CAREER PATHWAYS TOOLKIT:

An Enhanced Guide and Workbook for System Development

INTRODUCTION

MSG
MANHATTAN STRATEGY GROUP

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Many stakeholders contributed to the development of this enhanced Toolkit. In addition, two groups of stakeholders convened to provide insight, guidance, and their personal experiences with the Toolkit. The first group of stakeholders included State workforce administrators, adult basic education directors, human service agency directors, Workforce Development Board directors, and postsecondary education representatives to include:

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The second group of collaborators included stakeholders from technical assistance providers, associations, and other invested organizations, including:

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In the process of identifying worksheets for inclusion in this enhanced Toolkit, a thorough review of the resources available in the field was conducted. Many concepts and ideas for worksheets were adapted from this review. A special thanks to the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), Center for Occupational Research and Development (CORD), Colorado's Sector Strategies Initiatives, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, Cornell University, and USDOL/ETA for allowing their tools to be adapted for inclusion in this workbook.

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This Toolkit was revised by Manhattan Strategy Group (Contract #DOLU141A22202), including Bonnie Elsey and Jessie Stadd under the technical direction of USDOL/ETA staff Jennifer Troke, Sara Hastings, and Robin Fernkas.

CONTENTS

Preface

ABOUT THE CAREER PATHWAYS TOOLKIT

The primary audience for this Toolkit is staff who work at the State level representing one of the core partners required to develop a Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified Plan. The core partners include the State Workforce Agency, the State Adult Education Agency, and the State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency overseeing Title I, II, III, and IV of WIOA. In addition to the core partners, there are other important partners engaged in this work that may be included so that the State can develop a more comprehensive combined plan. The additional partners are listed in Element One of this Toolkit. State agencies that have oversight over WIOA core partners as well as other critical agencies may wish to participate on the State's career pathways leadership team.

In addition, given the increased role of the State Workforce Development Board in the development of an overall strategy for career pathways, State Workforce Development Board staff may find this Toolkit useful in supporting the work of the State Board. Under WIOA, State Boards are responsible for aligning core partners and developing and improving the workforce system through the creation of career pathways. As such, they are responsible for convening stakeholders and core partners to contribute to the development of the State plan. The policies and strategies of the State leadership team regarding career pathways must be consistent with the Unified/Combined State Plan required in WIOA. Similarly, Local Workforce Development Boards are required to develop career pathways and convene local partners to align their resources to implement career pathways.

The *Career Pathways Toolkit: A Guide for System Development* was released in fall 2015 to continue the spirit of the original Career Pathways Toolkit to guide State and local leaders to build, implement, and sustain career pathways systems and programs. The revised Toolkit acknowledges many of the U.S. Department of Labor's (USDOL) strategic investments to create and sustain a demand-driven employment and training system as part of a larger national effort. It incorporates the Career One-Stop competency model as a building block for creating career pathways programs and references the Career One-Stop Credentials Toolkit as an easy way to search existing industry-recognized credentials. This Toolkit maintains the original framework but reflects substantial gains in knowledge and experience as well as the system's new guiding legislation, WIOA.

Since the release of the 2015 Toolkit, USDOL has continued to work on developing worksheets to assist State and local leadership teams in operationalizing their career pathways systems. The current 2016 release, *Career Pathways Toolkit: An Enhanced Guide and Workbook for System Development*, embeds hands-on worksheets into each element of the Toolkit to assist in implementation. Many of the worksheets can also be used by planning teams or individuals at multiple levels (e.g., regions, local providers) as the process for building individual career pathways mirrors the process at the system level.

In addition, there are other Federal resources that will be useful to State staff developing a unified approach to career pathways. The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) released two Toolkits this year, both of which have relevance for the audience of this Toolkit. These Toolkits focus on sector strategies and Registered Apprenticeship and help states with the work of aligning these important required aspects of WIOA.

TOOLKIT STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION

This enhanced edition of the Toolkit continues to feature the Six Key Elements of Career Pathways, but presents each element as a separate module and embeds helpful worksheets directly into the module to guide State and local teams in operationalizing the elements. The Toolkit now begins with an introductory module, six distinct modules representing the key elements, and an eighth module that provides the references to the rich body of knowledge researched to revise the Toolkit as well as a bibliography and glossary of terms used throughout the Toolkit.

