

Pennsylvania Career Pathways Coaching Components: A Resource Guide

Developed by:
Community Action Southwest

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Introduction

The Pennsylvania Career Pathways Coaching Components Resource Guide was developed as a resource for adult education practitioners. This resource serves as a framework of general knowledge needed when working with adult students. It is useful for case managers, teachers, and administrators. The guide features a basic overview of career coaching techniques, resources, and examples under the umbrella of case management. The information presented here can be adopted or modified by programs and practitioners as they work to help students transition from adult basic education programs to employment and/or postsecondary education and training.

Career Awareness and Career Pathways

Integrating Career Awareness

Integrating Career Awareness in the ABE & ESOL Classroom Curriculum (ICA), developed by the National Transitions Career Network, is an adult education curriculum that incorporates career awareness and planning into instructional and counseling activities.

Pennsylvania's Professional Development System (PDS) supports a six-week online course that prepares instructors and case managers to implement and tailor the ICA to their local setting. Course participants take part in an introductory webinar and complete online components and assignments on topics that include:

- The Why and What of Career Awareness and Planning;
- The Self-Exploration Process;
- Occupational Exploration; and
- Career Planning Skills.

Prior to the end of this online course, teacher coaches may be assigned to participants. Teacher coaches mentor and support participants as they begin to apply what they learned.

Setting Career-Related Goals

Helping students set career-related goals can be considered a first step in establishing a solid career pathway. Once goals are set, practitioners may want to assist students to create a written action plan. Action plans lay out the steps to achieve the stated goals. They can also help students stay organized and mark progress. As the action plan is developed and implemented, student strengths and barriers must be considered. Each accomplishment should be celebrated to demonstrate progress and encourage students to take the next step. The action plan should be used as a flexible working document until the final goal is achieved; students and case managers or other supportive staff can adjust the action plan as needed to reflect progress, changes in goals, or address setbacks.

The **SMART goals framework**¹ is another tool that can help students set career-related goals. SMART Goals are: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-Specific.

Specific: Include details in the goal as a specific goal increases the odds of achieving the goal.

Questions to ask include:

- **Who:** Who needs to be involved/ considered in setting and achieving the goal?
- **What:** What do I want for myself?
- **Where:** Where do I want to work/go to school? (location)
- **When:** By when do I want to accomplish X? (timeframe)
- **Which:** Which impediments, constraints, and supports will I encounter? (identify requirements, constraints, and processes)
- **Why:** Why do I want to do this? (reasons, purpose, gains)

Measurable: Establish how progress will be measured towards each goal. When progress is measured, it helps students to stay on track. The more specific a goal, the easier it is to measure and chart success.

Attainable: Help students identify the most important goals and then determine ways to achieve these goals. Note that smaller goals may need to be set to attain a larger goal.

Realistic: Students must be willing and able to work towards their goal. Have students examine similar experiences or accomplishments to evaluate the legitimacy of a goal. Help students to determine if their current life situation will enable them to achieve their goal.

Time-measured: Create a timeline for accomplishing the goal to help create a sense of immediacy and to hold the student accountable.

EXAMPLE: General goal: "Get a job." **SMART** goal: "Become employed using my CDL credential making at least \$11 per hour within the next six months."

Career pathways maps can help students identify educational and employment goals. For more information on using these maps, see the *Career Pathways Maps* section of this Resource Guide.

Researching Interests

While many students already have a number of different interest areas, others may need help to determine how their skills fit into the job market. When developing career pathways plans, practitioners may want to help students:

- **Determine their needs:** Students should consider their needs as well as those of their families;
- **Understand their abilities and strengths:** Students, who have a clear understanding of their skills, abilities, strengths, and weaknesses, will establish more realistic, strategic, achievable, and inspired career pathway goals; and
- **Identify their options:** Students should be encouraged to research and identify options for the career pathway. It is essential to match students' unique skills, knowledge, and abilities with the right opportunities.

Practitioners can encourage students to investigate in-demand jobs and high-growth industries so they can invest in a career pathway with a stable future. The following online resources can help students make more informed choices:

- Careerpath.com;

- [my Skills my Future](#);
- [My Next Move](#);
- [The Career Gateway Career One Stop](#);
- [American Job Center](#); and
- [Virtual Career Network: Healthcare](#) (for students with a healthcare interest).

Local Labor Market Information

Center for Workforce Information & Analysis

[Center for Workforce Information and Analysis](#) (CWIA) is Pennsylvania’s leading source of labor market information for workforce and economic development. This information is used by stakeholders to make informed policy, business and career decisions that strengthen Pennsylvania’s economy.

