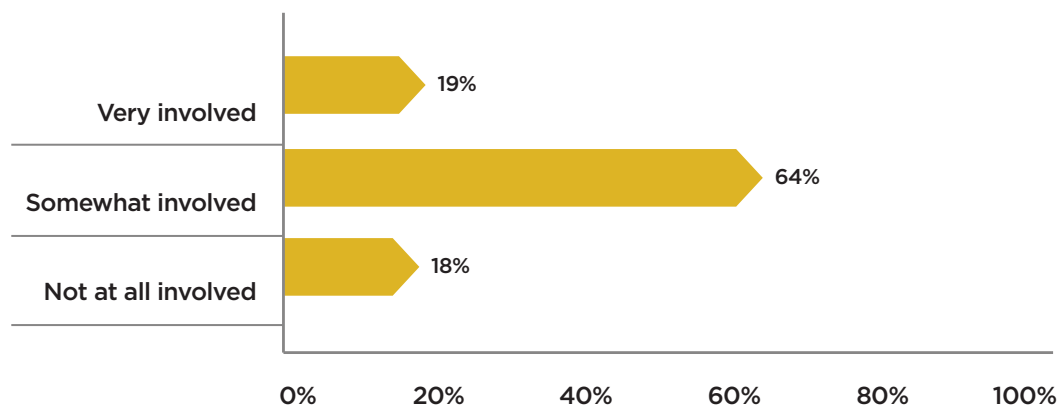
For these high-achieving Gen Zers, volunteering to support causes of personal importance and voicing their beliefs on issues may translate to action on a larger scale, but their desire to hold political office has diminished.

The majority of scholars (63%) say they are not interested in running for office, compared with 61% in 2017.

However, this does not point to apathy. While most aren't interested in running for political office, 83% plan to be somewhat or very involved in politics in the coming years.

POLITICAL ACTIVISM

How involved do you plan to be in politics in the coming years?

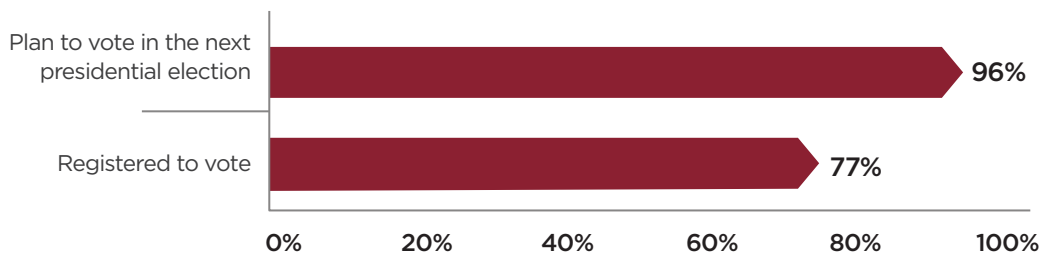




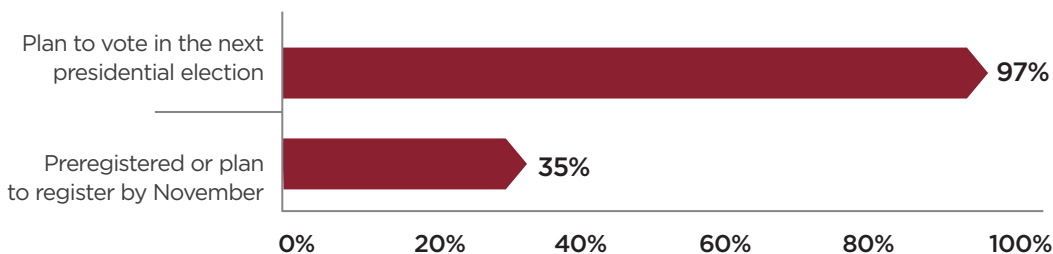
And, involvement and voter registration are high, indicating that this generation is poised to make an impact on the political process even if they are not dedicating their profession to political work.