SIX KEY ELEMENTS OF CAREER PATHWAYS

Build Cross-Agency Partnerships

Identify Industry Sector and Engage Employers

Measure System Change and Performance

Six Key Elements of Career Pathways

Design Education and Training Programs

Align Policies and Programs

Identify Funding Needs and Sources
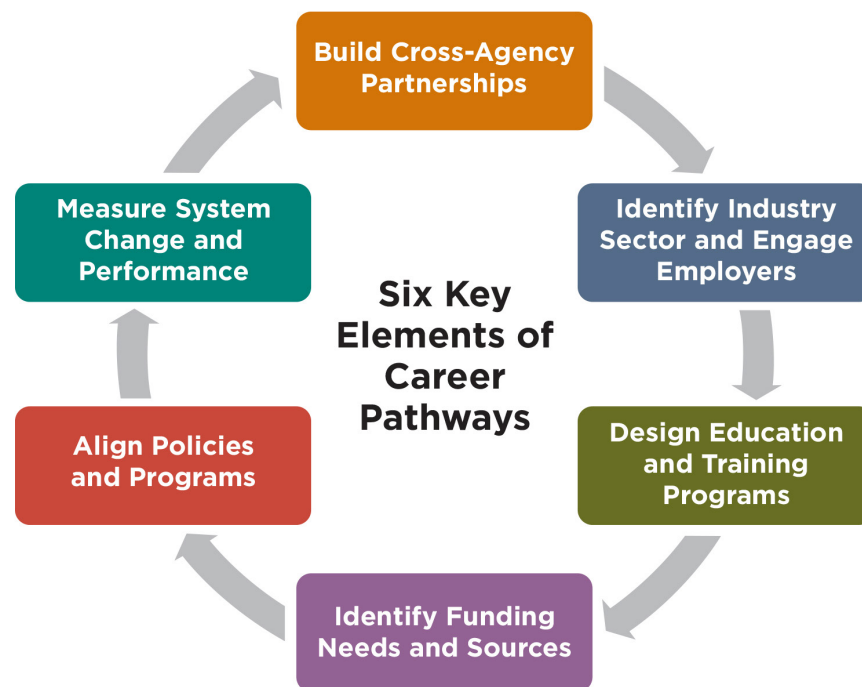
Included within the six key element modules are examples of **Promising Practices** from many communities throughout the nation that help contextualize the Six Key Elements and demonstrate how different communities have implemented key components of career pathways systems.

Additionally, each key element module includes **Career Pathways FYIs** highlighting useful information about career pathways and **How Tos** to guide the team in carrying out activities within each element. The enhanced version of the Toolkit also features **Worksheets** to help teams implement the strategies described in this Toolkit. Worksheets are embedded with the elements and components that they support. At the end of each key element module is a list of publications that were used as references in preparing the module.

The enhanced Toolkit is available in eight downloadable, writeable, and printable PDFs: the Introduction, Elements One through Six, and References & Glossary. Readers are encouraged to access and use the modules in sequential or nonsequential order, as dictated by State needs.

Examples

Table of Contents

Each PDF begins with a table of contents that lists the components and worksheets to be used within that component. The worksheet names are hyperlinked in the PDF. Click on the worksheet name to be brought directly to the worksheet.

CONTENTS

Narrative

The text found in the narrative of the Toolkit is also available in the *Career Pathways Toolkit: A Guide for System Development*. However, in this version, the text has been slightly updated and references to the worksheets have been inserted. They are also hyperlinked.

Component 2.1: Conduct Labor Market Analysis to Target High-Demand and Growing Industries

The intent of career pathways is to train participants for the skill needs of employers, so it is essential to select the industries that will benefit the local economy and provide employment at family-sustaining wages. Skillful use of labor market information (LMI) is an effective way to manage risk and ensure that the chosen industries will provide the best return on investment. States may wish to analyze many sources of LMI to identify regional workforce needs. These sources may include traditional LMI from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), real-time LMI from Internet job boards, sophisticated employer internal tracking systems, and industry cluster studies.

CAREER PATHWAYS FYI: In-demand Industry Sector or Operation

A. IN GENERAL, the term "in-demand industry sector or occupation" means:

ii. an industry sector that has a substantial current or potential impact (including through jobs that lead to economic self-sufficiency and opportunities for advancement) on the State, regional, or local economy, as appropriate, and that contributes to the growth or stability of other supporting businesses, or the growth of other industry sectors; or

iii. an occupation that currently has or is projected to have a number of positions

Worksheets

The worksheets themselves are writeable, meaning users can type into the form fields, save, and print. Worksheets can also be printed and completed on paper.

