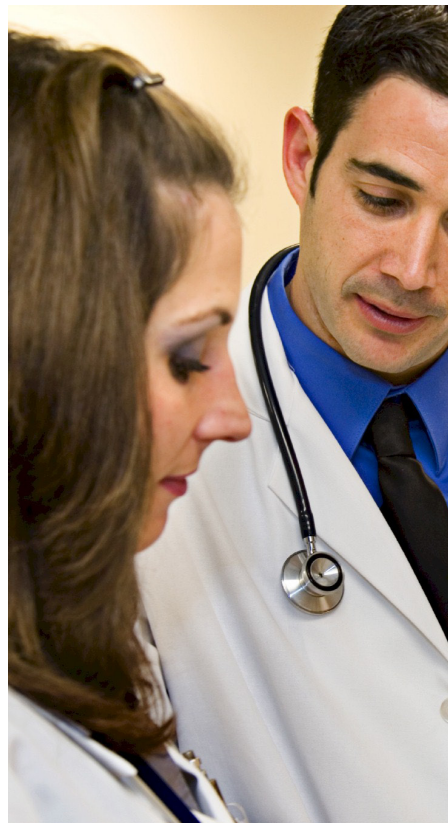




# Funding Career Pathways and Career Pathway Bridges

A FEDERAL POLICY TOOLKIT FOR STATES



policy solutions that work for low-income people

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*Revised Edition*

**About CLASP**

CLASP develops and advocates for policies at the federal, state and local levels that improve the lives of low income people. In particular, we seek policies that work to strengthen families and create pathways to education and work. For more information, visit [www.clasp.org](http://www.clasp.org).

**About the Center for Postsecondary and Economic Success**

The Center for Postsecondary and Economic Success is a policy and advocacy initiative within CLASP. The mission of the Center is to advocate for policies and investments that can increase the number of low-income adults and disadvantaged youth who earn marketable postsecondary and industry credentials that are essential to opening doors to good jobs, career advancement, and economic mobility.

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# Introduction

The current economic recession underscores the value of education in the workforce: More highly educated workers experience lower levels of unemployment than workers with lower levels of education and skill. While the average unemployment rate in September 2010 was 9.6 percent, the unemployment rate was just 4.4 percent for individuals with bachelor's degrees or higher, 9.1 percent for individuals with some college or an associate degree, 10 percent for high school graduates with no college, and 15.4 percent for those with less than a high school diploma.<sup>1</sup>

Less educated workers will experience little relief in this slow economic recovery as the growing demand for education and skills is unlikely to relent. Recent data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicated that one-third of all job openings and nearly half of all new jobs that will be created between 2008 and 2018 will require a postsecondary degree or credential. The fastest growth in new jobs will be in occupations requiring an associate degree: 19.1 percent, compared to 16.6 for bachelor's degrees, 13.2 for postsecondary vocational awards, and between 7.5 and 8 percent for on-the-job training (which varies considerably in length).<sup>2</sup>

Although the labor market demands a more educated workforce, millions of workers are ill-equipped for these jobs. Nearly half the U.S. workforce has only a high school education or less. Some 25 million workers aged 18 to 64 lack a high school diploma or GED, while another 52 million adults have no postsecondary education. Furthermore, this country cannot rely solely on new entrants to the workforce to meet this demand. About two-thirds (65 percent) of our 2020 workforce is already beyond the reach of our elementary and secondary schools.<sup>3</sup>

Millions of workers are ill-equipped for higher skilled jobs, and, unfortunately, our adult education, workforce development, and postsecondary education systems are ill-equipped to prepare them for these jobs. These systems are hobbled by institutional silos, poor alignment between educational institutions, and disconnects between the institutions and the needs of the labor market. They are plagued by leaky pipelines in which adult education and English language programs are generally not connected to job training and other postsecondary education programs. Most college developmental education programs are disconnected from college occupational and academic programs. Non-credit occupational education is disconnected from for-credit certificate and degree programs. And few of any of these programs are closely connected to employer and industry needs.<sup>4</sup>

## DEFINITIONS: CAREER PATHWAYS AND CAREER PATHWAY BRIDGES

One approach many states are adopting to fix fragmented and leaky educational pipelines is that of career pathways and career pathway bridge models. **Career pathways** are linked education and training services that “enable students, often while they are working, to advance over time to successively higher levels of educa-

tion and employment in a given industry or occupational sector. Each step on a career pathway is designed explicitly to prepare students to progress to the next level of employment and education” (Oregon Career Pathways initiative). Ideally, career pathways are not a separate program, but a framework for weaving together adult education, training, and college programs that are currently separated into silos and connecting those services to employers’ workforce needs.

