



TRANSFORMING U.S. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT POLICIES FOR THE 21st CENTURY

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Redesigning Workforce Development Strategies

10

A New Way of Doing Business

The Career Pathway Approach in Minnesota and Beyond

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THE NEED FOR CAREER PATHWAYS

The economy has gone through a dramatic transformation over the past 40 years, making postsecondary education and technical training the primary gateway out of low-wage work and into the middle class (Carnevale, Smith, and Strohl 2010). Yet, for numerous reasons, too many Americans cannot access such education and training. According to a recent international survey, *Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies 2012*, 18 percent of U.S. adults have low literacy skills and 30 percent have low numeracy skills (Goodman et al. 2013). Their skill levels are too low to succeed in postsecondary educa-

tion, and many of these lower-skilled adults struggle to succeed in the workplace.¹ Additionally, tuition and fees at postsecondary institutions have increased nearly four times faster than median family income, and are far beyond what low-income and lower-skilled individuals can afford (Reimherr et al. 2013). Low-income students with children also struggle to afford basic necessities like child care and transportation to stay in school.

Compounding these challenges is that many workers and job seekers do not know where or how to get the education or training necessary to begin a career. They lack access to career guidance (Choitz, Soares, and Pleasants 2010) and face a confusing array of education and training options. Most attend multiple institutions, but the credits and credentials earned in one program often do not transfer to another. Navigating the maze of education and training offerings is not any easier for small and medium-sized employers, who often want to expand their capacity to offer learning options for their workforces or need help finding workers with the right skills and credentials. All of these dynamics mean both workers and employers waste tremendous economic opportunity because they are not getting what they need. It also means that public dollars supporting existing programs could be better leveraged if educational opportunities and services were better coordinated and aligned.

AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

The career pathway approach connects progressive levels of education, training, support services, and credentials for specific occupations in a way designed to optimize the progress and success of individuals with varying levels of abilities and needs (including those with limited education, skills, English, and/or employment experience). The goal is to help individuals earn marketable credentials, engage in further education and employment, and achieve economic success. Importantly, the career pathway approach deeply engages employers and helps meet their workforce needs; it also helps states and communities strengthen their workforces and economies. However, it is not simply a new

model—it is a *systems transformation* strategy (Alliance for Quality Career Pathways [AQCP] 2014).

According to the AQCP, career pathways operationalize this approach and include three essential features and four functions as summarized in Box 10.1. Career pathways include secondary career and technical education programs of study, adult career pathways, and apprenticeships, among others. This approach can benefit low-income, lower-skilled adults, and youth in particular—who often must balance work, family, and school—by providing manageable segments of education and training that are tailored to learner needs, closely tied to regional industry and employer needs, infused with supportive services and career navigation assistance, and connected to marketable credentials that can be stacked throughout one’s career. This case study on Minnesota and the AQCP focuses on career pathways for low-income, lower-skilled adults.

Box 10.1 Career Pathway and Program Features and Functions

Features:

- 1) Well-connected and transparent education, training, support service, and credential offerings (often delivered via multiple linked and aligned programs)
- 2) Multiple entry points that enable both well-prepared students and targeted populations with limited education, skills, English, and work experiences to successfully enter the career pathway
- 3) Multiple exit points at successively higher levels leading to self- or family-supporting employment and aligned with subsequent entry points

Functions:

- 1) Participant-focused education and training
- 2) Consistent and non-duplicative assessments of participants’ education, skills, and assets/needs
- 3) Support services and career navigation assistance to facilitate transitions
- 4) Employment services and work experiences

Each career pathway includes a progressive set of competencies and credentials that often span across education and training partners, including adult education and English language instruction, high schools, workforce service providers, and/or postsecondary education institutions. Each career pathway also includes a range of support services provided by community-based organizations or human service agencies, depending on needs of the participants. Given the breadth and depth of a good career pathway, most often they are made up of individual linked and aligned programs, for example, an adult education “bridge” program that connects adult education students to a one-year technical certificate program in manufacturing production and operations, which is linked and aligned with a two-year associate of applied science degree in manufacturing production and operations.