14. What are the potential risks to each agency involved in the partnership?

Agency List	Agency Name	Risk to Agency
Agency 1		
Agency 2		
Agency 3		
Agency 4		
Agency 5		
Agency 6		
Agency 7		
Agency 8		

15. Are partners willing and able to take risks, alter policies, and/or add flexibilities, if necessary?

Partner 1 Name:

Willing to take risks?

◯ yes   ◯ no   ◯ somewhat   ◯ don't know

Introduction

Our nation's future is dependent upon an educated, skilled workforce. Improving the skills, knowledge, and credentials of American workers is critical to economic stability, growth, and global competitiveness. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Survey of Adult Skills, released in October 2013, confirmed what employers have often noted: far too many adults lack the skills or credentials required for in-demand jobs.

The OECD's analysis of U.S. data, available in the report *Time for the U.S. to Reskill,*[1] found that of the 36 million U.S. adults who have low skills, two-thirds are employed. By many accounts, the economic environment is ripe for employment expansion, yet employers continue to have difficulty finding skilled workers. Of those Americans who lack the skills required for in-demand occupations, many do not know how or where to access the information, training, and credentials needed for these family-supporting jobs.

WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014, provides an extraordinary opportunity to improve job and career options for our nation's workers and jobseekers through an integrated, job-driven, public workforce system that links diverse talent to businesses. It supports the development of strong, vibrant regional economies where businesses thrive and people want to live and work. This revitalized workforce system includes three critical hallmarks of excellence:

1. The needs of business and workers drive workforce solutions;

2. American Job Centers provide excellent customer service to jobseekers and employers and focus on continuous improvement; and

3. The workforce system supports strong regional economies and plays an active role in community and workforce development.

In addition, WIOA requires states and localities to collaborate with adult education, postsecondary education, and other partners to establish career pathways systems that make it easier for all Americans to attain the skills and credentials needed for jobs in their regional economy.

Also on July 22, 2014, Vice President Biden issued the *Ready to Work: Job-Driven Training and American Opportunity* report, which lays out a vision for measuring the effectiveness of job-training programs and announces an array of actions to achieve the enhancement of America's workforce. The *Ready to Work* report outlines strategies and program components that have shown promise in helping individuals persist in education and training and attain credentials necessary for obtaining in-demand jobs.

The message from the new law and the job-driven vision is clear—the workforce, human service, and educational systems must align through cross-agency planning; share common performance measures that inform data-driven decision making; and develop strategies for sector partnerships and career pathways systems and programs at the Federal, State, and local levels.

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1   Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2013). Time for the U.S. to Reskill?: What the Survey of Adult Skills Says. OECD Skills Studies, OECD Publishing. http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264204904-en

CAREER PATHWAY SYSTEMS AND PROGRAMS

What are career pathways? Career pathways are the new way of doing business, and they operate at two levels—a systems level and an individual program level. At the systems level, career pathways development is a broad approach for serving populations that may experience significant barriers to employment and can substantively alter the way the workforce system delivers its services and its relationship with partner organizations and stakeholders. Career pathways programs offer a clear sequence, or pathway, of education coursework and/or training credentials aligned with employer-validated work readiness standards and competencies. This Toolkit predominantly focuses on building career pathways systems, although there are also some tools included that support career pathways program development.

Career pathways systems offer an effective approach to the development of a skilled workforce by increasing the number of workers in the U.S. who gain industry-recognized and academic credentials necessary to work in jobs that are in-demand. To align educational offerings with business needs, career pathways systems engage businesses in the development of educational programs up front. Career pathways systems transform the role of employers from a customer to a partner and a co-leader and co-investor in the development of the workforce. Employers have a high stake in the development of career pathways that lead to an increase in their pipeline of qualified workers. Additionally, career pathways systems offer a more efficient and customer-centered approach to workforce development because they structure intentional connections among employers, adult basic education, supportive service providers, occupational training, and postsecondary education programs and design the systems to meet the needs of learners and employers.

CAREER PATHWAYS FYI: WIOA Career Pathways Definition

The term "career pathway" means a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that—

A. aligns with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the State or regional economy involved;

B. prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options, including apprenticeships registered under the Act of August 16, 1937;

C. includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual's education and career goals;

D. includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;

E. organizes education, training, and other services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable;

F. enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and at least one recognized postsecondary credential; and

G. helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

Career pathways programs make it easier for people to: earn industry-recognized credentials; provide opportunities for more flexible education and training; and attain market-identifiable skills that can transfer into work. These comprehensive education and training programs are suited to meet the needs of working learners and nontraditional students. Career pathways programs are designed to serve a diverse group of learners, including adults, youth, dislocated workers, veterans, individuals with a disability, public assistance recipients, new immigrants, English language learners, and formerly incarcerated individuals. Up until now, career pathways systems and programs have been defined in multiple ways. WIOA now codifies the essential elements of career pathways into law.

