

CAREER PATHWAYS TOOLKIT:

An Enhanced Guide and Workbook
for System Development

ELEMENT FIVE: ALIGN POLICIES AND PROGRAMS



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MSG
MANHATTAN STRATEGY GROUP

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An Enhanced Guide and Workbook
for System Development

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ELEMENT FIVE: Align Policies and Programs

State and local policies and administrative reforms have been revised to align with implementation of a career pathways system.

Key Element Components:

- Identify state and local policies necessary to implement career pathways systems.
- Identify and pursue needed reforms in state and local policy.
- Implement statutory and administrative procedures to facilitate cross-agency collaboration.

Introduction to Element Five

Aligning workforce development programs is a function of the State Workforce Development Board. The leadership team, in tandem with the Workforce Development Board, may identify strengths and barriers to the implementation of the vision, goals, and strategies of a career pathways system. The Board may wish to begin by evaluating each organization's vision and mission to identify the structure within which the partners operate. A Communications Chart (See below, [Worksheet 5.0a](#)) is provided to help the leadership team identify the vision and mission of each agency. A discussion around this exercise may help the leadership team gain appreciation for the complementary efforts of each agency and the common motivation that drives them. An understanding of this structure—made up of the laws, regulations, policies, and procedures associated with workforce development, education and training, social services, and economic development programs—will help identify if any change is necessary to implement the common vision and mission for a State career pathways system. The success of the career pathways system will largely depend on partners identifying the relevant policies that allow them to align the structure in support of their common vision. The leadership team can change policies and procedures quite readily, while barriers such as State statutes and additional barriers regarding data tracking, data sharing, and electronic system alignment may involve substantial investments that require legislative action.

At the Federal level, the WIOA legislation includes provisions that have lessened the hurdles of Federal legislative alignment and have expanded opportunities for shared accountability. The new legislation can serve as a policy tool to promote coordinated and effective services to individuals who are eligible for multiple funding streams or programs. WIOA's Three Hallmarks of Excellence also provide a vision for career pathways:

- The needs of businesses and workers drive workforce solutions, and local boards are accountable to the communities in which they are located;
- One-Stop Centers (or American Job Centers) provide excellent customer service to all jobseekers and employers and focus on continuous improvement; and
- The workforce system supports strong regional economies and plays an active role in community and workforce development.

In addition to using the leverage of WIOA in aligning systems, programs, and policies, states have a great deal of influence in whether the programs in the State are job-driven. Governors and State Workforce Development Boards can set industry priority areas based on labor market demand. State agencies can adopt policies that promote the use of data (including LMI and longitudinal data) for accountability and decision making. A conscious effort is necessary to ensure the State leadership team for career pathways works with the State Workforce Development Board (if different entities) to ensure that the State's career pathways strategies align with the strategies outlined in the Unified/Combined State Plan. States may also devote funding to attract businesses to their State and make different decisions about how training programs should support those economic development goals and what level of investment they require of businesses seeking assistance. Governors also have discretion in aligning their job training systems in how they structure their departments within State government.

The Perkins Act stresses the need for greater alignment between CTE programs and industry. Perkins IV has asked states to support the creation of Programs of Study, an educational option that incorporates and aligns secondary and postsecondary elements. ED's OCTAE

helped states identify 10 essential components of CTE Programs of Study. The essential components are designed to prepare students to transition into careers and college and create more structured pathways to postsecondary education.

Many states (e.g., California, Minnesota, North Carolina, Oregon, and Washington) have formulated articulation agreements between high schools and community colleges. Articulation agreements refer to agreements whereby an “articulated” high school course or series of courses have been determined by community college faculties to be comparable to a specific community college course or program. Students earn the college credit by either completing the high school course with a prescribed grade or by participating in a credit by examination process. This “dual credit” option speeds degree completion for high school students seeking some type of postsecondary credential.

The alignment of CTE and career pathways allows each system to benefit from the expertise and resources of the other. Jobs for the Future has published a paper, [“Advancing Career and Technical Education \(CTE\) in State and Local Career Pathways Systems,”](#) that offers strategies to align these two efforts. The paper provides a helpful crosswalk for states and local communities in aligning these two initiatives. A graphic of the alignment is on the following page. The art of building a career pathways system is to implement changes the agency has control over first while simultaneously working on strategies to change obstacles that are more difficult. Sometimes the most difficult obstacle is trust and the will to align programs for the benefit of the system. In this case, focusing on common vision, mission, and goals can remove some of this while a culture of trust is established.