The idea to align services and programs around the concept of a career pathway began to emerge in the 2000s (Fein 2012) and included Oregon’s Career Pathways Initiative, Washington State’s Integrated Basic Education Skills Training (I-BEST) program, and California’s Career Ladders Project—all three unique efforts. Many other states quickly followed with their own variations on career pathways: in 2007 Minnesota launched its FastTRAC Adult Career Pathways initiative, and Wisconsin created the RISE (Regional Industry Skills Education) Initiative. Today, at least a dozen states have their own career pathway initiatives that are growing into more comprehensive career pathway systems supported by state policy and multiple funding streams, and more are coming online every year. This acceleration is in part due to federal guidance—issued jointly by the U.S. Departments of Labor, Education, and Health and Human Services in 2012—that cited evidence and encouraged states to consider career pathway adoption. Also, there have been multiple federal technical assistance initiatives and public and private funding for career pathways (see U.S. Department of Education 2010; U.S. Department of Labor 2010).²

A body of evidence to support career pathways is beginning to emerge. The career pathway approach truly is a new way of doing business; therefore, it has taken time for partners to come together and align services, programs, funding, and data—all of which must be well-established before rigorous evaluation is appropriate. The integrated, multi-intervention nature of career pathways also poses challenges

for evaluation. However, program evaluations are beginning to provide evidence that the core functions or practices in career pathway programs are more effective than traditional education and training strategies. For example, studies of the Washington State I-BEST (Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training) program find that students achieved greater basic skills gains and were more likely to continue into credit-bearing course work, earn college credits, and attain occupational certificates than similar non-I-BEST students (Zeidenberg, Cho, and Jenkins 2010; Jenkins, Zeidenberg, and Kienzl 2009). I-BEST is a career pathway bridge program in which basic skills instruction occurs concurrently with college-level career training and is contextualized.³ Another study from Stanford University provides support for contextualized math in particular (Wiseley 2011).

Evaluations of programs in Illinois and New York City have shown that support services and student success services—one of the categories of essential functions in career pathways—can play a key role in improving student persistence, credit accumulation, and graduation (Bragg et al. 2009; Linderman and Kolenovic 2009; Scrivener and Weiss 2009). Students in the New York City program overwhelmingly credited enhanced supportive services—financial aid, free access to textbooks, a transportation card, and comprehensive academic, social, and interpersonal support—as the reason they were able to complete their educational programs. Other research provides evidence of effectiveness for these and other core functions and practices often utilized in career pathways (Bailey, Smith Jaggars, and Jenkins 2001; Werner et al. 2013).⁴ An analysis by CLASP reasoned that, “[w]hile the impact of any one of these strategies alone is often modest, the I-BEST experience lends weight to the idea that such strategies may have more impact when combined” (Strawn 2011).

Building from the body of evidence on common *practices* in career pathways, the federal government and foundations have recently invested in rigorous evaluation of career pathway *programs* that integrate several of these practices. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has funded the Health Profession Opportunity Grants and a set of corresponding evaluations, including a randomized control study. HHS also has funded the Innovative Strategies for Increasing Self-Sufficiency, a rigorous evaluation that should have

results available in 2017. A group of philanthropic funders is supporting the Accelerating Opportunity initiative, which includes a rigorous evaluation with results expected in 2015–2016.

THE ALLIANCE FOR QUALITY CAREER PATHWAYS

While the body of evidence grows, local practitioners, agency leaders, employers, and policymakers are forging ahead to adopt the career pathway approach in their states and communities. However, without definitive guidance on the strongest practices and processes to adopt and implement, it is difficult to know if they are on the right track. In 2012, CLASP recognized this challenge and invited 10 leading career pathway states and their local/regional partners—Arkansas, California, Illinois, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Oregon, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin—to form the AQCP supported by the Joyce Foundation, the James Irvine Foundation, and the Greater Twin Cities United Way. The purpose of the Alliance in the first two years was to develop a framework based on existing evidence and “wisdom from the field” that could provide a shared vision and definition of quality career pathways and *systems*.⁵ CLASP and the AQCP purposefully called the first iteration of this framework “version 1.0” because it is expected to evolve as the field generates more evaluation evidence of what works and what makes for quality. Since the field is still at an early stage, career pathway partnerships are continually refining their efforts to improve education, training, and employment outcomes and to scale up and sustain their pathways work.