Career pathways systems and programs include components that mirror promising practices from the workforce and education arenas at the Federal, State, and local levels, and the public and private sectors are investing significant resources in building the evidence base for this work. Evidence-based research takes time, as longitudinal data is necessary to measure an individual's progress and retention along a career pathway. The Federal government and many states are implementing initiatives that require the establishment of longitudinal data systems in order to evaluate the quality of their methods of practice.

FEDERAL INVESTMENTS

The past several years have seen unprecedented collaboration at the Federal level between the U.S. Departments of Labor, Education (ED), and Health and Human Services (HHS). The Departments have made important investments to help expand career pathways across the country. The Departments have expressed their shared commitment for career pathways strategies as an effective way of helping youth and adults to acquire marketable skills and industry-recognized credentials; developed a common career pathways framework to guide states and local leaders in developing and sustaining career pathways systems; and have hosted three national dialogues to engage individuals across the country on implementation.

While WIOA codified the definition of career pathways, the Departments have continued to encourage states to align their State resources to support integrated service delivery across Federal and State funding streams. In April 2016, 12 Federal agencies signed a [Career Pathways Joint Letter](#) demonstrating a strengthened commitment to promote career pathways by providing updated information and resources from the expanded Federal partnership to integrate service delivery across Federal and State funding streams. Many states have participated with the Federal agencies in undertaking this important work and are well positioned to implement the requirements in the new law for establishing career pathways.

In fact, the new law was the impetus for updating the Toolkit, and it provided an opportunity to engage State champions and leading workforce and educational organizations that have expertise in career pathways development. During spring 2015, the Departments asked for help in reviewing a draft Toolkit to ensure it included essential information to engage all the key partners. In addition, the Toolkit revisions reflect input from over 140 respondents as a result of a Request for Information on career pathways that the three Federal agencies issued in 2014. The Departments issued a joint Request for Information to solicit information and recommendations about career pathways systems from stakeholders in the public and private sectors, which resulted in a final report summarizing facilitators' comments and identifying barriers to career pathways development and implementation, as well as promising practices.

