iBridge Initiative

Creating a Successful Bridge Program: A *"How To"* Guide

Illinois Bridge Initiative
Leadership Partners

Illinois Community College Board

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ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE & ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
DCEO

Dear Colleagues:

Congratulations for picking up this guide! If you have come across this resource, we are guessing you know firsthand about the enormous challenges of and opportunities for preparing adult workers for better jobs. To aid in implementing bridge programs, Illinois has developed this bridge guide for the local practitioner.

There are not enough educated workers to fuel the economy today and into the future. And while it may seem like a paradox when unemployment figures are so high, there are employers who cannot fill jobs right now because they do not have qualified applicants. Education continues to be the gateway for individuals to advance their economic status and for the nation to improve its economic competitiveness. Yet the current system for educating and preparing low-skill, low-income adult workers does not meet the majority of employer and worker needs. Too often workers who pursue skill upgrades get stuck in courses that never lead to a credential or better jobs, and too often employers find that workforce programs are not able to adapt quickly enough to their changing skill requirements.

We believe that significant policy and institutional changes are required to bring good practice to scale and support a career pathways approach that leads to credentials of value to employers. With this in mind, six years ago The Joyce Foundation launched the Shifting Gears Initiative. This multi-year, multi-million dollar policy and system change effort in six states (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin) was designed to strengthen state postsecondary adult basic education and skills development systems so that more low-skill workers could gain the education, skills, and credentials they need to advance and succeed in our changing economy.

Over the past six years, the Illinois Shifting Gears effort has resulted in the creation of numerous state policies that are already enabling adult education, workforce, and postsecondary institutions to develop occupationally focused bridge programs like the ones profiled in this guide. Now that these policies are in place, state leaders are turning towards implementation. We wish you great success as you consider creating or growing a bridge program in your area.

Sincerely,

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Overview

Illinois is investing in bridge programs as a strategy to help more low-skilled and low-wage workers improve their skills, acquire postsecondary credentials, and move up to better jobs. This is not only good for our workers — it will also increase the productivity and competitiveness of employers in Illinois. Bridge programs integrate basic academic skills development with occupational education in the state's key industry sectors: manufacturing, healthcare, transportation/distribution/logistics, and green technology.

The need is great. By 2020, 67% of jobs will require a college degree or certificate, yet three million Illinois adults do not have a postsecondary education. "Middle-skill" jobs requiring more than a high school credential but less than a four-year degree are projected to account for 45% of all openings between 2006 and 2016. In contrast, low- and high-skill jobs will account for 23% and 31% respectively. In fact, more than one million middle-skill job openings (including new and replacement jobs) are projected for the state by 2016.[1]

Unfortunately, many adults in Illinois do not have the reading, writing, and math skills to qualify for these jobs. Nearly 770,000 working-age Illinois residents lack a high school degree or its equivalent.[2] In 2011, more than 117,000 Illinois community college students — 21% — needed to complete at least one remedial course before entering college-credit programs. This was an increase over the previous four years.[3]

In 2003 the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's (DCEO) Critical Skills Shortage Initiative and the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) leadership began to systematically explore bridge programs as a solution. Based on the promising results of pilot programs in the state and nationally, ICCB and DCEO together launched the Shifting Gears Initiative to develop policies, practices, and professional capacity to build bridge programs throughout the state.

Supported by The Joyce Foundation, the Shifting Gears Initiative produced:

- The Illinois Bridge Definition, which now standardizes program approaches in community colleges, adult education, and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs.
- Changes in WIA training policy and classifications for adult education programs and career and technical education programs to include bridge programs, thereby allowing WIA funding to go toward these programs.
- A data system and measures to track the transitions of students in adult and developmental education through training and employment.
- Development, evaluation, and documentation of innovative, effective practices.
- Outreach materials and professional development tools and programs.

Illinois is continuing to build on the institutional foundations and lessons from the Shifting Gears Initiative by: 1) fostering and promoting the use of bridge programs as an on-ramp to postsecondary occupational training leading to career path employment, 2) strengthening program capacity, and 3) developing accelerated models of integrated basic and occupational skills training that offer credentials.

THE BRIDGE DEFINITION

Bridge programs prepare adults with limited academic or limited English skills to enter and succeed in credit-bearing postsecondary education and training leading to career-path employment in high-demand, middle- and high-skilled occupations. The goal of bridge programs is to sequentially bridge the gap between the initial skills of individuals and what they need to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and career-path employment. The following definition outlines the key components of bridge programs in Illinois. This definition provides a foundation for bridge program design in Illinois.

Bridge Program Core Elements

Bridge programs assist students in obtaining the necessary academic, employability, and technical skills through three required components — contextualized instruction, career development, and support services. Required elements include:

- ***Contextualized instruction*** that integrates basic reading, math, and language skills and industry/occupation knowledge.
- ***Career development*** that includes career exploration, career planning within a career area, and understanding the world of work (specific elements depend upon the level of the bridge program and on whether participants are already incumbent workers in the specific field).
- ***Transition services*** that provide students with the information and assistance they need to successfully navigate the process of moving from adult education or remedial coursework to credit or occupational programs. Services may include (as needed and available) academic advising, tutoring, study skills, coaching, and referrals to individual support services, e.g., transportation and childcare.

Note: Career development and transition services should take into account the needs of those low-income adults who will need to find related work as they progress in their education and career paths.

Bridge Program Eligibility

Bridge programs are designed for adults 16 years and older, who:

- Have reading and math levels at or above the sixth grade through pre-college level or
- Have English language proficiency at or above the low-intermediate ESL level
- May or may not have a high school credential
- May or may not be an incumbent worker

Specific eligibility requirements will depend upon the type of provider offering the bridge program and program requirements.

Program Design Options

A bridge program may be designed as:

1) a single course (for students at higher reading and math levels) that moves students directly into credit-bearing courses, with the aim of eliminating the need for remediation or
2) a series of courses, in which students first complete a lower-level bridge course that prepares them to enter a noncredit or credit occupational course or program that leads to an entry-level job. In this case, the student can "stop out" for needed work/income and return to a higher-level bridge course without having to repeat content.

The bridge program must prepare students to enter credit-bearing courses and programs within one of the 16 nationally recognized career clusters (see: http://www.careerclusters.org/16clusters.cfm). That is, the course content must contain the knowledge and skills common for entry-level occupations within a broad cluster (e.g., Health Science, Manufacturing, Information Technology, etc.). This curriculum design element exposes the student to career information and to information about the skills and knowledge required by a broad range of occupational options within a cluster. The bridge program must be of sufficient duration and intensity to produce these transition results.

Education and Training Providers

Bridge programs may be provided by:

1) An Illinois Community College Board-approved and funded adult education program[4]
2) The credit or noncredit department(s) of a community college
3) Community-based organizations or other types of provider that offer noncredit workforce training

Bridge programs may be offered by a single entity (e.g., a community-based organization or a community college) or by a partnership (e.g., a community-based organization and a community college). Regardless of the provider, they:

- May provide opportunities to earn college credit (such as through escrow credit accounts)
- May offer dual enrollment in credit and noncredit programs
- May offer a multi-level program that moves people from an adult education course offered by one provider to a noncredit occupational course offered by the same or another provider

All bridge program providers use pre-skill assessments consistent with program requirements to place students into the appropriate courses as well as post-skill assessments to measure progress, and all providers use data tracking systems to collect and analyze key information about bridge program participants and graduates.

Bridge Program Outcomes

Short-Term

1) Higher number of low-income working adults enroll in postsecondary education
2) Bridge program graduates who enroll in credit programs succeed in their courses

Long-Term

1) Higher proportion of low-income working adults attain degrees and/or certificates
2) Higher proportion of Adult Basic Education (ABE)/GED, English as a Second Language (ESL), Adult Secondary Education (ASE), and developmental/remedial adult learners transition into and completion of associate's degrees and/or certificates
3) Increases in earnings and job quality for low-income adults engaged in career pathways

PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION OF THIS GUIDEBOOK

This guidebook is built on early lessons of bridge programs in Illinois. It is designed as a resource for those who want to develop a new bridge program or strengthen or expand an existing one.

This guidebook is intended for program directors, deans, curriculum developers, instructors, career development staff, and support services staff in adult education, career and technical education, developmental education, occupational training, employment, and social services who may be based at community colleges, community-based organizations, workforce agencies, social service organizations, employer associations, and even individual employers. Public and private funders, four-year colleges, advocacy organizations, elected officials, and others who work with low-skilled adults may also find it useful.

Because bridge programs must draw on the expertise and resources that cross departmental and organizational boundaries, it is written for inter- and intra-organizational partnerships. Typical partnerships involve adult education providers, community-based organizations, multiple departments and divisions of community colleges, employers, and public agencies.

This guidebook is comprehensive and concrete, including basics, strategies, examples, and worksheets. It is organized to help new programs to anticipate essential steps and to help those who need "just in time information" for redesigning a program or improving a particular program element. Recognizing that bridge programs take a long time to develop, get right, and sustain, this guidebook also includes tips for the continuous improvements required to get the right population, adequate funding, best outcomes, and to adapt to changing contexts to sustain the effort.

These ten chapters cover the key steps in a bridge program. Each chapter reviews the importance of the step, critical "how to's," and working practices from Illinois programs that illustrate how the steps have been organized and implemented in the field. In addition, it provides references to more detailed guides, publications, and tool kits on particular topics.

CHAPTER ONE

Lead the Way: Building the Team

BASICS

Bridge programs call for a diverse set of activities that require the expertise and resources of multiple organizations and departments within an organization. The first step to planning a bridge program is to develop a leadership team that will design core elements of the program, implement the program, evaluate it, and ultimately champion it.

The leadership team will likely evolve and grow as the program develops and expands, starting with a few partners in its initial phases and adapting to increase service scope, capacity, and sustainability.

In Illinois, bridge program leadership teams often include community-based nonprofit organizations, community colleges, adult education providers, workforce development organizations, and employers. This chapter provides guidance in forming and developing the leadership team, selecting additional partners, and formalizing partnership roles and obligations.

HOW TO BUILD A LEADERSHIP TEAM

- Form the initial leadership team
- Develop the leadership team
- Recruit additional program partners
- Formalize roles
- Manage the partners

Form The Initial Leadership Team

Generally, one or two people take the initiative to develop a bridge program. Their interest may be sparked by an observed need or gap in their service menus, a desire to improve outcomes, or new funding opportunities. To begin, a program initiator should reach out to at least one external organization or internal department with a common concern to explore interest, brainstorm possibilities, and develop an initial concept. This process is organic and relates to the experience and interests of those involved.

For example, Instituto del Progreso Latino and Association House, two community-based organizations (CBOs) with a history of working together, approached the Humboldt Park Vocational Education Center of Wilbur Wright College, one of the City Colleges of Chicago, in response to a study by the National Council of La Raza documenting the underrepresentation of Latinos in healthcare jobs. Although Instituto del Progreso Latino already offered literacy training, it had not connected it to healthcare, nor did it have the means to provide the degrees, certificates, and other credentials that are essential to advance in a healthcare career. Program initiators hoped that a partnership with Wright College would make those linkages. With three key partners on board and a basic bridge program outline, they could then approach employers to determine their interest and get information about the skills required for specific jobs and what skills they seek in employees.

In another example, Lake Land College's developmental education dean responded to a specific employer's needs for employees with more technical skills and certifications in automotive technology. However, the company's entry-level workers lacked the English and math skills required to qualify for more technical training in Lake Land's Career and Technical Education (CTE) Department. The dean worked with CTE and developmental education instructors to develop a bridge program to prepare participants to enter credit-based education and to advance in the career pathway.

