

Career Pathways Research Brief
Governor's Workforce Development Council
February 20, 2015

Introduction

In July 2014, President Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)—after it passed with virtually unanimous bipartisan support in Congress — the first update to the nation's core workforce training programs in the 16 years since the passage of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). A lot has changed since 1998—and our workforce system hasn't kept up. Low-skilled and low-income workers face more barriers than ever to securing an education and getting a good job. The new law recognizes the need for a new game plan and reauthorizes the nation's employment, training, adult education, and vocational rehabilitation programs created under WIA. WIOA improves connections to employment and training opportunities that lead to economic prosperity for workers and their families. It strengthens existing workforce development and adult education programs in four ways that can benefit adults and youth with barriers to economic success. The law:

1. **Increases the focus on serving the most vulnerable workers—low-income adults and youth who have limited skills, lack work experience, and face other barriers to economic success;**
2. **Expands education and training options to help participants access good jobs and advance in their careers;**
3. **Helps disadvantaged and unemployed adults and youth earn while they learn through support services and effective employment-based activities; and**
4. **Aligns planning and accountability policies across core programs to support more unified approaches to serving low-income, low-skilled individuals.**

Source: The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)

Title II of WIOA, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA)

There are six career pathways references under WIOA – Title II. The first two are of utmost importance to the work of the GWDC:

WIOA Title II Citation:

SEC. 202. PURPOSE. It is the purpose of this title to create a partnership among the Federal Government, States, and localities to provide, on a voluntary basis, adult education and literacy activities, in order to-- (3) assist adults in attaining a secondary school diploma and in the transition to postsecondary education and training, including through **career pathways**;

WIOA Title II Citations:

SEC. 223. STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES. (a) Activities.-- (1) Required.--Each eligible agency shall use funds made available under section 222(a)(2) for the following adult education and literacy activities to develop or enhance the adult education system of the State or outlying area: (A) The alignment of

adult education and literacy activities with other core programs and one-stop partners, including eligible providers, to implement the strategy identified in the unified State plan under section 102 or the combined State plan under section 103, including the development of career pathways to provide access to employment and training services for individuals in adult education and literacy activities. (2) Permissible activities.--Each eligible agency may use funds made available under section 222(a)(2) for 1 or more of the following adult education and literacy activities: (D) Developing content and models for integrated education and training and **career pathways**.

Also of note is Section 102 of WIOA, which requires the Governor of a state to submit a four-year unified plan that incorporates all the requirements under the law. Other sections refer to Corrections Education, Grants to Adult Education Providers, National Leadership and work and career development goals related to the EL-CIVICS grant program. More detail can be found in the following summary: <http://www.ncpn.info/2014downloads/WIOA%20and%20Career%20pathways.pdf>

Source: National Career Pathways Network

Career Pathways Definitions

The Alliance for Quality Career Pathways (AQCP) defines **career pathways** as well-articulated sequences of quality education and training offerings and supportive services that enable educationally underprepared youth and adults to advance over time to successively higher levels of education and employment in a given industry sector or occupation. A career pathways approach reorients existing education and workforce services from a myriad of disconnected programs to a structure that focuses on the individuals in need of education and training and their career paths. Such an approach provides clear transitions, strong supports, and other elements critical to participants' success. It is not simply a new model; it is a new way of doing business. Career pathway systems can exist at the local/regional and state levels, bringing together partners that adopt an integrative, transformative career pathway approach.

A **local/regional career pathway system** is a partnership among local and/or regional agencies, organizations, institutions, and employers or an industry. It includes specific structural elements such as multiple entry and exit points and supportive services and navigation assistance. The system generally consists of linked and aligned career pathway programs. The partnership follows six key guiding principles:

- Adopt and articulate a shared vision
- Demonstrate leadership and commitment to institutionalizing career pathways
- Ensure that career pathways are demand-driven, focus on sectors/occupations, and deeply engage employers
- Align policies, measures, and funding
- Use and promote data and continuous improvement strategies
- Support professional development A state career pathway system is a partnership of state-level agencies, organizations, and employers or an industry that provides a supportive policy environment for local/regional career pathway systems and programs and promote the quality,

scale, and sustainability of career pathways. State partnerships follow similar guiding principles to the local/regional systems.

Source: The Alliance for Quality Career Pathways

The U.S. Department of Labor offers the following definition: The term **“career pathway programs”** means a clear sequence of education coursework and/or training credentials that include the following components as a framework.

