

Arkansas Department of Higher Education Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative (CPI)

Established January 2005

Report
For

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Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Developing an Exit Strategy for Leaving TANF on the Pathways to Family Stability

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ARKANSAS CAREER PATHWAYS INITIATIVE

Implemented by the **Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE)**, in conjunction with **Arkansas Department of Workforce Services (DWS)** in 2005, and became part of a legislative mandate (Act 514) that mandates that **ADHE, DWS** and state **Workforce Investment Board (WIB)** work jointly to plan for the **Career Pathways Initiative (CPI)**.

Funded with the Arkansas TANF block grant.

The Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) is a comprehensive project designed to improve the **earnings** and **post-secondary education attainment** of Arkansas's low-income Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)-eligible adults.

The initiative provides funding for two-year colleges to develop career pathways programs that assist TANF-eligible adults to earn a marketable educational credential for immediate entry into a high demand occupation. The Career Pathways Initiative emphasizes such program components as job readiness skills, basic academic skills preparation, remediation, and college credentials tied to high wage, high demand occupations.

Intensive student services are provided for students in the program.

CPI fosters strong connections among two-year colleges, students, community-based organizations, state agencies, and employers.

The primary purpose of the initiative is to address the “education gap” as a vehicle through which the “economic gap” can be closed.

OVERVIEW

PURPOSE

- ✘ Provide an **educational, work-based program** that will assist **low-income** people to gain skills that lead to **self-sufficiency**.

- ✘ Encourage **upward educational** and **career mobility** for the target group of unprepared, low-wage workers.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- ✘ Improve **work participation** rates
- ✘ Enhance basic skills
- ✘ Increase **attainment** of college-level certificates and associate degrees
- ✘ Improve job retention, advancement and wage progression
- ✘ Reduce welfare recidivism
- ✘ Increase self-sufficiency

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- ✘ Enrollments with Current TEA Emphasis
- ✘ Attainments (GED, Employability, College Credentials)
- ✘ Entered Employment
- ✘ Employment Retention

Performance goals are set annually for each site and incentives are awarded as Performance Based Student Support funds. Up to \$1,000,000 has been reserved in past years.

WHY CAREER PATHWAYS INITIATIVE IN ARKANSAS?

- ✘ US Poverty rate shows largest number of poor people in 52 years that poverty has been measured.
- ✘ Almost 50 million Americans lack in reliable food access with 1/3 being children
- ✘ Arkansas ranks **1st** in food insecurity
- ✘ Arkansas currently has the **highest percentage** in the U.S. (tied with West Virginia) of adults ages 18 to 64 who have a high school diploma but are not in living-wage jobs.
- ✘ Arkansas ranks **46th** in the nation in the percentage of adults, ages 25 to 64 with an associate degree and **49th** in the percentage with a bachelor's degree or higher.
- ✘ Arkansas's **economy** directly related to level of **education** of citizens.
- ✘ Arkansas's low educational attainment relates strongly to the state's per capita personal income.
- ✘ Low-income young adults—twice as likely not to attend college.
- ✘ Poor education is the indicator in the vicious cycle of childhood poverty.