Early in the process, program initiators may want to involve their institution's or division's executives, such as the president, chief academic officer, or provost in a community college or the executive director in a community-based

organization. The executive can help bring key individuals to the table, make connections among departments and external agencies, identify linkages with other initiatives, seek resources, promote the program, and, later on, institutionalize the bridge programs.

A one- to two-page concept paper with information about the bridge program can help make the case for establishing the bridge program. It should outline:

- Population and/or employer need
- Purpose and description
- Involvement of the organization (e.g., potential staff roles)
- A few data points demonstrating the effectiveness of the approach (e.g., completion rates in similar classes or research studies)
- Resource requirements
- Potential partners
- Expected outcomes
- Potential sustainability beyond the first course
- Internal and external support for the concept (e.g., faculty, case manager, or an employer advisory council)
- Links to any related initiatives that the organization is undertaking

In preparing for a meeting with an executive, it is important to clearly define the "ask," invite other practitioners to the meeting, and be ready to discuss why the bridge program would be effective, why industry advisors say they need the program, how existing resources can be used or leveraged to sustain the program, and how expected outcomes will benefit the institution.

Develop The Leadership Team

Select the team

Leadership team members typically include representatives of the organizations that will deliver core bridge program services and be accountable for outcomes, including developing and implementing training, career development, and transition services. It is important to assess each team member's capacity to deliver the needed services. The combined capacity of the team should:

- Be knowledgeable about the labor market and employers in the industries that might be targeted
- Have the expertise to design a contextualized basic skills curriculum for the target population
- Have the skills and resources to teach low-skilled adults
- Have knowledge and expertise in identifying and delivering needed support services to the target population
- Have the capacity to recruit the target population
- Have an effective network of relationships within and outside the organization and the ability to build institutional support
- Have resources or access to resources for program development and delivery

The process for recruiting the leadership team should start with individuals and organizations that program initiators have worked with before or who, because of their institutional role, will be critical to program development. For example, adult education providers at a community college will need to recruit departments that offer credit-bearing career instruction, computer lab facilities, career counseling, and financial aid. They will also need to contact one or more community-based organizations that can provide employment-related support services to the target population.

A community-based adult education provider should look for colleges in its service area that offer career and technical education in the targeted industries. Team members should approach employer groups only after the basic program details have been worked out, unless a leadership team member already has a strong relationship with one or more employers. The concept paper will help in recruiting additional leadership team members. **Figure 1: Sample Partners and Roles**, identifies the types of organizations in Illinois that have relevant services and sample roles.

Figure 1: Sample Partners and Roles

Organization	Potential Roles
Adult Education Programs (community colleges, community-based organizations, public school system)	Techniques for teaching lower-skill adults; basic literacy, math, and computer skills training; English as a Second Language (ESL); assessment tools
Community-Based Organizations	Marketing and recruitment; initial screening; case management and coaching; support services and support services navigation; work readiness and job placement; vocational and occupational skills; internship coordination; ESL and vocational ESL; adult education (reading, writing, and math); computer skills; job training; fundraising assistance; employer connections, advisory councils
Community Colleges	
■ Developmental Education	■ Contextualized literacy curriculum design and delivery
■ Adult Education	■ Contextualized literacy curriculum design and instruction, including ESL and VESL
■ Career Services	■ Orientation to postsecondary education; career interest and aptitude assessments; career and employment information; career exploration and advising; resume and interview preparation
■ Continuing Education/ Workforce Development	■ Sector-specific occupational programs; specific courses that may be adapted to the bridge program framework, e.g., computer applications, customer service basics
■ Corporate Training	■ Capacity to customize training for specific employers and industries; employer connections; adjunct faculty and trainers
■ Degree and Credit Departments	■ Associate and applied associate degree programs; occupational certificates, licenses, and other industry-recognized credentials; articulation agreements
■ Support Services	■ Tutoring, computer labs; counseling; transportation; childcare; referral to community-based services
■ Financial Aid	■ Information and application assistance
Employer Associations (Chambers of Commerce) and Industry Associations	Program review and feedback; industry and career ladder information; skill information; labor market data; marketing; employer recruitment and coordination
Employers	Skills identification; job advancement information and requirements; program review and feedback; jobs, internships, and project-based learning; instructors, role models, mentors; referrals to program; training facilities, equipment; funding (tuition reimbursement, etc.)
Labor Unions	Identification of competencies and industry information; employer outreach; program review and feedback; referrals to program; skills training; apprenticeships; certifications; funding
One-Stop Career Centers/ Illinois workNet Centers	Labor market information (e.g., job vacancies, career options, employment trends, and employers);[5] job search skills; assistance with job searches, interview skills, and resumes; referrals to training programs and support services, including training funds; training vouchers
Social Service Agencies	Support services; case management; financial assistance (e.g., food stamps, dependent care, transportation); referrals
State Agencies	Labor market information and analysis; identification of target industries; connections to employers; funding and resource development; evaluation; policy development
Universities and Research Centers	Labor market information and analysis; research on special topics; curriculum and instructional design; evaluation and continuous improvement
Workforce Boards	Identify sectors important to local and regional economies; research job requirements and advancement paths; coordinate workforce development activities; prioritize funding for bridge programs; identify resources; connection to employers; labor market information and analysis
Workforce Intermediaries	Program design assistance; best practice models; advocacy; resource development; conducting focus groups; evaluation

Source: Women Employed, Chicago Jobs Council, and UIC Great Cities Institute, "Bridges to Careers for Low-Skilled Adults," Women Employed, 2005, 29.

When the leadership team is assembled, members should agree on a project director (usually from one of the primary organizations) to lead team-building, drive the program development process, and oversee initial implementation. The project director position may evolve over time as the program is established.

Develop the team

Leadership team members often come from organizations that operate with different languages, service approaches, and requirements. They are likely to have different perspectives on the nature of bridge components. The leadership team needs to take time to explore differences and commonalities and develop consensus.

Team members must discuss how the new bridge program will differ from other programs and services, and what institutional changes they need to make for the bridge program to be successful. This will help in building shared goals, expectations, and communication. Examples of differences include:

- Scheduling: College-credit programs generally operate on a semester or quarter schedule with set days and times, while adult education and customized training divisions have greater flexibility; employer schedules relate to hiring, production cycles, and hours of the workday; and community-based organizations have great flexibility in program scheduling.
- Credentials and certificates: These often have a different meaning to educators, employers, and workforce developers.
- Eligible participants: Many funding sources have specific income, employment, and individual characteristics (e.g., barriers) that are required for program participation, while adult education and community colleges use reading and math literacy levels and educational credentials for program eligibility.
- Outcome measures: Outcome requirements relate to particular funding streams and can be very different among institutions.
- Confidentiality stipulations: Partners have their own restrictions and obligations governing the use and sharing of participant and performance data.
- Instructor roles: Different rules may apply to full- and part-time instructors and whether or not they belong to a union. Rules need to be understood in advance, because bridge program instructors may teach in teams, are expected to communicate regularly with transition coordinators, tutors, and other staff members, and have expanded contact with students.
- Support focus: Community-based organizations are organized to provide holistic services to meet a range of individual needs and often build cohorts to encourage peer support for transition; adult education programs may provide support services and advising; and traditionally career instructors have focused primarily on academic performance.

Early identification of potential constraints in getting the project off the ground can help the team avoid or minimize time spent solving unanticipated issues. In community colleges, for example, questions that may arise include what are faculty teaching loads, contract specifications for the maximum number of credits an instructor can teach, qualifications required, and specifics of the course approval process.

CBOs that provide a range of training and support services will have to ask who is eligible for these services, the conditions under which bridge program participants may be served, and how the services may be coordinated to support bridge program goals. One strategy is to develop a flow chart of the people to involve, when to involve them, and the questions that need to be answered. The chart could map the organizational processes and policies that will be involved in developing a bridge program so that the leadership team can identify who should be involved in program design.

Worksheet 1: Process Map identifies important decision points that may be governed by a partner's institution and questions that the leadership team should ask up front to determine who should be involved and informed during program development.

Worksheet 1: Process Map

This worksheet will help teams identify the key steps in the partner organizations that are necessary in gaining approval, funding, staffing, and recruiting students. The partners should modify the steps to match their organization's policies and procedures.

	Requirements & Approval Process	Schedule	Key Individuals & Departments
Internal funding resources			
Course approval requirements and process			
Approval of course for credit, preparation for certification exams, etc.			
Approval of course for student funding assistance			
Course scheduling			
Staff recruitment, selection and approval (instructors, advisors, etc.)			
Identification and scheduling of course location(s)			
Identification of partner organization's current clients for recruitment			
Opportunities to use partner organization's communication vehicles and relationships with target audience for recruitment			
Application and enrollment process and requirements			
Access of targeted population to organization's services and facilities			
Application, approval, and enrollment process for the next step			
Other			

Recruit Additional Program Partners

The organizations represented on the leadership team will provide most, but not all, of the bridge program design and services. The team will have to assess these needs and recruit additional organizations or departments to fill them. Worksheet 2: Partner Role Identification can be used to record the services that the leadership team will cover and identify what is missing. Local intermediaries, policy organizations, and universities may have ready access to relevant best practice information and knowledge of effective organizations for partnership purposes.

Leadership team members should identify and reach out to potential partners. In addition to the considerations already presented, partner recruitment should focus on organizations that have the appropriate capacities, assets, and values, starting with those that team members have already worked with or that have been referred by colleagues. The concept paper will help to focus these conversations. A screening process with key staff and reference checks should be used to determine a potential partner's:

- Compatibility with the purpose and approach of the bridge program
- Service quality and effectiveness
- Willingness and capacity to work as part of a team
- Capacity to provide the range of activities and level of service desired within the specified timeframe
- Resources, expertise, and networks that can be leveraged
- Management, information, communication, and financial systems capacity

The relative weight of factors must be considered in negotiating partnerships. In some cases, an established and effective working relationship on previous initiatives may be tantamount. In other cases, exploring a new relationship with an organization that has underserved the target population may be optimal.

Formalize Roles

The leadership team will need to clearly define the roles of all partners and their obligations to the program. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) can outline the specific roles, rights, obligations, and expected outcomes relating to service levels and results of each partner, especially with external partners. Fiscal responsibility is especially important. The discussion of fiscal responsibility underscores the importance of detailing roles in preparing funding proposals, assigning fiscal accountability, and managing funds.

The leadership team will need to clearly define the roles of all partners and their obligations to the program... Fiscal responsibility is especially important.

The legal offices of each organization should authorize the MOU, and the president or executive director should sign it. Because of the complexity of these programs, the bridge program may need multiple MOUs for particular aspects of the program. For example, Instituto del Progreso Latino and Wright College signed data-sharing agreements so they could develop reports to funders and conduct research.[6] In cases where a formal MOU is not appropriate (such as between community college departments or divisions) a memo or letter outlining the program, roles, and responsibilities of all partners may suffice.

