# Overview of Career Pathways

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The Urban Institute

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# Topics

- Defining Career Pathways

- Key Elements of Career Pathways Programs

- Implementation Lessons from Previous Research

- Approaches Being Tested

- National Initiatives Underway

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# What Is a Career Pathways Program?

- Articulated progression through occupational skills training

- Interim credentials can be earned

- The final credential leads to a middle or high skill, in-demand job

- Partners such employers, human services, community-based organizations and workforce intermediaries support the development and implementation of the pathways and the students who participate in them

# Common Industries for Career Pathways Programs

- Healthcare

- Advanced manufacturing

- Green/energy

- Biotechnology

- But should always depend on local/regional labor market needs!

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# Key Elements of a Career Pathways Program

● Use of labor market information and industry resources to understand occupational demand and what occupational steps create the "pathway"

● Assessments of career/training readiness

● Selection of appropriate training provider(s)

● Capacity building within those providers
  ● High quality curriculum/instructional technology
  ● Qualified instructors that know the industry
  ● Academic support to students

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# Key Elements (cont'd)

- Supports that help with student retention
  - Intensive case management
  - Child care, transportation, emergency assistance, etc.
  - Mentoring

- Employment assistance
  - Work experience
  - Job search activities
  - Resume/interview workshops
  - Networking
  - Retention services

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# Implementation Lessons from Previous Research*

- Employers are important partners in implementing all aspects of an industry-driven project.

- New training technologies can be used to improve the quality of training and expand access to training.

- Instructors with industry-specific knowledge and experience are needed but they can be difficult to hire and retain.

- Projects need to be flexible to respond to changes in the external environment.

- Both monetary and non-monetary resources from partners, especially from employers, are difficult to secure.

- Hands-on training components are important to replicating actual work experience.

*High Growth Job Training Initiative Evaluation (2011)      7      THE URBAN INSTITUTE

# Some Pathways Approaches Being Tested

- Integrated basic education and skills training (contextualized learning)

- Stackable credentials

- Wraparound services

- Coaches or navigators for students

- Work-based learning

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# Initiatives Which Are Testing Career Pathways Approaches

- Community-Based Job Training Grants (CBJTG)

- Green Jobs Innovation Fund

- Innovative Strategies for Increasing Self-Sufficiency (ISIS)

- Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG)

- Accelerating Opportunity Initiative

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