Among respondents 18 and older, 77% are registered to vote and 71% of them plan to vote in the 2018 midterms – another 96% plan to vote in the next presidential election. Perhaps even more interesting, 35% of those 18 and under are pre-registered or plan to register to vote so they can participate in the 2018 midterm elections (68%), and almost all (97%) plan to vote for the next president.

18 AND OLDER



UNDER 18

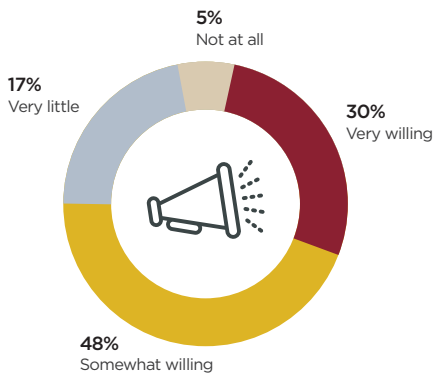


This generation is active and committed. They are aware of causes, lend their voices to make change, and volunteer widely. In fact, 93% said that they give their time in some capacity, ranging from helping family and friends (72%) to participating in organized events (65%), to actively donating time to a cause (45%). *And they do so intentionally* – 82% cite “educating myself” as an important way they support causes.

The majority are also willing to advocate for social justice issues, with women leading the charge.

WILLING TO ADVOCATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES

How willing are you to advocate for social justice issues?

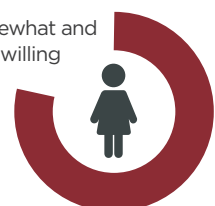


segmented by gender

66% Somewhat and very willing

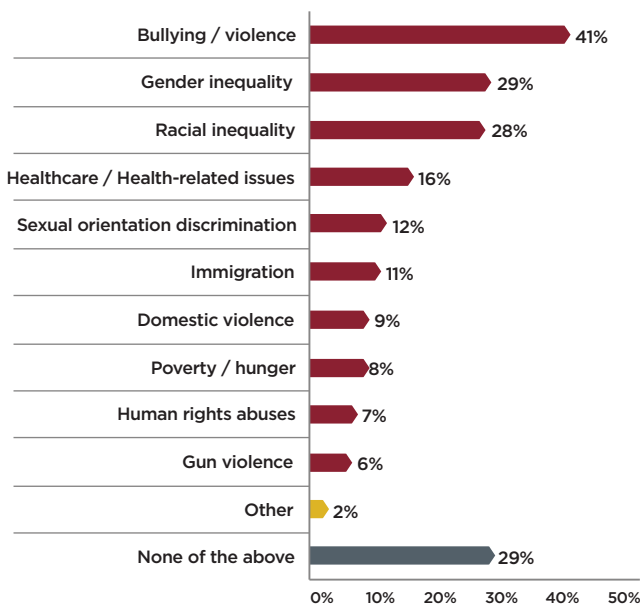


81% Somewhat and very willing



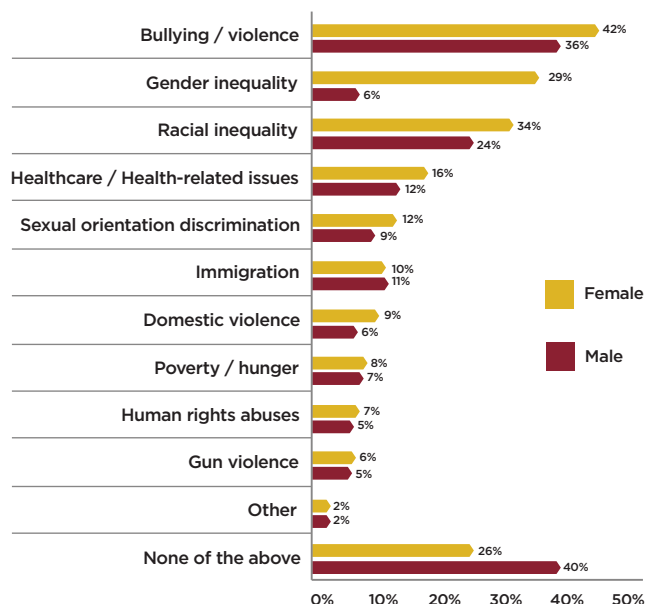
PERSONALLY AFFECTED BY SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES

Have you been personally affected by any of the following issues?