Career Pathways:

- Are aligned with the skill needs of industries important to the regional or state economies in which they are located, and reflect the active engagement of employers in targeted industry sectors regarding the skill requirements for employment or career progression in high demand occupations.
- Include the full range of secondary, adult education, and postsecondary education options, including registered apprenticeship, with a non-duplicative progression of courses clearly articulated from one level of instruction to the next, with opportunities to earn postsecondary credits and lead to industry-recognized [and/or] postsecondary credentials;
- Include curriculum and instructional strategies that make work a central context for learning (contextual learning) and help students attain work readiness skills;
- Include, as appropriate for the individual, integrated education and training that combine occupational skills training with adult education services, give credit for prior learning, and adopt other strategies that accelerate the educational and career advancement of the participant.
- Lead to the attainment of an industry-recognized degree or credential, which may include stackable credentials of value in the labor market and that articulate progressively to higher-level credentials or degrees.
- Help a worker enter or advance within a specific sector or occupational field, regardless of their skills at the point of entry.
- Include academic and career counseling, wrap-around support services particularly at points of transition, and support the development of an individual career plan.
- Are organized to meet the particular needs of adults, including childcare, accommodating work schedules with flexible and non-semester-based scheduling, alternative class times and locations, and the innovative use of technology.
- Have the goal of increasing an individual’s educational and skills attainment and employment outcomes.

Source: US Department of Labor – Employment and Training Administration

There are 10 states participating in the Alliance for Quality Career Pathways (AQCP) are Arkansas, California, Illinois, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Oregon, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin. Other states participating in career pathways programs include Arizona, Indiana, Maryland, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Washington, with some initiatives dating back to 2005.

| STATE | WHO CONVENES? | MEMBERSHIP | GOALS/AREAS OF FOCUS | CONTACT |
|---------------|--|---|---|---|
| Arkansas | Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative under the Arkansas Dept. of Higher Education | Community colleges, workforce development agencies, employers, social service providers | TANF/TEA recipients who meet eligibility requirements | www.arpathways.com |
| California | California Workforce Investment Board/Career Pathways and Education Committee | Industries, CBOs, Chamber members, legislative staff and dept. of education | Identify and implement comprehensive strategies to align education with career preparation as a catalyst for economic prosperity and to successfully compete within the 21st Century workplace. | http://www.cwib.ca.gov/ |
| Colorado | Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC) and the Community College System | Community colleges, workforce development and industries | Growing the talent pipeline | https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cwdc |
| Illinois | Illinois Workforce Investment Board/Illinois WorkNet | 6 state agencies, including economic and employment security | STEM Education Illinois Pathways, funded through Race to the Top | http://www2.illinoisworknet.com/WI/OA |
| Kentucky | CTE within Kentucky Dept. of Education | Secondary and post-secondary education, employers | Creating seamless paths to post-secondary credential | http://education.ky.gov/cte/cter/pages/ctecareerpathways.aspx |
| Massachusetts | | | | |
| Virginia | Advisor for Workforce Development, | 8 state agencies | - Strategic Planning - Co-development of annual Workforce | http://www.elevatevirginia.org/about-the-virginia-board-of-workforce-development/career-pathways/ |

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|--|---|--|--|--|
| | Office of the Secretary of Commerce and Trade | | Report Card. - Oversight of PluggedInVA, a career pathway to the GED, Career Readiness Certificates and professional soft skills. - Secured funding for three regional career pathways grants in advanced manufacturing, energy and allied health. - Support Governor's STEM Academies. | |
|--|---|--|--|--|