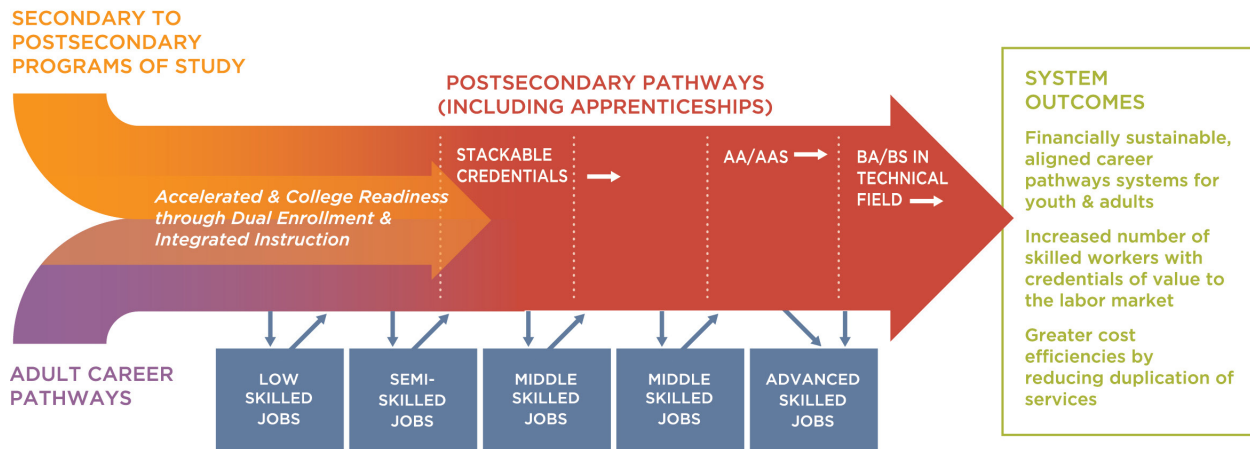
CAREER PATHWAYS FYI: WIOA requires states to align the following programs:

- Employment and training services for adults, dislocated workers, and youth, and Wagner-Peyser employment services administered by USDOL through formula grants to states;
- Adult education and literacy programs and vocational rehabilitation State grant programs that assist individuals with disabilities in obtaining employment administered by ED;
- Programs for specific vulnerable populations, including the Job Corps, YouthBuild, Indian and Native Americans, and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers; and
- Programs administered by ED and HHS.

CAREER PATHWAYS FYI: WIOA strengthens alignment by:

- Requiring a common performance accountability system for the core programs;
- Requiring a Unified Plan to include core programs;
- Encouraging additional programs to participate, such as TANF, SNAP Employment and Training, and Perkins CTE programs, in the development of a Combined Plan;
- Measuring the effectiveness of services to employers for the first time;
- Promoting alignment of the workforce development programs with regional economic development strategies;
- Encouraging the use of sector strategies to engage business;
- Promoting work-based training to assure the system is demand-driven;
- Strengthening the role of State and Local Workforce Development Boards and requiring the development of career pathways strategies; and
- Reinforcing the alignment with Registered Apprenticeship for earn-and-learn opportunities.

**THE POSTSECONDARY ALIGNMENT OF PROGRAMS
OF STUDY AND ADULT CAREER PATHWAYS**



Jobs for the Future. Advancing Career and Technical Education (CTE) in Career Pathways

5.0a COMMUNICATIONS CHART: CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION

The following exercise evaluates the extent to which an organization's vision and mission align with the organization's use of various media to communicate the purpose of programming. How aligned is the message to the public?

In Table 1 below, enter the vision and mission of each program represented by the State leadership team. Then, use Table 2 to organize how that mission and vision are communicated to the public using various media. Two blank rows appear in the tables to add any State-specific or other programs. Has cross-program and/or agency branding for career pathways been developed? The discussion around this exercise may help the leadership team gain appreciation for the complementary efforts of each agency and/or program and the common motivation that drives them.

Table 1. Program Vision and Mission

Agency	Vision	Mission
WIOA Title I Adult, Youth & Dislocated Worker		
WIOA Title II Adult Education & Literacy		
WIOA Title III Amendments to Wagner-Peyser		
WIOA Title IV Amendments to Rehabilitation Act		
Older Americans Act		
Trade Adjustment Act		
Veterans Employment & Training Services		



Agency	Vision	Mission
Unemployment Compensation		
TANF		
SNAP		
Perkins Act - Postsecondary		
Perkins Act - Secondary		
Second Chance Act of 2007 - Corrections		
CSBG Employment & Training		
HUD Employment & Training		



Table 2. Communication Vehicles

Workforce Programs

Agency	Websites	Social Media	Newsletters	Other:	Other:	Other:
WIOA Title I Adult, Youth & Dislocated Worker						
WIOA Title II Adult Education & Literacy						
WIOA Title III Amendments to Wagner-Peyser						
WIOA Title IV Amendments to Rehabilitation Act						
Older Americans Act						
Trade Adjustment Act						
Veterans Employment & Training Services						
Unemployment Compensation						
TANF						
SNAP						



Agency	Websites	Social Media	Newsletters	Other:	Other:	Other:
Perkins Act - Postsecondary						
Perkins Act - Secondary						
Second Chance Act of 2007 - Corrections						
CSBG Employment & Training						
HUD Employment & Training						

Source: Minnesota Department of Employment & Economic Development

Component 5.1: Identify State and Local Policies Necessary to Implement Career Pathways Systems

As states begin to develop strategies for aligning policies, the State leadership team may first wish to complete the Self-Assessment Worksheets ([Worksheets 5.1a-5.1j](#)), which may help the State leadership team and the Workforce Development Board identify progress in aligning the relevant policies, programs, and systems that need consideration if they are to support a statewide career pathways system. The worksheets are provided at the end of this component and cover 10 essential factors that contribute to a coordinated career pathways system.

