

# Overview of the Moving Pathways Forward Project

## Project Background

To meet the need in the U.S. for a better skilled and credentialed 21st century workforce, career pathways has emerged as a promising approach for increasing the number of individuals who gain the skills and academic and industry-recognized credentials needed for work in high-demand occupations. In April 2012, the U.S. Departments of Labor (DOL), Education (ED), and Health and Human Services (HHS) issued a joint policy memorandum<sup>1</sup> in which each agency acknowledged the need for better alignment of education, training, and employment services among public agencies to facilitate the delivery of career pathways services. This alignment requires the coordination and connection of different parts of multiple public and private services and activities to create a comprehensive education and training system.

To support the development of career pathways systems, the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) funded *Moving Pathways Forward: Supporting Career Pathways Integration*, a three-year project to assist states in advancing career pathways systems to transition low-skilled adults to postsecondary education and employment in high-demand and high-growth occupations. The project's goal is to further integrate adult education into broader career pathways systems development at the state and local levels by building upon the successes and lessons learned from earlier federal and state investments in career pathways. The project supports state and local activities to create career pathways systems involving industry; career and technical, adult, and postsecondary education; and workforce and economic development. The project also addresses barriers to the implementation of cross-system policies that support transitions for adult learners into postsecondary education and employment.

The *Moving Pathways Forward* project provides technical assistance services to states by leveraging and enhancing existing resources and tools, and is establishing an information dissemination service to connect individuals to career pathways resources and activities.

### Career Pathways Exchange

The project's *Career Pathways Exchange* is a comprehensive, online information dissemination service, to connect interested stakeholders to career pathways resources and activities on topics of their choosing from a large network of federal and state agencies and partners that include philanthropic organizations and other career pathways-focused initiatives. The *Career Pathways Exchange* streamlines information sharing by providing subscribers with ongoing updates on resources available on their selected career pathways topic areas and by informing them of upcoming events and online discussions to facilitate a deeper national dialog on career pathways systems development and implementation. The *Career Pathways Exchange* will launch in Fall 2014.

<sup>1</sup> See: [http://cte.ed.gov/docs/RPOS\\_2012/Joint\\_Letter\\_Career\\_Pathways.pdf](http://cte.ed.gov/docs/RPOS_2012/Joint_Letter_Career_Pathways.pdf)

# Technical Assistance Services for States

The *Moving Pathways Forward* project provides a range of technical assistance services to assist states in accelerating the development and implementation of their career pathways systems and facilitate local providers' career pathways services. States have access to resources and tools, and receive guidance to support their work on addressing key components of career pathways state systems, including:

- Cross-agency Partnerships and Industry Engagement;
- State Vision of a Career Pathways System and Communications about this Vision;
- Alignment of Policies and Programs;
- Education, Training, and Support Services;
- Professional Development and Technical Assistance;
- Data Systems and Evaluation; and
- Funding and Sustainability.

The Moving Pathways Forward project provides two forms of technical assistance to states:

**1. Intensive Technical Assistance** to 14 state inter-agency teams. These state teams, representing adult, career and technical, and postsecondary education; workforce and

economic development; and business, are guided by state coaches and subject matter experts in expanding their existing career pathways system components or developing new state system components. Assistance is provided to state teams through telephone conferences, webinars, site visits, and email. Participating states include: Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New Jersey, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

**2. General Technical Assistance** to states not receiving intensive technical assistance. The project team offers virtual mentoring support to states to examine their current activities in career pathways implementation and identify priority components of career pathways systems for further development. General technical assistance will be available to states beginning in Fall 2014.

Through these technical assistance services, all states will have access to resources and guidance to assist them in assessing their needs for career pathways system development or expansion, identifying goals for their project activities, and determining planning steps to strengthen and expand key career pathways systems components.

## Contact

**Email:** [cpexchange@kratoslearning.com](mailto:cpexchange@kratoslearning.com)

**Web:** <http://lincs.ed.gov/programs/movingpathways>



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