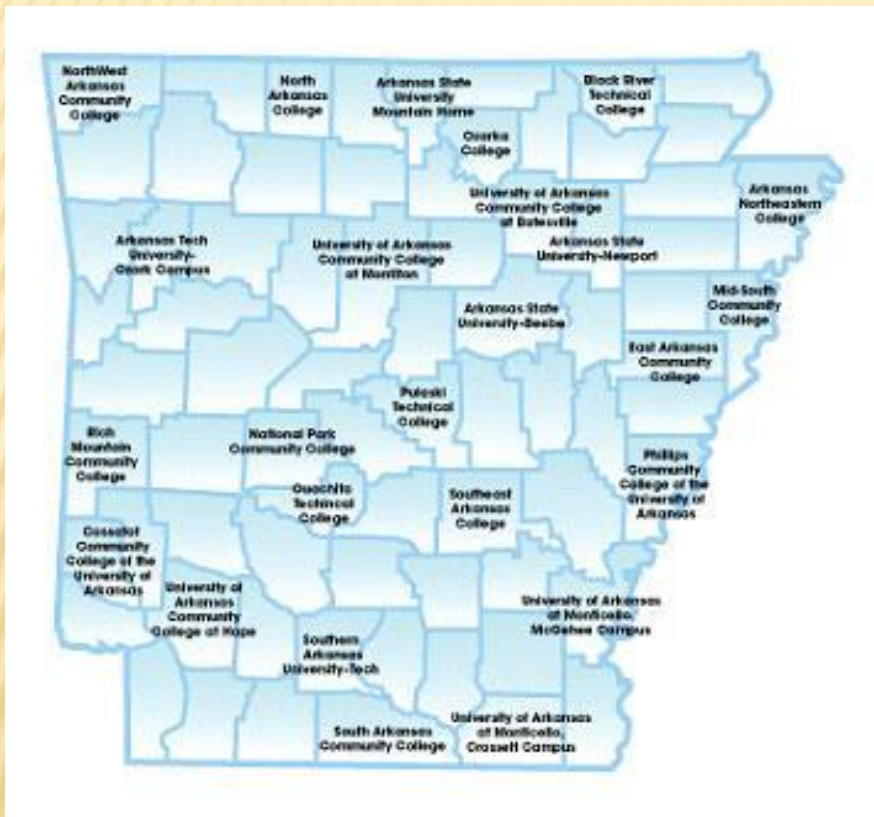
ELIGIBILITY...

Initiative serves current and former Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA) recipients, or TANF eligible students, currently or newly enrolled at one of the participating public two-year colleges in Arkansas or in a program administered by participating two-year colleges.

An adult caretaker, parent or relative of a child living in the home under the age of 21 deemed financially needy because they are/have:

- A former or current recipient of TEA cash assistance; or
- A current recipient of Food Stamps, ARKids or Medicaid; or
- Earnings are at 250% of the FPL or less

ARKANSAS CAREER PATHWAYS INITIATIVE FUNDED BY TANF



- ✘ ADHE received \$8 million in TANF funds July 1, 2005 – June 30, 2006.
- ✘ \$8 million in TANF funds July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007.
- ✘ \$12 million in TANF from July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008.
- ✘ \$12 million in TANF from July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009.
- ✘ FY10=\$12 million in TANF.
- ✘ FY11=\$13 million in TANF
- ✘ FY12=\$13 million in TANF
- ✘ FY13=\$11 million in TANF
- ✘ FY14=\$7,150 million with \$1 million reserved for Current TEA participating in WPR
- ✘ Twenty-five campuses provide “in-kind”.

GRANT AWARDS TO 25 SITES

- ✘ Arkansas Department of Higher Education determines which two-year colleges receive grant awards that range from \$109,288-\$436,623 in FY14. Grants are based on:
 - + Institutional Performance in Prior Year
 - + Institutional Spending in Prior Year
 - + Goals and Objectives for Upcoming Year
 - + Students Enrolled

TANF funds may be utilized for the following purposes:

- ✘ Portion of salary and fringe benefits that can be documented as supporting TANF eligible students.
- ✘ Portion of maintenance and operating costs that can be documented as supporting TANF eligible students.
- ✘ Expenditures consistent with the scope and activities as defined for the Career Pathways Initiative (tuition, transportation, childcare, books, uniforms, and assessments required for employment).

FEATURES...

