



# CAREER PATHWAYS: SIX KEY ELEMENTS

## READINESS ASSESSMENT TOOL

The *Six Key Elements Readiness Assessment Tool* was developed to assist teams in forming and implementing their career pathways initiative at the local and state levels. This tool will help teams assess their state's career pathways initiative by looking at progress, priorities, gaps, technical assistance needs, and next steps. The tool is divided into the six key elements of developing a career pathways initiative. These elements are: (1) Build Cross-Agency Partnerships and Clarify Roles, (2) Identify Sector or Industry and Engage Employers, (3) Design Education and Training Programs, (4) Identify Funding Needs and Sources, (5) Align Policies and Programs, and (6) Measure System Change and Performance.

### Using This Tool

The assessment tool is organized under the six key elements and includes corresponding indicators that are components of each element. Your team will examine each indicator to assess your site/team's progress toward achieving that element. A four-point scale representing the phases of an ongoing development process will help you assess progress. For each indicator, identify the place on the scale that best reflects your current effort and circle the number.

The four-point scale to assess progress is based on the following definitions:

1. **Initiation Phase:** The team has discussed this indicator but has not started planning.
2. **Planning Phase:** The team is engaged in a planning process to agree upon the steps necessary to move forward.
3. **Implementation Phase:** The team has completed planning and is in the process of implementing strategies.
4. **Sustain/Enhance Phase:** Strategies have been fully implemented. The team is managing for sustainability and further enhancement of this indicator.

The priority for action on any indicator can be ranked as high, medium, or low by circling A, B, or C (respectively) in the far right column.



<b>1. Build Cross-Agency Partnerships &amp; Clarify Roles</b>					
<i>Please indicate the phase of implementation of your state for each of the key components listed. Also, indicate the level of priority for each action.</i>	Initiation Phase	Planning Phase	Implementation Phase	Sustain/Enhance Phase	Priority for Action
<p>1. Key agency partners at the <i>local</i> level, are engaged, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Workforce Investment Board(s) and local workforce development agencies</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Community College(s) and Postsecondary Education Providers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Adult Basic Education providers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> TANF providers and Human service agencies</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Economic Development agencies</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Community-based organizations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Business representative(s)</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>
<p>2. Key agency partners at the <i>state</i> level are engaged, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> State Workforce Agency</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Adult Basic and Postsecondary Education</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Economic Development</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Human Services</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>
<p>3. Written memoranda of understanding clearly define the agreed upon roles and responsibilities of partnership members.</p>	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>
<p>4. A leadership or steering committee has been established to guide the process of developing a career pathways system.</p>	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>
<p>5. A labor market analysis and environmental scan of education and training providers has been completed.</p>	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>

<b>1. Build Cross-Agency Partnerships &amp; Clarify Roles</b>					
<i>Please indicate the phase of implementation of your state for each of the key components listed. Also, indicate the level of priority for each action.</i>	Initiation Phase	Planning Phase	Implementation Phase	Sustain/Enhance Phase	Priority for Action
6. Partners agree on a definition of a career pathways framework.	1	2	3	4	A B C
7. A set of common goals and shared vision for establishing a career pathways framework has been developed.	1	2	3	4	A B C
8. Senior or political leaders in the state/region are aware of and have pledged support for the initiative.	1	2	3	4	A B C

<b>2. Identify Sector or Industry and Engage Employers</b>					
<i>Please indicate the phase of implementation of your state for each of the key components listed. Also, indicate the level of priority for each action.</i>	<b>Initiation Phase</b>	<b>Planning Phase</b>	<b>Implementation Phase</b>	<b>Sustain/Enhance Phase</b>	<b>Priority for Action</b>
1. Current and projected labor demand and supply have been assessed.	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>
2. Sector(s) including high demand and growth industries are identified and selected. List sector(s):	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>
3. The education and skill needs of employers in the state/region have been analyzed and gaps identified.	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>
4. The strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and gaps within the state and region’s education and training programs have been assessed against meeting sector and industry training needs.	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>
5. The partners have developed an outreach strategy to determine which employers to target and how to engage them.	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>
6. Employers representing targeted industries have been engaged.	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>
7. A plan is in place to support working with employers during various phases of the project (design, launch, operation, and evaluation).	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>

<b>3. Design Education and Training Programs</b>					
<i>Please indicate the phase of implementation of your state for each of the key components listed. Also, indicate the level of priority for each action.</i>	<b>Initiation Phase</b>	<b>Planning Phase</b>	<b>Implementation Phase</b>	<b>Sustain/Enhance Phase</b>	<b>Priority for Action</b>
1. Occupations and pathways are employer-vetted and informed, and meet the skill needs of targeted high-growth sectors.	1	2	3	4	A B C
2. Education and training is non-duplicative and progressive, clearly articulating one level of instruction to the next and enabling students to move easily between academic and career technical programs, and to and from work.	1	2	3	4	A B C
3. Programs are designed with multiple entry points and exit points (on-ramps and off-ramps).	1	2	3	4	A B C
4. Curricula is “chunked” or organized in progressive modules, with each level clearly articulated to the next.	1	2	3	4	A B C
5. Training helps workers enter or advance within a specific sector or occupational field, regardless of their skills at the point of entry.	1	2	3	4	A B C
6. Curricula and instructional strategies are contextual and competency-based; they make work a central context for learning and help students attain work readiness skills.	1	2	3	4	A B C
7. Adult basic education programs are clearly articulated with postsecondary academic and career-technical programs.	1	2	3	4	A B C
8. Programs are designed to accelerate advancement into either postsecondary education or employment, shortening the duration of training or education.	1	2	3	4	A B C
9. Appropriate assessment tools determine placement and advancement, including credit for prior learning.	1	2	3	4	A B C
10. Programs lead to industry-recognized and/or postsecondary credentials that are stackable and articulate to progressively higher-level credentials or degrees.	1	2	3	4	A B C