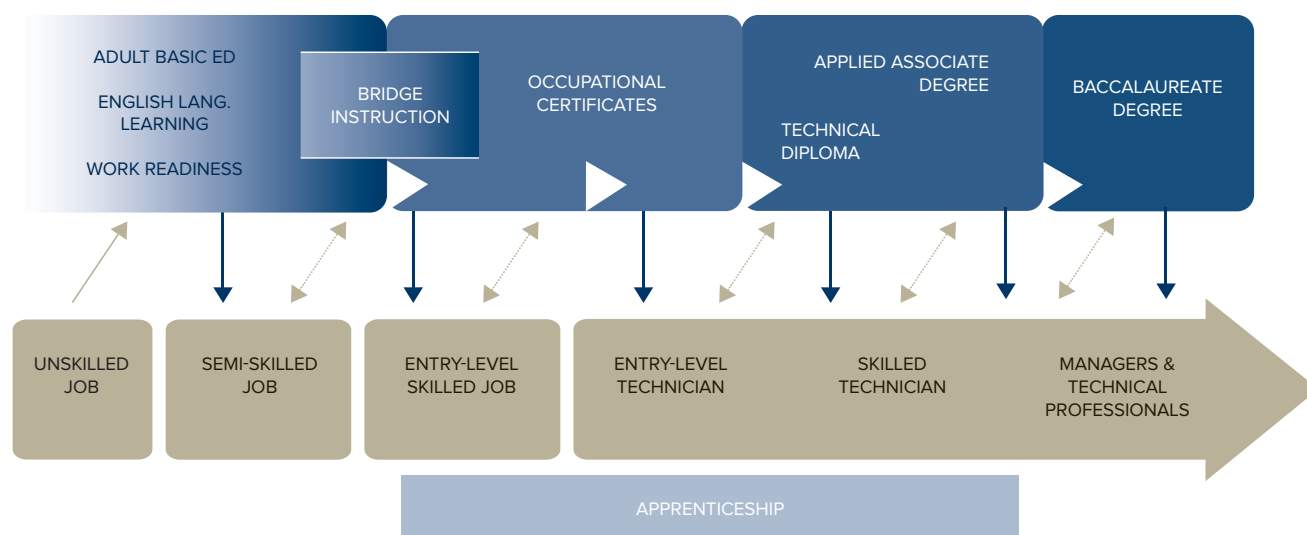
The core components of career pathways are:

- Multiple entry points, e.g., from adult education, ESL programs, workforce training, and not simply through high school.

**Career pathway bridge programs or instruction** combine basic academic and English language content with postsecondary occupational content to help lower-skilled workers and out-of-school youth earn credentials valued by employers. Through new curricula and joint planning and instruction, this model helps bridge the skills gap that can prevent them from entering and succeeding in postsecondary education.

Career pathway bridges tailor and contextualize adult basic education and English language content to general workplace needs and to the knowledge and skills needed in specific occupations. Additional features of career pathway bridges may include dual enrollment in basic

### CAREER PATHWAYS AND CAREER PATHWAY BRIDGES



*Credit: Wisconsin Regional Industry Skills Education (RISE) Initiative*

- Innovations in program content and delivery, e.g., flexible scheduling, contextualization, integration of bridge programs.
- Sequence of education and training leading to credentials with value in the labor market.
- Support services (provided by community organizations, community colleges, and/or other organizations).
- Strong role for employers in pathway development, worksite training, and contribution of resources.

skills and technical education courses and articulation of academic and technical content and credentials leading to the next step in a career pathway.

Career pathway bridges require close partnerships among education and training sectors—such as adult basic education, developmental education, skills development, and other postsecondary education systems. Other essential partners are employers and unions, community-based organizations, and social service agencies.

To the extent that they include postsecondary content, career pathway bridge models may qualify for college full-time equivalent (FTE) financing, student financial aid, Perkins funding, and other financial resources that can fund instruction and student supports.

At least seven states—Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Ohio, Oregon, and Wisconsin—have explored or adopted career pathways approaches to help working adults access and succeed in postsecondary education. Some states—including Illinois, Minnesota, Ohio, Oregon, Washington, and Wisconsin—are also engaged in bridge initiatives connected to career pathways. Among the states that have launched career pathways or career pathway bridge efforts, four are the Midwestern states of Illinois, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin that are part of the Shifting Gears state policy initiative to promote regional economic growth by improving the education and skills training of the workforce.