This comprehensive AQCP framework is a three-part package. The first is a refined set of definitions for the career pathway field; many have been included in the section above. These definitions are inclusive of a variety of career pathways, including those for youth and adults, for job seekers and incumbent workers, and for lower-skilled, nontraditional students as well as more traditional ones. The second part of the framework is a set of criteria and indicators for what constitutes quality career pathway systems (see Box 10.2). The third is the inaugural

Box 10.2 AQCP Criteria and Indicators for Quality Career Pathway Systems

A career pathway system is the cohesive combination of partnerships, resources and funding, policies, data, and shared performance measures that support the development, quality, scaling, and dynamic sustainability of career pathways and programs for youth and adults.

Commit to a shared vision and strategy for industry sector-based career pathways for youth and adults and for building, scaling, and dynamically sustaining career pathway systems.

Engage employers and integrate sector strategy principles to ensure multiple employers, business associations, and labor unions are partners in creating demand-driven career pathways.

Collaborate to make resources available by identifying, prioritizing, and leveraging resources for career pathway systems, partnerships, and programs.

Implement supportive policies for the career pathway systems, pathways, and programs.

Use data and shared measures to measure, demonstrate, and improve participant outcomes.

Implement and integrate evidence-based practices and processes (specifically for local/regional career pathway systems).

set of career pathway participant metrics to measure and manage participant progress and success in a joint, cross-system, and cross-partner approach (AQCP 2014). As of this writing, the AQCP is entering its second phase in which partners will implement the framework, using the criteria and indicators to self-assess their career pathway systems and evolving into using the participant metrics to inform continuous improvement and performance measurement.

MINNESOTA'S FASTTRAC ADULT CAREER PATHWAY PROGRAM AND EVOLVING STATE CAREER PATHWAY SYSTEM

Minnesota FastTRAC (Training, Resources, and Credentialing) is an adult achievement initiative to help educationally underprepared adults achieve success in high-demand careers that pay family-sustaining wages—the strategy is to integrate basic skills and career and technical education along a continuum from foundational skills preparation to a postsecondary credential. It is a critical career pathway program in the state's emerging career pathway system that provides entry points to career pathways in a variety of in-demand fields—including health care, manufacturing, business, construction, transportation, and early childhood education/child development—for low-wage, lower-skilled workers and job seekers.⁶

Minnesota provides an example of a strong state-led career pathway initiative that is evolving into a wider and more comprehensive state career pathway system. Over the years, the state has built a suite of career pathway initiatives for different types of individuals. For example, like most states, Minnesota's career and technical education (CTE) programs provide entry points to postsecondary technical career pathways for many high school students. In 2007, Minnesota took its first steps toward providing career pathways for lower-skilled adults with a planning grant through the Joyce Foundation's Shifting Gears initiative to design FastTRAC. The original core group of partners included the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System (MnSCU), Adult Basic Education (ABE) at the Department of Education, the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), and the Greater Twin Cities United Way.

In addition to the economic imperative of needing more skilled and credentialed workers, a primary motivational factor was that each entity was serving the same lower-skilled population, but in a disjointed way that failed to fully utilize each other's resources effectively. They agreed that they could do better *together* and developed the Minnesota FastTRAC Adult Career Pathway partnership and initiative. This partnership—convened by DEED—has grown over the years to also include the state's Department of Human Services (DHS), Department

of Corrections, Office of Higher Education, Department of Labor and Industry, Governor's Workforce Development Council, and employers, in addition to the original core partners. This partnership aligns resources to fund grantees, supports the importance of career pathways within each agency through an agreed-upon shared vision, and uses shared data made possible with data sharing agreements to support the evaluation and continuous improvement of career pathway programs and local systems.

