



Alliance for Quality
Career Pathways

a project of CLASP

Alliance for Quality Career Pathways “Beta” Framework: Public Version

July 15, 2013

Notice: This draft is for purposes of review and field-testing only from July through December 2013. CLASP and the Alliance partners will edit the definitions and terms, visuals, criteria, indicators, and metrics based on feedback and what we learn in the review and field-testing phase. In early 2014, CLASP and the Alliance will release Version 1.0 of the framework, which will be suitable for use by career pathway partners and supporters to build and improve career pathway systems.

For more information on the Alliance for Quality Career Pathways, contact
careerpathways@clasp.org.

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

[The Alliance for Quality Career Pathways](#) is a two-year (2012-2014), state-driven, CLASP-led initiative funded by the Joyce Foundation and James Irvine Foundation to identify criteria and indicators that define high-quality career pathway systems and a set of shared performance metrics for measuring and managing their success. The Alliance includes ten states that are leading the nation in experience with developing and taking to scale career pathways and that have volunteered to work together to develop the Alliance framework: **Arkansas, California, Illinois, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Oregon, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin.**¹

The goal of the Alliance is to help policymakers and practitioners build on existing career pathway innovations and strengthen career pathway systems that provide employers with the skilled workers they need and that offer educational and economic opportunities and credentials for workers. The Alliance recognizes that there are many different types of career pathways to accommodate the varying needs of individuals seeking education and training. For purposes of developing its framework, the Alliance defines **career pathways** as an approach to connecting progressive levels of basic skills and postsecondary education, training, and supportive services in specific sectors or cross-sector occupations in a way that optimizes the progress and success of individuals— including those with limited education, English, skills, and/or work experience—in securing marketable credentials, family-supporting employment, and further education and employment opportunities. Career pathways help employers meet their workforce needs and help states and communities strengthen their workforces and economies.

Today's education and workforce development systems were designed for different times when credentials were not required by nearly two-thirds of the workforce² and lifelong learning was more avocational than a key ingredient to sustained individual economic security and global competitiveness. As such, these systems have not been designed to provide all workers with a seamless path to earning credentials and, despite all good intentions, have shortcomings and disconnects that can block the road to educational and economic success. The career pathway approach reorients existing education and workforce services from a myriad of disconnected programs to a structure that focuses on the workforce needs of employers and on individuals in need of education and training and their career paths. It provides clear transitions, strong supports, and other elements critical to the success of participants. It is not simply a new model; it is a new way of doing business.

The framework developed by the Alliance for Quality Career Pathways is intended to provide a common understanding of high-quality career pathway systems and programs, regardless of the targeted industry, occupation, or credentials; the targeted population; or the design of the career pathways or programs. State and local/regional partnerships adopting the career pathway approach—within and

¹ The Alliance also includes a National Advisory Group of national experts including Ann Randazzo (Center for Energy Workforce Development), Bob Sheets (private consultant), Brandon Roberts (Working Poor Families Project), Deborah Mills (Center for Occupational Research and Development), Debra Bragg (Office of Community College Research and Leadership), Eric Seleznow (National Skills Coalition), Gary Hoachlander (ConnectEd California), Israel Mendoza (private consultant), Judy Alamprese (Abt Associates), Karen Gardiner (Abt Associates), Kim Green (National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium) Lennox McLendon (National Council of State Directors for Adult Education), Mala Thakur (National Youth Employment Coalition), Mary Clagett (Jobs for the Future), and Nan Poppe (Completion by Design).

² Carnevale, Anthony P., Nicole Smith, and Jeff Strohl. 2010. *Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018*. Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, p. 16.

beyond the ten Alliance states—can use the Alliance framework to build and strengthen their career pathway systems. This will enable them to provide seamless career paths that transcend the system disconnects and provide essential supports for youths and adults – including those with limited education, English, skills, and/or work experiences – to build their skills, earn credentials of value, and access jobs and careers that support themselves and their families.

Our vision is that the Alliance framework will be instrumental in the continued growth and scaling of the career pathways field. The framework can be used to help existing career pathway partnerships ratchet up quality, help accelerate the development of new career pathway systems, and inform evaluation efforts in the career pathways field. The framework seeks to strike a balance between being deeply rooted in the reality of the current career pathway efforts and aspiring to move the field to the next level of development. CLASP and the Alliance states anticipate that the field will continue to evolve and advance as we undertake this work; therefore, so will the Alliance framework.

This document is the ***“beta” version of the framework and is intended only for review and field-testing of the criteria, indicators, and metrics.*** It was drafted by CLASP and the Alliances states, drawing upon a review of existing research and literature on career pathways; extensive reviews by, and conversations with, several members of partner agencies and organizations in Alliance states and members of the Alliance’s National Advisory Group; communications with the researchers and the director of the Innovative Strategies for Increasing Self-Sufficiency (ISIS) project; and feedback from participants at national conferences and meetings. This beta framework builds upon the Department of Labor’s *Six Key Elements* and adds key new pieces such as the conceptual model of career pathway systems and the shared set of career pathway performance metrics.

The review and field-testing period will extend from July through December 2013, and includes the following activities:

- Career pathway partners in the state will review and provide feedback on the definitions, visuals, criteria, and indicators (sections II, III, and IV);
- Some career pathway partners *may be able to* field-test the criteria and indicators by using them in an organizational review, RFP, or other real-world application and providing feedback gained through the process;
- Career pathway partners will review and provide feedback on the metrics (section V); and
- Most Alliance states will field-test the metrics by conducting data runs using the metrics and definitions (or modifications specific to each Alliance state) and providing feedback on the technical feasibility of the metrics and on the appropriate applicability of each metric to a career pathway shared set of metrics.

In winter 2014, CLASP and the Alliance partners will edit the framework (including definitions, visuals, criteria, indicators, and metrics) based on the feedback and what we learn in the review and field-testing phase. CLASP and the Alliance partners will draft and publish a final Version 1.0 of the framework in the spring of 2014, and a complementary self-assessment tool for use by career pathway partnerships. To provide feedback on this beta version of the framework, contact the liaison in your Alliance state or contact CLASP at careerpathways@clasp.org.

Timeline:

- July-December 2013: Alliance partners review and field-test this beta framework; CLASP will collect any public comments from non-Alliance partners
- Winter 2014: CLASP and the Alliance partners review feedback and edit the framework
- Spring 2014: CLASP and the Alliance release Version 1.0 of the AQCP Framework (with self-assessment tool)

Section II of this document provides the Alliance’s conceptual model of career pathway systems and programs, including key definitions, visuals, and guiding principles. Section III provides the “beta” criteria and indicators for high-quality state career pathway systems and includes space for reviewers to provide examples of how a partnership might document that the system has met each indicator (divided into three levels of system maturity: emerging, established, and advanced). Section IV provides the “beta” criteria and indicators for high-quality local/regional career pathway systems and opportunities to suggest examples of documentation. Section V provides the “beta” career pathway metrics for review and field-testing in 2013. Section VI provides a glossary of key terms for the Alliance framework.

SECTION II: KEY DEFINITIONS, VISUALS, AND SUMMARY OF CRITERIA

Review and Field-testing: Alliance partners will review the definitions, visuals, and overview of criteria in this section with directors, staff, and practitioners at the state, regional, and local levels involved in career pathways by the end of December 2013. CLASP will work with Alliance teams to develop a process for collecting feedback during this period. CLASP and the Alliance partners will edit the definitions, visuals, and criteria based on the feedback and will release Version 1.0 of the framework in early 2014.

Key Questions:

1. Do the definitions and visuals in this section provide a clear and accurate description of the career pathway approach and career pathway systems?
2. Would you use these definitions and visuals in your work? If not, why not? What would you change?

- **Career pathways**³ (working definition⁴): An approach to connecting progressive levels of basic skills and postsecondary education, training, and *supportive services* in specific *sectors* or *cross-sector occupations* in a way that optimizes the progress and success of individuals—including those with limited education, English, skills, and/or work experience—in securing *marketable credentials*, family-supporting employment, and further education and employment opportunities. Career pathways help employers meet their workforce needs and help states and communities strengthen their workforces and economies. [Note: states and/or initiatives should follow this definition with more information on their specific career pathways efforts.]
- **Local/regional career pathway system:** A local/regional career pathway system is built and maintained by a partnership among local and/or regional agencies, organizations, institutions, and employers/industries that is committed to building, scaling, and sustaining demand-driven career pathways and to key guiding principles of career pathway systems (see page 8) . The system is comprised of **specific sector or cross-sector occupational career pathways** that consist of (1) well-connected education and training offerings; (2) multiple entry points that accommodate participants entering at differing education and skill levels (including *career pathway “bridge” programs* to help those with limited education, English, skills, and work experiences access career pathway programs); and (3) multiple exit points at successively higher levels of family-supporting employment and aligned with subsequent educational entry points. Each career pathway enables a participant—no matter his or her entry point—to earn marketable credentials and access employment at or above family-supporting wages. Local/regional career pathways often consist of multiple aligned career

³ Italicized terms throughout this document can be found in the glossary.

⁴ This is a hybrid of the previous AQCP working definition (based on the oft-used Oregon definition), the definition from the federal joint guidance letter on career pathways (April 4, 2012), and feedback from the AQCP partners.

pathway programs (see figure 1). Career pathway systems are inclusive of career pathways and programs.

- **Career pathway programs** are the building blocks of career pathways; they blend a set of programmatic elements in a specific sector or cross-sector occupational area and align them in a career pathway leading to marketable credentials. Career pathway programs are comprised of (1) *participant-focused approaches* to instruction and occupational training; (2) appropriate and meaningful assessment of participants' skills and needs; (3) supportive services and *career navigation assistance* for participants in the pathways (including early and ongoing career awareness and exploration and intensive support services for high-need populations); and (4) direct connections to employment that include *quality work experiences and employment services*. Career pathway programs for youth also blend in youth development principles. Career pathway programs vary regarding the extent of the education and training and the number of credentials a participant can earn. If the end point of a particular career pathway program does not enable a participant to earn a credential(s) that qualifies him or her for employment at or above family-supporting wages, that program aligns with and connects to a subsequent career pathway program that is designed to meet this goal.

