



# Bridges to Careers for Low-Skilled Adults



A Program Development Guide

# Bridges to Careers for Low-Skilled Adults

A Program Development Guide

**Women Employed with  
Chicago Jobs Council and  
UIC Great Cities Institute**

### **Women Employed**

Women Employed's mission is to improve the economic status of women and remove barriers to economic equity. Since its founding in 1973, Women Employed and its affiliate, the Women Employed Institute, have won historic changes in public and private sector policies that have expanded women's opportunities and improved workplaces throughout the country. Today, Women Employed is a leading national advocate for women earning low wages. Women Employed promotes fair employment practices, increases access to education and training, and provides women with innovative tools to plan their careers. In 2003, Women Employed launched the Illinois Career Pathways Initiative, a collaborative effort to enable individuals of varied skill and ability levels to move along clear educational pathways and into good jobs. [www.womenemployed.org](http://www.womenemployed.org)

### **Chicago Jobs Council**

Founded in 1981 as a citywide coalition, the Chicago Jobs Council's (CJC) mission is to ensure access to employment and career-advancement opportunities for people in poverty. Since its origin, CJC has reflected the principle that to eliminate poverty we must facilitate diverse and broad community participation in public policy. To that end, the membership has grown from 18 founding members to more than 100 community-based organizations, civic groups, and individuals with whom our staff work to develop and implement successful reform initiatives. Members contribute their frontline experience serving disadvantaged job seekers and working poor families at monthly working group meetings. CJC also partners with workforce stakeholders —local workforce boards, foundations, public agencies, and local, regional, and national coalitions — to strengthen linkages for a community-informed policy agenda. [www.cjc.net](http://www.cjc.net)

### **UIC Great Cities Institute**

The Great Cities Institute (GCI) serves as the University of Illinois at Chicago's (UIC) focal point for new initiatives in interdisciplinary applied urban research. Through its Workforce Development program, directed by senior fellow Davis Jenkins, GCI conducts research on how to increase access to economic opportunity for disadvantaged youths and adults. A key focus of this work is finding ways to strengthen the capacity of public postsecondary institutions, particularly community colleges, to educate economically and educationally disadvantaged individuals for gainful employment in a knowledge economy. [www.uic.edu/cuppa/gci](http://www.uic.edu/cuppa/gci)

## Foreword

There is increasing focus in the U.S. on the importance of education and training as both a key avenue to advancement for people earning low wages and an economic development strategy for building healthy state economies. In Illinois, Women Employed launched the Illinois Career Pathways Initiative in 2003 to focus on building career pathways that would enable individuals — particularly those with low skills — to combine school and work and advance over time to better jobs and higher levels of education and training, including four-year degrees. Similar initiatives have been launched in other states, often involving partnerships of state agencies, advocacy groups, workforce agencies and intermediaries, community colleges, and community-based organizations.

In Illinois, we began this effort by focusing on the development of the first rung of the pathway — bridge programs for low-literate individuals who are locked in low-wage jobs or are unemployed. By bridge programs, we mean training to prepare adults who lack basic skills to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and training leading to career-path employment. This decision coincided with growing interest in a career pathways approach on the part of community colleges, advocacy and community-based organizations, workforce boards, and others, and the launching of the Critical Skill Shortages Initiative by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

To broaden understanding of the potential contribution of bridge programs to workforce development, a partnership of the Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago, the Chicago Jobs Council, the UIC Great Cities Institute, and Women Employed formed to sponsor two conferences in 2004 focused on developing bridge programs in several high-growth industry sectors. The Grand Victoria Foundation and the Joyce Foundation provided funding. Partnerships of community colleges, community-based organizations, workforce boards, and employers interested in creating bridge programs attended in large numbers. Attendees told us: “We want to develop bridge programs, but how?” At the same time, the Center on Law and Social Policy (CLASP) was seeing the need for a how-to manual on bridge programs at the national level. CLASP approached Women Employed and the Chicago Jobs Council about developing this guide and then provided seed funding for it.

This guide is directed to bridge program developers, managers, and coordinators — that is, the individuals who are responsible for program development and implementation. They are typically based at a community college, a community-based organization, or other education or workforce agency. At the same time, the guide is rich with information useful to all bridge program partners, including employers, unions, four-year colleges, and others.

We welcome your ideas, your experiences with implementing bridge programs, and your suggestions for additional information or studies that would be helpful going forward. The guide will be available on the Web sites of Women Employed ([www.womenemployed.org](http://www.womenemployed.org)) and the Chicago Jobs Council ([www.cjc.net](http://www.cjc.net)). Also, information about career pathways and bridge programs will continue to be posted on the listserv of the Career Pathways Initiative (<http://groups.yahoo.com/subscribe/CareerPathways>).

This guide was a collaborative project of the Women Employed Institute, the Chicago Jobs Council, and the University of Illinois at Chicago’s Great Cities Institute. Toni Henle, Director of Workforce Development Policy at the Women Employed Institute, was the project manager. The project team included Davis Jenkins, faculty fellow at the UIC Great Cities Institute, and Whitney Smith, Associate Director of the Chicago Jobs Council, and project consultants, Deborah Hagman-Shannon, DHS Consultants, and Judith Kossy, Policy Program Partners. We’d like to thank Stephanie Sommers, Safer Foundation, who contributed to the curriculum section, and Dannielle Shaw and Rachel Unruh, Women Employed staff.

The guide was underwritten by generous grants from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and CLASP. In addition, the Ford Foundation, Grand Victoria Foundation, the Joyce Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, McCormick Tribune Foundation, the Polk Bros. Foundation, the Woods Fund of Chicago, and the Working Poor Families Project support our organizations' career pathways work. Many practitioners from Illinois community colleges and community-based organizations contributed their expertise, as did bridge program implementers at the programs profiled in the guide, workforce board staff, state policymakers, national advocates, and practitioners around the country.

We are grateful to the following people for reviewing the guide in its entirety: Julian Alssid, Workforce Strategy Center; Tina Bloomer, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Tom DuBois, Instituto del Progreso Latino; Melissa Goldberg, Workforce Strategy Center; Sarah Hawker, Illinois Community College Board; Melva Hunter, Illinois AFL-CIO; Linda Kaiser, Chicago Workforce Board; Anne Keeney, Seattle Jobs Initiative; Shauna King-Simms, Kentucky Community and Technical College System; Mike Leach, Southern Good Faith Fund; Mimi Maduro, Portland Community College; Bill McMillan, City Colleges of Chicago; Mary Pepperl, Workforce Board of Northern Cook County; Erin Riehle, Greater Cincinnati Health Professions Academy and Project Search; Trish Schneider, Jefferson County Public Schools Adult Education; Sarah Stapleton, Renton Technical College; Julie Strawn, Center for Law and Social Policy; and Kim Ward, Tacoma Community College. We would also like to thank our employer reviewers: Meg Amato, Exelon; Shauna Babcock, Evanston Northwestern Healthcare; Rogercarole Rogers, Houston-Rogers Consulting; and Jim Schultz, Pretty Good Consulting.\*

Thanks to the following people for reviewing special sections and early drafts of the guide: Maria Ayala, Instituto del Progreso Latino/Carreras en Salud; Sue Barauski, Adult Learning Resource Center/The Center; Cynthia Barnes, Triton College; Nancy Bellew, Bridging to Careers, Chicago Housing Authority in partnership with City Colleges of Chicago; Keith Bird, Kentucky Community and Technical College System; Kathleen Dowling, Jane Addams Resource Corporation; Ruth Ann Evans, Parkland College; Darlene Forte, Illinois Department of Human Services; Jennifer Foster, Illinois Community College Board; Margie Gonwa, LEED Council; Ben Greer, Olive-Harvey College; Karen Hunter-Anderson, Illinois Community College Board; Terry Irby, Joliet Junior College; Jean Johnson, Richard J. Daley College; Michelle Jones, Dawson Technical Institute; Rose Karasti, Chicago Jobs Council; Robert Kelly, Dawson Technical Institute; Marilou Kessler, Jewish Vocational Service Chicago; Armando Mata, Harry S. Truman College; Rachel McDonald, Central States SER-Jobs for Progress; Alex Prentzas, OAI, Inc.; Cynthia Ragusa, Illinois Department of Human Services; Robert Sheets, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity; and Linda Uzureau, Prairie State College.

We would also like to thank the following people who were interviewed for the bridge program profiles: Elaine Baker, Community College of Denver; Cris Crowley, Tammy Hardy, and Cindy Miller, Madisonville Community College; Tom DuBois, Instituto del Progreso Latino; Terri Greenfield, Portland Community College-Southeast Center; Mike Leach, Southern Good Faith Fund; Mimi Maduro, Portland Community College; Diego James Navarro and Rock Pfothenhauer, Cabrillo College; Paula Norby and Kim Ward, Tacoma Community College; Eric Parker, Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership; Erin Riehle, Greater Cincinnati Health Professions Academy and Project Search; and Regina Stanback-Stroud, Skyline College.

Toni Henle, Women Employed Institute  
Davis Jenkins, University of Illinois at Chicago Great Cities Institute  
Whitney Smith, Chicago Jobs Council

October 2005

---

\*Exelon Corporation and Evanston Northwestern Healthcare are listed for identification purposes only.

# Bridges to Careers for Low-Skilled Adults: A Program Development Guide

## Table of Contents

### Chapter I: Overview of Bridge Training Programs

UNDERSTANDING BRIDGE BASICS .....	2
IDENTIFYING BRIDGE PROGRAM MODELS .....	7
BUILDING BRIDGES TO A CAREER PATH .....	11

### Chapter II: Bridge Program Development

DESIGNING THE PROGRAM .....	16
Identify the Target Population .....	17
Identify Jobs and Education and Training Requirements .....	19
Conduct Gap Analysis .....	19
Develop Bridge Program Components .....	23
Create a Program Flowchart .....	23
BUILDING A BRIDGE PARTNERSHIP .....	28
Determine the Need for Partners .....	28
Launch and Manage the Partnership .....	33
BUILDING AND SUSTAINING EMPLOYER RELATIONSHIPS .....	34
Build Employer Relationships .....	34
Develop the Employer Role .....	38
Sustain Employer Involvement .....	38
DEVELOPING PROGRAM CURRICULUM .....	39
Understand the Principles of Bridge Instruction .....	39
Review Sample Bridge Curricula .....	40
Lower-Level and Higher-Level Bridge Program Examples: West Side Tech Career Bridge I and II .....	40
Field-Specific Bridge Programs .....	41
Employability Skills Curriculum .....	44
Develop the Bridge Curricula .....	44
Enrich the Learning Experience .....	51
Career Exploration .....	51
Cohorts and Peer Mentors .....	53
Job and College Exposure .....	53
Computer Skills Through Course Content .....	54
Computerized Instruction to Complement Bridge Instruction .....	55

Develop Student Assessment .....	55
Pre- and Post-Testing .....	55
Student Career Goals .....	56
Student Support Service Needs .....	56
<b>TARGETING STUDENT SERVICES .....</b>	<b>56</b>
Prioritize and Adapt Services for Target Population .....	56
<b>PLACING STUDENTS IN JOBS AND COLLEGE .....</b>	<b>64</b>
Job Placement .....	64
College Placement .....	64
<b>Chapter III: Bridge Program Costs and Funding</b>	
<b>BUDGETING A BRIDGE PROGRAM .....</b>	<b>66</b>
Develop a Budget .....	66
<b>FUNDING A BRIDGE PROGRAM .....</b>	<b>70</b>
Use Existing Funding Streams Innovatively .....	70
Explore Public Funding Options .....	70
Find Private Sector Contributions and Foundation and Corporate Giving Programs .....	71
<b>FUNDING AND SUPPORTING AN ONGOING BRIDGE PROGRAM .....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Chapter IV: Bridge Program Implementation and Management</b>	
<b>STAFFING .....</b>	<b>76</b>
Assign Roles and Responsibilities .....	76
Find the Right Instructors .....	77
Instructor Duties, Qualifications, and Recruitment .....	77
Instructor Orientation .....	77
<b>PROMOTING, RECRUITING FOR, AND MARKETING THE BRIDGE PROGRAM .....</b>	<b>81</b>
Promote the Bridge Program .....	81
Recruit Students to the Bridge Program .....	81
Market the Bridge Program .....	82
<b>Chapter V: Bridge Program Evaluation and Continuous Improvement .....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Chapter VI: Statewide Bridge Program Support .....</b>	<b>90</b>

**Chapter VII: Program Profiles**

ACCESS COLLEGE EDUCATION .....	.94–95
CAREER PATHWAYS VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR NON-NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS .....	.96–97
CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN SKILLED TRADES AND INDUSTRIES .....	.98–99
CHILD DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE PROGRAM .....	.100–101
COLLEGE GATEWAY PROGRAM .....	.102–103
ESSENTIAL SKILLS PROGRAM .....	.104–105
GREATER CINCINNATI HEALTH PROFESSIONS ACADEMY .....	.106–107
MADISONVILLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE CAREER PATHWAYS .....	.108–109
MANUFACTURING TECHNOLOGY BRIDGE .....	.110–111
SEARK COLLEGE CAREER PATHWAYS PILOT PROJECT .....	.112–113
WATSONVILLE DIGITAL BRIDGE ACADEMY .....	.114–115
<b>Glossary</b> .....	.116
<b>Endnotes</b> .....	.118



FIGURES, TABLES, AND WORKSHEETS	
FIGURE 1: KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY JOB STRUCTURE .....	5
TABLE 1: KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY JOB STRUCTURE: SAMPLE JOBS AND WAGES .....	6
FIGURE 2: LOWER-LEVEL BRIDGE PROGRAM MODEL.....	9
FIGURE 3: HIGHER-LEVEL BRIDGE PROGRAM MODEL.....	10
FIGURE 4: EDUCATIONAL PATHWAY TO CAREERS FOR ADULTS .....	12
TABLE 2: EDUCATIONAL PATHWAY PROGRAM LEVEL DESCRIPTIONS .....	13
FIGURE 5: BENEFITS OF BRIDGE TRAINING .....	14
WORKSHEET 1: QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER IN IDENTIFYING TARGET POPULATION .....	18
WORKSHEET 2: QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER IN IDENTIFYING JOB AND EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS .....	20
WORKSHEET 3: MAPPING JOB LEVELS AND EXISTING EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS.....	21
WORKSHEET 4: QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER IN CONDUCTING A GAP ANALYSIS .....	22
WORKSHEET 5: QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER IN DEVELOPING PROGRAM COMPONENTS .....	24
WORKSHEET 6: BRIDGE PROGRAM COMPONENTS SUMMARY SHEET.....	25
FIGURE 6: CITY COLLEGES OF CHICAGO WORKFORCE BRIDGE PROGRAM: TRANSPORTATION, WAREHOUSING, AND LOGISTICS .....	26
FIGURE 7: CURRICULUM/PROGRAM DESIGN FOR CARRERAS EN SALUD, INSTITUTO DEL PROGRESO LATINO .....	27
TABLE 3: SAMPLE PARTNERS AND ROLES.....	29
WORKSHEET 7: PARTNER ROLE IDENTIFICATION .....	30
WORKSHEET 8: EMPLOYER MEETINGS DISCUSSION GUIDE .....	37
FIGURE 8: STRUCTURE AND FLOW OF CAREER BRIDGE CURRICULUM, WEST SIDE TECHNICAL INSTITUTE .....	42
FIGURE 9: STRUCTURE AND FLOW OF FIELD-SPECIFIC HIGHER-LEVEL BRIDGE CURRICULUM.....	43
FIGURE 10: EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS FOR ADULTS, ADULT LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER .....	46-48
FIGURE 11: EXCERPT FROM SYLLABUS FOR COMMUNICATION COURSE.....	49
FIGURE 12: EXCERPT FROM SYLLABUS FOR MATH BRIDGE COURSE .....	49
FIGURE 13: SYLLABUS FOR TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES COURSE .....	50
WORKSHEET 9: STUDENT SERVICE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE: POTENTIAL STUDENTS .....	58-59
WORKSHEET 10: STUDENT SERVICE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE: FORMER STUDENTS.....	60-61
WORKSHEET 11: STUDENT SERVICE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE: CURRENT STUDENTS .....	62-63
WORKSHEET 12: COST CENTER BUDGET.....	68
WORKSHEET 13: PROGRAM OR ACTIVITY BUDGET.....	69
WORKSHEET 14: FUNDING THE COMPONENTS OF BRIDGE PROGRAMS .....	72-73
WORKSHEET 15: MAPPING BRIDGE PROGRAM FUNDS.....	74
TABLE 4: STAFF POSITIONS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND FUNCTIONS .....	78-79
FIGURE 14: WORKFORCE PREPARATION ACADEMY CLASS ASSIGNMENT.....	80
FIGURE 15: SAMPLE INFORMED CONSENT FORM .....	85
TABLE 5: DATA ELEMENTS TO COLLECT ON BRIDGE PARTICIPANTS UPON PROGRAM ENROLLMENT.....	86
TABLE 6: DATA ELEMENTS TO COLLECT ON BRIDGE PARTICIPANT PERFORMANCE AND INITIAL OUTCOMES.....	87

# Overview of Bridge Training Programs

UNDERSTANDING BRIDGE BASICS

IDENTIFYING BRIDGE PROGRAM MODELS

BUILDING BRIDGES TO A CAREER PATH

# Overview of Bridge Training Programs

## UNDERSTANDING BRIDGE BASICS

Increasingly, jobs that pay more than subsistence wages and offer opportunities for career advancement require at least some training beyond high school, even at the entry level. Yet too many people already in the workforce or coming into the labor force lack the basic skills to succeed in post-secondary education.

Bridge training programs prepare adults who lack adequate basic skills to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and training, leading to career-path employment. Bridge programs seek to enable students to advance both to better jobs and to further education *and* training, and thus are designed to provide a broad foundation for career-long learning on the job and formal post-high school education and training.

Bridge programs are suited for adults who have reading and mathematics skills below the ninth-grade level. These individuals may or may not have a high school diploma or GED. There are millions of such individuals in the United States:

- 27 million adults in the U.S. do not have a high school diploma.<sup>1</sup>
- More than half (52 percent) of U.S. adults with a high school diploma read in the two lowest literacy levels (out of five). This means, for example, that they are unable to find information in a text needed to perform a task.<sup>2</sup>
- Many students are not academically prepared for college. More than a quarter (28 percent) of first-time college freshmen in fall 2000 took at least one remedial course. Among first-time community college freshmen, 42 percent took at least one remedial course.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, the rewards for higher levels of education and the education requirements of jobs have been increasing:

- In the last 30 years, real wages for workers without a high school degree declined 19 percent, while wages for those with a college degree increased 16 percent.<sup>4</sup>

- Jobs requiring a level of basic skills associated with at least some college will account for an estimated two-thirds of all new jobs created between 2000 and 2010, and the vast majority of new jobs that pay wages sufficient to support a family.<sup>5</sup>
- Workers with associate degrees earn significantly more than those with at most a high school education, and the earnings advantage of bachelor's degree workers has grown even more quickly.<sup>6</sup>

Figure 1: Knowledge Economy Job Structure, p. 5, summarizes the characteristics of jobs at different levels of the labor market along with the qualifications for each. Table 1, p. 6, presents sample titles and wages for jobs at each level of the diagram. To put this in practical terms, to get a job that pays nine or 10 dollars an hour to start *and* pays health benefits — jobs that in the diagram are referred to as “entry-level skilled” and include, for example, patient care technician, multiple machine tool setter, or bank teller — applicants would need to have the basic skills to qualify for entry into a college-level certificate program plus some specific training. To move to the next level, entry-level technician jobs, one would need at least the equivalent of two full semesters of college occupational certificate training, and in some cases an associate degree. Bridge programs are designed to prepare adults to qualify for entry-level skilled jobs and enter two-year college occupational certificate or associate degree programs.

Bridge training programs are designed for individuals who have generally not been successful in traditional education settings or have been out of school for some time. These include:

- Prospective college students with a high school diploma or GED who are unable to meet college entrance or placement requirements
- Students in adult education (including adult basic education, GED preparation, or English-as-a-Second-Language programs)
- Students in developmental (college remedial) programs

- Workers displaced from jobs because of structural economic change
- Unemployed adults with poor basic skills
- Low-skilled workers who are employed but stuck in low-wage jobs

Bridge programs are an effective tool to reach, motivate, and teach such adults and enable them to succeed in postsecondary training and enter jobs that pay family-supporting wages.

Research indicates that the most effective way to help adults improve their basic skills is to teach the basics in the context of training for jobs, preparing for employment, or some other activity that is meaningful to their lives.<sup>7</sup> This is precisely what bridge programs do. Some of the key features of bridge programs are as follows:

- The curriculum is defined in terms of competencies needed to succeed in postsecondary training and jobs that, with experience and further training, can lead to career advancement.
- Programs are focused on the basics of communication, problem-solving, applied mathematics, technology applications, and technical fundamentals taught in the context of problems and situations drawn from the contemporary workplace and the postsecondary classroom.
- Instruction emphasizes learning by doing through projects, simulations, and labs.
- Programs expose students to opportunities and requirements of employment and education in fields of importance to local economies through career and college exploration and planning, field trips, job shadowing, internships, and other means.
- Programs are offered at times and places convenient to working adults and use instructional methods and technologies appropriate for adult learners.
- Programs are compressed to allow adults to complete them quickly and move on to better jobs and further education.

- Programs offer support services, including assessment and counseling, case management, child care, and financial aid.
- Programs offer job and college placement assistance and follow-up.

Bridge programs are typically offered through partnerships that can involve degree-credit and non-credit divisions within colleges, community groups, adult education providers, employers and labor groups, one-stop career centers, and social service agencies all actively cooperating to recruit students and provide them the training and support they need to advance to postsecondary education and career-path employment.

On the following pages, figure 1, p. 5, presents a schema of the job structure, and table 1, p. 6, provides sample job titles and wages for selected job levels in the knowledge economy.

Many existing programs for adults with limited basic skills have at least one of the key bridge program features listed above. Yet few programs incorporate most or all of them. What most distinguishes bridge programs is their dual focus on preparation for postsecondary learning and career access and advancement.

Bridge training can be built on existing educational programs that serve low-skilled adults, but these programs need to be reconfigured to ensure a connection both to job advancement and to further education.

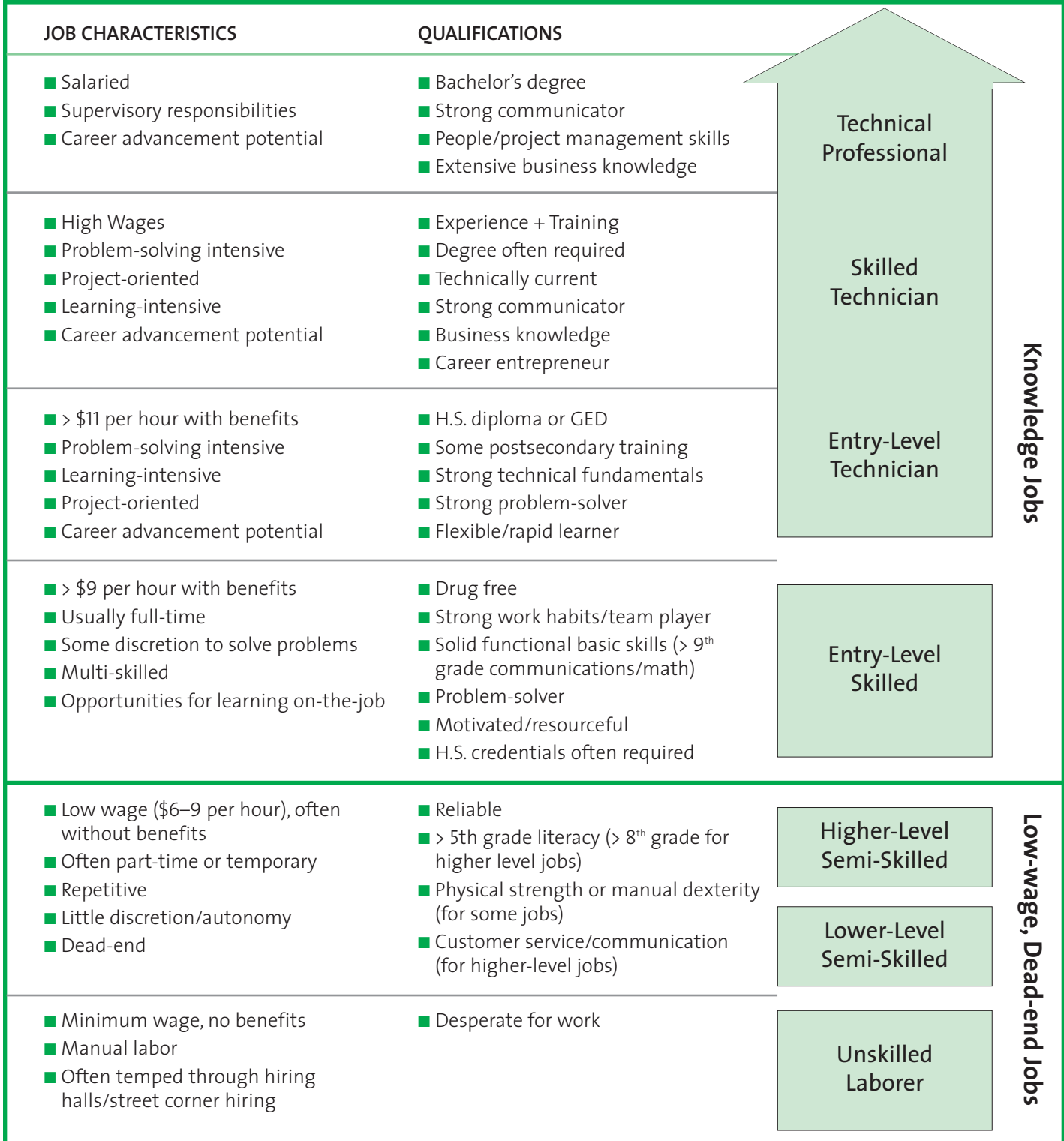
- Adult basic skills (ABE/GED) programs should prepare adults for college and a job, or to advance in a current job, as well as help them improve their literacy skills or study for the GED.
- English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) programs should help students develop academic skills and prepare for college or a job, in addition to improving their practical language skills.
- Adult vocational skills training programs, the typical short-term training programs for adults with no high school diploma or GED, should prepare students for further learning on the job or in school, and provide the specific skills needed for particular jobs.

### UNDERSTANDING BRIDGE BASICS

- Workplace literacy training should emphasize the basic skills needed for further learning and job advancement, for example, oral and written communication, problem-solving, applied math, basic computer applications, time management, and test-taking, along with improving basic skills needed for particular jobs.
- College remedial or developmental courses should focus on preparing students for success in college generally, enabling them to place into the initial college-level English and math courses, while integrating some introductory occupational skills and concepts.
- Programs should focus on integrating basic and vocational skills with job awareness to improve student motivation for learning that is connected to good jobs.

Today's labor market values both skills and credentials. Students should not have to choose between an academic or degree track and a vocational one. Bridge programs are designed to prepare and motivate students to enter further education leading to certificates and degrees and advance to better jobs.

**Figure 1: Knowledge Economy Job Structure**



**Table 1: Knowledge Economy Job Structure: Sample Jobs and Wages**

JOB LEVEL	SAMPLE JOB TITLES	MEDIAN WAGES
Technical Professional	Computer Systems Analyst	\$30.85
	Computer Software Engineer, Applications	\$34.87
	Computer Software Engineer, Systems	\$36.65
	Mechanical Engineer	\$30.72
	Registered Nurse	\$23.82
	Fashion Designer	\$25.42
	Accountant/Auditor	\$23.59
	Purchasing Manager	\$31.22
Skilled Technician	Computer Programmer	\$29.49
	CNC Programmer	\$18.43
	Machinist	\$15.91
	Industrial Engineering Technician	\$20.13
	Electronics Engineering Technician	\$20.98
	Surgical Technologist	\$15.45
	Radiologic Technician	\$19.53
	Bill and Account Collector	\$12.98
Entry-Level Technician	Computer Support Specialist	\$18.96
	CNC Operator	\$14.14
	Dental Assistant	\$13.32
	Emergency Medical Technicians	\$11.75
	Medical/Clinical Laboratory Technician	\$14.24
	License Practical Nurse	\$15.57
	Secretary	\$12.22
Entry-Level Skilled	Computer Repair Tech/Help Desk Level 1	\$16.24
	Multiple Machine Tool Setter	\$13.97
	Shipping and Receiving Clerk	\$11.38
	Patient Care Technician	\$11.62
	Office Clerk	\$10.80
	Bank Teller	\$9.94
Higher-Level Semi-Skilled	Telemarketer	\$9.55
	Home Health Aide (certified)	\$8.77
	Nursing Aides, Orderlies, Attendants	\$9.85
	Electronics Assembler	\$11.28
	Construction Laborer	\$11.86
	Truck Driver, Light or Delivery Services	\$11.58
	Counter/Rental Clerk	\$8.48
	Security Guard	\$9.45
	Taxi Driver or Chauffeur	\$9.14
	Mail Clerk	\$10.47
	Receptionist	\$10.25
	Cashier	\$7.58
Lower-Level Semi-Skilled	Production Worker – Helper	\$9.42
	Packers and Packagers, Hand	\$8.14
	Personal and Home Care Aide	\$7.91
	Maid/House Cleaner	\$7.98
	Car Washer	\$8.27
	Food Preparation Worker (incl. fast food)	\$7.92
	Baggage Porter or Bellhop	\$8.51
Unskilled Laborer	Day Laborer	Minimum wage

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics (OES), United States, May 2003. [http://www.bls.gov/oes/2003/may/oes\\_nat.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/2003/may/oes_nat.htm)

## IDENTIFYING BRIDGE PROGRAM MODELS

Bridge programs cannot be purchased “off the shelf” like a training curriculum or instructional software. Developing a bridge program is a *process* of adapting existing programs and services or adding new ones to enable the target population to advance to higher levels of education and employment. The particular form and content of a bridge program will depend on both the needs of the individuals to be served and the requirements of the education programs and jobs at the next level.

Not surprisingly, bridge programs for those who are seeking to move up from low-level jobs and who have relatively low levels of literacy are somewhat different than programs for those who are in somewhat better jobs and whose basic skills approach the level needed to enter postsecondary education and training.

This section describes two bridge program models, one for lower-skilled individuals and the other for those with somewhat higher levels of basic skills. It also includes examples of actual programs that reflect each model (see the last chapter of this guide for profiles of these programs). The two models incorporate features of actual programs and, as such, they should be thought of as idealized models. It is important to remember that **each bridge program is unique because it is developed for a specific target population and specific employers and will generally involve adapting existing program elements into the bridge model.**

**Lower-level bridge programs** prepare adults who are unemployed or in lower-level semi-skilled jobs to advance to higher-level semi-skilled jobs and to higher levels of training, including more advanced bridge programs. Lower-level programs are generally designed for native English speakers at the fifth- or sixth- grade reading level or for non-native speakers at the low-intermediate ESL level (as defined by the National Reporting System). Although participants in these programs are usually far from qualifying for college-level training or career-path employment, they will begin to explore postsecondary and career opportunities as part of the bridge experience.

Lower-level bridge programs emphasize the teaching of basic skills such as reading, communication, and applied math in the context of developing skills such as customer service, basic computer operation, and job-specific skills that will improve their job prospects. In this sense, these programs are like vocational ESL (VESL) or vocational adult basic education (VABE) programs. Yet, whereas VESL and VABE programs tend to focus fairly narrowly on the skills needed for specific jobs, lower-level bridge programs are designed to provide a broader foundation in applied basic skills. The goals of a lower-level bridge program are to improve the individual’s job prospects, provide a foundation for continued education and training, and increase career awareness.

Some lower-level programs are designed for individuals who want to enter a specific career field in a particular industry sector. These field-specific programs include instruction in basic skills integrated with teaching of basic occupation-specific technical skills. They can be offered in a college or other training organization.

**Higher-level bridge programs** prepare adults for advancement into entry-level skilled positions and into occupational certificate or associate degree programs. Most programs generally require a minimum of seventh grade reading for native speakers or a high-intermediate ESL level. Some higher-level programs are designed for individuals who want to enter a specific career field in a particular industry sector. These field-specific programs include higher-level instruction in basic skills (reading, communication, and applied math) integrated with teaching of basic occupation-specific technical skills. They can be offered in a college or other training organization. They can also be offered in workplaces, for example, when state customized training and workplace literacy funds are linked to develop programs for advancing employees within an individual company or within an employer consortium.

Other higher-level bridge programs are designed for those who want to pursue a career path but are not sure in which field. In these programs, students build their basic skills in the context of exploring postsecondary options and careers. They may also get a taste of instruction in the basics of one or more occupational fields. These programs put special



### IDENTIFYING BRIDGE PROGRAM MODELS

emphasis on preparing for college placement tests and on college success skills in addition to career exposure.

Higher-level bridge programs most often prepare people for community college occupational certificates and degree programs. With careful design, they can also prepare students to succeed in two-year transfer programs. In any case, higher-level programs should be developed to connect students to college-credit programs as quickly as possible. This will enable students to draw on student financial aid and motivate them by putting career-path employment within their reach.

In some cases, lower- and higher-level bridge programs are designed sequentially to enable individuals who start at low levels of literacy to advance over time, completing one level of training and perhaps working for a while before returning to complete the next level. (See the profile of Instituto del Progreso Latino's "Pre-Bridge" contextualized ESL program on pp. 110–111, which is designed as a feeder for the higher-level Manufacturing Technology Bridge Program.) How long it will take those who start with low levels of literacy to advance to the point where they can enter college-level training will vary according to each person's circumstances. In some cases, an individual struggling to support a family through low-wage jobs may take years to advance.

Because even the lower-level bridge programs require at least fifth-grade reading level or a low-intermediate ESL level, native English speakers with even lower levels of literacy or who have learning disabilities and non-native speakers with limited English fluency are unlikely to succeed in bridge training without extensive instruction and support. Those who have little or no work experience may also have trouble succeeding in bridge programs or may require assistance securing stable employment and even income supports before they are ready for a bridge program.

An optional follow-on to higher-level bridge programs is an intensive GED program. In such a program, students take a GED practice test and then the program staff and instruc-

tors tailor a program that addresses students' individual weaknesses.\* Intensive GED programs are designed for individuals with at least eighth-grade reading and math skills. In contrast to the traditional approach to GED instruction, intensive GED programs are designed to be offered *after* students enter or at least qualify for college-level training or entry-level skilled employment.† Such students are not only more prepared than the typical GED students, they can more readily see the connection between getting a GED and earning a postsecondary credential and advancing in their jobs. Both bridge program types described here are designed to teach skills essential to mastering the GED, so that students begin building their GED skills even before entering formal preparation for the test.