In addition, there are key actions that can be undertaken to facilitate the expansion and success of State initiatives. The Pathways Network initiative by Jobs for the Future provides a good listing of the policy actions that facilitate change. These include:

1. **Encouraging** better coordination of resources across State and local agencies to provide funding for scale-up of pathways programs.
2. **Supporting** acceleration of learning through dual enrollment/dual credit.
3. **Integrating** academic and CTE programs and elevating the profile of these programs as a means to develop crucial workplace skills.
4. **Expanding** the mission and purview of workforce development organizations and other economic development nonprofits.
5. **Establishing** more robust career information and advising systems linking online resources and appropriate counseling from teachers, mentors, and others through student work-based learning plans.
6. **Developing** policies that incentivize business involvement and work-based learning.

With these actions in mind, State agencies have considerable freedom to structure their career pathways system. State agencies can use their budget authority over Federal funds to align and braid resources across funding streams. States can also incentivize local/regional career pathways systems in how they choose to distribute discretionary resources that may be available. State agencies can provide specific guidance to local areas in developing their local/regional plans that align with industry needs and State strategies for developing career pathways systems. State agencies can also provide guidance and technical assistance on the allowable use of Federal and State funding under their jurisdiction to support career pathways.

A good example of how Federal incentives can align systems is USDOL's Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) competitive grant program. The TAACCCT grants align the community college system with business and industry to ensure their programs are demand-driven. Grantees were asked to incorporate key features of a career pathways system, including stackable credentials, multiple entry points that create on-off ramps for workers as they continue in their career path, and accelerated learning approaches that provide credit for prior learning and articulate from two- to four-year degrees. Although the TAACCCT grant program has a broader scope, it reveals how policy priorities can promote systems change.

PROMISING PRACTICE: Los Angeles Unified School District Career Academies

The Los Angeles Career Academies' State educational partners adopt policies that consistently define and document credentials and establish quality assurance processes to ensure their market relevance. The educational partners utilize employer engagement strategies and methods within their jurisdiction. The educational partners can also establish consistent assessments. The system office shares curricula across the system to maximize impact. Articulating and mapping instructional courses from secondary to postsecondary education is within their purview.

The Los Angeles Unified School District received a \$7 million grant from the James Irvine Foundation to create new career academies in six high schools focusing on healthcare, biotechnology, and other technology-related industries. The program is backed by funding from the James Irvine Foundation, the United Way of Greater Los Angeles, the Los Angeles workforce development system, and the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. It provides work-based learning opportunities to students, including 10,000 student summer internships. For more information, please see:

http://notebook.lausd.net/portal/page?_pageid=33,153234&_dad=ptl&_schema=PTL_EP

Collective Impact

Teams may also wish to disseminate a report to stakeholders on the collective impact of the partnership. Collective Impact Models provide information on how well the partnership is working and may provide input on how to improve your system.

A Collective Impact Model includes five conditions:

1. **Common Agenda:** all participants have a shared vision for change, including a common understanding of the problem and approach. The common mission and vision tool Asset Map ([Worksheet 1.1c](#)) is in Element One: Building Cross-agency Partnerships and Clarify Roles as well as Element Five: Align Policies and Programs Leadership Assessment ([Worksheet 5.1a](#)).
2. **Shared Measurement Systems:** Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all partners ensures efforts will remain aligned, and allows partners to hold each other accountable for the outcomes. The shared measurement system tool is covered in Element Six: Measure System Change and Performance ([Worksheet 6.2a](#)).
3. **Mutually Reinforcing Activities:** A diverse group of stakeholders working together by encouraging each participant to undertake the specific set of activities at which it excels. Each stakeholder's efforts must fit into an overarching plan if their combined efforts are to succeed. The Matrix of Partner Roles & Responsibilities ([Worksheet 1.3a](#)) is covered in Element One: Build Cross-Agency Partnerships and Clarify Roles.
4. **Continuous Communication:** Participants need several years of regular meetings to build up enough experience with each other to recognize and appreciate the common motivation behind their different efforts. Even the process of creating a common vocabulary takes time, and it is an essential prerequisite to developing shared

measurement systems. The Continuous Communication worksheet ([Worksheet 5.0a](#)) is covered in Element Five: Align Policies and Programs.

5. **Backbone Support Organizations:** A separate organization and staff with a very specific set of skills may serve as the backbone for the entire initiative. The expectation that collaboration can occur without a supporting infrastructure is one of the most frequent reasons why it fails. The Backbone Support Organizations is covered in the Element One Governance Structure Chart ([Worksheet 1.1b](#)). The leadership team may wish to select one organization to lead this initiative.

Reviewing the worksheets in the five areas may provide new insights and opportunities for further discussion as partners look toward better ways to report system and program outcomes.

Source document: Stanford Social Innovation Review, John Kania & Mark Kramer, Winter 2011.

Team Worksheets

Alignment Questionnaires

The State or local leadership team may complete the alignment questionnaires collaboratively. If it is not possible to convene the team initially for these assessments, program partners may complete the assessments separately and convene a meeting to share the results. The team should come to a consensus on the overall rating for each factor. After assessing each factor, establish priorities for developing strategies to operationalize factors that will improve the coordination and alignment of policies and programs.

Each worksheet is set up on a rating scale to assess progress along a continuum from no consideration to complete implementation. Please rate the strength of the team's progress in aligning the relevant policies and programs to establish a State or local career pathways system.