Current evidence-based⁵ approaches to participant-centered instruction and occupational training

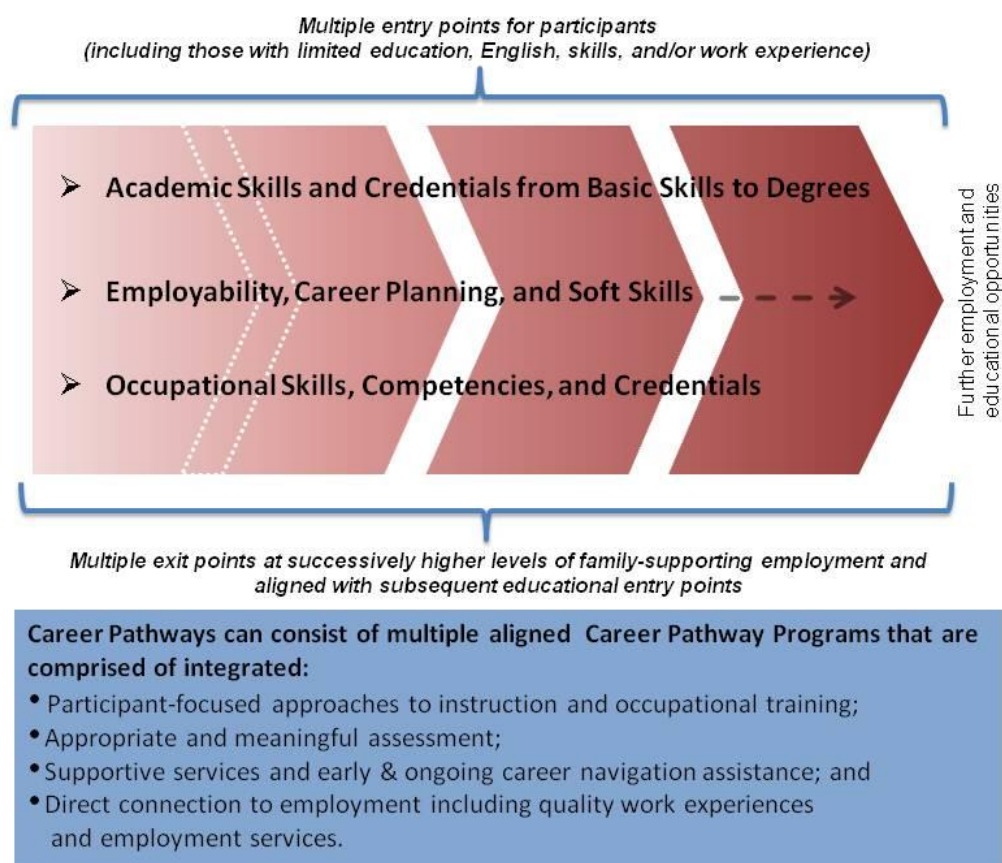
One indicator of a high-quality local/regional career pathway system is that the partners adopt *evidence-based best practices* to optimize career pathway participant success (see indicator 5.1 for Local/Regional Career Pathway Systems in section IV). Current examples of evidence-based best practices for participant-focused approaches to instruction and occupational training are listed below. This list is not exhaustive and may evolve as more evidence accumulates. Additionally, the specific practices used by a career pathway program will vary depending on the target population, sector or cross-sector occupation, and program design. The AQCP framework is designed to be customizable to accommodate the important variation of career pathways; therefore, it does not specify particular approaches, but rather indicates that they should be evidence-based (based on evidence currently available).

Current evidence-based approaches to participant-centered instruction and occupational training include:

- *Dual and/or concurrent enrollment* and other strategies for accelerating learning;
- *Integrated education and training*;
- *Contextualized* curriculum and instruction;
- *Learning communities*;
- *Supportive services*;
- Offering education and training at times and places and in formats that work for the targeted population, including non-semester-based schedules, block schedules, evening/and weekend schedules;
- *Chunked or modularized curriculum*;
- Self-paced instruction;
- Competency-based curriculum and assessment; and/or
- Technology-enabled, online and/or *hybrid instruction* (and/or supports and learning management).

⁵ Policies or practices of demonstrated effectiveness as shown by theoretical knowledge, data on practices, program evaluation results, implementation data, and/or synthesis of research (see glossary). "Evidenced-based" is not limited to randomized evaluation.

Figure 1. Local/regional sector or cross-sector occupational career pathway and programs



- A **state career pathway system** is built and maintained by a partnership of state-level agencies, organizations, and employers/industries that provides leadership, supportive and aligned policies, and resources for state and local/regional demand-driven career pathway systems and that promotes the quality, scale, and sustainability of career pathways. The partnership follows key guiding principles in building and implementing the career pathway system (see below).

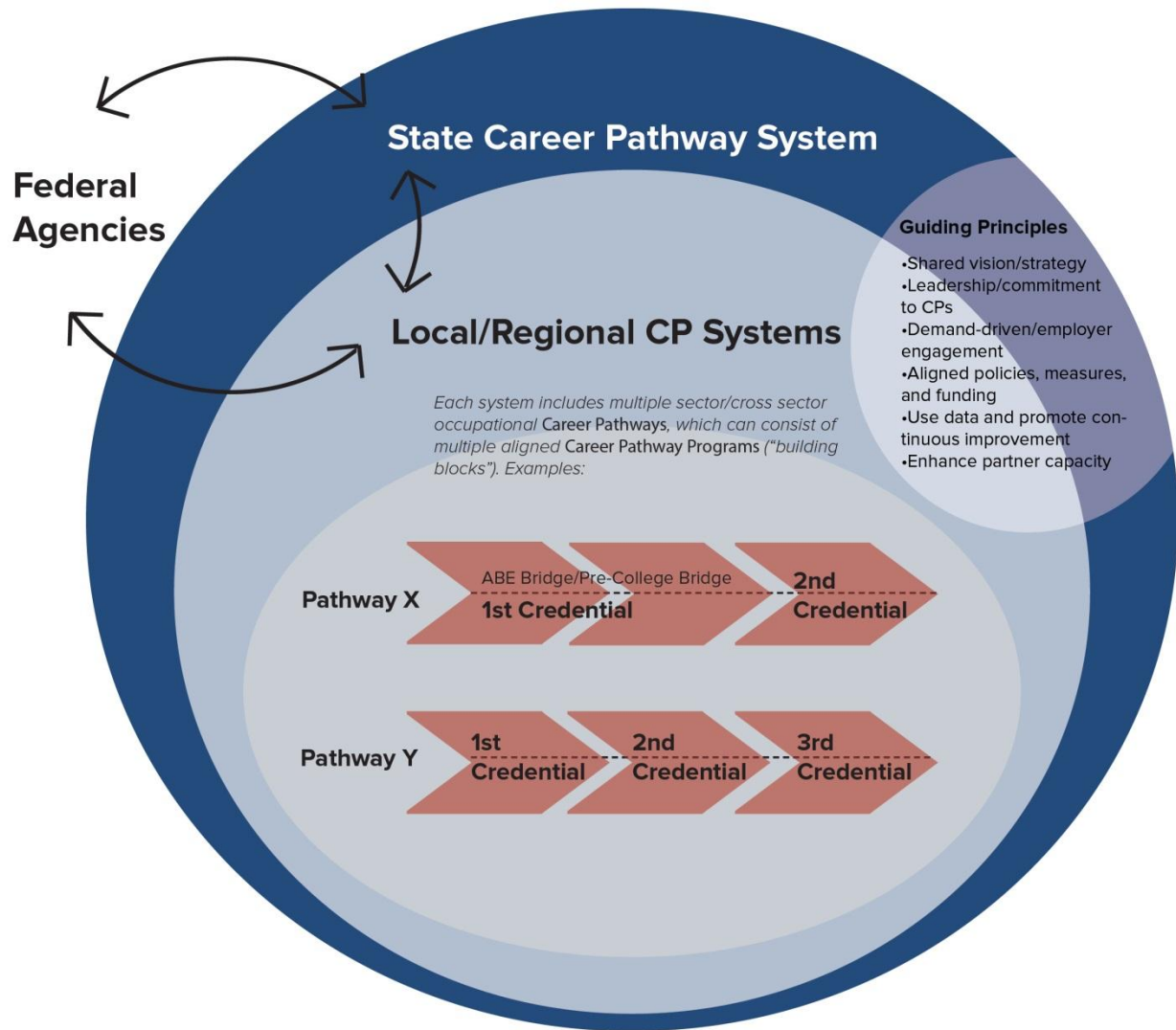
There should be a feedback loop between the state career pathway system and the local/regional systems such that each is learning from the other and that each system is mutually reinforcing of the other. The relevant federal agencies also should be part of the feedback loop. Both local/regional and state career pathway systems are shaped by six guiding principles.

Guiding principles:

- **Adopt and articulate a shared vision and strategy:** Partners adopt a shared vision of demand-driven career pathways and a collaborative strategy for building, scaling, and sustaining state and local/regional career pathway systems (including programs).
- **Demonstrate leadership and commitment to institutionalizing career pathways:** Partners demonstrate collaborative leadership and a commitment to building, scaling, and sustaining state and local career pathway systems (including programs). This approach becomes the way they do business on a regular basis.
- **Ensure that career pathways are driven by demand in key sectors/occupations and significantly engage employers:** The local/regional career pathway system and programs are responsive to the specific, dynamic contexts of the regional labor market and significantly engage multiple employers within a sector or cross-sector occupation in an interactive, ongoing working relationship (connecting to sector strategies where applicable).
- **Align policies, measures, and funding:** partners align related policies, performance and accountability measures, and funding for career pathways and programs, including through the use of aligned and braided resources across funding streams.
- **Use and promote data and continuous improvement strategies:** Partners are data-driven and focus on continuous improvement by measuring participants' interim and ultimate outcomes, as well as process indicators.
- **Enhance the capacity of partners to implement the shared vision:** Partners support capacity building to fully implement the shared vision.