One example of a FastTRAC career pathway program is the Rochester Medical Careers FastTRAC Pathway program in which participants are trained to become Advanced Hospital Certified Nursing Assistants. It provides participants with two courses of contextualized basic skills instruction linked to a for-credit Advanced Hospital Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) course at Rochester Community and Technical College.⁷ Partners include Workforce Development Inc., Rochester Adult and Family Literacy, Olmsted County United Way, and Mayo Clinic. Entry points into this program include the adult basic education program, the workforce service providers, as well as referrals from the college. The main exit point is an Advanced Hospital CNA credential; however, partners have created seamless transitions for participants into subsequent career pathway programs in health emergency medical technician, unit coordinator, human service technicians, practical nursing, coding specialist, surgical technology, and medical secretary. Credits earned in FastTRAC count toward these subsequent pathways. A staff person called a navigator provides guidance, makes referrals to the supports participants may need, and serves as a central point of contact throughout the pathway. Participant-focused education and training includes contextualized instruction as well as integrated ABE and Advanced Hospital CNA technical skills instruction.⁸

Partners have implemented consistent and nonduplicative assessment of participants' education, skills, and assets/needs by aligning their intake processes. If the participants pass the contextualized basic education bridge course, they can skip the college placement exam and continue taking courses in their health care career pathway of choice. Workforce Development Inc. provides supportive services and career navigation. The navigator supports students through recruitment, assessment, career counseling, individual plan development, job search, and entry into a job. Eligible participants are coenrolled in applicable

support and career navigation programs offered through the workforce system.

The Rochester Medical Careers FastTRAC Pathway program has garnered enthusiastic support from its employer partner. According to Guy Finne, human resources manager at the Mayo Clinic, “[t]his new education model guides learners to GED/diploma attainment AND college/career readiness AND a higher level of employability with college education. The model’s vision created an individualized job training/education experience connecting diverse populations to demanded career pathways in health care. The model’s strategy utilizes an innovative support system (from assessment to job placement) that allows students to enter and exit job training, developmental education and support services at various points based on individual learner’s academic/personal assessments.”⁹

Another example of a career pathway is the new West Metro Pathway to Manufacturing Careers FastTRAC program in Hennepin County (Minneapolis and western suburbs).¹⁰ This pathway offers ABE students, English Language Learners, and long-term unemployed individuals a fundamentals of manufacturing bridge course in which participants gain foundational knowledge and skills necessary to complete the integrated soldering class at Hennepin Technical College. They also earn an industry-recognized soldering certification. From there, participants can seamlessly continue on a manufacturing education and career pathway via the nationally recognized M-Powered precision manufacturing program, which is a partnership among Hennepin Technical College, HIRED (a community-based organization), employers, and the local workforce agency. Career navigators support and guide participants through the West Metro bridge program and into the linked college manufacturing program. Participants can access support services throughout the program as needed.

Results and Scale

Since 2009, the state partnership has funded six rounds of FastTRAC grants. The last two rounds in 2013 and 2014 have been supported with funds from the state workforce development fund as authorized by the state legislature and have funded 25 FastTRAC career pathways. During the previous four rounds (2009–2012), Minnesota

FastTRAC programs were supported through braided funds combining multiple federal, state, and philanthropic sources and served 3,385 individuals. Self-reported data through quarterly program reporting indicates that 88 percent of these individuals completed industry-recognized credentials and/or credits toward those credentials, and 69 percent attained employment and/or continued education in the career pathway (see Table 10.1). Recently, Minnesota has been able to access wage record data from the state Unemployment Insurance records for program exiters in calendar years 2010–2013. On average, almost 60 percent of all exiters entered employment, and 85 percent retained employment for at least 6 months.¹¹ Exiters who had wages in all four quarters after exit earned an average of \$21,080 annually, which is 33 percent more on average than what they earned prior to FastTRAC enrollment (\$15,856). This average percentage increase has risen steadily since 2010, suggesting that, as the programs mature, they may be better able to assist participants in finding better jobs.¹² This increase lifts a family of three out of poverty; however, the average participant is still among the “working poor,” which is why it is critical that Minnesota FastTRAC programs link and align with subsequent programs along career pathways to provide participants with further education and credentials and higher-paying employment.¹³

