



Toolkit for Career Pathways

A Checklist for State VR Agencies

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Section I: Understanding Career Pathways as a Strategy for Increasing Positive Employment Outcomes

1. Do you have a clear understanding of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) vision of Career Pathways (CP) at the individual and the systems level?
 - a. Have you identified a common vision within the Combined or Unified State Plan around Career Pathways?
 - b. Does your State Plan outline the roles and responsibilities of each agency, and does it give VR representation on state workforce boards, employer advisory groups, Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) providers, etc.?
 - c. Do you know how your core partners are defining Career Pathways?
 - d. Does your agency have the same vision and understanding of Career Pathways as the core partners?
 - e. Have you identified ways to co-enroll? Ways to share costs, resources and data across partners?
 - f. Have you provided training to leadership and front-line staff to ensure a “same page” understanding of Career Pathways within WIOA implementation?
 - g. Are you aware of labor market trends and how they influence your approach to Career Pathways with individual consumers?

- h. Are you aware of training options in your community that include Career Tech Education, postsecondary opportunities, vocational and technical programs, apprenticeship and employer-based training?
- i. Have you connected with all training entities to determine their ability to provide appropriate access to your clientele?
- j. Have you identified points of service where Career Pathways options can be presented and discussed with individual consumers?
- k. Have you identified service strategies, procedures and policies that need to be adjusted to incorporate a Career Pathways framework?

Resources for Section I

WINTAC Career Pathways: A Roadmap for Innovation and Integration Webinar:
<http://www.wintac.org/training/all-training/career-pathways-roadmap-innovation-and-integration>

CLASP's Career Pathways Explained: <https://www.clasp.org/career-pathways-explained-multimedia-overview>

Career Pathways Systems: <https://cte.ed.gov/initiatives/career-pathways-systems>

National Skills Coalition: Realizing Innovation and Opportunity in WIOA:
<https://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/resources/publications/file/2014-11-NSC-WIOA-state-report.pdf>

Section II: Utilizing Pre-Employment Transition Services as the First Step in Career Pathways

1. Have you considered how Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) can be a first step along the Career Pathways continuum?
 - a. Have you considered how using Pre-ETS as the first step along their Career Pathway will enable students with disabilities to ...



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- i. discover who they are;
 - ii. identify and gain work experience;
 - iii. identify jobs within local, regional or national labor markets that fall within a Career Pathway with multiple on- and off-ramps;
 - iv. gain knowledge about the educational and/or training requirements for various jobs along their Career Pathway, and where to go to get additional postsecondary training;
 - v. understand what it takes to get and successfully keep a job; and/or
 - vi. learn how their disability may impact employment/training, and understand how to advocate for accommodations in a job setting?
 - b. Have you identified how the five required Pre-Employment Transition Services (job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition programs or other postsecondary education programs at institutes of higher learning, workplace-readiness training, instruction in self-advocacy) align within a Career Pathways framework?
 - c. Do your current policies and procedures around the provision of Pre-ETS include the connection to Career Pathways?
 - d. Have you provided training to staff on how to utilize a Career Pathways approach in the delivery and successful implementation of Pre-ETS?
2. Have you identified processes that will guide decision-making around the development of work-based learning experiences within a Career Pathways model?
- a. Have you identified opportunities for work-based learning experiences that will allow students to build skills within a Career Pathway?
 - b. Are the work-based learning experience programs in your state designed to provide students opportunities for exploration within career fields that align with local labor market trends and business needs?



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- c. Does your agency work with the local education agency to supplement Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) transition services by developing, expanding or enhancing in-school, after-school, or summer work experience opportunities in diverse Career Pathways, leading to more meaningful postsecondary employment and training goals in the Individual Education Plan (IEP)/Individual Plan for Employment (IPE)?
- d. Does your agency coordinate the provision of work-based learning experiences with the local education agency so teachers have the opportunity to support such activities in the classroom by building on students' experiences and knowledge as they learn new skills?
- e. Have you connected and built relationships with employers offering work-based learning experiences that expose students with disabilities to employment opportunities that might lead to industry-recognized credentials?
- f. Have you provided training to staff regarding how to identify jobs within Career Pathways that provide opportunities for an upward trajectory, and where to locate the skills required to move from an entry level job to a higher-paying/higher-skilled job within that Pathway?
- g. Have you utilized VR business specialists and/or workforce partners' expertise to identify work experiences and job opportunities outside the traditional school setting that will provide increased opportunities to explore postsecondary training options, leading to more industry-recognized credentials, skills gains and meaningful postsecondary employment?
- h. Do you know how your agency can partner with AJCs in developing work-based learning opportunities for students with disabilities?
- i. Do students with disabilities receiving Pre-ETS have an opportunity to participate in paid work-based learning experiences in your state?
- j. Is there a process for identifying who will serve as the "employer of record" if the employer offering the work-based learning experience is not able to pay the student directly?
- k. Do you know how to coordinate the provision of work-based learning experiences with Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) or other partners?
- l. Have you connected with your Career Technical Education (CTE) programs to provide Pre-ETS that expose students to these types of Career Pathways?



