

Career Pathways Conference
October 2-3, 2003 Cincinnati, OH

Career Pathway Planning Guide

August 2003

This guide is designed to help teams of community colleges and their partners develop plans for implementing career pathway programs in sectors of importance to their region's economy. Teams are encouraged to create a plan by answering the questions under the headings below. For an overview of career pathways, see the accompanying *Career Pathway Primer*.

Mapping Career Pathways (Follow these questions to fill in the framework for mapping career pathways on the next page.)

Mapping job advancement opportunities

What occupations in your region offer opportunities for entry-level jobs and job advancement for workers without extensive education or skills?

- What are the various levels of jobs within each occupational group? What do these jobs pay? What is the current and projected demand for such jobs by level? (What recent data or studies are available on these jobs?)
- How are such jobs important to your region's economy? Should building a workforce for these jobs be a priority for your region?
- What employers offer these jobs in your region? What relationships do you already have to these employers? How can you get entrée to other employers in the sector to determine their hiring needs and methods?
- What are the requirements for jobs at each level? How do employers hire for these jobs?
- What professional certification or licensing standards exist for jobs at any level in this sector? Do employers in your region use these standards in hiring?

Designing programs to support advancement along career pathways in targeted occupations

What education and training programs and other services are needed to enable residents of your region to enter into jobs and advance to better paying jobs in the targeted sector?

- What should be the content of programs designed to support entry or advancement into jobs at each level of the targeted occupational group?
- What support services, such as counseling, case management, childcare, transportation and job placement assistance should be offered at each level?
- What remedial programs are needed for those who lack the basic qualifications even for entry-level training and employment in the sector?
- What should the entrance requirements be for programs at each level?
- How ideally should such programs be offered? By what organization or organizations? In what setting (e.g., workplace or schools or both)? What should be the duration of programs at each level?

Framework for Mapping Career Pathways

Occupational Cluster:

Geographic Region:

Job Levels		Stepping Stone Education/Training Programs	
Characteristics	Qualifications	Content	Entry Requirements
<i>Job Level:</i> <i>Wages:</i> <i>Demand:</i>	•	<i>Curriculum and Services:</i> <i>Duration:</i>	•
<i>Job Level:</i> <i>Wages:</i> <i>Demand:</i>	•	<i>Curriculum:</i> <i>Duration:</i>	•
<i>Job Level:</i> <i>Wages:</i> <i>Demand:</i>	•	<i>Curriculum:</i> <i>Duration:</i>	•
<i>Job Level:</i> <i>Wages:</i> <i>Demand:</i>	•	<i>Curriculum:</i> <i>Duration:</i>	•
<i>Job Level:</i> <i>Wages:</i> <i>Demand:</i>	•	<i>Curriculum:</i> <i>Duration:</i>	•

Building and Sustaining Regional Partnerships to Support Career Pathways

Creating articulated educational pathways to degrees and careers

Which programs and services currently exist in the region to prepare for jobs and further education at each level? Where are the gaps?

- What modifications are needed to existing programs and services?
- What new programs and services are needed?

Which organizations offer the existing programs and services and which would be best positioned to offer needed new ones?

- To what extent do these institutions currently work together?
- What are the barriers to cooperation?
- What needs to be done to enable these organizations to collaborate in developing and offering of career pathway programs and services?

What needs to be done to facilitate more seamless articulation from one program level to the next?

- How easy is it for students to advance from lower program levels to higher ones?
- What are the barriers to advancement?

Creating a coordinated assessment and enrollment system

To what extent can common or at least coordinated standards and assessments be developed to facilitate articulation among education and training programs in the career pathway?

- What are the standards for entry into programs at each level?
- What assessment instruments are used?
- What needs to change to facilitate articulation and advancement from one level of education and training to the next?

What needs to be done to ensure that students entering in at various levels are informed about career pathway programs?

- What advising or counseling is currently provided to students at each program level?
- What information do students now receive at each level?
- What information should they receive?

What can be done to allow students to enroll in a career pathway sequence through any one partner organization?

How can the partner organizations collaborate to strengthen marketing of career pathway programs and recruitment of disadvantaged students, especially those disconnected from the current system?

Providing supports students need to advance along career pathways

What steps need to be taken to ensure that students receive the support services – for example counseling, case management, child care, transportation, job placement assistance, etc. – they need to succeed at each program level and advance to the next one?

- Which such services are currently provided by the partner education and training institutions? Which of these services are not adequate to meet the demand?
- What other services are needed?
- How can the needed support services be offered to students in career pathway programs?
- What other institutions offer the needed services – for example, community organizations and social service agencies? How can the needed services be provided through partnerships with these outside institutions? What other steps are needed to ensure that students receive sufficient support?

Ensuring adequate funding of career pathway programs and services at all levels

What needs to be done to ensure the career pathway programs and services are adequately funded?

- What funds are needed to launch career pathways and coordinate the work of the partners?
- What are the current sources of operational funding for programs and support services at each level of the career pathway?
- What additional funds are needed for program operation by level? What are the possible sources for this funding and how can it be secured?
- In what ways can partner institutions leverage each other's resources to improve efficiencies and reduce overall costs?

Reorganizing Programs and Services to Support Student Advancement

Redesigning programs within partner institutions

What changes in programs and services are needed within each partner organization to support the development of effective career pathways?

- What changes are needed to ensure that students in remedial or basic skills programs are able readily to enter and succeed in career pathway programs?
- What can be done to ensure that students in career pathways programs are able to both secure better jobs and earn recognized credentials (including eventually a bachelor's degree) in a reasonable timeframe?

What changes are needed to accommodate working students in career pathway programs?

- To what extent are career pathway courses offered using schedules convenient to working adults? What changes are needed to better accommodate working students?
- To what extent are such programs offered in modules to allow students to combine learning and work or to stop in and out as their circumstances permit?
- What credentials are offered at each program level? Are additional credentials needed to encourage students to continue moving from one level of education and employment to the next?

What internal resources are needed to support program redesign and for which purposes – for example, curriculum development, faculty and staff training, or program coordination?

Establishing systems to track student progress

What steps need to be taken to track progress and outcomes of students in career pathway programs?

- How is the progress of students currently monitored at each program level? What outcomes are tracked at each level?
- What needs to be done to allow for monitoring of student progress across career programs and partner organizations involved in career pathways?
- How can the labor market and further education outcomes of participants be tracked?

Developing ownership for career pathways

What needs to be done to develop ownership of career pathways from faculty, staff, students and other key stakeholders?

- What are the likely sources of resistance to career pathways in the partner organizations?
- How can career pathway advocates persuade skeptics of the benefits of the career pathway approach?