Figure 2 below provides a visual representation of the relationship between state career pathway systems, local/regional career pathway systems, career pathways, and career pathway programs.

Figure 2. State career pathway systems, local/regional career pathway systems, and career pathway programs



The above definitions, figures, and guiding principles constitute the Alliance for Quality Career Pathways' conceptual model for state and local/regional career pathway systems (inclusive of pathways and programs). From this model, the Alliance has identified four key criteria for high-quality state career pathway systems and six key criteria for high-quality local/regional career pathway systems. A summary of these criteria appears below. Criteria with corresponding indicators are presented in sections III and IV of this beta framework document.

OVERVIEW OF CRITERIA

Criteria for High Quality State Career Pathway Systems

1. **Commit to a Shared Vision and Strategy:** State-level partners—in conjunction with local/regional partners—are committed to a shared vision of demand-driven career pathways and to a strategy for building, scaling, and sustaining state and local/regional career pathway systems.
2. **Provide Resources:** State-level partners identify and provide resources to build, scale, and sustain state and local/regional career pathway systems.
3. **Implement Supportive State Policies:** State-level partners implement supportive policies to build, scale, and sustain state and local/regional career pathway systems.
4. **Use Data and Shared Measures:** State-level partners use data to demonstrate and improve career pathway participant outcomes.

Criteria for High Quality Local/Regional Career Pathway Systems

1. **Commit to a Shared Vision and Strategy:** Local/regional partners—in conjunction with state partners—are committed to a shared vision of demand-driven career pathways and to a strategy for building, scaling, and sustaining a local/regional career pathway system.
2. **Engage Employers:** Local/regional partners engage multiple employers and labor partners to support, shape, and utilize the local/regional career pathway system.
3. **Provide Resources:** Local/regional partners identify and provide resources to build, scale, and sustain the career pathway system.
4. **Implement Supportive Local/Regional Policies:** Local/regional partners implement supportive policies to build, scale, and sustain a local/regional career pathway system.
5. **Adopt Evidence-Based Best Practices:** Local/regional partners adopt evidence-based best practices to optimize career pathway participant success.
6. **Use Data and Shared Measures:** Local/regional partners use data to demonstrate and improve career pathway participant outcomes.

SECTION III: STATE CAREER PATHWAY SYSTEM

Review and Field-testing: Alliance partners will review the State Career Pathway System criteria and indicators below with directors, staff, and practitioners at the state, regional, and local levels involved in career pathways by the end of December 2013. CLASP will work with Alliance partners to develop a process for collecting feedback during this period. In winter 2014, CLASP and the Alliance partners will edit these criteria and indicators based on the feedback and will release Version 1.0 of the framework in early 2014. Alliance partners will provide examples in the right-side column of documentation of a system meeting each indicator. Some examples are provided for illustrative purposes.

Key questions for review:

1. Do these criteria and indicators clearly and accurately describe the key elements and activities necessary for a high-quality state career pathway system? If not, what would you change, add, or delete? (Note: the framework must have as few criteria and indicators as possible to be useable.)
2. How would you use these criteria and indicators in your work? Do you think they would be useful to you?

A state career pathway system is built and maintained by a partnership of state-level agencies, organizations, and employers/industries that provides leadership, supportive and aligned policies, and resources for state and local/regional demand-driven career pathway systems and that promotes the quality, scale, and sustainability of career pathways. The partnership follows key guiding principles in building and implementing the career pathway system. (See figure 2 in section II above for an illustration of how a state career pathway system relates to local/regional systems).

Criteria and Indicators for a HIGH-QUALITY System <i>The “north star” for where a state career pathway partnership should aim its efforts to achieve a high-quality career pathway system (inclusive of pathways and programs).</i>	Documentation of Meeting the Indicator <i>Examples of how a state partnership may document meeting each indicator, categorized into level of maturity for the specific indicator. Current examples are for illustrative purposes only. Each level of documentation is cumulative. Systems may have different levels of maturity across the indicators.</i>
1. Criterion: State-level partners—in conjunction with local/regional partners—are committed to a shared vision of demand-driven career pathways and to a strategy for building, scaling, and sustaining state and local/regional career pathway systems.	
1.1. Indicator: State partnership includes state agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private sector partners that provide critical functions in the career pathway system for targeted populations, including education, training, employment and employment services, and supportive services.	Emerging: Established: Advanced:
1.2. Indicator: State-level public, nonprofit, and private sector partners commit their organizations to carrying out specific roles and responsibilities in a shared strategy for building and sustaining career pathway systems.	Emerging: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State partners have signed a memorandum of agreement that clearly describes each partner’s role in a discrete career pathway initiative. Established: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State partners embed their shared vision, strategy, and/or goals in each of their agency/organization/institutional strategic plans. Advanced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State partners’ shared career pathway vision, strategy, and goals determine direction for both discretionary and formula funding for all relevant education and workforce programs.

1.3. Indicator: Employer partners promote and support career pathways.	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:
1.4. Indicator: State partners communicate state career pathway-related policy and their implementation of federal career pathway-related policy to local/regional partners.	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:
1.5. Indicator: State partners adjust state policies that pose barriers to the successful development and implementation of career pathways based on local/regional feedback and lessons learned.	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:
1.6. Indicator: State partners communicate lessons learned from state and local implementation of career pathways to federal partners.	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced: State partners proactively provide recommendations to federal agencies regarding important federal policies related to career pathways.
2. Criterion: State-level partners identify and provide resources to build, scale, and sustain state and local/regional career pathway systems.	
2.1. Indicator: State agencies use their budget authority over <u>federal funds</u> to align and <i>braid</i> them to support state and local/regional career pathway systems.	Emerging:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State partners leverage discretionary federal funds to support career pathway systems. • State partners leverage federal competitive grant funds to support career pathway systems.
	Established:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State partners have developed a funding plan that documents the costs of career pathway systems and funding sources to cover the costs.
	Advanced:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State partners use federal formula funding to support career pathways. • State partners use their authority or seek federal waivers to remove policy barriers – including data collection, reporting and performance accountability requirements – to the use of these funds for career pathways.

<p>2.2. Indicator: State partnership leverages <u>state resources</u> to support state and local/regional career pathway systems, including staffing and management.</p>	<p>Emerging:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State partners commit staff time to building career pathway systems (“in kind” contribution). • State partners educate state policymakers about career pathways • State partners offer professional development opportunities for local/regional practitioners and administrators on career pathways programming.
	<p>Established:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State partners secure state funding to support career pathway systems, but still require substantial discretionary assistance (i.e., from discretionary grants and/or philanthropic support). • Partners provide professional development opportunities for state and local staff on building career pathway systems.
	<p>Advanced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State partners align provisions related to competitive grant solicitations within the state to support career pathways, i.e., competitive funding for adult education, TANF, etc. is specifically for implementing the career pathway approach and building career pathway systems. • State partners secure state funding to support career pathway systems, which substantially supports career pathway systems.
<p>2.3. Indicator: State partners leverage philanthropic funds to support state and local/regional career pathway systems.</p>	<p>Emerging:</p>
	<p>Established:</p>
	<p>Advanced:</p>
<p>3. Criterion: State-level partners implement supportive policies to build, scale, and sustain state and local/regional career pathway systems.</p>	
<p>3.1. Indicator: State partners provide specific guidance that is consistent within and across agencies on cross-system alignment and the allowable use of federal and state funding streams under their jurisdiction to support career pathways.</p>	<p>Emerging:</p>
	<p>Established:</p>
	<p>Advanced:</p>
<p>3.2. Indicator: State partners adopt a shared definition of career pathways and key related concepts and embed them in new and existing regulatory policies.</p>	<p>Emerging:</p>
	<p>Established:</p>
	<p>Advanced:</p>

3.3. Indicator: State partners adopt policies in their respective agencies/organizations that facilitate <i>credit recognition</i> and transfer.	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:
3.4. Indicator: State partners adopt policies that consistently define and document credentials, establish quality assurance processes to assure the market relevance and educational currency of career pathway credentials, and establish consistent assessment processes for granting credentials.	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:
4. Criterion: State-level partners use data and shared measures to demonstrate and improve career pathway participant outcomes.	
4.1. Indicator: State partnership produces data and reports on career pathway participant progress and success using a consistent set of shared interim and outcome measures (see AQCP shared metrics). Reports are available to policymakers, career pathway system partners and staff at the state and local/regional levels, and participants.	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:
	TBD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State partnership includes a wide range of education and workforce programs in state SLDS systems. • State partnership includes a wide range of credentials and degrees as part of SLDS data.
4.2. Indicator: State partnership jointly and regularly reports on labor market outcomes (employment, earnings, etc.) for individuals entering and exiting each career pathway (see AQCP shared metrics). Reports are available to policymakers, career pathway system partners and staff, and participants.	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:
	TBD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State partnership is participating in WRIS2 or another platform to share employment data across states.
4.3. Indicator: State partnership provides data, resources, and assistance to support the use of labor market intelligence and longitudinal data at the local/regional level for development and implementation of state and local/regional career pathway systems.	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:
	TBD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State partnership produces labor market information and other intelligence relevant to the development and implementation of career pathways.