Use the definitions provided below to select a rating in the questionnaire:

None – The leadership team has not considered this factor.

In Planning – The leadership team has identified this factor as important and is planning to incorporate it in our work.

In Progress – The leadership team has included this factor in our plans and is working on implementation strategies.

Operational – The leadership team has operationalized this factor, and it is a regular part of our system.

Optimal – The leadership team is aligned, and State or local policies support long-term sustainability.

This series of questionnaire worksheets cover 10 essential factors for developing a career pathways system. The factors include:

5.1a Leadership – This worksheet helps to identify a Decision-Making Model and define the extent to which policies and practices that may align a State/local career pathways system have been considered with regard to State and local leaders.

5.1b Co-Enrollment – This worksheet is used to assess current policies around co-enrollment.

5.1c Data Management – This worksheet is used to determine if policies and practices regarding collecting, storing, sharing, tracking, and using data are aligned.

5.1d Educational Credit Attainment – This worksheet is used to determine if policies and practices align to strengthen credit attainment for participants.

5.1e Client Services – This worksheet is used to determine if policies and practices regarding client services align to strengthen the State/local career pathways system.

5.1f Eligible Training Providers – This worksheet is used to determine if policies and practices exist regarding the State Eligible Training Provider List.

5.1g Resource Allocation – This worksheet is used to determine if policies and practices align resources to maximize services to career pathways participants.

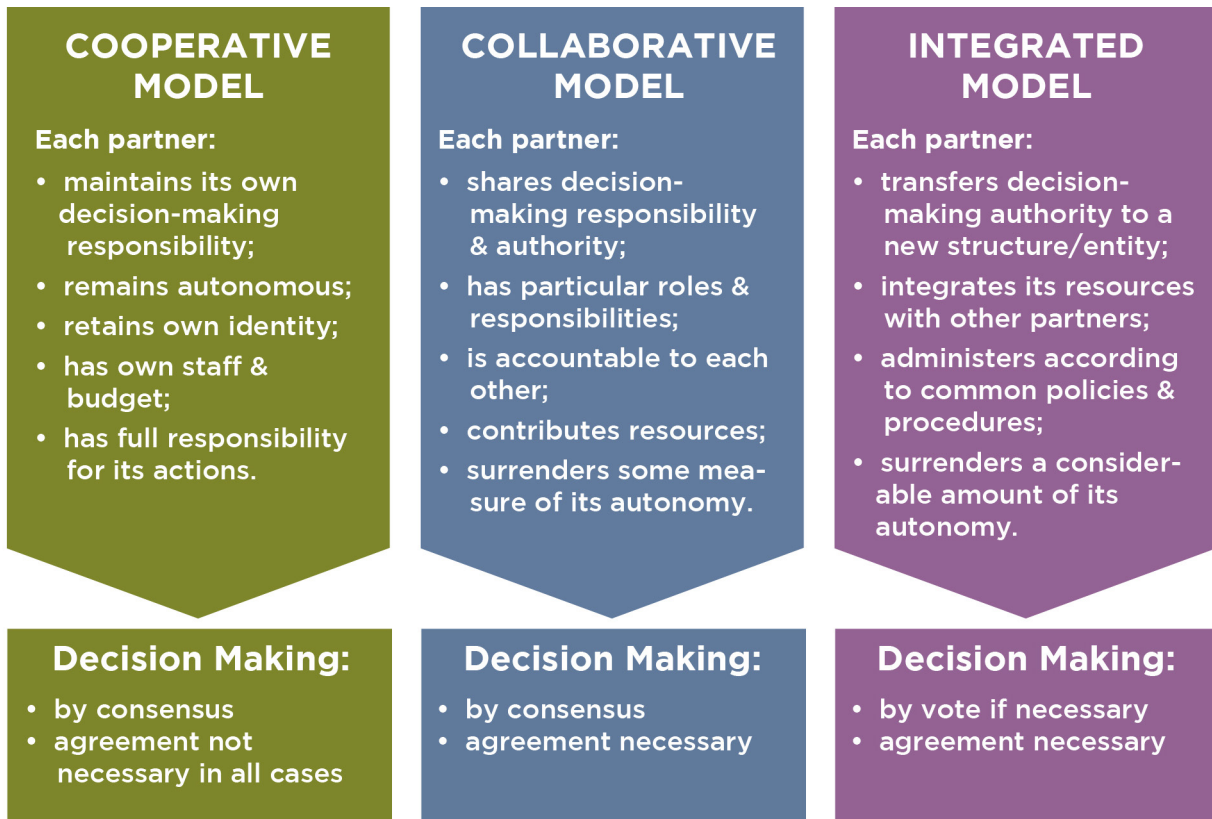


- 5.1h Skill Attainment** – This worksheet is used to determine if policies and practices align to measure skill attainment.
- 5.1i Professional Development** – This worksheet is used to determine if policies and practices have integrated professional development for frontline staff across agencies.
- 5.1j Sector Strategies** – This worksheet is used to determine if policies and practices align to strengthen employer engagement activities.

5.1a LEADERSHIP

Decision-Making Model

Use the definitions in the following chart to identify a decision-making model. A key characteristic that differs along this continuum is the degree of decision-making authority each partner retains or is willing to give up. Whatever model is adopted, make sure all partners agree.