Manage The Partners

Because bridge programs use new approaches and create innovative systems, they often confront new and unexpected challenges and issues with students, staff, and organizational procedures. Therefore, forming close

Worksheet 2: Partner Role Identification

Roles — Program Development	Partner(s) Responsible
Leadership/management	
Partnership development	
Identification of target population	
Identification of career cluster and pathway	
Identification of targeted occupations/jobs and skill requirements	
Identification of next step training and education options and related skill requirements	
Program design and planning	
Budgeting	
Curriculum development	
Securing funds	
Recruitment of staff and instructors	
Orientation/training of staff and instructors	
Equipment, supplies, and facilities	
Policies and procedures	
Other	

Roles — Program Delivery	Partner(s) Responsible
Marketing and recruitment	
Intake, assessment, and screening	
Program orientation	
Instruction: basic and technical skills	
Certifications and degrees	
Career development and advising	
Internships: development and management	
College advising	
Counseling, case management	
Transition coordination	
Support services	
Job search and placement	
Communication	
Ongoing management and coordination among units (e.g., CTE, adult education, and basic skills)	
Other	

Note: Adapted from Women Employed, 2005, 30.

working relationships — formal and informal — is critical to the partners' ability to work together to identify and respond to issues as they arise. To create those relationships, partners should work to:

- Develop a shared understanding of the purpose and core goals of the bridge program for the students and for each of the participating institutions, and how they differ from traditional programs
- Have a mutual understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities and requirements related to their organizations and funding streams
- Develop mutual trust and openness
- Participate in inter-organizational problem-solving, continuous improvement, and professional development activities
- Be flexible in defining challenges and solutions
- Develop a clear message for students, colleagues, and stakeholders that reflects a consensus of the partners' shared goals and vision of the bridge program

Partners can do this through an initial orientation, team-building activities, workshops on new techniques and approaches, and introductions to organizational leaders of participating organizations and departments. Simple management and information systems can serve to structure those relationships. These should include:[7]

- A governance structure that allows for efficient decision-making and is participatory and transparent
- Identification of a single point of contact for all members
- A policy manual for use by all members
- A documented process for referrals and sharing information about students
- Regular formal and informal communication regarding student progress and needs for intervention
- Data collection systems and a process for identifying and solving problems, monitoring program performance, and making adjustments
- Compatible information collection, tracking, and systems
- Reporting schedules and formats
- Regular communication among stakeholders
- Financial management of all funding streams
- Early planning regarding sustaining and expanding the program
- Where possible, use of technology and software that facilitates communication among partner members

Lead the Way: Working Practices

Carreras en Salud

Instituto del Progreso Latino and Association House of Chicago teamed up in 2005 to form the Carreras en Salud bridge program, building on an existing working relationship, a shared Latino target population, a shared affiliation with the National Council of La Raza, and Instituto's previous experience with the manufacturing bridge model. "We've been working on projects together for 11 years, so how we manage the Carreras partnerships has matured over time," explained Dr. Ricardo Estrada, Vice President of Education and Programs. First, they worked with La Raza to identify the right industry and occupations to employ Latinos. After selecting the Health Science Career Cluster and therapeutic services pathway, they reached out to Wilbur Wright College because it offers quality healthcare programs and its graduates have a strong track record for passing the state licensing exams. It was a good fit because both Wright College and its neighborhood branch — Humboldt Park Vocational Education Center — wanted to increase Latino enrollment in their healthcare programs.

Partners designed the pathway through brainstorming. Next they detailed each partner's competencies and roles. For example, Wright College has specific academic requirements, so Instituto and Association House focused on addressing the population's academic barriers, such as low literacy, poor study habits and test taking skills, and personal barriers. Instituto developed its existing ESL programs into contextualized language courses in healthcare, while Association House took on case management and nonacademic barriers to participation. "Each partner's role is in its area of expertise, so we effectively provide the entire bridge program," explained Dr. Estrada.

Partners formed a management team that developed and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with specific roles and responsibilities, including data sharing. Clearly defined fiscal responsibility is critical, because any of the partners may be the fiscal agent for a grant, depending on the funder. Each partner applies for funds it is most likely to receive. Dr. Estrada explained, "We maximize our funding opportunities and everyone feels like it is fair." To avoid inadvertently competing for the same funds, fundraising is a standing item on meeting agendas to assure coordination and information sharing.

The leadership team recruited employer partners and an industry association to keep the bridge program current on job requirements, clinical sites, internships, and job placement. Over time, Carreras en Salud has formed close relationships with a number of individual hospitals, which have even provided onsite training, and now partners with Metropolitan Chicago Healthcare Council (MCHC). The partnership with MCHC, which has over 49 member hospitals, is an efficient way to engage employers and has helped negotiations for clinical sites and internships with member hospitals. Employer feedback continues through one-on-one sessions, group breakfasts, an existing advisory committee for another healthcare program at Instituto, and a more recently formed advisory committee for the Carreras en Salud program. Employers also provide letters of support for funding proposals, and participate in graduations and career development activities.

CTE Reading-Study Skills for Automotive Technology/Mechanic and John Deere Technology

The leadership team for the bridge program at Lake Land College grew from an initial meeting called by Diana Glosser, Director of Perkins Programs, to introduce people across the campus to the bridge concept, determine interest, and recruit team members. Participants included those whose work would be relevant to a bridge program: division chairs for Humanities, Technology, Math and Science, and Agriculture; and the director of the TRIO

program. The leadership team and member roles emerged organically based not on their positions, but rather on the relevance of what they were doing as described below:

- In forming and now managing the bridge program, the Associate Vice President for Workforce Development "makes things work" at a policy level with her special knowledge of systems, processes, and rules within the college and the Illinois Community College Board.
- The Director of Perkins Programs, who provides day-to-day organizational guidance, identifies questions and data needs, and tracks program progress.
- CTE instructors in two programs, Automotive and John Deere Technology, who observed that their students were entering their programs with fewer skills as the workplace was demanding higher skills. This was instrumental in the decision to focus the bridge program on developmental reading. These instructors knew their students' strengths and personal, social, and academic challenges. "When students get to hydraulics, here's where they're going to struggle." They worked with the developmental education instructors to contextualize the curriculum, sharing their CTE curriculum and helping developmental education instructors understand the skills needed for success in CTE auto programs.
- The Director of Adult Education, who helped design transition and career development services, identifying student needs, developing a career planning process, designing a 10-minute interview form, and taking students on campus tours. Ms. Glosser explained, "Although it was a developmental education/CTE bridge program, we needed the Adult Education connection because we want to address how to raise student skills while working on their GED so that they'll be candidates for this program."

While this bridge program has solid internal partners, Lake Land College is focusing on growing its external partners. The College is in discussions with WIA providers about how to engage their clients in the bridge program: "We would like to reach their clients earlier in the process," explained Ms. Glosser. Industry partners include auto dealerships, repair shops, agriculture, power, and logistics: "But the leadership team as a whole doesn't work directly with them, because we haven't defined a specific role for them. We will ask when we have specific things to ask." Ms. Glosser added, "Our primary connection to employers is through advisory councils that meet once a year for the Automotive and John Deere programs." These councils discuss workplace skills and have underscored the importance of soft skills like communication, as well as reading and math, which has helped to inform the bridge program focus.

According to Ms. Glosser, the key to an effective leadership team is collaboration. "A bridge program can't be a single department's initiative. We were fortunate to have the right people involved and interested on both the CTE and the Developmental Education reading sides at the right time. Our meetings focused on the 'What if's?' and 'Why not's?' so that they became a place for innovation rather than about barriers. Everyone on the team felt the excitement of talking across campus divisions. We always had opportunities to address problems, but the whole team addressed them together. We held regular meetings, prepared agendas with defined outcomes, and respected everyone's time constraints. The team is what makes it happen. Each member brings expertise, energy. It can't be a single person or department's initiative, it has to be everybody."

CHAPTER TWO

Target the Jobs: Choosing the Career Cluster and Connecting to a Career Pathway

BASICS

The goal of Illinois bridge programs is to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in postsecondary educational pathways and employment within one of the 16 nationally recognized career clusters, which generally correspond to industry sectors (Figure 2: 16 Career Clusters). Illinois workforce, economic development, and educational institutions use these clusters as a framework to organize their services and to move people along career pathways that provide clear next steps for educational and career advancement.

Identification of the career cluster and pathway(s) in which the bridge program is situated is one of the first tasks that the leadership team should undertake. It should be based on evidence that: a) the cluster and pathway will prepare students for employment in industries and occupations with current and projected demand for workers, b) there is a need for the bridge program, and c) the partnership has capacity to design and deliver an effective bridge program. This chapter presents the steps in assessing the need for a bridge program and connecting it to a career pathway, and offers information and resources that can be used to develop a bridge program.

Figure 2: 16 Career Clusters™

The National Career Clusters framework is comprised of 16 Career Clusters and related Career Pathways to help students of all ages explore different career options and better prepare for college and career. Each Career Cluster represents a distinct grouping of occupations and industries based on the knowledge and skills they require. The 16 Career Clusters and related Career Pathways provide an important organizing tool for schools to develop more effective programs of study and curriculum.

- Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources
- Architecture & Construction
- Arts, Audio/Video Technology & Communications
- Business Management & Administration
- Education & Training
- Finance
- Government & Public Administration
- Health Science
- Hospitality & Tourism
- Human Services
- Information Technology
- Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security
- Manufacturing
- Marketing
- Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics
- Transportation, Distribution & Logistics

Source: "The 16 Career Clusters," The National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc); www.careertech.org/career-clusters/glance/clusters.html, accessed January 29, 2012.

HOW TO CHOOSE A CAREER CLUSTER AND CAREER PATHWAY

- Assess the need for a bridge program
- Effectively link the bridge program to career pathways
- Use available information

Assess The Need For A Bridge Program

The starting point for any bridge program is local employer demand, which must then be connected to an education and training pathway that is accessible to low-skilled adults. Over the past several years, many

bridge programs have been developed in healthcare because of the labor shortages experienced by many of Illinois' workforce regions, but others such as manufacturing and transportation, distribution, and logistics (TDL) exist. Sample starting points may be:

- Adult education providers wanting to contextualize a basic skills course and connect it to an existing CTE program in the Health Science Cluster
- Education and training providers who want to meet the needs of a group of employers in a specific occupation, e.g., welding or CNC operators
- A developmental education department interested in linking directly to a CTE program in a career cluster that has a high rate of employment for graduates, but whose students struggle with basic skills
- A community-based organization seeking to increase education and employment opportunities for a specific population, e.g., the formerly incarcerated, immigrants with limited English language proficiency, or adults stuck in low-wage jobs
- A CTE department sees a growing need for information technology skills in several industries in its region, such as energy, agribusiness, and manufacturing
- A CTE department that wants to increase student diversity or improve completion rates
- An employer that seeks to increase the skills of its employees and help provide access to the requisite credential
- A local Workforce Investment Board (WIB) that suggests a program for dislocated workers who have basic skills deficiencies

Regardless of the starting point, it is important to gain a firm understanding of the need for a bridge program from the perspective of the local labor market, existing educational offerings, and the needs of the people to be served. Existing basic job training, literacy, and developmental education programs should examine:

- The extent to which students or clients advance to college-level occupational programs and the extent to which those who enter college-level occupational programs succeed there
- Barriers for entering or succeeding in established career education programs, such as insufficient English, reading, writing, math, or comprehension skills, lack of motivation, or personal issues

Reviewing student data will help identify patterns, and talking to instructors, counselors, admissions officers, and students about their barriers and skills gaps will increase understanding of what is behind the trends and student needs.

Credit-based occupational programs should examine whether students are successfully completing the program and transferring to the next level of education or employment in the industry. They should ask instructors why students are not completing the program, including if they are having trouble with the material or experiencing individual challenges.

Where students are not getting jobs in the industry, they should ask employers about the labor market for graduates in the industry, whether graduates have the right basic, occupational, and workplace skills, and expectations for future skill sets. Programs with lower completion rates should consider giving basic skills assessments to students who have already enrolled to determine their need to strengthen basic skills.

Community-based organizations or social service agencies should examine the extent to which clients with low literacy skills enter postsecondary training and education programs that lead to good jobs with defined career pathways and advancement potential. They should identify their barriers to participation and success, such as prior educational attainment, exposure to opportunities, etc.