The CWIA was developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry to produce and provide timely, objective, and credible labor market information. They provide localized employment data related to occupations, labor supply and demand, earnings, unemployment, and labor force demographics. Local labor market information can help students make more informed decisions about their career choices. In addition, when students are exploring possible careers, CWIA local labor market information can help them answer important questions, such as:

- Which industries employ people in occupations that interest you?
- Where will you be able to find a job?
- Are there opportunities for advancement in this occupation or field?
- Will there be opportunities in the field after you complete the required training or education?
- How much might you be able to earn?

Adult education staff can use CWIA local labor market information to investigate in-demand careers located in specific workforce investment areas or communities. This information can be accessed at the following sites:

- PA Fast Facts is published by CWIA on a monthly basis for each workforce investment area in the Commonwealth and offers a basic overview of labor market data including:
 - Unemployment data;
 - Industries with growing companies;
 - The “Top 25 Industries” for hiring;
- [Labor Market Information System](#); and
- [Pennsylvania Career Education and Work Standards](#).

Career Pathways Maps

Career pathways maps provide a graphic overview of the education, experience, and skills needed to gain employment or advance in an industry, and associated salaries. These maps can be easily incorporated into lessons; for example, staff can use career maps to:

- Explore occupations and salary scales;
- Demonstrate qualifications (e.g., education, experience, skills, abilities) needed for different occupations;

- Provide a perspective on what is needed to be promoted within an industry;
- Inform action plans; and
- Identify how classroom content supports skill development and job attainment.

Pennsylvania's Division of Adult Education career pathways leadership project staff developed general and occupation-specific career pathways maps. Staff-developed resources also provide suggestions for incorporating them into the classroom, for example 20 Ways to Use Career Pathways Maps.

Postsecondary Education

According to the National Association for College Admission Counseling,ⁱⁱ many students need support preparing for postsecondary education. Low-income students particularly need information to prepare for the financial and academic demands of postsecondary programs. The Consortium on Chicago School Researchⁱⁱⁱ found that mentors can help students navigate the complicated process of preparing, applying, and paying for college. Many students enrolled in adult education classes see teachers and case managers as mentors and rely on them to assist with their transition to a postsecondary school, which may be an integral component of their career pathway.

Certificate Programs

Certificate programs provide job-specific training. Students generally enroll in certificate programs with employment as an end goal. They can earn a certificate after taking a series of courses related to a particular industry occupation. Certificate programs are offered by career and technical education centers, community colleges, colleges, private training providers, or other educational and training institutions.

Degree Programs

Degree programs are typically offered at community colleges, colleges and universities. Degrees offered include:

- Associate's (two years);
- Bachelor's (four years);
- Master's (typically two years beyond bachelor's degree); and
- Doctoral (three to six years beyond a bachelor's or master's degree).

Students in degree programs are required to take general education courses that may not pertain to the student's specified degree program. For example, a student majoring in biology may also be required to take art, physical education, English, math, philosophy and sociology classes in addition to science courses.

These resources can help students with postsecondary education planning:

- [College Scorecards](#) (U.S. Department of Education's College Affordability and Transparency Center) helps students identify colleges based on affordability and value;

- [The Pay Scale](#) has tools to calculate the return on investment for different colleges based on their job placement rates.

Career and Technical Education

Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs offer certificate courses that prepare students for employment and additional postsecondary education. CTEs are designed to assist students gain or refine their technical and academic skills needed to meet their career pathway goals. Students that enroll in CTE programs learn hands-on skills in a short period of time. Typically, CTEs are more affordable than degree programs and may be offered through local Career and Technology Centers (CTCs), high schools, community colleges, or colleges and universities.

The Career and Technical Education Foundation's 10-page booklet, *A Guide to Understanding Career and Technology Education*, outlines the benefits of enrolling in CTE programs.

The Association for Career and Technology Education reports the following outcomes for CTE students:

- A CTE degree or credential can increase earnings between \$4,000 and \$19,000 over a humanities associate's degree;
- Twenty-seven percent of people with less than an associate's degree (includes those with CTE licenses and certificates) earn more than someone with a bachelor's degree; and
- Nearly 47 million middle-skill jobs will be created by 2018, 30% of these jobs will require some postsecondary training,^{iv} such as an associate's degree or certificate.^v

The Pennsylvania Association of Career & Technical Administrators provides a list of its [Member Organizations](#) with a link to each school's website along with other information about CTE.