Discuss each model and come to a consensus on which model best describes the partnership. Periodically, review the model to determine if there is any need for change. The Decision-Making Model may be embedded in the MOU.

Which Decision-Making Model(s) did the team select?

Rate the following statements regarding partnership agreements to determine the extent to which policies and practices that may align a State/local career pathways system have been considered. After completing the worksheet, discuss the level of decision-making authority the team has adopted based on a Decision-Making Model.

1. There is a career pathways leadership team in place at the State and/or local level to set policies for the career pathways system.

Note: If so, consult with the leadership team members identified in Element One to complete all of the worksheets in Element Five.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

2. The career pathways State and/or local level leadership team has defined a vision, mission, and shared goals for the partnership.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

3. The career pathways State-level leadership team has identified the geographic area statewide.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

4. The career pathways state or local level leadership team has identified all agencies and/or organizations involved in the partnership.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

5. The career pathways leadership team aligns its employer engagement strategies with industry sector strategies.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

6. The governance structure has been developed and agreed upon.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

7. The cooperative, collaborative, integrated, or other Decision-Making Model (see Decision-Making Model above) has been decided.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

8. The meeting format has been defined (frequency, duration, attendance, quorum, special meetings, etc.).

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

9. Partners' roles and responsibilities pertaining to the leadership team have been developed.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal



10. Partners' roles and responsibilities pertaining to the system have been developed.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
11. Financial contributions of each partner (cash and in-kind) have been identified.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
12. Data sharing agreements and metrics for collective impact have been developed.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
13. Financial policies and procedures as system partners have been developed.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
14. Fundraising policies and procedures have been developed.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
15. Guidelines have been developed for conflict resolution.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
16. A policy regarding confidentiality among partners has been developed.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
17. An intellectual property rights policy has been developed if needed.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
18. A conflict of interest policy has been developed.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
19. Policies have been developed regarding diversity/inclusivity and accessibility for program participants.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
20. A policy regarding document retention and destruction has been defined.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
21. An indemnification clause has been developed and agreed upon.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
22. Risk, security and insurance policies have been identified and obtained.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal



23. Compliance with State, Federal and local regulations has been defined.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

24. The team has developed an MOU that elaborates on the roles and responsibilities of each team member. (See [Worksheet 1.4a](#)).

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal



5.1b CO-ENROLLMENT

Rate the following statements as you convene stakeholders to determine if your policies and practices align to strengthen the state/local career pathways system.

1. State or local career pathways partnership has a written policy in place to co-enroll applicants in multiple programs.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
2. What programs are included in your policy? List below:

3. Are there plans to expand the policy to other programs?
☐ yes ☐ no

If so, list the programs and anticipated timeline:

Program List	Program Name	Anticipated Timeline
Program 1		
Program 2		
Program 3		
Program 4		
Program 5		
Program 6		
Program 7		
Program 8		



4. All program providers are aware of the policy. This should include frontline staff enrolling applicants into programs.
- ☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
5. There is a process for tracking co-enrolled participants.
- ☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
6. How is the process for tracking co-enrolled participants encouraged or promoted?
-
7. What type of identifying number is used?
-
8. There are measurements in place to measure the impact of the co-enrollment.
- ☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal



5.1c DATA MANAGEMENT

Rate the following statements as stakeholders are convened to determine if policies and practices align regarding collecting, storing, sharing, tracking, and using data to strengthen the State/local career pathways system.

1. State agencies have data-sharing policy agreements in place.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
2. What state agencies are included in the data-sharing policy agreement? (*List below and designate who is responsible for data storage, and tracking and reporting*)

Agency List	State Agency	Data Storage & Tracking?	Data Reporting?
Agency 1			
Agency 2			
Agency 3			
Agency 4			
Agency 5			
Agency 6			
Agency 7			
Agency 8			

3. State level policy exists to identify participants in a career pathways program with some type of data flag across partner systems.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
4. The State has a State longitudinal database in place.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

What programs are included? List below:



5. The State has a policy for administrative record matching between education and employment data (unemployment insurance wage record data).

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

6. The State has a longitudinal data tracking system (SLDS).

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

7. Is there a process for requesting data from the Workforce Data Quality Initiative or SLDS Initiative?

8. The State has developed a policy on measuring system impact.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

If not, what is your plan for developing system impact?

9. The State has a plan to use the data for continuous improvement.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

10. How will the data be used for continuous improvement?



5.1d EDUCATIONAL CREDIT ATTAINMENT

Rate the following statements as stakeholders are convened to determine if policies and practices align to strengthen credit attainment for participants.

Dual Credit

1. The State has a policy on granting credit for dual enrollment in secondary and postsecondary courses.
- ☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

2. What courses are included in the dual credit policy? List below:

3. What institutions grant dual credit options?

4. Is there a plan to incorporate additional coursework in your dual credit policy?
- ☐ yes ☐ no

If so, list courses and timeline:

Course List	Course Name	Timeframe
Course 1		
Course 2		
Course 3		
Course 4		
Course 5		
Course 6		
Course 7		
Course 8		



5. Students are made aware of the dual credit opportunity.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
6. Dual credit options lead to an industry-recognized, postsecondary credential by incorporating industry technical standards into curricula.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
7. List the dual credit options that lead to an industry-recognized postsecondary credential by incorporating industry technical standards into curricula:

Credit for Prior Learning

8. There is a policy on credit for prior learning.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
9. What factors are considered in granting credit for prior learning?

