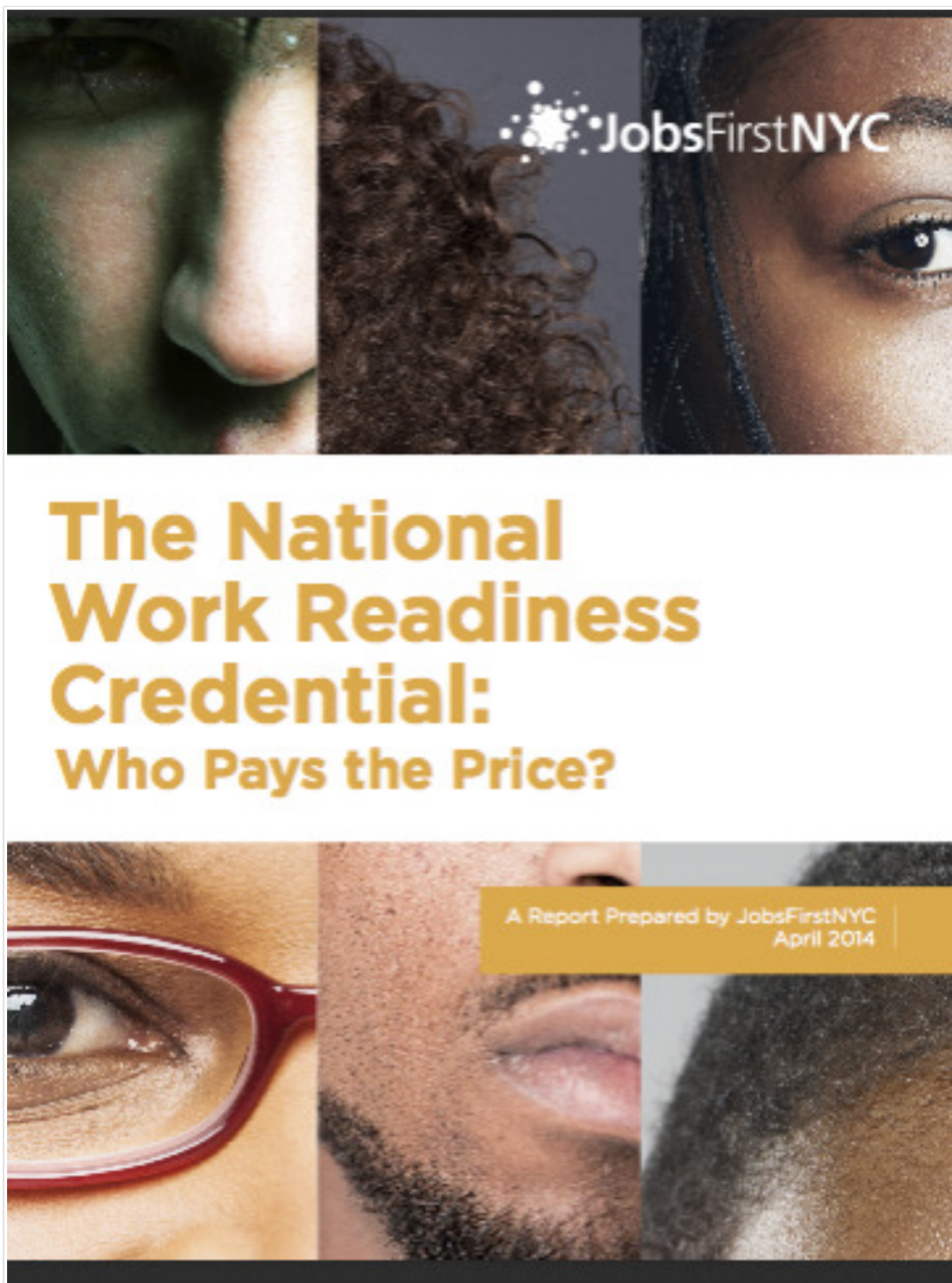


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Miceli Speaks Truth to Power

by Ytfg Learning By Connections • May 12, 2014 • 1 min read • [original](#)



Speaking truth to power. This is the kind of leadership we need if we are going to address the youth

unemployment crisis. And that's the kind of leadership Lou Miceli, executive director of [JobsfirstNYC](#), demonstrated in his *Huffington Post* article [No Way to Treat a Crisis](#), about the National Work Readiness Credential.

Based on JobsFirstNYC's must-read report, [The National Work Readiness Credential: Who Pays the Price?](#), Miceli argues that New York State is wasting dollars on an invalid, ineffective and possibly racially biased exam:

New York State has tried to ease this crisis with the National Work Readiness Credential (NWRC), which is intended to show employers that a jobseeker can perform well in an entry-level position. But according to an [investigative report](#) by JobsFirstNYC, few of the tens of thousands of young people who attempted to earn the credential ultimately attained it, and virtually none of them got a leg up in the job market. Employers don't value it. Black test takers fail the exam to get the NWRC at twice the rate of whites, suggesting the test is racially biased.

New York partnered with four other states and the District of Columbia to develop the NWRC. While the other states abandoned it, New York State continues to make this ineffective credential a key component of its youth employment programs, at a cost of millions. Job training providers statewide are required to spend weeks preparing young adults for the qualifying exam. In 2011, only 312 young adults in New York City passed the NWRC test, out of an estimated 12,000 who prepared for it.

The test for the NWRC does not measure the skills needed for the service and retail jobs sought by most unemployed young adults in New York City. Some questions are taken directly from the New York State Trooper entrance exam, a test requiring a driver's license and at least two years of college. Other questions require knowledge of office and warehouse operations. These questions have nothing to do with the skills that most young people need to perform on the job.

Miceli then argues that the funds spent on the NWRC can be much better spent:

Thousands of well-paying jobs are available in New York City annually that can be performed without a four-year college degree. Young adults can become cable installers, computer technicians, and truck drivers, for example, by earning employer-recognized postsecondary certificates. Employers can develop and implement high-quality on-the-job training that meets their needs.

Let's get honest about what it is going to cost to provide real skills-training that will lead to real jobs. Speaking truth to power. That is what we are going to have to do in order to get honest about the implications of the youth unemployment crisis and what it is going to take to address it.

Thanks to Lou and all the folks at JobsFirstNYC for your courage and leadership!

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