Proprietary Schools

Proprietary schools are privately-owned, for-profit business and career schools. These schools provide training in specific trades, occupations, or vocations. Students who graduate from these schools generally earn a certificate (as opposed to a degree). In Pennsylvania, these schools are known as Private Licensed Schools; the schools and their programs are licensed through the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Postsecondary and Adult Education.

Information on these programs can be found on the Department of Education's [Pages on Private Licensed Schools](#).

Community Colleges

Community colleges are publicly funded higher education institutions. They provide local communities affordable and accessible education. Community colleges offer a range of educational options, such as, certificate programs, licenses, associate's degrees, and bachelor's degrees. Their smaller class and campus size can be a benefit for returning adult learners.

Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Credentialing Programs

The Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) Grant Program provides funds to eligible higher education institutions, such as community colleges. The U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Education issue these grants to ensure that postsecondary institutions help people obtain the education needed to obtain living-wage careers. Participating programs are required to target skilled occupations in manufacturing, healthcare, or energy, and offer training that can be completed in two years or less. In Pennsylvania, these programs are known as [JobTrakPA](#).

For more information visit the [US Department of Labor website](#) or find a list of grantees and a summary of project descriptions in the [Summary of Grantees](#).

Colleges and Universities

Colleges and universities are accredited as institutions of higher learning by the state. They offer educational routes to the following degrees: associate's, bachelor's, master's and doctorate. A bachelor's degree signifies that a student has completed a core group of general education courses and pursued one subject in depth. A graduate degree (e.g., master's, doctoral) usually requires two or more years of advanced subject-specific courses, such as, law, social work, or medicine, in addition to the four years of undergraduate courses. Colleges and universities also provide a host of other educational services and certificate programs.

The [List of Colleges and Universities](#) allows you to explore colleges and universities by state.

Postsecondary Entrance Requirements

Entrance requirements vary based on the postsecondary institution and the specific program (e.g., Teacher Education versus Occupational Therapy). Students should contact the school's admissions department to request specific information about the entrance requirements. It is also beneficial for a student to visit the school before applying. To prepare for informational phone calls or school visits students may want to create a list of questions such as these:

- When is the enrollment deadline?
- Is there an application fee? (If there is, ask for the fee to be waived.)
- Are scholarships or other types of financial assistance available?
- Is there an entrance exam?
- What standards are used for acceptance?
- Is the school accredited and licensed?
- Are remedial courses required and/or offered?
- What types of jobs are graduates getting?
- Does the school have job placement services?

Adult education programs may want to develop and maintain a list of the answers to these and other commonly-asked questions for each post-secondary school in the region. Furthermore, programs can begin to develop partnerships with these schools. These relationships can benefit

students in a variety of ways, for example, conditional acceptance or streamlined application process.

Most schools require students to take an entrance exam. This exam often determines whether a student will be admitted and/or whether remedial courses are required following enrollment or as a condition for admittance. Following is a list of the more common entrance exams:

- Accuplacer CPT: Tests Reading Comprehension, Math and Vocabulary;
- [Compass](#): Tests Reading Comprehension, Math, Vocabulary and Usage;
- [SAT](#) Tests Reading Comprehension, Math and Writing Skills;
- TEAS-5: Tests Reading Comprehension, Math, English and Science;
- and
- [Wonderlic](#): Tests Math and Vocabulary.

A site that offers practice tests for these and many more academic or occupational tests is [Test Prep Review](#).

Costs Associated With Postsecondary Education

Books

The cost of books can easily add up; one book can cost \$100 or more. In most cases, students are responsible for paying for their own books. Some students rely on student loans to help cover these costs. Practitioners can guide students to investigate alternative options to purchasing new books; some of these options are:

- Buying used books at the school bookstore or online;
- Renting books; and
- Using books from the library (most instructors will put a copy on reserve in the library).

Fees

Student fees, such as, athletic fees, technology fees, and student services fees, are generally not included in tuition. These fees are usually mandatory, regardless of whether or not a student uses the services. These costs appear as a separate fee on tuition statements.

Transportation

Many adult students lack access to reliable transportation. When helping students decide on a postsecondary school, practitioners may want to discuss transportation options to ensure that adult students can access the transportation needed to attend classes.

Funding Opportunities

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

- The FAFSA is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. It is a unified process to apply for federal, state, and institutional aid. Federal aid includes: Pell Grants, Stafford Loans, and Federal Work Study.
- The FAFSA must be completed and submitted each year the student is enrolled at the postsecondary institution.