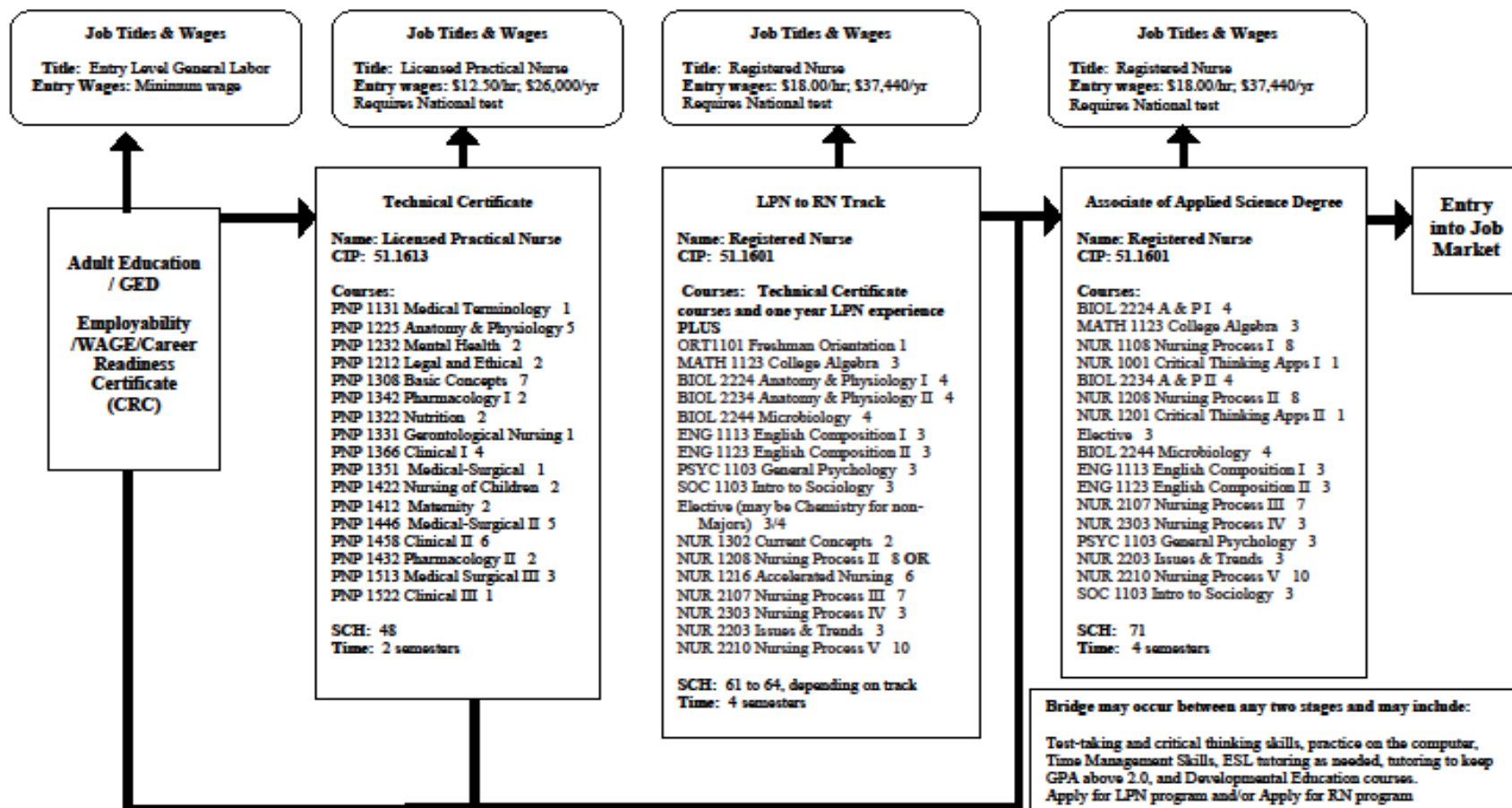
- ✘ Institutional and instructional transformation. Almost 400 pathways have been mapped for local high-wage, high-demand job categories.
- ✘ Supports and tools to help students succeed such as tutoring, intrusive advising, job placement assistance and community outreach.
- ✘ Partnerships and Employer Involvement for student support and employment.



Career Cluster: Health Science

Career Pathway: Therapeutic Services (Nursing)

Labor Market Information from Department of Workforce Services



ARKANSAS TARGETED JOB CATEGORIES

- ✘ Manufacturing
- ✘ Health care and social assistance
- ✘ Transportation and warehousing
- ✘ Professional and technical services
- ✘ Management of companies and enterprises