10. What is the process to award credit for prior learning?



11. List the agencies/organizations have the authority to grant credit for prior learning:

12. The process or opportunity for credit for prior learning is communicated effectively
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

13. How is the process or opportunity communicated?

Articulation Credit Agreements

14. The State has articulation agreements between secondary and postsecondary education that provide natural progression.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

15. What factors are considered in granting articulation credit?

16. What is the process to award articulation credit?



17. What programs are included in the articulation agreements?

18. Are there plans to expand these agreements?

☐ yes ☐ no

If so, what programs, and on what timeframe?

Program List	Program Name	Timeframe
Program 1		
Program 2		
Program 3		
Program 4		
Program 5		
Program 6		
Program 7		
Program 8		

19. The process or opportunity for articulated credit is communicated effectively.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

20. How is the process or opportunity communicated?



Work-based Learning Credit

21. Employer participation is included in the process to award credit for work-based learning.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

22. Policy exists to connect classroom learning to work-based learning.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

23. What factors need to exist to grant credit for work-based learning?

24. What is the process to award credit for work-based learning?

25. What regulatory or accrediting approval is needed to offer credit for work-based learning?

26. What programs grant credit for work-based learning?



27. The process or opportunity for work-based learning credit is communicated effectively.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

28. How is the process or opportunity communicated?

Postsecondary Credit Attainment

29. There is a process for granting postsecondary education credit that leads to a stackable credential.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

30. Students are made aware of the career ladder/lattice the credential applies to.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

31. Students are made aware of what postsecondary credentials lead to an industry-recognized credential.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

32. What career pathways programs exist that offer stackable credentials leading to an industry-recognized credential?

5.1e CLIENT SERVICES

Rate the following statements as stakeholders are convened to determine if policies and practices regarding client services align to strengthen the State/local career pathways system.

Assessment

1. There is a State policy on sharing assessments across-agencies.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
2. Federal and/or State regulations guide the sharing of assessment results.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
3. The State agencies agree on a standardized set of tools for assessment.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
4. What are the agreed-upon assessment tools and corresponding purpose?

5. Under what circumstances do partners engage in re-assessments?

Individual Career Plans

6. There is a standardized career plan across programs/agencies.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
7. There is a policy and process to update the individualized career plans on a regular basis.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal



8. There is a policy and process to share individualized career plans across programs/agencies.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

9. The policy is guided by Federal and/or State regulations.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

Supportive Services

10. There is a policy and process to align the provision of supportive services for co-enrolled customers.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal



5.1f ELIGIBLE TRAINING PROVIDERS

Rate the following statements as stakeholders are convened to determine if policies and practices exist regarding the State Eligible Training Provider List.

1. There is a State policy/practice regarding including programs on the State's Eligible Training Provider List, including apprenticeship programs.

☐ none
 ☐ planning stage
 ☐ in progress
 ☐ operational
 ☐ optimal

2. Define the process for including programs on the eligible training provider list.

3. List or link to the eligible training providers.

4. There is a communication plan and outreach to notify training programs of the criteria for inclusion on the State's Eligible Training Provider List.

☐ none
 ☐ planning stage
 ☐ in progress
 ☐ operational
 ☐ optimal

5. Is there a need to recruit additional eligible training providers?

5.1g RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Rate the following statements as stakeholders are convened to determine if policies and practices align resources to maximize services to career pathways participants. (See Resources in Funding Options Worksheets in Element Four.)

1. There is a State policy on braiding funds to cover system, program and participant costs (funds can come from multiple sources to include State, Federal, philanthropic, and business contributions).

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

2. What is the State policy on braiding funds?

3. There is a process to track braided funds separately.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

4. How are the costs allocated amongst partners?

5. What resources are used to pay for system costs?

6. What resources are used to pay for dedicated staff for the system costs?

5.1h SKILL ATTAINMENT

Rate the following statements as stakeholders are convened to determine if policies and practices align to measure skill attainment.

1. There is a State policy or practice on assessing **current** level of skills.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

2. What is your policy or practice on assessing **current** level of skills?

3. There is a State policy or practice on assessing **NEW** level of skills.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

4. What is the State policy or practice on assessing **NEW** level of skills?

5. The policy or practice includes demonstrated application of knowledge or skill (e.g., competency-based assessments).

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

6. Skill gains are assessed and lead to industry-recognized credentials.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

5.1i PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Rate the following statements to determine if your policies and practices have integrated professional development for frontline staff across agencies to promote a systematic versus programmatic approach to operations. Based on the collective ratings, partners come to a consensus on the top two to three areas to target for professional development.