- If a first-time student is applying to multiple institutions, FAFSA results can be sent to each school. The student can use the proposed aid package offered by each institution to help make the final decision about where to attend.
- The FAFSA can be completed on paper or [online](#). The online application allows applicants to electronically link to their IRS tax return information.
- The FAFSA is available on January 1. Applicants should check with their educational institutions to see if they have a priority deadline for receiving aid. Deadlines vary for state aid. FAFSA provides a [Deadline Search](#) tool.
- The U.S. Department of Education provides more information on the [Federal Student Aid](#) website.

Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA)

The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) is a state run agency that provides loan servicing, financial aid processing, and administers several student aid programs. The Pennsylvania State Grants are awarded using the FAFSA application (see below). Grants are awarded based on financial need and the cost (tuition, room and board, incidentals) of attending the chosen institution.

Online resources related to PHEAA include:

- [PHEAA American Education Services Federal Loan Servicing](#);
- [You Can Deal With It](#) (loan services).

More information, including the full application, annual deadlines, and a list of eligible schools are available at these websites:

- [PHEAA Funding Opportunities](#);
- [PHEAA Eligible Schools](#).

Pell Grant

The Pell Grant is a federal grant for students with financial needs enrolled in certificate or degree programs. Pell grants are not loans and do not have to be repaid. Awardees must be U.S. citizens and have a high school diploma or a high school equivalency diploma. The grant amount varies; \$5,550 was the maximum award for the 2011-2012 academic year.

The application for a Pell Grant is tied into the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Pell Grants can be used to pay tuition, fees, and other expenses related to education, including books.

If the student is accepted into an eligible program and takes remedial courses offered by the program, Pell Grants can be used to pay for those courses. Up to one academic year of remedial courses can be counted towards the student's enrollment status for federal aid.

More information can be found on the [Pell Grant](#) website.

Local Scholarships

In addition to grants, student loans, and Work Study opportunities, career pathways students should consider researching local scholarship opportunities. Many community groups, religious institutions, and high schools offer scholarships to local students working to advance their education. Students should inquire at their perspective postsecondary institution to see if they offer scholarships. Practitioners can work with students and nonprofit partners to build a database of well-known local scholarships, application criteria, and deadlines.

There are a host of online resources to help with scholarship searches. Before searching online, program staff can take some time to talk to students about their talents or background, as many scholarships are related to specific personal characteristics including race or ethnicity, parents' educational background, income level, field of study, or professional goals.

Resources for online scholarship search resources include:

- [Cappex](#);
- [My College Options](#);
- [The Sallie Mae Fund](#);
- [Fast Web](#);
- [Scholarship America](#);
- [Jeannette Rankin Women's Scholarship Fund](#); and
- [Scholarships for Women](#).

Workforce Development Partners

Background Information: Workforce Investment Act, Title I

In 1998, the U.S. Congress enacted the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Under the purview of the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, WIA funds are used to support workforce development. Four relevant components to this funding system are:

- Title I: supports adults, dislocated workers and youth seeking jobs;
- Title II: supports adult education and literacy programming;
- Title III: supports state employment services;
- Title IV: supports vocational rehabilitation programs.

Title I funds the national network for one-stop centers (in Pennsylvania, the PA CareerLink[®] sites) which fund employment and training programs. These one-stop centers are administered by state and Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs). In Pennsylvania, there are 22 LWIBs representing the 23 Pennsylvania Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIA). LWIAs are regions with common labor pools. A list of all of Pennsylvania's LWIBs and LWIAs can be found on the [State and Local Workforce Investment Board Contacts](#) webpage.

Pennsylvania LWIBs determine how Title I funding will be spent within its Workforce Investment Area. Title I-funded services for adult and dislocated workers include:

- **Core services:** Available at PA CareerLink[®] sites and can include access to skills assessments, job listings and help finding employment, career information and exploration, and local labor market information;
- **Intensive services:** Available to job seekers who have not been able to find work using the core services, who are employed but need additional services to retain their employment, or to those that have other requirements established by the LWIB; and
- **Training services:** Available to job seekers who have not successfully found employment using either of the above categories; these services can include, occupational training, on-the-job training, job readiness training, and adult education.

Title I Eligibility

Any job seeker may be eligible to receive WIA-funded services. There are three categories of job seekers:

- **Adults:** Eighteen and older (additional requirements);
- **Dislocated Workers** (additional requirements):
 - Have been laid off or have been notified that they will be laid off;
 - No longer have or are eligible for unemployment benefits;
 - Self-employed but unable to sustain this type of work due to the economy;
 - Displaced homemakers;
- **Youth:** Fourteen to twenty-one-year olds (additional requirements).