Input from all of the stakeholders validated the original Six Key Elements and made suggestions on revisions to the Toolkit by incorporating the latest relevant innovations, creative approaches, and best practices that have emerged since the original publication.
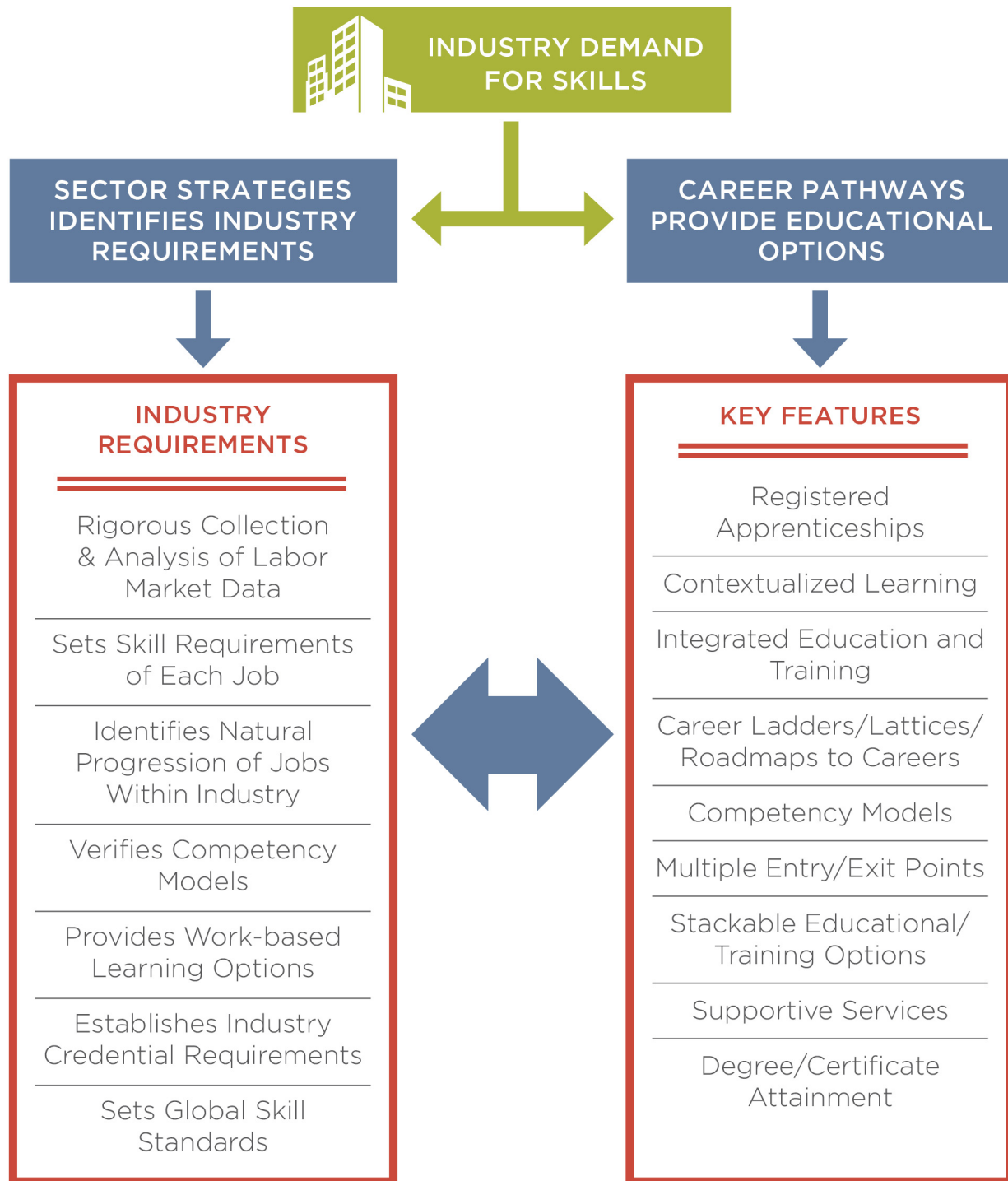
IMPACT OF WIOA ON STATE AGENCIES

WIOA has a far-reaching impact on State agencies. Career pathways is prominent in the new law as a required function of the State and Local Workforce Development Boards and is an important component of the State Workforce Plan. The State Plan ensures that all State agencies play a role in the development of a vision for a career pathways State system, as well as how the State system interplays with regional and local career pathways and career pathways plans.

The Unified State Plan also provides an opportunity to lay out State and regional/local strategies for achieving the State's vision. The collective thoughts of all stakeholder agencies should be harnessed to develop statewide strategies for building career pathways that align the education and workforce systems with the in-demand needs of employers. Career pathways are often developed within an industry sector and developed as part of a larger sector strategy. As defined in ETA's Sector Strategy Implementation Framework, a sector strategy is a partnership of multiple employers within a critical industry that brings together education, economic development, workforce systems, and community organizations to identify, develop, and implement workforce, education, and training programs to meet the needs of industry. Sector partnerships create highly customized responses to the needs of target industries within their regional economy. ETA has collaborated with leaders in the field to catalog and share what effective sector strategies look like. ETA has developed and identified online resources to serve as guidance for States and regions to implement sector strategies.

The enhanced 2016 Toolkit draws particular attention to the complementary resources that support the development and enhancement of sector strategies and Registered Apprenticeship. Career pathways and sector strategies are not new programs but rather complementary approaches to workforce development that have evolved through increased experimentation in the field. They intertwine in almost every aspect of their operations. Sector strategies exist to organize a set of like-minded businesses together within an industry to identify the critical workforce skills needed now and in the future. Career pathways exist to educate and train potential workers in the essential skills required by industry for their economic survival. Sector strategies and career pathways are demand-driven. Industry informs the development of career pathways and the learner or future worker of the essential skills necessary to work in their industry. The Complementary Approaches to Workforce Development graphic depicts the relationship between sector strategies and career pathways.

With the implementation of WIOA and the job-driven agenda, as well as the continued work on career pathways, sector strategies, and Registered Apprenticeship, USDOL is very excited about the opportunity to strengthen and expand partnerships and align systems at the State and local levels. These partnerships will ensure that America's workers have the skills they need to obtain good jobs, and that employers have the workers they need to remain competitive and to prosper.