Common features of the lower- and higher-level bridge programs are:

- Exposure to GED skills for those who have not earned a GED
- Computer-assisted instruction in reading and math
- Strong emphasis on teaching test-taking skills (which are important for advancing both to college-level programs and to career-path employment)
- Career exploration, which may involve use of Internet-based resources such as Women Employed's Career Coach ([www.womenemployed.org](http://www.womenemployed.org))
- Critical thinking integrated into all lessons
- Emphasis on learning to network to advance one's career, navigate support systems, and deal with personal issues (e.g., dependent care, transportation, domestic violence)
- Assistance with finding services such as child care, transportation, housing, and medical care

Figures 2 and 3, pp. 9–10, provide more details on the lower-level and higher-level bridge program models. In addition, profiles of the programs cited as examples are included at the end of this guide.

\*For a guide to developing an intensive GED program, see <http://www.uic.edu/cuppa/techbridge/>.

†In most states, students who demonstrate an "ability to benefit" by passing placement tests at a certain level can enter community college programs without having a high school diploma or GED, allowing students to take intensive GED instruction concurrently with college-level courses.

Figure 2: Lower-Level Bridge Program Model

<b>Target Audience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Fifth- to sixth- grade reading (for native English speakers)</li> <li>■ Low-intermediate ESL level (for non-native speakers)*</li> <li>■ With or without a high school diploma or GED</li> <li>■ At least some work experience</li> <li>■ Desire to improve basic skills to advance to a better job</li> </ul>	
<b>Job Objective</b>		<b>Education Objective</b>
Full-time job paying \$7 to \$10 per hour, sometimes with benefits. Examples include home care aide, receptionist, construction laborer, telemarketer.		Further training through higher-level bridge programs.
<b>Duration</b>	8–12 weeks, 12–14 hours per week	
<b>Features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Adult educators and vocational instructors jointly develop and teach curriculum</li> <li>■ Basic reading (meaning), writing (sentences), speaking (workplace vocabulary), and math (arithmetic) taught in context of job and life “success skills,” such as writing a resume, interviewing for a job, providing customer service, using computers at home and on the job, workplace safety, workplace rights, and exploring life and work values and goals</li> <li>■ Training in industry-specific vocabulary and skills (in field-specific programs)</li> <li>■ Workplace communication skills</li> <li>■ Job-placement assistance</li> </ul>	
<b>Program Examples</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ ESL Pre-Bridge, Instituto del Progreso Latino</li> <li>■ Career Pathways Vocational Trainings for Non-Native Speakers, Portland and Mt. Hood community colleges</li> </ul>	

\*The literacy levels for English as a Second Language (ESL) are based upon the National Reporting Service (NRS) levels; see [www.nrsweb.org/reports/EFL\\_Descriptors.doc](http://www.nrsweb.org/reports/EFL_Descriptors.doc).

**Figure 3: Higher-Level Bridge Program Model**

<p><b>Target Audience</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Seventh- to eighth- grade reading (for native English speakers)</li> <li>■ High-intermediate ESL level (for non-native speakers)</li> <li>■ With or without a high school diploma or GED</li> <li>■ Stable work history</li> <li>■ Desire to pursue postsecondary technical training or education</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Job Objective</b></p>		<p><b>Education Objective</b></p>
<p>Full-time job paying \$8 to \$12 per hour, usually with benefits. Examples include bank teller, multiple machine tool setter, medical billing, and coding clerk.</p>		<p>College-level certificate, associate degree program, or other postsecondary technical training.</p>
<p><b>Duration</b></p>	<p>8–16 weeks, 12–14 hours per week</p>	
<p><b>Features</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Outcome competencies set by employers and college occupational degree program faculty</li> <li>■ Basic reading (reading for information), writing (paragraphs), speaking (presentations), math (pre-algebra), and computer applications (word processing, spreadsheet, presentation software) taught in the context of exploring careers and postsecondary training options and preparing a career plan</li> <li>■ Learning success skills (for school and on the job), including note-taking, study habits, time management, financial literacy, and test-taking</li> <li>■ Training in industry-specific vocabulary and technical fundamentals taught using workplace problems and tools and material from introductory college-level courses (in field-specific programs)</li> <li>■ College credits or “credit equivalencies” for competencies developed and documented during bridge training</li> <li>■ Job shadowing and internships</li> <li>■ Job and college placement assistance</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Program Examples</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Watsonville Digital Bridge Academy, Cabrillo College</li> <li>■ WAGE Pathways Bridge Program, Southeast Arkansas College and Southern Good Faith Fund</li> <li>■ Manufacturing Technology Bridge, Instituto del Progreso Latino</li> <li>■ Essential Skills Program, Community College of Denver</li> </ul>	

## BUILDING BRIDGES TO A CAREER PATH

Ideally, bridge programs provide the initial steps in a longer progression of education and training that enables adults to advance over time to better jobs and higher levels of education. Figure 4: Educational Pathway to Careers for Adults, p. 12, illustrates such a “career pathway,” which consists of a connected series of education programs, with integrated support services, work experience, and learning on the job, and which enables adults to combine work and learning. Table 2: Educational Pathway Program Level Descriptions, p. 13, describes the various levels of programs involved in a career pathway. Note the key role of bridge programs in preparing low-skilled adults, who would otherwise be stuck in low-wage jobs, for postsecondary education leading to well-paying, career-path jobs.

Career pathways are characterized by clear connections within and across education and workforce institutions and programs. The outcome standards for each level are aligned to the requirements of education and employment at the next level and beyond and may result in state- or employer-recognized credentials. Thus, career pathways create explicit connections and clear roadmaps to educational and career advancement.

Career pathways are also designed around jobs of importance to regional economies. As such, they create educational stepping-stones for workers and job seekers and a supply of qualified workers for employers. Because of their focus on workforce and economic development, career pathways are best built through regional partnerships of education, workforce training, and economic development entities. Figure 5, p. 14, lists some of the many benefits of bridge programs to low-skilled adults, employers, and providers.

Figure 4: Educational Pathway to Careers for Adults

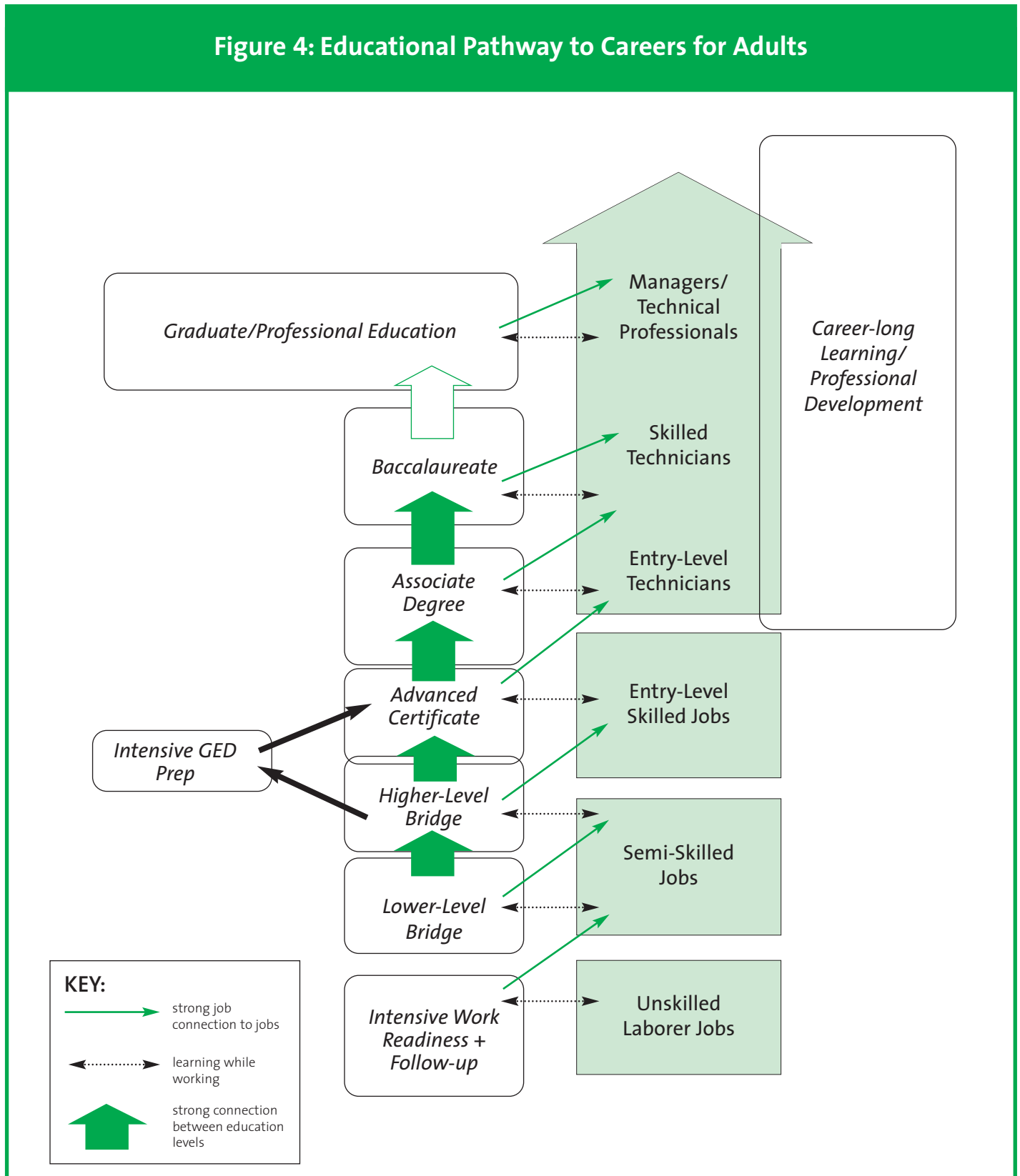


Table 2: Educational Pathway Program Level Descriptions

PROGRAM LEVEL	REQUIREMENTS FOR ENTRY	CONTENT/FEATURES
Baccalaureate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ H.S. diploma or GED</li> <li>■ Associate degree or equivalent (for cc transfer students)</li> <li>■ Pass college placement exams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Technical fundamentals</li> <li>■ General education core</li> <li>■ Project learning</li> <li>■ Career exposure/planning</li> <li>■ Internships/co-op education</li> <li>■ Job-placement assistance</li> </ul>
Associate Degree (Applied or transfer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Pass college placement exams</li> <li>■ 10<sup>th</sup>-grade reading and math</li> <li>■ H.S. diploma or GED (to complete)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Technical fundamentals</li> <li>■ General education core</li> <li>■ Project learning</li> <li>■ Career exposure/planning</li> <li>■ Internships/co-op education</li> </ul>
Occupational Certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Pass college entrance exams</li> <li>■ 10<sup>th</sup>-grade reading and math</li> <li>■ H.S. diploma or GED (to complete)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Applied technical fundamentals</li> <li>■ Project learning</li> <li>■ Industry exposure/career planning</li> <li>■ Career success skills</li> </ul>
Intensive GED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ ≥ 8<sup>th</sup>-grade reading and math</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Assessment to target weaknesses</li> <li>■ Intensive tutoring and computer-assisted instruction focused on weaknesses</li> <li>■ GED writing skills instruction</li> <li>■ Test-taking strategies</li> </ul>
Higher-Level Bridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 7<sup>th</sup>- to 8<sup>th</sup>- grade reading and math or high-intermediate ESL level (with some exceptions)</li> <li>■ Stable work history</li> <li>■ Demonstrated motivation</li> <li>■ Drug free</li> <li>■ Desire to enter target sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Applied communication + math + problem-solving + computers</li> <li>■ Technical fundamentals (sector-specific)</li> <li>■ Intro. to technical basics in various fields</li> <li>■ Career/college planning</li> <li>■ Job shadowing and internships</li> <li>■ Career/college success skills</li> <li>■ Test-taking skills</li> <li>■ Computer-assisted basic skills instruction</li> <li>■ Job- and college-placement assistance</li> </ul>
Lower-Level Bridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 5<sup>th</sup>- to 6<sup>th</sup>- grade reading (native English speakers) or low-intermediate ESL level (non-native speakers)</li> <li>■ Desire to advance in job and improve basic skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Applied basics: communications + math + problem-solving</li> <li>■ Job/life success skills</li> <li>■ Vocational skills (field-specific programs)</li> <li>■ Introduction to computers</li> <li>■ Career exploration</li> <li>■ Computer-assisted basic skills instruction</li> <li>■ Job-placement assistance</li> </ul>
Intensive Work Readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Desire to work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Help accessing income supports</li> <li>■ Drug treatment</li> <li>■ Transitional jobs</li> <li>■ Intensive work readiness prep</li> <li>■ Job placement and follow-up support for clients and employers</li> </ul>

### Figure 5: Benefits of Bridge Training

#### **BENEFITS FOR LOW-SKILLED ADULTS**

- Help for individuals who want to advance to a career-path job but lack the necessary basic skills
- Access to postsecondary occupational education
- Higher earning potential
- Counseling to help with career and educational planning and overcoming barriers to success
- Facilitated contacts and connections to the labor market, employers, and specific jobs
- Exposure to a broad range of jobs, careers, and education opportunities
- Building resume through work experience
- Increased income through paid internships

#### **BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYERS**

- Improved recruitment of qualified and motivated workers
- Source of workers who are qualified for higher-level semi-skilled and entry-level skilled jobs and are prepared to advance
- Reduced turnover of entry-level workers and accompanying cost savings
- Improved productivity resulting from a qualified workforce
- Good public relations and improved corporate citizenship image with local communities

#### **BENEFITS FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND OTHER POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS**

- “Feeders” of qualified and motivated students to occupational certificate and degree programs; preparation of students who come to college with inadequate basic skills to succeed in college-level occupational-technical and, potentially, transfer degree programs
- Improved retention, graduation rates, and job-placement outcomes, particularly among disadvantaged students
- Faculty in credit programs can focus on college-level material rather than try to remediate students’ basic skills
- Strengthened relationships and better reputation with employers
- Improved image in low-income communities
- Clear way to show the connections between a college’s multiple missions

#### **BENEFITS FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES**

- Help community members advance to college-level occupational education, which has become the gateway to career-path employment
- Strengthened and expanded relationships with employers by providing a supply of prepared workers
- Use of publicly subsidized staff, facilities, and equipment for technical training found at most community college campuses for providing basic skills instruction integrated with instruction in technical topics
- Effective response to community need for economic development
- Potentially increases eligibility for competitively awarded private and public funds

#### **BENEFITS FOR WORKFORCE TRAINING AGENCIES, WORKFORCE BOARDS, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ENTITIES**

- Job-connected training and advancement opportunities for one-stop career center clients
- Use of existing infrastructure to meet employers’ hiring needs in sectors of importance to regional economies
- Response to the mismatch between employers’ demands for motivated workers with strong basic skills and basic skills deficiencies among large segments of the workforce

# Bridge Program Development

DESIGNING THE PROGRAM

BUILDING A BRIDGE PARTNERSHIP

BUILDING AND SUSTAINING EMPLOYER RELATIONSHIPS

DEVELOPING PROGRAM CURRICULUM

TARGETING STUDENT SERVICES

PLACING STUDENTS IN JOBS AND COLLEGE



# Bridge Program Development

This chapter provides a step-by-step guide to developing a bridge program. First, it will help the program designer to identify and understand the target student audience and design a program that meets their needs, building on the best of what exists. Then it describes the process of building the partnerships necessary to develop and implement a bridge program, followed by a section on building key employer relationships. Next, the chapter presents bridge program instructional principles and sample curricula for our two model bridge types, along with a curriculum for employability skills that can be used in conjunction with either bridge model. Finally, this chapter presents a process for identifying the support services your students need and discusses post-program job and college placement.

In many cases, bridge programs will be built on or adapted from existing programs or services. The process outlined here is suited for such cases as well as for developing programs from scratch. Where programs for low-income adults currently exist, the object is to build on existing program strengths while working to fill gaps that prevent students from advancing in terms of both education and employment. The program designers should adapt the following steps as appropriate to build on the lead institution's strengths and avoid duplication of efforts. It is important to note that program design and development can be lengthy, taking anywhere from a few months to more than a year, as reflected by the programs profiled at the end of this guide.

## DESIGNING THE PROGRAM

Designing a bridge program involves the following steps:

- 1) Identify the target population** to be served and assess their learning and career goals and barriers to success.
- 2) Identify jobs and further education and training programs** that would provide opportunities for advancement for the target population and map out the requirements of entry and success in those jobs and educational programs.

- 3) Conduct a gap analysis** to determine how well existing programs or services prepare members of the target population to enter and succeed in the targeted jobs and education programs and highlight where individuals are “falling through the cracks.”
- 4) Redesign existing program components** and create new ones to address gaps and create “bridges” to better jobs and higher-level education and training.
- 5) Create a program flowchart** to carefully review the elements that are in place and determine remaining gaps. In addition, it is a useful tool in identifying partner roles and providing a snapshot of the program for administrators, funders, and others.

Where the planned bridge programs build on existing programs, faculty and staff from those programs should be actively involved in the design process. In addition, it is critically important to involve faculty and staff from the programs to which the bridges are designed to lead.

The remainder of this section presents a series of worksheets containing questions and tips to guide bridge designers through each of these steps and to help in the initial stage of program design. These worksheets are guides and may need to be augmented depending upon the needs of the particular population, region, and partners.

## Identify the Target Population

The answers to the questions in worksheet 1, p. 18, will help identify and assess the goals and needs of the target population the bridge program will serve. Potential target populations include individuals who have applied for training programs but have been rejected because they cannot pass the entrance test and current students in adult education classes, community college developmental education courses, and non-credit job-training programs. Instructors, staff, and students in adult education and non-credit job-training programs are good sources of information for answering these questions. The program designers may want to survey or conduct a focus group of students in adult education and developmental programs and students in degree-credit courses who have not yet declared a major. Even if the target population for the bridge program has already been identified, this section will help clarify their needs.

Cabrillo College in California developed the **Watsonville Digital Bridge Academy** based on an in-depth analysis of the needs of their target population, the majority of whom are first-generation American, limited-English-speaking Latinos. The resulting curriculum includes an initial two-week immersion class designed to help students learn new behaviors, become aware of their potential, and become motivated to learn, and an Academic Acceleration semester that includes a primary research project on a social justice issue, which serves as an important motivator for students. To develop the curriculum, program designers researched best practices for learning and conducted in-depth interviews of service providers.

#### Worksheet 1: Questions to Consider in Identifying Target Population

1. What are the basic literacy (reading, writing, math) levels of the target population?
2. Does the target population include non-native speakers of English? What is the range of ESL fluency in the population? Is the target population literate in its native language?
3. Do the targeted individuals have basic computer skills (word processing, Internet)?
4. What are their near- and long-term occupational goals? Have they had the chance to explore careers, receive career counseling, or develop a career plan?
5. What are their near- and long-term educational goals?
6. What types of occupations have they worked in? What is the nature of their work experience (short or long job attachment, full- or part-time work, etc.)?
7. What barriers do they face to program participation (e.g., child care, domestic violence, substance abuse) and what support service needs do they have?

#### Tips:

- If there is wide variation in the basic skill levels of the target population, consider offering both the lower-level and higher-level bridge programs. Dividing students into groups at similar skill levels will make instruction more manageable.
- If the target population has similar employment or career goals — for example, as would be the case with individuals who applied for a training program in a specific field but lacked the basic skills required to enter the program — consider a field-specific bridge.
- If the target population wants to enter college-level occupational training but has varied career goals, consider a higher-level bridge program with multiple career tracks, to provide exposure to postsecondary education in a range of fields.

Community colleges in a number of states may have access to **Community College Strategic Planner (CCSP)**, a Web-based tool developed by CCbenefits, which is designed to assist community colleges in making strategic planning decisions that respond to growing industries and occupations and characteristics of their future student body. Employers in an employer focus group can then verify this information. Contact CCbenefits at [www.ccbenefits.com](http://www.ccbenefits.com) or 208-882-3567.

## Identify Jobs and Education and Training Requirements

This section helps identify the educational and job outcomes for participants in the bridge program or programs. One objective is to identify the qualifications for jobs in the region that pay decent wages and benefits to those with limited education and experience and have the potential for career advancement. A second objective is to identify existing education and training programs in the region that prepare people for these jobs. The program designers will then use this information to design bridge programs to be stepping-stones to these education and training programs and jobs. Worksheet 2: Questions to Consider in Identifying Job and Education Requirements, p. 20, provides a framework for this analysis and will help the program designer complete worksheet 3: Mapping Job Levels and Existing Education and Training Programs, on p. 21.

The following entities are good resources and should be consulted in this process:

- Employers and industry associations. Instructors and staff at both the bridge and college-credit levels should be involved in interviewing employers about their needs and practices. (“Building and Sustaining

Employer Relationships,” pp. 34–38, provides guidance on this process.) One option is to hold a session to bring employers together with faculty from both the bridge and college-credit levels.

- Workforce boards and economic development agencies
- Unions, including apprenticeship programs
- Postsecondary program faculty and any other postsecondary education departments that are involved as the program is developed

## Conduct Gap Analysis

Worksheets 1, 2, and 3 have helped to define the target audience and qualifications needed for the targeted jobs and helped to identify further education and training that prepare people for these occupations. The next step is to conduct a gap analysis to see how effective existing programs and services are in preparing individuals from the target audience to advance to the identified jobs and postsecondary education programs (see worksheet 4: Questions to Consider in Conducting a Gap Analysis, p. 22). If certain data are difficult to obtain, key informants can provide a general idea, so as not to delay program planning.

The Adult Education Program within the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education created the **WAGE (Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy)** workplace literacy program several years ago to contextualize adult basic education curricula to specific job skills and competencies based on Literacy Task Analyses. LTAs involve observing workers engaged in specific jobs to determine the particular skills needed for the identified positions. Southeast Arkansas (SEARK) College and the Southern Good Faith Fund used this model to develop the WAGE Pathways Bridge Program curricula, which are designed to help prepare people for certain Certificate of Proficiency college credit programs at SEARK College, and they continue to conduct Literacy Task Analyses to keep the curricula current.

## Worksheet 2: Questions to Consider in Identifying Job and Education Requirements

Use responses to the following questions to complete worksheet 3: Mapping Job Levels and Existing Education and Training Programs, p. 21.

- 1) What industries are of economic importance to the region?
  - Which are the largest industrial sectors in the region (e.g. healthcare, manufacturing, retail)?
  - What jobs in these industries pay \$9 to \$12 per hour at the entry level plus full benefits?
  - Is building a workforce for these jobs a priority for the region?
  - What are the potential target occupations for workers without extensive education or skills (i.e., for workers with less than an associate degree)?
- 2) What are the characteristics of the targeted jobs/occupations?
  - What are these jobs and what are the next steps up the job ladder?
  - What wages and benefits do the jobs at each level offer?
  - What is the current and projected demand for these jobs among local employers?
  - What employers in the area hire for these jobs?
- 3) How do employers secure their workforce?
  - From what sources and with what methods do local employers hire for such jobs?
  - Do local employers have difficulty hiring for any of these jobs? If so, why?
  - Do local employers have trouble retaining or advancing workers in these jobs? If so, why?
- 4) What are the requirements of the targeted occupations?
  - What qualifications do local employers seek in applicants for the jobs at each level?
  - Do employers in the region use common assessment tools or skill certifications in hiring?
  - What professional certification or licensing standards exist for the targeted jobs?
  - What screening criteria do employers use (e.g., educational credentials, work experience, drug testing, criminal background)?
- 5) What education or training programs in the area prepare adults for the jobs identified?
  - Which institutions or organizations provide these programs? What types of programs are provided (certificate, degree)?
  - What curriculum and support services (including job placement and follow-up) do these programs provide? How long is each program (number of hours per week and number of weeks)?
- 6) What are the requirements for entry into each of these programs?
  - What competencies must students have to enter the program?
  - What assessment tests and other methods are used to screen applicants?
  - Are there any additional eligibility requirements such as those imposed by specific funding sources?

### Tips:

- Potential sources of information for local labor market demand and projections include:
  - The “business and industry” contract training division at a community college
  - Faculty in occupational degree programs at community colleges or technical schools
  - Community-based organizations with strong ties to local employers
  - Universities
  - One-stop career centers
  - State departments of labor and employment security
  - State and local workforce boards
  - Local economic development groups and commissions
  - Chambers of commerce, employer or trade associations
- As helpful as labor market statistics can be in gauging overall employment and projected demand in particular job types, data analysis cannot substitute for reaching out to employers to discuss their hiring needs and challenges. (Worksheet 8: Employer Meetings Discussion Guide on p. 37 provides sample questions.)
- Consider whether there are opportunities for attaching academic credit or arranging for articulation with postsecondary credentials at a community or technical college.
- Determine whether anyone in the region has conducted a formal analysis of the skill requirements of the target jobs using ACT WorkKeys, DACUM, literacy task analysis, or some other methodology. Usually staff members of community college business and industry customized training divisions are familiar with such tools. Also, find out if the state workforce or economic development agency has developed skill standards for occupations in the target industry.

**Worksheet 3: Mapping Job Levels and Existing Education and Training Programs**

**TARGET OCCUPATION(S):**

JOB LEVELS		EXISTING EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS		
CHARACTERISTICS	REQUIREMENTS	PROVIDER(S)	CONTENT*	ENTRY REQUIREMENTS
Position: Wages: Benefits: Demand: Career Path/Next Job Level:	Qualifications: Assessment Tools: Certification/Licensing: Screenings:	Name:  Type:	Curriculum:  Services:  Length:	Competencies: Assessments/Tests: Program Eligibility:
Position: Wages: Benefits: Demand: Career Path/Next Job Level:	Qualifications: Assessment Tools: Certification/Licensing: Screenings:	Name:  Type:	Curriculum:  Services:  Length:	Competencies: Assessments/Tests: Program Eligibility:
Position: Wages: Benefits: Demand: Career Path/Next Job Level:	Qualifications: Assessment Tools: Certification/Licensing: Screenings:	Name:  Type:	Curriculum:  Services:  Length:	Competencies: Assessments/Tests: Program Eligibility:

\*List the program's basic curricula and support services components (more detail will be developed in later steps).

### Worksheet 4: Questions to Consider in Conducting a Gap Analysis

#### 1) Employer Demand and Existing Capacity:

- Are existing programs meeting the demand from employers in the region in terms of both quantity and quality?
- Is there sufficient demand from employers to warrant the building of bridge or feeder programs into the existing education and training programs?
- Are existing programs operating at or near capacity? If not, how many additional students could each accommodate?

#### 2) Recruitment:

- What is the demographic profile of students in each program (e.g., age, educational level, race/ethnicity, parental status, work experience)?
- How are students recruited for these programs and from what sources?

#### 3) Retention and Outcomes:

- How many students complete each program every year?
- Do the programs have trouble retaining students? If so, why?
- What data are available on the job and further education outcomes of each program? Which programs are most effective in preparing students for employment and further learning in the target sector?

#### 4) Bridge Opportunities:

- What are the most common reasons that applicants are rejected from existing programs?
- Are there remedial programs for individuals who do not qualify for the programs? If so, whom do they serve, what instruction and support do they provide, and how effective are they?
- Given the above responses, what are the opportunities for bridge program development?

#### Tips:

- If the lead institution is a community college, examine the extent to which students in adult education (ABE, ESL, or GED) or developmental education programs advance to college-level occupational programs in the target field and the extent to which adults trying to enter college-level occupational programs are successful or unsuccessful.
- If the lead institution is a community organization, examine the extent to which clients with low literacy skills enter job training and other occupational education programs within the organization or with other education and training providers.
- If the lead institution is an employer, think about the sorts of qualifications more applicants should exhibit for the jobs in question. What are the most common deficiencies in applicants for these jobs? Do entry requirements clearly relate to what is required for success on the job? How prepared are current employees for their jobs, and what improvement in skills or work behaviors do they need?

## Develop Bridge Program Components

Using the information developed in worksheets 1 through 4, the next step is to develop the basic bridge program components. This process will often involve both building on existing programs and developing new components to meet the needs of the target population, employers, and gaps in existing programs and services. Worksheet 5: Questions to Consider When Developing Program Components, p. 24, along with worksheet 6: Bridge Program Components, p. 25, guide the program designer through the process of developing the basic bridge program components.

## Create a Program Flowchart

Now that the basic curriculum and support service elements to be offered through your bridge program(s) are outlined, the program designers can begin to map the flow of steps that will be involved in the operation of the program. Below are sample program flowcharts of two bridge programs.

Figure 6, p. 26, from the City Colleges of Chicago, shows the program elements of a lower-level bridge program leading into a higher-level bridge program in targeted jobs in the transportation, warehousing, and logistics sector. Figure 7, p. 27, from Instituto del Progreso Latino, a community-based organization in Chicago, also shows the elements of a lower-level bridge leading into a higher-level bridge for targeted occupations in the healthcare field. A bridge program would produce such a flowchart after the program designers have analyzed the target population, employer needs, and existing institutional resources and identified the gaps that the bridge program is designed to address.

These diagrams can help the lead institution and partners begin to assign responsibility for the various parts of operating the program. They can also help identify any unintended gaps prior to program implementation.



### Worksheet 5: Questions to Consider in Developing Program Components

- 1) What will be the level of the bridge program? What if any sector(s) are targeted?
  - Should the bridge program be designed with multiple levels?
  - Will the bridge program be field-specific?
- 2) What will be the entry requirements and recruitment sources?
  - What basic skill levels are required for program entry at each level?
  - What are the screening and assessment tools?
  - What are the recruitment sources?
- 3) What are the targeted education and employment goals?
  - What skill levels will program graduates attain (literacy and other competencies)?
  - What is the next level of education for which program graduates will be qualified?
  - What is the employment goal (targeted occupations)?
  - Who are the targeted employers?
- 4) What will be the basic curricula and support services components?
  - What competencies do students need to succeed at the next job and education level?
  - Based on these competencies, what are the essential curriculum elements?
  - What existing courses or programs address these competency areas? What types of new courses will need to be developed?
  - What program length (number of hours and number of weeks), schedule (days, evenings), and location are best suited to the target population?
  - What will be some unique features of the program (e.g., internships, cohorts)?
  - What support services, for example counseling, case management, child care, transportation, job-placement assistance, will be needed to ensure that members of the target population are able to complete bridge training and advance to the next levels of education and employment? (“Targeting Student Services,” pp. 56–63, will help answer this question.)

#### Tips:

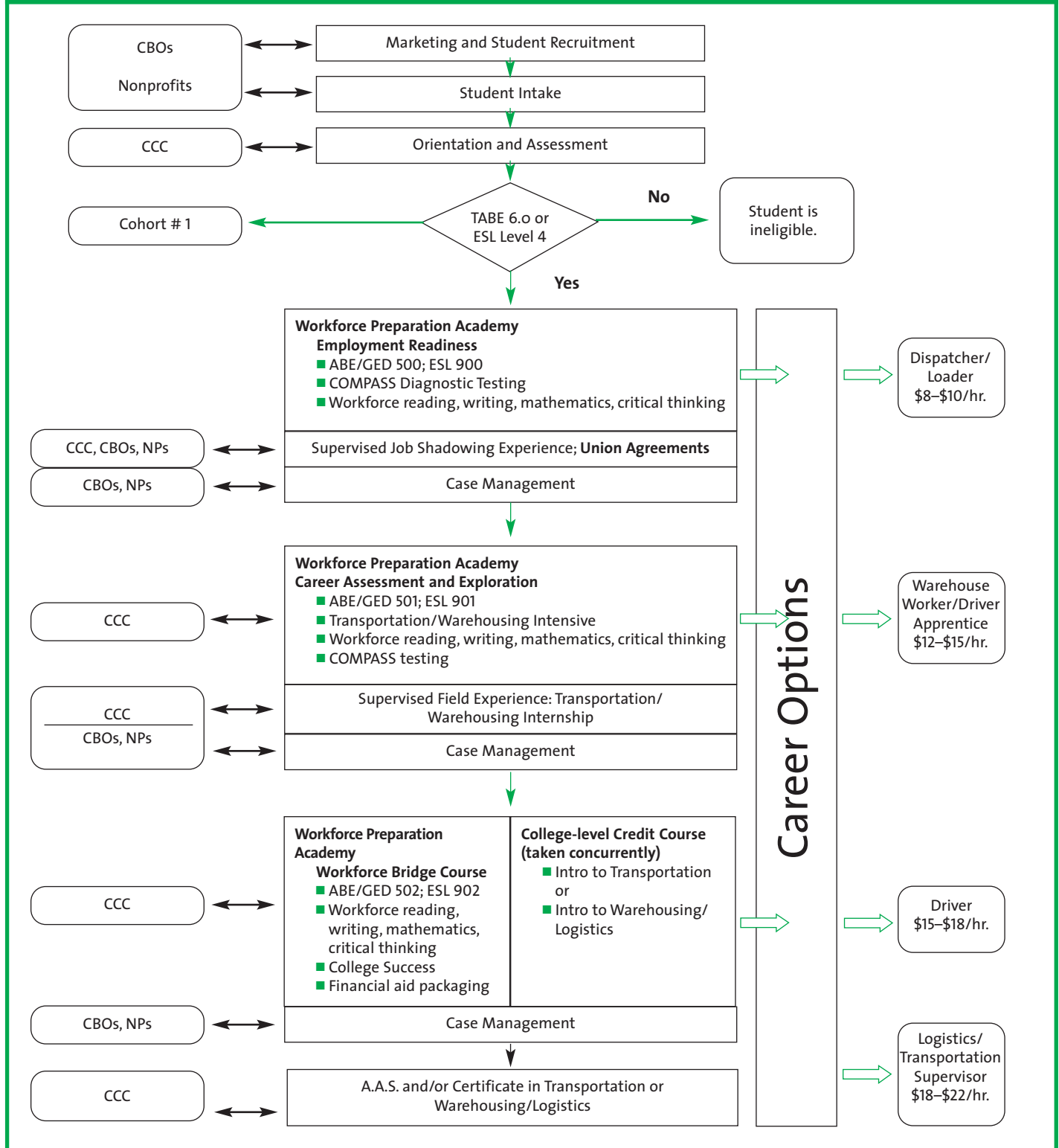
- Use worksheet 6, p. 25, to help summarize the major features of the bridge program design at each level. Responses to the questions in worksheets 1 through 5 will aid in completing the worksheet.
- Examine how existing programs and services can be modified or repackaged to provide the instruction and support needed by the target population to advance to the targeted further education and jobs. What new or additional program elements are needed?
- More guidance on developing or adapting bridge curriculum materials is provided in “Developing Program Curriculum,” pp. 39–56, and more guidance on student support services is provided in “Targeting Student Services,” pp. 56–63.