For additional information about eligibility for Title I services, consider scheduling a meeting with the staff at your local PA CareerLink[®] site.

Background Information: High Priority Occupations

Pennsylvania's workforce development system aligns its education and training funding with High-Priority Occupations (HPOs). Each year, the [Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry](#) (L&I) prepares a list of HPOs drawing on state and federal labor market data, projections based on U.S. Department of Labor models, and a three-part process to identify occupations likely to grow or be in demand. HPO reports are developed for the state and for each Workforce Investment Area.

HPOs are jobs that:

- Are in high demand by employers;
- Have advanced skill requirements; and
- Provide family sustaining wages.

A full list of HPOs for Pennsylvania and each LWIA is available on the L&I High Priority Occupations webpage.

Background Information: Assessments

Test of Adult Basic Education

The Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) assesses adult learners' skills and knowledge. The TABE does not have passing or failing scores, it helps providers determine the educational level of the student. Some adult education programs in Pennsylvania use this assessment as a placement exam for students who would like to enroll in adult education programs. They may also use the TABE score to determine whether the Title I applicant should enroll directly into a postsecondary school or be referred to an adult education program for remediation before enrolling in postsecondary classes.

WorkKeys®

WorkKeys, developed by ACT®, is a nationally recognized assessment that measures skills needed for success in the workplace: Applied Mathematics, Reading for Information, Locating Information. The assessment can also help determine job seekers' interests and training needs. A Bronze, Silver or Gold Certificate is awarded based on the test-taker's score. Job seekers can list the Career Readiness Certificate on their resume to evidence proficiency in workplace skills. Job seekers can take the WorkKeys® assessment at most PA CareerLink® sites. Some PA CareerLink® sites use WorkKeys® as part of the criteria for determining ITA awards.

Adult education providers can help prepare students to take the WorkKeys® assessment and other assessments using the **Worldwide Information Network® (WIN®)** or **KeyTrain**. [WIN® courseware](#) includes over 1,200 hours of instruction and over 22,000 pages of print and electronic contextualized basic skills instructional activities that focus on preparing individuals for the workforce. Many programs can access WIN® through workforce development partners. For a limited time, the Division of Adult Education also provides access to this remediation program. Interested adult education providers should contact their assigned PDS Lead Consultant for additional information and support on accessing and using WIN® in the classroom.

Background Information: Requirements for Employment

Employment requirements differ based on individual positions. It is essential that students understand the varying requirements and duties of the application process and job. Students can then better determine if they are qualified for the position. Common employment requirements include:

- A valid driver's license;
- U.S. citizenship or appropriate work credentials;
- Proof of required educational degrees, certificates or licenses;
- Clearances that may include FBI or Act 33/34;
- Computer skills;
- Specific physical abilities—such as lifting, standing, etc.;
- The ability to work varying shifts; and
- Drug testing.

PA CareerLink®

PA CareerLink® is a collaborative consortium of agencies mandated to provide employment and career services to job seekers and employers. Some counties are served by multiple PA CareerLink® sites while other counties provide services through satellite sites or hubs.

PA CareerLink® sites offer a variety of services that may differ from site to site. Many of these sites assist clients to access postsecondary schooling and employment opportunities. Some of the services they offer include job vacancy listings, career counseling, basic skills training, training funds, referrals to training programs, and unemployment insurance claims processing. Some PA CareerLink® sites have partners that may include adult education providers, postsecondary schools, human service agencies, and employers.

Staffing at PA CareerLink® sites varies by site; typically each site includes a site administrator and support staff who oversee the coordination of services. Many sites have a weekly staff meeting where representatives from all partner agencies gather to discuss operational items, such as, upcoming job fairs, new employer needs, emerging industries, and new degree or certificate programs at partnering postsecondary schools. At some locations, the site administrator also meets regularly with representatives from each of the partners to exchange information about site operations. These meetings may be open to non-CareerLink® staff and could offer adult education practitioners and case managers a wealth of local employment information and partnership possibilities.

A list of all of PA CareerLink® sites can be found on the Bureau of workforce Development Partnership webpage. They are listed by region; contact information for each site administrator is included.

PA CareerLink® Opportunities

The PA CareerLink® sites offer a variety of opportunities for workforce development partners and adult education providers to collaborate. These sites provide a variety of services that support students and clients when seeking employment and educational and training opportunities.