<p>4.4. Indicator: State partnership has adopted policies and procedures to promote the use of data (including labor market intelligence and longitudinal data) by institutions and program administrators at the state and local/regional levels for accountability, continuous improvement, and transparency.</p>	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:
	<p>TBD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State partners provide financial resources to help institutions and program administrators use data. • State partners provide technical assistance to help institutions and program administrators use data. • State partners provide professional development to help institutions and program administrators use data.
<p>4.5. Indicator: State partnership uses analysis of career pathway data on interim and outcomes measures to implement or recommend policy changes to support building, scaling, and sustaining state and local/regional career pathway systems.</p>	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:
<p>4.6. Indicator: State partnership adopts and implements a plan for evaluating how well local/regional career pathway systems are performing and for providing support for their continuous improvement.</p>	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:
<p>4.7. Indicator: State partnership adopts and implements a plan for evaluating how well the state system is supporting the local/regional systems and for continually improving state system performance.</p>	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:

SECTION IV: LOCAL/REGIONAL CAREER PATHWAY SYSTEM

Review and Field-testing: Alliance partners will review the Local/Regional Career Pathway System criteria and indicators below with directors, staff, and practitioners at the state, regional, and local levels involved in career pathways by the end of December 2013. CLASP will work with Alliance partners to develop a process for collecting feedback during this period. In winter 2014, CLASP and the Alliance partners will edit these criteria and indicators based on the feedback and will release Version 1.0 of the framework in early 2014. Alliance partners will provide examples in the right-side column of documentation of a system meeting each indicator. Some examples are provided for illustrative purposes.

Key questions for review:

1. Do these criteria and indicators clearly and accurately describe the key elements and activities necessary for a high-quality local/regional career pathway system? If not, what would you change, add, or delete? (Note: the framework must have as few criteria and indicators as possible to be useable.)
2. How would you use these criteria and indicators in your work? Do you think they would be useful to you?

- **Local/regional career pathway system:** A local/regional career pathway system is built and maintained by a partnership among local and/or regional agencies, organizations, institutions, and employers/industries that is committed to building, scaling, and sustaining demand-driven career pathways and to key guiding principles of career pathway systems. The system is comprised of **specific sector or cross-sector occupational career pathways** that consist of (1) well-connected education and training offerings; (2) multiple entry points that accommodate participants entering at differing education and skill levels (including *career pathway “bridge” programs* to help those with limited education, English, skills, and work experiences access career pathway programs); and (3) multiple exit points at successively higher levels of family-supporting employment and aligned with subsequent educational entry points. Each career pathway enables a participant—no matter his or her entry point—to earn marketable credentials and access employment at or above family-supporting wages. Local/regional career pathways often consist of multiple aligned career pathway programs. Career pathway systems are inclusive of career pathways and programs.

- **Career pathway programs** are the building blocks of career pathways; they blend a set of programmatic elements in a specific sector or a cross-sector occupational area and align them in a career pathway leading to marketable credentials. Career pathway programs are comprised of (1) *participant-focused approaches* to instruction and occupational training; (2) appropriate and meaningful assessment of participants' skills and needs; (3) supportive services and *career navigation assistance* for participants in the pathways (including early and ongoing career awareness and exploration and intensive support services for high-need populations); and (4) direct connections to employment that include *quality work experiences and employment services*. Career pathway programs for youth also blend in youth development principles. Career pathway programs vary regarding the extent of the education and training and the number of credentials a participant can earn. If the end point of a particular career pathway program does not enable a participant to earn a credential(s) that qualifies him or her for employment at or above family-supporting wages, that program aligns with and connects to a subsequent career pathway program that is designed to meet this goal.

Note: A state may want to use the Local/Regional Career Pathway System criteria and indicators to assess the local/regional systems "in toto." And, each local/regional system would use the criteria/indicators to assess their individual systems.

<p>Criteria and Indicators for a HIGH-QUALITY System</p> <p><i>The “north star” for where a career pathway partnership should aim its efforts to achieve a high-quality career pathway system (inclusive of pathways and programs).</i></p>	<p>Documentation of Meeting the Indicator</p> <p><i>Examples of how a local/regional partnership may document meeting each indicator, categorized into level of maturity for the specific indicator. Current examples are for illustrative purposes only. Each level of documentation is cumulative. Systems may have different levels of maturity across the indicators.</i></p>
<p>1. Criterion: Local/regional partners—in conjunction with state partners—are committed to a shared vision and strategy for building, scaling, and sustaining a demand-driven career pathway system (includes pathways and programs).</p>	
<p>1.1. Indicator: Local/regional partnership includes (1) employer and labor representatives from industries and occupations that are significant to the local/regional economy to assure that the partnership is attuned to industry demand; and (2) agencies, institutions, and organizations that provide critical functions in the career pathway system for the target population, including education, training, employment services, and support services.</p>	<p>Emerging:</p> <p>Established:</p> <p>Advanced:</p> <p>TBD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local/regional partners establish a process that welcomes and engages new partners in the local/regional partnership.
<p>1.2. Indicator: Local/regional partners are committed to a shared vision of systemic change in how resources are used and institutions and other providers deliver services.</p>	<p>Emerging:</p> <p>Established:</p> <p>Advanced:</p> <p>TBD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A shared vision is communicated in a strategic plan or other document. Public, private, and non-profit partners prioritize the career pathway approach in funding and policy actions.
<p>1.3. Indicator: Local/regional partners continuously and openly communicate with state partners about state and local/regional needs and goals for building a local/regional career pathway system.</p>	<p>Emerging:</p> <p>Established:</p> <p>Advanced:</p> <p>TBD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local/regional partners inform state and federal leadership and policymakers of changes to policy that would support career pathways based on lessons learned and barriers encountered. Local/regional partners are responsive to overarching state

	needs/goals.
2. Criterion: Local/regional partners engage multiple employers and labor partners to support, shape, and utilize the career pathway system.	
2.1. Indicator: Employer and labor partners jointly develop career pathways and programs with public and nonprofit partners to ensure that the local/regional partnership is attuned to industry demand.	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:
	TBD:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career pathways are linked to state and local sector strategies. • Career pathways are designed based on real-time labor market intelligence. • Employers and industry associations identify the workforce challenges to be addressed by the career pathway, including skill requirements. • Employers and industry associations provide input on curriculum design. • Employers and industry associations validate career pathway credentials. • Employers and industry associations participate in ongoing assessment of the relevance of the career pathway and continuous improvement. • Employers champion the career pathways approach.
2.2. Indicator: Employers and labor partners support participant involvement and progression in career pathways through their policies and practices.	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:
	TBD:
	<p>Employers support participant involvement and progression in career pathways by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiring career pathway program graduates when they have openings; • Providing paid release time to enable workers to participate in courses; • Providing supervisor training or development; • Supporting on-the-job training and coaching;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aligning tuition reimbursement policies and professional development opportunities; The partnership has prepared a written agreement with employers and labor representatives that specifies their contributions; and/or Providing quality work experiences coordinated with other elements of the career pathway.
3. Criterion: Local/regional partners identify and provide resources to build, scale, and sustain the career pathway system.	
3.1. Indicator: Local/regional partners secure, align, and <i>braid funds</i> to support high-quality career pathways (and programs) and the system as a whole.	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:
	TBD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local/regional partners have a shared understanding of the cost of each high-quality, comprehensive career pathway and program and have developed a shared funding plan to cover these costs.
3.2. Indicator: Local/regional partners ensure practitioners have the knowledge, skills, and time to implement a high-quality system.	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:
	TBD: <p>Local/regional partners support career pathways staff and instructors using the following policies and/or practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional development within and across systems; and/or Adequate time for planning and implementing career pathways.
3.3. Indicator: Local/regional partners ensure necessary resources, tools, and infrastructure are in place to support practitioners to implement the high-quality career pathway system.	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:
	TBD: <p>Local/regional partners support career pathway program staff with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidelines, templates, and mechanisms for accessing data to implement data-driven decision-making; and/or Tools and resources necessary for implementation of evidence-based best practices.

4. Criterion: Local/regional partners implement supportive policies to build, scale, and sustain a career pathway system.	
4.1. Indicator: Each career pathway has clear on-ramps that enable participants with different levels of educational preparation, skills, and experience to gain the education and skill levels necessary to access and succeed in the career pathway. Career pathways provide participants educational offerings that enable them to bypass developmental education or to accelerate progress through developmental education and into postsecondary education.	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:
	TBD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local/regional partnership provides <i>career pathway bridge programs</i> in in-demand industries/occupations that have entry-level short-term credentials easily accessed by lower-skilled individuals that “<i>stack</i>” into progressively higher credentials. Local/regional partnership provides credit recovery options to help participants with lower levels of education work toward a high school diploma or equivalency while accruing postsecondary education credit.
4.2. Indicator: Each career pathway has multiple exit points that are tied to summative assessments; result in stackable, employer-recognized credentials that are aligned with industry and occupational requirements; and result in or lead to family-supporting employment.	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:
4.3. Indicator: Each career pathway includes services to keep participants engaged as they move in and out of pathway programs.	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:
	TBD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local/regional partners implement strategies to re-engage participants who have exited the pathway.
4.4. Indicator: Institutions adopt policies regarding <i>credit recognition</i> and transfer to optimize participants’ progress toward attainment of marketable educational credentials.	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:
	TBD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At each level, institutions provide “<i>transferrable credit</i>” that qualifies the participant for entry into the next level of the career pathway. Institutions provide credit for competencies represented by industry certifications, apprenticeships, and other work-based credentials.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local/regional partners use <i>assessment of prior learning</i> to provide educational credit for work-based and other non-classroom learning. Local/regional partners provide innovative approaches such as <i>dual and/or concurrent enrollment options</i> for accelerating credit accumulation. In each educational/training offering, participants gain the knowledge, skills and abilities required to be ready to enter and succeed in subsequent components of the pathway. Pathway participants can progress along pathways or in a <i>lattice</i> to related fields of study without having to repeat courses that teach what they already know or are able to do. Local/regional partners re-engage former participants in pathway programs to continue on to the next step of the pathway. Each credential is “<i>stackable</i>” in that they build on previously acquired content and previously earned credentials as participants progress along the pathway. Credentials are <i>competency-based</i>.
4.5. Indicator: Local/regional partners adopt policies to assure the market relevance and educational currency of career pathway credentials.	Emerging: Established: Advanced: TBD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Credentials are employer-recognized.
4.6. Indicator: Each career pathway is transparent regarding competencies, credentials, and other requirements underlying career ladders and lattices in that industry or cross-cutting occupation.	Emerging: Established: Advanced: TBD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local/regional partnership designs and makes publically available visual “career maps” for each career pathway.
4.7. Indicator: Local/regional partners use shared standards and procedures to assess participant knowledge and skills so that participants are not subjected to duplicative assessments.	Emerging: Established: Advanced:

4.8. Indicator: Local/regional partners adopt a shared definition of career pathways and key related concepts and embed them in existing policies and practices.	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:
5. Criterion: Local/regional partners adopt evidence-based best practices to optimize career pathway participant success.	
5.1. Indicator: Local/regional partners implement evidenced-based, participant-focused approaches to instruction and service delivery. (See text box in section II.)	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:
5.2. Indicator: Local/regional partners use appropriate and useful assessment of participants' academic, work-readiness, and vocational skills, and support service needs throughout their participation in the pathway.	Emerging: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career pathway programs have a shared understanding of formative (diagnostic) and summative assessments used by various local/regional partners.
	Established: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career pathway programs commit to using shared assessments. Career pathway programs use Prior Learning Assessment as the basis for recognizing the knowledge and skills people have gained through work and life experience.
	Advanced:
5.3. Indicator: Local/regional partners provide academic and personal/financial supports, career exploration, and early and ongoing career navigation assistance (through the career pathway and, ideally, into retained employment).	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:
5.4. Indicator: Local/regional partners provide direct connections with employers, including quality work experiences and employment services.	Emerging: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career pathways provide the following quality work experiences...[TBD] Career pathway programs provide the following employment services: assistance securing training-related employment, job fairs, assistance with resume writing, and interviewing.
	Established: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career pathway programs provide the following quality work experiences: job shadowing, unpaid internships, and/or apprenticeships. Career pathways programs provide the following employment services...[TBD]

	<p>Advanced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work experience is paid. • Institutions provide credit for work experience. • Entrepreneurship incubators and accelerators provide work-based support.
6. Criterion: Local/regional partners use data and shared measures to demonstrate and improve career pathway participant outcomes.	
6.1. Indicator: Local/regional partnership produces data and reports on career pathway participant progress and success using a consistent set of shared interim and outcome measures (see AQCP shared metrics). Reports are available to policymakers, career pathway system partners and staff at the state and local/regional levels, and participants.	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:
	<p>TBD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local/regional partners build and maintain knowledge and expertise about trends, jobs, skill requirements, and job structures in selected industries and occupations. • Local/regional partners have the analytic capacity to use labor market information and other data for pathway development. • Local/regional partners commit to producing a periodic report of shared performance data.
6.2. Indicator: Local/regional partners use labor market intelligence on current and future demand to inform the development and ongoing relevance of career pathways (see AQCP metrics).	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:
	<p>TBD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local/regional partners identify jobs in demand and skill gaps and requirements of entry and advancement in particular fields. • Local/regional partners review up-to-date data or surveys of employers as they become available.
6.3. Indicator: Local/regional partners use a set of shared interim and outcome measures to clearly communicate participant progress and success.	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:
	<p>TBD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local/regional partners have the capacity to collect data needed for shared outcome measurement and reporting. • Local/regional partners have the capacity to track participant performance long-term.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local/regional partners incorporate key results into the overall communications strategy for career pathways. Local/regional partners use performance data to inform customer choice. Local/regional partners issue performance scorecards.
6.4. Indicator: Local/regional partners use data and other information to determine cross-system professional development priorities and improve professional development offerings.	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:
	TBD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local/regional partners conduct a needs assessment of practitioners to identify professional development strengths and gaps. Local/regional partners offer professional development opportunities. Local/regional partners support shared learning communities for career pathway practitioners.
6.5. Indicator: Local/regional partners use a set of shared interim and outcome measures, together with other information, to drive continuous improvement of processes and practices relevant to career pathways (see AQCP metrics).	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:
	TBD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local/regional partners review data on participant demographics and customer feedback on services.
6.6. Indicator: Local/regional partners use analysis of career pathway data on interim and outcomes measures to implement or recommend policy changes to support building, scaling, and sustaining career pathway systems (see AQCP metrics).	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:
6.7. Indicator: Local/regional partners adopt and implement a plan for evaluating how well the local/regional career pathway system is performing and for supporting continuous improvement efforts.	Emerging:
	Established:
	Advanced:

SECTION V: CAREER PATHWAY METRICS

Review and Field-Testing: CLASP will work with each Alliance team to design a review and field-test process appropriate for each state. Review and field-testing will occur through December 2013. In winter 2014, CLASP and the Alliance partners will edit the metrics based on feedback and what we learned in the field-testing process. In spring 2014, CLASP and the Alliance partners will release Version 1.0 of the AQCP framework, which will provide a recommended set of metrics that is appropriate for measuring career pathway participant progress and success and that would be useful in continuous improvement efforts.

NOTICE: These career pathway metrics should NOT be used to measure or manage career pathway efforts until after the Alliance review and field-testing have been completed.

Key questions for review and field-testing:

1. Do Alliance states have the capacity to calculate the metrics for career pathway programs and systems, both in terms of the availability of the data elements required and the policy infrastructure to apply the metrics as defined?
2. Do Alliance states find the metrics to have utility for continuous improvement and/or accountability, and if so, how do they envision using these metrics to support these functions?

Note to readers: You may wish to review the Alliance working paper on career pathway metrics released on February 14, 2013 for more background information: [A Framework for Measuring Career Pathways Innovation](#).

Goals for Career Pathway Metrics: Career pathway metrics support the overall goals of state and local/regional career pathway systems by providing a structured basis for measuring career pathway results. Career pathway metrics are intended to support several objectives for state and local/regional career pathway systems:

- Allow states and local/regional career pathway systems to measure key results for their pathway programs and to communicate these results to stakeholders, including employers and the public;
- Capture important educational and employment development milestones for career pathway participants that are not captured by current performance reporting requirements and ensure that metrics do not create or reinforce disincentives to serving individuals with low education and skill levels;

- Promote the progression of participants in education and training and through the labor market over time, unlike most current performance metrics that focus on immediate or short-term outcomes;
- Support continuous improvement of pathway programs and systems;
- Provide a basis for a shared performance accountability framework across multiple fund sources, thereby encouraging greater collaboration and integration among funders; and
- Provide a “common language” across a variety of basic skills, workforce, and postsecondary programs, providing a more coherent understanding of regional workforce development for employers considering moving to or expanding in a region.

In addition to supporting these general objectives, career pathway metrics will enable Alliance state partners to measure and recognize the results of unique features of career pathway programs and local/regional career pathway systems, as reflected in the Alliance State and Local/Regional Criteria and Indicators.

For High Quality State Career Pathway Systems, career pathway metrics provide a mechanism through which criterion Four (*Use Data and Shared Measures*) is demonstrated, particularly indicators 4.1 (*reporting on career pathway participant progress and success using a consistent set of shared interim and outcome measures*) and 4.2 (*reporting on labor market outcomes for individuals entering and exiting each career pathway*).⁶

For High Quality Local/Regional Career Pathway Systems, career pathway metrics provide a mechanism through which criterion Six (*Use data to demonstrate and improve career pathway participant outcomes*) is demonstrated, particularly indicators 6.3 (*shared interim and outcome measures to clearly communicate participant progress and success*), 6.5 (*use of shared interim and outcome measures for continuous improvement of career pathways*), and 6.6 (*use of performance data and other information to inform and make recommendations for policy changes in areas relevant to career pathways*).⁷

Key Definitions for Application of Career Pathway Metrics: Application of the career pathway metrics will require Alliance state partners to make decisions about which participants would be included in each metric, and what actions would trigger measurement for each participant. The following definitions are recommended to guide Alliance states in their application of the career pathway metrics to specific career pathway programs and systems, and to provide a starting point for field testing the metrics. These definitions have been included in the glossary in the next section.

⁶ Career pathway metrics also play a role in state career pathway system indicators 1.2, 1.3, 1.6, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7, and criterion 2.

⁷ Career pathway metrics also play a role in local/regional career pathway system indicators 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 6.4, and criteria 3, 4, and 5 in general.

Career pathway participant: *An individual who is associated with a specific career pathway either by a formal declaration of intent or by enrolling in specific courses, activities, or services (or combinations thereof) that have been designated as formal entry points for a career pathway.*

Career pathway exiter: *A career pathway participant has exited career pathway courses and services and has not re-enrolled in pathway coursework, services, or activities. Career pathway exiters include those who attained specific credentials or interim outcomes prior to exit, as well as those who did not.*

Career pathway completer: *A career pathway exiter who attained one or more pathway education and training outcomes prior to exit, including licensure, credential, certificate, or degree.*

NOTE: *These terms are to be used solely as part of the specifications of the career pathways measures that are described on pages 32-37. These terms—career pathway participant, exiter and completer—have not been defined more globally in this framework due to extensive state variation.*

While the Alliance Criteria and Indicators identify core features and general expectations for career pathway systems and programs, there is great variation in how career pathways are defined and in state and institutional capacity to identify participants in specific career pathways. States are likely to adapt the proposed definitions to reflect the pathways that are being developed on the ground, and the following discussion is intended to provide context for these definitions and their use by Alliance states in field testing the metrics. During field testing, Alliance partners will apply these definitions to their career pathways to the extent that their data capabilities permit.

Participants: Under the Alliance framework, the focus of career pathway metrics is on results for career pathways. Therefore, career pathway metrics should be applied to *career pathway participants*, as defined above. This definition of career pathway participant is supported by the Alliance definition of a local/regional career pathway system, which “...is comprised of specific sector or cross-sector occupational career pathways that consist of (1) well-connected education and training offerings; (2) multiple entry points that accommodate participants entering at differing education and skill levels (including “bridge” programs to help those with limited skills, experience, and/or English access career pathway programs); and (3) multiple exit points at successively higher levels of education and employment.”