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- m. Have you provided training to front-line staff regarding how to identify, coordinate and authorize paid work-based learning opportunities, including on-the-job training (OJT) and internships, for students receiving Pre-ETS?
- n. Have you provided increased work-based learning experiences that support advanced training in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) and other technical professions?

3. Have you discussed how the VR counselor can use Career Pathways as a strategy to frame Pre-ETS within the IPE?

- a. Have you considered that using Pre-ETS as the first step along a Career Pathway will enable VR counselors to ...
 - i. actively engage students in the vocational planning process because they will know more about who they are and what they want to do;
 - ii. develop IPEs within 90 days;
 - iii. utilize the student's Career Pathway as a framework to help identify services on the IPE;
 - iv. utilize the student's Career Pathway to support the employment goal; and/or
 - v. increase the opportunity for high quality employment outcomes that include measurable skills gains and industry-recognized credential attainment?
- b. Do your policies/procedures identify how to document Pre-ETS in the IPE?
- c. Have you provided training to staff regarding how to document the Pre-ETS in the IPE?
- d. Have you considered how the results of the student's performance, progress, and/or participation in any of the five required Pre-ETS services while they are potentially eligible will be used to help identify a projected post-school employment outcome or employment goal on the IPE, once the student applies and has been determined eligible for VR services?
- e. Do you have written processes in place, and have you provided training to agency staff regarding how Career Pathways can support the student's projected post-school employment outcomes or employment goal leading to high quality employment outcomes?



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Resources for Section II

WINTAC Pre-Employment Transition Services Resources:

<http://www.wintac.org/topic-areas/pre-employment-transition-services/resources>

Pipeline to Career Success for Students with Disabilities:

<https://www.napequity.org/projects/pipeline-career-success-students-disabilities/>

Collaborative Initiatives Across Career and Technical Education, Vocational Rehabilitation and Special Education: Three State/Local Stories:

<https://www.transitionta.org/events-details?page=3>

Resources from 2019 Capacity Building Institute: <https://transitionta.org/cbi/2019>

Section III: Identifying ways to Implement Career Pathways Model at Application, Eligibility, Plan Development and at Exit

1. Have you considered strategies at the point of application that will guide the Career Pathways process?
 - a. What services are available through your local American Job Centers (AJCs) that could benefit your clientele while waiting for eligibility determination?
 - b. Have you connected with your AJC partners to promote access and inclusion of your clientele into AJC career services?
 - c. Do you have an effective referral process that includes a warm handoff to AJC services?
 - d. Have you provided training to AJC staff on disability etiquette and specifics of how to effectively work with individuals experiencing a range of disabilities?
 - e. Have you trained agency and AJC staff on shared and unique areas of expertise within the two systems to define roles and encourage partnership?
 - f. Do you have an effective communication process to inform and share information on the client as they are receiving services through the AJC?
 - g. Have you identified ways that the AJC can begin the assessment and career exploration process that will establish goals and inform ongoing service needs once determined eligible for VR services?



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- h. Have you cross-walked agency and AJC services to determine equivalencies, avoid duplication and enhance coordination to streamline service delivery?
2. Have you considered strategies to implement at the point of eligibility determination that will guide the Career Pathways process and inform the development of the IPE?
- a. How do your assessments establish a concrete employment plan when following a Career Pathways framework versus a “job”?
 - b. Can your counselors identify expectations for following a Career Pathway versus a “job” with clientele?
 - c. Do you have guidance in place for counselors that identifies how the career exploration process will be completed?
 - d. Do you have guidance on the process for sharing information and data with partners that will inform and expand discovery to assist with identification of career goals?
 - e. Do your counselors have guidance and support in the engagement of local resources to ensure that Career Pathways objectives are achievable? *[Note: This includes strategies of engaging partner expertise and resources for a holistic/wraparound approach for the benefit of the client (e.g., Integrated Resource Team strategy)?]*
 - f. Have you created strategies for communication between front-line staff and leadership, and strategies to provide support as processes are changing?
3. Have you identified expectations and processes that will guide decision-making around point of exit and continuum of services?
- a. Have you evaluated within a Career Pathways model the best point of exit to maximize client success and attainment of positive performance outcomes?
 - b. Have you discussed with partners how co-enrolled individuals may receive follow-up and continued services through their programs at point of VR exit?
 - c. Do you have a process for referral for other needed services during and post-VR involvement?
 - d. What current policies and procedures need to be modified to ensure inclusion of a Career Pathways service delivery framework?



