

RISE Career Pathways

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Descriptions

The **Career Pathway** is a new way of organizing technical college occupational training as a sequence of credentials that leads adult learners in attainable steps toward better jobs and a degree or technical diploma. Each step improves the learner's career and earning opportunities and provides a skill set needed by an industry or industry sector. Industry sectors that are appropriate for pathway development are those that need significant numbers of skilled workers, can provide good jobs, and contribute to the economic growth of the region.

A **Career Pathway Bridge** helps adults in need of basic skills or English Language Learning succeed in a career pathway. Bridges consist of courses that link basic skills development with occupational skills development and accelerate the transition from pre-college to college level work.

Career Pathway Operational Elements

A. Industry Engagement

1. A core group of businesses from an industry sector has agreed to be involved in developing and supporting the pathway.
2. Employers involved in Career Pathways show that they can improve pay or job security for workers as workers' skill levels increase, and they examine their patterns of organizing work and filling jobs to see if career pathways can be built where none currently exist.
3. Organized labor is involved if a significant number of workers in any of the targeted occupations in the region are included in a collective bargaining agreement.
4. Regional businesses participate in recruiting individuals to pursue career pathways education and commit to hiring, retaining or advancing successful pathways participants.
5. Employers actively support participation of their employees in pathway education.

B. Career Pathway Design

1. The choice of industries and occupations for RISE Career Pathway development is based on labor market data and employer input showing compelling need for higher-skilled workers and good employment opportunities for individuals who increase their skills.

2. The Career Pathway curriculum is organized as a sequence of embedded credentials, each of which is recognized by employers within the industry and region and qualifies a worker for a higher level job or occupation.
3. The modularized curriculum enables working adults to pursue postsecondary occupational education in manageable increments. Career Pathway sequences are designed to allow workers to move in and out of their studies while still making academic progress with minimal inefficiencies and disruptions.
4. The embedded credentials lead learners toward a technical diploma or applied associate degree in an occupation that pays family-sustaining wages.
5. Employers are engaged on an ongoing basis in identifying competencies for Career Pathway curricula and validating pathways design and credentials.
6. Career Pathway curricula are linked, whenever possible, to industry skill standards, certifications or licensing requirements.
7. The Career Pathway is visually summarized by a career pathway map, produced in collaboration with business and industry, that depicts the multiple entry and exit points for skills education and their relationship with occupations in the industry or sector.
8. A fully developed pathway includes ABE/ELL bridge instruction to help adults needing basic education or English-Language-Learning services to succeed in postsecondary Career Pathway education.

C. Career Pathway Bridge Design

1. The Career Pathway Bridge connects lower-skilled adults with postsecondary occupational programs by offering concurrent, coordinated basic skills instruction and occupational instruction as part of a postsecondary embedded credential in a Career Pathway.
2. The Bridge contextualizes basic skills instruction so that basic skills being developed are directly relevant to the adult learner's occupational goals.
3. The Bridge employs teaching and student support methods that have proven effective for students with lower levels of literacy.
4. Career Pathway Bridges result from cooperation and joint planning between postsecondary and non-postsecondary divisions within the college.

D. Pathway Support for Life Long Learning

1. Career planning services, including assessment and the development of a lifelong learning plan, are provided to learners.
2. Multiple agencies coordinate with each other and with employers to provide wrap-around support services—e.g., case management, coaching and mentoring, child care, financial aid, job placement, and referral to community resources—to help learners succeed in their combined education and work responsibilities.
3. Help with developing soft skills, e.g., workplace behavior and interpersonal skills, is provided.

4. Employers support employees' lifelong learning plans and incorporate the pathway design into employee development (e.g., tuition reimbursement) and advancement opportunities.

E. Systems and Partnerships

1. At least one technical college district and one workforce development board are involved in a Career Pathway project. Colleges, workforce agencies, businesses, and community agencies collaborate to support career pathway learners.
2. The roles and expectations of each organization involved in a Career Pathway project are clearly defined.
3. Public and private funding (e.g., technical college, WIA, TANF, state/federal financial aid, employer tuition reimbursement) is coordinated to the maximum extent possible.