Have you been personally affected by any of the following issues?

Segmented by gender



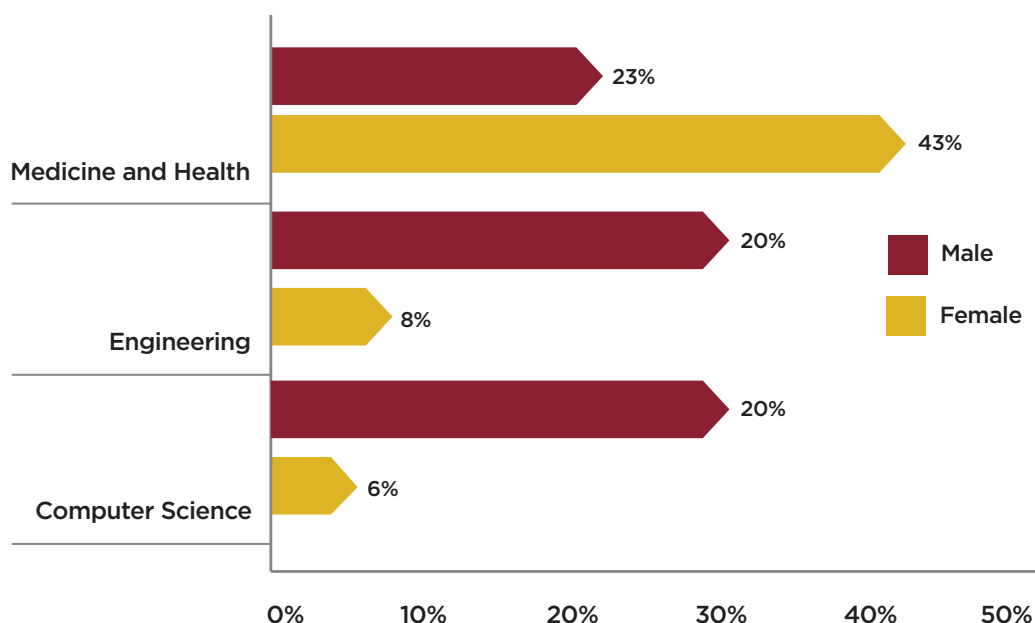
STEM CAREER ASPIRATIONS CONTINUE TO THRIVE

Ample job availability and competitive salaries in STEM careers are likely driving the high numbers of students we see in related academic programs. STEM-related jobs have grown at three times the rate and earned an average of 12-30% more than non-STEM jobs in the past decade. In 2018, market analysts expect 2.4 million jobs in the space will go unfilled, mainly due to lack of talent.¹¹

34% of Americans say they would encourage high school students to get jobs in a STEM-related field.¹²

Since 2008, STEM-related fields have been the most popular employment fields of interest among survey participants. Women (43%) are still significantly more likely than men (23%) to expect to work in Medicine or Health. Engineering (20% of men and 8% of women) and Computer Science (20% of men and 6% of women) remain the male-dominated fields, despite continuous efforts to recruit more women into these areas.