The momentum for career pathways and career pathway bridges has grown over the last decade. It is likely that more states and institutions will initiate these types of models since they have been highlighted in recent federal legislation, such as the workforce development funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The Obama administration has signaled that it intends to use WIA reauthorization to continue policy reforms begun under the Recovery Act, especially those that create better pathways for lower-skilled adults and out-of-school youth to postsecondary credentials and to careers. Also, philanthropic organizations increasingly are supporting these types of efforts, such as The Joyce Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and foundations involved in the National Fund for Workforce Solutions.

# Using the Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to help interagency state teams to identify and use federal resources to support career pathways and bridges into them for adults and out-of-school youth. Specifically, the toolkit aims to help states:

- Understand possible key components and tasks involved in developing, implementing, and maintaining career pathways and career pathway bridges.
- Identify how federal resources can support these key components and tasks.
- Pinpoint state policy changes or other state actions needed to fully realize federal funding opportunities for pathways and bridges into them.

## WHO SHOULD USE THIS TOOLKIT?

This tool will be most useful for state-level interagency teams engaging in discussions about resources and policies across workforce development, adult education, postsecondary education, and support service programs that can support career pathways and career pathway bridges. In addition, the federal program summaries may be a useful resource for regions or communities seeking to better understand federal resources that can support career pathway and career pathway bridge efforts at the regional or local level.

## HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit is divided into two main sections: (1) a funding options worksheet, and (2) federal program summaries. (The funding options worksheet is adapted from a framework first developed by the state of Wisconsin as part of its RISE career pathways initiative.)<sup>5</sup>

We recommend the following steps for using these two components to identify how federal programs might support your state's career pathways and career pathway bridge efforts:

**STEP 1:** The state should review the key tasks for building career pathways in the funding options worksheet on page 9. The state can use the blank worksheet provided or download a blank worksheet from the CLASP Web site to customize the key tasks for the state's specific initiative.

- Identify the specific target population(s).
- List the key tasks for developing and implementing your approach under each of the main sections: Business and Industry Engagement, Program Innovation, Student Supports and Student Success Services, Student Aid, and Systems and Partnerships.

**Note:** The state may want to use the sample tasks provided in the example and/or may want to customize tasks based on the specific interests or needs of the state.

**STEP 2:** Review the federal program summaries in Section III to identify resources that might support your state's career pathways initiative. Complete the worksheet with specific information on how individual federal programs can support key tasks in your state's career pathways initiative.

- Read the program summaries and note state examples, program limitations, and opportunities.
- Multiple federal programs can be included in one worksheet. Some states may want to include just one or a few programs per worksheet and include details about each funding source in the cells. Other states may want to include a column for each of the ten federal programs and simply check off which federal funding sources can fund specific tasks. It may be useful to use multiple worksheets, grouping similar federal programs on each.

**STEP 3:** Identify state policy changes or actions needed to remove barriers or encourage wider use of federal resources to support career pathways and bridges into them.

**Note:** States may want to make the funding options worksheet a living document by updating it as policies change, programs are reauthorized, etc.

#### OVERVIEW OF FEDERAL PROGRAM SUMMARIES

This toolkit includes summaries of ten federal programs that can support various components of state career pathways and career pathway bridges into them. They are administered by four federal departments.

#### Administered by the U.S. Department of Labor:

- Workforce Investment Act Title I: Adult and Dislocated Worker
- Workforce Investment Act Title I: Youth
- Trade Adjustment Assistance
- Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship
- Employment Service (Wagner-Peyser Act)

#### Administered by the U.S. Department of Education:

- Workforce Investment Act Title II: Adult Education and Family Literacy Act
- Pell Grant
- Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education

#### Administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

#### Administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training

Some federal program resources may be more supportive of certain key tasks than others. For example:

Federal programs that may support staff to perform tasks relevant to **Business and Industry Engagement** and **Systems and Partnerships**:

- Employment Service (Wagner-Peyser Act)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- And others

Federal programs that may support **Program Innovation:**

- Workforce Investment Act Title II: Adult Education and Family Literacy Act
- Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education
- And others

Federal programs that may support **Student Support/Success Services:**

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training
- Trade Adjustment Assistance
- And others

Federal programs that may provide **payment directly to students and/or for education/training:**

- Workforce Investment Act Title I: Adult and Dislocated Worker
- Pell Grant
- Trade Adjustment Assistance
- And others

States may think of additional federal resources that can be brought to bear on pathways and career pathway bridge efforts; this toolkit does not try to provide an exhaustive list, just detailed insights into some of the most significant ones.