Table 10.1 Minnesota FastTRAC Participant Outcomes

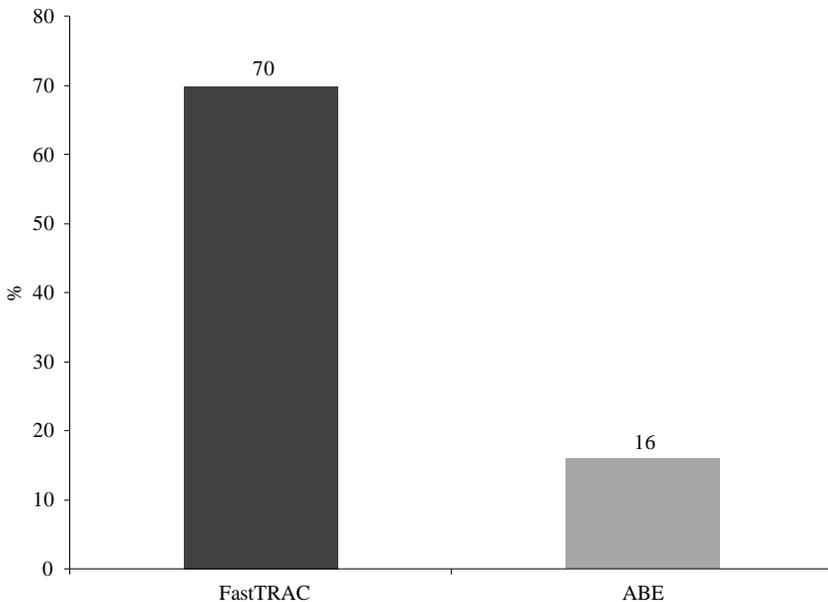
Quarterly self-reported program data; 2009–2012 (N = 3,385)	
Completed industry recognized credentials and/or credits toward those credentials (%)	88
Attained employment and/or continued education in the career pathway (%)	69
Administrative data (Unemployment Insurance wage records) 2010–2013 program exiters (N = 1,019)	
Entered employment (%)	57.2 ^a
Retained employment (%)	84.8
Average wage one year after exit for those with wages in all four quarters (\$)	21,080

^a This percentage includes 2013 program exiters, whereas the other data points only include exiters in 2010–2012.

SOURCE: State of Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development Workforce One system and Unemployment Insurance wage records.

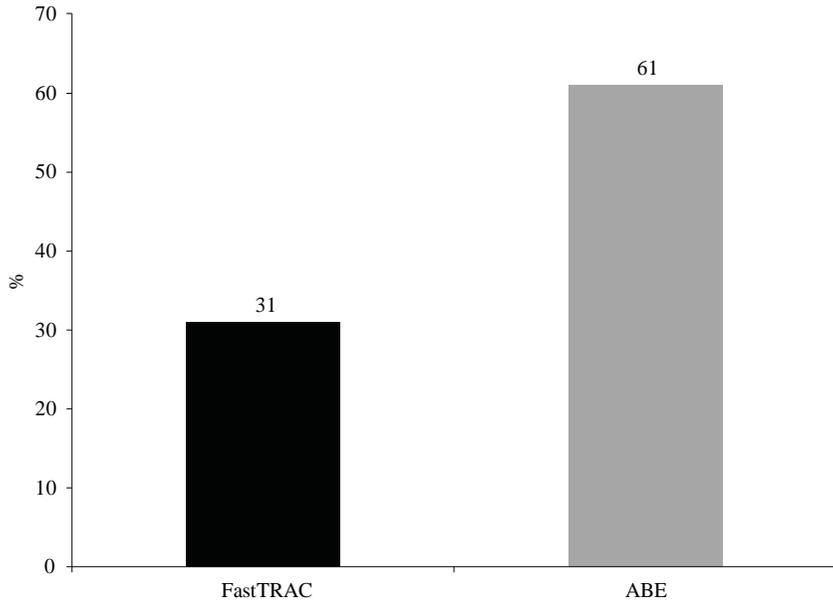
A 2013 study by MnSCU finds that FastTRAC participants were more likely to enroll in college courses than their traditional ABE peers and were more likely to be able to skip developmental education. Seventy percent of the FastTRAC participants flagged in the MnSCU data system in the 2011–2012 academic year were enrolled in college courses (credit and noncredit) during or within one year after participation in FastTRAC, compared to only 16 percent of ABE students who had not participated in FastTRAC (see Figure 10.1). Only 31 percent of FastTRAC participants registered for a developmental education course in the 2011–2012 academic year, compared to 61 percent of traditional ABE learners (see Figure 10.2; Minnesota State Colleges and Universities 2013). Incorporating remedial education into early course work such as career pathway bridge programs greatly increases students' chances of earning a credential and accelerates their progress. As data become available, state FastTRAC partners will work together to ana-

Figure 10.1 Percentages of FastTRAC and ABE Students Enrolled in College Courses during or within One Year of Program Participation (2011–2012 academic year data)



SOURCE: Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (2013).