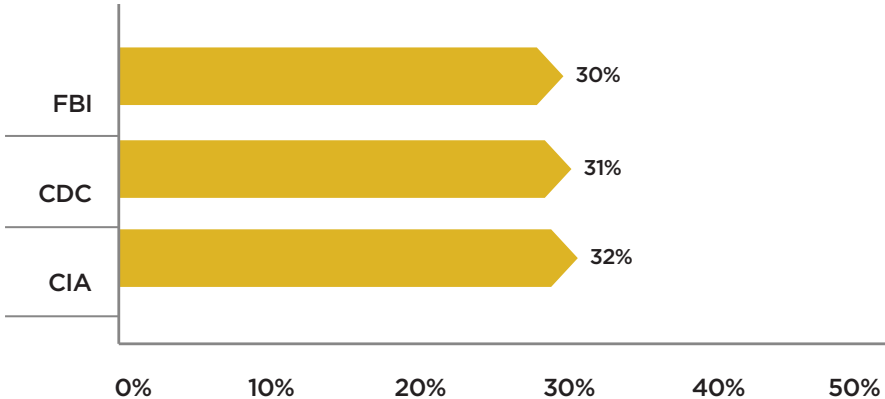
STEM-RELATED FIELDS



Learning tracks related to **innovation, design thinking, and entrepreneurship** have become prevalent in undergraduate and graduate school levels. Even high schools are implementing these programs. Despite these educational opportunities, the number of students who report an **interest in launching a business or nonprofit** venture actually dropped slightly from 2017 (35%) to 2018 (32%) and the 'Not Sure' rose from 38% to 41% in the same timeframe - likely another sign of the general cautiousness of this cohort or of their uncertainty about economic stability.

Along those same lines, the number of students expressing an interest in working in the nonprofit sector (7%) is only about one-sixth of the number who expect to work in Medicine/Health. And only slightly more (9%) express an interest in government service for which these three U.S. agencies and offices ranked highest:

MOST POPULAR U.S. AGENCIES/OFFICES



TOP EMPLOYERS OF CHOICE

The list of companies that scholars would most like to work for has changed some from 2017 to reflect a higher level of interest in Healthcare, Entertainment and Sports, rather than in pure Internet, Software, and SaaS organizations.

EMPLOYER RANK	2018	2017
St. Jude Children's Research Hospital	1	2
Google	2	1
Local Hospital	3	3
Amazon	4	11
Walt Disney Company	5	4
Apple, Incorporated	6	6
FBI	7	5
BuzzFeed	8	9
Children's Healthcare of Atlanta	9	10
Health Care Service Corp.	10	12
Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)	11	7
NASA	12	--
Mayo Clinic	13	13
Netflix	14	18
Microsoft	15	14
U.S. State Department	16	16
DreamWorks Animation SKG	17	19
SpaceX	18	--
Nike	19	15
Universal Studios	20	17
The New York Times	21	23
Atlantic Health Systems	22	25
Instagram	23	21
Chick-fil-A	24	--
Boeing	25	24

EMPLOYER RANK	2018	2017
U.S. Air Force	26	28
Blue Cross and Blue Shield	27	29
Abercrombie & Fitch / Hollister	28	--
UnitedHealth Group	29	40
CHG Healthcare Services	30	20
National Security Agency (NSA)	31	27
Tesla Motors	32	22
Adobe Systems	33	46
U.S. Army	34	47
Spotify	35	36
Kaiser Permanente	36	41
Starbucks	37	31
Delta Air Lines	38	37
SONY	39	26
Local Police Department	40	43
National Basketball Association	41	--
U.S. Navy	42	38
Bank of America	43	39
Snapchat	44	30
Meridian Health	45	49
Teach For America	46	34
E.L.F. (Eyes Lips Face)	47	45
Boston Scientific	48	32
Samsung	49	35
Coca Cola Company	50	44



With 39% of respondents looking to work in medicine or a health-related field, it's no surprise that 40% of the top 10 companies fall within this category, including this year's **number one, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.**

There were eight newcomers to the list, three of which penetrated the top 25, NASA (12), SpaceX (18), and Chick-fil-A (24). With a nod to sports, the National Basketball Association (41), National Football League (51), and Major League Soccer (78) are new to the top 100.