PROGRAM SUCCESSES

- ✘ **Student success** more than 17 points higher in FY12 compared to other community college students (Students completed or retained from Fall to Fall)
- ✘ Over 28,000 adults **enrolled**.
- ✘ Over 24,000 certificate and degrees **attained**.
- ✘ **Entered Employment** goal met when matched to Unemployment Insurance (UI) Data.
- ✘ **Return on Investment (ROI)**-When participant income at entry into the CPI program (as documented in initial application materials) are measured against subsequent wage increases related to improved employment opportunities, the program is able to document a **significant benefit** to the state through aggregated increases in income and sales tax revenue and a decrease in spending on public assistance. These positive benefits are then weighed against costs related to the public investment in the CPI. Promising Pathways staff developed a model to project the ROI realized by the State of Arkansas as a result of the CPI program which shows a positive return within a two to three year time frame, despite very conservative assumptions. A very small sample set of participants from a past cohort was used to test the model.

PARTNERSHIPS ARE

POWER

Next Steps

The Arkansas Association of Two Year Colleges (AATYC) in partnership with the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE), the Arkansas Research Center (ARC) and ICF International seeks support of an important return on investment study and policy advocacy effort with national implications. Over a 30 month time period the consortia proposes to mine a remarkably rich database of more than 33,000 student records and conduct focus groups with former participants for the purpose of evaluating outcomes of the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) in order to answer the following critical questions:

1. What are the subsequent economic returns to low-income parents who earn less than 250% of the federal poverty level who participate in postsecondary education and training at a two-year college through the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative?
2. What are the social impacts and economic returns to the state and community as a result of this state investment in education and training for the TANF-eligible population?
3. Is there evidence that the CPI is making a contribution to breaking the poverty cycle in Arkansas by reducing the number of Arkansas families living below the federal poverty line and by increasing postsecondary attainment completion and improving economic mobility across the state?

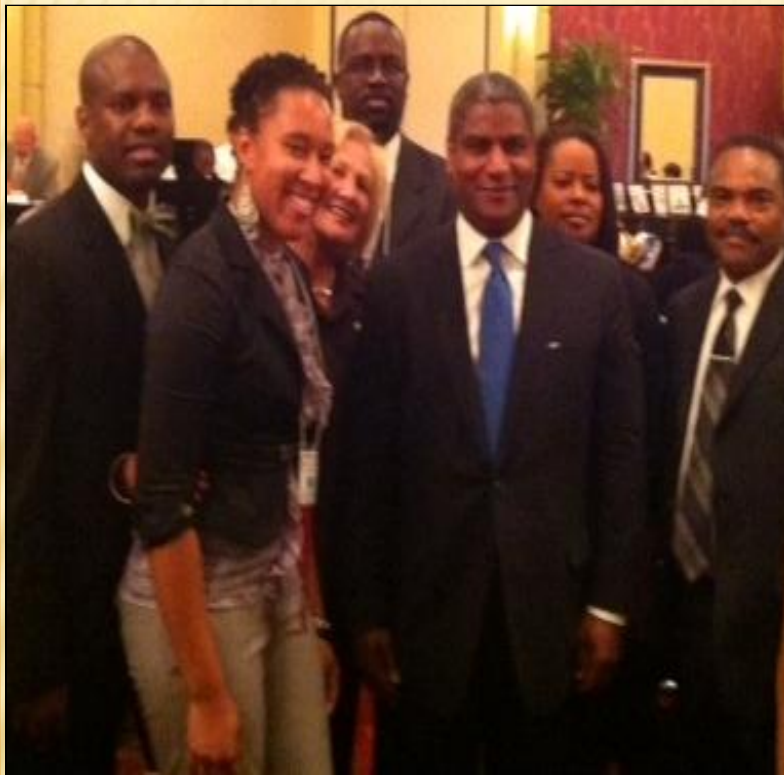
Higher Education (ADHE) in cooperation with other State agencies has focused significant resources that seek to assist economically disadvantaged people with attaining a college credential. It is our belief that only with postsecondary level skills will citizens move from poverty to a living wage.

Shane Broadway
ADHE Director

SHARING OUR STRENGTHS WORKFORCE CENTERS ON CAMPUSES



PARTNERING FOR LINKAGES



Low-Income Advocates



Identified as One of the Most Promising Initiatives 2011

Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative

Arkansas Department of Higher Education