Complementary Approaches to Workforce Development

INDUSTRY DEMAND FOR SKILLS

SECTOR STRATEGIES IDENTIFIES INDUSTRY REQUIREMENTS

CAREER PATHWAYS PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS

INDUSTRY REQUIREMENTS

Rigorous Collection & Analysis of Labor Market Data

Sets Skill Requirements of Each Job

Identifies Natural Progression of Jobs Within Industry

Verifies Competency Models

Provides Work-based Learning Options

Establishes Industry Credential Requirements

Sets Global Skill Standards

KEY FEATURES

Registered Apprenticeships

Contextualized Learning

Integrated Education and Training

Career Ladders/Lattices/ Roadmaps to Careers

Competency Models

Multiple Entry/Exit Points

Stackable Educational/ Training Options

Supportive Services

Degree/Certificate Attainment

REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP – A SHINING EXAMPLE!

Apprenticeship is a proven talent development model that combines on-the-job training with job-related education. Registered Apprenticeship programs are a natural fit with sector strategies. It is a demand-driven, flexible model that can work for any business in any industry to recruit, train, and retain highly skilled workers. Apprenticeship provides both a means for engaging businesses in sector strategies and the solution to meet the workforce needs identified by sector partners.

Apprenticeship is also the gold standard for a career pathways program. The structure of a Registered Apprenticeship program is along a pathway for progressive increases in skills, knowledge, and wages. In this "earn and learn" model, workers hired by industry begin receiving wages on day one of their apprenticeship. Pre-apprenticeship programs are frequently part of the pathway, used as a bridge for individuals who need basic skills and other workforce preparation before entering a Registered Apprenticeship program. To learn more about apprenticeship and access resources to develop apprenticeship strategies, visit the ApprenticeshipUSA Toolkit.

Two foundational planning tools are available in this Introduction: the Six Key Elements Readiness Assessment and the Next Steps Action Planning Tool. These two resources, designed to be used together, should be completed prior to beginning career pathways development. First, complete the Readiness Assessment to identify system needs. Then, use the Action Planning Tool to guide the planning process.

SIX KEY ELEMENTS READINESS ASSESSMENT

To take the pulse of existing career pathways systems, begin by completing the Six Key Elements Readiness Assessment. Optimally, State or local leadership teams will complete the assessment tool together to form a benchmark of the status of a career pathways system. The worksheets should help State or local teams assess progress in developing each key element in relationship to their progress toward an optimal stage. The team should identify a facilitator to guide the process as well as someone to record issues and ideas that arise during discussion. Repeat periodically (at least annually) to assess the team's progress and help set priorities for the annual plan.

- Complete the entire assessment instrument with the career pathways leadership team.

- Select one or two components under each key element the team identifies as the strengths of the State/local career pathways system (rating functional or optimal).

- Determine how to celebrate the strengths of the State/local system and publicize success.

- Select one or two components to prioritize under each key element that the team identifies as opportunities to improve the State/local career pathways system (rating minimal or emerging). Discuss the opportunities to improve and develop and prioritize action steps to address in these areas.

- Write an action plan listing the priorities, responsible parties, and dates to accomplish each item (see the Action Planning tool that follows the Readiness Assessment).

- Periodically (annually) evaluate the system by revisiting the assessment tool and Action Planning tool to chart progress.

Career Pathways: Six Key Elements Readiness Checklist

Optimal Alignment: Leadership vision and strategy is operational. System focuses on targeted sector strategy, engages employers, and reflects clear pathways educational components. State-level policies support long-term sustainability with federal and/or state funding plans. Metrics and outcomes reflect evidence-based evaluation processes and continuous improvement.

Functional Alignment: Shared decision-making and accountability exist between state-level or local-level team members and defined roles exist in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Partners map and identify funding resources. Curricula design includes components/educational strategies of career pathways that align with industry needs.Team is identifying metrics and outcomes. State-level policy levers and opportunities are utilized.

Emerging Alignment: State- or local-level team agrees to adopt Federal framework for career pathways systems. The results of the readiness self-assessment instrument shapes the development of a strategic plan. A formal steering committee creates a vision with partner roles delineated. Senior-level government and business leaders engage to form a MOU. Labor market research is in place and targets industry sectors with some business engagement. State-level analysis is underway to determine if there are state-level policy barriers that exist.

Minimal Alignment: No cohesive, integrated strategy for career pathways exists. No formal team structure exists to coordinate efforts and align resources. Senior leader's engagement is minimal. Business engagement and labor market research is minimal. No formal assessment of assets or system resources has been conducted.

