Introduction

The Aspen Institute's Workforce Playbook provides practical guidance for community college leaders and practitioners to strengthen labor market outcomes for students and address economic and workforce development needs in their regions. This companion assessment tool outlines research-based practices and policies highlighted in the playbook, gathered from institutions that achieve strong and equitable workforce outcomes. The purpose of the tool is to enable leaders and practitioners to explore areas of strength and needed improvement for their own institutions' workforce strategies and practices.

Assessment Rating Key
- Strongly agree - We do this consistently.
- Agree - We do this often.
- Neither agree nor disagree - I'm not sure.
- Disagree - We seldom do this.
- Strongly disagree - We don't do this.

The team members attending Texas Pathways Institute #2 should individually determine their responses to assessment questions using the PDF version of the assessment tool on the Texas Pathways Institute #2 event page before meeting as a group to collectively determine a consensus response. **Each college should submit only one consensus response in SurveyMonkey.**

Your team's responses to these prompts will inform team strategy sessions at Texas Pathways Institute #2.

SurveyMonkey does not allow respondents to save or print completed surveys. Prior to the institute, the Texas Success Center will send a PDF of each college's completed survey to the pathways lead.

* Please select your college

[⬍]

The Workforce Playbook Assessment Tool

Domain 1: Advance a vision for talent development and economic mobility.

Include labor market outcomes as a central component of student success.

* The college's student success goals include clear and measurable targets for graduates' employment and earnings outcomes.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

* Collegewide reports to the president, cabinet, and board of trustees about student outcomes include data on graduates' employment and earning outcomes soon after graduation and over time.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

* The strategic plan and other documents that reference student success include significant goals and strategies aimed at improving graduates' employment and earnings outcomes.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

Domain 1: Advance a vision for talent development and economic mobility.

Understand the state and dynamics of the regional labor market and population.

* The president and cabinet meet at least every other year to review data on changing demographics in the college's service area, which enables changes in strategic direction to keep pace with changes in demography.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

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* The president and cabinet meet at least every other year to analyze data on employment trends, including data on educational requirements and wages associated with different jobs in the region, which enables changes in strategic direction to keep pace with changes in the labor market.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

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* The president and cabinet meet annually to review employment demand and wage outcomes for the college's graduates and for career and technical programs overall.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

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* The college has set explicit goals for workforce development that include attracting, training, and graduating students from targeted populations, such as underemployed adults or racial and ethnic groups underrepresented in high-value CTE programs.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

* The college has developed a specific definition of the baseline living wage for graduates in its service area, which it uses to assess the success of graduates and programs, and updates it periodically.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

Domain 1: Advance a vision for talent development and economic mobility.

Align offerings to the needs of the region.

* The college has processes in place to consider where and how programs may need to be expanded or developed to meet changing labor market demands.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

* The college closes or redesigns programs due to low graduation rates or poor employment and earnings outcomes.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

* The president and cabinet have an annual process to review and refine the mix of programs offered—credit and noncredit, CTE and transfer-oriented—that enable students to access most of the good jobs in the region.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

* The president and cabinet meet annually to consider equity in program enrollment and outcomes, considering which students—by race, ethnicity, income level, age, and gender—enroll in and graduate from the programs that result in the strongest labor market outcomes, versus those that result in earnings below a living wage.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

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Domain 2: Deliver high-quality programs aligned to regional needs.

Execute a rigorous program approval process aligned to the college's vision.

* The program approval process considers whether a proposed credential is tailored to the specific technical and professional skills required for targeted jobs. Considerations include program length, whether the program should be credit-bearing or not, and whether it should end in certification, a technical associate's degree, or an associate's that leads to transfer toward a four-year degree.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

* The program approval process requires that program design and delivery strategies address the needs of diverse students.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

* Proposed programs are only approved if they demonstrate the potential for strong labor market outcomes.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

Domain 2: Deliver high-quality programs aligned to regional needs.

Define skills and credentials; include work-based learning in program delivery.

* Program heads and others engaged in program design are trained in and use curriculum design processes that engage employers, and they begin by identifying the skills needed before designing the credentials to be awarded.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

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* Internal processes promote information-sharing between workforce and liberal arts programs and between credit CTE and noncredit workforce programs.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

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* The program design process considers not just the credential under consideration but also the trajectory of credentials required for continued momentum in the field, for instance by embedding industry-recognized certifications and articulating to bachelor's degrees.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

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* Programs define and assess the professional, or "soft," skills graduates will need and use assessments to ensure that programs are teaching these skills.

| | | Neither Agree nor | | |
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

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* Programs include specific work-based learning requirements (such as internships, co-ops, clinicals, and apprenticeships) developed collaboratively with employers. The design considers whether employers have the capacity to provide supervision and mentorship and what resources and equipment the college needs to provide high-quality experiences.

| | | Neither Agree nor | | |
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

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* Where appropriate, explicit pathways allow students to move between workforce and liberal arts programs, credit and noncredit workforce programs, and workforce programs and university-based bachelor's programs.

| | | Neither Agree nor | | |
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

Domain 2: Deliver high-quality programs aligned to regional needs.

Hire and empower exceptional workforce leaders to guide strategy and implement programs.