EMPLOYER RANK	2018	2017
National Football League	51	--
HuffingtonPost	52	48
L'Oreal	53	54
Airbnb	54	71
Dell	55	52
Build-A-Bear Workshop	56	51
Intel	57	53
WellStar Health System	58	62
Facebook	59	50
Ohio Health	60	78
Forbes	61	59
Johnson & Johnson	62	63
Scripps Health	63	67
Hershey's	64	42
Major League Baseball	65	64
CVS Caremark	66	57
Aeropostale	67	60
Nordstrom	68	55
Walgreens	69	65
3M	70	8
Southern Ohio Medical Center	71	56
AT&T	72	61
Whole Foods Market	73	58
IBM Corp.	74	76
Ford Motor Co.	75	74

EMPLOYER RANK	2018	2017
Bethesda Softworks	76	73
Wal-Mart Stores Inc.	77	80
Major League Soccer	78	--
U.S. Marine Corps	79	68
Lockheed Martin	80	66
Costco Wholesale	81	101
JPMorgan Chase	82	77
Mercedes Benz USA	83	84
General Electric (GE)	84	75
Hilton Hotels & Resorts	85	72
Wells Fargo & Co.	86	88
Bitmoji	87	93
Target Corp.	88	79
American Express	89	89
Estee Lauder Cosmetics	90	--
Pandora Radio	91	70
Lululemon	92	111
Genentech	93	92
Under Armour	94	83
Fitbit	95	87
Dow Chemical	96	91
Exxon Mobil	97	102
Twitter Inc.	98	86
Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corp.	99	94
Goldman Sachs	100	99

See page 25 for Top Employer List methodology. Go to www.nshss.org/about/career-interest-survey to see complete listing of all 239 companies.

INTENTION, INCLUSIVENESS, AND A FUN WORKPLACE

This generation expects a lot from themselves and equally as much from their employer.

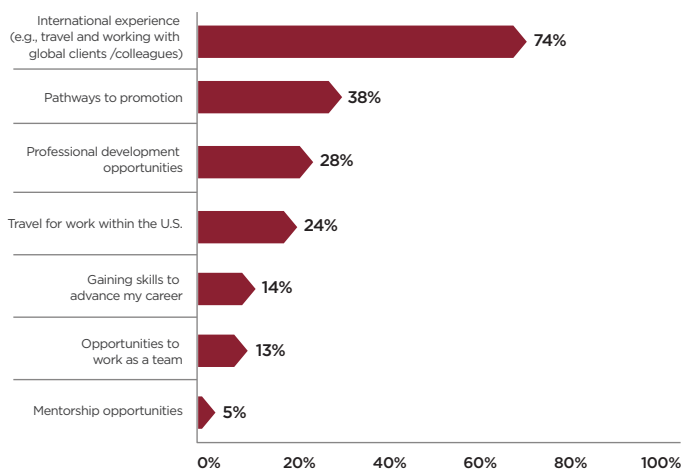
As the volunteer rates and commitment to awareness of causes shows us, this is a thoughtful, intentional generation. Many of them are worldly, thanks to the role of international travel as part of the educational and work experience, and the ability to connect digitally with cultures across the globe anytime. The composition of their families and homes also has changed. In fact, it's becoming increasingly likely that a young professional has grown up in a multi-cultural household and highly likely they have a multi-generational home (20%).¹³

For employers, this broad-mindedness translates to a high priority for a workplace where all employees are treated equally and fairly. NSHSS scholars also report that they seek evidence of positive corporate social responsibility, company reputation, diversity, and environmental impact from an employer.