Workshops

Each PA CareerLink® site offers informational and skill-building workshops on a monthly, weekly, or daily basis, depending on the site. Before students can participate in these workshops, they may be required to be registered in Job Gatewaysm.

PA CareerLink® sites usually offer orientation session that might of interest to adult education students. Orientations sessions typically introduce and explain the programs and resources available at the site. They usually include information, such as, guidance on self-directed and staff assisted services, and Individual Training Accounts (ITAs).

Workshop topics vary by site and often include:

- Developing resumes;
- Internet job searching;
- Interviewing skills;

- Microsoft® Office skills;
- Careers in specific fields such as Allied Health, MechaTronics, or Natural Gas; and
- ITA-approved training programs.

Job Developers

PA CareerLink® job developers help students find and secure employment. Students can get help to:

- Develop a resume;
- Develop a cover letter that can be modified as needed; and
- Apply for appropriate job openings listed through the PA CareerLink® system.

Veterans' Representatives

PA CareerLink® sites have trained representatives to provide employment services for veterans. These representatives can help veterans match their job skills to job openings and contact employers on behalf of a veteran for hiring consideration. They also provide referrals to:

- General social service organizations;
- Training organizations; and
- Government and local veteran service agencies.

To find the veterans' program closest to you, contact your local PA CareerLink® site or call this toll-free number, (866) 858-2753.

Job Developers

At PA CareerLink® sites, job developers maintain current information about employers who are hiring in their Workforce Investment Area. Job developers have access to up-to-date employment information such as newspapers, websites, and employer groups and contacts. Furthermore, current job openings are distributed weekly to PA CareerLink® site staff and partners. As a result, job developers can sometimes directly link job seekers to job openings.

Business Services Team

PA CareerLink® sites typically have a Business Services Team that serves as the primary connection between employers and the PA CareerLink® site. The team fosters relationships with employers who can help students find jobs. They keep employers informed on PA CareerLink® programs and services and how these services may benefit their company or organization. Adult education programs might want to investigate opportunities to become members of the Business Services Team or determine the best way to communicate and share information with the team.

Funding Opportunities at the PA CareerLink® Sites

Trade Adjustment Assistance and Other Dislocated Worker Funding

The federally funded Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) supports workers who are unemployed due to changes in foreign trade (e.g., increased imports, jobs moving overseas). The TAA program provides them with opportunities to retrain to meet the needs of the local labor market. The local PA CareerLink® site office manages the grant monies. Individuals can apply

for TAA benefits and services, such as job training, income support, job search, relocation allowances, and assistance with healthcare premium costs at the PA CareerLink[®] site.

ITA Funding

ITAs provide tuition assistance for education and training related to specific career fields offered by approved programs and providers. Approved postsecondary and training institutions must offer at least one program aligned to a designated HPO in their region.

Funding for ITAs, provided through the Workforce Investment Act, Title I, is reserved for those who:

- Need to update their skills in order to obtain employment;
- Cannot fund training using other funding sources; or,
- Need more funding than what is provided by other grant programs (e.g., Pell Grants, Trade Adjustment Assistance).

For current eligibility and application details, contact your local PA CareerLink[®] site.

More information on approved training providers and their programs can be found on the [Commonwealth Workforce Development System](#) website. To search for eligible training programs in your area, please visit the Pennsylvania Workforce Development's [Training and Individual Training Accounts](#) webpage.

Commonwealth Workforce Development System

The Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS) connects businesses and individuals to workforce development and other supportive services, such as independent living services. To access or get more information about available services, contact:

- Department of Labor & Industry;
 - PA CareerLink[®];
 - Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR);
 - Center for Workforce Information & Analysis (CWIA);
- Department of Public Welfare, Bureau of Employment & Training Programs.

Job Gatewaysm

[Job Gatewaysm](#) is Pennsylvania's online tool that provides a variety of job-related resources including:

- Career exploration tools;
- Information on training programs;
- Ability to search for PA CareerLink[®] sites by zip code;
- Labor market statistics;
- Job search tools (job seekers can review thousands of employment opportunities from dozens of websites including: Monster[®], Career Builder, employer and government job boards). *Note:* The Department of Labor and Industry's initiative known as Job Spidering is now a part of Job Gatewaysm. When job seekers search for employment

opportunities through Job Gatewaysm, they have the ability to review job postings from numerous sites;

- Resume creation tools;
- Place to upload a resume in order to apply for jobs;
- Employer search tool (employers can look for job seekers and view resumes);
- Job recommendations based on job preferences; and
- Job tracking search activities (job seekers can track where they have applied and the employers they have contacted).