### Worksheet 6: Bridge Program Components Summary Sheet

BRIDGE PROGRAM LEVEL AND TARGET SECTOR(S)	STUDENT ENTRY AND RECRUITMENT	TARGET EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT GOALS	CURRICULA AND SUPPORT SERVICES COMPONENTS*
<p>Level:</p> <p>Target Sector(s):</p>	<p>Basic Skills Level:</p> <p>Screening and Pre-assessment Instruments:</p> <p>Recruitment Sources:</p>	<p>Exit Competencies:</p> <p>Education Goals:</p> <p>Employment Goal:</p> <p>Targeted Employers:</p>	<p>Curriculum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Courses (existing and new):</li> <li>■ Length and Schedule:</li> <li>■ Features:</li> <li>■ Credit:</li> </ul> <p>Support Services:</p>
<p>Level:</p> <p>Target Sector(s):</p>	<p>Basic Skills Level:</p> <p>Screening and Pre-assessment Instruments:</p> <p>Recruitment Sources:</p>	<p>Exit Competencies:</p> <p>Education Goals:</p> <p>Employment Goal:</p> <p>Targeted Employers:</p>	<p>Curriculum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Courses (existing and new):</li> <li>■ Length and Schedule:</li> <li>■ Features:</li> <li>■ Credit:</li> </ul> <p>Support Services:</p>

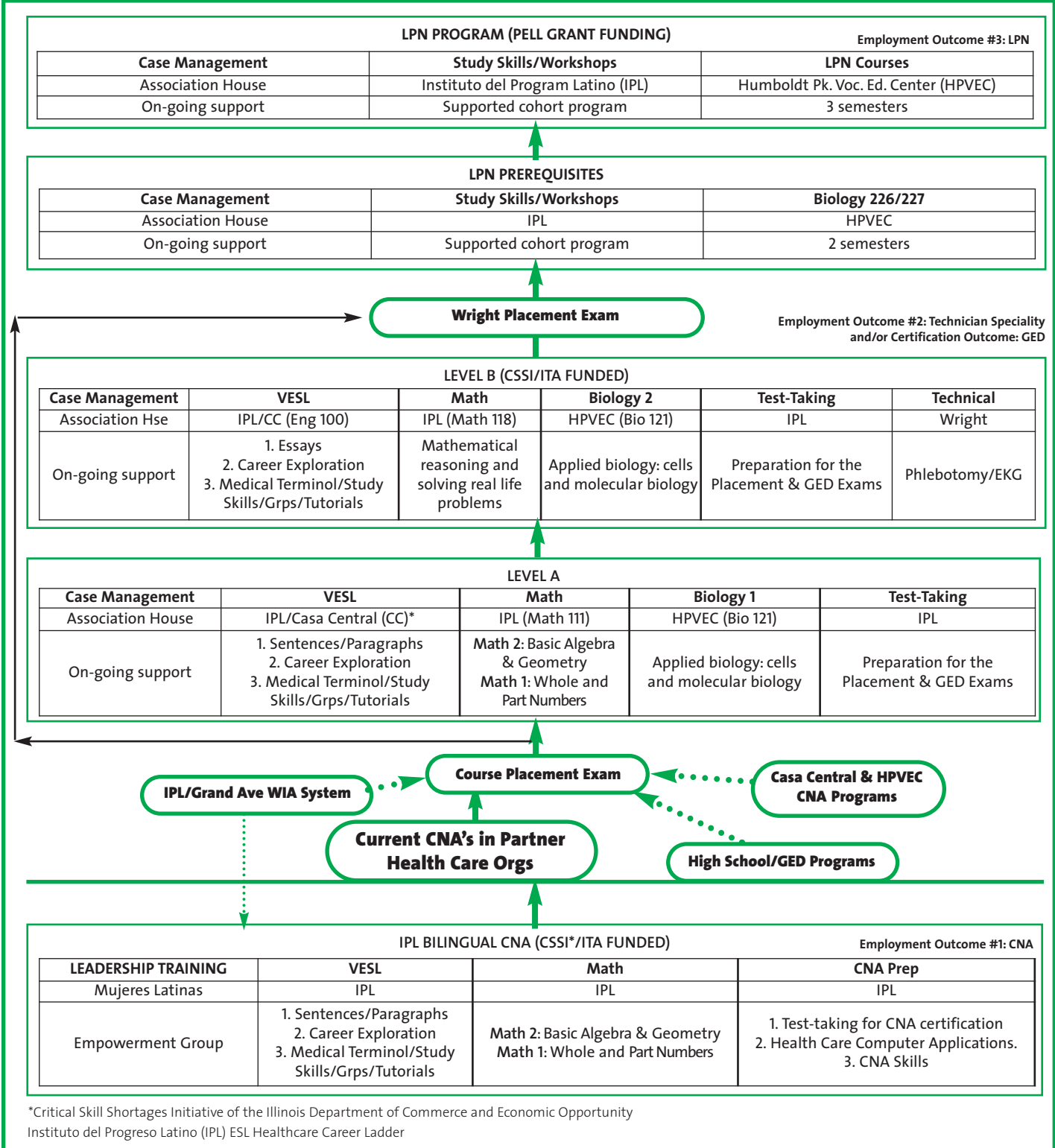
\*At this point, simply list the basic curricula and support services components; more details on curriculum development and identifying needed student support services are provided later in this chapter.

**Figure 6: City Colleges of Chicago Workforce Bridge Program  
Transportation, Warehousing, and Logistics**



Developed by Cynthia A. Barnes, Ph.D., and Steven Bryant, City Colleges of Chicago, Adult Education, November 2004

Figure 7: Curriculum/Program Design for Carreras en Salud



#### BUILDING A BRIDGE PARTNERSHIP

Bridge programs involve a complex set of functions that are often beyond the capacity and resources of a single organization or department within a large organization. Formation of internal and external partnerships is an effective strategy for building the needed capacity and for leveraging resources. The number, scope, and nature of partnerships should be tailored to fit program needs and organizational culture. In many cases, partnerships will evolve and grow with the program, starting with a small number of partners in initial program phases and expanding to increase service scope and capacity in subsequent phases.

This section provides tips on forming and sustaining high-performing partnerships that:

- Include internal and external members
- Take advantage of core competencies of each partner
- Leverage resources
- Provide high-quality services in a seamless system
- Meet or exceed outcomes and objectives

This guide defines a partner as one who performs a specific service function and is responsible for delivery and outcomes. Partnerships may be distinguished from relationships with organizations that provide general assistance with, for example, marketing, but are not accountable for outcomes. These less formal relationships may include organizations that agree to post materials or host a workshop, and employers that serve on advisory groups and refer employees or job applicants to training.

The key program partners in the **SEARK College Career Pathways Pilot Project** are the Southern Good Faith Fund (SGFF) and Southeast Arkansas (SEARK) College. SEARK College provides most of the academic instruction, while SGFF coordinates a comprehensive student support services system. Together SEARK College and SGFF have developed a replicable strategy for improving adult enrollment and completion of college credentials. The Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges (AATYC) supports any necessary institutional change at the college and replication of the program at other two-year colleges. The Arkansas Department of Workforce Education supported the development of the six contextualized WAGE Pathways Bridge Program curricula.

#### Determine the Need for Partners

Lead institutions should start forming partnerships during program conceptualization. The first phase requires preparation of a preliminary list of core program components and the expertise needed to develop and manage the program. Although this list may change as planning progresses, it is intended to help systematically identify who needs to be involved at the outset and to identify gaps in existing relationships where new partnerships will need to be developed.

Table 3: Sample Partners and Roles, p. 29, identifies the types of organizations with services and expertise that may be assets in developing and delivering a bridge program. The table is intended to demonstrate the range of potential partners—both internal and external.

Worksheet 7: Partner Role Identification, p. 30, will help the program designers inventory the functions and services that the program will need, identify what is already in place, and highlight the need for internal and external partners. The worksheet should be completed in **two distinct steps**. After completing the **internal** partners, use the worksheet to identify the need for potential **external** partners.

**Step One: Internal Partnerships.** It is important to spend time building the internal team before reaching out to external partners. Identify the individuals and departments within the lead institution that will be able to help build the program and recruit them to be part of a “core team.” The core team members should have a commitment to the success of this type of program, and their roles should be clearly defined as central and not simply add-ons to their existing jobs. The core team will help recruit the necessary

Table 3: Sample Partners and Roles

ORGANIZATION	POTENTIAL ROLES
Adult education programs (community colleges, community-based organizations, public school system)	Techniques for teaching lower-skill adults; Basic literacy, math, and computer skills training; English as a Second Language (ESL); Assessment tools
Community-Based Organizations	Marketing and recruitment; Case management; Support services and support services navigation; Work readiness and job placement; Vocational and occupational skills; ESL and vocational ESL; Adult education (reading, writing, and math); Computer skills; Job training
Community Colleges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Career Services</li> <li>■ Continuing Education/Workforce Development</li> <li>■ Corporate Training</li> <li>■ Degree and Credit Departments</li> <li>■ Developmental Education</li> <li>■ Financial Aid</li> </ul>	<p>Orientation to postsecondary education; Interest and capacity assessments; Educational and career advising; Support service navigation</p> <p>Sector-specific occupational programs; Specific courses that may be adapted to the bridge program framework, e.g., computer applications, customer service basics</p> <p>Capacity to customize training for specific employers and industries; Employer connections; Adjunct faculty and trainers</p> <p>Associate and Applied Associate degree programs; Occupational certificates, licenses, and other industry-recognized credentials</p> <p>Basic literacy and math skills</p> <p>Information and application assistance</p>
Employer Associations (Chambers of Commerce) and Industry Associations	Program review and feedback; Industry and career ladder information; Skill information; Labor market data; Marketing ; Employer recruitment and coordination
Employers	Skills identification; Job advancement information and requirements; Program review and feedback; Jobs, internships, and project learning; Instructors, role models, mentors; Referrals to program; Training facilities, equipment; Workplace-based incumbent worker training; Funding (tuition reimbursement, etc.)
Labor Unions	Identification of competencies and industry information; Employer outreach; Program review and feedback; Referrals to program; Skills training; Apprenticeships; Certifications; Funding
One-Stop Career Centers	Job search skills; Job information; Training vouchers
Social Service Agencies	Support services; Case management; Financial assistance (e.g., food stamps, dependent care, transportation); Referrals
State Agencies	Labor market information and analysis; Economic and workforce trend analysis; Identification of target industries; Connection to employers; Resource development and allocation; Evaluation
Universities	Labor market information and analysis; Curriculum and instructional design; Evaluation and continuous improvement
Workforce Boards	Identifying sectors of importance to regional economy; Mapping job requirements and advancement paths; Planning and budgeting; Policy development
Workforce Intermediaries	Program design assistance; Best practice models; Advocacy; Resource development; Conducting focus groups; Evaluation

**Worksheet 7: Partner Role Identification**

ROLES	PARTNER(S) RESPONSIBLE
<b>Program Development</b>	
Coordination	
Partnership development and management	
Identification of target population	
Identification of targeted jobs and skill requirements	
Identification of next step education and training programs	
Program design and planning	
Curriculum development	
Fundraising	
Recruitment of staff and instructors	
Training of staff and instructors	
Equipment, supplies, and facilities	
Monitor and track program outcomes	
<b>Program Delivery</b>	
Marketing and recruitment	
Intake, assessment, screening, and counseling	
Program orientation	
Instruction: basic skills and technical skills	
Certifications and degrees	
Tutoring and other academic support	
Case management	
Support services	
Career exposure and planning	
College exposure and planning	
Job, internship, and college placement	

support and related services within the organization and externally. The program designer should be prepared to discuss the importance of bridge programs with team members and the organizations, potential benefits of such programs, examples of successful programs, and what is needed in initial meetings with potential partners.

Early involvement of the lead institution's top leadership, such as the president or provost in a community college and executive director in a nonprofit organization, will facilitate program and partnership development within the organization. This leadership should be engaged in promoting the program, making it a priority, bringing key departments and individuals to the table, and seeking resources for development and delivery. Ideally, faculty from the next level of education or training will work with the bridge designers to identify competencies required both for their programs and for the jobs to which these programs lead.

The combined capacity of the core team is critical. Effective core teams:

- Have skills and resources to teach low-literate adults
- Have the expertise to design a curriculum for the target audience
- Are knowledgeable about employers' needs and hiring practices

- Will be able to define the competencies required for the next level of education and target jobs
- Are familiar with the target population's need for support services
- Have an effective network of relationships both within and outside the organization, and can build institutional support
- Are familiar with diverse funding streams

**Step Two: External Partnerships.** Identify the need for external partners by reviewing the gaps on the completed worksheet 7: Partner Role Identification, p. 30. How a partnership functions will vary depending on the context, organizational cultures of the partners, and history of the partnership. Some, especially those that involve fees, contracts, or grants, may be formalized. Others may be informal and based on a mutual understanding. These are effective when organizations have complementary functions and trust each other, or when departments of large organizations have difficulty entering into legal relationships. They are also useful in working with employers, who may define "partnerships" differently and therefore prefer more informal relationships. (See "Building and Sustaining Employer Relationships," pp. 34–38.)

Together, the internal core partners should identify organizations that could perform the needed functions. The

As part of the **Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) Demonstration Project**, the Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges has developed Guidelines for Quality Integration Programs for colleges, including:

- Efforts begin with faculty most optimistic and enthusiastic about integrated learning.
- Faculty members are cross-educated about the culture, norms, and values of their respective disciplines.
- Curriculum is built between Adult Education and Professional and Technical faculty members.
- Outcomes are tracked in parallel (i.e., gains in ESL levels and certificate graduation in professional and technical elements) to demonstrate actual impact of the integration project.
- One point of contact is provided for student



### BUILDING A BRIDGE PARTNERSHIP

process of recruiting and selecting external partners should build interest in partnering and should determine whether the organizations have the capacity to provide the needed services and whether they are the “right fit.” Preparation of a one- to two-page preliminary program concept will help focus the conversation. The concept should outline the purpose of the program, key components, organizational involvement, time frame, resource requirements, need for partners, and potential partnerships.

The core team should start the recruitment process with organizations that the lead institution already works with or that have been referred by colleagues and that have appropriate capacities. The following factors should be considered in the screening process:

- Compatibility with the organization’s mission, culture, and values
- The quality of their experience with the target audience
- Their capacity to provide the needed services and their past performance
- Their understanding of labor market dynamics, work environments, and general expectations of employers for productive employees
- The resources that they will bring to the partnership, such as financing, staff expertise and experience, knowledge of employers, or networks with the target audience
- Their ability to adapt their current activities to a bridge program context
- The effectiveness of their management, information, and financial systems
- Their excitement about the potential of the program

The lead institution may want to formalize relationships with those external partners that are responsible for program outcomes and resources. This may involve a formal document, such as a letter of agreement or memorandum of understanding, which is signed by all core partners. The document should:

- Identify the lead organization and who has overall responsibility and authority. This organization is responsible for managing the flow of students through the different provider partners.
- Identify the lead person and primary contact in all partnering organizations.
- Define the specific tasks (type of service) that will be performed by each organization and the expected outcomes.
- Identify the participating staff and their specific responsibilities.
- Describe the resource contributions from each organization and how each will be compensated.
- Define the service delivery outcomes (number and length of courses, students, etc.).
- Include timelines and identify key milestones.
- Identify facilities to be used and who is responsible for set-up, supplies, and maintenance.
- State the protocol for communication with funders, the press, and other parties.
- Specify liability for each partner, as appropriate.
- State the terms for opting out of the agreement.
- Include signatures of all partners.

In the best partnerships, each partner recognizes that the other parties must have their goals met in this project. It must be a “win” for all concerned. Program partners must meet regularly and actively listen to each other.

## Launch and Manage the Partnership

The success of the bridge program will depend on the effectiveness of the working relationships among all of the partners—formal and informal. Even though some of the organizations may have worked together in the past, or are in the same larger organization, it is important to make sure that members have a shared understanding of the mission, goals, and objectives of the bridge program, can present a common message about the program, understand each others' roles, responsibilities, and techniques for implementing their part of the program, understand program policies, protocols, and requirements, have basic contact information for each other, develop a shared trust and openness with other members, and participate in interorganizational problem-solving and continuous improvement activities.

These relationships can be developed through an initial orientation, team-building activities, workshops with the entire staff on new techniques and challenges, facilities tours, and introductions to organizational leaders. It may be helpful to establish an advisory committee for the bridge program that includes internal and external partners. An advisory committee can be built from an existing committee, such as a committee that advises on a related program, or it can be built from scratch. See “Building and Sustaining Employer Relationships,” pp. 34–38.

The team will also need to develop simple and effective management and information systems for use by all program partners. These might include:

- A governance structure that allows for efficient decision-making and is participatory

- Identification of a single point of contact for all partnership organizations
- A documented process for referrals and sharing information about students
- Communication protocols (e.g., a process for identifying and solving problems)
- Ongoing informal communication regarding student progress and needs for intervention
- Compatible information-collection and tracking systems
- Reporting schedules and formats
- A process for monitoring performance and continuous improvement
- Ongoing fundraising
- Regular communication with stakeholders

Partners should be an asset to program delivery, meeting the needs of the target audience and achieving goals. The person responsible for coordinating the program should monitor their progress regularly and work with all partners to make adjustments that are necessary for continuous improvement (see “Bridge Program Evaluation and Continuous Improvement,” pp. 83–88). In addition, over time it may be useful to add partners or change roles to pursue new opportunities, to expand service capacity to reach new groups, or add training in different sectors or occupations.

The **Center of Excellence in Skilled Trades and Industries** in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, partners with employers, unions, training providers, and community-based organizations to design and deliver pre-employment certificate programs to address skills shortages identified by local employers and labor unions. In developing a pre-employment certificate, the center establishes a steering committee for the trade or industry that is jointly composed of employers and labor to design a program to meet the target industry's skills shortage. The steering committee helps to assess the specific skills required for the identified job openings and assists in overseeing the curriculum development and instruction. The committee reviews the curriculum and approves the pre-employment certificate as a qualification for hiring.

## BUILDING AND SUSTAINING EMPLOYER RELATIONSHIPS

The role of employers is an important component in all bridge programs. The significance of these roles in developing and implementing these programs is reflected throughout this guide. This section, however, specifically describes how to effectively build relationships with employers and employer groups so that they will engage in developing, implementing, and sustaining the bridge program. The process described here assumes that the employer has a limited amount of time to devote to the bridge program, therefore, the lead institution and/or core team members will be responsible for selling the program and facilitating the partnership. It further assumes that the core team is prepared to approach employers in a specific industry with a bridge program model in mind and the reasons why it can help solve one or more of the employers' problems, such as high turnover in entry-level positions or a lack of qualified candidates. Most likely, the core team has already met with key employers in order to complete worksheet 2: Identifying Job and Education Requirements, p. 20. In all cases, the bridge program providers need to ask employers for specific commitments and make it as simple as possible for them to participate.

Labor unions and labor-management partnerships that are active in the targeted sectors can be an important asset in all phases of program design and delivery. They can provide information about the industry and required competencies, instructors, apprenticeships, and resources, and can refer

employees. Where appropriate, bridge program operators should work with labor and management in determining the most effective collaboration.

### Build Employer Relationships

Employers should play numerous roles in the development and implementation of bridge programs. They are most heavily involved with higher-level bridge programs, but they need to be engaged in the development and implementation of lower-level bridges as well. Employer relationships are best built in phases.

**PHASE 1** Learn the language of business and develop an understanding of the issues employers face, their workforce needs, and their performance challenges. Some suggested action steps to take:

- Review the Web sites of industry associations, industry leaders, and labor unions that are active in the target sectors.
- Talk with internal and external partners who have good connections with the industry.
- Review annual reports from relevant companies.
- Meet with local workforce boards.
- Meet with labor union representatives.

The initial impetus for Portland and Mt. Hood community colleges' **Career Pathways Vocational Training for Non-Native English Speakers** came when Kaiser-Permanente and then three other medical facilities approached Mt. Hood Community College because they were having trouble filling pharmacy packager jobs. PCC/MHCC interviewed employers to identify entry-level requirements, including skill levels, as well as state requirements in order to develop the curriculum and to establish parameters for internships and jobs. This program has expanded from one department and one occupation to more than 60 employers and several occupations. PCC/MHCC continues to adapt the programming to meet the current needs of employers.

**PHASE 2** Create a strategy for reaching out to employers.

Action steps include:

- Determine which employers in your area are the best prospects for outreach.
- Document what the bridge program will offer to employers.
- Document the advantages of employer participation from the employer’s perspective. Employer benefits may include filling employee skill gaps, reducing recruitment costs, increasing retention, and improving quality and safety.
- Outline the advantages of labor union participation.
- Outline the specific roles of employers and labor unions (as appropriate) in the bridge program.

**PHASE 3** Develop a networking plan to reach employers in the industries of importance to the region. Action steps include:

- Ask bridge program partners, labor unions, and stakeholders for references and enlist them in making connections.
- Consult local Workforce Investment Board members and staff, as well as local chambers of commerce for suggestions of employers and employer groups.
- Determine the company or companies that would be the most logical starting point.

**PHASE 4** With the networking plan in place, begin the engagement at the CEO or senior executive level in companies where there is an entree. In some cases, it is necessary to get buy-in at this level early in the project. Action steps will be:

- Determine who should participate in the meeting. It is sometimes advantageous to include the lead institution’s CEO.

- If a labor union is active in the company, determine the best approach for involving their leaders.
- Collect information and outcomes regarding previous interactions with the company.
- Be sure to have current information about the company to appear knowledgeable. Minimally, review the annual report and visit the company Web site.

**PHASE 5** Begin to work with others in the employer organization. Action steps may include:

- Meetings with human resources, training, and/or organizational development managers to learn more about how the bridge program will fit into their training and development strategy.
- Meetings with supervisors and frontline staff from hiring departments to gather information about skill needs and gaps among current employees.
- Identification of a single point of contact in both the lead institution and employer organization to ensure good coordination and efficiency. (It is also advisable to engage a “back-up” person in case the designated person leaves the company or is moved to a different job.)
- Establishment of meeting formats, length, and follow-up protocol.

Worksheet 8: Employer Meetings Discussion Guide, p. 37, is designed for meetings with individual employers and may be useful at either Phase 4 or Phase 5. If appropriate, it can be easily adapted for use with a focus group of employers in a particular industry.

**PHASE 6** Employers should be involved in bridge program design and curriculum development (see “Designing the Program,” pp. 16–27, and “Developing Program Curriculum,” pp. 39–56).

One way to do this is to establish a curriculum advisory committee that includes program designers and employers. When these roles are clearly stated and represent the employers' perspective, the core team can then develop the curriculum. Action steps might include:

- Identify a number of employers who could participate in this phase to ensure a broad perspective.
- Engage employers in identifying specific entry-level requirements, technical and soft skills, and desired competencies for those who complete the program.
- Ask employers for copies of company manuals, forms, and procedures that could be incorporated into the curriculum.
- Form a curriculum advisory committee for getting employer input.
- If appropriate, contact labor union representatives for information about entry level competencies and skills gaps and include them in the advisory committee.

**PHASE 7** As the program is being developed, the employer should be invited to provide program review and feedback. This is essential to ensure that the end product is aligned with employer needs and expectations. Specific action steps include:

- Develop milestone points to obtain employer feedback.

- Develop a clear format for getting the employer feedback. (If the program has an advisory committee, this is an appropriate vehicle.)

**PHASE 8** Once the program is in the implementation phase, the lead institution needs to maintain regular communication and follow-up with the involved employers. A program advisory committee is one vehicle to get input on changing employer demand and to ensure that the curriculum continues to meet employer needs. It also helps the program build employer relationships that can lead to further involvement in program delivery. All communications should be short, to the point, and in language that will resonate with employers. Specific actions might include:

- Establish clear internal protocol for communication to ensure that all contacts with the employer are centralized and thoughtful.
- Develop a schedule for regular communication (such as advisory committee meetings).

While some programs may initially involve just one employer, where possible bridge program designers should identify and work with multiple employers in designing a bridge program and placing graduates. It may make the early development more complex, but it also brings more options and greater flexibility in the long run. Finally, the lead institution should make a point of meaningfully recognizing the individuals within the employer companies who help develop and implement the bridge program.

Instituto del Progreso Latino designed the **Manufacturing Technology Bridge** based on the Transformations program that was developed by the Consortium on Occupational Research and Development in Waco, Texas, for use in training displaced manufacturing workers for more skilled jobs. Instituto worked closely with a group of Chicago-area manufacturers and with faculty from the Manufacturing Technology certificate programs at Richard J. Daley College, one of the City Colleges of Chicago, to ensure that program graduates meet the qualifications sought by employers and are qualified to enter the college program so they can advance to even better jobs.

## Worksheet 8: Employer Meetings Discussion Guide

Below is a set of topics to discuss during start-up meetings with potential employer partners. The topics discussed will vary based on knowledge of the company, type of bridge program under development, and previous relationships with the company. The completed worksheet 2: Questions to Consider in Identifying Job and Education Requirements, p. 20, will provide answers to some of these questions.

### Background

- A. Information about the lead institution
- B. Summary of previous relationships with the employer
- C. Overview of how/why you chose to meet with this employer now

*Tip: Consider sending this information before the actual meeting along with a detailed agenda. Be ready to give an overview of the information to reinforce it and focus the conversation.*

### Bridge Program Basics

- A. Brief overview of bridge program basics (a handout may be helpful)
- B. Brief overview of the bridge program you are developing:
  1. Target occupations
  2. Target audience (*The target audience is important to the provider. Employers tend to care most about who they see at their door when they are hiring—make this a program that will help employers meet their bottom line, not a social service program.*)
  3. Timeframe/schedule
  4. Expected outcomes
- C. Benefits to the employer (*To the degree possible, anticipate what the benefits will be. These can be clarified as you learn more about the employer.*)
  1. The bridge program will help develop a qualified workforce.
  2. The program curriculum will reflect the employer's needs.
  3. The bridge program can assist in promoting the company to a new population of potential workers.
  4. The program would be available to the employer's entry-level workers.
  5. The program could help the employer lower costs of recruitment and reduce turnover.

### Employer Information

- A. Baseline information about the company
  1. Number of employees, types of positions, number of company locations, etc.
  2. The company's goals for the next one to three years
  3. Challenges the company faces in meeting its goals
- B. Human resources information and challenges
  1. Does the company have the skilled workforce it needs to meet its goals? What gaps exist? Are there plans to address those gaps?

2. What are the problems with finding and training entry-level workers?
3. Has the company identified career pathways for entry-level workers? (*If not, this might be a useful exercise to engage in with the employer.*)
4. Is the company open to working with an external provider such as your institution?
5. Is the company willing to provide release time or on-the-clock time for participation of incumbent workers and new hires?
6. Does the company have a labor union and what roles might it play?

### Options for Employer Roles

- A. Specific information on the role the employer (and, if appropriate, the labor union) might play in bridge program development and implementation
  1. Program development
    - Clarification on hiring issues
    - Descriptions of required skills and educational levels, advancement opportunities, and salary levels for entry-level positions
    - Input into curriculum development
  2. Program delivery
    - Presentations to bridge program participants
    - Service on advisory committee
    - Providing tours of facilities, job shadowing, or mentoring
    - Providing internship or work experience opportunities
    - Priority interviewing for program graduates
- B. Exploration of areas that are of most interest to the employer
  - Strengths of employer organization
  - Motivation for involvement, e.g., gain new employees, educate current workforce, improve public relations
- C. Feedback and input on curricular directions and program design
  - Eligibility of incumbent employees for the program
  - Other potential employer partners (*be aware that the employer may be sensitive about having partners who are direct competitors*)
  - Potential funding through the Workforce Investment Act

### Summary and Next Steps

- A. Summarize the program under consideration and the employer's response to it
- B. Together, determine what needs to be done, by whom, by when
- C. Agree on a next meeting time and who needs to be at the next meeting

#### Develop the Employer Role

Employers will play specific roles in the implementation of a successful bridge program. These roles can include providing opportunities for student field trips, job shadowing and internships, and appearing as a guest speaker (“Job and College Exposure,” p. 53, provides a more detailed discussion from the student learning perspective). Most of these options bring benefits to the employer as well as to the program, as highlighted below.

**Field trips** to worksites provide opportunities for employers to “market” their business to potential new hires.

**Job shadowing** can be used as a developmental opportunity for incumbent employees, who may be asked to give a detailed narrative about the individual job or how the business functions as a whole.

**Internships** are attractive to employers because they allow them to assess potential employees before hiring them.

Appearing as a **guest speaker** provides an opportunity for an employer to inform potential employees of business expectations. Managers may also want to use this as an opportunity for an employee to develop new skills in speaking and representing the company.

**Support and encouragement** for employees who are program graduates can be an important factor in participating in the next level of education or training and ultimately the transition to the next step in their career ladder.

While these kinds of collaborations may require additional effort and coordination, the payoff is great. Employer participation on an advisory committee can help facilitate their involvement. These activities allow the employer to have ownership in the program and its outcomes, and employer involvement makes the bridge from school to work easier for the program participant.

#### Sustain Employer Involvement

There are several key elements in keeping employers engaged:

- **Balancing employer and program needs.** Most employers are not accustomed to seeking hiring and employee-development assistance with an educational institution and/or nonprofit provider. Their needs are not the same as the needs of the program provider; employers are generally seeking expertise, quick turn-around, and very direct assistance in solving their workforce issues.
- **Providing regular opportunities for input and feedback.** This can be formal, informal, quantifiable and/or qualitative. An advisory committee is one potential vehicle.
- **Keeping communication short and to the point.** Employers believe that “time is money.”
- **Involving the employer in various aspects of the curriculum.**
- **Following up in a timely manner on internship and job placements to find out what is working and to correct what is not.** It may also help to establish a process for recommending job applicants, such as a commitment by the employer to interview candidates from the program. Providing the employer with qualified entry-level employees and upgrading incumbent workers’ job skills will be key to sustaining employer involvement.
- **Providing timely recognition to individuals within the engaged companies, getting media coverage ensuring that the right people are credited and that the employer(s) has given permission, and identifying and pursuing award opportunities.**

## DEVELOPING PROGRAM CURRICULUM

While bridge program curricula cannot be purchased “off the shelf,” the core team will probably be able to identify existing curriculum models and materials upon which to build. This section describes the process of developing curricula for bridge programs. It begins with a discussion of principles of bridge program instruction and presents sample bridge curricula to give a sense of the final product. It then details the steps of developing a bridge curriculum. This section concludes with a discussion of topics related to creating an effective learning environment for bridge training, including career exploration, and a discussion of types of assessments.

### Understand the Principles of Bridge Instruction

Bridge programs should be designed to emphasize the following instructional principles.

- Competency-based curricula
- Teaching in context
- Learning by doing or “project learning”
- Teacher as learning coach

**Competency-based curricula.** Bridge curricula are defined in the terms of the competencies or knowledge and skills students should be able to demonstrate once they have completed the course. A competency is defined as “demonstrated ability to perform a task successfully.” Mastery of competencies is more important than coverage of subject matter. The competencies that provide the learning objectives for bridge programs are based on the requirements of entry and success at the next levels of education and employment. Examples of competency statements include:

- Demonstrate basic workplace math skills.
- Describe general workplace safety.
- Identify and match appropriate social skills with multiple workplace settings.

In all cases, these statements contain a verb that indicates a demonstrated ability as well as workplace context and

reference to a basic skill. When writing competencies for bridge programs, it is important to remember to include each of these elements.

**Teaching in context.** Research in cognitive science indicates that adults learn basic skills faster and more effectively when they are taught in the context of preparation for employment or some other meaningful activity.<sup>8</sup> Studies of efforts to prepare low-skilled adults for jobs that pay more than subsistence wages find that teaching adults basic skills in the context of training for jobs leads to better job outcomes than does focusing only on basic skills or providing job-placement assistance without any education or training.<sup>9</sup>

In bridge programs, the teaching of basic skills is integrated with instruction in job skills or exploration of college and careers. So, for example, students might improve their reading comprehension, vocabulary, and study skills in the context of exploring career options and charting their desired career paths. Or, in a field-specific bridge program in manufacturing, students learn about fractions in the context of solving problems that a machinist or other manufacturing worker might face. Organizing teaching around problems, situations, or tasks of interest to students motivates them to learn and shows them they can learn. For native speakers who have received substandard education in elementary and secondary schools, or for immigrants who must overcome language barriers, this approach engenders the confidence and self-esteem that are critical to success both in securing a good job and pursuing further education and training.

**Learning by doing or project learning.** Following the principle of teaching in context, bridge programs are structured so that students learn by doing through a process that enables them to comprehend new skills and concepts, apply them to different situations or problems, draw conclusions and make clearly substantiated judgments based on evidence, and solve problems by taking ideas from various places and coming up with something new. So, for example, to learn fractions, students might learn the new concept and operation (comprehension), apply it in a variety of relevant word problems (analysis and applications), make up hands-on problems in student teams for the class to solve (application), comment on each other’s work (evaluation), and design a class problem for other classes to solve



(synthesis). To learn to write better essays, students are taught and given the chance to practice the different essay parts (comprehension), read student partners' essays and make suggestions for improvement on each essay part (analysis), incorporate those suggestions into a rewritten draft (application and synthesis), and evaluate the whole revision (evaluation).

Lesson plans are structured in a way to guide students through this process so they increasingly become accustomed to thinking critically and independently. Units consist of a series of “mini-projects” culminating in larger projects with meaningful outcomes or products. Examples of the products of bridge program projects include:

- A resume developed by the student that required new vocabulary and the ability to write sentences
- A career-path plan developed by the student that required research, summarizing, interviewing, computer, and essay-writing skills
- A piece of furniture that is built using students' new blue-print-reading and measuring skills
- A spreadsheet that tracks the work hours and patient contacts of nurses in the ward of a local hospital

Guiding students in this way helps them become self-directed learners and critical thinkers, qualities that are highly valued in today's workplace.