* The college sets goals and criteria for what makes an effective CTE faculty or staff member, such as technical knowledge and skill, a focus on student learning, and a customer service orientation toward internal and external stakeholders.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

* Tools and processes, such as hiring rubrics, teaching demonstrations, and annual professional development design sessions, ensure that those goals are embedded into the college's approach to hiring, professional development, and evaluation.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

* The college embeds goals for diversity into its decision-making processes for hiring.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

* Professional development for all CTE faculty ensures that they have updated technical skills, including through training on up-to-date equipment, required site visits to employers, and/or opportunities to maintain part-time or intermittent employment in the field.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

Domain 2: Deliver high-quality programs aligned to regional needs.

Maintain program quality through honest and actionable feedback.

* The college evaluates program quality and devises improvements in part through the results of student performance on third-party or industry certification exams.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

* CTE program review includes reliable and actionable data on participation rates (disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, age, and income), graduation rates, and employment and earnings outcomes.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

* Advisory board meetings focus on problem-solving rather than on updates and result in concrete next steps to improve programs' quality and equitable student participation and success.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

* Between advisory board meetings, program heads and faculty proactively solicit feedback from employers, particularly frontline managers—through faculty visits to employer sites, classroom observations by employers, monthly check-ins, and more.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

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* CTE program review includes active participation by all stakeholders with relevant perspectives, including faculty, program heads, students, advisors, graduates, and employers.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

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Ensure broad and equitable access to high-quality programs.

* The college works with K-12 partners on strategies to help high school students explore careers and to align advanced coursework, such as dual enrollment, with likely college program choice.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

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* The college has scaled strategies to move students from noncredit programs associated with under-preparation, such as GED and English as a second language programs, into workforce and CTE programs.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

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* The college partners with community-based and other workforce organizations to provide adults with information on available programs aligned to good jobs and create clear processes for adults to easily connect to the appropriate contact at the college.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

* The college president, cabinet, and program leads regularly collaborate with marketing and communications teams to recruit and enroll diverse populations in programs with the strongest labor market outcomes.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

Domain 3: Support students' career goals from pre-matriculation through post-graduation.

Create onboarding processes to support productive program exploration and informed decision-making.

* The onboarding process provides students with opportunities to think critically about their own interests, financial goals, and desired job characteristics (such as location, hours, and working climate).

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

* The onboarding process provides opportunities for students to actively explore program courses and career pathways through approaches like student testimonials, hands-on activities, and visits to work sites.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

* The onboarding process provides students with clear information about:

- The degrees, credentials or certifications, background checks, and other requirements needed for employment and career progression
- Program costs and time commitment
- Likely employment and wages outcomes (upon hire and in later years)

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

* Advisors are trained to understand programs with the strongest labor market and transfer outcomes, as well as gaps in participation in these programs by race, ethnicity, and gender.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

Domain 3: Support students' career goals from pre-matriculation through post-graduation.

Teach career and life skills throughout the student experience.

* Multiple times throughout their college experience, all students receive advising on career exploration and have opportunities to practice key career skills, such as interviewing and networking.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

* The college provides all students training in life skills directly tied to economic mobility, including financial literacy and security and navigating the job market.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

Domain 3: Support students' career goals from pre-matriculation through post-graduation.

Help students get good jobs.

* The college plays an active role in connecting all CTE students to job opportunities.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Optional Comments

* The college collects feedback about the satisfaction of alumni and employers and proactively uses that information to improve program quality and inform employers' ability to onboard new graduates.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Optional Comments

* Students in workforce programs receive regular coaching and mentoring from people within the industry sectors or organizations where they aim to work.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Optional Comments

Domain 4: Develop strong, mutually beneficial employer partnerships.

Select and engage employers based on honest, data-informed conversations.

* The president and cabinet conduct targeted outreach to important regional employers to maintain existing relationships and to develop new relationships with growing employers and in growing sectors.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

* The college president, cabinet, and program heads engage in activities outside the college to understand employers' perspective, such as by serving on industry advisory boards, regional workforce organizations, and trade and industry associations.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

* The college equips program leaders to approach employers and respond to employer requests, by providing training on how to collect data on job growth, turnover, and wages; how to approach engagement with questions about employer perspectives and incentives; how to make the business case for partnership; and what information is available from different actors within a company.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

Domain 4: Develop strong, mutually beneficial employer partnerships.

Create business-friendly on-ramps and management processes.

* Communication and other materials from the college are business-friendly. They are targeted to employer needs and incentives, avoid lengthy text and academic jargon, and have uncluttered designs.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

* The college has strong staff capacity for employer outreach and relationship maintenance, both in number of employees and their skill sets (such as being able to negotiate and communicate effectively).

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

* The college has a system that enables its employees to be responsive to employers. The system stores employer contact and background information, prompts staff to respond quickly to inquiries, and helps organize regular touchpoints.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

* The college builds employer partnerships by emphasizing benefits to the employer's talent pipeline—that the investment is meant to yield long-term, scaled results rather than to serve as short-term corporate charity.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

* College leaders are creative and flexible in brainstorming partnership and resource contribution options in line with employers' varying capacities and the college's needs.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

Domain 4: Develop strong, mutually beneficial employer partnerships.

Convene industries and other critical partners for scaled, regional impact.

* The college collects and presents to employers current data on the regional labor market, providing insights on topics like trends in skills gaps, demographic changes, and the trajectory to good wages.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

* The college periodically convenes employers by sector to collectively solve problems faced by multiple employers.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments

* The college convenes other education providers to solve workforce challenges that the community college cannot solve alone.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Optional Comments