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Five Steps to Career Pathways

Career pathways involve five stages that follow a rational design model. The process guides regions through data analysis, planning, partnership development, goal setting and the implementation of strategies. Taken together, the career pathways steps represent a continuous improvement process that, if undertaken correctly, will have a systemic and sustainable impact on the performance of the partner organizations.

I. GAP ANALYSIS

- Assess labor demand (current and projected)
- Assess labor supply (current and projected)
- Assess capacity of educational institutions
- Analyze return on potential investments
- Choose a sector of focus
- Scan current service provision
- Identify service provision gaps

II. CAREER PATHWAYS PLANNING

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- Identify potential partners
- Gain partner participation
- Set mission, vision, and goals
- Formalize partner roles and responsibilities

EMPLOYER STRATEGY

- Identify employers
- Determine the framework of an employer partnership
- Map career mobility patterns
- Gain employer–partner commitment
- Develop ongoing relationships with employers

PATHWAYS DESIGN

- Illustrate training, education, and career mobility
- Incorporate and align the following programmatic components:
 - Recruitment
 - Assessment
 - Training
 - Work experience
 - Support services/case management
 - Job development and placement
 - Retention services
- Establish data collection protocols
- Organize data management and reporting procedures among partners
- Develop a sustainability strategy

BUDGET AND FUNDING STRATEGY

- Generate a budget
- Identify potential resources, including:
 - Workforce resources
 - Educational resources
 - Private resources (employers, foundations, individual donors)
 - Other (e.g., economic development organizations, youth programs)
- Leverage available resources
- Plan for fundraising and development

III. IMPLEMENTATION

- Develop curriculum
- Recruit and assess participants
- Deliver training
- Provide support services and case management
- Develop work experience opportunities and jobs
- Continue employer development activities
- Utilize data management system

IV. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- Conduct regular in-process reviews
- Review overall performance
- Evaluate the performance of each partner
- Make operational adjustments based on evaluations
- Optimize scale based upon need for services
- Reevaluate the mission, vision, and goals
- Document lessons learned

V. EXPAND THE PATHWAY

- Apply pathways model to additional populations
- Replicate the pathways process in other sectors of importance to the regional economy