Components of Key Elements

1. Build cross-agency partnerships and clarify roles.

Component of Key Element One	Minimal	Emerging	Functional	Optimal
A. WIOA Core Partners:				
• Title 1B Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Workers				
• Title II Adult Education and Literacy				
• Title III Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Services				
• Title IV Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Title I				
B. WIOA Additional Partners:				
• Postsecondary Education				
• State Human Services Agency (TANF)				
• Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)				
• Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP Employment & Training)				
• Trade Readjustment Assistance Program (Trade Act of 1974)				
• Veterans Employment & Training				
• Unemployment Compensation				
• Older Worker Programs (Senior Community Service Program)				
• HUD Employment & Training (Housing & Urban Development)				
• Community Service Block Grant				
• Second Chance Act of 2007 (ex-offenders)				
C. A leadership team (or steering committee) guides the process of developing career pathways systems.				
D. Partners create a shared vision, mission, goals, and strategies for state and local/regional career pathways systems.				
E. Defined roles and responsibilities of partners exist.				
F. An MOU exists governing the partnership.				
G. A work plan exists for the partnership.				

2. Identify industry sectors and engage employers

Component of Key Element Two	Minimal	Emerging	Functional	Optimal
A. Labor market analysis targets high-demand growing industries that support family-sustaining wages.				
B. Industry leaders and sector partnerships engage in the development of the system.				
C. Clarify and define employers' role in program development and operations.				
• Affirm the set of foundational academic, work readiness, and technical skills, abilities, and knowledge				

Component of Key Element Two	Minimal	Emerging	Functional	Optimal
• Affirm the required certificates and credentials				
• Help design education and training programs				
• Assist in instruction				
• Provide on-site training space				
• Provide real equipment, supplies, or tools				
• Make real industry-based projects				
• Co-invest resources in program development and/or implementation				
• Assist in developing certification/credentialing process				
• Provide mentoring or work-based learning opportunities				
• Hire completers				
D. Identify existing training systems within industry and career ladders/lattices.				
E. Identify the skill competencies and associated training needs needed in a given career ladder.				
F. Implement a process to sustain and grow businesses partnerships.				

3. Design education and training programs

Component of Key Element Three	Minimal	Emerging	Functional	Optimal
A. Identify potential "education, training, and service partners," including secondary education.				
B. Identify target populations, entry points, and recruitment strategies for target populations.				
C. Review or modify competency models with employers to ensure they meet industry standards.				
D. Build career ladders and lattices with employers that lead to industry-recognized credentials.				
E. Modify existing program offerings to mirror competency models and career ladders/lattices and meet industry-recognized and/or postsecondary credentials.				
F. Analyze education and training institutions' capacity to respond to industry demands (i.e., classrooms and lab space; educational staff; work-based learning sites, training spaces, equipment/tools, and materials/supplies; credentialed instructors; technology, etc.).				
G. Design and promote work-based learning opportunities (i.e., workplace simulations; school-based enterprises; cooperative work and study programs; internships (paid or unpaid); on-the-job training (OJT); job shadowing, apprenticeships, fellowships, short-term employment, and other paid or unpaid work experiences).				

Component of Key Element Three	Minimal	Emerging	Functional	Optimal
H. Design programs in a progressive manner; each course builds upon the previous and the participant's progress along a pathway to build skills that are industry recognized.				
I. Consider credit for prior learning in all program design and allow participants to progress at their own pace along a career pathways program.				
J. Embed academic content (e.g., reading, writing, mathematics) within curricula that is relevant to real workplace tasks.				
K. Design curricula to allow for multiple entry/exit points.				
L. Design self-paced curricula to allow participants to progress based on their abilities and time commitment (i.e., class scheduling; e-learning; work-based learning; computer-based or web-based lessons).				
M. Provide participants with appropriate financial aid information to include State grant programs, Federal financial aid, and program eligibility for special populations.				
N. Provide career assistance and assessment, develop a student-specific academic plan (i.e., select a career pathway), and assist participant navigation in the system.				
O. Provide academic support, school adjustment, and retention services to include tutors and English Language Learning (ELL) services.				
P. Arrange for and select an organization to provide case management services.				
Q. Arrange for or provide supportive services to include childcare, transportation, housing, financial assistance, life management skills, and money management skills.				
R. Provide employment assistance to include job referrals, job-seeking skills training, and retention services (i.e., job coach).				