1. The design and implementation of professional development in career pathways is inclusive of the cross-agency partnership to create expert knowledge of the career pathways system in every agency.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

2. The professional development strategies include the dissemination of policies across education and workforce providers to create better alignment.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

Demand-Driven Cross-Agency Training Includes:

3. Information on the current labor market and the industry sectors that drive their local economy.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

4. Targeted occupations within an industry sector that are in greatest demand and pay a family-sustaining wage.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

5. Employer outreach strategies to improve upon coordination of employer contacts and share best practices in employer engagement strategies.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

6. Local industry requirements and their corresponding industry recognized credentials, if applicable.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

7. Workplace or employability skills requirements that match the needs of targeted industries.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

8. Procedures for assessing employer workforce needs (see Element Two for more information about employer needs).

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

Educational Training Includes:

9. Strategies for incorporating competency models to identify and/or verify skill competencies and to review and revise curriculum accordingly for in-demand occupations.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
10. Converting Industry career ladders into corresponding academic/training ladders.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
11. Building bridge programs to create multiple entry/exit points for students.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
12. Innovative teaching and learning strategies to include chunking curricula and contextualized learning.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
13. Strategies for flexible delivery methods and accelerated learning.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
14. Aligning curricula from 9th to 12th grade and from secondary to postsecondary education.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
15. Aligning academic curricula with CTE.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
16. Strategies for integrating adult education and literacy curricula with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
17. Strategies for incorporating work-based learning opportunities into program design, including apprenticeship.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

Assessment and Career Planning Training Includes:

18. Process and criteria for the selection of assessment instruments is known and consistent with policies and practices for specific targeted groups.
- ☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
19. Criteria and process for joint assessment of co-enrolled participants is well known.
- ☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
20. Elements of a career plan are communicated and consistent with policies and practices across agencies.
- ☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
21. Process and criteria for re-assessment is well known.
- ☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

Career Services Training Includes:

22. Identification of WIOA career service categories for each program across agencies.
- ☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
23. Identification of which agencies provide career services in the local labor market area.
- ☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

Employment Assistance and Retention Services Training Includes:

24. Workforce readiness preparation; e.g. resume writing, cover letters, job interviewing skills, and soft-skill training.
- ☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
25. Job search assistance; e.g., navigating job banks.
- ☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
26. Job retention skills techniques, e.g., taking direction, job-appropriate behaviors, problem-solving techniques, and attendance.
- ☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

27. Special accommodations, e.g., OTJ coaching techniques and workplace modification procedures.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

Resource Allocation: Braided Funding Training for Administrative Staff Includes:

28. Techniques on how to braid multiple program resources and track resources for program accountability and reporting.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

Performance Data: Continuous Improvement for Administrative Staff Includes:

29. Cross-agency staff can identify the appropriate data for continuous system improvement.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

5.1j SECTOR STRATEGIES

Rate the following statements as sector strategy stakeholders are convened to determine if policies and practices align to strengthen employer engagement activities. Refer to Element Two for the Sector Strategies Organizational Self-Assessment ([Worksheet 2.0a](#)).

For more information on establishing sector partnerships, see the [Sector Partnership Policy Toolkit](#) published by the National Skills Coalition.

1. The State has a policy in place to promote sector strategies.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
2. The State policy provides monetary incentives for regions that form sector partnerships.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
3. The incentives may be used for convening, planning, and sustaining sector partnership.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal
4. Select the source of monetary incentives for sector partnerships:

☐ State funds

Identify source (general fund, unemployment insurance offset, trust fund established for workforce development):

☐ Federal funds

Identify source (WIOA set-aside, incentive grants, competitive grants):

5. If the State requires local areas to match funds, indicate the source of the contribution - in-kind, business contributions or cash?
☐ in-kind ☐ business contribution ☐ cash
6. The State policies include providing technical assistance to State and local partnerships such as professional development, capacity building, economic and market analysis, and data on industry needs and trends.
☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal



7. The State has a policy regarding the provisions of providing technical assistance to regions/localities to implement and sustain sector strategies.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

8. List the type of technical assistance included in the State policy:

9. The State has instituted program initiatives that promote sector partnerships. Program initiatives may include funding framework, executive orders, Workforce Development Board resolutions, and competitive grants to promote implementation of sector strategies.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

List the program initiatives:

10. The State has designated sector partnerships as a part of the overall workforce strategies that are delineated in the State's Unified/Combined Plan.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

11. The State has a policy on the minimum required member representation for a sector strategy partnership.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal



12. List the makeup of sector partnerships (i.e., business, community college, union, workforce agencies, workforce development boards, etc.).

If the sector strategies leadership team is distinct from the career pathways leadership team, describe policies and processes in place to ensure that the two teams are in alignment with each other.

13. The State has designated a lead agency to oversee the administration of sector partnership policies.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

List the agency:

14. The State has identified metrics to measure the quality of the sector partnership.

☐ none ☐ planning stage ☐ in progress ☐ operational ☐ optimal

List the metrics identified:

Component 5.2: Identify and Pursue Needed Reforms in State and Local Policy

To move career pathways forward, State agencies need to examine statutes to identify barriers that need to be addressed. Oftentimes it is policy and resources, not statutes, which create the appearance of a barrier. If there are statutory barriers, State agencies should collaboratively address those issues with the governor's office and attempt to move those changes forward through their legislatures. The State and Local Workforce Development Board members and business associations can be very helpful in advancing legislative changes that will advance the implementation of a State career pathways system. The [Request for Information](#) solicitation issued by USDOL, ED, and HHS in 2014 served to inform the system of common barriers experienced by states/localities in implementing a comprehensive career pathways system. The most common are listed in the text box below.