Exiters: Most of the career pathway metrics are defined so that they are calculated based on career pathway participants exiting the career pathway. A definition of career pathway exiter is therefore provided to identify the population to which each metric should be applied. Many career pathway participants exit and re-enter career pathways; therefore, states should have flexibility in how this definition is applied. The Alliance partners recognize that this flexibility may pose a problem for comparability of outcomes across states. During and subsequent to the field testing, Alliance partners

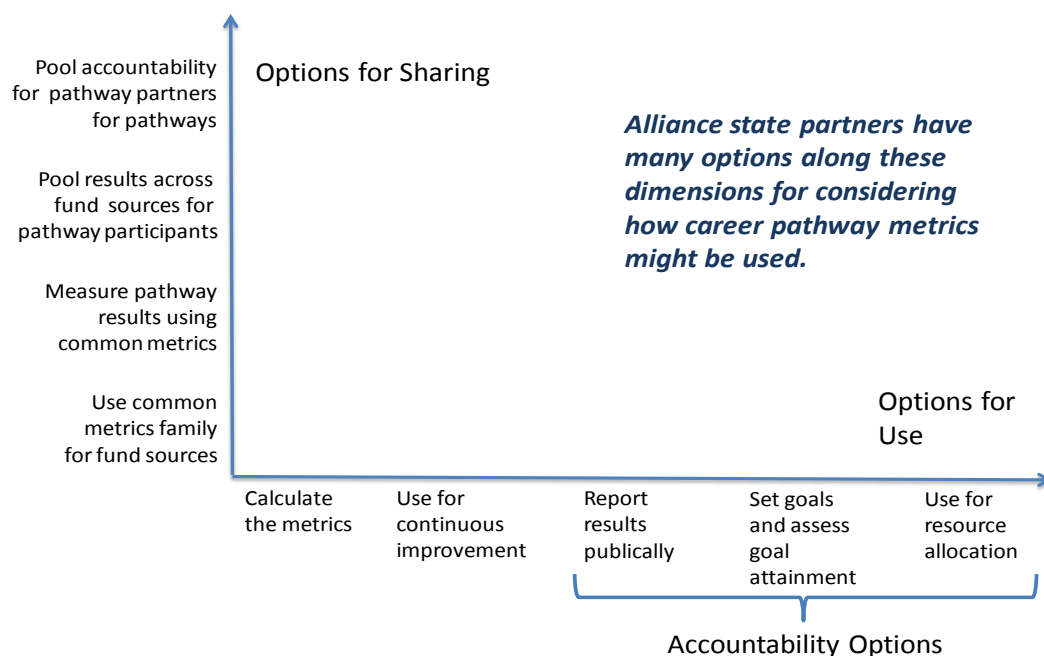
will consider whether it may be appropriate to include a time limit during which a participant must have not been participating in order to be considered an exiter under this definition.

Completers: The “Employed in Targeted Industry” metric applies only to those career pathway participants who have successfully completed their pathway instruction. The definition of career pathway completer is provided for use solely with this metric. For purposes of this definition, a participant who attained one or more pathway education and training outcomes prior to exit would be considered a completer, even if they did not attain the most advanced credential available along the pathway.

Shared Use of the Career Pathway Metrics: Another important decision that career pathway partnerships using career pathway metrics will need to explore is how to use the metrics. Figure 3 below illustrates progressive dimensions for shared use of career pathway metrics. In considering specific metrics for the Alliance for Quality Career Pathways, we explored whether each metric is best suited for continuous improvement uses or for one of the levels of shared accountability (i.e., publically reporting results, setting goals and assessing goal attainment, or for resource allocation decisions). This discussion is captured in the table of potential metrics below.

Beyond this metric-by-metric discussion, Alliance partners are giving consideration to the overall approach to accountability for career pathway systems and programs. In this context, Alliance partners will work within each of their respective states to consider how career pathway metrics could support shared uses across the various funding sources and educational settings that support career pathways.

Figure 3. Two Dimensions of Shared Use



Career Pathway Metrics and Definitions: The table that follows provides the Alliance career pathway metrics and definitions that will be reviewed and field-tested by Alliance partners in 2013. The metrics are organized into three categories:

- A) *Interim Education and Training Outcomes* that identify important progress steps, or “momentum points,” along a career pathway that are attained prior to the overall results for the pathway;
- B) *Pathway Education and Training Outcomes* that encompass the primary educational and training results for the pathway, including licenses and industry credentials, certificates, and degrees; and
- C) *Labor Market Outcomes* that encompass the primary labor market outcomes for the career pathway, and are intended to measure the progression in employment and earnings over time for pathway participants.

The table also provides comments on each metric, including notes on changes to the definitions that were recommended and notes on whether the Alliance partners considered the metric appropriate for continuous improvement only or also for accountability. The comments also include notes on how the metrics compare to existing federal performance measures under WIA Titles I and II and Perkins Career and Technical Education.

AQCP “Beta” Metrics and Definitions for Career Pathway Measurement

AQCP “Beta” Metrics and Definitions for Career Pathway Measurement	Comments
<p>A. Interim education and training outcomes. Interim education and training outcomes are meant to identify important progress steps, or “momentum points,” along a career pathway that are attained prior to the overall results for the pathway, and that are associated with eventual success on the pathway. Generally, these metrics are meant to support continuous improvement rather than accountability, except as noted in the comments section.</p>	
<p>A.1. Educational level gains: The percent of career pathway participants who gain one or more educational levels (using Adult Education NRS levels or equivalent), of those participants who gained one or more levels or exited the pathway without doing so.</p>	<p>The Alliance partners recommended that to the extent possible, this metric should be calculated in such a way that pathway participants who receive educational gains in more than one domain, or who receive multiple level gains, should be counted in each period in which such gains are attained. This is different than how the measure is defined for use in WIA Title II.</p>
<p>A.2. High school diploma or equivalency attainment: The percent of career pathway participants who obtained a high school diploma or its equivalent of those participants who did not have a high school diploma or its equivalent at pathway entry, and either obtained the credential or exited the pathway without doing so.</p>	<p>This metric was considered appropriate for career pathways that have a specific focus on serving participants without a high school diploma or its equivalent. This metric is similar to the current WIA Title II measure. Most Alliance partners saw this measure as being useful for accountability purposes, as well as for continuous improvement.</p>
<p>A.3. Developmental/remedial education completion: The percent of career pathway participants who enrolled in developmental/remedial coursework and who obtained a passing grade in all such courses, of those who obtained a passing grade in all such courses or exited the pathway without doing so.</p>	<p>The Alliance partners recommended that this metric only be applied to career pathways that incorporate or require developmental or remedial instruction and that assess students for entry into this component. Evolving strategies for addressing the needs of participants entering career pathways at less than college level may make this metric less applicable to many career pathways, but it should be retained for those pathways that include a developmental or remedial component.</p>

AQCP “Beta” Metrics and Definitions for Career Pathway Measurement	Comments
<p>A.4. College-level pathway course completion: The percent of career pathway participants who initially entered the career pathway by enrolling in instruction at less than college level (including adult education or developmental education) who successfully completed one or more college level pathway courses, of those who enrolled in these courses or exited the pathway without doing so.</p>	<p>The Alliance partners altered the definition of the original metric to use college-level course <i>completion</i> (rather than enrollment) as the outcome. Partners considered this a useful metric not only for continuous improvement, but also for accountability purposes. The metric captures progress to and success in college-level instruction for all participants entering a career pathway at less than college level.</p>
<p>A.5. Employability credential attainment: The percent of career pathway participants who obtained an industry-recognized credential for basic employability skills, of those who obtained such a credential or exited the pathway without doing so.</p>	<p>The Alliance partners recommended that this metric only be applied to career pathways that include an industry-recognized credential for basic employability skills, such as the National Career Readiness Certificate.</p>
<p>A.6 College-level math or English course completion: The percent of career pathway participants who completed a college-level course in math or English, of those who completed such courses or exited the pathway without doing so.</p>	<p>The Alliance partners recommended that this metric only be applied to career pathways that require the completion of a college-level math or English course. Partners also recognized that defining ‘college level’ is an issue that will need to be addressed during field testing.</p>
<p>A.7. Retention in pathway coursework: The percent of career pathway participants who enrolled in pathway coursework in the term following the term of initial pathway enrollment (other than summer terms), or in the subsequent term, of those who were initially enrolled in the pathway.</p>	<p>The Alliance partners expanded the original definition to include enrollment in the term subsequent to the term following initial pathway enrollment, in recognition of the fact that many participants may not be able to be continuously enrolled in pathway coursework.</p>
<p>A.8. Pathway credit accumulation 1: The percent of career pathway participants who accumulated 12 semester college credits or 15 quarterly college credits in pathway coursework, of those who accumulated these college credits or exited the pathway prior to doing so.</p>	<p>The definitions of this metric and the next were amended to reference both semester and quarter hours. Most Alliance partners felt that these metrics had potential for accountability, as well as continuous improvement.</p>