# FUNDING OPTIONS WORKSHEET

*Below is a tool that lists sample key tasks in designing, implementing, and sustaining career pathway and career pathway bridges. An [electronic version of this tool](#) that can be customized for your state can be found on the CLASP Center for Postsecondary and Economic Success Web site.*

## Major Federal Funding Streams That Support Key Tasks in Building Career Pathway and Career Pathway Bridges

| KEY TASKS                                                                                                                                                                           |  | FEDERAL PROGRAM A | FEDERAL PROGRAM B |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>TARGET POPULATION:</b><br>(e.g., TANF recipients, at risk or out-of-school youth)                                                                                                |  |                   |                   |
| BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT                                                                                                                                                    |  |                   |                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify sectors and employers within sectors needing skilled workers and offering employment opportunities at different levels</li> </ul>   |  |                   |                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the skill needs and employment opportunities at different levels to inform creation of related educational opportunities</li> </ul> |  |                   |                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create hands-on learning opportunities hosted or sponsored by employers, such as job shadowing, internships and work experience</li> </ul>   |  |                   |                   |

| KEY TASKS                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  |  | FEDERAL PROGRAM A | FEDERAL PROGRAM B |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| PROGRAM INNOVATION                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  |  |                   |                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define, with employer input, the steps leading to certificates, licenses or degrees and relevant employment opportunities at each level</li> </ul>                            |  |  |                   |                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximize the ability to build toward credentials over time through articulation and transfer (dual enrollment), especially between credit and non-credit offerings</li> </ul> |  |  |                   |                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create “Road Maps”—visual representations of educational and employment pathways</li> </ul>                                                                                   |  |  |                   |                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create or re-write curricula for short-term credentials linked to jobs and imbedded in educational pathways</li> </ul>                                                        |  |  |                   |                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop instructional formats that accelerate and compress content</li> </ul>                                                                                                 |  |  |                   |                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make programs accessible to non-traditional students through flexible scheduling and alternative locations and innovative use of technology</li> </ul>                        |  |  |                   |                   |

| KEY TASKS                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |  | FEDERAL PROGRAM A | FEDERAL PROGRAM B |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| PROGRAM INNOVATION (continued)                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  |  |                   |                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enroll students in groups through learning communities, etc.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                     |  |  |                   |                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Combine basic skills with occupational training (in both developmental education and ABE/ESL) to enable low-skilled adults to enter and complete programs leading to credentials</li> </ul> |  |  |                   |                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build essential skills needed for the workplace, career and postsecondary success</li> </ul>                                                                                                |  |  |                   |                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase awarding of credit with wider use of credit for prior learning</li> </ul>                                                                                                          |  |  |                   |                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pay for unreimbursed program costs (e.g., equipment and faculty time for team teaching) not fully covered by tuition and institutional support</li> </ul>                                   |  |  |                   |                   |
| STUDENT SUPPORTS AND STUDENT SUCCESS SERVICES                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |  |                   |                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide career planning and assessment services</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                  |  |  |                   |                   |

| KEY TASKS                                                                                                                                                      |  | FEDERAL PROGRAM A |  | FEDERAL PROGRAM B |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-------------------|--|-------------------|--|
| STUDENT SUPPORTS AND STUDENT SUCCESS SERVICES (continued)                                                                                                      |  |                   |  |                   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide academic support and tutoring</li></ul>                                                                        |  |                   |  |                   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide case management and coaching, including navigation of financial aid options and educational programs</li></ul> |  |                   |  |                   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide support services, such as child care and transportation</li></ul>                                              |  |                   |  |                   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide mentoring for youth</li></ul>                                                                                  |  |                   |  |                   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enable students to participate in work experience, internships</li></ul>                                               |  |                   |  |                   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make available job search assistance and placement assistance</li></ul>                                                |  |                   |  |                   |  |

| KEY TASKS                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  | FEDERAL PROGRAM A |  | FEDERAL PROGRAM B |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-------------------|--|-------------------|--|
| STUDENT AID                                                                                                                                                                                                                |  |                   |  |                   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provide direct student assistance (e.g., tuition, fees, books and supplies) or pay for the costs of student participation in education and training programs</li></ul>               |  |                   |  |                   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Cover indirect costs of attendance (e.g., living expenses)</li></ul>                                                                                                                 |  |                   |  |                   |  |
| SYSTEMS AND PARTNERSHIPS                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  |                   |  |                   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identify/Employ dedicated staff to maintain business/education and other pathway partnerships with community organizations, such as labor or community-based organizations</li></ul> |  |                   |  |                   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Use data to identify sectors and related educational and employment pathways</li></ul>                                                                                               |  |                   |  |                   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Use data to measure student progress and transitions to career and postsecondary success and evaluate program performance</li></ul>                                                  |  |                   |  |                   |  |