



CAREER PATHWAYS TOOLS FOR TANF PROGRAMS: STARTER PATHWAYS

What Are Starter Pathways?

Starter Pathways are role-based entry points designed to help users quickly, intentionally, and efficiently engage with the Career Pathways Catalog.

Each pathway highlights the catalog sections most relevant to a user’s primary role, making it easier to understand where to begin, locate resources, and engage purposefully.

Introduction

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs play a critical role in supporting families’ employment, stability, and long-term economic mobility. To accompany the Career Pathways Toolkit Catalog, the Starter Pathways are designed to help TANF administrators and staff navigate the tools more efficiently and intentionally.

Rather than reading every toolkit from start to finish, users can begin with Starter Pathways to identify where to start based on their role and quickly access the most relevant tools and sections.

How to Use

The Starter Pathways reflect the realities of TANF work, where roles overlap, and responsibilities shift. They provide flexible entry points as categorized below:

- **New staff:** Individuals new to TANF programs, systems, or workforce services who are learning how career pathways support TANF goals.
- **Frontline staff:** Staff who directly interact with participants, deliver services, connect families to education and employment opportunities, and support progress toward self-sufficiency.
- **Supervisors and administrators:** Leaders responsible for program oversight, design, compliance, and performance.

Each pathway offers a focused starting place while allowing users to move across pathways as roles evolve, expand, or intersect.

Pathways Provided in This Resource

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New Staff Pathway

New staff are often focused on:

- Understanding TANF purpose, structure, and requirements
- Learning how career pathways fit into TANF goals
- Navigating systems, terminology, and partner roles
- Building foundational confidence before making decisions or recommendations

While they may not yet design programs or policies, they may directly influence participant experience through early interactions and service delivery.

Suggested Tools to Use:

These resources build a foundational understanding of career pathways, TANF alignment, and participant navigation.

Career Pathways Toolkit Catalog	Relevant Catalog Sections	How This Resource Supports New Staff
Achievement in Career Engagement: A Guide to Career Counseling Page 3	<i>Ch. 2 - Guidance and Career Counselor Comparison</i> <i>Ch. 6 - Career Counseling 101: Making Employer Contacts</i> <i>Ch. 15 - How to Manage Large Caseloads</i>	Introduces core concepts such as career counseling, employer engagement, and pathway navigation, helping new staff understand how career pathways support participant progress.
Evidence Snapshot: Career Pathways Page 11	<i>Pgs. 1-4</i>	Provides a high-level evidence base explaining why career pathways are used in TANF programs and how they improve participant outcomes.
Ohio Aspire Page 17	<i>Overview and PD (Professional Development) Offerings: #2, #4, and #5</i>	Demonstrates how intake, assessment, advising, and support services work together, helping new staff understand the full participant experience across systems.

What Success Looks Like:

New staff will understand of the purpose of career pathways within TANF, navigate the toolkit confidently, and identify key components, terminology, and examples showing how education, training, and employment strategies support participant outcomes.

Frontline Staff Pathway

Frontline staff often:

- Translate policy into day-to-day practice
- Help participants navigate education, training, and work
- Identify barriers, service gaps, and system misalignments
- Inform program improvements through lived operational insight

Suggested Tools to Use:

These resources support day-to-day participant engagement, pathway navigation, and partner coordination.

Career Pathways Toolkit Catalog	Relevant Catalog Sections	How This Resource Supports Frontline Staff
<u>Business Engagement Collaborative: Sector Strategies Resources</u> Page 5	<i>Data-based Decision Making</i>	Helps frontline staff understand employer needs and sector strategies so participant placements align with real labor market demand.
<u>Career Pathways Toolkit: An Enhanced Guide and Workbook for System Development</u> Page 7	<i>Element Two Career Pathways Resources</i>	Supports practical application of career pathways by showing how education, training, and support services connect across systems.
<u>Competency Model Clearinghouse</u> Page 8	<i>All links of: Learn, Apply, and Explore</i>	Helps translate job requirements into clear skill progression, supporting participant goal-setting and pathway planning.
<u>Evidence Snapshot: Career Pathways</u> Page 11	<i>Pgs. 5-12</i>	Reinforces why pathway approaches matter, helping staff communicate value to participants and partners.
<u>Evidence Snapshot: Occupational and Sectoral Training</u> Page 12	<i>Pgs. 4-8</i>	Helps frontline staff understand which training approaches are most effective, supporting better referrals and more informed participant guidance.

What Success Looks Like:

Frontline staff will use career pathways resources to support participant conversations, make informed referrals, understand employer and sector needs, and apply evidence-informed approaches when guiding participants through education, training, and employment options.

Supervisors & Administrators Pathway

Supervisors and administrators often:

- Interpret and apply federal and state TANF policy
- Oversee staff and contractor performance
- Make decisions about program design, funding, and partnerships
- Balance compliance, equity, outcomes, and operational realities

In many agencies, they may still engage directly with participants or frontline staff, especially during high demand or limited staffing.

Suggested Tools to Use:

These resources strengthen governance, partnerships, system alignment, and long-term sustainability.

Career Pathways Toolkit Catalog	Relevant Catalog Sections	How This Resource Supports Supervisors and Administrators
<u>A Quick-Start Toolkit: Building Registered Apprenticeship Programs</u> Page 2	<i>Pgs. 1-2 Pgs. 4-5 Pgs. 7-8 Pgs. 13-15</i>	Provides a step-by-step guide to explore, build, and register a Registered Apprenticeship Program that combines structured on-the-job learning with related classroom instruction.
<u>Business Engagement Collaborative: Sector Strategies Resources</u> Page 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sector Strategies</i> • <i>Data-Based Decision Making</i> • <i>Industry Engagement</i> • <i>Organizational Capacity & Alignment</i> • <i>Sector-Based Service Delivery</i> • <i>Sustainability & Continuous Improvement</i> 	Supports strategic employer partnerships and sector-based planning decisions.
<u>Career Pathways Toolkit: Enhanced Guide & Workbook</u> Page 7	<i>All Elements 1-6</i>	Serves as a core system-building resource for aligning TANF, workforce, education, and human services partners.
<u>Competency Model Clearinghouse</u> Page 8	<i>Build Section</i>	Supports alignment between workforce programs, education partners, and employer needs by clarifying skill progression and competency frameworks.
<u>Evidence Snapshot: Career Pathways</u> Page 11	<i>Pgs. 1-26</i>	Provides data-informed context to support leadership decisions and strategic investments.
<u>Evidence Snapshot: Occupational and Sectoral Training</u> Page 12	<i>Pgs. 9-19</i>	Helps leaders assess training models and determine which approaches are most effective to scale.

Career Pathways Toolkit Catalog	Relevant Catalog Sections	How This Resource Supports Supervisors and Administrators
Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse Case Studies Page 19	All	Provides real-world examples of employment strategies that can inform frontline practice, referrals, and service coordination.
Registered Apprenticeship Academy Page 20	All	Supports administrators in integrating apprenticeship strategies while maintaining quality and compliance.
Toward Sustainability and Scale: A Playbook for California Apprenticeship Stakeholders Page 24	All	Helps leadership plan for sustainability, scaling, and long-term system impact beyond pilot programs.

What Success Looks Like:

Supervisors and administrators will use the toolkit to inform program design, strengthen partnerships, align strategies with evidence, and support sustainable and compliant career pathways implementation across systems.

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