AQCP “Beta” Metrics and Definitions for Career Pathway Measurement	Comments
<p>A.9. Pathway credit accumulation 2: The percent of career pathway participants who accumulated 24 semester college credits or 30 quarterly college credits in pathway coursework, of those who accumulated these college credits or exited the pathway prior to doing so.</p>	<p>The definitions of this metric were amended to reference both semester and quarter hours. Most Alliance partners felt that these metrics had potential for accountability, as well as continuous improvement.</p>
<p>B. Pathway education and training outcomes. These metrics encompass the primary educational and training results for the pathway. These metrics comprise several types of outcomes, including licenses and industry credentials, certificates, and degrees. Application of these metrics to a particular career pathway would require that the specific licenses, certifications, credentials, and degrees that are available for pathway participants could be identified, so that pathway participants who obtain one or more of these outcomes can be included in the applicable metrics.</p>	
<p>B.1. Pathway license, industry certification, or apprenticeship certificate attainment: The percent of career pathway participants who obtained an occupational license, industry certification, or apprenticeship certificate in the pathway, of those who obtained such a credential or exited the pathway prior to doing so.</p>	<p>The Alliance partners recognized the difficulty of obtaining reliable data on licenses and industry certifications, but felt that these outcomes should be reflected in the metrics. This metric is similar to one of the postsecondary Perkins CTE measures (receipt of industry-recognized credential) and one of the WIA Title I statutory adult measures (credential attainment).</p>
<p>B.2. Pathway certificate attainment: The percent of career pathway participants who obtained a certificate in the pathway, of those who obtained such a certificate or exited the pathway prior to doing so.</p>	<p>The Alliance partners recommended that this metric be defined to include all certificates available along a career pathway, and would also include technical diplomas and other credentials other than degrees. This metric is similar to one of the postsecondary Perkins CTE measures (receipt of certificate), one of the WIA Title I youth measures (attainment of certificate), and one of the WIA Title I statutory adult measures (credential attainment). A form of this metric also is used in the Voluntary Framework of Accountability.</p>
<p>B.3. Pathway Associate degree attainment: The percent of career pathway participants who obtained an Associate degree in the pathway, of those who obtained such a degree or exited the pathway prior to doing so.</p>	<p>This metric would be appropriate for career pathways that are meant to lead to an Associate degree. It is similar to one of the postsecondary Perkins CTE measures (receipt of diploma), one of the WIA Title I youth measures (attainment of degree), and one of the WIA Title I statutory adult measures (credential attainment).</p>

AQCP “Beta” Metrics and Definitions for Career Pathway Measurement	Comments
<p>B.4. Pathway Associate degree attainment or transfer to a 2 or 4 year institution: The percent of career pathway participants who obtained an Associate degree in the pathway or transferred to a two or four-year institution, of those who obtained such a degree or transfer, or exited the pathway prior to doing so.</p>	<p>The Alliance partners recognized that there may be challenges in obtaining data on transfers, but felt that transfer should be considered a success, and therefore recommended including this metric. A form of this metric is used in the Voluntary Framework of Accountability and Complete College America.</p>
<p>B.5. Pathway credential attainment: The percent of career pathway participants who obtained a credential along the pathway, of those who obtained the credential or exited the pathway prior to doing so.</p>	<p>The Alliance partners suggested that this metric could be considered as the primary measure of career pathway education and training outcomes, since it includes each of the other outcomes listed in this category. Using this metric, each career pathway could define one or more credentials that are available to participants along the pathway and implement a version of this metric for <u>each</u> of these credentials. Alliance partners recommended that this metric was more appropriate for accountability purposes than the other metrics in this category, given the variation among career pathway designs and state capacity to capture data on certain credentials. Several Alliance partners felt that it would be important for states to be able to report on the specific types of credentials obtained (as reflected in the other metrics in this category) for informational and continuous improvement purposes.</p>

AQCP “Beta” Metrics and Definitions for Career Pathway Measurement	Comments
<p>C. Labor market outcomes. Labor market outcome metrics are meant to encompass the primary labor market outcomes for the career pathway. They are also intended to measure the progression in employment and earnings over time for pathway participants. Taken together, these metrics are an attempt to gauge the extent to which career pathways “lead to employment paying self-sufficient or family-supporting earnings and offering opportunities for advancement.”</p>	
<p>C.1. Employment at exit: The percent of career pathway exiters who are employed in the first full quarter after pathway exit.</p>	<p>This measure is essentially the same as the Entered Employment Rate under WIA Title I. However, the Alliance partners recommended that the definition of the applicable population be expanded to include those participants who are working at the time they entered a career pathway. Also, it was recommended that these labor market measures follow WIA exceptions to inclusion (incarceration, illness, etc.). States should have the option of using supplemental data collection for employment in addition to UI wage data or other administrative earnings records. Most, but not all, Alliance partners felt that this metric would be appropriate for accountability.</p>
<p>C.2. Initial employment retention: Percent of career pathway exiters who are employed in the second and third full quarter after pathway exit.</p>	<p>The Alliance partners felt that this metric would be helpful to measure the persistence of employment in the period following completion or exit from the pathway. It was recommended that this metric be defined in a manner similar to the current WIA common measure (i.e., applies only to persons with employment in the first full quarter following exit), and that it also follow the WIA exclusion rules as mentioned for 3.1. The Alliance partners viewed this metric as appropriate for accountability purposes.</p>

AQCP “Beta” Metrics and Definitions for Career Pathway Measurement	Comments
<p>C.3. Employment in targeted industry sector: The percent of career pathway completers who are employed in the first, second, or third full quarter after pathway exit in an industry sector targeted by the career pathway (for career pathways with specific industry targeting).</p>	<p>The Alliance partners considered this metric appropriate for those career pathways that have specific industry sector orientation, but recognized that it might not be appropriate for career pathways that are not sector-oriented. Also, it was recognized that participants may be employed in an occupation related to their program of study, but in an unrelated industry sector. Some states may be able to capture data on occupations of participants at exit; if so, they may wish to adapt this measure to identify occupations related to the career pathway rather than (or in addition to) industries. Alliance partners viewed this metric as appropriate for continuous improvement, but not for accountability purposes.</p>
<p>C.4. Subsequent employment retention: The percent of career pathway exiters employed in the second and third full quarter after pathway exit who are also employed in the sixth and seventh full quarters after pathway exit.</p>	<p>The Alliance partners considered this longer-term measure of employment retention appropriate for gauging longer term impact, but probably not for accountability purposes in light of the time delay.</p>
<p>C.5. Initial earnings: The median quarterly earnings of career pathway exiters who are employed in the second and third full quarters following exit.</p>	<p>This metric is very similar to the existing WIA common measure, with the exception that median earnings would be calculated rather than average earnings. Most Alliance partners viewed this metric as appropriate for accountability purposes.</p>
<p>C.6. Initial earnings gain/loss: The average gain/loss of earnings for career pathway exiters based on a comparison of the second and third quarters following completion and the second and third quarters prior to pathway entry.</p>	<p>Alliance partners considered this metric of potential use for continuous improvement purposes, but not for accountability purposes. One issue is that this metric may not work well for a wide variety of career pathway participants, including currently employed workers or dislocated workers.</p>
<p>C.7. Subsequent earnings: The median quarterly earnings of career pathway exiters who are employed in the sixth and seventh full quarters following exit.</p>	<p>The Alliance partners considered this longer-term measure of earnings appropriate for gauging longer-term progression or growth, but probably not for accountability purposes, given the time delay. In addition, it was recommended that this measure be applied only to exiters who have completed a career pathway. Median earnings would be calculated rather than the average earnings.</p>

SECTION VI: GLOSSARY OF KEY AQCP TERMS

Review and Field-testing: Alliance partners will review the key terms in this section with directors, staff, and practitioners at the state, regional, and local levels involved in career pathways by the end of December 2013. CLASP will work with Alliance teams to develop a process for collecting feedback during this time period. CLASP and the Alliance partners will edit the terms based on the feedback and will release Version 1.0 of the framework in early 2014.

Key Questions:

1. Do the definitions in this section provide a clear and accurate description of key career pathway terms?
2. Would you use these terms and definitions and visuals in your work? If not, why not? What would you change?

- **Appropriate and useful assessment:** The process of gathering and documenting information about the achievement, skills, abilities, and personality variables of an individual. The process and tools used for the assessment must be reliable, valid, and diagnostic and must be used appropriately to place individuals in educational levels and programs and measure their progress. *(See definition of career pathway programs and Indicator 4.2, 4.4, 4.7, and 5.2 in local/regional career pathway system.)*
- **Assessment of prior learning:** A method of determining the knowledge and skills of a participant gained through work and life experience; military training and experience; and formal and informal education and training from in-state, out-of-state, and foreign institutions. Assessment of prior learning can be accomplished using methods such as individualized student portfolios, evaluation of corporate and military training, program evaluations, challenge exams, and standardized exams.⁸ *(See Indicator 4.4 in local/regional career pathway system.)*
- **Braided Funding/Resources:** The weaving together of various state, federal, and private funding streams and resources to sufficiently fund an intervention or set of interventions (e.g. career pathway programs). *(See guiding principles of career pathway system, criterion 2 in state career pathway system, and criterion 3 in local/regional career pathway system.)*
- **Career navigation assistance:** Services provided to participants that assist individuals in determining a career path, understanding the requirements for the jobs they seek, and

⁸ State Policy Approaches to Support Prior Learning Assessments, CAEL and HCM Strategists, 2012.
<http://www.cael.org/pdfs/College-Productivity-Resource-Guide2012>.

accessing the education and training needed to achieve their goals.⁹ (See definition of career pathway program and Indicator 5.3 of local/regional career pathways system.)