Organizations serving low-skilled incumbent workers stuck in entry-level jobs should identify the next level of jobs and their basic qualifications, workers' barriers to advancement, and what occupational programs would prepare workers to advance. They should determine whether the entry requirements clearly relate to what is required for success on the job, how prepared current employees are for their jobs, and what additional skills or work behaviors they need to develop.

Effectively Link The Bridge Program To Career Pathways

Target industries should be important to the regional and local economy and have a strong demand for employees in entry-level positions that offer career pathways. Partners should review information about the region's industries and high demand occupations, including current and projected employment in the industry, entry-level and skilled jobs, wages, skills and education requirements, and trends among local employers.

This should start with conversations with experts at local or state organizations such as workforce boards, industry associations, business organizations, community college business and industry centers, and local workforce service providers, as well as a review of existing data.

Community-based organizations or adult education providers serving specific populations should determine the industries that have current and projected employment demand and could be suited to the individuals they serve. Instituto del Progreso Latino, for example, looked at growing industries with high demand and skilled occupations in which their constituency was underrepresented.

After the industry and occupations are identified, the leadership team should examine educational programs in the industry. They will want to look for CTE programs at local community colleges or industry-sponsored certificate programs and identify enrollment patterns for the population served, enrollment requirements, barriers to entry and completion, and education outcomes, including rates of transition to the next level of education and employment.

To determine interest and need among the target population, the leadership team should analyze the number and trends of applicants to particular training programs in certain clusters (such as health sciences or technology) and occupations (such as nursing or computer technician) that do not have the qualifications to enter the programs. They should assess the barriers to entry for these students, including their literacy levels, English proficiency, goals, etc.

This information may be obtained from college admissions offices and conversations with advisors and counselors. They should collect information about the target population's interest in the career clusters being considered through informal conversations with current students and clients or talking with instructors about their students' interests, and by using more formal methods, such as focus groups, group discussions, or brief surveys of students in basics skills and language programs.

For example, Black Hawk College selected the healthcare cluster and three pathways. Its bridge program is aligned with postsecondary curricula in three healthcare careers: nursing assistant, phlebotomist, and dialysis technician. Students are prepared to transition into postsecondary programs and eventually entry-level employment in these three career pathways, selected because:

- The local WIBs identified them as growth occupations
- Employment demand was confirmed by analysis of job ads, success of graduates in getting jobs, and discussions with local employers about their future hiring needs
- They connect with short-term postsecondary programs that show good outcomes for ESL students
- They have been approved by the local WIBs for Workforce Investment Act (WIA) training

Figure 3: Decision Points for Choosing the Career Cluster and Industry will help determine whether to create a bridge program to connect to an existing program, to identify the right career cluster, and to decide whether to modify an existing program or start from scratch. Industries that have the characteristics identified using this tool should be given priority. Checks in all of the boxes indicate that a bridge program will fulfill a clear need.

Figure 3: Decision Points for Choosing the Career Cluster and Industry

- ✓ The industry fits within one of the CTE training programs offered at a local community college
- ✓ The industry and occupational pathway have strong current and projected growth rates
- ✓ Local employers have validated the current and projected need for employees with the requisite skills
- ✓ Entry-level skilled jobs pay family sustaining wages, have benefits, and are connected to career pathways
- ✓ The next level of credit training and education will lead to jobs with advancement potential
- ✓ The target population is likely to be suited for jobs in the industry and qualified for a bridge program
- ✓ The partnership has the capacity and expertise to develop and deliver a bridge program in the industry and career cluster

Figure 4: Identifying Career Pathways includes detailed questions that will be helpful in selecting the career pathway.

The nature of connections will depend on the purpose of the program, the target population, and the partners. For example, partners that want to serve a broad population with a fifth to ninth grade literacy level may consider offering a pre-bridge program for the fifth and sixth grade levels, which would prepare students for a bridge program that might range from seventh to ninth or tenth grade levels. Others may want to start with the sixth grade literacy level, and add preparation for the GED exam as well as for college entrance requirements. Other options include components that offer VESL courses, certificate programs that prepare graduates for entry-level jobs that do not require postsecondary credentials, and co-enrollment in adult education and CTE courses that provide postsecondary college credit and credentials.

Career pathway maps profile the key steps in education and employment starting from the entry-level and proceeding to more advanced levels. They identify points where students may enter the pathway. Pathway maps may show the entry requirements, education and industry credentials, skills obtained at each level of education, and the types of occupations that graduates may enter. This graphically shows the links between education and employment and the options for bridge program participants that combine or alternate work and learning.

Note that the bridge program may be one of several entry points, and that there may be multiple bridge programs at different levels. Pathway maps should be updated and revised to reflect connections to additional pathways or occupations, educational levels, partners, and specific job types.

Figure 4: Identifying Career Pathways

Once the industry and career cluster are identified, it is critical to define career pathways that will connect to the bridge program. This can be done in three phases:

Phase One: Identify the potential career pathway connections in education and employment.

- Identify career pathways and occupations within the targeted career cluster using the Illinois Career Cluster Model prepared for the Illinois Community College Board and the Illinois State Board of Education by the Office of Community College Research at the University of Illinois.[8]
- Using the information in selecting the target industry and other sources profiled, identify the most specific career pathway with a strong labor market that is expected to remain strong over the next three to four years.
- Define the entry requirements for specific educational programs at local community colleges that the program will bridge to (such as literacy levels, assessments, drug testing, drivers licenses, and background checks).
- Examine the skill requirements for entry-level jobs with local employers (such as industry certifications, degrees, technical skills, and industry knowledge) and advancement steps.
- Identify the career programs in the career pathway at partner organizations and in the community.
- Identify the barriers to entry into career education programs and employment and advancement in the pathway(s).

Phase Two: Select a realistic number of career pathways and occupations that the bridge program will connect to.

- Talk with employers to validate and refine employer demand and interest.
- Review information and talk with potential stakeholders and partners (such as faculty, employers, employer associations, industry experts, and deans).
- Identify the strengths of the career pathway programs in partner organizations and locally, and potential interest in partnering.
- Determine student interest and need, if possible.
- Identify priorities of state and local workforce development agencies.

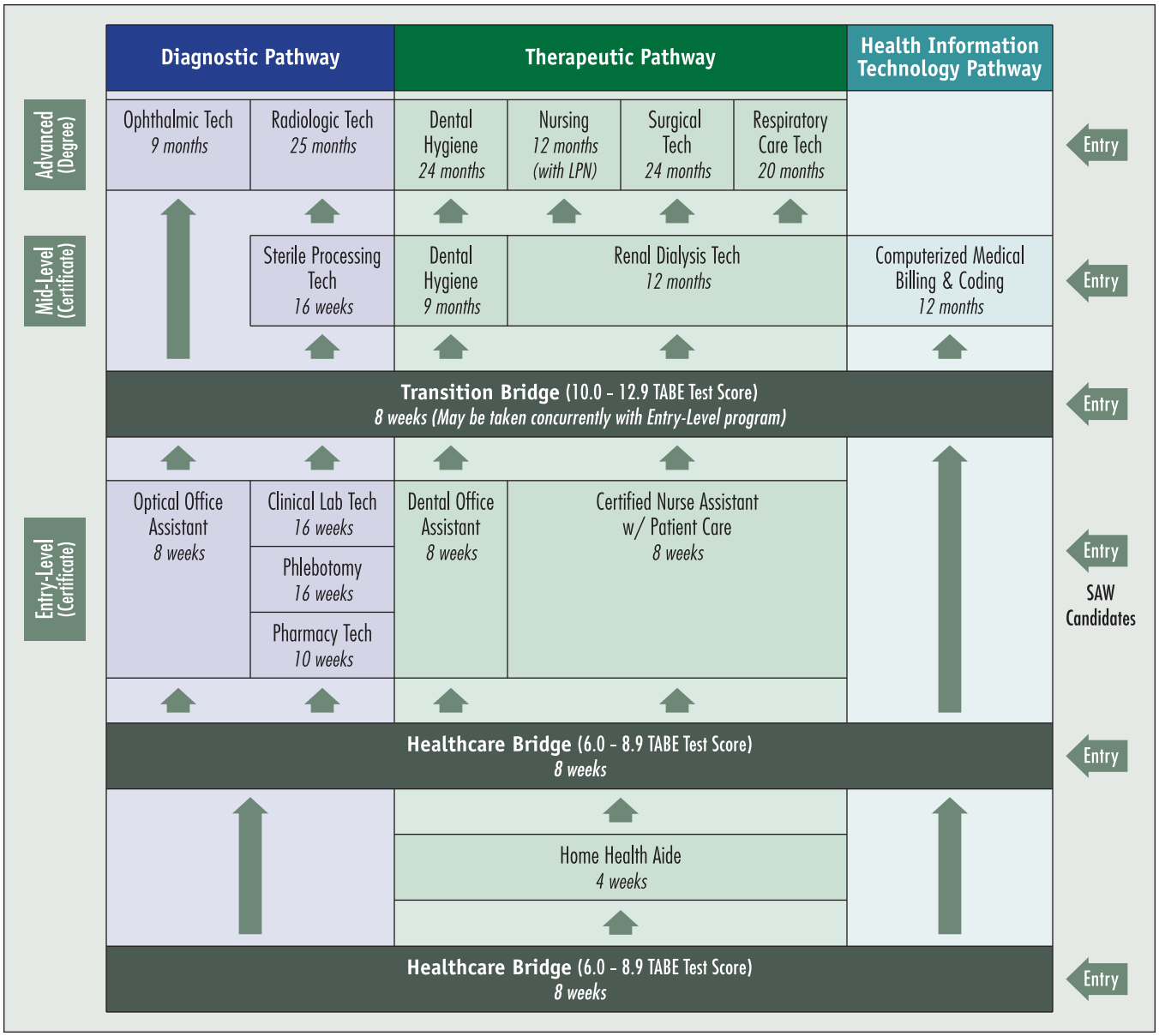
Phase Three: Outline the career pathway connections.

- Identify the education and training steps that will prepare students for each of the career pathways and the requirements for each.
- Determine entry requirements and skills that will be essential for success in the pathway programs, and for the associated industry certificates and education credentials.
- List possible next steps in the educational pathway, including skills and credential requirements.
- Identify typical occupations at each level, including wages and credential and experience requirements.
- Identify entry and exit points along the pathway where a series of "stackable" credentials may be earned.

Figure 5: Central States SER's Healthcare Careers Pathway and Figure 6: Carreras en Salud Career Pathway show different approaches to pathways in programs that have been grown over a number of years. SER's shows three different pathways, training levels with literacy requirements, program length, and related certificates, credentials, and jobs.

The Carreras pathway, which has a greater number of steps, starts at the sixth grade literacy level and extends to a Bachelor of Nursing. It shows academic requirements at each level, program length, skills outcomes, occupations, and wages at each level.