**Teacher as learning coach.** Teaching in a contextual, project-oriented way requires teachers to abandon the conventional “talk and chalk” methods. The role of the teacher in the bridge program is more as a learning coach than a purveyor of knowledge and skills. This creates a teacher-learner relationship that resembles the relationship between a team leader and team member in the workplace. Moreover, it respects and capitalizes on the extensive practical knowledge and experience that adults bring to the learning situation. (See “Staffing,” pp. 76–80, for suggestions on selecting instructors qualified for this teaching approach.)

### Review Sample Bridge Curricula

The following sections describe examples of curricula for actual bridge programs, including their overall structure and sample course outlines. The “career” bridge program piloted at West Side Technical Institute, part of the City Colleges of Chicago, consisted of two levels, Career Bridge I and Career Bridge II; the former corresponds to the lower-level bridge program and the latter corresponds to the higher-level bridge program, as described in “Identifying Bridge Program Models,” pp. 7–10.

The Manufacturing Technology Bridge developed by Instituto del Progreso Latino is an example of a field-specific higher-level bridge program. These curriculum examples are briefly described in this section; the following section, “Develop the Bridge Curricula,” pp. 44–51, outlines the six-step curriculum development process.

### Lower-Level and Higher-Level Bridge Program Examples: West Side Tech Career Bridge I and II

The West Side Technical Institute Career Bridge was a two-level bridge program designed to help applicants scoring below 9.0 on the TABE to build their basic skills to the point where they could access career-path employment and be eligible for and succeed in college-level career programs. Career Bridge I (an example of the lower-level bridge model) was designed to prepare students who tested between 4.0 and 5.9 on the TABE to acquire skills needed to advance to better-paying jobs and prepare for further education; Career Bridge II (an example of the higher-level bridge model) was designed to prepare students who tested between 6.0 and 8.9 on the TABE to explore the occupational training programs at West Side Technical Institute and the career paths to which they lead, and to enter and succeed in a student's program of choice.\*

Figure 8, p. 42, shows the structure of the West Side Tech Career Bridge programs. Each program level consisted of three courses: math, communication, and test-taking. The curricula for both Career Bridge programs were intended to be offered on a fairly intensive schedule, each running four hours per day, four days a week for 10 weeks. The two Career

\* The West Side Tech Career Bridges were designed using a developmental learning framework appropriate for native and advanced ESL students. In the West Side Tech pilots, about two-thirds of the students were immigrants from Mexico while one-third were native English speakers. Although all were seeking to enter college-level training in career fields, about 40 percent did not have a high school diploma or GED. West Side Tech also conducted a successful pilot of the career bridge with a smaller group of young people from the Chicago Job Corps program.

Bridge levels were designed so that when offered together, they could be customized to fit individual students' skill profiles. For example, students with low skills in math but higher language skills could be scheduled to take both levels of math, one level of communication, and test-taking. Thus, the length of stay within the program when both bridges were offered together could be significantly shortened.

In addition to incorporating key bridge features already described, the West Side Tech curriculum also incorporated GED instruction.

The following are summary descriptions of each course-type in the curriculum.

#### **Career Bridge 1 (lower-level bridge): Communication 1**

The Communication 1 course focused on word and sentence skills and introductions to multi-paragraph forms. The course emphasized vocabulary, punctuation, and work with the various tenses in the context of speaking, reading, and writing about personal goals and job skills. Through integrated reading and writing exercises and peer editing techniques, students learned how to recognize and build paragraph structures. The final products of the course included a completed job application, resume, simple cover letter, and a multi-paragraph theme where students described who they were in the past, their current values, and what they want in their future. Students also learned basic computer skills, as all these products must be entered and saved on a computer. In addition, students completed an in-class mock interview presenting these materials to either a prospective employer or a mock interviewer.

#### **Career Bridge II (higher-level bridge): Communication 2**

The Communication 2 course focused on paragraph and essay forms and group research skills. Students in this course charted their short- and long-term personal, work, and community goals. They worked in career interest groups to do research in newspapers, in the library, and over the phone to find out the specific employment and training information they needed to develop career plans. Students also interviewed employers and student and faculty representatives from community college career programs to determine what training they would need for the careers they decided to pursue. The final products of this course included a report, presentation, and formal essay on the career path each student chose, as well as a completed

(reworked) resume, cover letter, and follow-up letter created and saved on a computer. Exercises on vocabulary and punctuation were also offered as needed.

#### **Career Bridges I and II: Math 1 and 2**

The math courses were presented in a modular fashion so instructors could target skills needed by a particular class. Modules were defined by specific themes, and each theme came with recommended materials and hands-on classroom activities that instructors could choose from to teach specific skills. Also included were lab projects that allowed students to apply the skills they were learning to problems drawn from the workplace.

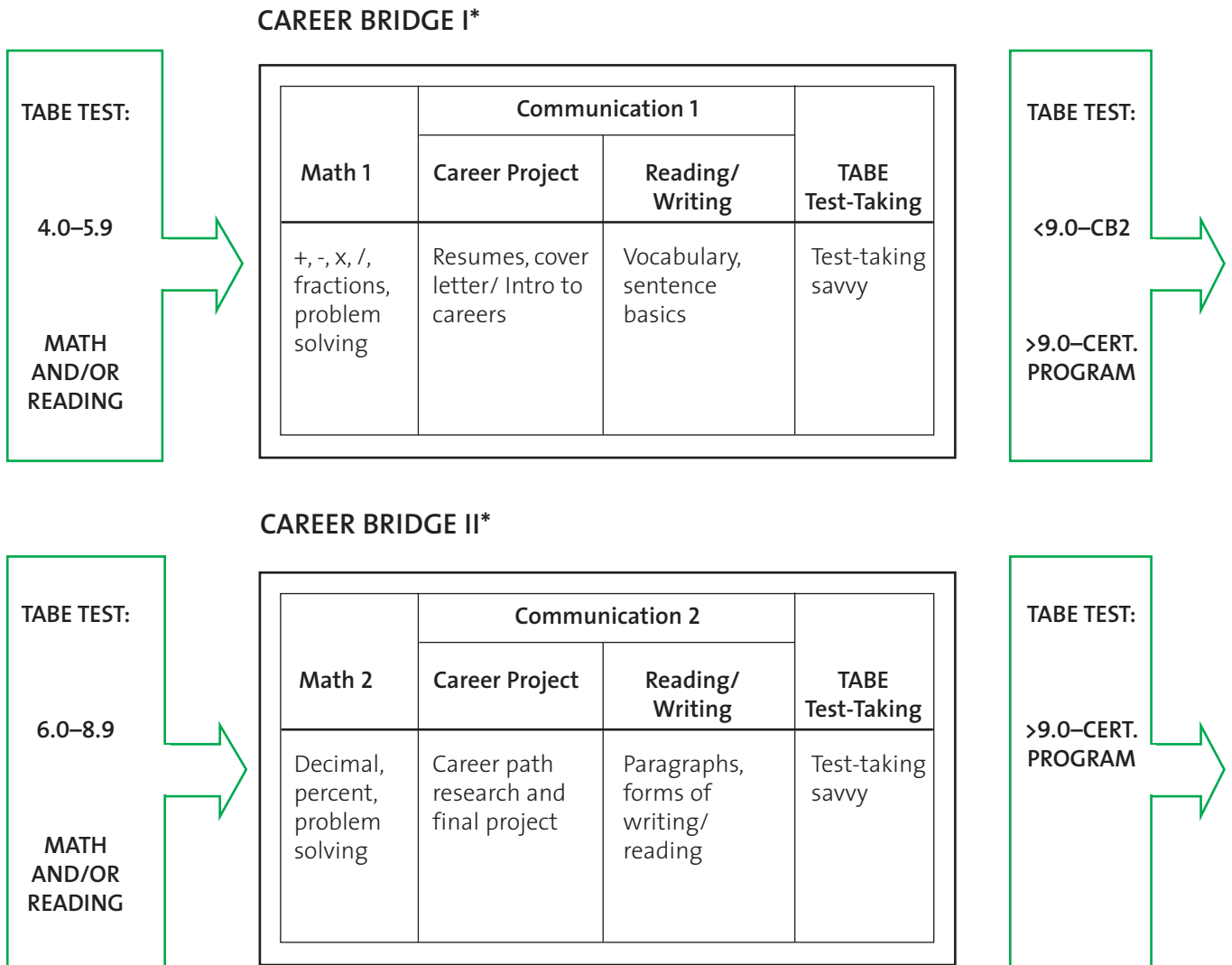
#### **Career Bridges I and II: Test-Taking Strategies**

The test-taking course was comprised of a set of strategies for working with TABE test materials. Students studied question and answer types, rated test questions in terms of how sure they were of their answers, ranked the likelihood of various test answers, and gave the reasons why they got specific answers right or wrong. Once students mastered test-taking strategies, they were asked to make up TABE tests for each other. The class analyzed and evaluated each mock TABE test. Students also devised techniques for completing tests quickly and checking their work when they have extra testing time. Similar strategies can also be used for preparation for the GED and other standardized tests.

#### **Field-Specific Bridge Programs**

Both lower-level and higher-level bridge programs can be field-specific, that is, designed to prepare students for positions in a particular occupation or set of related occupations. The curriculum for the Manufacturing Technology Bridge program (an example of a field-specific higher-level bridge program developed by the Instituto del Progreso Latino in Chicago) includes job-related conversation, technical vocabulary, job-related reading, and words and phrases that assist workers in resolving problems on the job. The curriculum is delivered in an intensive, five-days-per week/five to six hours per day format for 16 weeks to accommodate the needs of individuals who are either working or available for job shadowing or a paid internship during second or third shift. Figure 9: Structure and Flow of Field-Specific Higher-Level Bridge Curriculum, p. 43, shows the organization of the course.

**Figure 8: Structure and Flow of Career Bridge Curriculum**



Students received individualized schedules depending on Math and Communication courses they tested into. Delivered at West Side Technical Institute, part of Richard J. Daley College, City Colleges of Chicago, in 2001–2003.

\*Figures 11, 12, and 13, pp. 49–50, provide excerpts from the syllabi of the communication, math, and test-taking strategies courses.

**Figure 9: Structure and Flow of Field-Specific Higher-Level Bridge Curriculum**

		Technical Literacy		Technical Specialty
		Four days per week		One day per week
Hours		Weeks 1–7	Weeks 8–14	Weeks 1–16
1		Workplace Mathematics (2 hrs x 28 days = 56 hours)	Principles of Technology (Applied Physics) (2 hrs x 28 days = 56 hours)	Blueprint Reading (2 hrs x 14 days + 2 hrs x 8 days = 44 hours)
2				
3		Workplace Communication (1.5 hrs x 56 days = 84 hours) • Careers in Manufacturing • Employment Skills • Principles of Quality Management		Metrology* and Machining (3.5 hrs x 14 days + 4 hrs x 8 days = 81 hours)
4				
		Lunch		Lunch
5		Industrial Computer Applications (2 hrs x 28 days = 56 hours)	Workplace Mathematics (Computer Applications) (2 hrs x 28 days = 56 hours)	Metrology and Machining
6				
	2 <sup>ND</sup> OR 3 <sup>RD</sup> SHIFT	Current job student has upon entering program (if employed)	Job Shadowing or Paid Internship with a Partner Company	

\*Metrology-the scientific study of measurement

Manufacturing Technology Bridge Curriculum, Instituto del Progreso Latino

#### Employability Skills Curriculum

Because bridge program students often have little or no successful work history, it is especially important to incorporate employability skills into the curriculum. The Adult Learning Resource Center in Des Plaines, Illinois, developed a 16-week course to address this need.\* Detailed in figure 10: Employability Skills for Adults, pp. 46–48, the course is divided into four phases to correspond with the classroom, field studies, job shadowing, and internship components. Competencies fall into five key areas of workplace literacy: self-awareness and advocacy; communication; social and interpersonal; career awareness, development and exploration; and workplace culture.<sup>10</sup> This curriculum can be adapted and integrated into either the lower-level or the higher-level bridge program type.

#### Develop the Bridge Curricula

This section presents a step-by-step guide for developing a bridge program curriculum. Ideally, a team of program developers will carry out this process. It is important that the program is jointly designed and developed by instructors with expertise in vocational content and those with expertise in basic skills, including ESL if appropriate. Employers and, as appropriate, labor union representatives, should be involved as well (see worksheet 2, p. 20, and “Building and Sustaining Employer Relationships,” pp. 34–38). The products of this process will include a curriculum summary describing each course and showing the relationships among them and, for each course, an outline syllabus and daily lesson plans. The main steps in developing bridge curricula are:

- STEP 1:** Identify the competencies needed by the target population to enter the next level of employment and education in the target sector
- STEP 2:** Organize competencies into courses or instructional modules
- STEP 3:** For each course, draft a summary and syllabus
- STEP 4:** For each course, draft a course outline or schedule

**STEP 5:** For each course, draft daily lesson plans (this step may be further informed as the schedule (Step 6) is developed).

**STEP 6:** Determine a schedule for the full set of modules or courses (in some circumstances, this may also be Step 1)

#### Step 1. Identify the competencies needed to advance

This step builds on the process of determining the bridge program model as described in “Designing the Program,” pp. 16–27; worksheet 3, p. 21, and worksheet 6, p. 25, can be modified as the program detail is developed. Once the program designers determine the jobs or higher education level that the bridge program will prepare the target audience for, the next step is to identify the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that the target audience will need to enter and succeed in those jobs. Often this will involve preparing the target audience for further education or training that in turn leads to the target jobs. So the competencies identified should include those needed for the target jobs as well as for any intermediate training.

There are well-established methodologies for analyzing the skills and knowledge needed for particular jobs, such as DACUM and WorkKeys profiles.<sup>11</sup> These tools are generally useful, although some can be expensive to implement. Even if these more formal methodologies are used to identify work competencies, curriculum development teams should interview workers in these jobs to see how they got them and what they think are the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in them. Employers should also be interviewed to find out what they look for in a successful applicant. If, for example, employers require applicants to take some sort of test or assessment and go through an interview process, the required competencies ought to include being able to pass the sort of test actually given and to interview effectively.

Just as important, bridge program designers should identify the competencies that the target audience will need to advance to the next level of education or training. Here again, it is essential to identify the specific entry

\*This curriculum was developed by the Adult Learning Resource Center/The Center (ALRC) specifically for adults with learning difficulties/learning disabilities; however, it may be used with adults needing employability skills training. Title change with permission from ALRC.

requirements and the process by which applicants are screened and to interview faculty and staff at the next level to identify the requirements for success in their programs. Ideally, faculty from the next level of education or training will work with the bridge designers to identify competencies required both for their programs and for the jobs to which these programs lead. Where applicable, union representatives should be interviewed about entry-level qualifications for both training programs and jobs.

Other sources include existing technical or professional advisory boards. Also, skill standards developed by some state workforce or economic development agencies can be useful in gaining an understanding of the necessary education and training requirements and basic skill levels required to perform specific jobs.

### Step 2. Organize competencies into courses or instructional modules

Identify the competencies that students will be expected to master as part of each course. Specify the requirements for entry into the course as well as the assessment methods and tools that will be used to determine whether applicants meet these requirements. For example, the Workforce Education Division of The Center: Resources for Teaching and Learning in Illinois developed this list of course competencies for a new hire training program at a local company:

1. Read a production outline
2. Read product sheets
3. Summarize facts from a product sheet
4. Read bar and line production and quality charts
5. Write a memo that lists key facts
6. Listen and take notes at a staff meeting
7. Use notes to write a summary of a staff meeting
8. Take a phone message
9. Skim and scan newsletter

10. Read Employee Stock Option Purchase and Savings Plan

### Step 3. For each course, draft a summary and syllabus

List the competencies that students will be expected to master through the course, and designate and describe the final products. Sequence units in a developmentally appropriate manner and assign a theme to each unit that matches with specific competencies that will be learned in the course of studying that theme. Write a syllabus that lists the specific assignments that will go along with that theme. Figure 11, p. 49, shows a syllabus for one week of a communications course in a lower-level bridge program, the West Side Tech Career Bridge I.

Review relevant resources for use in the course. This can be done alongside the sequencing activities to suggest interesting or useful ways to structure the competencies. Use tables of contents of promising books to get ideas about how to order and group necessary competencies and search resources for innovative ideas for classroom projects.

Brainstorm projects that could result from work completed as a result of learning the competency sequences. Projects can be completed by individuals or by teams of students with similar career or job interests. A project could also have specific presentation requirements and could require computer-skills learning as a part of the process. Clearly state how each assignment will help prepare students for their final projects.

As another example, figure 12, p. 49, presents an excerpt from Week 3 of the mathematics course of the West Side Tech Career Bridge program. The math course is an eight-week, four-days-per-week, two-hours-per-day course (total of 64 hours). This particular unit teaches math concepts drawing on problems and materials from jobs in manufacturing. Figure 13, p. 50, shows the syllabus for the test-taking strategies course.

**Figure 10: Employability Skills for Adults  
Sequence of Introduction of Competencies**

PHASE I: COMMITMENT TO WORK		PHASE II: EMP. SKILLS AND COMPENSATIONS	
CLASSROOM		FIELD STUDIES	
<b>WEEK 1</b>	1. Identify and describe expectations and implications of program participation at each stage of project. 2. Identify, describe, and demonstrate an understanding of individual learning strengths and challenges. 5. Identify, describe, and prioritize short and long term goals.	<b>WEEK 5</b>	12. Identify and demonstrate strategies for self-correcting mistakes. 13. Identify and demonstrate strategies for handling criticism. 15. Describe and demonstrate the steps in teaching others new skills.
<b>WEEK 2</b>	3. Identify, describe, develop, and implement individual compensation strategies needed to meet learning challenges. 4. Describe and demonstrate effective approaches to decision making through anticipating problem areas and identifying solutions. 6. Identify, describe, and demonstrate an understanding of individual strengths, skills, and interests as they relate to life and job goals.	<b>WEEK 6</b>	16. Identify and demonstrate how to join or initiate a group task appropriately. 17. Identify and match appropriate social skills with multiple workplace settings.
<b>WEEK 3</b>	18. Identify and describe the necessary job skills, qualifications, and outlook of various jobs. 23. Identify and describe the elements of succeeding on the job and job retention strategies. 20. Identify and describe the characteristics an employer seeks in a prospective employee.	<b>WEEK 7</b>	19. Identify and describe effective approaches to conducting a job search.
<b>WEEK 4</b>	7. Identify, describe, and demonstrate effective oral and written communication strategies. 11. Identify, describe, and demonstrate effective approaches to interacting with supervisors and co-workers. 14. Identify and demonstrate effective approaches to conflict resolution.	<b>WEEK 8</b>	25. Describe the functions of the workplace “chain of command” and working as a team member. 26. Identify and describe how individual jobs are related within various workplaces and how they collectively impact the workplace’s mission.

Developed by Adult Learning Resource Center (Des Plaines, IL). Numbers correspond to groupings by competency, as shown on page 48.

**Figure 10 (CONT.) : Employability Skills for Adults  
Sequence of Introduction of Competencies**

	<b>PHASE III: CONNECTING CLASS TO WORK</b>	<b>PHASE IV: EXPERIENCING THE JOB</b>
	<b>JOB SHADOWING</b>	<b>INTERNSHIP</b>
<b>WEEK 9</b>	24. Identify and describe where and how to gather and exchange information at the workplace. 8. Give and receive oral instructions and job information. 9. Respond appropriately to written materials, including general directions, procedures, forms and charts.	<b>WEEK 13</b> Integration and application of all competencies within internship.
<b>WEEK 10</b>	27. Identify and describe general workplace safety. 10. Demonstrate basic workplace math skills.	<b>WEEK 14</b> Integration and application of all competencies within internship.
<b>WEEK 11</b>	28. Identify and describe general employee rights and responsibilities. 29. Identify and describe examples of cultural diversity in the workplace and their impact on today's workforce.	<b>WEEK 15</b> Integration and application of all competencies within internship.
<b>WEEK 12</b>	21. Develop and write a job history and/or résumé. 22. Demonstrate effective approaches to job interview situations.	<b>WEEK 16</b> Integration and application of all competencies within internship.



## Figure 10 (CONT.) : Competencies for Instructional and Work-based Experience Components

**Self-Awareness and Advocacy** competencies enable learners with special needs to make informed decisions, set goals, and take responsibility for their own decisions and advocacy:

1. Identify and describe expectations and implications of program participation at each stage of project.
2. Identify, describe, and demonstrate an understanding of individual learning strengths and challenges.
3. Identify, describe, develop, and implement individual compensation strategies needed to meet learning challenges.
4. Describe and demonstrate effective approaches to decision-making through anticipating problem areas and identifying solutions.
5. Identify, describe, and prioritize short- and long-term goals.
6. Identify, describe, and demonstrate an understanding of individual strengths, skills, and interests as they relate to life and job goals.

**Communication** competencies include the ability to use oral and written information on the job:

7. Identify, describe, and demonstrate effective oral and written communication strategies.
8. Give and receive oral instructions and job information.
9. Respond appropriately to written materials, including general directions, procedures, forms, and charts.
10. Demonstrate basic workplace math skills.

**Social and Interpersonal** competencies enable learners to interact with others in a workplace setting and participate as members of a team:

11. Identify, describe, and demonstrate effective approaches to interacting with supervisors and co-workers.
12. Identify and demonstrate strategies for self-correcting mistakes.
13. Identify and demonstrate strategies for handling criticism.
14. Identify and demonstrate effective approaches to conflict resolution.
15. Describe and demonstrate the steps in teaching others new skills.
16. Identify and demonstrate how to join or initiate a group task appropriately.
17. Identify and match appropriate social skills with multiple workplace settings.

**Career Awareness, Development, and Exploration** competencies develop an understanding of learners' place in the world of work through the identification of their own strengths and challenges and consideration of how these relate to identified job goals:

18. Identify and describe the necessary job skills, qualifications, and outlook of various jobs.
19. Identify and describe effective approaches to conducting a job search.
20. Identify and describe the characteristics an employer seeks in a prospective employee.
21. Develop and write a job history and/or resume.
22. Demonstrate effective approaches to job interview situations.
23. Identify and describe the elements of succeeding on the job and job-retention strategies.

**Workplace Culture** competencies develop learners' understanding of their roles within specific workplaces and awareness of the appropriate behavior in a given workplace situation:

24. Identify and describe where and how to gather and exchange information at the workplace.
25. Describe the functions of the workplace "chain of command" and working as a team member.
26. Identify and describe how individual jobs are related within various workplaces and how they collectively impact the workplace's mission.
27. Identify and describe general workplace safety.
28. Identify and describe general employee rights and responsibilities.
29. Identify and describe examples of cultural diversity in the workplace and their impact on today's workforce.

**Specific Job Skills** will be added to the curriculum based on each program's needs and resources.

Figure 11: Excerpt from Syllabus for Communication Course

## WEEK 1 THEME: JOB SKILLS

## COMPETENCY: ESSAY STRUCTURE EXERCISES FOR STUDENTS

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Classroom activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Read summaries aloud.</li> <li>■ Job skills exercise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Introduce basic essay structure (<i>teacher</i>).</li> <li>■ Write a simple introduction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Determine best job skills.</li> <li>■ Write a simple conclusion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Vocabulary contest and last vocabulary list.</li> <li>■ Complete writing paragraph set.</li> </ul>
Homework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Write a paragraph on your strongest every-day skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Complete job skills checklist.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Complete the conclusion.</li> <li>■ Write 1-2 paragraphs that describe best job skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Vocabulary words exercise due Monday.</li> </ul>

Source: Stephanie Sommers, workforce consultant, designed this curriculum for West Side Tech.

Figure 12: Excerpt from Syllabus for Math Bridge Course

## WEEK 3: MORE DECIMALS, CALCULATORS

<b>A) Introduce scientific calculators</b>	<b>B) Continue Arithmetic with 3-place decimals. Do calculations manually and verify answers with calculator.</b>
(TI-30xa or TI-30x-IIs recommended) <i>(Developer's comment: TABE does not allow use of calculator, but industry requires speed, and that means using calculators.)</i>  Scientific calculators vs. plain calculators: Hierarchy of operations use the equals key to bypass hierarchy Multiple memories The fraction key (A-b/c) Fraction-decimal conversion key (F-D)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Add and subtract with 3-place decimals.</li> <li>2) Round 3-place decimals to nearest 2-place and 1-place decimal.</li> <li>3) Understand rules for multiplying decimals.</li> <li>4) Understand rules for long division with decimals.</li> <li>5) Estimating answers in decimal problems.</li> </ol>

Source: Adapted by Stephanie Sommers from a course designed by Ray Prendergast, October 2000, for the Instituto del Progreso Latino Manufacturing Technology Bridge program.

## Figure 13: Syllabus for Test-Taking Strategies Course

### INTRODUCE THE PURPOSES OF THE COURSE

Present and explain the following set of course objectives to the class:

- To understand and be able to identify direct and indirect comprehension questions on a TABE test.
- To understand and use the appropriate strategies for answering TABE questions.
- To be able to gauge your level of understanding for each TABE question in a test-taking situation.
- To understand and use strategies for finding the best answer.
- To practice taking and analyzing the results of TABE tests.

### I. DETERMINE TEST-TAKING PROBLEMS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Write about a difficult test-taking experience
- Do an introduction exercise
- Write tips for test takers
- Apply tips to a test-taking situation

### II. BECOME GOOD AT DIRECT COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- Recognize different types of comprehension questions
- Identify and answer comprehension questions on a TABE test
- Create a comprehension question protocol
- Write comprehension questions

### III. ANALYZE ANSWERS

- Evaluate knowledge levels on past tests and define test anxiety
- Analyze responses to TABE test questions and answers
- Create answering protocols

### IV. TAKE TABE TESTS

Source: Stephanie Sommers.

**Step 4. For each course, draft a course outline or schedule**

Create a grid for each day of the week and write the theme and competency or competencies that will be the focus of each week. Use one row for the day of the week the course will be taught, one for basic classroom activities, and one for homework. Think through how the skill competency will be contextualized and how critical skill sequences will be played out during the week. Design homework that follows up on classroom activities and prepares for the activities the next day.

**Step 5. For each course, draft daily lesson plans**

For each day on the curriculum outline, write a daily lesson plan. The daily plan should state the week, day, theme, and competency that have been assigned for that week. The classroom objectives and materials can be listed at the top of each page. Activities can be described step by step. Writing lesson plans can be a good way for teachers to get creative and specific about what they are trying out in their classes.

Teachers who develop complete lesson plans can use them later as the basis for identifying what did and did not work in the classroom, and for communicating new ideas about a potential new approach. Courses that are taught multiple times can allow teachers to collect their proven best practices in a growing and changing curriculum file that can, in turn, be used to help orient and train new teachers.

**Step 6. Determine a schedule for the full set of courses or modules**

Work with all partners to determine the number of courses in the program and the number of hours per week per course. Also decide which course will take place on which days per week. Create a table that clearly presents the program schedule with all courses integrated. Note that the

course schedules may be constrained by the academic calendar of the providing institution or by funding requirements. For these reasons, some program designers may need to develop the course schedule prior to undertaking Steps 1 through 5.

Increasingly colleges and other educational institutions are experimenting with ways of breaking down courses into modules or “chunks” that can be offered in an accelerated manner or according to the schedules of students. This approach should be considered when developing the schedule. Some programs have also found that student mastery and retention increases when classes are broken up into shorter credit-hour segments.

**Enrich the Learning Experience****Career Exploration**

Career planning is a fundamental element of bridge programs. Often, people at this academic level have never had the chance to step back and consider a career plan. This can be a powerful motivator for program participants. Adults with little prior attachment to the paid labor force and those working in low-wage jobs often have less access to career exploration and planning services than those from more affluent backgrounds. As a result, they may have:

- Limited knowledge of the range of careers available
- Less contact with or knowledge of the labor market
- A limited knowledge of career paths, including the qualifications necessary to advance
- Lack of job satisfaction, often leading to problems with job retention

The **College Gateway** program at Skyline and Cañada community colleges prepares under- and unemployed adults and transitioning foster youth for education programs in allied health and bioscience. The Gateway Program consists of 12 to 14 weeks of intensive contextualized basic skills preparation in English and Math, along with life counseling and career planning. In the Career Preparation course, students explore the career planning process and gather information about their interests, personality type, and values. The information helps students determine their career options, make decisions and plans, write resumes, and prepare for interviews. Students create, present to the class, and submit a final career-related project.

### DEVELOPING PROGRAM CURRICULUM

- Few opportunities for employment leading to family-supporting wages
- Barriers to employment such as low literacy, learning disabilities, and low skills requiring an employment plan that incorporates education, training, and support services

Career exploration and planning help students gain a more realistic picture of how to secure a job and advance in a career, and thus a greater commitment to a particular job and greater individual willingness to undertake ongoing education and training. Lack of career-planning information and skills is a fundamental barrier to envisioning a meaningful series of steps to move from low-paying jobs to better employment.

However, simply transferring employment materials designed for other populations, such as teens in high school or adults with a lot of work experience, may not be effective in meeting the career-development needs of low-skilled adults. Career-development materials must take into account their resources, life circumstances, and experiences to be effective.

There are many appropriate career indexes available. Some are available online and are free of charge, such as America's Job Bank, and others may be purchased. One tool, Career Coach, provides free online career planning and is the only tool that specifically addresses the needs of adults with lower literacy levels.\* This Web-based career development tool takes users through a process of expanding their knowledge of different careers, narrowing down a career choice, exploring and choosing the right education and training, and building skills on the job. The tool, available in both English and Spanish, is written for those below an eighth-grade reading level, supports users through a step-by-step process, and is available free over the Internet to anyone who wishes to use it. Importantly for working adults who may also be parents, it also allows users to develop, save, and refine their career exploration work, returning to their saved information as time allows. The Career Coach is an ideal tool for bridge programs in a community college, community-based organization, or workplace setting.

Importantly for bridge program designers, Career Coach can be incorporated into both the lower- and higher-level bridge curricula in a variety of ways, such as in a writing assignment or a class presentation on potential careers.

#### The Career Coach:

- Expands the career knowledge of users
- Provides step-by-step support for incremental career planning
- Shows how to accumulate career assets
- Encourages more education, but also provides ways for those who cannot go to school to advance
- Shows that people from similar backgrounds have been successful in careers
- Is accessible to people with low literacy levels and includes information in a variety of modalities—visual, auditory, and through stories
- Provides a step-by-step planning function that can be used in short increments, for example, after children are asleep or at a school, library, or community technology center
- Can be used with little supervision, when career counselor-to-student ratios are stretched thin
- Allows users to organize and store necessary information

The Career Coach is available for free at [www.womenemployed.org](http://www.womenemployed.org). For more information or a demonstration, call 312-782-3902.

\* The Career Coach Web site is a partnership between Women Employed and One Economy Corporation. <http://www.womenemployed.org>.

### Cohorts and Peer Mentors

Bridge program participants can benefit from a variety of support structures that can be built into the program delivery model. Some bridge program providers believe that students have greatest success when they are able to go through programs as a cohort. Being in a cohort encourages students to help one another and engenders esprit de corps. Organizing students into cohorts means, however, that all students have to attend at the same time. Cohorts also may make it difficult to serve students with a wide range of needs. As a result, some bridge programs are designed to be self-paced, with instruction provided by teachers/tutors and computers. Some programs are using peer mentors very successfully. Bridge program designers should weigh the benefits of different ways of organizing bridge training and, over time, experiment with various approaches to see what works best.

### Job and College Exposure

Bridge programs should expose students to employment and postsecondary education as much as possible. The following are some activities that provide such exposure (“Building and Sustaining Employer Relationships,” pp. 34–38, provides more detail on the employer role in providing such exposure).

**Field trips** to worksites can help students get a clearer picture of their post-bridge options. These trips can be linked to classroom exercises where students prepare interview questions about career opportunities and business practices. Students can also be required to write reports on these trips based on the information they learn.

**Job shadowing** offers a non-threatening, substantive opportunity for individuals with little or no previous work experience to observe and learn about a particular job. Typically, the students identify positions in which they are interested and spend time with an incumbent worker observing how the work is done. It is often a good idea to have the student develop a list of questions prior to the activity and to report back in a written assignment or class presentation. It is also helpful to prepare the worker who is being shadowed; this can make the experience more useful for both parties. Job shadowing can be enhanced when the student is paired with an employee who has had to overcome some of the same types of barriers the student faces.

**Role model panels** are made up of small groups of employed bridge program completers who return to report on their experiences at work. Such panels can give current students insight into the kinds of life changes they can expect, the obstacles they are likely to face, and tips on how to deal with them. Role model panels are highly effective because students identify strongly with the panel members.

**Internships** or work experience provide students with the opportunity to try out work behaviors such as teamwork and reliability that they are learning in class, while getting assistance from bridge program staff with work behavior issues that may arise. Although paid internships are preferable, unpaid internships should be considered when paid positions are difficult to obtain. Another option is providing internal internships at the lead institution for those students who need more time to develop workplace skills. Student interns should have a class assignment (written report and/or class presentation) in which they reflect on what they have learned through the internship or work experience.

The **Essential Skills Program (ESP)** at the Community College of Denver uses paid internships to achieve its goal of preparing low-income individuals for jobs in high-demand occupations. The program emphasizes building student skills in the transactional environment of the world of work. Students begin internships in their chosen field, one of six occupational tracks, in the second month of the program. They are in class two days a week, with contextualized instruction specialized to the selected field, and serve their internships three days a week. Internships are credit-bearing and count toward a degree if the student stays in the same vocational area.

The relationships between the program, the employer, and the student need to be charted in an internship agreement. Such an agreement should reflect all the specifics of the internship program, including work expectations and evaluation procedures.

A fully detailed internship agreement should incorporate the expectations of each party regarding:

- Tasks and responsibilities
- Job goals and expected outcomes
- Number of hours and length of time of the internship
- Attendance/promptness expectations on the job and consequences for violations of these expectations
- Communication pattern between the program and the employer
- Intervals for employer/supervisor evaluations
- Conditions for permanent employment opportunities

Bridge students need **exposure to college** and can get a flavor for college-level study touring a college campus and visiting a class, or, even better, from a college-level faculty member teaching a class or seminar for bridge students on introductory topics. Bridge students should also meet with college counselors and financial aid staff. The goal should be to ensure that bridge students who are interested in progressing academically have applied for admission and for financial aid before they complete the bridge.

Bridge program coordinators may decide to have students document their work and achievements in a **portfolio**. Portfolios are compilations of materials created by the student, such as final projects, transcripts, and certificates.

They give students confidence in interviews, as they help students present themselves in a structured manner using tangible displays of their accomplishments and skills.