Figure 10.2 Percentages of FastTRAC and ABE Students Enrolled in a Development Education Course (2011–2012 academic year data)



SOURCE: Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (2013).

lyze the employment and earnings outcomes of Minnesota FastTRAC Adult Career Pathway participants compared to students participating in traditional adult basic education courses required prior to entering occupational skills training programs.

Since 2010, 44 Minnesota FastTRAC programs have been started across all 16 Workforce Service Areas (workforce investment board regions in Minnesota) and on 29 of the 47 MnSCU campuses. Also, approximately 90 percent of Minnesota's ABE service delivery consortia have created career pathway programming.

Building a Minnesota Career Pathway System

This proliferation of Minnesota FastTRAC programs has been supported by a committed and persistent state partnership dedicated to continually refining the model and to building a state career pathway system

(AQCP 2014).¹⁴ The FastTRAC partnership of state agencies (workforce, postsecondary, adult and secondary education, human services, corrections, and others); philanthropy; and employers has met consistently over the last seven years and provides a solid base for a system that supports a suite of different types of pathways. Partners have grown to know each other's systems and have a shared vision of the FastTRAC initiative and desired outcomes. They collaborate to make resources available, improve and/or implement new agency policies and practices to support FastTRAC, work to align data systems, and use a set of shared metrics to measure FastTRAC participant success. They contribute funds to support joint requests for proposals to the field and also coordinate resources that may be outside the joint grant-making process. For example, in 2012–2013, the state partnership “braided” several funding sources together to grant \$1.5 million to 20 FastTRAC partnerships.¹⁵ In 2013, the state legislature significantly increased FastTRAC sustainability by appropriating \$1.5 million per year for FastTRAC from the state's Workforce Development Fund; partners continue to support FastTRAC programs with their own resources as well.

Each partnering agency has made policy changes supportive of career pathways. The state adult basic education office has revamped its State Strategic Plan to reflect the FastTRAC Adult Career Pathway framework and has hired regional transition coordinators to assist FastTRAC programs; it now leads joint professional development for local/regional career pathway partnerships. MnSCU has adopted administrative guidelines for program referral and curriculum alignment between adult basic education and community/technical colleges. The state workforce office has revised state Workforce Investment Act Title I guidelines to require local workforce board plans to support FastTRAC Adult Career Pathway programs and provide staff support to coordinate the state partnership and manage the grants (Roberts and Price 2012). ABE, MnSCU, DEED, and DHS have engaged in the very difficult work of coordinating data across systems to longitudinally track participant progress and success.

Minnesota has been a key partner in the AQCP and is using its framework to strengthen its career pathway efforts. The state has used the framework at the local level, where FastTRAC career pathway programs employed an early version of the self-assessment tool to identify

strengths and areas for improvement. Building from the state FastTRAC partnership and from the AQCP framework, the Governor's Workforce Development Board (the state workforce investment board) has issued recommendations for building a statewide, sector-based career pathway system inclusive of all career pathways, including but not limited to FastTRAC and career and technical education.

CONCLUSION

The career pathways approach has taken root in Minnesota and elsewhere out of an imperative to do better for workers and employers. Early evidence is mounting, rigorous evaluations are under way, and a national framework is emerging to more clearly understand this robust, multifaceted approach to aligning and integrating resources. Supported by a variety of public and private investments, the roots of this education and workforce movement are growing. However, to ensure that emerging career pathway systems at the state and local/regional levels do not topple with the next gubernatorial or presidential change or budgetary shift, systems need to establish deeper roots. We need policy changes across federal and state agencies that support the career pathways approach, such as allowing student financial aid for shorter-term programs that successfully produce graduates with marketable credentials. Also, "formula" funding—federal or state noncompetitive grant funding based on a predetermined formula—should be shaped to support this approach (in addition to discretionary grant funding deployed thus far). And data and performance measurement systems should facilitate career pathway partnerships working together to achieve shared outcomes rather than reinforcing the silos and disconnects in the status quo, for example, performance measured by participant success along the career pathway rather than simply by separate federal programs or funding streams.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act passed in July 2014 to reauthorize federal workforce and adult education programs is a significant step in that direction. The law supports the career pathway approach in its requirements for state and local workforce boards,