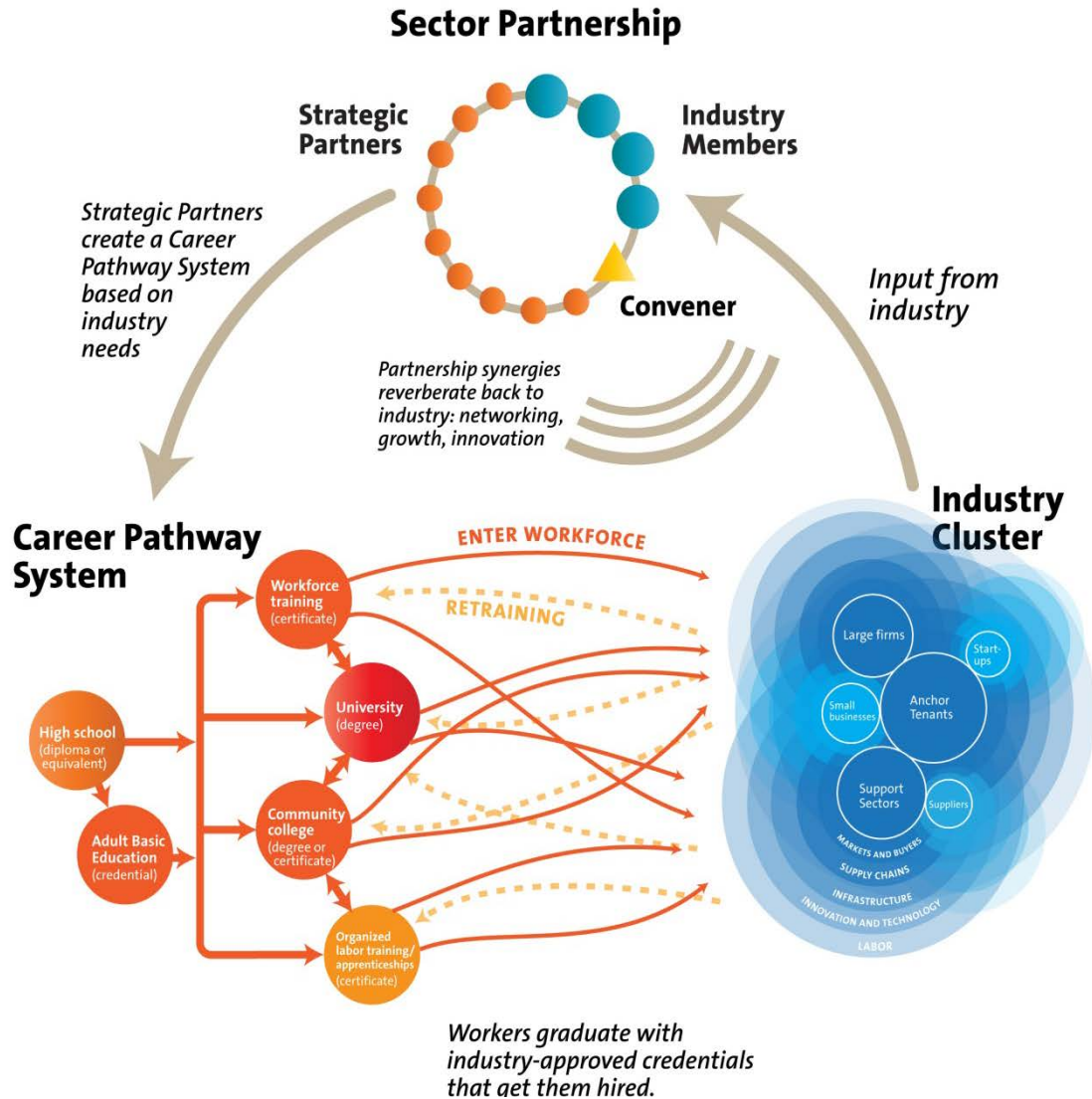
| Partners | Roles in Developing Pathways |
|--------------------------|--|
| Workforce Agencies | Provide labor market information Engage employers Recruit and make referrals Assist with job search and placement Provide funding for training Provide skills assessments |
| Educational Institutions | Design programs Develop curricula Create links between credit and non-credit Assist with financial aid Provide support services Adult basic education |
| Human Service Agencies | Provide support services Recruit and make referrals |
| Economic Development | Provide labor market information Engage employers |
| Employers | Help to develop industry relevant curricula Provide training facilities and equipment Provide internships/job shadowing Provide employment |

Source: Colorado Workforce Development Council

See also: <http://www.dol.gov/NationalDialogue/ColoradoCareerPathwaysGuide.pdf>

Sector Partnerships: The Keystone to Connecting Career Pathways to Industry Cluster Growth

Sector Partnerships align education and training programs with industry needs to produce readily-employable workers.



Source: National Governors Association (NGA)

Resources

- Governor's Workforce Development Council (GWDC)

<http://www.gwdc.org/docs/publications/GWDC-Building-Partnerships-2014.pdf>

- CLASP

<http://www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/publication-1/KeyProvisionsofWIOA-Final.pdf>

<http://www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/files/CLASP-AQCP-Metrics-Feb-2013.pdf>

<http://www.clasp.org/issues/postsecondary/pages/aqcp-framework-version-1-0>

- Career Pathways Initiative

<https://learnwork.workforce3one.org/>

- NGA

<http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/2013/1301NGASSSReport.pdf>

- National Career Pathways Network

<http://www.ncpn.info/>