Figure 5: SER Healthcare Careers Bridge Program Pathway

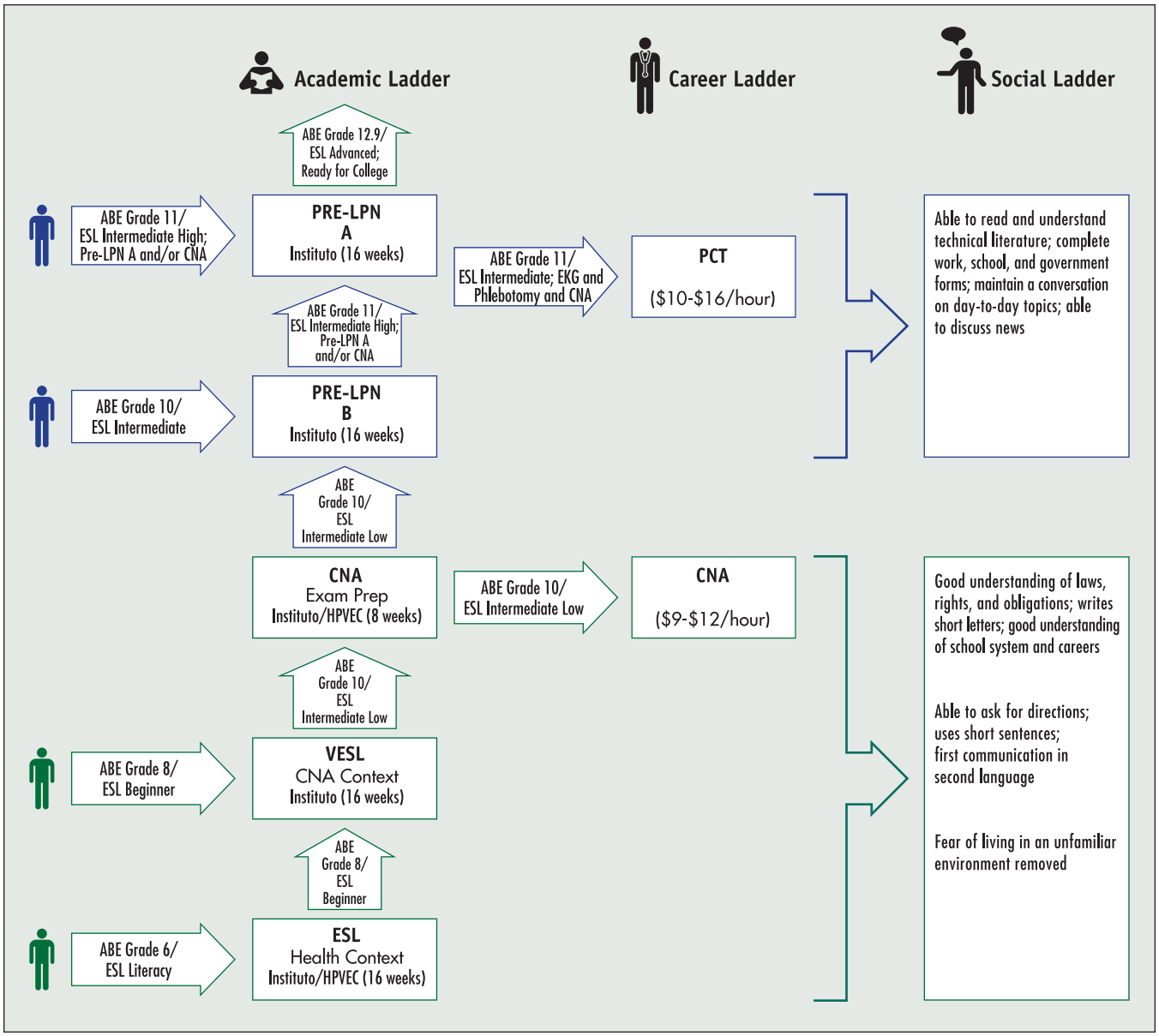


Source: Central States SER

Use Available Information

A wide range of quality information is available to help define a career cluster, target industry, and career pathway. Below is a list of resources commonly used in bridge program planning in Illinois. Information collected from these resources should be used as a basis for conversations with employers to validate and refine their need for employees, skills requirements, and interest in the program. Conversations may be formal or informal, and may be held with existing employer groups, industry associations, or individual employers.

Figure 6: Carreras en Salud Career Pathway



State Information Resources

Illinois has assembled a broad array of data and information on education, the labor market, the population, and the economy. It draws on federal, state, and local resources and much of the information is available on the Internet and in customized reports. Key sources include:

- The ***Illinois Community College Board*** collects and analyzes data for programs and students in Adult Education, CTE, and college programs. The data can be used to understand rates of completion, transition, and credential attainment for groups of students, programs, and colleges.

- *Illinois workNet* provides a portal of information helpful to selecting target industries and developing career pathways:
  - Identifies industries and sectors important to the state and each region and demand occupations
  - Provides data on the labor market, workforce, employers, and education and training by industry and occupation
  - Uses information and data collected by the Illinois Department of Employment Security and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Department of Labor
  - Includes information and assessments that can be used in individual career exploration and planning
  - Is updated regularly to reflect current economic conditions, state and federal policies and programs, and new information[9]

- The *Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity*, in collaboration with regional economic workforce development organizations and employers, identifies industries with growing occupations in each of the state's 10 regions on an ongoing basis. It is available through Illinois workNet.

- The *Illinois Department of Employment Security* provides labor market information, including employment statistics, job forecasts, wages, and demographic characteristics. It collects, analyzes, and disseminates this data in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics and Employment and Training Administration.[10]

National Resources

Although the state sources listed above link to many relevant national data and information sources, more detailed information is accessible directly from federal sources. Good places to start are the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics and Employment and Training Administration, along with the U.S. Census Bureau. Published data sets, reports, and analyses from these agencies and other federal sources can be accessed through a comprehensive website, O*Net (the Occupational Information Network), the nation's primary source of occupational information. Career exploration tools, job analysis questionnaires, employer guides, and technical reports can be downloaded and used at no charge. Another site that can be accessed through O*Net is the CareerOneStop, which offers industry competency models, references to a range of federal labor market databases, and career information.[11]

Local Resources

Sources of information focusing on local and regional labor markets include workforce investment boards, employer and business associations, workforce development organizations, unions, education providers, and policy organizations and experts. Examples of the types of reports prepared for specific Illinois regions and communities include *Middle-Skill Job Opportunities in the Metropolitan Chicago Region*, by the Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago, and the *Competitive Assessment, Springfield Illinois*, prepared for the Springfield Chamber of Commerce. Another example is the Chicago Jobs Council's web-based Workforce Information and Resource Exchange (WIRE), which provides easy-to-use data and research from a variety of sources.

Industry and Professional Associations

Individual industries and sectors also provide information on economic, technological, and labor market trends at the national, state, and local levels. Examples of industry associations at the various levels in manufacturing include the Manufacturing Institute, Illinois Manufacturing Association, and Illinois Tooling and Manufacturing Association. Healthcare examples include the American Hospital Association, Illinois Hospital Association, and Metropolitan Chicago Healthcare Council.

Target the Jobs: Working Practices

William Rainey Harper College Health Care Bridge Program

Harper College selected healthcare for its bridge program based on regional data showing job growth, their own programmatic strengths, and student interests. It began when Harper's deans of Adult Education, Developmental Education, and Academic ESL, and a staff grants specialist examined the results of a Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago report that projected growth in demand for nurses, nurse aids, emergency technicians, and other allied health occupations — all with above average pay — over the next five years. Further, Health Sciences is one of Illinois' targeted career clusters.

This team then examined student demand from several perspectives. Enrollment data showed that growing numbers of adult education and ESL students show interest in healthcare, but nearly 60% of entering students need at least one developmental education course and many need to improve their English language skills before pursuing a credential. "The data provided a clear message that we needed to focus on healthcare," explained Diana Cincinello, Academic Enrichment and Language Studies (AELS Professor). A student survey refined data on interest in healthcare careers and determined how students could take a bridge program and fit it into the GED schedule.

The team scrutinized Harper's existing strengths in the healthcare field: nursing, imaging, and medical office administration. Adult education and developmental education students could not realistically enter these programs without further development of basic skills and healthcare preparation, so the team identified the steps that would lead to each: CNA certificate for LPN and nursing and medical terminology or phlebotomy for imaging and medical office administration. The team met with CTE instructors in each of the three areas to identify the skills and knowledge students need to enter and succeed in those courses. They reviewed a draft and final curriculum with the instructors and continue to consult with them on continuous improvements. Ms. Cincinello explained, "The bridge program enabled us to design a program that would help students succeed."

For the future: "We plan to look at more occupations and to develop detailed career pathway maps that we can use in program design, recruitment, and career development activities."

Carreras en Salud

Instituto del Progreso Latino knew that employment success for Chicago Latinos had to start with getting them into and succeeding in college. "Everyone knows that we need training and education to get good jobs in today's economy, but Latinos are behind," explained Dr. Ricardo Estrada, Vice President of Education and Programs.

Instituto's first step was to identify an industry with employment growth, career pathways, demand for workers, and existing training or education resources. A labor market analysis for three sectors with strong growth rates and good-paying career opportunities — healthcare, transportation, and construction — revealed healthcare to be the best choice. In healthcare: 1) employment growth projections were strongest, 2) possible career pathways existed with entry for low-skilled employees and opportunities to advance, 3) there was a significant demand for bilingual healthcare professionals, and 4) high quality healthcare training was available.

Instituto selected the therapeutic career pathway within healthcare because of projected growth in demand, underrepresentation of Latinos in LPN and RN jobs (less than 2%), and employers' growing need for bilingual nurses.

CHAPTER THREE

Attract the Right Students: Identifying and Recruiting the Target Population

BASICS

The potential target population for bridge programs includes low-skilled adults who lack a high school credential, those who have a high school credential but no college credit, and some who have taken a few college courses but never completed a certificate or degree. They are hampered in their quest for family-sustaining jobs on a career pathway by a combination of low literacy levels and the lack of educational credentials.

Program designers must narrow their focus by defining a target — the subgroup of all possible low-skilled adults — for a particular bridge program. Bridge programs can be most effective when they target specific groups of people who share common characteristics, which may include literacy level, English language ability, occupational interest, current or past employment, educational goals, and other factors.

Defining the common characteristics of the target population is necessary for program design and later for marketing and recruiting bridge program participants. Bridge programs must be tailored to serve target groups that share some common characteristics, so that the program can be designed to reach their specific needs. Over time, the target population and/or the course content can be adjusted, thus defining the target population is likely to be an ongoing activity.

This chapter will help define a target population and design a marketing and recruitment plan tailored to the bridge program's target population.

HOW TO IDENTIFY AND RECRUIT THE TARGET POPULATION

- Identify a target population to serve
- Recruit the target population

Identify A Target Population To Serve

The potential target population comprises all the people who could be interested in and benefit from the bridge program. It is important to involve the entire leadership team and other key partners to identify the specific groups for the program and to learn as much about them as possible to aid in program design, marketing, and recruitment.

By the time the leadership team is assembled, the target population is already somewhat defined. For example, the provider could already deliver a particular type of program, such as adult education, occupational training, or developmental education. In defining the target population, the leadership team will need to determine who would most benefit from a bridge program. Potential criteria include people who wish to continue their education but lack the qualifications to do so, those who have dropped out of occupational programs because they are academically underprepared, and students with the potential to succeed if provided with support and transitional services. More targeted examples could include:

- Residents of an immigrant community who work in low-wage jobs, have little knowledge of career options, and lack information and confidence to pursue a college program
- Students who have been admitted to a community college but lack the required reading, writing, and/or math scores to enter an industrial technology program
- Adults who do not have a high school credential and want to pursue a career in one of the allied health professions
- Assembly line employees of a manufacturing firm who lack basic literacy skills to enter technical training required for certifications needed to advance to higher level jobs

In defining the target population, the leadership team should look outside conventional ways of grouping people and examine the target population's underlying characteristics. It should consider populations that may be served by partner organizations or employers, and who share common characteristics. These common characteristics may include:

- Basic skills level
- Level of English language competency
- High school diploma or GED
- Dislocation from a particular industry (similar skill sets)
- An occupational goal — specific or broad — within a career cluster
- Employment status or work schedule
- Childcare responsibilities
- Level of knowledge of college and careers
- Transportation needs

Worksheet 3: Information to Define the Target Population lists the general information needed to define the target population more precisely and to design the bridge program to meet their educational, occupational, and other needs.