CAREER PATHWAYS FYI: Most common barriers identified by states/localities include:

- The transferability and recognition of stackable, portable, industry-recognized credentials;
- Federal policies and regulations, such as training time limits and the work participation requirements of TANF;
- Different performance and outcome measures and participant tracking systems;
- Lack of articulation between credit- and noncredit-bearing pathways;
- Funding limitations; and
- Remaining current on LMI.

Although these may be real barriers, the Workforce Development Board and the governor can address them by developing long-term strategies to lessen their impact or alleviate them altogether. With a complete list of barriers, the leadership team may collaboratively develop strategies to address each one. The leadership team should start with barriers that are easier to resolve (including those requiring fewer financial resources). These barriers can provide the core around which new policies are developed. State and local partners can jointly strategize on solutions. During this process, it is critical that the leadership team keeps its focus on the mission, vision, and goals to move forward.

At the Federal level, WIOA acknowledges the importance of program alignment and requires a structure that supports Federal legislative alignment. WIOA has elevated the function of policy review, program alignment, and removing programmatic barriers to the State Workforce Development Board. The new legislation can serve as the impetus for real change and can address the barriers in a four-year Unified/Combined State Plan.

If it is determined the barriers to establishing or expanding a career pathways system are not regulatory or are within their purview, the leadership team should address key policies, which may hamper the goals and vision for a career pathways system, including those that are necessary for coordinating efforts across the State and/or region. Many current policies—quite inadvertently—may support the status quo. Many systems operate in silos for lack of

any strong reason to change. The result is that individuals are not able to easily transition between academic programs, adult education, and workforce development training systems.

Helpful strategies to support alignment may be:

- Implementing a coordinated and systems approach to youth, adult education, and postsecondary training;
- Developing new and/or strengthened linkages between secondary CTE and academic programs at community colleges, adult basic education programs, and American Job Centers;
- Developing articulation agreements between secondary and postsecondary education;
- Supporting integrated and coordinated services between American Job Centers and TANF service providers;
- Offering programs that allow learners to earn portable and stackable credentials;
- Supporting cross-program and cross-agency professional development;
- Developing work-based learning opportunities;
- Developing an Eligible Training Provider List that promotes the development of career pathways; and
- Establishing and supporting the development of the State's longitudinal data system.

Component 5.3: Implement Statutory and Administrative Procedures to Facilitate Cross-Agency Collaboration

Implementation of the new policies and procedures will require communication. Continuity of messaging across departments requires coordination. It may be helpful to develop joint letters signed by the leadership team that delineate the policies and practices that will drive the team's practices going forward.

HOW TO: Engage in Collaborative Communication

- A shared vision and strategies;
- A shared policy agenda to build, scale, and sustain a career pathways system;
- A commitment to collaborate and share and/or leverage resources;
- A requirement for the adaptation of similar local/regional policies;
- An explanation of how the team will hold grantees accountable and how they will be measured;
- A commitment to share outcome data and work toward a longitudinal participant information system;
- A process for technical assistance; and
- A plan for professional development.

PROMISING PRACTICE: Minnesota FastTRAC

Minnesota FastTRAC (Training, Resources, and Credentialing) seeks to make Minnesota more competitive by meeting common skills needs of businesses and individuals. FastTRAC's adult career pathways program helps educationally underprepared adults succeed in well-paying careers by integrating basic skills education and career-specific training in high-demand fields. Each local adult career pathways program consists of a series of connected educational and training programs that allows learners to advance over time to successively higher levels of education and employment in a given sector.

FastTRAC programs cover key Minnesota industries, including healthcare, manufacturing, education, business, energy, and others. As of December 2012, FastTRAC programs have served more than 1,900 adults at 29 sites. Eighty-eight percent of these adults earned industry-recognized credentials or earned credits toward those credentials, and 69 percent had success in either gaining employment or continuing into further career pathways education. Local programs have braided FastTRAC grants with other State and Federal funds. Locals have braided funds from TANF, Workforce Investment Act Incentive grants, Adult Basic Education Leadership funds, Perkins funds, foundation funding, Pell grants, and other sources. Currently, an allocation from the State workforce development fund and TANF Innovation funds are braided.

PROMISING PRACTICE: Public/Private Partnership Massachusetts

SkillWorks is a multiyear initiative to improve workforce development in Boston and in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. SkillWorks brings together philanthropy, government, community organizations, and employers to address the twin goals of helping low-income individuals attain family-sustaining jobs and businesses find skilled workers. Phase I (2003–2008) invested \$15 million to help more than 3,000 workers receive skills training, with hundreds entering the workforce or receiving raises and promotions.

Phase II (2009–2013) continued this important work with an added emphasis on better connecting Massachusetts' community colleges and other postsecondary institutions to the workforce development system. SkillWorks raised \$10 million for Phase II for investments in workforce partnerships, public policy advocacy, and capacity building.

Phase III (2014–2018) investments will aim to improve the workforce system's effectiveness and efficiency, resulting in significantly improved economic outcomes for job and skill seekers, with a priority focus on those in Greater Boston who are low income and low skilled. SkillWorks will achieve this goal by leveraging its leadership position and collaborative model to convene business, labor, education, and civic leaders and catalyze change through innovative investments, adoption of best practices, and advocacy. SkillWorks is projecting a \$5.6 million, five-year budget for Phase III. For more information, read SkillWorks' [Phase III Strategic Plan](#).

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