- **Career pathways:** An approach to connecting progressive levels of basic skills and postsecondary education, training, and *supportive services* in specific *sectors* or *cross-sector occupations* in a way that optimizes the progress and success of individuals—including those with limited education, English, skills, and/or work experience—in securing *marketable credentials*, family-supporting employment, and further education and employment opportunities. Career pathways help employers meet their workforce needs and help states and communities strengthen their workforces and economies. [Note: states and/or initiatives should follow this definition with more information on their specific career pathways efforts.]
- **Career pathway bridge program:** An extension of the career pathways concept, but designed specifically to meet the needs of lower-skilled adults and youth. Career pathway bridge programs provide targeted basic skills or English language help to lower-skilled students to enable them to enter and succeed in career pathways.¹⁰
- **Career pathway completer:** A career pathway exiter who attained one or more pathway education and training outcomes prior to exit, including licensure, credential, certificate, or degree. (For use only with AQCP beta metrics, see section V.)
- **Career pathway exiter:** A career pathway participant has exited career pathway courses and services and has not re-enrolled in pathway coursework, services, or activities. Career pathway exiters include those who attained specific credentials or interim outcomes prior to exit, as well as those who did not. (For use only with AQCP beta metrics, see section V.)
- **Career pathway participant:** An individual who is associated with a specific career pathway either by a formal declaration of intent or by enrolling in specific courses, activities, or services (or combinations thereof) that have been designated as formal entry points for a career pathway. (For use only with AQCP beta metrics, see section V.)
- **Career pathway programs:** Career pathway programs are the building blocks of career pathways; they blend a set of programmatic elements in a specific sector or a cross-sector occupational area and align them in a career pathway leading to marketable credentials. Career pathway programs are comprised of (1) *participant-focused approaches* to instruction and occupational training; (2) appropriate and meaningful assessment of participants' skills and needs; (3) supportive services and *career navigation assistance* for participants in the pathways (including early and ongoing career awareness and exploration and intensive support services for high-need populations); and (4) direct connections to employment that includes *quality work experiences and employment services*. Career pathway programs for youth also blend in youth development principles. Career pathway programs vary regarding the extent of the education

⁹ Choitz, Vickie, with Louis Soares and Rachel Pleasants. A New National Approach to Career Navigation for Working Learners. Center for American Progress, 2010. http://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2010/03/pdf/career_counseling.pdf

¹⁰ Strawn, Julie. *Farther Faster: Six Promising Programs Show How Career Pathway Bridges Help Basic Skills Students Earn Credentials that Matter*. CLASP, 2011.

and training and the number of credentials a participant can earn. If the end point of a particular career pathway program does not enable a participant to earn a credential(s) that qualifies him or her for employment at or above family-supporting wages, that program aligns with and connects to a subsequent career pathway program that is designed to meet this goal.

- **“Chunked” or modularized curriculum:** A method by which programs can divide certificate or degree coursework into smaller, discrete sets of courses, thereby allowing adults already in the labor force to build skills on a schedule more amenable to work and family life.¹¹ (See text box in section II.)
- **Competency-based:** Model or method of awarding credit that uses defined learning outcomes and competencies instead of measuring learning through clock or credit hours. (See text box in section II.)
- **Contextualization:** An instructional technique that integrates concepts from occupational areas, industries, or sectors with basic skills education (e.g., a health careers bridge might teach math concepts in that context, such as measurement for proper medication dosage).¹² See text box in section II.)
- **Credential:** See *marketable credential and stackable credentials*.
- **Credit recognition:** The act of awarding educational credit for academic-equivalent competencies mastered through formal and informal occupational education and training completed at an educational institution or an industry or occupational certifying organization. (See Indicator 3.3 in state career pathway systems and 4.4 in local/regional career pathway system.)
- **Cross-sector occupation:** An occupation available in multiple sectors for which the same skills and competencies are required. (See definition of career pathways, local/regional career pathway system; and guiding principles of career pathway systems)
- **Dual/Concurrent enrollment:** Allowing basic skills students to enroll in occupational or academic courses at the same time they are enrolled in basic skills courses.¹³ (See Indicator 4.4 in local/regional career pathway system and text box in section II.)
- **Employment services:** Services provided to participants that are designed to increase the employability of the unemployed, which can include employment counseling, providing assistance to employers, collecting statistics relating to the labor market, and publishing information and data on employment trends. (See definition of career pathway program, Indicator 1.1 of state career pathway system, and Indicators 1.1 and 5.4 of local/regional career pathway system.)

¹¹ http://www.workingpoorfamilies.org/pdfs/bp-adultlearners_032907.pdf.

¹² Foster, Marcie, Julie Strawn, and Amy Ellen Duke-Benfield. *Beyond Basic Skills: State Strategies to Connect Low-Skilled Adults to an Employer-Valued Postsecondary Education*, CLASP, 2011.

¹³ Foster, Marcie, Julie Strawn, and Amy Ellen Duke-Benfield. *Beyond Basic Skills: State Strategies to Connect Low-Skilled Adults*

- **Evidence-based policy or practice:** Policies or practice of demonstrated effectiveness as shown by theoretical knowledge, practice data, program evaluation results, implementation data, and/or synthesis research.¹⁴ (See criteria for local/regional career pathway system, Indicator 3.3, and criterion 5 of local/regional career pathway system.)
- **Hybrid Instruction:** An instructional model that utilizes both online and face-to-face learning. (See text box in section II.)
- **Industry:** A specific grouping of companies with highly similar business activities within a sector. For example, the financial sector can be broken down into industries such as asset management, life insurance, and banking. Despite their differences in scope, the terms industry and sector are often used interchangeably.
- **Integrated Education and Training:** An instructional model that combines skills training with basic skills services to increase the educational and career advancement of participants by delivering these services simultaneously.¹⁵ (See text box in section II.)
- **Labor market intelligence:** Data and other information that can be used to understand labor market conditions in a particular region or local area. This can include employment statistics, unemployment rates and unemployment insurance claims, wages and salaries, job projections, and qualitative intelligence from employers. (See Indicator 4.3 of state career pathway system and Indicators 2.1, 6.1, and 6.2 of local/regional career pathway system.)
- **Lattice:** A framework that enables participants to explore and/or build skills and earn credentials in several occupations within the same sector (or across sectors) as they progress along a career pathway. (See Indicators 4.4 and 4.6 of local/regional career pathway system.)
- **Learning communities:** A learning community is made up of a cohort of students who co-enroll in two, or sometimes three, courses that are linked by a common theme and are taught by a team of instructors who collaborate with each other around the syllabi and assignments.¹⁶ (See text box in section II.)
- **Local/regional career pathway system:** A local/regional career pathway system is built and maintained by a partnership among local and/or regional agencies, organizations, institutions, and employers/industries that is committed to building, scaling, and sustaining demand-driven career pathways and to key guiding principles of career pathway systems. The system is comprised of **specific sector or cross-sector occupational career pathways** that consist of (1) well-connected education and training offerings, (2) multiple entry points that accommodate

¹⁴ See *The Promise and Challenges of Evidence-Based Policy and Practice*, CLASP.

<http://www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications/files/EBPF-Kinds-of-evidence-handout.pdf>.

¹⁵ Adapted from OVAE Program Memorandum *Use of Funds Under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) for Integrated Education and Training (IET)*. <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/aefta-funds-for-iet.pdf>.

¹⁶ Visser, Mary G. and Jedidiah Teshler with Phoebe Richman. *Breaking New Ground: An Impact Study of Career-Focused Learning Communities in Kingsborough Community College*. National Center for Postsecondary Research, 2011. http://www.postsecondaryresearch.org/i/a/document/19638_Breaking-NCPR_FINAL.pdf

participants entering at differing education and skill levels (including *career pathway “bridge” programs* to help those with limited education, English, skills, and work experiences access career pathway programs), and (3) multiple exit points at successively higher levels of family-supporting employment and aligned with subsequent educational entry points. Each career pathway enables a participant—no matter his or her entry point—to earn marketable credentials and access employment at or above family-supporting wages. Local/regional career pathways often consist of multiple aligned career pathway programs. Career pathway systems are inclusive of career pathways and programs.

- **Marketable credential**¹⁷: An attestation of qualification or competence issued to an individual by a third party (such as an educational institution or an industry or occupational certifying organization) with the relevant authority or assumed competence to issue such a credential that offers individuals a reasonable opportunity to attain labor market success. Marketable credentials can include postsecondary degrees, diplomas, licenses, certificates, and certifications provided that they meet this definition.
- **Participant-focused education and/or training**: Education and/or training models that focus on the needs of the whole participant rather than those of others involved in the educational process, such as instructors, faculty, and administrators. Participant-centered education and/or training is focused on each participant’s needs, abilities, interests, and learning styles both inside and outside of the classroom. (*See definition of career pathway programs and indicator 5.1 of local/regional career pathway system.*)
- **Quality work experiences**: Opportunities provided to participants that enable them to develop occupation or sector-specific skills while on the job in a paid or unpaid capacity. (*See definition of career pathway program and Indicator 5.4 in local/regional career pathway system.*)
- **Sector**: One of approximately 12 large segments in the economy. Despite their differences in scope, the terms industry and sector are often used interchangeably.
- **Sector strategy**¹⁸: A partnership between employers, training providers, community organizations, and other key stakeholders around specific industries to address the workforce needs of employers and the training, employment, and career advancement needs of workers. (*See guiding principles of career pathway systems and Indicator 2.1 in local/regional career pathway system.*)
- **State career pathway system**: A state career pathway system is built and maintained by a partnership of state-level agencies, organizations, and employers/industries that provides leadership, supportive and aligned policies, and resources for state and local/regional demand-driven career pathway systems and that promotes the quality, scale, and sustainability of career pathways. The partnership follows key guiding principles in building and implementing the career pathway system.

¹⁷ Adapted from the Department of Labor’s Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 15-10, [Increasing Credential, Degree, and Certificate Attainment by Participants of the Public Workforce System](#).

¹⁸ National Governor’s Association.

- **Stackable credentials:** Marketable credentials are a series of progressively higher-level credentials that build upon each other and enable individuals to advance in their careers as they earn new credentials. Stackable credentials allow participants to build an employer-valued portfolio regardless of whether or not they ultimately complete a full degree program.¹⁹ (See *Indicators 4.2 and 4.4 in local/regional career pathway system.*)
- **Supportive services:** The range of supports that should be available to students to help them persist in and complete their education or training program. Supportive services can include financial stability support, personal support, academic support, and career preparation support.²⁰ (See *definition of career pathways, career pathway programs, and indicator 5.3 in local/regional career pathway system.*)

¹⁹ Modified from the U.S. Department of Labor's Notice of Availability of Funds and Solicitation for Grant Applications for Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Grants Program, 2013. http://www.doleta.gov/grants/pdf/taaccct_sga_dfa_py_12_10.pdf

²⁰ See CLASP Federal Funding for Support Services Appendix, 2013. <http://www.clasp.org/admin/site/documents/files/Appendix-Federal-Funding-for-Support-Services.pdf>