The leadership team can use this initial analysis as the starting point for collecting more detailed information about the potential target population. The information gathered should focus on how a bridge program could benefit the individuals and groups identified and what the individuals need in order to transition to the next educational or career level.

Sources of information about a target population include members of the target population themselves, as well as individuals and organizations that work with them. It may be helpful to hold meetings with organizations and departments that serve the target population, conduct surveys of or focus groups with the target population, and have discussions with employers, instructors, and counselors.

Once enough information is collected, the leadership team can clearly and specifically identify and describe the target population. A member of the leadership team should write a detailed description of the target population that includes the range of the following characteristics:

- Literacy levels and English language competency
- Educational credentials, including high school diploma or GED, and any postsecondary certificates or degrees
- Work experience and employment certifications, e.g., MSSC, phlebotomy, etc.
- Employment status, i.e., employed, unemployed, or employed part-time
- Career and employment goals
- Specific demographic characteristics, such as single parents, veterans, the formerly incarcerated, etc.
- Common individual barriers

Recruit The Target Population

Recruiting adult learners is often tougher than it might appear. Many existing bridge programs have had difficulty recruiting a full class for a new bridge program, especially in the initial cohorts. One reason may be that the bridge program is still an unfamiliar concept, so marketing materials and recruitment methods need to take that into consideration.

Develop Messaging and Marketing Materials

The first step is to develop the message. All the program's marketing materials should convey a positive, inclusive message that tells the target population, "This program is for you." A key way to do that is through values-based

Worksheet 3: Information to Define the Target Population

Answer the questions about the proposed target population. Seek information when answers are not readily available. After answering all the questions, use this information to prepare a list of potential groups that could benefit from the planned bridge program.

1. What are their basic reading, writing, and math literacy levels? _____

2. Are they non-native speakers of English? What is the range of English proficiency among ESL students? Do they share a native language? Are they literate in their native language? _____

3. What are their educational credentials? _____

4. What has been their recent education and training experience (successful completion, drop-out, applied to a program for which they were not qualified, etc.)? _____

5. Do they have basic computer skills? Describe their skill level. _____

6. What types of jobs have they had? What is the nature of their work experience (short- or long-term job attachment, full- or part-time work, etc.)? _____

7. What are their occupational credentials? _____

8. Do they have occupational and career goals? Have they received career guidance to help determine their goals? _____

9. What barriers do they face to program participation (e.g., childcare, transportation, personal counseling) and what support services might be needed? _____

Examine the research results to identify common characteristics that can be used in detailed program design and marketing. Examples of bridge program types that may emerge are:

1. Two levels of the bridge program to serve a target population with a wide variation in literacy (e.g., 6-9 and 9-12 grade).
2. A defined bridge program leading to a CTE program for students with a common interest in a specific career pathway.
3. A bridge program that explores multiple occupations within a career cluster and focuses on college transition for students who want to go to college but have not defined their occupational goal.
4. Two separate but integrated bridge courses, one for VESL and the other that provides basic ESL for a defined immigrant community with varied English competency skills and educational credentials.
5. A bridge program for students in a CTE course who need to strengthen their basic skills.

Adapted from Women Employed, 18.

messaging. The message must convey that the core values of the bridge program go beyond the discrete issues of education and workforce development and provide a chance for adult learners to change their lives. Some powerful terms to incorporate in messaging include:

- Jobs/Work
- Education
- Economy
- Opportunity

Messages should above all be *focused on results* and *driven by outcomes*. Supporting points expand on the main messages with more detail. They can be used to target specific audiences and often contain brief data points. They are also meant to be spoken aloud or incorporated into written materials.

Sample messages suitable for recruitment efforts can be found in **Figure 7: Marketing Messages**.

Figure 7: Marketing Messages

Core Messages

- Bridge programs are solutions for preparing adults in Illinois to work in today's economy.
- Good jobs today call for education beyond high school and practical, hands-on training that prepares workers with the skills that employers are looking for.
- You can find success in today's economy. Bridge programs will give you the education and the skills you need in the workplace.

Supporting Points on Bridge Program Instruction

Bridge program instructors and coaches will help you:

- Explore careers and choose one that meets your individual needs
- Develop confidence for pursing and achieving your own educational goals
- Create a concrete plan for your education and next steps
- Gain the skills and credentials necessary to enter careers that pay well and offer benefits
- Gain marketable experience in the workplace and meet people in the occupations you want
- Prepare a resume, interview, and look for jobs that suit your needs
- Help prepare you for college programs, instructors, and students
- Assist with college entrance exams and financial aid forms

Prepared by Douglas Gould and Company, 2011.

Marketing materials should use messages to clearly explain the benefits of the bridge program to the target population. They can take the form of brochures, websites, advertisements, leave-behinds, and flyers. Regardless of the form, all marketing materials should address the following points.

- Program outcomes or results for graduates, such as:
  - It is for people like them (i.e., who want to enter a career but have been unable to obtain the needed skills and credentials)
  - It builds skills that lead to opportunities to enter and advance in a career cluster or occupation ("Are you looking to advance in a healthcare career?")
  - It connects graduates directly to the next step in their career pathway ("Do you want to go to college but aren't sure it's possible or right for you?")
  - It leads to certificates or credentials that employees look for and need
  - It will help them qualify for jobs that have family-sustaining wages

- Special features of the program, such as:
  - Career development, including exploring careers in the field, meeting employers, touring work places and colleges, gaining basic occupational skills and computer skills, and learning how to search for good jobs, prepare resumes, and interview with professionals
  - Support services, including tutoring, computers, childcare, a transportation subsidy, counseling, financial aid, etc.
  - Work in teams to solve real-world problems and learn new techniques

- Illustrative information to help prospective students get a feel for the program and understand it is for people like them. This can include:
  - Quotes from graduates about their experience in the program, the job it helped them get, or the educational goal it helped them achieve
  - Images of individuals working in the career cluster or industry the pathway is targeting; select images that will resonate with the target audience, such as pictures of people who look like them

- Bridge program logistics, including:
  - Registration and program dates
  - Schedule (class time and frequency)
  - Cost and financial aid
  - Location
  - Eligibility requirements
  - Who is delivering the program

Marketing materials must be written for the literacy level and English language proficiency of the target population, so they will understand the purpose of the program and feel it is right for them. To do this:

Marketing materials must be written for the literacy level and English language proficiency of the target population...

- Examine materials used by partners who regularly work with the population, such as community organizations, adult education instructors, or counselors
- Ask partners or others familiar with the target population to read the materials for the appropriate level
- Ask a few potential students to read the material and get their reactions. Do they understand the main points? What questions do they have that are not answered by the material?

Figure 8: Sample Recruitment Language shows sample language for a healthcare bridge program that can be customized for other types of programs.

Another key element to consider is success stories. Brief, 250-word stories that feature a graduate of the program, along with photographs can show potential students tangible benefits of a bridge program. The story should have a conversational tone that draws readers into the piece and be built around personal interviews with individuals who have had successful experiences with the program.

Figure 9: Story Outline gives more detail on how these stories can be constructed. Examples of student stories can be found at the Shifting Gears website.[12]

Figure 8: Sample Recruitment Language

Looking for a Career in Healthcare? You Can Succeed!
Thousands of adults just like you are looking forward to brighter futures. They are doing it through a new way to get the skills called Bridge programs. Bridge programs are offered at [*insert provider*] and give people like you a path to a brighter future.

What Are Bridge Programs?
Good jobs today call for education beyond high school. Job seekers like you need hands-on training today. Bridge programs combine practical education and hands-on learning to give students the skills employers need. In [insert city or town], there is a bridge program in healthcare. By completing this [*insert number*]-week course, you will get the skills you need to get a job as a certified nursing assistant. This is what employers such as [*insert industry partner names*] are looking for to fill jobs today.

> "The teachers, staff, and financial aid at the bridge program made college possible for me. Classes were bilingual and they combined math, health, English, and medical terminology. They were useful for my work in the hospital."
>
> — Eva, graduate of the Carreras en Salud bridge program in Chicago

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How Bridge Programs Work
By enrolling in a bridge program, you are taking the first step on the road to a better future. In today's economy, many people have to get back to work in the shortest amount of time possible. The instructors and coaches at [*insert provider*] can help by giving you support that will help you on the road to success as fast as possible. This support includes:

- Practical classes such as reading medical charts, math for healthcare professionals, and communication skills
- Hands-on training in skills necessary for healthcare such as drawing blood, patient care, and first aid

Coaches and other staff at [*insert provider*] are there to help you with other skills necessary to get good jobs in today's economy. The support includes:

- Creating a plan for your education and career
- Preparing a resume
- Helping with interviews and job searches
- Helping with college programs, instructors, and students
- Assisting with college entrance exams and financial aid forms

---

Learn More
Bridge programs can help adults at all educational levels get the skills they need to seek family-sustaining jobs. Childcare and financial aid is available to all students.

Classes start on [*insert date*].

Contact [*insert name, phone number, and email address*] for more information about how you can enroll in the upcoming bridge program. [*insert any additional logistics*]

Note: This sample is written for the sixth/seventh grade reading level.

Prepared by Douglas Gould and Company, 2011.

Figure 9: Story Outline

Below is an outline for a typical story. Variations depend on the interviewee's personal experiences and the specific issues around each program.

Introduction
In a few sentences the introduction should:

- Frame the issue of workforce education
- Discuss the program's importance for state and local communities
- Introduce the interviewee

Problem Statement/Background
In one to two paragraphs, this section should present the interviewee's situation before she or he became involved with the program.

- If the interviewee is a worker, this would take the form of a brief biographical sketch and discussion around why she/he needed training
- If the interviewee is a teacher, a college instructor, or an administrator, this would involve a discussion of the situation in the community or state and show the role the interviewee plays

Program Description
In one paragraph, this should discuss the workforce education program the interviewee is involved with, including:

- How the interviewee found out about the program
- When she or he became involved
- Why she or he was initially interested

How it Helped
The meat of the story, this should be two to three paragraphs that present the program's tangible impact.

- If the interviewee is a worker, this would include her or his experiences in the program and how it changed her or his life
- If the interviewee is a teacher, a college instructor, or an administrator, this section would show how the program has helped the community

Conclusion
This would wrap up the story in a few sentences and look forward, ending on an inspirational and positive note.

Prepared by Douglas Gould and Company, 2011.

Conduct Outreach to the Target Population

Marketing materials must be used strategically to be successful. Research on bridge programs in Illinois shows that personal contact is the most effective recruitment tool.[13] The most successful activities include visits to other programs or organizations in the community that serve the target population, such as One Stop Career Centers, training or educational programs, social service organizations, churches, and others.

Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIAs) can help identify a range of organizations that have contact with the target population. Adult education instructors teaching literacy levels that could feed into the bridge program, CTE

instructors who could identify students at risk of dropping out due to lack of basic skills, and case managers or advisors with CBOs or public assistance offices are especially good sources. Personal outreach to these individuals will help them better understand who could benefit from the bridge program so they can become ambassadors for the program. Materials add to personal contact by providing essential information that can be read later and passed on to others.