unified plans, youth activities, and performance measurement. It also makes career pathways an allowable activity in state leadership activities and funding.

Additionally, a group of leading career pathway partnerships—including state and local partners in Minnesota—has joined together in the AQCP alliance to identify and hone a framework that can help them grow these deeper roots. This *system transformation* work is not easy, but the fruits of the partners' labor promises to improve the way they do business together; to help meet business demand for an educated workforce; to help individuals—with varying needs and abilities—access credentials, careers and economic security; and to strengthen our economies and communities.

Notes

1. For example, adults with low literacy skill levels cannot find the name of a particular congressperson within a summary information sheet that lists the congressional district, the name of the district's representative, and the representative's date and place of birth. Adults with low numeracy skills are unlikely to be able to calculate the total cost of a daily car rental when provided with miles driven that day, cost per day, and the cost per mile driven. (Examples drawn from the American Institutes for Research PIACC Gateway; see www.piacgateway.com.)
2. Publicly funded examples include but are not limited to the Department of Labor's 2010–2011 Career Pathway Institute and the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training grants; the Department of Education's Advancing Career and Technical Education in Career Pathways initiative and the Moving Pathways Forward initiative; and Innovative Strategies to Improve Self-Sufficiency and Health Profession Opportunity Grants administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Philanthropic examples include the Ford Foundation's Bridges to Opportunity initiative, the multifunder Accelerating Opportunity, and the Joyce Foundation's Shifting Gears initiative.
3. Contextualization is an instructional technique that integrates concepts from occupational areas, industries, or sectors with basic skills education.
4. Also see the summary of the research in Foster, Strawn, and Duke-Benfield (2011).
5. According to the AQCP, a career pathway system is the cohesive combination of partnerships, resources and funding, policies, data, and shared performance measures that support the development, quality, scaling, and dynamic sustainability of career pathways and programs for youth and adults.
6. A 2013 implementation study of the 2011 FastTRAC grantees showed that, on average, 57 percent of participants entered the program at or below the 6th–8th grade education level, 31 percent of participants had no wages prior to enrollment, and 53 percent had annual wages of \$20,000 or less. (See Burns et al. [2013].)

7. Minnesota FastTRAC defines contextualized basic skills instruction as building foundational academic and technology skills within an occupational context to prepare for college level work.
8. The integrated course consists of an ABE instructor and a technical instructor teaching in the same classroom.
9. Personal communication with Nola Speiser, April 25, 2014.
10. This program is in its first year of operation; participant numbers will be forthcoming.
11. Employment retention is defined as the proportion of people employed during the first quarter after exit who are also employed during the second and third quarters after exit.
12. Fifty-three percent of all exiters during 2010–2012 had wages in all four quarters after exit. For the exiters who had wages in any of the four quarters after exit (but not all quarters), their average wage increase was 23 percent from an average of \$13,136 to \$16,101. As with the other group of exiters, the average wage increase has steadily increased over the reporting period.
13. Minnesota FastTRAC staff is tracking the number of FastTRAC completers who return to the educational pathway after having been in the workforce. Because many FastTRAC program graduates who left for work have been working for just a few years, this longitudinal data will emerge over time.
14. Dynamic sustainability means not only continuing career pathways, programs, and systems beyond initial development, but also supporting their adaptation and continuous improvement over time based on experience, new information, data, and outcomes. In some cases, it may mean discontinuing career pathways and programs that are not working or no longer in demand.
15. Funding sources included the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title II adult education discretionary funds (\$300,000), WIA Incentive funds (\$650,000), Greater Twin Cities United Way (\$300,000), and Department of Human Services TANF (public assistance) Innovation Funds (\$250,000).

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