Job Gatewaysm can also be accessed via PA CareerLink[®] sites; employers, service providers, job seekers, and adult students can create an account on the [Job Gatewaysm](#) home page.

Making Connections to Businesses

Rather than just directing students to apply for jobs based on various “help wanted” advertisements, practitioners may want to become familiar with the area’s leading employers. Making these connections, through Workforce Development Partners (at your local PA CareerLink[®] site) and other employer networks, such as Chambers of Commerce and [WEDnetPA](#), can establish a mutually beneficial relationship.

Top employers can be found on the [Top 50 Employers](#) website. Employers are listed by county and statewide. Adult education staff may want to consider developing a spreadsheet listing top employers, other employers who have hired adult education students, contact information and any other information that will help link individual job seekers to employment opportunities. Practitioners can begin researching different companies online by visiting their websites and viewing employment opportunities, eligibility information, application procedures, and human resources contact information. Once practitioners have completed the research and have a basic understanding of the employers’ needs, they can rely on networking abilities and contacts to get to know these employers and inform them about adult education programs and students.

Once a partnership has been formed between the employer and the adult education program, programs could develop a basic partnership agreement. The agreement might include:

Adult education program will:

- Receive and distribute job postings and materials to students about employment opportunities with the employer;
- Allow the employer to send representatives to meet with students about job opportunities as appropriate;
- Assist interested students to apply for jobs available with the employer;
- Contact the employer about these students as appropriate; and
- Designate an adult education staff member as the employer contact person.

The employer will:

- Provide the adult education program with job postings and materials about employment opportunities;
- Send representatives to meet with students about job opportunities as appropriate; and
- Designate an employer staff member as the adult education program contact.

The national [Adult Career Pathways Training and Support Center](#) released an Issue Brief in April 2013 entitled, *Engaging Employers to Support Adult Career Pathways Programs*. The brief offers strategies that can be used to engage employers and establish business-education partnerships designed to support career pathways programs. To help programs develop their own approaches, the brief highlights promising practices from adult education programs in three states, including Pennsylvania.

Job and Career Fairs

Job and career fairs are events where job seekers, employers, postsecondary and training institutions, and other service providers unite to present employment and training opportunities. While various businesses and organizations may sponsor job and career fairs in the community, each PA CareerLink[®] site typically sponsors these events. Some events are industry-specific job fairs relevant to local employment opportunities. Job fairs are good opportunities for students to learn additional information about the local labor market and career pathways available in the community.

Adult education programs may want to attend job and career fairs to recruit students *and* cultivate partnerships with the employers, postsecondary schools and other service providers that will benefit their students' career pathways.

Follow-Up Opportunities

Individual Discussions

It is important to develop an individual relationship with all students. Through one-on-one sessions, practitioners can assess students' specific needs, interests, and abilities to develop a plan for their career pathway.

One approach is based on the *Seven Steps to Family Development*.^{vi} In this book, the author, Claire Forest, suggests creating a mutually beneficial partnership with individual clients (students). This student-centered, case management approach provides an organized, structured plan to assist students with their varying career pathways' goals. Following are some examples.

- The case manager should develop a partnership with each student.
- The case manager and student should collaboratively assess needs and strengths on a regular basis.
- The student should set their own goals with caseworker guidance.
- Students should work with their caseworker towards the goals while identifying specific objectives in order to attain their goals.
- The case manager should help each student develop a plan outlining steps to achieve their goals; some tasks should be the responsibility of the student, others the responsibility of the caseworker.
- Accomplishments should be celebrated and the plan should be continually updated.
- The student should learn and practice the skills needed to become self-sufficient.
- The student should use services as “stepping stones” to reach their goals.
- Each student's sense of responsibility should be restored or established through this process so the student is better able to handle challenges in the future.^{vii}

Group Activities

While individual discussions might be the best way for practitioners to get to know students, group activities can also be used as a method to engage students. Inviting speakers from local employers, professional organizations, and postsecondary schools to talk with students can be useful for sharing information. Field trips to campuses, businesses, or other professional organizations can provide students with first-hand knowledge about these organizations. However, transportation can be barrier for students and programs; plans for transportation may need to be arranged.

Programs can design a workshop where students can develop their resumes with a focus on using the computer as a tool for teaching writing and other basic skills. Also, programs can consider workshops on some of the HPOs, or challenge students to conduct mock interviews with one another, again, with the focus on improving basic skills. The possibilities are endless; staff can use creativity to develop beneficial group activities. Adult education program staff might be willing to brainstorm other possible group activities at an upcoming Program Improvement Team meeting.