### Computer Skills Through Course Content

Since computer use is a must in today's knowledge economy jobs, bridge programs can provide an important job skill for participants by integrating computer use into the curriculum. Following are ways that programs can integrate computer use into course content:

Lower-Level Bridge:

- Writing a resume (product: resume on disk)
- Using computers at home and on the job

Higher-Level Bridge:

- Computer applications (word processing, spreadsheet, presentation software) taught in the context of exploring careers and postsecondary training options and preparing a career plan
- Using the Internet to research career information, including using resources such as Women Employed Institute's Web-based Career Coach
- Computer applications taught using problems, tools, materials, and situations taken from state-of-the-art workplaces in the given field (for field-specific bridge programs)

Students in the **Access College Education (ACE)** program at Portland Community College develop research, writing, and computer skills in the context of career exploration. For example, for one math exercise, students calculated what they would need to earn to become completely self-supporting, an exercise that was very motivating for students. The information gathered in this and other similar life-related tasks culminated in student-generated PowerPoint presentations, many of which included percentages, pie charts, and graphs.

### Computerized Instruction to Complement Bridge Instruction

Basic skills, GED, and vocational computer software can sometimes improve the effectiveness of bridge programs.

**Basic skills software** can help strengthen math, reading, and writing skills. Teachers can assign lessons in specific programs as homework to help students meet program competencies or use portions of these programs as teaching materials. Software selected should be able to introduce concepts in small increments, allow for plenty of interaction, give good explanations to right and wrong answers, and have a user-friendly student tracking system. Computer labs should have the personnel necessary to help students learn computer skills and to answer questions that arise, and teachers should have good relationships with the personnel so all work can be monitored carefully.

GED skills can be targeted objectives of bridge programs, and **GED software** can be used as required supplements. Certainly the math, reading, writing, and technical skills taught in the bridge program can strengthen students' ability to prepare for the GED. Test-taking courses can teach GED test-taking skills for the various skill areas, and GED software can supplement course work. Bridge programs that serve students older than 16 with this approach should be sure to give students a GED practice test, meet with students to help them interpret their scores and create study strategies, and give specific GED software assignments. As always, it is critical that the software is able to track student progress and that teachers require updates on this progress frequently.

An effective GED software program will provide readings, test materials, and feedback on right and wrong answers, and will introduce concepts, provide opportunities for interaction while the concepts are being learned, and enable students to build their skills and knowledge incrementally.

**Vocational software** comes in a wide variety of types, and each should be evaluated in relation to the primary course materials and carefully integrated with coursework. Some software provides a good introduction to a field, some can be used for research purposes, and some can help students practice vocation-specific skills.

### Develop Student Assessment

Assessment is a key component of any bridge program. Ideally, an assessment will:

- Help determine the placement level of a student within a program
- Determine the student's career and advancement interests or goals
- Determine the student's support service needs
- Determine the student's strengths and weaknesses
- Inform curriculum and instruction
- Measure student learning gains

### Pre- and Post-Testing

Assessment testing should occur prior to entry (placement or pre-testing) and upon completion of the program (exit or post-testing). Program designers will need to determine the type of assessment instruments the bridge program will use. Practices to test basic literacy as well as those used as a gateway for college entry vary among states and between specific institutions within states.

Standardized instruments such as the TABE, BEST-Literacy, BEST-Plus, Accuplacer, and COMPASS tests can be effective and appropriate. The same test is often used for both placement and exit testing to determine level gains. Any instrument that is selected should align with the course content to afford more accurate placement of students into the program. The assessment process and tools also need to align with the requirements of the funding source(s). In addition, the program could offer a test that measures the specific competencies taught in the bridge program.

Since many bridge program students have negative histories with assessment and testing, it is also important to integrate assessment (testing) into the curriculum. Exemplary bridge programs intersperse assessments throughout the program so that students develop test-taking skills and become comfortable with the idea of assessment (see figure 13, p. 50, for a sample test-taking syllabus). For higher-level bridge programs, it is important to prepare students for the college entrance exam. One useful resource is the COMPASS practice test on the American College Testing (ACT) Web site (<http://www.act.org/compass/index.html>).



### TARGETING STUDENT SERVICES

#### Student Career Goals

The core team will have gathered information about the career and advancement goals of potential students during the program development phase (“Designing the Program,” pp. 16–27). “Career Exploration,” p. 51, describes a free career-exploration tool that students can use either prior to program entry or as part of the bridge program curriculum. In addition, bridge program participants should take a short questionnaire at the beginning and end of the program, to ensure that the program remains relevant to students’ career and advancement goals.

#### Student Support Service Needs

The focus groups described in “Targeting Student Services,” pp. 56–63, will provide a general idea of student support service needs. However, the person responsible for intake will also need to determine the specific needs of the individuals enrolling in the program. An outside referring agency or the program itself may do this. Necessary adjustments should be made during the program depending on the needs of enrolled students. Some programs have found that a staff member dedicated to student support is a critical program component.

### TARGETING STUDENT SERVICES

A host of barriers may confront students, including child-care responsibilities, tuition costs, lack of knowledge about financial aid, lack of transportation, learning disabilities, physical disabilities, lack of family commitment or support, fear and anxiety, substance abuse, and domestic violence.

Student services are the linchpin that holds together a successful bridge program. Without them, the barriers can

make program completion impossible. Student services can address these barriers and make it possible for learners to succeed. It is important to think about the target population and how to make services as accessible as possible given their needs and circumstances. This section will help determine the target population’s needs in order to maximize the effectiveness of your support services.

Student services generally consist of:

- Career counseling, including aptitude assessment, career exploration, and career and educational plan development
- Academic guidance, including orientation to the institution or organization, the program, and available services; advising in course planning and selection; and transfer counseling
- Academic support, such as tutoring, help developing effective study skills, and time-management coaching
- Personal guidance, including crisis intervention, personal counseling (mental health and life skills), and peer mentoring
- Supplemental resources such as subsidies or vouchers for child care, transportation, books and supplies<sup>12</sup>

### Prioritize and Adapt Services for Target Population

While there is a vast menu of student services, every program and every student population is different. With limited resources for these services, it is important to prioritize services that are most important to the target

The **Greater Cincinnati Health Professions Academy’s** “multi-entry, multi-exit” system enables applicants to enter specific programs at different levels based on their interest and capacity and supports them in advancing towards their healthcare career goals. The Academy program assesses skill levels as well as individual issues that may present barriers to participating and succeeding in the program. The Academy employs two Career Coaches to guide students through the program. They begin with vocational, educational, and personal assessments to help place the students in appropriate programs and determine their need for support services. The Career Coaches then provide career guidance and planning, life-skills training, placement assistance, and retention support for a full year after employment.

population and the program. It is also important to consider ways of delivering these services that specifically meet the needs of the target population. A number of factors can lead to different priorities and different strategies for delivering student services, including student characteristics, local geography, and infrastructure. Some priorities may be obvious. For example, if the program is located in an area that is geographically spread out without public transportation, transportation subsidies are probably important. If the target population includes a number of parents, child care will likely be a priority.

However, there are less obvious student-service needs that may be particular to the target population and area. There may also be ways to better structure and deliver services to meet students' needs. By holding focus groups, the program designers will learn about the primary barriers targeted students may face in accessing and persisting in the program. Focus groups will help identify the most effective services and how best to target them so they ultimately contribute to better retention and completion outcomes.

Ideally, program designers will be able to hold focus groups with the three populations described below. Local foundations may be able to provide funds for the costs associated with focus groups, which may include a facilitator and participant stipends. If multiple focus groups prove too costly, one can be sufficient or program designers can use the instruments below to develop surveys or questions for one-on-one interviews. Suggestions on how to prioritize are discussed below.

To the extent possible, select focus-group participants based on the population the bridge program will target. For example, if the program will serve adults with children, the focus group should be made up of adults with children. If the target population is ESL or low-literacy students, the focus group should reflect this as well.

It is helpful to hold a separate focus group with each of the following:

**Potential students** are individuals who have never been to postsecondary education or training but are seriously

considering it. These individuals will help program designers understand how to get people started in the program.

**Former students** are those who were enrolled in a program but have not completed it or a degree because they have had to take time off for some reason. These individuals will help identify the major precipitating factors that lead students to take time off and potentially not return. Targeting services to alleviate these factors can help keep students in the program.

**Current students** who match the target population demographics will inform program designers about what has helped them succeed. It may be that certain services, if marketed better, could help more students. It may also be that students have developed informal services — such as peer mentoring — that could be explicitly systematized in the program model.

**Tip:** If holding only one focus group, it is likely that the former students will provide the information that is most useful in identifying priority services.

Worksheets 9-11, pp. 58–63, will help in conducting focus groups. There is a separate worksheet for each category of students: potential, former, and current. Using these guides with groups of eight to 12 participants, the focus group will take between one and a half and two hours.

Focus groups will yield a wealth of information for the core team to consider. It is important that as many members of the team as possible observe the focus groups. Former students in particular can offer a wealth of information about how services can be made more accessible or targeted in meeting their needs.

## Worksheet 9: Student Service Focus Group Discussion Guide Potential Students

### A. Introduction

#### 1. Staff/organization introductions

#### 2. Explanation of focus groups

- Focus groups are a technique used in business to find out what consumers want and need.
- Since students are consumers of education or training, our goal is to find out what you need to be successful in our program.
- First, we will talk about your life and your daily experiences, and then we want to find out more about your educational goals and needs.

#### 3. Purpose of this focus group

#### 4. Participant introductions

Ask each participant to share:

- Name
- Basic family information (kids, ages, etc.)
- Current job, if employed
- Career goal

### B. Discussion

#### 1. A day in your life

The purpose of this section is to get an accurate picture of the daily responsibilities of your potential students. Having a good sense of what they are balancing, what kinds of things can interfere with their day, and what kind of support networks they have will help you identify places where your program can offer support.

- What is your morning like? What time does it start? What does it take to get everyone out the door?
- What is your day like?
- What time do you get home in the evening? What needs to get done? When do you go to sleep?
- What are your child-care arrangements during the day? What happens if your child is sick?
- What makes you feel like you have had a successful day?

- What kinds of things throw your day off?
- When these things happen, what is your back-up? Do you feel like you have a network of support? What does that network look like?

#### 2. Reasons for seeking education and training

The purpose of this section is to find out what students' motivations are for seeking education and training. Understanding these motivations is helpful because program staff can reinforce these throughout the program, while helping students find other motivations for staying in school. These questions will also help you determine whether participants generally have people in their lives who will reinforce their motivation or work against it.

- When you finished high school, did you seek out further education and training immediately or wait? If you waited, tell us about some reasons for waiting.
- Now that you've started thinking about continuing your education or improving your skills, we'd like to get a good understanding of what is motivating you to do this.
  - Task: Please take a moment to think about your top three or four reasons for continuing your education or building your skills. Write them down.
  - Have participants share their reasons and discuss.
- If you decide to continue your education, how do you think people in your life will respond? Are they supportive? If so, how are they supportive? If not, what makes you feel they will be unsupportive?
  - Let's talk about specific people and how they might or might not support you:
    - Spouse
    - Extended family — parents, siblings, aunts, uncles
    - Kids
    - Employer

### 3. The path to further education and training

The purpose of this section is to help illuminate students' prior knowledge of the process of getting started in college or a training program. This will help you determine how much initial outreach, orientation, and assistance you will need to provide.

- What colleges or job-training programs are available in your area?
- Do you know anyone who has taken part in any of these? Who — relatives, friends, coworkers?
- Have you talked to them about how to get started? Could you talk to them about how to get started? If not, do you know of anyone you could go to for advice?
- What are the basic things that someone has to do to apply to and get into college or a job-training program?
  - What is the first thing you would do?
  - Where would you go and who would you talk to?
  - If someone you know wanted to go to college or get job training, what would you advise them to do?
- Have any of you ever started the process of applying to college or registering for a job-training program but had to stop? Tell us about that. What happened?
- Take a moment to think about the following sentence: "I want to get started in college, but there are just a few things I need to do, or things that need to happen, or things I need to get into place before I can get started." What are those things?
  - Task: Please take a moment to think about this and write down what is getting in the way of getting started.

- Have participants share their reasons and discuss.

### 4. Expectations of college or job training

This section will help you learn about students' notions of what college or training will be like. If common misperceptions arise, you will be able to address these with incoming students. If common fears arise, you will also be better able to preempt these concerns when students begin a program.

- When you picture yourself in college or a job-training program, what do you imagine it will be like?
  - What will it be like to be in a classroom? Do you think you will enjoy that experience? Why or why not?
  - What about homework? How much time do you think you will spend on homework?
  - Do you picture college as a social experience? Do you see it as a place to make friends?
- What excites you the most about the thought of going to college or job training?
- What worries you the most? Do you have any concerns? What are those concerns?

### 5. Wrap-up

- If you go to college or a job-training program, how do you picture your life in 10 years? What are your hopes? What would success look like to you? Describe the life you want to have.

## Worksheet 10: Student Service Focus Group Discussion Guide Former Students

### A. Introduction

#### 1. Staff/organization introductions

#### 2. Explanation of focus groups

- A focus group is a technique used in business to find out what consumers want and need.
- Since students are consumers of education, our goal is to find out what you need to be successful in school.
- First, we will talk about your life and your daily experiences, and then we want to find out more about your educational goals and needs.

#### 3. Purpose of this focus group

#### 4. Participant introductions

Ask each participant to share:

- Name
- Basic family information (kids, ages, etc.)
- Current job, if employed
- When they were in school and what program they were in

### B. Discussion

#### 1. A day in your life

The purpose of this section is to get an accurate picture of the daily responsibilities of students. Having a good sense of what they are balancing, what kinds of things can interfere with their day, and what kind of support networks they have will help you identify places where your program can offer support. Note that for former students, you may want to ask them to think back to when they were in school or training when they answer the following questions.

- What is your morning like? What time does it start? What does it take to get everyone out the door?
- What is your day like?
- What time do you get home in the evening? What needs to get done? When do you go to sleep?
- What are your child-care arrangements during the day? What happens if your child is sick?

- What makes you feel like you have had a successful day?
- What kinds of things throw your day off?
- When these things happen, what is your back-up? Do you feel like you have a network of support? What does that network look like?

#### 2. Reasons for going to seeking education or training

The purpose of this section is to find out what students' motivations are for seeking education and training. Understanding these motivations is helpful because program staff can reinforce these throughout the program, while helping students find other motivations for staying in school. These questions will also help you determine whether participants generally have people in their lives who will reinforce their motivation or work against it.

- When you finished high school, did you apply to college or job training immediately or wait? If you waited, tell us about some reasons for waiting.
- We want to understand your motivations for continuing your education. When you decided to go to college or enter a job-training program, what were your reasons?
  - Task: Please take a moment to think about your top three or four reasons for continuing your education. Write them down.
  - Have participants share their reasons and discuss.
- When you decided to enroll in college/job training, how did people in your life react? Were they supportive? If so, how were they supportive? Talk about specific things they did.
- If not, in what ways were they unsupportive? Talk about specific things they did.
- Probe specific people:
  - Spouse
  - Extended family — parents, siblings, aunts, uncles
  - Kids
  - Employer

### 3. Expectations of college/job training

This section will help you learn about what students expected and how that differed from their experience. If common misperceptions arise, you will be able to address these with incoming students. If common fears arise, you will also be better able to preempt these concerns when students begin a program.

- When you started college or job training, did you know what you wanted your career to be? How did you figure that out?
- If you didn't know what you wanted your career to be, how did you pick your major or program of study?
- How did you figure out which classes to take?
- Did you feel like the classes you were taking were moving you toward your goal? Why or why not?
- Think back to how you pictured college or job training before you started. What were your greatest fears? What excited you the most?
- Once you were there, was it what you expected it to be? How was it different?

Probes:

- Classes
- Homework
- Difficulty of work
- Schedule
- Social life/sense of community

### 4. Reasons for leaving/taking time off

The purpose of this section is to understand why students leave their programs. By identifying these factors, you can use your services to target these events before they become a barrier to persistence.

- We would like to understand what kinds of things make it difficult for students to continue in a program or force them to take time off. Please take a moment to think about your reasons for taking time off from or leaving your program.

- Task: Please write your reasons down.

- Have participants share their reasons and discuss.

- Were there any resources or people at the college or program you were in who could have helped you with these things?

- Probe specific services depending on the barriers that were raised. Example: You mentioned that you left your program because you were failing a class. Did your program have tutoring services available? Were you able to take advantage of that service? What would have made it easier for you to use the tutors that were available? *Your goal here is to find out if the service existed, and if it did, why it did not work (e.g., too far away, or hours weren't convenient, or didn't know about it).* This may help you adapt your services to particular needs. Specific services to probe include:

- Financial aid and financial-aid counseling
- Academic advising
- Tutoring
- Mentoring
- Career counseling
- Job placement
- Personal counseling
- Child care
- Student support groups/clubs

- Do you plan to re-enroll in your program or a different program? If so, what needs to happen before that is possible for you?

### 5. Wrap-up

- If you go back to college or a job-training program, how do you picture your life in 10 years? What are your hopes? What would success look like to you? Describe the life you want to have.

## Worksheet 11: Student Service Focus Group Discussion Guide Current Students

### A. Introduction

#### 1. Staff/organization introductions

#### 2. Explanation of focus groups

- A focus group is a technique used in business to find out what consumers want and need.
- Since students are consumers of education and training, our goal is to find out what you need to be successful in school.
- First, we will talk about your life and your daily experiences, and then we want to find out more about your educational goals and needs.

#### 3. Purpose of this focus group

#### 4. Participant introductions

Ask each participant to share:

- Name
- Basic family information (kids, ages, etc.)
- Current job if employed
- What education or training program they are currently in and career goal

### B. Discussion

#### 1. A day in your life

The purpose of this section is to get an accurate picture of the daily responsibilities of students. Having a good sense of what they are balancing, what kinds of things can interfere with their day, and what kind of support networks they have will help you identify places where your program can offer support.

- What is your morning like? What time does it start? What does it take to get everyone out the door?
- What is your day like?
- What time do you get home in the evening? What needs to get done? When do you go to sleep?
- What are your child care arrangements during the day? What happens if your child is sick?
- What makes you feel like you have had a successful day?

- What kinds of things throw your day off?
- When these things happen, what is your back up? Do you feel like you have a network of support? What does that network look like?

#### 2. Reasons for seeking education and training

The purpose of this section is to find out what students' motivations are for seeking education and training. Understanding these motivations is helpful because program staff can reinforce these throughout the program, while helping students find other motivations for staying in school. These questions will also help you determine if participants generally have people in their life who will reinforce their motivation or work against it.

- When you finished high school, did you apply to college or job training immediately or wait? If you waited, tell us about some reasons for waiting.
- We want to understand your motivations for continuing your education. When you decided to go to college or enter a job training program, what were your reasons?
  - Task: Please take a moment to think about your top three or four reasons for continuing your education. Write them down.
  - Have participants share their reasons and discuss.
- When you decided to enroll in college/job training, how did people in your life react?
- Were they supportive? If so, how were they supportive? Talk about specific things they did.
- If not, in what ways were they unsupportive? Talk about specific things they did.
- Probe specific people:
  - Spouse
  - Extended family — parents, siblings, aunts, uncles
  - Kids
  - Employer

### 3. Expectations of college/job training

This section will help you learn about what students expected from college or job training and how that differed from their experience. If common misperceptions arise, you will be able to address these with incoming students. If common fears arise, you will also be better able to preempt these concerns when students begin a program.

- When you started college or job training, did you know what you wanted your career to be? How did you figure that out?
- If you didn't know what you wanted your career to be, how did you pick your major or program of study?
- How did you figure out which classes to take?
- Did you feel like the classes you were taking were moving you toward your goal? Why or why not?
- Think back to how you pictured college or job training before you started.
- What were your greatest fears? What excited you the most?
- Once you were there, was it what you expected it to be? How was it different?

Probes:

- Classes
- Homework
- Difficulty of work
- Schedule
- Social life/sense of community

### 4. Knowledge/use of student services

The purpose of this section is to help you learn about students' knowledge of available services, their experiences with those services, and how the services can be adapted to better fit their needs. You may also learn about informal supports that students provide for each other that can be systematized.

- Have you ever had to miss a class? What caused you to have to miss a class? Did you share the reasons with anyone at your school?
- Have you ever had to drop a class? What caused you to have to drop a class? Was there anyone at the college or in the program who could have helped you stay in the class? Did you seek their help? What happened?
- Have you ever had to leave in the middle of a term? What caused you to have to leave? Was there anyone at the college or in the program who could have helped you stay? Did you seek their help? What happened?
- What kinds of services did/does your college or program offer? Did/do you ever use them? How were they useful? How could they be improved?

Probes:

- Financial aid and financial aid counseling
- Academic advising
- Tutoring
- Mentoring
- Career counseling
- Job placement
- Personal counseling
- Child care
- Student support groups/clubs

### 5. Wrap-up

- How do you picture your life in 10 years? What are your hopes? What would success look like to you? Describe the life you want to have.



## PLACING STUDENTS IN JOBS AND COLLEGE

Bridge programs prepare students to advance both educationally and in their careers. Some programs may emphasize one aspect more than the other, but ideally the program leads to both job and educational advancement. This section focuses on placement of students into a job or a college track. (Internships are a related option discussed in “Building and Sustaining Employer Relationships,” pp. 34–38, and “Job and College Exposure,” p. 53.)

### Job Placement

Bridge program participants generally will need activities that connect them to potential jobs both during the bridge program and upon its conclusion. In-program activities like internships and job shadowing, described elsewhere in this guide, build students’ workplace competencies and expose them to places they might want to work and employers who might want to hire them. Job placement then becomes a natural extension of the bridge program. Committing program resources to job placement, for instance by designating a placement coordinator, is an important program-development step (see “Staffing,” pp. 76–80).

Bridge programs should create clear policies to structure follow-up activities with employers, designating exactly what needs to happen before, during, and after a placement; how long post-placement activities need to continue; and what aspects of the whole process must be tracked. With a fully articulated placement system, the bridge program will be able to measure results and, subsequently, hone placement and post-placement efforts.

Program graduates who move into and are successfully performing on their jobs may be ready to advance to the next step in their career paths with the necessary education or training. But they may not have the confidence, resources,

or information to take that step. Programs may help these graduates make the transition by periodically following up with them to not only determine how they are doing, but also to encourage those who are ready to consider additional training and to provide assistance in identifying and accessing opportunities.

### College Placement

As noted above, a bridge program ideally leads to both job and educational advancement. “Developing Program Curriculum,” pp. 39–56, describes how to design the curriculum to consciously lead to the next educational level. Besides curriculum articulation, there are other concrete steps that can make the educational transition seamless for students:

- Arrange for students to apply for college financial aid while still enrolled in the bridge program.
- Work with student support services to have students arrange for necessary support services, such as child care assistance, for which they are eligible.
- Take a campus tour during class time.
- Enroll students in the next level of classes before the bridge program ends. (Program designers may need to work with the college credit department to provide more flexible scheduling that meets students’ needs.)
- Invite program graduates who have continued to credit programs to speak to the class about how the program prepared them to succeed in college.
- Continue to monitor the bridge program graduates’ success at the next level, looking at the areas in which they are succeeding and at those in which they are not, to continually revise the curriculum to achieve the best results for the students. (See “Bridge Program Evaluation and Continuous Improvement,” pp. 83–88.)

The **Child Development Associate** program at Tacoma Community College prepares people with very low basic skills to secure the Child Development Associate (CDA), an industry-recognized credential, and to enter a one-year paraeducator certificate program or a two-year associate of applied science (AAS) degree program. The CDA is a national accreditation and targets a high-demand occupation — there are not enough certified child-development associates in Tacoma to meet the need. This program has an active advisory board, which includes representatives from large human service agencies, a private-sector child care center, and the public schools. Board members assist in recruiting students from among their own employees and help place students who need new jobs.

# Bridge Program Costs and Funding

BUDGETING A BRIDGE PROGRAM

FUNDING A BRIDGE PROGRAM

FUNDING AND SUPPORTING AN ONGOING BRIDGE PROGRAM

## Bridge Program Costs and Funding

This chapter discusses the costs of bridge program development and implementation and advises on sources of funding to cover these costs. It is extremely difficult to place a per-client cost on such programs.\* This is because bridge programs require so many partners and each partner frequently contributes in-kind and other resources to the development and implementation of the programs, and because institutions who offer these types of programs piece together funding and try to minimize the costs of the additional strategies needed to support success and retention for underprepared students. However, this chapter should help the bridge program designer identify expenses and potential sources of funding.

### BUDGETING A BRIDGE PROGRAM

The bridge program budget will need to identify costs associated with implementation of the various bridge program components. The budget is not only a critical part of fundraising, it will also help the partners determine how to allocate financial responsibility for the program.

In general, costs will vary depending on the type of bridge program and the availability of institutional resources. For example, some bridge programs will require the purchase of occupational equipment such as a hospital bed or press machine. On the other hand, the program might be able to take advantage of existing and already-funded services such as college advising. The bridge program budget should include *all* the costs of the program, with institutional contributions indicated as revenue. Often resources can be leveraged through partnerships. For example, provided it is convenient for students, the program may be able to use a community technology center or community college computer lab for free during “off-hours.”

### Develop a Budget

There are two approaches to budgeting. One approach is to develop a budget according to *institutional cost centers*. This type of budget is often helpful to the lead institution for

accounting purposes. Community colleges typically use three categories or “cost centers” to assign costs — direct instruction, instructional support, and administration. Regardless of the type of institution, the following is a list of typical “cost centers” that a bridge program would include:

#### Direct Instruction

- Staffing (salary or wage for all staff involved in program). Determine whether the individual will be part- or full-time and whether fringe benefits will be included. Examples of the types of staff needed to operate a bridge program are provided in “Staffing,” pp. 76–80.

#### Instructional Support

- Consulting services (curriculum development, fundraising, evaluation frameworks, applied research, e.g., on the labor market, local employers’ needs, career ladders, etc.)
- Collateral materials (books, assessment testing materials, promotional materials, etc.)
- Facility, equipment, software (cost of rooms, computers, computer software such as a database, occupational equipment)
- Support services (e.g., transportation vouchers, assistance with purchasing uniforms). Include support services provided by program partners and student wage subsidies
- Miscellaneous (refreshments, staff and student field trips, etc.)

#### Administration

- Administrative overhead or indirect costs (Some institutions might require a contribution from every program toward management information systems, accounting, etc.)

\*One cost study showed that programs serving academically unprepared students tend to cost \$2,500–\$3,500 per student in addition to tuition. *The Costs of Serving Non-Academically Prepared Students: A Study of Three Community College of Denver Programs*, Elaine Baker. Funded by the Ford Foundation’s Bridges to Opportunity Initiative.

The second approach to budgeting is to develop an *activity or program budget*. This sort of budget is useful for funders who are asked to support a specific component of the program. An activity or program budget also can be used as support documentation for a cost-center budget, since it typically includes details as opposed to summary-level information. Program costs should total the same in both types of budgets; they are simply presented differently. The activity budget usually incorporates staffing-related costs into each activity, rather than as a separate line item. It is helpful to distinguish start-up costs from ongoing operating costs.

Start-up costs include:

- Staff recruitment and orientation (development of a training manual and staff-orientation process including field trips; include salary costs as determined by the percentage of time spent by staff to complete the task.)
- Program/curriculum development (calculate the time for all individuals involved in the identification of learning objectives, review of books and materials, development of lesson plans, etc. Do not double count with staffing costs if curriculum is considered part of the individual's job and is already included in program operations. Consider whether a curriculum-development consultant is necessary.)
- Partnership development, employer focus groups, etc.
- Facilities, equipment, and software (identification of space, purchase of computers, software, and other office or classroom support plus any technical assistance needed.)
- Fundraising
- Coordination of partnership and program development

Ongoing costs include:

- Student recruitment (marketing materials, staff salaries calculated as percentage of time spent for staff involved)

- Employer recruitment (marketing materials, staff salaries calculated as percentage of time spent for staff involved)
- Project management (salary of manager, generation of program-update reports)
- Program operations (teaching salaries, books and materials, field trips, speakers, wages for work experience)
- Support services (include staff responsible for job placement, counseling, college advising, tutoring, and case management; transportation vouchers)
- Facilities (rental costs)
- Fundraising
- Administrative overhead

Worksheets 12 and 13, pp. 68–69, will assist with the development of a cost center and program or activity budget.

**Worksheet 12: Cost Center Budget**

COST CENTER		TYPE OF COST	ACTUAL COST	COST CENTER SUBTOTALS (INSERT IN GREY BOX)	TOTAL
<b>Direct Instruction</b>					
	<b>Staffing</b>	# of FT staff x salary + fringe			
		# of PT staff x hrly. wage			
		# of students x hrly. wage/stipend			
<b>Instructional Support</b>					
	<b>Consultants</b>	Promotional material design			
		Curriculum development			
	<b>General Materials and Supplies</b>	# of books x students per year			
		Assessment testing materials			
		# of promotional materials x printing/copying cost			
	<b>Facility, Equipment, Software</b>	Room cost			
		Lab cost			
		# of computers			
		Computer software (3 of licenses?)			
	<b>Support Services</b>	Transportation voucher amount x # of students x length of program			
		Cost of uniforms x # of students			
		Other			
	<b>Refreshments</b>	Cost of food/drinks x # of students x # of class days			
		Cost of food/drinks x # of students and guests for graduation			
<b>Administration</b>					
	<b>Administrative Overhead</b>	% of institution's budget			
<b>TOTAL</b> (sum of subtotals)					

**Worksheet 13: Program or Activity Budget**

TYPE OF ACTIVITY	SALARY	BENEFITS	CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	GENERAL MATERIAL AND SUPPLIES	ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES AND/OR CAPITAL OUTLAY*	OTHER EXPENDITURES	SUBTOTALS	TOTAL
<b>Start-Up Costs</b>								
Staff Recruitment and Orientation								
Program Development								
Equipment and Software								
Fundraising								
<b>TOTAL START-UP COSTS</b>								
<b>Ongoing Program Operation Costs (define a time period)</b>								
Student Recruitment								
Employer Partnerships								
Project Management								
Program Operation: Bridge Skills								
Support Services								
Facilities								
Fundraising								
<b>Total Ongoing Costs</b>								
<b>TOTAL PRG. OPERATION</b>								

\* Sometimes calculated as percentage of total budget

## FUNDING A BRIDGE PROGRAM

There are many existing resources that can be used and combined to pay for bridge programs. Because in most states there is no dedicated source of funding for bridge training, someone on the core team or a hired consultant will need to allocate time and energy to raise and/or encourage the redirection of funds.

The ultimate goal is to get the bridge program institutionalized so that it does not have to rely on discretionary or one-time project funding year after year. The program may have to run as a pilot for a year or two before it is generally seen as effective and is incorporated into an annual budget.

The discussion and examples in this section are designed to prepare the responsible program staff to answer the questions posed in worksheet 14, pp 72–73, and to complete the funding map in worksheet 15, p. 74.

### Use Existing Funding Streams Innovatively

One fundraising option is to redirect existing funding sources to support a bridge pilot program. For example, in Wisconsin, a pilot is under way to enrich remedial programs with contextualized academic and vocational material already recognized by the college. These programs are credit-bearing, and therefore students can use Pell grants to pay for them. Additionally, federal work-study funds help

subsidize the work experience for up to 19 hours a week.<sup>13</sup> As another example, the Illinois Community College Board used Workforce Investment Act incentive funds earned by the high performance of Illinois' adult education and Carl Perkins vocational education programs to provide support to community colleges in partnership with community-based organizations to develop bridge programs in health care and transportation, warehousing, and logistics occupations. Similarly, supportive institutional leadership may be able to make discretionary funds available to pilot the program. The advantage of using existing institutional resources is once the program proves effective, the core team can advocate for the financing to become a permanent way to support the program.

### Explore Public Funding Options

Another funding option is to apply for public funding. It is important to note that public funding comes with many different eligibility requirements, including what type of institution can apply, what type of student can benefit, and what kind of activities can be supported. It is very important to pay close attention to the guidelines before applying to make sure the funding is a right fit for the particular bridge program. Also, public funding streams are implemented differently state by state, depending on established policies and priorities. Worksheet 14 will help map potential funds.\*

The **Career Pathways** program at Madisonville Community College provides individualized one-on-one and small-group tutoring to help individuals who wish to enter the college's CNA, LPN, or RN programs, existing students who need additional academic support, and students who are trying to move from one rung to the next on the nursing career ladder. Two program enhancements are available to qualifying CNA students, both funded through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The You Make A Difference CNA program pays for tuition, uniforms, books, supplies, and certification fees for 15 CNA students per year. The Workforce Connections program offers a three-day employability skills workshop and then places graduates of the CNA program into subsidized work experience positions at the Trover Foundation/Regional Medical Center, area nursing homes, and physicians' offices, with WIA funds paying their first 500 hours of salary.

\*A detailed funding streams diagram can be found at: [www.cjc.net/publications/02\\_Bridge\\_Programs\\_PDFs/bridge\\_funding.pdf](http://www.cjc.net/publications/02_Bridge_Programs_PDFs/bridge_funding.pdf) and: [www.womenemployed.org/docs/Bridge%20Funding%20Diagram.pdf](http://www.womenemployed.org/docs/Bridge%20Funding%20Diagram.pdf)

Instituto del Progreso Latino funds the **Manufacturing Technology Bridge** through many sources, including the Workforce Investment Act, North American Free Trade Agreement/Trade Adjustment Act (NAFTA/TAA), and the Illinois Job Training and Economic Development program. Empowerment Zone funding was important in establishing the program. Each program has different eligibility requirements. NAFTA/TAA provides the most options for training and permits a longer and more comprehensive ESL component. In addition, Instituto provides customized training for employers for a fee. As with most community-based organizations, it also seeks support from foundations.

### Find Private-Sector Contributions and Foundation and Corporate Giving Programs

Employer partners often contribute to programs. These contributions can take the form of in-kind or non-cash donations such as assistance with curriculum development, loaning employees to help teach or present to the class, lending classroom space, providing company tours for students, allowing employees to be “shadowed” by students, providing internships with the company, and lending or donating equipment. Employer partners will sometimes contribute resources directly to the program or provide tuition assistance or paid release time for incumbent workers who want to improve their skills and advance.

Foundations and corporate giving programs are also important sources of funds. However, it will be difficult to rely on foundation support for program operation over the long term because foundations often change priorities and/or limit funding to a certain number of years. Therefore, foundations should be considered for upfront or one-time expenses such as program development, convening of program partners and other stakeholders, evaluation, technical assistance, and tools such as literacy testing and computer software to assist with student tracking. A foundation or corporate giving program may also be interested in funding the program pilot, but will likely ask for plans for sustaining the program.