In addition to personal contact, the team can experiment with a variety of marketing tools and methods and evaluate what works best with their target population. Some methods and approaches that other programs have used successfully include:

- Contacting people who applied to a higher level program but did not get accepted (the bridge program can be a feeder for this program)
- Providing current students or graduates with brochures they can give to relatives and friends
- Translating the brochure into languages other than English, if appropriate (even if the bridge program will be taught in English, people for whom it is a second language will understand it better if it is explained in their first language)
- Making public service radio, public-access TV announcements, and including information in community newspapers
- Putting brochures in churches, local stores, and community organizations
- Inviting the target population to a program orientation, either at a community location or at the location where the bridge program will be delivered
- Social media, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter

Illinois workNet serves as a communications conduit to individuals, employers, and education and workforce training providers. The website provides a set of tools to communicate state and local opportunities, including features and announcements, monthly emailed news, account messages, a LinkedIn group, Twitter, Facebook, event registration, and more.[14]

For meetings and orientation sessions, it is important to ensure a welcoming environment, convenient time, and information tailored to the participants' needs and goals. This might include having translators or ESL instructors on hand, arranging chairs in a circle instead of classroom style to encourage discussion, asking instructors and other key personnel to make presentations, allowing time for questions, serving refreshments, and providing childcare.

Attract the Right Students: Working Practices

Pre-Health Care Bridge Program

Black Hawk College's Pre-Health Care bridge program targets three groups of students: Adult Secondary Education students working towards their GED, Adult Basic Education Pre-GED for Second Language Learners (ESL students who are at the high-intermediate level or above), and students in the Early School Leaver program.

To determine which students to target for the bridge program, staff assembled a group of Adult Education students to assess their interest in healthcare careers. Staff explained the program would focus on basic technical skills and knowledge in three occupations, nursing assistant, phlebotomy, and dialysis technician, and would help them discover the career that was right for them. For the Early School Leaver students, staff trained students to use the Career Cruising job placement tool and then used that and other assessments to identify those whose personality type and interests would lend themselves to healthcare.

Glenda Nicke, Dean of Extended Educational Programs, said, "We developed a brochure that emphasizes 'career' more than 'job' so students get the message that this will build upon their education, connect them to jobs, and build their careers. We tell them that this is an opportunity to learn more about careers they might not know about and to connect with people in the field. ESL students in particular need a detailed explanation, because cultural differences inhibit an understanding of their full range of choices."

They designed a recruitment binder targeted to students that want a career but do not yet have a GED. The binder stays in the Adult Education classroom so students can look at it during the semester. Ms. Nicke added, "Students need a personal connection. You can have pretty brochures and posters, but this population needs to have direct contact with people they trust, they can ask questions of, and who will answer them on the spot."

She explained, "We are building our recruitment network as word of the program spreads. GED instructors are excited about the program, so they promote it. Our Allied Health partner feels that the bridge will improve preparation of those coming into those classes, so they support it."

"Also, part of marketing is running a successful program — students talk to each other, and the word gets around. One of the best things we did was to mix the GED, ESL, and high school students for computer lab and guest speakers. The students motivated each other. We will definitely continue the cohort idea of mixing students from different cultures, and also including the high school students who are mature enough to be with adults."

Carreras en Salud

Instituto del Progreso Latino's Carreras en Salud uses nontraditional marketing strategies to attract students from the adult immigrant Latino community.

Internally, the program makes presentations to students completing Instituto's basic ESL program. Those interested in healthcare are invited to take the TABE test, and those who meet the entrance requirements are encouraged to register. Instituto's Center for Working Families, which is responsible for intake, financial coaching, applications for public benefits, and job placement, refers those who lack employment skills and are interested in healthcare to the Carreras bridge program. Dr. Ricardo Estrada, Vice President of Education and Programs, explained, "Word-of-mouth among students to family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers is essential to attracting the right students."

Externally, Carreras makes presentations at local religious institutions and offers one-on-one information sessions on the same day for those who are interested. This method reaches many people at once in a situation that gives the

program credibility. Carreras also participates in ethnic festivals, providing program materials and telling stories of student success, and places program announcements and success stories on ethnic television.

The program's information session plays an important role in recruitment by providing detailed information about the program, expectations, and employment outcomes to help students decide if they are a good fit. The session includes program background and purpose, demand for bilingual healthcare workers, the healthcare career pathway and modules, program requirements, and timeframe. Attendees learn how to apply, schedule placement test appointments, and see an intake counselor. Dr. Estrada explained, "The employment information we provide at orientation is particularly effective. We give details about the jobs that graduates get and they meet employers."

Health Sciences Prep

For its bridge program, Southwestern Illinois College targets students who test into the top developmental education level in reading and writing. To attract these students to the bridge program initially, they mailed flyers and followed up with phone calls. They also advertised in the WIA office and in the college counselor offices. But in spite of these efforts, enrollment in the first course was low.

For the second course, they used more personal outreach. Julie Muertz, Dean of Health Sciences and Homeland Security, explained, "For example, I remind the counselors frequently about the courses because I have found that if I make one phone call to a counselor, I end up with one enrollment. Also, we target the Nurse Assistant program because it has prerequisites and those students are likely to want to advance but don't have the academic skills to do so. When we visit the Nurse Assistant classes, we bring forms so we can enroll people on the spot. We have found that these students need the supports provided by a bridge program, including with registration." They also plan to recruit from ESL courses.

Now the program's main focus is increasing enrollment. Dean Muertz said, "Building on our experience, we believe that we have identified the right target population and we refined our recruitment pitch to reflect their needs and interests. It tells them they will be with other students in healthcare and the class content will be related to healthcare. Research shows that when you have a group with the same interest supporting each other, they are more likely to finish and move on and be successful." Students are also aware of the academic benefits — they can get credit for Medical Terminology if they pass the test at the end and they can test out of Developmental Reading and Writing. One student said, "I just didn't have much confidence in myself, and this course has let me believe that I can do this."

CHAPTER FOUR

Assess for Success: Measuring Abilities, Placing, and Advancing Students

BASICS

Bridge programs must carefully assess the basic academic skills, interests, and readiness of applicants to place them in programs that best suit their abilities, needs, and goals. Applicants who are accurately placed into programs and classes are more likely to complete the program. This produces better outcomes for the programs and minimizes the negative impact on students who enroll but are unable to keep up. Effective assessment and placement is a top priority in enrolling adults who are ready for the program and can succeed with support.

Workforce development agencies, educational institutions, and employers use a variety of assessment tools to gauge literacy levels, college readiness, workplace readiness, occupational competencies, motivation, and career interests. Many tools have standard rankings and eligibility criteria. Although many tools are available and in use, they are not coordinated or organized into a system and are often designed for different populations and purposes.

Therefore, bridge programs face a challenge in coordinating the required assessments and identifying those that reflect the skill levels and aspirations of their target populations. Using a combination of tools is an effective approach to determine whether candidates are a good fit for a bridge program and their potential to transition to the next level in a career pathway. To ensure consistency, bridge program partners need to understand each other's tools and to develop a coordinated process for interpreting and weighing the different measures.

This chapter reviews the assessment tools that are used by bridge program partners and strategies for optimizing their use.

HOW TO ASSESS, PLACE, AND ADVANCE STUDENTS

- Use available tools to assess skills, competencies, motivation, and interests
- Combine tools and results to maximize effectiveness

Use Available Tools To Assess Skills, Competencies, Motivation, And Interests

Assessment tools to measure skills, career interest, and readiness to enter and complete a bridge program fall into three categories:

- Standardized skills tests to measure reading, writing, and math literacy, English language competency, high school equivalency, and college readiness
- Career interest inventories and work readiness tools to assess aptitude, occupational skills, work readiness, and genuine interest in the career cluster
- Customized tools to determine readiness to enter and complete a specific bridge program

The tests commonly used in Illinois include:

Reading, Writing, Math Literacy, and English Language Competency

The U.S. Department of Education's National Reporting System (NRS) has approved two standardized tests for assessing skills and aptitudes in reading, writing, and math: CASAS (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System, 2006) and TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education, CTB/McGraw-Hill, 2004). Adult education programs that receive federal or state literacy funds use these tools to place students in course levels that fit their competency and to report their literacy gains. Occupational skills training providers, career centers, and social service agencies often use these literacy assessment tools to help place clients in training and employment.

The Illinois Community College Board requires adult education providers to use the TABE for students enrolled in adult basic and secondary education instruction, and CASAS, BEST Plus, and BEST Literacy for students enrolled in ESL instruction. TABE is also the approved assessment for WIA activities in Illinois for literacy programs and CASAS, BEST Plus, and BEST Literacy for English Language Learners (ELLs).

High School Equivalency

The GED is an official national and state recognized equivalency test document awarded to individuals without a high school diploma when they pass the five-part GED and Illinois Constitution tests. The GED was developed as a transferable, universal test to demonstrate acquisition of knowledge and core academic skills and is accepted by colleges and employers. Many students enter adult education programs to prepare for the GED test.

College Readiness Assessment

College readiness is the level of preparation a student needs to succeed without remediation in for-credit coursework at the postsecondary level. Most community colleges in Illinois use COMPASS (about 90%) and the rest use Accuplacer and ASSET to determine eligibility for college-level credit programs and to advise students on the courses that best fit their needs and goals. COMPASS and Accuplacer are computer-based while ASSET uses paper and pencil.

The tests measure skills considered essential for success in college, including reading comprehension, understanding sentence structure, identifying common grammar errors, and algebra. Currently, Illinois colleges set their own "cut scores" for admission to credit courses. Colleges may also supplement these standardized tests with other information, including high school grade-point averages, class ranking, writing samples, and performance in advanced placement classes. Colleges may cover the cost of the test or pass it on to the student, and they may set a limit on the number of times the test can be taken per year.

Students who do not place into college-level courses are placed in developmental education courses, which are offered at several levels. These prepare students to succeed in college-credit English, math, and career and technical programs, but generally do not carry credit. Colleges use end of course grades in developmental education courses to determine students' ability to transition to the next level of developmental coursework or to college-credit courses.

Work Readiness

The National Work Readiness Certificate is used by some employers, educational institutions, and job training providers in Illinois and nationally to indicate a specific foundation of knowledge, skills, and abilities that workers need to succeed in entry-level jobs across industries. ACT, a private company, worked with industry to develop WorkKeys, an exam that is linked to a National Work Readiness Certificate process. Frontline supervisors and entry-level employees from businesses across the country helped develop criteria for securing the certificate.

The Illinois workNet portal includes free work readiness resources. Workforce and education providers can register for webinars to learn more and to view the online guides for using the work readiness assessment tools.[15] The site includes the following types of assessments.

- Computer Skills Self-Survey
- Skill and Interest Surveys
- Employability Pre-Assessment/Study Guide
- Career Development Post-Assessment
- Observational Assessment
- NOCTI 21st Century Skills Assessment[16]
- Worksite Evaluation

Industry Certifications

Many employers use industry-recognized credentials as a condition of employment or in screening job applicants. Certifications and related examinations are generally developed by or with professional and industry associations and some are administered by the state's Division of Professional Regulation. In some cases, completion of accredited training programs is a condition of taking the tests, such as for medical assistants, occupational therapists, advanced welders, and network technicians.

Career Interest Inventories

There is a wide range of Web-based inventories that help individuals define their interests, values, and aptitudes. These are often used in conjunction with individual career advising, but may also be integrated into an application process. Bridge program staff may review the inventory results in interviews with applicants to explore their interests in the career cluster, reasons for returning to school, and whether the bridge program is a good fit for them. Examples of tools include the Individual Employment Plan, Career Voyager, Career Coach, and Prove It!.

Orientations

Carefully planned orientations provide additional opportunities to get to know candidates. Such orientations combine in-depth information about the program, its requirements, and the career cluster and pathways with activities where potential participants imagine themselves in the occupation, take career inventories, and outline why they want to enroll. This helps students decide if the program is a good fit and allows staff to meet the applicants prior to an interview.

Interviews

Interviews can be customized to assess characteristics and behaviors that relate directly to a bridge program and career pathway. The interview may involve one or more staff and ask candidates:

- Why they are interested in the career cluster or industry
- What they would like to learn from the bridge program
- What they are good at
- What accomplishments or activities they are proud of
- An example of a struggle that they have had to overcome
- What individual/family needs or issues will have to be addressed to enable participation
- Why they would be a good candidate for the program

Figure 10: Assessment Questions for Interviews provides some sample interview questions.