4. Identify funding needs and sources

Component of Key Element Four	Minimal	Emerging	Functional	Optimal
A. Identify system start-up and maintenance costs and associated funding sources.				
B. Identify program development and maintenance costs and associated funding sources.				
C. Identify participant costs and associated funding sources.				
• Tuition, fees, books, and supplies (training-related tools and equipment)				
• Certification and/or licensure fees				
• Academic support and tutoring				
• Career counseling, advising, and planning				
• Case management and coaching (including navigation of financial aid options and educational programs, and supportive services)				

Component of Key Element Four	Minimal	Emerging	Functional	Optimal
• Mentoring services for youth				
• Assessment services				
• Work experience and work-based learning opportunities				
• Supportive services (i.e., transportation, childcare, living expenses, etc.)				
D. Explore and secure public or private sources (student aid programs–Pell grants, Ability to Benefit grants, and State grant programs; WIOA funding; employer-paid tuition reimbursement programs; scholarships; WIOA title I and IV, TANF, Trade Adjustment Assistance /TRA, and SNAP E&T) to offset participant training fees and other direct customer costs.				
E. Identify and commit funds from partner agencies to apply to each of the core components of career pathways systems. Determine gap funding and seek other related public and private resources to fill the gaps.				
• USDOL Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I: Adult and Dislocated Workers				
• USDOL WIOA Title III: Employment Services (Wagner-Peyser)				
• USDOL Trade Adjustment Assistance				
• USDOL Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship				
• ED WIOA Title II: Adult Education and Family Literacy Act				
• ED Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education				
• ED Pell Grants				
• ED WIOA Title IV: Vocational Rehabilitation Services				
• HHS TANF				
• USDA SNAP Employment and Training				
• HUD Employment & Training				
• Second Chance Act of 2007 (formerly incarcerated)				
• Veterans Employment & Training				
• Unemployment Compensation				
• Older Worker Programs (Senior Community Service Program)				
• Community Service Block Grant				
F. Develop a business plan that documents revenue and expenses to continue the operation and improvement of the career pathways system for long-term sustainability.				

5. Align policies and programs

Component of Key Element Five	Minimal	Emerging	Functional	Optimal
A. Identify State statutory and regulatory barriers to implementing a State or local career pathways system.				
B. Reform State/local policy to align with vision and implementation of a coordinated system for youth and adults.				
C. Align and braid funding for activities that support the State and/or local system.				
D. Develop policies and procedures that incentivize local/regional career pathways systems by awarding discretionary resources when available.				
E. Build career pathways components in the State and local Unified/Combined State Plan.				
F. Address any statutory barrier issues with the governor's office and attempt to move changes forward through legislatures.				
G. Implement new policies and procedures and communicate across agencies.				

6. Measure systems change and performance

Component of Key Element Six	Minimal	Emerging	Functional	Optimal
A. Identify, develop, and define short-term and long-term system, program, and participant outcomes, not just categorical program outcomes.				
B. Designate in an MOU the data that agencies will collect, store, track, share, and report on.				
C. Report pathways program outcomes that reveal total resources leveraged and total aggregate impact on a system (not simply categorical funding streams). Aggregate outcomes may include number of participants served; of those, number receiving postsecondary credentials, number entering employment, including earnings received, number retained in employment, and employer engagement measures.				
D. Agree upon a process/methodology to report system return on investment measures and consider measures such as change in earnings, reduction in public assistance payments, taxes paid, etc.				
E. Communicate and disseminate outcomes as a system rather than as an agency or program.				

NEXT STEPS ACTION PLANNING TOOL

Purpose: The flexible action-planning tool on the next page can help the team carry out prioritized action steps identified in the Six Key Elements Readiness Assessment. It may help the team decide which key element to concentrate on first.

Directions:

- Review and discuss key priorities. Use the completed Readiness Assessment to review your priorities.

- List the prioritized activities or indicators in the "Priority Objectives" column.

- Discuss and list the tactics or actions to conduct in order to implement each strategy in the "Tactics/Activities" column.

- Enter the name or initials of the person or persons (or organization) responsible in the "Lead" column.

- Discuss and enter the "expected outcomes" of the actions in the fourth column.

- Enter the timeline for each activity in the fifth column.

- Use the tool to track progress. Enter relevant updates and information about progress and any modifications in the "Progress & Adjustments" column.

Key Element:

Priority Objectives *What we will do*	Tactics/Activities *How will we do it?*	Lead *Who is responsible?*	Expected Outcome *What is the result?*	Due Date	Progress & Adjsutments *What have we accomplished?*