Worksheet 14: Funding the Components of Bridge Programs, pp. 72–73, will help identify potential funding

sources for the various components of bridge programs. Worksheet 15: Mapping Bridge Program Funds, p. 74, presents a format for organizing funding stream information. For an example of a completed diagram for the state of Illinois, along with funding-stream definitions and potential funding scenarios, see [www.womenemployed.org](http://www.womenemployed.org) and [www.cjc.net](http://www.cjc.net).

### FUNDING AND SUPPORTING AN ONGOING BRIDGE PROGRAM

The bridge program’s ability to demonstrate positive program outcomes will be essential to securing ongoing financial support. The earliest funders will pay close attention to program outcomes to determine whether they want to make an ongoing or multi-year investment. New funders will likely provide support if they can see the program’s success in helping low-skilled individuals find good jobs or advance in their careers. Finally, because the bridge program concept will likely be relatively new to public agencies, one or two successful programs may sway them to dedicate a larger amount of funds to bridge programs throughout the state or in the country. Holding an event to showcase the program’s success — for example, an open house, reception, or graduation ceremony — can build wider support and encourage continued funding, and can also interest new funders. Conducting an evaluation is a good way to document outcomes in a credible way (see “Bridge Program Evaluation and Continuous Improvement,” pp. 83–88).

Employer partners contribute significant resources to the **Greater Cincinnati Health Professions Academy**. Participating employers provide tuition reimbursement for incumbent workers and, in some cases, pre-pay tuition so upfront costs will not be a barrier to employee participation. Industry also provides subsidies for 50 percent of the Academy space, in-kind donation of supervisors' time for clinicals, and funding for a career advisor.



## Worksheet 14: Funding the Components of Bridge Programs

### A step-by-step process to identifying resources to support bridge programs in your state

#### Step 1

Create a list of federal, state, and local funds that are available for workforce development in your state. Standard federal streams may include Perkins, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) (including the governor's discretionary grant and any performance or incentive grants), and federal financial aid programs such as Pell. One resource for this type of research is the staff at your state or local workforce investment board.\* Your state likely has dedicated funding for workforce development that may be available for bridge programs. Often these funds are administered by the state economic-development and/or higher-education agencies. The National Network of Sector Partners has conducted a state-by-state analysis of economic-development funds usable for sector-focused programming that may be useful in finding this information.<sup>14</sup> Your state's community college association or agency may have information about appropriate educational grants. Finally, you will need to investigate any local funds that can be used to support workforce development.

#### Step 2

Using the questions provided below, determine whether each stream can support bridge programs, and if so, what components of bridge programs. A note about federal funds: since federal regulations for these funding streams are interpreted differently by state and even by local area, you should look at how answers to these questions would be interpreted in your area. The examples given under each question demonstrate how state interpretations may or may not make funds amenable to supporting bridge programs. You might consider meeting with your local workforce board to discuss the possibility of exceptions or waivers. Answer these questions for each stream that you have identified.

1. What are the population eligibility guidelines required by the funding stream? To be useful for a bridge program, people with limited literacy or individuals without a high school diploma or GED must be eligible.

#### *Example: State interpretations of federal guidelines*

Although there is nothing in the federal regulations that prevent WIA Title I Training Funds (Individual Training Accounts [ITAs]) from being used for people with limited literacy, some local areas have chosen to require a high school diploma to be eligible for an ITA. Therefore, ITAs may not be available to support bridge programs. Another example can be found in the federal income eligibility guidelines for Title XX Community Services Block Grant Funds. These funds are amenable for use in bridge programs that target public-aid recipients and other low-income groups.

\*See [www.nawb.org](http://www.nawb.org) to identify a contact for your state or local board information.

2. Do the laws or regulations restrict the types of services that can be offered (what can the money be spent on)? Determine whether there are funds that can support the various components of bridge programs: curriculum development, program operation, work experience, and support services. Because bridge programs offer a unique mix of literacy and occupational instruction, you also need to determine whether the funds will support one or both of these types of services. Finally, if you are developing a bridge program that does not offer college credit, you need to determine whether funds are available for non-credit programming.

**Example: State interpretations of federal guidelines**

Federal Perkins funds could support program operation, curriculum development, and support services depending on state interpretation. Likewise, some states use federal WIA Title II (Adult Education) dollars to support vocational adult education services, while others have a stricter interpretation and do not allow for funding any occupational programming. Finally, federal Pell Grants can be used only for credit programs, while some states may have a state need-based grant that allows for use in non-credit programs.

3. Do the laws or regulations limit the provider type (who can administer the funding stream)? It is necessary to determine whether the funds are accessible to community colleges, community-based organizations, proprietary schools, or other training agencies depending on who will administer your program.

**Example: State interpretations of federal guidelines**

Some states competitively bid TANF Employment and Training contracts with little restriction regarding provider type. On the other hand, states sometimes have state-funded job-training funds that are limited to community-based organizations and employer partnerships. This type of funding would not be available to support bridge programs at community colleges.

4. What are the regulations on how the funding is administered (formula, competitively bid, etc.)? Bridge providers need to be aware of what is competitively bid so that they do not miss out on proposal opportunities. Typically, colleges plan what to do with formula funding during a budget cycle. This requires advanced planning and requesting. Your state Workforce Investment Board might be able to help you find the answers to these questions.

**Step 3**

Complete a chart that lists each bridge program component and identifies funding streams that can support that component. List any caveats, special opportunities and circumstances, or provider limitations. Use worksheet 15: Mapping Bridge Program Funds, p. 74.

**Worksheet 15: Mapping Bridge Program Funds**

	PROGRAM COORDINATION	CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT	PROGRAM OPERATION: LOWER-LEVEL BRIDGE	PROGRAM OPERATION: HIGHER-LEVEL BRIDGE	WORK EXPERIENCE	SUPPORT SERVICES	NOTES: CAVEATS, STIPULATIONS
<b>Federal Funds</b>							
Federal Work-Study							
WIA Title I							
WIA Title II							
Perkins							
CSBG							
TANF							
Other (including incentive and discretionary)							
<b>State Funds</b>							
Child Care Subsidy							
Job Training							
Adult Education							
<b>Local Funds</b>							
<b>Grants: Foundation and Corporate Giving</b>							

# Bridge Program Implementation and Management

CHAPTER IV

STAFFING

PROMOTING, RECRUITING FOR, AND MARKETING THE BRIDGE PROGRAM

# Bridge Program Implementation and Management

## STAFFING

### Assign Roles and Responsibilities

To implement an effective bridge program, staff members will need clear responsibilities so that they are accountable for key functions and have clear roles in a team effort to move students through training to a career path. It is also important to define the staff functions so that there are clear linkages among them. The program design, showing the relationship of the major components, provides a starting point for identifying the required functions. The program designers will then be able to group the functions in specific positions.

Table 4, pp. 78–79, presents a generic list of staff positions, responsibilities, and functions for both community colleges and community-based organizations. However, the list of positions represents an ideal that may be beyond the reach of most organizations, so it is important to focus on the functions, which are critical to a program's success. Also, the functions on the list may be filled by different organizations.

The list of functions provides a basis for assessing the current staffing structure to determine what functions are already in place, what positions may be modified, and what new positions are needed. In large organizations, the functions will be spread among different positions, departments, and divisions. In such cases, a clear definition of functions and tasks will help determine which functions may be consolidated and how to integrate the work of the others into the bridge program through clear communication,

processes, and procedures. It is important to note that several of these positions may not exist in community colleges, or if they do, it may be difficult for bridge programs to secure a regular commitment of some of their time. Strong leadership support may be necessary to help secure dedicated staff time. In any case, the program coordinator should take the necessary time to orient staff to the bridge concept and to build an integrated team as the program is implemented. It might be helpful to refer back to the list of benefits of bridge programs for internal and external partners and students presented in figure 5: Benefits of Bridge Training, p. 14.

All staff, including the core team, support employees, and the staff of partnering organizations, should thoroughly understand the purpose of the program, their roles and responsibilities, the roles and responsibilities of others, and how they fit into the bigger picture. This may be done in an orientation or workshop.

Although the organization's leadership may not be directly involved in the design or day-to-day operation of the bridge program, it is important to gain their buy-in and support. This may involve marketing the program to them in memos and meetings. Presentations should convey the purpose of the program, how it supports the organization's mission, expected results, how it will be funded, and what the leader could do for the program. Periodic updates regarding successes, challenges, issues, and recommended solutions are critical. Other techniques are described in "Promoting, Recruiting for, and Marketing the Bridge Program," pp. 81–82.

The Portland Community College/Mt. Hood Community College training team for the **Career Pathways Vocational Training for Non-Native English Speakers** includes a full-time education coordinator, a full-time employment specialist, a part-time office assistant, a part-time director, and a part-time education coordinator. Part-time trainers teach occupational and technical skills, and part-time training assistants provide small-group supports for job search and computer skills. The program serves 120 to 150 students a year, in eight to 12 classes, with 12 to 15 students per class.

## Find the Right Instructors

Good instructors are the key to the success of any bridge program. They must impart real skills that translate to increased employability and educational mobility. Thus, core teams must recognize and hire innovative and motivated instructors with experience teaching the program's target population and who have firsthand experience and insight into the world of work. Instructors for a field-specific bridge program should also have knowledge of the particular sector.

### Instructor Duties, Qualifications, and Recruitment

The instructor's primary responsibility is to see that students actually learn the skills and competencies they will need to be successful on the job and at the next educational level. In addition, instructors need to work with other program staff to deliver a clear and continuous stream of student-specific services. Therefore, instructors need to:

- Adjust the curriculum to meet student needs
- Integrate experiential (hands-on) and team learning activities into curriculum
- Have knowledge of entry-level work environments, the career-path framework concept, and education and job-advancement opportunities
- Work with other bridge program team members to innovate new approaches to integrate basic skills, career exploration, and/or technical skills instruction
- Conduct ongoing evaluations of the curriculum and document changes
- Keep complete records of student progress
- Communicate student issues to appropriate program staff regularly

Depending upon the type of bridge program, the right set of teachers may be a mix of skilled reading and math instructors and technical experts from industry, or trainers or faculty with industry knowledge. Such a mix will require that instructors have opportunities to share their skills with each other so that the more academic instructors gain knowledge of the targeted sector, and technical experts can

learn new teaching approaches and techniques that are sensitive to adults' education needs.

The central instructor qualification is the ability to connect with students in such a way that they learn new skills. Instructors must have excellent interpersonal skills and the sensitivity and strategies to motivate and support the targeted population. To find appropriate instructors for a bridge program, organizations must pursue many avenues. Usually, instructor recruitment means identifying existing faculty and trainers from across the organization who might be interested and qualified, as well as getting in touch with organizations that have extensive contact with training and trainers in both the industrial and adult education fields. To evaluate whether potential instructors are able to teach in context and function as learning coaches, ask them to prepare a demonstration lesson and conduct it for the hiring group. Candidates can be given a specific topic concept or principle or be allowed to select one. This is a more revealing method than asking potential teachers to answer a list of questions.

### Instructor Orientation

Once appropriate instructors have been hired, it is important to integrate them into the bridge program to build a consistent understanding of the underlying philosophy, techniques, goals, and objectives, and to clarify expectations and procedures. This may be done at the level of the group and the individual.

Because the bridge program involves so many new approaches, it will be important to build a shared understanding of its principles and methods and of the fact that success will require a departure from current practices. This can be done through one or more orientation workshops focusing on these program elements:

- Substance of the bridge program, e.g., the career-path framework, the target audience, curriculum development, use of adult learning techniques, evaluating student progress
- Organization and structure, including all partners and their roles, timelines, communication protocols
- Procedures and expectations, including schedules of meetings, reports, registration, and student conferences

**Table 4: Staff Positions, Responsibilities, and Functions**

POSITION	RESPONSIBILITIES AND FUNCTIONS
President/ Executive Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide leadership in building support and understanding of the bridge program internally and externally</li> <li>■ Provide organizational support</li> <li>■ Require accountability for advancement outcomes</li> <li>■ Be an internal and external champion</li> <li>■ Mention bridge programs in speeches, newsletters, and meetings</li> <li>■ Attend graduations</li> <li>■ Support fundraising efforts</li> <li>■ Meet with key stakeholders (particularly employers)</li> <li>■ Advocate for needed policies to decision-makers</li> </ul>
Dean/ Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Promote and help develop the bridge program's model of teaching and learning</li> <li>■ Promote understanding, buy-in, cooperation, and faculty participation</li> <li>■ Provide assistance and guidance in developing, managing, and sustaining the program</li> <li>■ Facilitate linkages to advanced training and education</li> <li>■ Ensure that the bridge program is an integral part of the division's or department's functions</li> <li>■ Provide resources, staff, and support for fundraising</li> <li>■ Facilitate meetings to help integrate bridge program principles into all activities related to its operation and success</li> </ul>
Program Manager or Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Plan, manage, and monitor all aspects of the program, including staff and partnerships</li> <li>■ Ensure that all staff have the required skills and knowledge to do their jobs</li> <li>■ Develop and manage partnerships</li> <li>■ Develop and maintain employer relationships</li> <li>■ Provide initial training and orientation for staff and instructors</li> <li>■ Support staff and provide feedback in writing and in one-on-one meetings</li> <li>■ Coordinate with student services</li> <li>■ Establish a communication system</li> <li>■ Require and maintain accurate records of student and staff progress</li> <li>■ Hold regular meetings with staff, partners, and leaders</li> <li>■ Prepare progress reports for leaders, supervisors, funders, and partners</li> <li>■ Inform stakeholders and customers of progress and results</li> <li>■ Raise funds to support the program</li> <li>■ Coordinate with evaluators</li> </ul>
Recruitment and Intake Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide all pre-program activities, including marketing, recruiting, providing information, assessing interest and capacity, and assisting students to select the most appropriate program</li> <li>■ Maintain and distribute up-to-date information/marketing materials</li> <li>■ Respond to inquiries</li> <li>■ Maintain program information</li> <li>■ Hold information sessions</li> <li>■ Administer and analyze assessments</li> <li>■ Assist students in selecting courses and registering</li> </ul>
Career Services Advisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Help students develop and pursue career and learning plans</li> <li>■ Work closely with the placement coordinator (see below)</li> <li>■ Provide information about education and training opportunities, careers, and jobs</li> <li>■ Identify financial aid opportunities for education and training (or make referrals)</li> <li>■ Help students determine which jobs are good steps to careers</li> <li>■ Help interested students explore advanced education/training opportunities</li> <li>■ Establish relationships with relevant educational organizations</li> </ul>

POSITION	RESPONSIBILITIES AND FUNCTIONS
Instructors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Develop, deliver, and continuously improve curriculum and lessons</li> <li>■ Participate in student recruitment</li> <li>■ Support the efforts of all students and evaluate student performance</li> <li>■ Submit reports</li> <li>■ Prepare lesson plans</li> <li>■ Teach courses</li> <li>■ Coordinate experiential learning activities</li> <li>■ Invite outside speakers</li> <li>■ Evaluate performance</li> <li>■ Advise students on progress and recommend steps to solve any issues</li> <li>■ Track attendance and progress</li> </ul>
Learning Coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide tutoring</li> <li>■ Support study groups</li> </ul>
Placement Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Solicit employment and internship opportunities</li> <li>■ Help define qualifications</li> <li>■ Screen students</li> <li>■ Assist students with applications</li> <li>■ Follow up with students and employers</li> <li>■ Research appropriate companies</li> <li>■ Establish contacts with employers and other workforce intermediaries</li> <li>■ Maintain job and internship data</li> <li>■ Assist students with job search and applications</li> <li>■ Help students set long-term employment goals</li> <li>■ Review expectations for specific jobs, employers, and assignments</li> <li>■ Establish manager/supervisor contacts for each internship and placement</li> <li>■ Make regular follow-up calls to the manager/supervisor and the new employee, and respond to their calls and concerns</li> <li>■ Regularly collect employer evaluations</li> <li>■ Communicate with other staff to discuss student issues and opportunities</li> <li>■ Troubleshoot employer recruitment and placement issues</li> <li>■ Coordinate with service coordinators as appropriate</li> </ul>
Case Manager/ Service Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Assist students in resolving non-educational personal issues that affect learning and program completion</li> <li>■ Help students solve problems independently</li> <li>■ Identify need for intervention</li> <li>■ Conduct intake interviews to identify possible barriers to success</li> <li>■ Construct individual service plans with students</li> <li>■ Establish relationships with organizations that offer support services</li> <li>■ Conduct regular conferences with students to discuss progress and identify needs for additional assistance</li> <li>■ Maintain individual case files</li> </ul>



### STAFFING

The orientation workshops should emphasize that the program approach is new and exciting, and show how and why it differs from more traditional methods. Workshops will be most successful if they are highly interactive and participatory. Simulations of key program activities that allow instructors to experience the program from a student's perspective, role play, and solve the range of problems that will inevitably emerge can be very effective.

Figure 14 is an example of a class assignment from a two-week summer training course for adult education instructors in the Workforce Preparation Academy at the City Colleges of Chicago.

### Figure 14: Workforce Preparation Academy Class Assignment

#### Topic: Job Search and Job Applications

Finding an appropriate job and submitting an application for it are complicated endeavors. In order to experience what our students encounter in the job-search process, and to prepare for Thursday's session on job search and job application, please complete the following assignment for Thursday:

- ✓ Find two entry-level jobs for which our ABE/GED or ESL students might apply (preferably in two of the critical skills shortage career areas—healthcare, manufacturing, service, or transportation).
- ✓ Use whatever means you would normally use to find these jobs—Internet, networking, classified ads, “Help Wanted” signs in windows, etc.
- ✓ Complete a hard-copy application for one job.
- ✓ Submit one on-line application for a second job.
- ✓ Bring copies of both applications (if possible; you may not be able to get a copy of the on-line application, but try to get one), as well as the job descriptions or advertisements with you to class on Saturday, October 9.
- ✓ Also bring a list of the steps (1, 2, 3, etc.) that you took to locate the jobs for which you applied and to describe the process you went through to submit the application.
- ✓ Write a paragraph of three (3) to five (5) sentences that describes what you learned as a result of this experience, and bring this to Thursday's class with you, as well.

WPADI  
Application Assignment #1  
Developed by Cynthia A. Barnes, Ph.D.  
City Colleges of Chicago 2004

## PROMOTING, RECRUITING FOR, AND MARKETING THE BRIDGE PROGRAM

This section focuses on positioning bridge programs and developing appealing, stimulating messages about them. It offers points for promoting the program to partners and others, and for recruiting students. When marketing, it is important to let potentially interested audiences know that the bridge program connects students to higher learning and to a career in a manner that is interesting and designed to meet students' needs.

### Promote the Bridge Program

Every interaction about the development and implementation of a bridge program is, in fact, a form of program promotion. Bridge programs need to be “sold” in a number of ways. Initially and throughout the program design and development, the bridge program idea needs to be promoted within the lead institution. The bridge approach is new to many faculty and administrators — it requires many new and different approaches to teaching methodologies, course sequences, student enrollment process, support services for students, and funding. (Resistance within the institution in the early stages of development and implementation is not unusual and makes early and ongoing communication a necessity.)

For many institutions, bridge programs will essentially serve students in a new way that needs to be clearly articulated. Promotion of the bridge program, therefore, needs to be designed to include the following points in a simple one- or two-page document:

- Clear statement of why the organization wants and needs to offer this type of program
- Identification of specific populations who will be served by the program and a description of their needs/challenges
- A definition of the bridge program elements and the departments/divisions responsible for delivering them
- Examples of other successful programs

- A timetable for when the program will begin
- Clear statements of what is required from institutional participants for the program to be successful

Ideally, the promotion activities will encompass the following types of things:

- Individual and small group meetings with senior administrators where all of the above-mentioned points would be covered.
- Identification of key players in the delivery of bridge programs. These individuals need to be brought in early through one-on-one meetings and eventually larger group meetings. Areas for potential inclusion are credit programs, adult education, continuing education, workforce development, contract training, counseling/career services, registration, and financial aid. Again, the elements mentioned above would be covered.
- Meetings with faculty members and academic and support-services departments to acquaint them with the needs of the bridge program students and the institution's desire to move in this direction.
- Regular, brief written updates to keep key people informed about the development of the bridge program.
- Meetings with prospective employer partners and industry associations.
- Feature articles in relevant local (institution) publications.

### Recruit Students to the Bridge Program

Recruitment refers to efforts aimed at potential individual students. The key to determining the depth and breadth of recruitment, and potentially marketing activities, will rest on the program size.

Get in touch with potential students through:

- Presentations and flyers to students who would normally be placed in adult education or developmental education classes

### PROMOTING, RECRUITING FOR, AND MARKETING THE BRIDGE PROGRAM

- Visits by bridge program instructors to adult education classes, including ESL classes, and to developmental classes — face-to-face contact is often the best recruitment device
- Identification of college students who have not yet declared majors
- Use of counselors and others who might provide other types of program information and social services to potentially eligible students
- Information sessions in places where potential students are likely to be found — this might include one-stop career centers, schools, churches, community-based organizations, union halls, etc.; ideally, these sessions would involve and engage faculty members
- Regular contact with unemployment offices, other government agencies, churches, community-based organizations, and community colleges
- Employers whose entry-level workers need additional skills/education to work more effectively and be eligible for promotion
- Other training/education programs that might serve as feeders to the bridge program
- High schools and alternative high school diploma-completion programs

#### Market the Bridge Program

One of the most important early activities in program marketing is to create a name for the program that lets potential students know it is different than other programs. This is where the messaging begins. Examples from the programs profiled at the end of this guide include:

- WAGE Pathways Bridge Program
- Digital Bridge Academy
- College Gateway Program

Other messages that must be delivered through recruitment and marketing channels are:

- Clear statements of how the program will benefit the student and what the student will get as a result of completing it
- Curriculum elements outlined in a simple manner, with graphics, so the student can easily follow the sequence and logic of the coursework
- Specific descriptions of course schedules to let students know there is flexibility
- Availability of support services to help students with some of their most vexing issues, such as transportation and scheduling
- Examples of other students who have completed the same, or similar, programs and are now doing well in a job of their choosing

If it is appropriate, messages should be written in languages other than English to reinforce the point that the program is designed to meet people where they are.

Marketing strategies will ensure that information about the program is communicated broadly. This is primarily required if there is a shortage of qualified students identified during the recruitment process. It is important to design a marketing strategy that will reach the target audience for the program. Potential marketing strategies include:

- The development of brochures and/or flyers that can be mailed, posted in key locations, etc.
- Ads in local papers and on radio
- Feature stories in newspapers and on radio, highlighting the bridge program opportunities and individual success stories

# Bridge Program Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

# Bridge Program Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

Developing a bridge program ideally is itself an evaluative process that seeks to identify the requirements of success for low-skilled adults at the next levels of education and employment, highlight gaps in existing education and employment programs that prevent low-skilled adults from advancing, and modify existing programs and services and add new ones to help bridge the gaps identified.

To evaluate a bridge program, it is essential to continue this process by staying abreast of the requirements for advancement to the next levels of education and employment, tracking how readily participants are in fact advancing, and using this information to modify the programs in ways that improve participants' outcomes.

The following steps will help evaluate and continuously improve the bridge program. The first set of steps involves collecting data needed to gauge the performance of students in a bridge program and track their outcomes when they leave. The second set, under “formative evaluation,” outlines steps for evaluating how well the program is being implemented and how to improve program operations. The steps under “summative evaluation” describe how to tell whether the program is effective. The final, and in many ways the most important, steps involve using the findings from formative and summative evaluations to improve program operation and outcomes over time.

## Data Collection for Tracking Student Program Performance and Outcomes

- Secure informed consent from every participant upon entry to participate in an evaluation of the program. Figure 15, p. 85, presents a sample informed consent form.\*

- Collect data on the demographic characteristics of every participant upon enrollment in the program. The data elements listed in table 5, p. 86, are the minimum set necessary to conduct a summative evaluation of the project. Programs may want to collect other sorts of information on participants based on funding requirements and objectives.
- Collect data on the performance and immediate outcomes of every participant. Table 6, p. 87, lists a recommended set of data elements.

## Formative Evaluation

- Interview participants, instructors, and staff around the midpoint and at the end of each initial program cycle to identify what is working with the program, what is not, and how it can be improved. Every effort should be made to interview participants who drop out to find out why they are leaving and what can be done to prevent attrition in the future.
- Regularly interview participants who have completed the bridge program, employers that have hired them, and faculty and support staff at the next level of education about the strengths and weaknesses of the program and ways it can be improved.
- Examine the performance of the program over time benchmarked against its own historical performance (or that of similar pre-existing programs) in terms of participant retention and completion rates, tested basic skills gains, job-placement rates and wage levels, and rates of advancement to higher levels of education and training.

\*“Informed consent” is a process in which the risks, benefits, and requirements of a research study are explained to persons invited to take part in a study. Before entering the study (in this case, a program evaluation) a participant should sign an informed consent form, which should contain a description of the goals and methods of the study, the risks involved, and the steps that will be taken to protect participants' confidentiality. Participants can elect whether or not to take part in the study. If they opt out, information about them cannot be used.

Figure 15: Sample Informed Consent Form

## PERMISSION TO PARTICIPATE IN AN EVALUATION OF THIS TRAINING PROGRAM

The training program you are in is provided by [NAME OF PROVIDER] with funding from [NAME OF FUNDER(S)]. Both [SHORT NAME OF PROVIDER] and the funding agency(ies) would like to see how effective this program is in helping you and other participants get better jobs and pursue further education and training.

We would like to have your permission to have access to information on your employment, wages, and participation in education and training for use in evaluating this training program. This information is available from state agencies such as the [UNEMPLOYMENT DEPARTMENT AND HIGHER EDUCATION BOARD]. All of the information we collect on you from these agencies will not be shared with anyone else, and no one will ever be able to connect this information with you personally.

You do not have to participate in this evaluation. If you choose not to participate, [NAME OF PROVIDER] cannot use information on you to evaluate the program.

Please read the following statement and then sign and date below if you agree to give [NAME OF PROVIDER] access to information needed to evaluate the program.

I hereby give [NAME OF PROVIDER] permission to use the information I have provided and information collected by state agencies on my employment and further education once I leave this training program. I understand that this information will be used to improve the quality of this program for future students, and that I will not benefit directly. All information about me and my job and education outcomes will be kept strictly confidential and will be used for evaluation purposes only. I understand that I do not have to give this information if I do not want to.

SIGNED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT FULL NAME

**Table 5: Data Elements to Collect on Bridge Participants Upon Program Enrollment**

MEASURE	DATA ELEMENTS
Personal Identifier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Social security number</li> </ul>
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Date of birth</li> </ul>
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Male or female</li> </ul>
Race/Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ White, African-American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, or other</li> </ul>
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Earned high school diploma? (y/n)</li> <li>■ Earned GED? (y/n)</li> <li>■ Previously enrolled in job-training program? (y/n)                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If yes, name of provider, program name, and date enrolled</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Previously enrolled in at least one college-level class (y/n)                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If yes, college name, program (or course) name, and date enrolled</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Recent Work History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Currently employed? (y/n)                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If yes, name of current employer, job title, and one-sentence job description</li> <li>- If yes, hourly wage</li> <li>- If yes, hours per week currently working</li> <li>- Receive health benefits from employer? (y/n)</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Number of months employed in the past 12 months</li> </ul>
Native Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Native language is English? (y/n)</li> </ul>
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Disability that would require special support during the program (y/n)                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If yes, nature of disability</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Education and Career Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Main reason for enrolling in program</li> <li>■ Main goal for employment in the next 12 months</li> <li>■ Main goal for further education (beyond this program) in the next 12 months</li> </ul>
Tested Basic Skills at Entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Test reading and math levels</li> </ul>

**Table 6: Data Elements to Collect on Bridge Participant Performance and Initial Outcomes**

MEASURE	DATA ELEMENTS
Personal Identifier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Social security number</li> </ul>
Start Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Date participant started in program</li> </ul>
Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Participant successfully completed the program (y/n)</li> <li>- If no, reason for leaving the program</li> </ul>
Tested Basic Skills at Completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Test reading and math levels, using the same instrument used upon enrollment</li> </ul>
Job Placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Employed for at least 30 days within 12 months of program completion? (y/n)</li> <li>- If yes, new job held during the program? (y/n)</li> <li>- If yes, start date</li> <li>- If yes, name and address of employer</li> <li>- If yes, job title and one-sentence job description</li> <li>- If yes, hourly wage</li> <li>- If yes, hours worked per week</li> <li>- If yes, receive health benefits? (y/n)</li> </ul>
GED Completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Completed GED? (y/n/NA)</li> </ul>
Certification(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Earned a certification recognized by employers and/or educational institutions? (y/n/NA)</li> <li>- If yes, name of certification and issuing agency</li> </ul>
Further Education and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Enrolled in further education and training within 12 months of program completion? (y/n)</li> <li>- If yes, date enrolled</li> <li>- If yes, name of college or school</li> <li>- If yes, name of program and one-sentence description</li> <li>- If yes, participant's goal for the program</li> </ul>



### Summative Evaluation

- Document the main components of the program being evaluated, including program content, duration, and support services. It is important to accurately describe the eligibility criteria for program entry and the process by which participants are recruited and selected. Describe any major changes in program design made during the course of each cycle. Interview program faculty and staff to better understand the reasons for these changes. (This will make it possible to more accurately compare and contrast outcomes across programs and over time.)
- Analyze the full costs of the program to all partners, including costs for staff, materials and supplies, equipment, and administrative overhead. (“Bridge Program Costs and Funding,” pp. 66–74, discusses costs in detail.)
- Track the further education participation outcomes of leavers (completers and non-completers) from each program level using data from partner institutions, the state, or, if data are not available from those sources, from the National Student Clearinghouse, which collects data on enrollment in undergraduate programs across the country.
- Collect data on employment and earnings of program leavers (completers and non-completers) for at least eight quarters prior to and eight quarters following program participation using unemployment insurance wage records.\*
- Secure data on an appropriate comparison group with which to compare labor-market outcomes of program participants. Use a quasi-experimental design to

compare the labor market (and, if possible, further education) outcomes of pairs of program participants and comparison group members matched statistically based on demographic characteristics (age, gender, race, education, and prior earnings).†

### Continuous Improvement

- Bring together program staff, instructors, and partners to study the data from the formative and summative evaluation activities, discuss what is working and what is not, diagnose the causes of the barriers that prevent participants from succeeding and progressing to the next level, and decide on ways to modify the program to promote participant advancement.
- Track the effectiveness of program modifications in improving outcomes.
- Shift resources (people, money, facilities) to support program strategies that prove effective in supporting participant advancement.
- Start a network of other bridge programs to share lessons learned, best practices, resources and tools, approaches to team development, and so on.

---

\* By law, all employers with employees eligible for unemployment insurance (UI) are required to report to the state the quarterly earnings of every employee they employ in that state. States use this information to calculate unemployment insurance benefits. In most states, the employment security agency is responsible for issuing UI wage data. In most states, providers of education and training (or the state agencies that fund them) can gain access to UI wage data for purposes of evaluating and improving programs if they have the necessary consents from participants and sign a data-sharing agreement with the state agency that collects UI data.

† Hollenbeck and Huang (2003) used this method and data on Employment Service participants as a comparison group to assess the net impact of several workforce training programs in the Washington State workforce system.

# Statewide Bridge Program Support

## Statewide Bridge Program Support

This guide describes how to build a bridge program locally, from the ground up. In addition, state and local policy support of such programs can help individual programs succeed and go to scale. Policy support can take the form of focusing state agency resources on bridge program and career pathway development, funding pilot programs, offering technical assistance, developing evaluation standards, and developing state legislation, among others. This chapter describes statewide implementation efforts under way in four states: Washington, Kentucky, Ohio, and Arkansas.

In Washington State, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) is supporting joint efforts by adult basic skills and occupational technical faculty and staff to build “integrated instruction” programs designed to prepare basic skills students to enter and succeed in occupational certificate and degree programs (see Integrated Instruction Guidelines excerpt on p. 31). The SBCTC is supporting pilots at ten of the system’s 34 colleges with funding from the Federal Perkins and Adult Basic Education (WIA Title II) programs, and the state enrollment formula. (One of these pilot programs, the Child Development Associate Program at Tacoma Community College, is profiled on pp 100–101). The SBCTC staff is tracking both the educational and labor-market outcomes of students in the integrated instruction programs. The staff is also studying the full costs of such programs, which are initially more expensive than regular courses because they are jointly developed and co-taught by basic-skills and occupational faculty, in order to assess the cost-benefit of the integrated approach.

In launching this work, the SBCTC was motivated by a study conducted by the Washington State Training and Education Coordinating Board showing that, by itself, adult basic education has little net impact on students’ wages in the short and long terms, and only a modest impact on rates of employment.<sup>15</sup> However, students who took basic skills courses concurrently with vocational training enjoyed a boost in both quarterly earnings and average rates of employment. A more recent study by the SBCTC showed

that adult students who enter one of Washington State’s community or technical colleges with at most a high school diploma need to take at least one year of college-level courses and earn at least an occupational certificate to achieve a significant earnings advantage over those with a high school education.<sup>16</sup>

The SBCTC has on several occasions convened staff and faculty in adult basic skills, workforce education (called occupational programs in Washington State), and student services from all colleges in its system to discuss how they can work together to support educational and career advancement by students, particularly those who come unprepared for college. The SBCTC has encouraged colleges to link these integration programs and the occupational programs to which they lead to the regional workforce and economic development activities of the state’s “skills panels.” These panels, comprised of representatives from industry, analyze labor-market demand and identify opportunities for career pathways within sectors experiencing high demand. Thus, the SBCTC is seeking to ensure that such integrated bridge instruction leads to careers in the state’s regional labor markets.

The SBCTC is also trying to provide fiscal incentives to create stronger ties between adult basic skills and occupational programs. The SBCTC currently provides funding for integrated instruction under its “WorkFirst” welfare-to-work contracts. The “council” that represents lead staff and faculty from adult basic-skills programs from each college in the system is advocating to the SBCTC and the colleges’ presidents that, in future requests for proposals for Perkins, high-demand job training, and other occupational programs, funding should be set aside for integrated instruction. (For more information, please contact Tina Bloomer, Director, Student Achievement Project, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, (360) 704-4325, [tbloomer@sbctc.ctc.edu](mailto:tbloomer@sbctc.ctc.edu).)

The Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) is encouraging its colleges to develop bridge

programs as part of a larger, system-wide effort to foster the creation of educational pathways to careers in fields of importance to the regions its districts serve. KCTCS has awarded funding to its 16 districts to build career pathways in selected industry sectors. (Madisonville Community College, profiled on pp. 108–109, is one of the districts receiving this funding.) Because KCTCS is emphasizing the potential of career pathways to help low-skilled adults and youth enter and succeed in postsecondary career education, all of the colleges are expected to integrate a remedial bridge component into their career pathways and to ensure that all students in pathways programs receive remediation as needed, whether it is through developmental education or adult basic education. KCTCS is encouraging colleges to involve degree program faculty from both occupational and liberal arts in the career pathway work as well as staff from adult basic skills, developmental education, and non-credit workforce development.

As part of the career pathway work, KCTCS is seeking to develop a feasible way to modularize curricula (and also fractionalize the credit offered) in both bridge and college-level instruction to allow the creation of programs that are responsive to the schedules of working students and the skills needs of employers. Like the staff of the Washington State Community and Technical College System, the KCTCS staff is putting in place a mechanism for evaluating the efficacy of career pathways to enable students to complete credentials, secure jobs in fields related to their training, and pursue further education. A key focus of this evaluation will be on the extent to which students in adult literacy programs are able to advance to and succeed in occupational certificate and degree programs. (For more information, please contact Shauna King-Simms, Director of Adult Education Partnerships and Transitions, Kentucky Community and Technical College System, (859) 256-3301, [shauna.king-simms@kctcs.edu](mailto:shauna.king-simms@kctcs.edu).)

In Ohio, the KnowledgeWorks Foundation is spearheading the development of career pathways as a strategy for addressing the fact that nearly a million working-age adults in the state can be classified as working poor. KnowledgeWorks is using its own funds, supplemented with grants from the Ohio Department of Job and Family

Services and the Governor's Workforce Policy Board, to support the development of career pathway plans by colleges and other partners in 12 regions of the state and the actual implementation of pathways in six of them. (One participating program is the Greater Cincinnati Health Professions Academy, profiled on pp. 106–107.) In promoting the career pathways approach, KnowledgeWorks is seeking to cultivate clear connections among programs within the state community and technical colleges, as well as between these two-year colleges and the state's adult career-technical schools and adult basic literacy programs. The latter two serve individuals who tend to be from poorer families than the average community or technical college student. As it is, few students go on from the adult literacy or career-technical programs to college-level programs at the community and technical colleges.

KnowledgeWorks has organized a stakeholder group comprised of leaders from the various educational sectors, community groups, and employers to advocate for state policies supportive of career pathways. This approach of working both on the ground through the regional planning and implementation efforts and at the state policy level has succeeded in shaping the discussion at the local and state levels about how to promote educational and economic advancement, particularly for disadvantaged youth and adults. (For more information, please contact Brett Visger, Program Director, College and Career Access Program, KnowledgeWorks Foundation, (513) 929-1118, [visgerb@kwfdn.org](mailto:visgerb@kwfdn.org).)

In Arkansas, the Department of Higher Education (ADHE) has recently secured substantial funding from the state's welfare agency to strengthen welfare recipients' access to and success in postsecondary education. The ADHE is promoting the career pathway approach to its community and technical colleges as a promising strategy for helping welfare recipients enter and succeed in college and prepare for careers. Because the focus is on welfare recipients and other low-income individuals, many of whom are unprepared for college, building bridge programs will be a key emphasis of the Arkansas career pathway initiative. This initiative is looking to the bridge development work of Southeastern Arkansas College and the Southern Good Faith Fund, pro-

filed on pp. 112–113. Following the lead of Kentucky and Ohio, the ADHE plans to use TANF funds to better connect existing programs through curriculum development and alignment, coordination of partners, and other capacity-building activities, rather than to create new special programs for TANF clients, which can stigmatize participants and are likely to disappear when the dedicated funding ends. The ADHE is also considering adopting Kentucky’s Ready to Work program model in which counselors are assigned to ensure that TANF clients receive the wrap-around support services they need to complete their programs. (For more information, please contact Doug Miller, Director, Career Pathways, Arkansas Department of Higher Education, (501) 371-2035, [dougml@adhe.arknet.edu](mailto:dougml@adhe.arknet.edu).)

While differing in their particulars, these statewide efforts share the goal of creating better connections and transitions among educational programs and between those programs and the labor market. Each state is promoting the development of bridge programs to provide the critical first steps toward a career pathway for educationally disadvantaged adults. To ensure that these efforts are sustained, the agencies involved are seeking to integrate bridge programs into the mainstream of statewide education and workforce-development practice and to offer more dedicated support tied to established funding streams.

# Program Profiles

## ACCESS COLLEGE EDUCATION

<b>Lead Organization:</b>	Portland Community College Southeast Center, Portland, Oregon
<b>Partners:</b>	Steps to Success Welfare-to-Work program at Portland Community College, WIA Dislocated Worker program, One-Stop Career Centers
<b>Key Features:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Use of student resource specialist to connect students to services</li> <li>■ College credit earned for bridge classes</li> </ul>

Portland Community College's (PCC) Southeast Center developed the Access College Education (ACE) program to increase access to a college education for students who place below the college-entrance level, in part to address the high dropout rate in its developmental education reading and math classes. PCC developed a contextualized curriculum and intensive support model to motivate student learning and to prepare students for college-level work. Students are able to earn college credit for classes taken in this bridge program once they test at the college-entrance level.

### Program Design

ACE integrates the teaching of basic skills, especially math and writing, into career planning, goal-setting, and some soft-skills training. Students develop research, writing, and computer skills in the context of career exploration. For example, for one motivating math exercise, students calculate what they would need to earn to become completely self-supporting. The information gathered in this and other similar life-related tasks culminates in student-generated PowerPoint presentations, many of which include percentages, pie charts, and graphs. The curriculum was developed in-house using a variety of sources.

The program targets current and potential PCC students who fall into four categories: dislocated workers, participants in PCC's Steps to Success Welfare-to-Work program, WIA Title II students who are completing their GED and wish to continue on to college, and college applicants who test too low to enter college. This last group may be recruited through flyers, or referred to ACE by their employers, social service agencies, community groups, and

other organizations in the Portland area that work with this student population. Classes are approximately half white and half people of color (Latino, Asian, and African-American).

In the first term of the program, students earn six institutional credits by enrolling in one reading, one math, and one college-guidance class. In addition, they are required to attend two half-day seminars on topics such as self-esteem and job-search skills. At the end of the first term, students are tested using Compass or Asset. Those whose test scores indicate that their skills have advanced beyond the developmental education level begin to take college classes in the second term. Those who still need to improve their basic skills continue with additional developmental studies, mostly in math and some in writing.

The students in this second developmental ACE term take a four-hour math and a four-hour English class and can earn up to eight additional institutional credits. All ACE students continue to participate in the half-day seminars to strengthen their communication and assertiveness skills and help them learn how to deal with difficult situations and plan for the future. Once students pass the PCC entrance requirements, after either the first or second term, they are able to enroll in a vast array of either lower-division transfer or professional-technical programs.

Students move through the two-term program in a cohort of about 20. Within each cohort, students work collaboratively in small groups. In these cohorts, frequently those with higher skill levels support and mentor those with lower skill levels.

### Support Services

In addition to the coursework and seminars, all ACE students meet with the student resource specialist. The student resource specialist's duties include program outreach and recruitment, providing counseling to help students handle personal crises, connecting students with the college's tutoring center, and connecting students with outside support services. The resource specialist provides this support to all students for their entire stay in the ACE program, whether one or both terms.

The cost to the participants in this program is minimal. Because the courses in the program are college-level and credit-bearing, students qualify for federal financial aid. However, application deadlines may be past by the time students enroll. In that case, students entering ACE through the Welfare-to-Work and Dislocated Worker programs have their tuition paid by these programs, while students who have first completed their GED at PCC are awarded one free college semester; the few students who do not fit in either of these categories are given scholarships, funded by the state grant (see below). During the second ACE term, students generally receive federal financial aid, which can cover tuition.

### Staffing

PCC Southeast Center is a workforce training center that only recently added degree programs. ACE instructors are full-time faculty in writing and math who also teach developmental education and transfer credit courses. The program instructors work individually with students to help them master course content. The program also employs a student resource specialist who works 10 hours per week to help provide the additional support these students need. The program considers the student resource position vital to the program's success.

### Funding

PCC uses state-allocated WIA Title I and Title II incentive money to partially fund the ACE program. The money is used for the student resource specialist, while college operating funds support the full-time faculty instructors. There may be some funding changes in the future due to budget cuts to the college, but the college is committed to continuing to offer the program.

### Outcomes

About half of the first cohort completed the program in one or two terms and entered college courses, either during the second ACE term or after.

### Contact Information

Terri Greenfield  
Dean of Adult and Continuing Education  
Portland Community College  
(503)788-6220  
tgreenfi@pcc.edu



## CAREER PATHWAYS VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR NON-NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS

<b>Lead Organizations:</b>	Portland Community College and Mt. Hood Community College, Portland, Oregon
<b>Partners:</b>	Worksystems, Inc., five one-stop career centers in the Portland metropolitan area, Vocational Rehabilitation, Oregon Employment Department, other WIA partners
<b>Key Features:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Employer involvement in identifying labor-market needs, ongoing curriculum design, and providing internships and jobs</li> <li>■ Close connection with workforce system, especially for referrals and funding</li> </ul>

The Career Pathways Vocational Training for Non-Native English Speakers provides vocational training in entry-level occupations to limited English, non-native speakers at the intermediate level, some with high school diplomas from their native countries. The program offers six skills tracks: healthcare, institutional food service, direct care worker, office skills, entry-level high-tech manufacturing, and welding. Several of these incorporate customer-service skills. Upon program completion, students can secure positions starting at \$7.50 to \$12 an hour.

### Program Design

The program, jointly operated by Portland Community College (PCC) and Mt. Hood Community College (MHCC), provides occupational and technical training taught contextually in English to immigrants primarily from Asia (especially China and Vietnam), Latin America, and Africa. Since the program targets non-native English speakers, all courses incorporate ESL into the curriculum. Most students are unemployed or dislocated workers with access to training unemployment insurance. The Dislocated Worker programs and Adult Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs at five one-stop career centers refer about 60 percent of students. The CASAS entrance requirement varies slightly depending upon the program and is used to test students for English-language proficiency.

All of the six skills programs integrate technical and basic skills and connect all learning to work. The healthcare, institutional food service, direct care, and office skills programs last 14 to 23 weeks, depending on the skills track. Most programs include field trips, unpaid internships of eight to 12 hours per week, and 12 to 20 classroom hours per week, including six hours spent on job-search strategies, one-on-one job-search assistance, and developing customized cover letters and resumes. The high-tech manufacturing program lasts six weeks, meets for 35 hours a week in the classroom, and does not include an internship. The sixth track, welding, lasts 23 weeks, is the only program that provides credit (22 hours), and does not include an internship. Program curricula are available on CD for a shipping and handling fee.

Students have access to a tutoring center and computer lab. All six programs include job-placement services. Most completers secure employment quickly. Those who do not meet in small groups for job-search assistance for 60 days after training.

This program serves 120 to 150 students a year, in eight to 12 classes, with 12 to 15 students per class. Some classes are offered at PCC and others at MHCC. PCC and MHCC also offer other career-pathway bridge trainings that do not target non-native English speakers.

### Staffing

The PCC/MHCC Career Pathways Training Team includes a full-time education coordinator, a full-time employment specialist, a part-time office assistant, a part-time director, and a part-time education coordinator. Part-time trainers teach occupational and technical skills, and part-time training assistants provide small-group supports for job search and computer skills.

### Role of Employers

Program staff interviews employers to identify entry-level requirements and state requirements, identify skills requirements for curriculum development, and establish parameters for internships and jobs.

### Partners

PCC and MHCC jointly operate the training. Worksystems, Inc., the Local Workforce Investment Board, provides funding. WIA partners, including the five one-stop career centers, the Employment Department, Housing Authority of Portland, and Vocational Rehabilitation, provide outreach and referral to the training. PCC operates two and MHCC operates one of the one-stop career centers.

### Program Development

Manufacturing layoffs beginning in 1998 hit immigrants in production-line positions particularly hard because it was difficult to secure new employment with their limited skills and limited English. Around this time, Kaiser-Permanente and then later three other medical facilities (Legacy, Emmanuel, and Providence) approached MHCC about preparing people for pharmacy packager jobs, which they were having trouble filling. Soon this program expanded from one department and one occupation to more than 60 employers and several occupations. PCC/MHCC continues to expand and adapt the programming to meet the current needs of employers.

The latest program, direct caregiver, took about six months to get off the ground, requiring approval for the curriculum and hiring technical, ESL job readiness, and workplace basics skills trainers. After each program is piloted, PCC/MHCC modifies the curriculum. The direct caregiver position at an assisted-living facility leads to medication aide, activities coordinator, and eventually to CNA.

### Funding

Worksystems, Inc., the local Workforce Investment Board, provides funding through WIA Title I-B funds. The program also has a grant from the Governor's Employer Workforce Fund and is developing career pathway roadmaps for all of these ESL and vocational trainings, which will be Web-based and available in early 2006.

### Outcomes

In fiscal year 2003-2004, 146 students enrolled in the Vocational Training for Non-Native English Speakers programs, 144 completed, four continued with further education, and 123 were placed in jobs (83 percent). In fiscal year 2002-2003, 163 students enrolled, 133 completed, six continued with further education, and 96 were placed in jobs (72 percent).

### Contact Information

Mimi Maduro  
Workforce Development Director  
Portland Community College – Extended Learning Campus  
(503) 788-6209  
mmaduro@pcc.edu  
www.pcc.edu/cp

Kelli Walker  
Assistant Director  
Mt. Hood Community College – Workforce Connection  
(503) 252-0758  
walkerk@mhcc.edu

## CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN SKILLED TRADES AND INDUSTRIES

<b>Lead Organization:</b>	The Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
<b>Partners:</b>	Program-related employers, labor unions, M-Trans, BIG STEP pre-apprenticeship program, training providers, nonprofit organizations
<b>Key Features:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Employer and labor union demand for qualified and diverse candidate pool drives program development</li> <li>■ Lead organization is a workforce intermediary jointly governed by business and labor</li> </ul>

The Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership (WRTP), a nonprofit membership organization of employers, unions, and other organizations whose mission is to maintain family-sustaining jobs in the Milwaukee area, founded the Center of Excellence in Skilled Trades and Industries in 2004 to develop a more skilled workforce in manufacturing and construction in the Milwaukee area. WRTP worked with employers, labor unions, educational institutions, and philanthropic organizations to develop the Center of Excellence to bring WRTP's widely recognized manufacturing model to scale in Milwaukee's central city. In addition, WRTP has expanded its efforts to include a wide range of target industries, including healthcare and service, and plans to open more Centers of Excellence to work with even more industries.

### Program Design

The Center of Excellence in Skilled Trades and Industries develops programs to address skill shortages identified by local employers and labor unions. The demand-driven programs expand employment and advancement opportunities for community residents, upgrade the skills of incumbent workers, and help employers and unions recruit and retain qualified job candidates while building a more diverse workforce. The programs prepare low-income, unemployed, and younger workers for careers in a variety of manufacturing industries and construction trades.

To develop a training program for a particular skill area, the Center begins with a needs assessment to identify a target

industry's occupational career ladder, job openings, job requirements, and the demographics of the current workforce. The Center also secures hiring commitments from those employers who pay higher wages and offer benefits. The Center then establishes a steering committee for the trade or industry that is jointly composed of employers and labor to design a program to meet the target industry's skill shortage. The steering committee develops a charter specifying the mission and governance of the partnership and then helps to assess the specific skills required for the identified job openings. This set of skills is used as the basis for designing a pre-employment certificate-training program for that industry. The Center then works with an appropriate local technical college, such as the Milwaukee Area and Waukesha County technical colleges, apprenticeship training center, or other training provider, or the training centers and trust funds of the carpenters, electrical workers, laborers, operating engineers, or other trades, to develop the curriculum. The committee reviews the curriculum, which includes basic skills contextualized for the targeted occupation, and approves the certificate as a qualification for hiring. Where applicable, certificates are also designed to meet state certification requirements.

Potential trainees include apprenticeship candidates, dislocated workers, graduates of other training and tutoring programs, students from local high schools and technical colleges, and other job seekers. Applicants are referred by public agencies, employers, unions, and community

organizations, including the Milwaukee Urban League, Spotted Eagle, UMOS, Word of Hope, and YWCA. These and other nonprofit partners then conduct a pre-screening and the Center TABE-tests and interviews applicants, and provides an orientation. Depending on skills level and qualifications, applicants are then placed in one of four tracks: direct job placement; referral to the Business-Industry-Group Skilled Trades Employment Program (BIG STEP), a building and construction trades apprenticeship preparation program that requires eighth-grade skills and access to transportation; referral to one of the Center's pre-employment certificate programs, which require sixth- to eighth-grade skills and last about 160 hours; or referral back to the community organizations for support services and, for those with skills below the sixth-grade level, basic skills development.

The Center currently offers:

- Entry-Level Construction Skills Certificate
- M-Trans Road Construction Certificate
- Sewer and Water Construction Certificate
- Utility Construction Certificate
- Entry-Level Manufacturing Skills Program
- Environmental Remediation Training Program

Those students who complete a pre-employment certificate program and demonstrate the required skills are eligible for the identified job openings. In the case of industries that use hiring halls, unions and employers have agreed to give hiring priority to individuals holding certificates. Nearly 150 Center pre-employment training participants were placed in laborer, utility, and other construction jobs in 2004, with an average starting wage of \$15.80 an hour plus benefits.

### Partners

The Center partners with employers, labor unions, training providers, and community-based organizations to design and deliver the pre-employment programs. These partners vary depending on the targeted industry, and include representatives from Associated General Contractors, Harley-Davidson, SBC, VA Medical Center, and We

Energies, as appropriate. The WRTP Board of Directors is involved in the design of these programs, and includes the heads of the Milwaukee Building Trades Council and the Milwaukee County Labor Council, representatives of individual labor unions, and employers from manufacturing, construction, and healthcare institutions. In particular, the Associated General Contractors, which has a member on the WRTP Board, offers the BIG STEP apprenticeship preparation program and is a Center partner.

### Role of Employers and Labor

The Center partners with labor and employers to develop the pre-employment certificate programs. The development of the Utility Construction Certificate Program (UCCP) illustrates how this works. This pre-employment training certificate is the first formal job-training system for this trade. A person entering this career pathway generally begins as a groundsman (essentially a helper), moves up to an equipment operator, and then to a line mechanic. In the past, there were no specific requirements for a person to move from groundsman to equipment operator. The UCCP is now recognized as the entry-level credential for the equipment operator position by both labor and employer partners. Those who want to become line mechanics can enter BIG STEP.

### Funding

Funding for the Center of Excellence comes from foundations (24 percent), Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (23 percent), the Department of Transportation (11 percent), the private sector (11 percent), the City of Milwaukee and the United Way (seven percent each), and the workforce development system (six percent). The Center's annual budget exceeds \$1 million.

### Contact Information

Eric Parker  
Executive Director  
Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership  
(414) 217-3158  
eparker@wrtp.org.  
[www.wrtp.org/pdf/CtrOfExcelBroc.pdf](http://www.wrtp.org/pdf/CtrOfExcelBroc.pdf)

## CHILD DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE PROGRAM

<b>Lead Organization:</b>	Tacoma Community College, Tacoma, Washington
<b>Partners:</b>	Tacoma Community College Division of Workforce/Basic Skills and Division of Continuing Education, Tacoma Public Schools, local child-care providers
<b>Key Features:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Two college divisions developed and implement program together</li> <li>■ Employers provide internships and employment opportunities and participate on program advisory board</li> <li>■ Program is first step on Early Childhood Education career pathway</li> </ul>

The Tacoma Community College Child Development Associate program prepares people with very low basic skills to secure the Child Development Associate (CDA), an industry-recognized credential, and to enter a one-year paraeducator certificate program or a two-year associate of applied science (AAS) degree program. The CDA is a national accreditation and targets a high-demand occupation — there are not enough certified child development associates in Tacoma to meet the need. CDA is one of the educational requirements of state licensing for program supervisors in child care centers. This program has an active advisory board, which includes representatives from large human service agencies, a private-sector child care center, and the public schools. Board members assist in recruiting students from among their own employees and help place students who need new jobs.

### Program Design

Most students are non-native English speakers with native languages of Spanish, Cambodian, Russian, Korean, Thai, Vietnamese, and Farsi. Some test as low as level 3 or 4 on the CASAS test. Many worked with young children in their home countries, and some are employed by agencies represented on the program's advisory board.

The program is marketed primarily through word-of-mouth, ESL classes, and mailings to community agencies,

and the college currently has more applicants than capacity to serve them. The intake process includes the CASAS test and an interview that helps students to assess their own goals and skill levels. Interested students attend an orientation that emphasizes the required time commitment and helps students to determine whether the program is right for them.

The program combines ABE and ESL instruction with the required early childhood coursework to prepare students for the CDA credential examination process. The overall CDA program of three non-sequential quarters and an optional fourth takes nine months to one year to complete. The fourth quarter is used to help organize application materials and to help prepare students for written and oral examinations. Students can begin the program in any quarter. Because most students work during the day, the program meets three evenings per week.

In addition to the three-quarter program, students take a 20-hour basic training, which is an introduction to caring for young children, and they take CPR and first aid, which are state requirements for all child care providers. The Child Development Associate curriculum includes concepts of child development, safety and health, social and emotional development, and basic skills, which is contextualized and team-taught by vocational and basic skills instructors.

Students must also complete 420 hours of documented work experience in a state-licensed facility, Head Start, or Early Childhood Education Assistance Program (ECEAP) program. Program instructors visit and evaluate the students on these jobs. Some of these positions are paid. For students wishing to pursue further education, the CDA program provides nine credits that transfer to the paraeducator certificate or paraeducator/ECE AAS degree program at Tacoma Community College.

Overall, the program is designed to help students increase their incomes to at least \$9.50 an hour, prepare them for greater job responsibility as they learn English, qualify some for employment in public schools as bilingual teacher aides (although beginning in 2006, this will become more difficult because the law will change to require an AA degree to be a teacher aide), prepare them to pass the national test for certification, and expose students to the potential of starting their own facility. The program enrolled 13 students in the first cohort, six in the second, and six more in the third, with another 10 students on the waiting list for fall 2005.

### Program Development

The college identified an appropriate existing training program, the CDA, that would respond to both industry need and the interests of students. The CDA curriculum was based on the Essentials for Child Development Associates coursework, a competency-based curriculum developed by the Council for Professional Recognition.\* Program development began with a series of meetings between Continuing Education and Workforce/Basic Skills, at which they each clarified their roles in program development and implementation. Program administrators and division deans worked on the proposal for funding, and faculty from both divisions developed the basic skills and contextualized ESL as bridge components. The faculty used the national certification standards in developing the curriculum, which required teamwork between the basic skills and vocational instructors. The state provided technical assistance in

developing the curriculum and helped to facilitate a learning community with other pilot programs, where meetings with staff from the other state-funded pilot programs enabled them to share lessons learned and best practices.

### Funding

A one-year grant awarded by Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Demonstration Project (I-BEST), which has been extended for an additional year, covers some tuition and the cost of exams, books, fees, and instructional costs. Perkins funding and college operating funds are used to support curriculum development and coordination between the two college divisions, as well as time for program instructors to conduct site visits and evaluations for students during the structured work experience. In addition, college operating funds supported administrative time and effort for planning and development. Program staff are also trying to secure funds for intensive intake support and for assistance with identifying financial aid for students.

### Contact Information

Kim Ward  
 Director, Basic Skills  
 Tacoma Community College  
 (253) 566-6048  
 kward@tacomacc.edu  
 www.tacomacc.edu/schedule/abe.shtm

\*www.cdacouncil.org

## COLLEGE GATEWAY PROGRAM

<b>Lead Organizations:</b>	Skyline College Center for Workforce Development, San Bruno, California; the San Mateo County Workforce Investment Board; and Cañada College, Redwood City, California
<b>Partners:</b>	One East Palo Alto, Opportunities Industrial Centers West, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Walter S. Johnson Foundation, State of California Career Ladders Project, Gruber & Pereira Associates
<b>Key Features:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Public/private partnership among colleges, workforce system, community-based organizations, and two foundations</li> <li>■ Prepares low-skilled individuals for college-level work in biosciences and allied health</li> <li>■ Career exploration is integral part of contextualized curriculum</li> </ul>

The College Gateway program prepares under- and unemployed adults and transitioning foster youth for education programs in allied health and biosciences. Offered by both Skyline College and Cañada College, it helps people who are not prepared for college-level courses to navigate up the educational and employment ladder by offering contextualized basic skills training and career planning. Completers may continue on to pursue a certificate program or an associate of arts degree and prepare for transfer to a four-year university. Students completing certificate programs are prepared for employment in high-growth job sectors like allied health and life sciences.

### Program Design

Opportunities Industrial Centers West (OICW), a local community-based organization, conducts the screening intake and assessments for the Gateway program. OICW uses Accuplacer to assess English and math levels. Successful candidates then complete the community college placement tests to ensure accurate placement. Applicants can place one to two levels below college English and math to participate in the program.

The Gateway program consists of 12 to 14 weeks of intensive contextualized basic skills preparation in English and math, along with life counseling and career planning. The curriculum consists of four courses: 1) Math, a basic skills class that leads to elementary algebra, a requirement for allied health programs; 2) English and Reading, one level below transfer level, contextualized to familiarize students with the allied health field; 3) Learning Skills, individual or small group instruction by tutors or instructional aides to help in English, reading, and math; includes computer-assisted learning programs and online tutorials; and 4) Career Preparation, self-assessment, career exploration, and job-seeking strategies, in which students explore the career-planning process and gather information about their interests, personality type, and values. The information helps students determine their career options, make decisions and plans, write resumes, and prepare for interviews. Students create, present to the class, and submit a final career-related project.

Students in the Gateway program earn 12 to 14 units of college credit, which establishes their full-time status. As a result, students can apply for financial aid, including Pell grants.

Instructors employ a team approach, working with each other and all of the program core staff, including administrators and support people, to discuss the progress of students and the effectiveness of the program, share information, identify issues, and work on solutions.

### Partners

The Gateway program is a public/private partnership involving the two community colleges and the workforce, nonprofit, and foundation communities. Each institution takes leadership in the areas of its specialty. Skyline College develops and implements the curriculum, coordinates the faculty activity, coordinates and provides educational student support services, designs and implements program elements, evaluates the effectiveness of the program, and supports the participation of its sister college, Cañada College. OICW, which is located closer to the targeted population, houses the location for classes for the Cañada College cohort, taught by Cañada instructors. The Workforce Investment Board (WIB) contracts with the colleges, helps fund the programs, and identifies funding streams to support it. The community-based organizations, OICW and One East Palo Alto, offer outreach, communication, and support services. Employers are integral to the success of the career programs that students enter as a result of the Gateway Program. All the program partners were involved in the development of the program.

The program also built internal partnerships by convening college faculty in the biology department and presenting the program idea to the Academic Senate at Skyline College. The project leader addressed initial faculty concerns about the program and invited interested faculty to participate in its design and to teach the classes.

### Program Development

The Gateway program grew out of three initiatives. The first is a program to retrain dislocated airport workers for jobs in the biotechnology industry, which was offered by the San Mateo County WIB. Program developers adapted Skyline's bioscience curriculum to fit the career pathways approach and the needs of dislocated workers. Program

entry was highly competitive, and program developers discovered that many of those interested in this program did not have the tenth-grade-level math and reading skills required. The second is the Hewlett Foundation's Earn Initiative, an employment program targeting Palo Alto, which realized it could be more effective if it incorporated for-credit education, a suggestion of the Vice President of Instruction at Skyline College who chairs the foundation's Workforce Development subcommittee. The third initiative is the State of California's Career Ladders Project, which convened several WIBs, colleges, and community-based organizations to encourage them to offer for-credit instruction to disadvantaged 18- to 24-year-olds to prepare them for employment and further education. It took program partners about nine months to move from initial discussion to the start of classes.

### Funding

The Walter S. Johnson Foundation, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the San Mateo County Workforce Investment Board (using WIA governor's discretionary dollars), Skyline College, and Cañada College fund the Gateway program.

### Outcomes

Two college cohorts have completed thus far, in June and August 2005. They had a combined enrollment of 45 students, with an 82 percent completion rate. Of the Skyline cohort, seven students entered the bio-manufacturing program and 13 students are working toward an associate of arts degree. Of the Cañada cohort, 13 students are continuing in general education and four are continuing in a variety of programs. Two additional cohorts are slated for Skyline in the spring of 2006.

### Contact Information

Regina Stanback-Stroud  
Vice President of Instruction  
Skyline College  
(650) 738-4321  
stroudr@smccd.net  
www.skylinecollege.edu/workforce



## ESSENTIAL SKILLS PROGRAM

<b>Lead Organization:</b>	Community College of Denver Center for Learning Outreach, Denver, Colorado
<b>Partners:</b>	Denver Office of Economic Development Division of Workforce Development, Denver Department of Human Services, employers, community-based organizations
<b>Key Features:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Employer involvement in identifying labor-market needs, ongoing curriculum design, and providing internships and jobs</li> <li>■ Program results in credit-bearing vocational certificate</li> <li>■ Paid internship acclimates students to the world of work</li> </ul>

The Essential Skills Program (ESP) is a multi-occupational vocational certificate program that began by serving low-income individuals with dependent children and people transitioning from welfare to work and is now offered to the general population. It prepares participants for jobs in high-demand occupations, which currently include medical clerical, accounting, financial services, business services, information technology, and early childhood education, and it articulates to the next educational level. The program emphasizes building skills in the transactional environment of the world of work through group discussion, peer support, case management, internships, and post-employment support.

### Program Design

Most applicants find out about ESP and enter the program through a Community College of Denver (CCD) recruiter housed at the Denver Department of Human Services who pre-screens and TABE-tests applicants. Those who are interested in the program and meet the seventh-grade literacy requirement are referred to the CCD campuses for enrollment in ESP. CCD staff, called individual track coordinators, conduct industry-focused literacy and life-skills assessments and review students' employment history. Students who do not have a high school diploma or a GED must co-enroll in a GED program.

The five-month program has three components: 1) workplace core, 2) vocational core, and 3) full-time, unsubsidized employment. The workplace core is completed in the first month of the program. Students participate full-time in a combination of work-readiness activities and vocational training specific to each of the six occupational tracks. Also included in this phase are GED preparation (when needed), case management, and resource referrals.

The vocational core is a two- to three-month period of contextualized classroom instruction, specialized to the selected occupation, combined with a paid internship. Students are in class two days a week and serve their internships three days a week. Internships are credit-bearing and count toward a degree if the student stays in the same vocational area. Case management during this period shifts from a focus on personal issues to professional behavior and expectations in the workplace. This component also offers transition skills training, such as financial planning and individual education plans for progression to standard community college offerings. It ends with placement in unsubsidized employment. Students who complete the workplace and vocational cores earn an Essential Skills Certificate in their chosen occupation and 16 to 17 college credits. Each of the Essential Skills Certificates is the first step on an educational ladder that leads to better positions

in their fields. For example, a person with an Early Childhood Education Essential Skills Certificate can move up to a Group Leader position, earn a Director Certification, and then an associate degree.

The final component lasts a full year after placement in full-time employment and offers retention services through traditional case management, job coaching, and referral to appropriate support services.

### Staffing

The program has one coordinator for each career track, a case manager who refers people to outside support services, two full-time and one part-time job developer, instructors, and a program director.

### Role of Employers

Employers provide resources to enhance the program, offer expertise on workplace competencies, consult on curriculum design, provide internship opportunities, hire program graduates, and provide CCD staff feedback on new-hire performance. Employers also help the program stay abreast of labor-market information, since standard data are generally six months out of date. Business partners for medical clerical occupations include Denver Health Medical Center, Exempla Hospital, Planned Parenthood, Kindred Hospital, and Bright Eyes Optometrist Center. Employer partners in business services include Center for Financial Education, Public Service Credit Union, Denver Community Federal Credit Union, Glendale Police Department, and Denver Division of Workforce Development. Early childhood education employer partners include Denver Public Schools, Hope Center, YMCA, Clayton Foundation, Catholic Charities, and the Community College of Denver.

### Partners

The one-stop career centers administer all employment and training contracts for Denver's TANF and low-income participants and serve as the primary government partner. The second key partner is the Denver Department of Human Services, which works with ESP on recruitment and case management. In addition, ESP works with several local community-based organizations that provide additional resources for emergency and long-term issues, such as housing, financial planning, legal issues, and mental health services.

### Funding

The Denver Division of Workforce Development contracts with ESP to provide program staff and to pay wages for the internships, using TANF funds. In Colorado, internship wages are set at the going entry-level wage of the employer (for example, \$10 an hour for 24 hours a week, which meets 200 percent of the poverty level if the person has two children).

### Outcomes

The program has 1,000 completers to date, and 35 percent of program completers have gone beyond the certificate into college. Job placement varies between 80 and 95 percent, depending on the labor market. About half of the students who co-enroll in the GED program pass the exam. This program meets the TANF participation rate with a program retention rate of 125 percent of the TANF goal and meets the TANF work requirement with the internship.

### Contact Information

Elaine Baker  
 Director of Workforce Initiatives  
 Center for Learning Outreach  
 Community College of Denver  
 (303) 226-5560  
 elaine.baker@ccd.edu

## GREATER CINCINNATI HEALTH PROFESSIONS ACADEMY

<b>Lead Organization:</b>	Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center, Cincinnati, Ohio
<b>Partners:</b>	Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development Adult Workforce Division, Cincinnati State Technical and Community College, The Health Alliance of Greater Cincinnati, City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County One-Stop Career Center, Greater Cincinnati Health Council, Mercy Connections, Cincinnati Dress for Success, and the Greater Cincinnati Tech Prep Consortium
<b>Key Features:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Employers actively involved in creating, building, managing, supporting, and delivering program</li> <li>■ Multiple points of entry and exit</li> <li>■ Career coaches help students negotiate pathways and provide support</li> </ul>

The Greater Cincinnati Health Professions Academy is a collaboration of healthcare employers, educators, the workforce investment system, and community agencies that is designed to: 1) provide access to healthcare careers for unemployed and underemployed individuals, low-wage incumbent workers, displaced workers, recent immigrants, and people with disabilities; 2) alleviate regional healthcare workforce shortages; and 3) increase the diversity of the healthcare workforce in Greater Cincinnati.