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11. Individualized career plans support an individual’s journey through the pathway and provide “roadmaps” for participants to attain the education, training and credentials they need to reach their goal.	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>
12. Wrap-around support services are available, including job placement services, career and financial aid counseling, especially during points of transition.	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>
13. Training is accessible and flexible by site and schedule, reduces or accommodates language and learning barriers, and develops drop-out prevention services or policies.	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>
14. Programs are organized to meet the unique needs of adult learners (including childcare, accommodating work schedules with flexible and non-semester-based scheduling, alternative class times and locations, easy entry and exit points, learning cohorts, and the innovative use of technology).	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>

<b>4. Identify Funding Needs and Sources</b>					
<i>Please indicate the phase of implementation of your state for each of the key components listed. Also, indicate the level of priority for each action.</i>	<b>Initiation Phase</b>	<b>Planning Phase</b>	<b>Implementation Phase</b>	<b>Sustain/Enhance Phase</b>	<b>Priority for Action</b>
<p>1. Partners identified funding needs for developing core components of the career pathway system including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Program development</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Professional development</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Operating costs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Supportive services</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>
<p>2. Partners explored funding resources that could support the career pathway system, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> WIA Titles I, II, and IV</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Wagner-Peyser Act funds</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Carl Perkins Act funds</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> TANF funds</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> State funding</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Private foundations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Employers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>

<b>4. Identify Funding Needs and Sources</b>					
<i>Please indicate the phase of implementation of your state for each of the key components listed. Also, indicate the level of priority for each action.</i>	Initiation Phase	Planning Phase	Implementation Phase	Sustain/Enhance Phase	Priority for Action
<p>3. Partners assessed the financial resources necessary for <i>covering the training costs of individual participants</i>, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Improving counseling and assistance to students in accessing student aid (Title IV HEA)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Paying tuition and related costs with student aid programs (e.g. Pell grants, state grant programs)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Paying tuition and related costs with WIA funding (including continued training after initial employment placements toward higher level credentials)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Attracting and expanding employer-provided training, utilization of tax credits, etc.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Covering indirect costs of attendance.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>



<b>5. Align Policies and Programs</b>					
<i>Please indicate the phase of implementation of your state for each of the key components listed. Also, indicate the level of priority for each action.</i>	<b>Initiation Phase</b>	<b>Planning Phase</b>	<b>Implementation Phase</b>	<b>Sustain/Enhance Phase</b>	<b>Priority for Action</b>
1. Local and state partners identified key policy and program changes and action steps necessary to implement the goals and vision for the career pathways initiative, including coordinating efforts across the state and/or region.	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>
2. Local and state policymakers support a coordinated, systems approach to adult education and training.	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>
3. Administrative policies have been assessed for each of the partner agencies (workforce, education, human services, economic development) and opportunities/barriers to alignment have been identified around the following topics: <input type="checkbox"/> Allowable uses of funds, including cost-sharing agreements <input type="checkbox"/> Program Eligibility <input type="checkbox"/> Performance reporting requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Financial reporting requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Other	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>
4. Legislative policy reforms to support a career pathways system have been identified and communicated to relevant authorities and policymakers.	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>
5. A cross-program, and cross-agency professional development strategy is in place.	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>

<b>6. Measure System Change and Performance</b>					
<i>Please indicate the phase of implementation of your state for each of the key components listed. Also, indicate the level of priority for each action.</i>	<b>Initiation Phase</b>	<b>Planning Phase</b>	<b>Implementation Phase</b>	<b>Sustain/Enhance Phase</b>	<b>Priority for Action</b>
1. A scan of all of the performance measures that are connected to your career pathways programs					
2. Common measures have been identified and are used to evaluate participant outcomes, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Measures that encourage long-term strategies for meeting the needs of low-skilled participants</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Interim measures.</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>
3. Longitudinal data collection and analysis measures student learning gains, progress along educational pathways, credential attainment, and employment outcomes.	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>
4. Data is used to make program improvements.	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>
5. Regular assessments are used to support continuous improvement, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conducting regular in-process reviews</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reviewing overall performance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Evaluating the performance of partners</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Optimizing scale based on needs for services</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reevaluating the mission, vision, and goals</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>

<b>6. Measure System Change and Performance</b>					
<i>Please indicate the phase of implementation of your state for each of the key components listed. Also, indicate the level of priority for each action.</i>	<b>Initiation Phase</b>	<b>Planning Phase</b>	<b>Implementation Phase</b>	<b>Sustain/Enhance Phase</b>	<b>Priority for Action</b>
6. Evaluations are used to improve career pathways and to maintain (or attract) partnerships.	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>
7. Funding is reserved or secured for external or intensive program evaluations.	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>
8. Data is used to identify labor market changes and to make system changes on a real-time basis.	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>
9. Measures are used to assess and determine system change and performance (including policy changes for system-wide change).	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>
10. A cross-program, and cross-agency professional development strategy is in place.	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>
11. The Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) promote the development of career pathways.	1	2	3	4	<b>A B C</b>