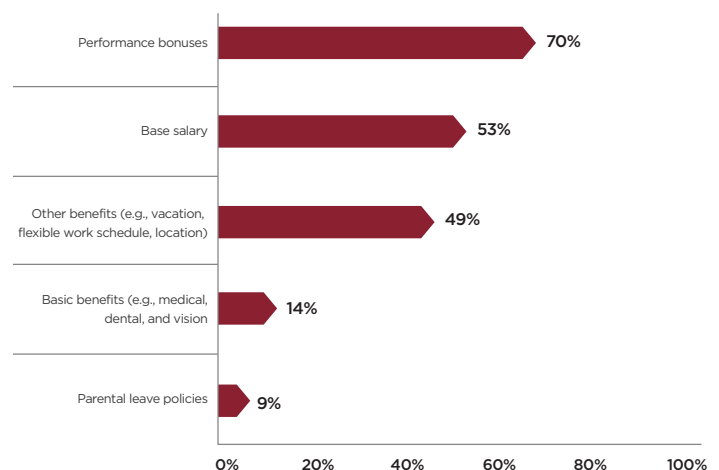
How the organization behaves is important. However, how it treats its people is even more so. By the time that many members of this young workforce launch their careers, they already have started saving for retirement. They care a lot about basic benefits and a clear path to professional growth. They also expect work/life balance (71%), even if they are expected to report to an office every day, and a fun place to work where they can produce and gain value.¹⁴

IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS

Work Experience



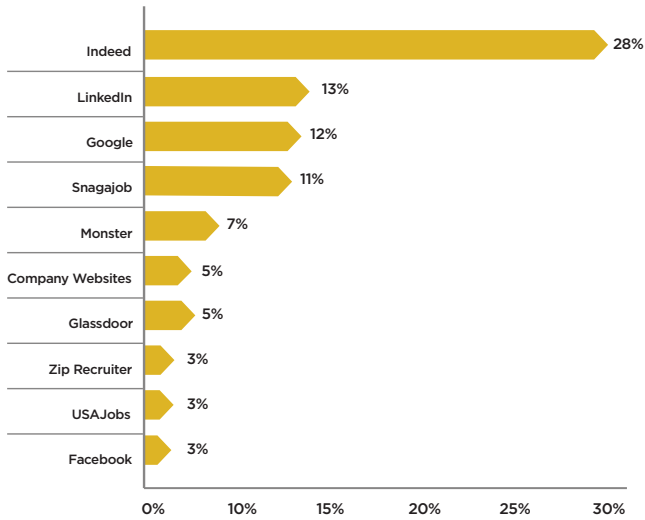
Benefits and Compensation



Percentages may add up to over 100% as respondents could select multiple options.

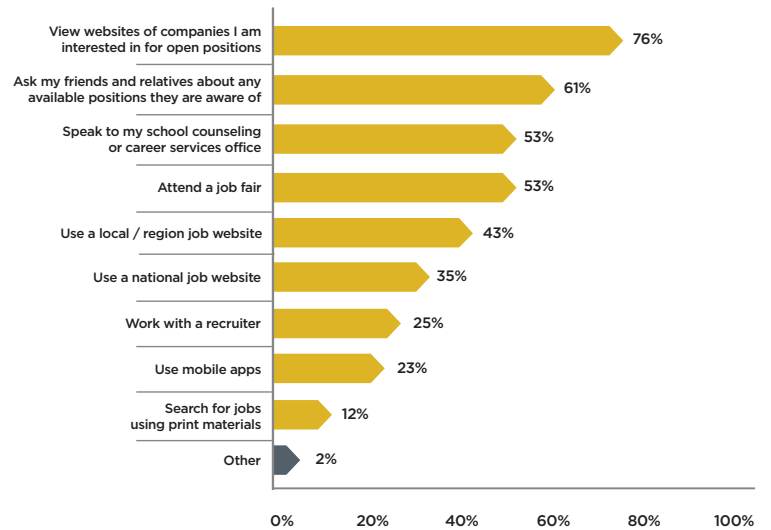
COMMUNICATION WITH POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS

Please specify the websites or mobile apps that you use to find a company.