Job Shadowing

Job shadowing offers students the opportunity to observe a professional working in the students' targeted career field. Students can observe the day-to-day job responsibilities and can have their questions answered by someone who knows the job details.

The *Making Connections to Businesses* section of this Resource Guide features information on the importance of establishing and maintaining contact with local employers as a key strategy to help students obtain entry level employment associated with their defined career pathway. Once solid relationships have been established with employers, practitioners may consider calling on them to see if they are willing to allow a student—interested in a career at their business or organization—to shadow one of their employees for a few hours or days.

Before a student goes to job shadow, programs may want to help the student determine appropriate clothing (ask the employer for guidance) and develop a list of questions to ask to get the most out of the event. Once the job-shadowing experience is complete, encourage the student to send thank-you notes to the business contact and the partnering employee.

Campus Visits

Adult education program staff may want to arrange a visit to a postsecondary school. Such visits can help students decide if pursuing postsecondary education is an appropriate goal. Visits might include a campus tour; meeting with an advisor, faculty or staff; and observing a class. Programs may want to consider providing this opportunity to all adult education students, not just those planning to attend postsecondary education or training. Exposure to schools may help adult students feel more comfortable choosing postsecondary education as a career pathways step.

Project-Based Work

Case managers may want to consider working with instructors to identify classroom projects that enable students to practice and demonstrate academic skills in a simulated work context.

Following are some examples.

- Students create a portfolio containing:
 - Letters students wrote with Microsoft® Word using different tones;
 - Flyers students created in Microsoft® Publisher;
 - Spreadsheets students developed in Microsoft® Excel (useful for students interested in secretarial or clerical work).
- Students create and present a Microsoft® PowerPoint presentation on a specific occupation or postsecondary school they are considering.
- Teacher introduces the concept of assembly lines. In groups students plan and put together boxes, bird houses, etc. This example also promotes teamwork.

Employment Opportunities

Pennsylvania Career Coach

In 2012, the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry developed and launched the PA Career Coach. This web-based tool allows job seekers and people examining career pathways to explore a variety of options. The website offers: up-to-date local employment data including current and projected job openings, recent job growth data, occupations and earnings matching the job seeker's current skills and knowledge, and specific education or training programs in the local area.

Students can begin their search by entering their name and zip code, the site then returns results based on interests and location.

Job Spidering and Job Gatewaysm

The Department of Labor and Industry's initiative known as Job Spidering is now part of Job Gatewaysm (see below). Job Spidering allows job seekers to search and review results from multiple sites including:

- [Monster®](#);
- [CareerBuilder](#);
- Employer Job Boards; and
- Government Job Boards.

These tools provide access to thousands of online job postings.

The Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry launched [Job Gatewaysm](#) in July 2012 to link skilled job seekers and employers.

Through this resource, job seekers:

- Can access more than 200,000 job openings;
- Can create and upload a resume that is then available to thousands of employers; and

- Will receive information on recommended jobs based on their preferences.

Through this resource, employers:

- Can post job openings;
- Can receive information about job seekers;
- Can sort and filter job seekers by capabilities; and
- Can connect with job seekers.

END NOTES

ⁱ First attributed to Doran, G. T. (1981). There's a S.M.A.R.T. way to write management's goals and objectives. *Management Review*, Volume 70, Issue 11(AMA FORUM), pp. 35–36.

ⁱⁱ Moses Palacios, & Skababik. (2010). *Recommendations of the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Reauthorization*. Arlington, VA: National Association for College Admission Counseling Retrieved from <http://www.nacacnet.org/issues-advocacy/policy/Documents/ESEAREcs.pdf>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Williams, V. (2012). Talking points: The Pathways to College Act. Arlington, VA: National Association for College Admission Counseling. Retrieved from http://www.nacacnet.org/issues-advocacy/policy/Documents/Talking Points_Pathways.pdf

^{iv} Association for Career and Technical Education. (n.d.). CTE Today! Arlington, VA: Association for Career and Technical Education. Retrieved from www.acteonline.org

^v Maya, R., & Meyer, L. (n.d.). New jobs forecast predicts millions of workers being left behind: Shift to “College Economy” intensifies. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce.

^{vi} Forest, C. (2003). *Empowerment skills for families: A worker handbook*. Ithaca, NY: Family Development Press.

^{vii} Forest, C. (2003). *Empowerment skills for families: A worker handbook*. Ithaca, NY: Family Development Press, p. 38.