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Resources for Section III

LEAD Center

→ Road to Inclusive Career Pathways: <http://www.leadcenter.org/career-pathways>

→ How AJCs Can Help: <http://www.leadcenter.org/resources/presentation/successful-employment-how-local-american-job-centers-ajcs-can-help>

USDOL-American Job Centers: <https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/training/onestop>

AJC Customer Flow Scenarios:

<https://ion.workforcegps.org/resources/2017/08/22/18/16/~link.aspx?id=2513A64E9B554A61850ACBB8E0FE6972&z=z>

Section IV: Career Pathways and Connection to Common Performance Measures?

1. Have you considered how following a Career Pathways model will increase your measurable skill gains (MSG) and credential rates?
 - a. Do your current policies and procedures around RSA-911 data recording and attainment of performance outcomes include the connection to Career Pathways goals?
 - b. Are you using your data dashboard information to identify underrepresentation of MSGs, training services and apprenticeship, and develop a strategy to follow a Career Pathways service delivery framework to increase these numbers?
 - c. Do you have policy and procedures around necessary documentation in case files on MSGs and credentials for verification purposes that will also demonstrate a Career Pathways focus?
 - d. Does your case management system have a designated place for the collecting, documenting, tracking and reporting of credential attainment and measureable skill gains to track individuals following a Career Pathway?
 - e. In a multi-occupational Career Pathway plan, have you considered if you exit VR services at initial credential or final higher level?



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For example, consider the pathway from Personal Care Attendant to a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Would Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) be the end point, with Registered Nurse (RN) and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) still to follow? Or would you continue supports through the BSN and subsequent higher level employment?

- f. Have you considered how you engage service partners, and if timelines differ, how you coordinate and align?
2. Have you determined how you will share employment and wage data with partners?
 - a. Since Career Pathways assumes an individual will be moving upward along a career ladder with increased wages and higher level employment, have you considered how will you capture and use wage data as a measure of success?
 - b. Have you considered when an individual following a Career Pathway with interim employment goals along the way to the broader career goal will be exited?
 - c. Will you hold individuals open to the point of final career goal to capture higher wages or set up a continuum of service delivery and supports through a partner?
 3. Have you discussed or entered into data sharing agreements with your local education agency (both secondary and higher education) or other agencies in order to access credential attainment data?
 - a. Have you discussed how you will obtain credential information?
 - b. Have you considered data sharing agreements with other agencies in order to collect this data (e.g. National Clearinghouse)?
 - c. Have you provided training to VR counselors on what types of credentials count for this measure and how a Career Pathways-focused IPE can positively impact this measure?



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4. Have you considered how to use agency resources and expertise to increase access to credential attainment and MSG outcomes?
 - a. Have you looked at standard proficiency measures for credentialed training programs to determine if they present access issues for agency clients?
 - b. Have you considered nonstandard measures of skill gains for agency clients (i.e. targeted to operational industry standards rather than academic proficiency standards)?
 - c. Have you developed expectations/procedures for agency staff around accommodation and communication planning for shared clients engaged in credentialed training programs?
 - d. Have you developed expectations/procedures for agency staff around placement planning for shared clients in credentialed training programs?
 - e. Have you developed expectations/procedures for agency staff around retention planning for shared clients who have completed credentialed training programs?

Resources for Section IV

WINTAC Performance Measures Resources: <http://www.wintac.org/topic-areas/transition-common-performance-accountability-system/resources>

Relationship Between WIOA Performance Measures and AQCP Career Pathway Metrics: <https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/relationship-between-wioa-performance-measures-and-aqcp-career-pathway>

RSA-TAC-17-01: <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/rsa/subregulatory/tac-17-01.pdf>



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