### Program Design

The Academy’s “multi-entry, multi-exit” system enables applicants to enter specific programs at different levels based on their interest and capacity and to advance along different tracks in healthcare careers. The Academy draws applicants both from the community and from among incumbent low-skilled hospital employees. Career coaches assist individuals to identify and pursue their own goals for healthcare advancement, whether becoming a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) or LPN, or pursuing an associate degree. There is no “correct” pathway—each pathway is designed by the individual.

Once students identify their goals, they take a program-specific placement test, and if they do not place into the program immediately, the career coaches identify steps to reach the entry level. For instance, if a person’s goal is a CNA and she tests below a ninth-grade level in reading and math, she

may enter a GED program or the 80-hour Adult Basic Literacy Exam (ABLE) course, which offers contextualized basic skills in healthcare. CNA or Unit Clerk applicants who test at or above the ninth grade or complete the remedial program begin the CNA or Unit Clerk program. Both courses include a three-week employability skills component. Upon completion of the CNA course, the student takes the certification exam to become a state-certified nursing assistant. Unit Clerk program credits are transferable to any of the associate degree programs at Cincinnati State Technical and Community College. After completing either of these programs, most people will secure employment or move to better positions, and some will wish to continue into the multi-comp degree program described below.

LPN applicants take the WorkKeys test. Those who do not pass level 4 reading and level 5 math are referred to the pre-nursing course, which is a contextualized developmental course, and retest upon completion. Successful participants can then enter the LPN program and are able to work while enrolled. LPN completers can continue on to an AA in Nursing offered by Cincinnati State, with LPN credits applying toward this degree.

The Academy has partnered with Cincinnati State in building a “multi-comp” degree program in clinical, clerical, diagnostic, and information technology occupations. Uniquely, the core courses that are common to all the

occupations may be taken at the Academy, with the hospitals providing the clinicals. Students may then pursue a specialty at Cincinnati State.

### Support Services

The Academy employs two career coaches (one funded by Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and the other by Cincinnati State) to guide students through the program. They begin with vocational, educational, and personal assessments to help place the students in appropriate programs and determine their need for support services. The career coaches then provide career guidance and planning, life-skills training, placement assistance, and retention support for a full year after employment.

### Role of Employers

Employers were actively involved in creating and developing the Academy. Participating employers provide curricula input, clinicals, equipment and space, program oversight, job placement, and funding for a career advisor. They also provide tuition reimbursement and, in some cases, pre-pay tuition so upfront costs will not be a barrier to employee participation.

### Partners

The primary Academy partners now include:

- Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development Adult Workforce Division, which is the fiscal agent and provides career development, workforce development, and economic development
- Cincinnati State Technical and Community College
- Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center
- The Health Alliance of Greater Cincinnati, a group of six hospitals and multiple physicians' practices
- City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County One-Stop, which recruits students and provides tuition assistance
- The Greater Cincinnati Health Council, a nonprofit member service organization that provides an industry-wide presence, critical workforce data, and community outreach
- Mercy Connections, Cincinnati Dress for Success, and the Greater Cincinnati Tech Prep Consortium, which are all community-based organizations

### Program Development

In 2003 the Academy emerged out of an existing partnership of Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and the Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development, a public nonprofit provider that offers adult career technical courses, to address a severe shortage of qualified healthcare workers. The partnership expanded its Project SEARCH Healthcare Training program, a vocational training program for TANF recipients and individuals with disabilities, to include hospital employees in low-wage, low-skills occupations, and it developed a course to bridge to credit-based programs in healthcare. The Health Alliance, a hospital system, and Cincinnati State then joined as partners, and the Academy began meeting regularly to formalize the partnership, further define and enhance educational programs, and reach out to a larger target audience.

### Funding

Sources of funds include contracts for Workforce Investment Act, Vocational Education, Empowerment Zone, and State of Ohio funding; employer-paid tuition; and a planning grant from the KnowledgeWorks Foundation. Industry provides significant contributions through tuition reimbursement for incumbent workers, subsidies for 50 percent of the Academy space, supervisors for clinicals, and career coaches. Using partners' existing services also leverages funds. In addition, the Academy is considering requiring a placement fee for employers.

### Outcomes

The Academy tracks completers for one year after graduation, analyzing key indicators such as job placement, certifications and licenses acquired, wage gains, and employment retention and advancement. All 18 of last year's LPN graduates are now working. In 2005, the Unit Clerk and state-tested Nursing Assistant classes graduated 80 people, and 56 are currently working. An additional four people have gone on to another level of education. The remaining 20 people are still working with the job developer.

### Contact Information

Erin Riehle

A Managing Partner of the Health Professions Academy and Director of Project Search

(513) 636-8729

Erin.Riehle@cchmc.org

## MADISONVILLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE CAREER PATHWAYS

<b>Lead Organization:</b>	Madisonville Community College, Madisonville, Kentucky
<b>Partners:</b>	Madisonville Community College Adult Centers for Educational Excellence, Madisonville Community College Nursing Department, The Trover Foundation/Regional Medical Center, the West Kentucky Workforce Investment Board
<b>Key Features:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Flexible weekend and evening schedules for working CNA and LPN students</li> <li>■ Individualized one-to-one and small-group tutoring support</li> <li>■ WIA-funded paid work experience for those who qualify</li> </ul>

The Madisonville Community College Career Pathways program provides academic support for weekend and evening students in Madisonville Community College's CNA, LPN, and two-year RN/ADN programs. In addition, the program provides academic assistance to students who are preparing to "bridge" into a Nursing Assistant program or to a higher level of nursing education. An articulation agreement with Murray State University allows LPN students to transfer credits toward its bachelor of nursing degree.

### Program Design

Madisonville Career Pathways provides individualized one-on-one and small-group tutoring to help individuals who wish to enter Madisonville Community College's CNA, LPN, or RN programs, existing students who need additional academic support, and students who are trying to move from one rung to the next in the nursing career ladder. Instead of an established curriculum, the one instructor and two LPN and two RN tutors work with students on their problem areas, especially to prepare them for the nurse entrance test and the later RN test. The instructor and tutors help students with their class work and prepare additional materials as needed, such as math problems contextualized to the appropriate nursing program level. The key component is responding to students' specific needs, which can include basic math and reading, the content of a neurology chapter, preparation for examinations, time

management, or goal setting. Students who are very far behind are placed in adult education developmental courses.

Two program enhancements are available to qualifying CNA students, both funded through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The You Make A Difference CNA program pays for tuition, uniforms, books, supplies, and certification fees for 15 CNA students per year. The Workforce Connections program offers a three-day employability skills workshop and then places graduates of the CNA program in subsidized work experience positions at the Trover Foundation/Regional Medical Center, area nursing homes, and physicians' offices, with WIA funds paying their first 500 hours of salary. About 80 percent of Workforce Connections participants receive an offer for a permanent job with their subsidized employer. Both WIA programs target 19- to 21-year-olds with barriers to employment, such as being a single parent, having a criminal record, and/or having an income less than \$9,300 per year.

### Partners

Two divisions of Madisonville Community College (MCC), the Adult Centers for Educational Excellence (the adult education program) and the Nursing Department, work closely to offer this program. Other partners include the West Kentucky Workforce Investment Board, which provides financial and other assistance and paid work

experience for eligible CNA students, and the Trover Foundation/Regional Medical Center, which provides weekend and evening tutoring space in its library. Madisonville Career Pathways also benefits from the knowledge of the MCC Nursing Advisory Board, which includes the chairman of the MCC Nursing Division and representatives of local hospitals.

### **Program Development**

To meet the needs of working students, the MCC Nursing Department began offering weekend RN classes in fall 2001 and weekend LPN and evening CNA classes in January 2004. Although the pieces of the career pathway were in place, they needed a way to help students move from one rung to the next, that is, for individuals with a high school credential to enter the CNA program and for CNAs and others to progress up the career ladder. In December 2004, the MCC Adult Centers for Educational Excellence applied for and won state Career Pathways funding to provide academic support services for these weekend and evening students and for other students who are either at risk of dropping out or who want to advance in nursing careers. These efforts connected with an existing project, the Department of Nursing's Nurse Mobility Project, an outreach effort to recruit low-income individuals in the general population to the CNA program and to recruit CNAs at long-term care facilities and hospitals to the LPN program. This project is funded by a Health Resources and Services Association (HRSA) grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Its outreach effort informs working adults of the academic support services available through the Career Pathways program.

### **Funding**

The Madisonville Career Pathways program is funded under a two-year grant from the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, which provides funding to support innovative approaches to developing career pathways in its 16 districts. In addition, the West Kentucky Workforce Investment Board pays for tuition, uniforms, books, supplies, and certification fees and subsidizes work experience for eligible individuals. Madisonville Community College contributes the learning lab, nursing software for remediation, and equipment.

### **Contact Information**

Cris Crowley  
Director of Adult Education  
Madisonville Community College  
(270) 824-1818  
cris.crowley@kctcs.edu

## MANUFACTURING TECHNOLOGY BRIDGE

<b>Lead Organization:</b>	Instituto del Progreso Latino, Chicago, Illinois
<b>Partners:</b>	West Side Technical Institute (part of Richard J. Daley College, one of the City Colleges of Chicago), University of Illinois at Chicago Great Cities Institute, the Tooling and Manufacturing Association, its member companies, and other manufacturers
<b>Key Features:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Vocational ESL pre-bridge serves as feeder to higher-level bridge</li> <li>■ Program offered by a community-based organization and connected to an educational and career pathway</li> <li>■ Provides bilingual instruction in technical fundamentals of manufacturing</li> </ul>

Instituto del Progreso Latino, a community organization in Chicago's Latino Pilsen neighborhood, created the Manufacturing Technology Bridge program to enable Latinos who have been laid off from low-skilled manufacturing jobs and others stuck in low-wage service jobs to advance to better paying entry-level skilled manufacturing jobs and community college certificate programs in manufacturing technology. These entry-level jobs start at \$9 to \$12 per hour plus benefits, while an advanced certificate from a community college qualifies workers for skilled trades positions that start at \$12 per hour and are in even greater demand by employers.

### Program Design

Individuals wishing to enter the Manufacturing Bridge program take the TABE test, or CASAS for monolingual Spanish speakers, to assess reading and math levels. Those testing eighth grade and higher can begin the Manufacturing Bridge, while others begin the vocational ESL pre-bridge program. An extensive intake interview helps program applicants explore different career possibilities, focusing on transferable skills, resolving personal barriers to employment, and determining the education and training needed to pursue their chosen career paths.

Two 14-week sessions of vocational ESL pre-bridge provide instruction in job-related conversation, technical vocabulary,

job-related reading, and words and phrases that explain job processes and can help individuals resolve problems on the job. At this level Instituto also offers instruction in basic computer skills and basic math, stressing measurement skills. Completers may enter the Manufacturing Technology Bridge program.

The Manufacturing Bridge curriculum consists of technical literacy modules in applied mathematics, computer applications, and workplace communication, and technical specialty modules in blueprint reading and machining. Instruction is contextualized, using problems, situations, and materials drawn from the contemporary manufacturing workplace. Bilingual instructors teach the technical specialty topics. The curriculum was designed to prepare students for the rigorous screening tests in applied mathematics, literacy, and graphical acuity given by employers, and for interviews with workplace team leaders and members, which test their ability to think on their feet and communicate well with others.

Trainees in both the lower-level pre-bridge and higher-level Manufacturing Bridge programs receive extensive preparation in resume writing, interviewing, test-taking, and other employment skills, as well as job-placement assistance through the strong relationships Instituto program staff have established with Chicago-area manufacturers.

Graduates from the Manufacturing Technology Bridge are strongly encouraged to enroll in the West Side Tech advanced certificate programs in precision metalworking or industrial maintenance. In many cases, Trade Act funding is extended to cover these tuition costs.

### Partners

Instituto provides recruitment, counseling, case management, job placement, follow-up support, ESL, VESL, instruction in workplace basics, and curriculum development. Daley College's West Side Technical Institute provides instruction in applied technology fundamentals and college recruitment and enrollment. Tooling and Manufacturing Association staff and companies form the program advisory board and provide opportunities for job shadowing, internships, and jobs. The UIC Great Cities Institute provides labor-market analyses, technical assistance on program design, planning, evaluation, and funding.

### Support Services

Instituto provides tutoring services as needed and conducts job-readiness workshops. Clerical staff complete bi-weekly forms for students receiving extended unemployment insurance under the Trade Act program and arrange for onsite child care or after-school programs and provide bus passes for transportation assistance. Instituto can also provide vouchers to pay for interview clothes, work boots, etc., and can refer students for additional assistance.

### Program Development

Instituto designed the Manufacturing Technology Bridge program based on the Transformations program that was developed by the Consortium on Occupational Research and Development in Waco, Texas, for use in training displaced manufacturing workers for more skilled jobs.\* Instituto worked closely with a group of Chicago-area manufacturers and with faculty from the Manufacturing Technology certificate programs at Richard J. Daley College to ensure that program graduates meet the qualifications sought by employers and are qualified to enter the college program so they can advance to even better jobs. Instituto also offers bridge programs for careers in computer technology and healthcare.

\*[www.cord.org](http://www.cord.org)

### Funding

The Instituto del Progreso Latino uses multiple funding sources for its bridge programming, including the Workforce Investment Act, North American Free Trade Agreement/Trade Adjustment Act (NAFTA/TAA), and the Illinois Job Training and Economic Development program. Empowerment Zone funding was important in establishing the program. Each of these sources has a different eligibility requirement. NAFTA/TAA provides the most options for training and permits a longer and more comprehensive ESL component. Instituto also provides customized training for employers for a fee. As with most community-based organizations, it seeks support from foundations.

### Outcomes

Using wage record data from the Illinois Department of Employment Security, the University of Illinois at Chicago tracked the job histories of participants before and after the Manufacturing Bridge. These data show that program completers secure better employment and retain their jobs longer than those who do not complete the program. On average, completers earn significantly more than program dropouts. Detailed reports on the evaluation are available at [www.uic.edu/cuppa/techbridge/](http://www.uic.edu/cuppa/techbridge/). Over the past three years the Manufacturing Bridge and pre-bridge have served an average of 90 students per year.

### Contact Information

Tom DuBois  
 Director of Workforce Programs  
 Instituto del Progreso Latino  
 (773) 890-0055  
[tom@idpl.org](mailto:tom@idpl.org)  
[www.idpl.org](http://www.idpl.org)



## SEARK COLLEGE CAREER PATHWAYS PILOT PROJECT

<b>Lead Organizations:</b>	Southern Good Faith Fund and Southeast Arkansas College, Pine Bluff, Arkansas
<b>Partners:</b>	Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges, Arkansas Department of Workforce Education
<b>Key Features:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Prepares students for specific college-level certificate programs</li> <li>■ College/community-based organization partnership</li> <li>■ Offers “Employability Certificate” to those who need immediate employment</li> </ul>

The Southern Good Faith Fund (SGFF), a community-based organization, and Southeast Arkansas (SEARK) College developed and offer the Career Pathways Pilot Project to improve access to and completion of college-level training for low-skilled adults. Arkansas, and in particular its Delta region, has many low-skilled adults, while the region and the state have significant job opportunities that require post-secondary training. The Career Pathways Pilot is designed to address this mismatch and to provide an alternative model to deliver postsecondary training, because the current model does not adequately serve low-skilled adults.

### Program Design

There are four major components of the Career Pathways Pilot: 1) WAGE Prep, 2) WAGE Pathways Bridge Program, 3) the WAGE Employability Certificate, and 4) six college-level Certificate of Proficiency programs (Microsoft Office Specialist, Early Childhood Paraprofessional, Emergency Medical Technician, Industrial Skills Technologist, Nursing Assistant, and Welding Technology).

Students who TABE-test below sixth grade begin with the WAGE (Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy) Prep component. Students who TABE-test between the sixth and ninth grade begin with the WAGE Pathways Bridge Program, which links low-skilled individuals to career paths by preparing them for the college-level Certificate of Proficiency credit programs. The program teaches basic academic skills and job-specific competencies in the context of specific job tasks and knowledge through six separate, con-

textualized curricula. The WAGE Pathways Bridge curricula are not only contextualized to the specific jobs for which the six Certificate of Proficiency Programs prepare students, but they also provide the required academic and classroom skills needed for success in the six Certificate of Proficiency programs. The key outcome is a ninth-grade TABE score in reading and math so the students can move on to one of the Certificate of Proficiency college credit programs.

Students who complete the WAGE Pathways Bridge or who bypass it by TABE-testing at ninth grade or above can enter into one of the Certificate of Proficiency programs. The certificates articulate to six higher-education programs, providing credits that can be applied towards advanced degrees in business, education, emergency medical technician/paramedic, manufacturing, nursing, and welding. Upon completion of a certificate of proficiency, students can secure better-paying jobs as well, as employers have verified that demand exists for individuals with these credentials.

For students without a high school diploma or GED and/or who want to quickly secure employment, the program also offers the WAGE Employability Certificate. This qualifies them for specific entry-level jobs with local employers while preparing them to take the GED exam, thus completers can get a job and qualify to enter college. Those who wish to continue with their education can then enroll in any of the programs that are part of the SEARK College Career Pathways Pilot Project, or any other college credit program.

### Staffing

One adult education instructor teaches the WAGE Prep and WAGE Pathways Bridge program for all six areas. This instructor provides group and individual classroom instruction, flexible scheduling, and an open-entry, open-exit format. Other core staff members are the WAGE program coordinator at SEARK College who engages employers in the WAGE program, a SGFF counselor who coordinates a comprehensive system of student support services, and a SGFF career consultant who focuses on job placement.

### Partners

The key program partners are SGFF and SEARK College. SEARK College provides most of the academic instruction, while SGFF coordinates a comprehensive student support services system, which includes student outreach, program orientation, individual assessments, career and academic advising, academic monitoring and tutoring, and job placement. Together SEARK College and SGFF have developed a replicable strategy for improving adult enrollment and completion of college credentials. The Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges (AATYC) supports any necessary institutional change at the college and replication of the program at other two-year colleges. The Arkansas Department of Workforce Education supported the development of the six contextualized WAGE Pathways Bridge program curricula.

### Role of Employers

Employers were initially engaged via the WAGE program advisory committee, which provided input into the design of the Career Pathways program. They helped organize focus groups of a broader collection of local employers in each of the six targeted industries. The focus groups verified occupational demand, identified career pathways in their workplaces, identified internship and other work experience opportunities, and provided input on further aligning the career pathways training with their specific workforce skill needs. Most employers involved in the program are relatively large local employers in manufacturing, healthcare, education, and business and government services.

### Program Development

Several years ago, the Adult Education program within the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education created the

WAGE workplace literacy program to contextualize adult basic education curricula to specific job skills and competencies based on Literacy Task Analyses, which involve observing workers engaged in specific jobs to determine the particular skills needed for those positions. SEARK College and SGFF used this model to develop the WAGE Pathways Bridge program curricula, and they continue to conduct Literacy Task Analyses to keep the curricula current.

SGFF and SEARK College began to design the WAGE Pathways Bridge program to help prepare people for certain Certificate of Proficiency college credit programs at SEARK College in the fall of 2003. It took about a year to write the curricula and hire the full-time instructor, which were in place by January 2005. The partners derived the conceptual framework of the project from several Workforce Strategy Center reports.\*

### Funding

SGFF and SEARK secured a grant from the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education to develop the WAGE Pathways Bridge program curricula and hire a dedicated instructor. In 2005, state TANF funds were provided under the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative to continue to support WAGE staff and SGFF staff involved in providing student support services. TANF funds are also supporting student child care and transportation payments. Continued TANF support is now mandated by state TANF law under the High Wage Education and Training Initiative, which incorporated the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative already underway at the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. This initiative was recently awarded \$16 million in state TANF funds for two years to replicate career pathways programs at eleven two-year colleges in Arkansas. AATYC was instrumental in securing the TANF funds, which started July 2005.

### Contact Information

Mike Leach  
Public Policy Program Director  
Southern Good Faith Fund  
(501) 661-0322  
mleach@goodfaithfund.org  
www.southerngoodfaithfund.org

\*Building a Career Pathways System: Promising Practices in Community College-Centered Workforce Development, and Building Bridges to College and Careers: Contextualized Basic Skills Programs at Community Colleges. [www.workforcestrategy.org](http://www.workforcestrategy.org).

## WATSONVILLE DIGITAL BRIDGE ACADEMY

<b>Lead Organization:</b>	Cabrillo Community College, Watsonville, California
<b>Partners:</b>	Santa Cruz County Human Resource Agency, Watsonville High School, alternative and continuation schools, drug and alcohol treatment programs, Santa Cruz County Probation, Children’s Mental Health Departments
<b>Key Features:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Accelerated semester prepares individuals with multiple barriers for college-level educational programs in fields requiring the use of digital technologies</li> <li>■ Students earn degree credits while enrolled in Digital Bridge program</li> <li>■ Effective use of cohorts</li> </ul>

The Watsonville Digital Bridge Academy prepares multiple-barrier individuals for success in knowledge-based careers in computer information systems, engineering technology, nursing, radiology, criminal justice, or other allied health fields that require postsecondary education, the ability to work in teams, and the capacity for ongoing learning. The Digital Bridge addresses the divide between the need of the area’s high-technology industry for qualified workers and the low-skilled residents in nearby communities. The program prepares its participants to enter college and ultimately graduate with a degree or a certificate in fields requiring the use of digital technologies, or to transfer to a four-year college if the student so wishes. Most participants are limited-English-speaking Latinos, and 65 percent are first-generation Americans.

### Program Design

The Digital Bridge recruits students through the Santa Cruz County Human Resource Agency, comprehensive high schools (Watsonville High School), alternative and continuation schools, Cabrillo College’s basic skills classes, drug and alcohol treatment programs, Santa Cruz County Probation department, and Children’s Mental Health Departments. Also, many students learn about the program by word of mouth. Because the goal is for students to continue into a degree or certificate program, the main criteria

for entering the program is a ninth-grade reading level in English, which is the minimum starting level for a student to successfully complete the program.

Students proceed through the program in cohorts of 24 to 29. The curriculum is broken into components so it can be customized and localized for use at other colleges. There are three main components: 1) Light the Fire Within, 2) Academic Acceleration Semester, and 3) Internships.

Light the Fire Within is a two-week immersion program to help these students with no role models or previous expectation of going to college and little understanding of knowledge-based careers to learn new behaviors, become aware of their potential, and be motivated to learn. This component meets for 40 hours a week and uses discovery exercises and a self-managing team environment.

The Academic Acceleration Semester (the Bridge Semester) is a 13-week series of five courses to bring students to college-level academic performance and accustom them to a full-time workload. Students earn 16.5 AA degree-level credits toward a college degree or certification. The students meet in class four days a week and in a study group on the fifth day. The courses are interdisciplinary and offered by three divisions within the college that cover computer information systems, reading, movement, and

career counseling departments. Most classes include project-based learning. The faculty designed the curriculum for the semester so that content from different classes follows a logical sequence and may be introduced in one class, used in another, and reinforced in a third. In addition, to help students manage their workloads, all assignment due dates are coordinated. During this semester students take a project course, which begins with a primary research project on a social justice issue and culminates with a public presentation. The social justice issue serves as an important motivator for these students, because the topics they choose frequently relate to their own personal experiences.

After the Academic Acceleration Semester, students continue into college-level certificate or degree programs at Cabrillo College. While enrolled in a degree program, they also continue with their cohort in a one-and-a-half- credit seminar that covers topics like leadership versus management, creating the conditions for self-managing work teams, leadership and sustainability, managing change, and consulting skills.

Students have internships while enrolled in classes in their second semester at the college. These internships are within the college itself, where the interns recruit for the academy, do office work, provide peer mentoring, support service referrals, and help arrange other internship opportunities. The plan is for these interns to continue with other internships in governmental agencies, community-based organizations, and educational institutions, and then move on to externships in the private sector.

### **Staffing**

The program has eight faculty members who also teach other Cabrillo classes. One benefit of faculty who also teach outside the Digital Bridge is they are able to evaluate Bridge students in the same way they evaluate other students. The Digital Bridge has one full-time faculty member.

### **Program Development**

Cabrillo College spent 19 months researching and developing this program, interviewing 125 experts who work with high-risk populations. It piloted the curriculum in five 40-hour sessions.

### **Funding**

The program is funded by grants from the National Science Foundation, the David and Lucille Packard Foundation, and the James Irvine Foundation.

### **Outcomes**

Piloting of the Digital Bridge Academy's two-week Light the Fire Within curriculum began in June 2002 and continued through the summer of 2003. The first cohort began in the fall of 2003. To date, 90 students have completed the Watsonville Bridge, 83 percent on average have successfully completed the accelerated Bridge Semester, and 94 percent of them are still in college.

### **Contact Information**

Diego James Navarro  
 Director, Watsonville Digital Bridge Academy and  
 Instructor, Computer Information Systems  
 Cabrillo Community College  
 (831) 477-5166  
 diego@cabrillo.edu  
 www.cabrillo.edu/academics/wdba/

# Glossary

**Adult Basic Education (ABE)\***— instruction in reading, writing, and mathematics for adults with literacy levels generally below the ninth grade.

**Adult Education** — instruction in reading, writing, and mathematics for adults at lower literacy levels; includes adult basic education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL), and preparation for the General Education Development (GED) test.

**Associate Degree** — the degree awarded after a two-year period of study that can be either terminal (vocational) or transfer (the first two years of a bachelor's degree). The vocational degree is the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) and the transfer degree may be either the Associate of Arts (AA) or the Associate of Science (AS).

**Basic Skills** — fundamental skills such as literacy, reading comprehension, writing, math, and English language competency that are crucial to success in a workplace.

**Bridge Program** — program designed to prepare individuals, particularly those individuals with literacy levels below ninth grade, to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and training leading to career-path employment.

**Career Pathway\***— a series of occupations within an industry that build from the relatively minimal skill and education requirements needed for entry-level employment to increasing levels of skills, experience, and/or formal education.

**Case Management** — the management of the entire range of services offered to a trainee or student. Provides assistance in accessing educational components and support services, developing a career plan, and accessing any other services that will help ensure successful completion of the training program.

**Community-Based Organization (CBO)** — a nonprofit organization designed to address the needs within a particular community.

**Community College** — a public two-year institution of higher education, offering instruction in programs adapted to the needs of the community; programs may include adult education, certificate and degree programs, workforce preparation, noncredit continuing education, and customized training for business.

**Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)** — federal program aimed at ameliorating the causes and conditions of poverty in communities. The funds provide a range of

services and activities to assist the needs of low-income individuals, including the homeless, migrants, and the elderly.

**Competency-Based Curricula** — curricula defined in terms of the abilities, knowledge, and skills a student should be able to demonstrate once they have completed the course. The competencies that provide the learning objectives for bridge programs are based on the requirements of entry and success at the next levels of education and employment.

**Entry-Level Occupation\***— the lowest paid occupations within an industry or firm, usually requiring minimal work experience and limited educational background as conditions for hire. Criteria differ widely from industry to industry.

**ESL (English as a Second Language)** — programs and classes for persons who lack proficiency in the English language. Classes assist non-native English speakers in obtaining speaking, listening, reading, writing, and math skills.

**Field-Specific Bridge Program** — a bridge program that prepares adults for college-level occupational certificate programs and advancement to entry-level skilled positions. These programs are geared toward participants who have decided upon a career sector focus.

**GED (General Educational Development)\***— GED tests are designed to test knowledge and academic skills equivalent to those of a graduate of a United States high school. Knowledge is tested in areas of writing skills, social studies, mathematics, science, literature, and the arts. GED programs provide academic skills instruction geared toward enabling participants to pass the exam and obtain a high school equivalency diploma.

**Industry certification** — a credential based on standards set by employers in a particular industry or by skilled workers in a given occupation.

**Occupational (Vocational) Certificate** — a credential earned by completing a training program for a specific industry or career; programs vary in length from one to more than four semesters of full-time study. They are generally state-recognized and thus carry college credit, although this credit does not necessarily transfer to a college degree program.

**One-Stop Career Centers (OSCCs)\***— mandated under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), OSCCs provide employers, job-seekers, and workers with access to resources for employment and training services at a single location; resources at an OSCC

may include access to state agencies such as those administering unemployment insurance.

**Sector\***— a group of closely interrelated industries that use common technologies or draw on similar resources, such as particular occupations or raw materials (e.g., healthcare, manufacturing, transportation).

**Soft Skills** — nontechnical skills that build an individual's ability to succeed in any workplace. Examples include teamwork, interpersonal communication, working well with supervisors, time management, and conflict resolution.

**Support Services** — services that enable individuals to participate successfully in work and/or education and training. Student services generally consist of career counseling, academic guidance, academic support, personal guidance, and supplemental resources.

**Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)** — Time-limited public assistance payments made to poor families, based on Title IV-A of the Social Security Act. Under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), which was signed into law in 1996, TANF funds may also be used by states to fund job-placement programs for TANF recipients and other low-income populations.

**Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE)** — a widely used diagnostic and evaluative tool that measures basic reading, math, and language skills for adults with low literacy levels; often used for program placement, skills assessment, or as a measure of student progress.

**Tuition Reimbursement** — partial or full payment by employers, public entities, or others for courses that individuals take at educational institutions. Payment is made either to the institution or reimbursed or paid upfront to the employee.

**Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA)** — a federal program created under the Trade Adjustment Act to retrain workers laid off due to increased imports or whose employment was moved to Canada or Mexico. TRA benefits may be payable to eligible workers following exhaustion of their unemployment insurance benefits, if they are participating in or have completed an approved training program.

**Vocational Adult Basic Education (VABE)** — programs that teach basic literacy skills to native English-speaking students in the context of preparing them to work in a specific occupation.

**Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL)** — programs that teach basic literacy skills to non-native English-speaking students in the context of preparing them to work in a specific occupation.

**Workforce Intermediaries** — organizations that provide resources such as program-design assistance, assistance evaluation, and others to workforce program providers.

**Workforce Investment Act (WIA)** — the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 supersedes the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and provides a broad range of workforce-development activities through both statewide and local organizations. For more about WIA, see <http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/wia/act.cfm>.

**Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title I Training Funds (Individual Training Accounts)**—funds that can be used by registered WIA participants for state and local workforce board-approved training programs. The majority of training funds are distributed through vouchers called Individual Training Accounts, but training contracts are also permissible under federal law.

**Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title II** — funds that are meant to assist those who lack basic educational skills (including reading, numeracy, and English-language skills), do not have a high school diploma or GED, or who lack literacy in English. Eligible providers include community colleges, regional offices of education, CBOs, public schools, and universities.

**Workforce Investment Boards— Local and State (LWIB and SWIB)** — advisory committees established under WIA whose purpose is to set policy and direction for implementation of the workforce investment system and, at the state level, to foster cooperation between the government and private sector to meet the workforce preparation needs of employers and workers. Members may consist of businesses, educational entities, labor organizations, community-based organizations, and/or economic development agencies.

\*Definitions from *Building Career Ladders for Low-Wage Workers: A "How-to" Manual for Workforce Development Practitioners and Partners*, Claudia Green, Sarah Griffen, Laurie Sheridan Boston Workforce Development Coalition

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Waldron, T., B. Roberts, and A. Reamer. *Working Hard, Falling Short: America's Working Families and the Pursuit of Economic Security*. Working Poor Families Project, October 2004.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Adult Literacy Survey. *Adult Literacy in America, 1992*, prepared by Educational Testing Service (Table 391, prepared February 1994) (Latest data available.) Adults are age 16 and older.

<sup>3</sup>U.S. Department of Education. *Remedial Education at Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions in Fall 2000*. NCES 2004-010. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. November 2003.

<sup>4</sup>*Working Hard*, page 14.

<sup>5</sup>Carnevale, A.P., and D. M. Desrochers. *Standards for What? The Economic Roots of K-16 Reform*. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 2003.

<sup>6</sup>U.S. Bureau of Census. *The Big Payoff: Educational Attainment and Synthetic Estimates of Work-Life Earnings*. Current Population Reports P23-210. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, July 2002.

<sup>7</sup>Sticht, T., and W. Armstrong. *Adult Literacy in the United States: A Compendium of Quantitative Data and Interpretive Comments*. Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy, 1994.

<sup>8</sup>Grubb, W. N., *Learning to Work: The Case for Reintegrating Job Training and Education*. New York, NY: Russell Sage, 1996; Sticht, T.G., *The Military Experience and Workplace Literacy: A Review and Synthesis for Policy and Practice*. Philadelphia, PA: National Center on Adult Literacy, 1995.

<sup>9</sup>Strawn, J. *Beyond Job Search or Basic Education: Rethinking the Role of Skills in Welfare Reform*. Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy, 1998; Strawn, J. and K. Martinson, *Steady Work and Better Jobs: How to Help Low-Income Parents Sustain Employment and Advance in the Workforce*. New York: MDRC, 2000.

<sup>10</sup>For more information on the *Employability Skills for Adults* curriculum, contact the Adult Learning Resource Center, Des Plaines, IL (847-803-3535 or [www.thecenterweb.org](http://www.thecenterweb.org)).

<sup>11</sup>For information on DACUM, see <http://www.dacum.org/index.asp>. For information on WorkKeys, see <http://www.act.org/workkeys/>.

<sup>12</sup>MDRC, "Support Success: Services that May Help Low-Income Students Succeed in Community College," 2004.

<sup>13</sup>Gruber, D. *Using Resources Effectively: An Overview of Funding Resources for Workforce Development Initiatives*. Workforce Strategy Center, November 2004. [http://www.workforcestrategy.org/publications/WSC\\_UsingResources.pdf](http://www.workforcestrategy.org/publications/WSC_UsingResources.pdf).

<sup>14</sup>[www.nnsp.org](http://www.nnsp.org)

<sup>15</sup>Hollenbeck, K.M., and W.J. Huang. *Net Impact and Benefit-Cost Estimates of the Workforce Development System in Washington State* (Technical Report No. TR03-018). Kalamazoo, MI: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, July 2003; Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. *Workforce Training Results 2002: An Evaluation of Washington State's Workforce Training System*. Olympia, WA: Author, March 2003.

<sup>16</sup>Prince, D., and D. Jenkins. *Building Pathways to Success for Low-Skill Adult Students: Lessons for Community College Policy and Practice from a Statewide Longitudinal Tracking Study*. New York: Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University, April 2005.



Women Employed

111 N. Wabash Avenue, Suite 1300  
Chicago, IL 60602-2010  
(312) 782-3902  
[www.womenemployed.org](http://www.womenemployed.org)