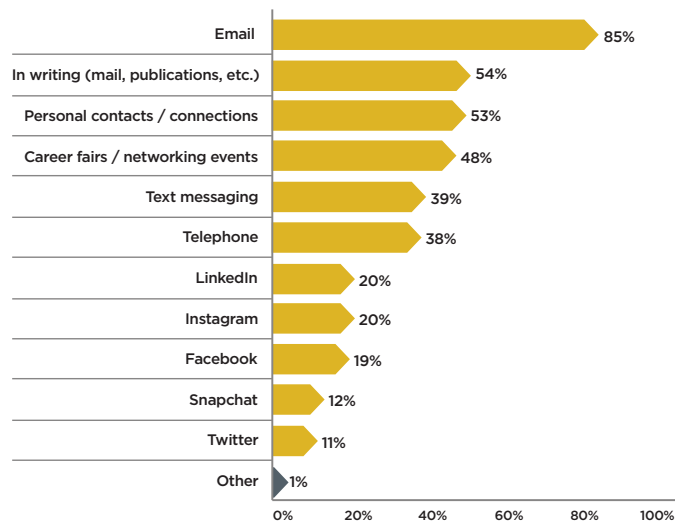
Percentages may add up to over 100% as respondents could select multiple options.

When looking for a job, which resource(s) would you use to find a company to work for?



Percentages may add up to over 100% as respondents could select multiple options.

What is the best way for companies to pass along information about their job opportunities to you?



Percentages may add up to over 100% as respondents could select multiple options.





RESOURCES

1. <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/05/01/61-million-gen-z-ers-about-to-enter-us-workforce-and-change-it.html>
2. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/03/01/defining-generations-where-millennials-end-and-post-millennials-begin/>
3. <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/hsgsec.nr0.htm>
4. <http://genhq.com/what-does-gen-z-value-in-the-workplace/>
5. <http://appraise-mobile.com/shrm-managers-not-enthusiastic-generation-z-coming-work/>
6. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/04/11/millennials-largest-generation-us-labor-force/>
7. <http://genhq.com/what-does-gen-z-value-in-the-workplace/>
8. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/01/09/7-facts-about-the-stem-workforce/>
9. <https://ssec.si.edu/stem-imperative>
10. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16_104.20.asp
11. <https://ssec.si.edu/stem-imperative>
12. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/09/26/about-a-third-of-americans-would-tell-a-high-schooler-seeking-career-advice-to-enter-a-stem-related-field/>
13. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/04/05/a-record-64-million-americans-live-in-multigenerational-households/>
14. <http://genhq.com/what-does-gen-z-value-in-the-workplace/>

ABOUT THE NSHSS ANNUAL TOP EMPLOYERS LIST

Respondents were asked to rank their preferred companies to work for from a list created by combining the *Fortune* 100 Best Companies to Work For, *DiversityInc* Top 50 Companies for Diversity, selected companies from *Fortune's* Global 500, and popular write-in choices from prior surveys. Companies were also included this year from the lists of top innovative companies from *Fast Company*, *Fortune* and *Forbes*. Respondents were given the opportunity to select up to three companies and were also allowed to write in choices. Segmented rankings are available for further review by gender, age group, and ethnicity. To see a complete list of all 239 company rankings, please visit www.nshss.org/about/career-interest-survey.

About Hanover Research

This report reflects work done in partnership with Hanover Research, a global research and analytics firm founded in 2003 and headquartered in Arlington, Virginia. Since 2015, NSHSS and Hanover have performed this annual in-depth survey of high-achieving high school and college-aged individuals to uncover useful insights into their academic, employment, career, and lifestyle goals.

Hanover Research is the second fastest growing market research firm in the world, recognized as a 2015 American Marketing Association Gold Top 50 Firm and Gold Global Top 50 Firm and a 2015 Washington Business Journal 50 Fastest Growing Company.



NSHSS

Be Honored. Be More.

For more information about partnership opportunities with NSHSS, contact partnerships@nshss.org, or visit www.nshss.org.

For media inquiries please contact Christy Olliff, colliff@trevelinokeller.com