In recognition of the challenges posed by so many different assessments and inventories, Illinois adopted a set of common core standards for K-12 achievement that will be reflected in the redesign of career and technical education and incorporated into adult education. The state has also launched a process for designing an assessment system for use at all levels of education that is based on common core standards and expected to be complete in 2014 (see http://www.iccb.org/pdf/adulted/ABE_ASE_Content_Standards_04-2011.pdf).

Figure 10: Assessment Questions for Interviews

Name of participant: _____

Name of person completing assessment: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____ Early/Late/On Time

Healthcare Focused Questions:

1. Why are you interested in a healthcare career?
2. Over the next year, what would you like to improve about yourself?
3. What have you done in your life that you are proud of now?
4. What skills and abilities do you have? What are you good at?
5. What skills do you feel you need to work on in order to be successful in our program?

Customer Focused Questions:

1. How do you handle stress or challenging situations?
2. Does your family support you in pursuing this program? Please explain.
3. Do you have child(ren)? How many? What age(s)?
4. Do you need childcare assistance? What childcare arrangements do you have?
5. If you had an emergency, whom would you call to help you?
6. Please tell me about a struggle you have had in your life. How did you overcome this or do you plan to overcome this?
7. Are there any plans of you getting off of government assistance? (Please explain)
8. Do you have a car?
9. What are your resources for transportation?
10. Do you have a daily planner? Do you use it? Please Explain.
11. After you get your CNA, what would you want to do next? (What's your next move?) (For example: continue school, get a job, or not work)
12. Why would you be a great candidate for our healthcare careers program?

Interviewer Comments:

Attitude: _____

Mannerisms: _____

Professionalism: _____

First Impression: _____

Motivated? _____

Important: Do they really want this? _____

Developed by Central States SER

Figure 11: Basic and Applied Skills Assessment Tools in Illinois summarizes the basic and applied literacy assessment tools commonly used in Illinois, what they measure, and how they can be used in bridge programs.

Combine Tools And Results To Maximize Effectiveness

Standardized assessments are generally designed for a specific purpose. Consequently, by themselves they do not reflect the goals of bridge programs. For example, assessments developed for a general population may not have enough test items at lower literacy levels to be accurate with a low-skilled population. Assessments

Figure 11: Basic and Applied Skills Assessment Tools in Illinois

Assessment Tools	What does it measure?	How can it be used in bridge program?
ACT & SAT	General educational development and ability to complete college-level work. Used by 4-year colleges and universities.	Not typically used
COMPASS, Accuplacer, & ASSET	Readiness of students for college-level work in core classes like English and math.	▪ Identification of the target population ▪ Determination of an individual's need for bridge programs, and level of program ▪ Students advising and placement ▪ Preparation for college exams
TABE Locator	The appropriate level of the TABE test to be administered for reading, language, and math.	Determine appropriate TABE to administer
TABE Levels 1-6	Skill levels and aptitudes in reading, math, and language as they are applied in the classroom or workplace.	▪ Intake ▪ Placement ▪ Entry-level employment ▪ Learning gains
CASAS	Applied reading, math, and writing skills needed in everyday life.	▪ Intake ▪ Placement
BEST Plus and Best Literacy	Language proficiency for adult English language learners performing at survival and pre-employment skill levels. BEST Plus is an oral interview, and BEST Literacy is a literacy skills assessment.	▪ Intake ▪ Placement
Illinois workNet	Provides a common set of work readiness assessments that are available online; includes webinars and guidance in use; basic skills assessments and a paper and pencil interest inventory.	▪ Intake ▪ Placement ▪ Job counseling & search
WorkKeys	Skills that employers believe are critical to job success: reading for information, writing, and applied math, listening, locating information, and teamwork. Specialized tests are also available for skilled and professional occupations.[17]	▪ Intake ▪ Pre- & post-test ▪ Placement ▪ Preparation for National Work Readiness Credential ▪ Job counseling & search

used at one level, such as adult education or workforce training, have little relevance to other levels, such as GED preparation or college readiness.

At the same time, standardized assessments designed for traditional student populations may not be able to capture the full capabilities of nontraditional bridge program applicants. Therefore, bridge programs should use a combination of tools to provide consistent and reliable information for answering the following questions:

- **Literacy levels**: Is the candidate prepared for this level of coursework? Does the student have the ability to benefit from the coursework and move to the next level of instruction?
- **Interest, aptitude, and motivation**: Does the candidate have a real interest in the career cluster and a commitment to successfully complete the course?
- **Learning needs**: Does the program offer the type of support the candidate will need to succeed in the course?
- **Transition**: Can assessments be used in the program to prepare students to qualify for and succeed in the next level of education and employment?

An example of a combination of tools includes interest and aptitude tests to determine suitability for the occupation and career pathway, basic skills assessments to determine literacy levels, and interviews and application forms to demonstrate understanding of the target occupation, training expectations and requirements, individual needs, and objectives.

To effectively use a combination of tools, bridge program partners should clearly define what is required to succeed, understand what each test measures and the meaning of results, build in consistency, and balance skills requirements with enrollment and goals.

Define What is Required to Succeed

It is important to clearly define the entrance requirements based on literacy levels, interests, occupational skills, and personal characteristics that will contribute to success. In bridge programs designed for literacy levels below the ninth grade, primary focus will be on basic skills, interests, and behaviors. Above the ninth grade literacy level, as the occupational content and skill level becomes more specific, measuring technical skills and industry knowledge becomes more important.

Bridge programs may also look for certain personal traits and interests. For example, health sciences bridge programs leading to an LPN or RN seek students who rank high on aptitude for compassion and caring, whereas programs in industrial technology look for computer literacy, mechanical aptitude, and ability to work in teams. Also, intensive bridge programs that meet 25-30 hours a week for 12 weeks with homework will seek a deeper time commitment and need more individual supports to overcome challenges than programs that meet two to four hours a week.

Finally, the degree of interest in the career area should be assessed. Students who are actively interested in the career cluster and have some familiarity with the industry are more likely to succeed than those who have not made an informed choice (i.e., they are filling a training requirement or just learned of the program from a counselor).

Understand the Tests

To effectively use all these tools, bridge program designers must understand the meaning of the rankings and measures of all of these tests. Partners will have to discuss how their assessments fit together. Crosswalk tables that delineate scores on several different testing systems according to a standard literacy definition can help partners understand their comparable levels. The National Reporting Service has prepared a table comparing the literacy levels and scores for commonly used tests.[18]

Build in Consistency and Reliability

Use of a variety of assessments and customized tools can produce varying interpretations of the results and decisions regarding enrollment. Interview panels comprised of instructors, the transition coordinator, and other staff may reduce variations in the interview process. Training for all staff involved in the selection process will help develop a consistent approach and interpretation of results. In addition, program staff and partners should periodically examine the effectiveness of using different assessments in selecting the students who are the best fit for the program.

Use a Balanced Decision-Making Process

Use of a combination of tools allows programs to balance the relative weight that they give to each factor. For example, although literacy is one of the most significant factors of success, its sole application could screen out those who can succeed with support. Being open to considering different combinations of applicant strengths will provide opportunity to a broader group of people who are qualified to succeed.

For example, in its initial cohorts, Lewis and Clark Community College found that students without the required 9.0 literacy level had a hard time in the course. However, program staff also found that motivation and other positive factors can balance a lower score. They make exceptions if they are familiar with the student and know the student will work hard, considering that student's motivation, attendance in other programs, recommendations, and the results of career assessments.

Worksheet 4: Planning for Student Assessment will help bridge program planners to identify the best set of assessment tools for a new bridge program.

Worksheet 4: Planning for Student Assessment

Step One: Identify the competencies required to succeed in the bridge program.

- What literacy level, English language proficiency, and computer skills are required to understand the materials and complete the lessons?
- Is familiarity with the career cluster or pathway or prior employment necessary?
- What is the degree of motivation, readiness, and career interest necessary for success?

Step Two: Review all of the tools that partners use to assess bridge program candidates and place them into their various programs. This list should include standardized literacy assessments, career and interest inventories, interview protocols, references, etc.

- What assessments and exams do partners use to measure the skills required for entry and success at each point in the pathway, including for entry-level employment in the targeted occupation?
- What skills do they measure and what ranking systems are used?
- What groups of students are given each test and at what points?
- What skills and competencies do the tests measure?
- How do the measures and ranking systems used by the partners relate to each other? Crosswalk tables for the standardized tests may be helpful here.
- What are the skills and competencies required at each level?

Step Three: Determine if the existing tools measure the skills and characteristics that are important to success.

- What is important but not measured by the tests?
- What additional tools may be used to capture the factors critical to successful completion of the program?
- What are the differences among the tests?

Step Four: Determine how to more closely align the assessments and use multiple vehicles to improve student placement and success.

- What tools are available to fill the gaps? What other tests do partners use? What do other bridge programs use?
- What is the track record of their use in bridge programs? Can or should they be modified?
- What do they cost?
- What skills are required to administer them?
- How do they fit with the other tools?

Step Five: Align assessments in the pathway.

- Do the tests and exams that are used at each step in the pathway align? How can the alignment be enhanced?
- How can COMPASS, Accuplacer, and Asset practice tests be used to better prepare students to pass college entrance exams?
- What tests can help instructors and students strengthen the transition from one level to the next (for example, pre-college level courses to college credit in as short of time as possible, with little or no repetition)?
- Should the bridge program include contextualized English and math even though the next level of training or employment only requires one or the other, but more advanced programs require both English and math?
- How does the performance of bridge program students on post-tests compare to other students at the same level?
- Have the assessments at each level accurately pinpointed capacity and motivation to succeed in the course?
- Are any of the tests duplicated by partners?

Enroll for Success: Working Practices

Healthcare Careers Bridge Program

Central States SER Healthcare Careers bridge program, offered in partnership with Daley College, uses a three-part assessment that takes place over three days. On the first day, staff present a detailed description of the bridge program, including requirements, commitments, the application process, eligibility, and an overview of the healthcare profession and the career pathways of the program. Those interested in enrolling return for day two and take the TABE test. They also take Prove It!, an online aptitude test for healthcare that assesses fit on core qualities, such as compassion, listening, etc.

Those who meet the required score on the assessment tests return for the third day, which focuses on readiness, strengths, and barriers to participation and success. Staff meet with applicants to discuss their ability to meet requirements and challenges to participation. They use a customized, open ended interview and may be one-on-one or use a panel approach to get different perspectives. Michelle Rafferty, Director of Development, explained, "This discussion approach is particularly effective in screening and identifying candidates who are serious about pursuing a career in healthcare and are most likely to complete and benefit from the program." Students also prepare a career and education plan prior to the first day of class and sign a participation agreement on the first day of class.

Ms. Rafferty believes, "The success of the bridge program for the student and for the program's performance outcomes is directly tied to the assessment and selection process. It is important to make sure that it is the right fit and right time in the student's life. All of the students we serve face pressures that could interfere with completing the program, so it is essential that we only enroll those who are ready to make a significant investment into their future. There are some potential participants who are not well-suited for a career in healthcare or who need emergency support before they can pursue a training program."

CHAPTER FIVE

Make it Relevant: Contextualizing the Curriculum

BASICS

An occupationally contextualized curriculum is a core element of an Illinois bridge program. A bridge program must prepare students for credit-bearing courses and programs within one of the 16 nationally recognized career clusters, as discussed in Chapter Two. The bridge program course content must impart the knowledge and skills required for entry-level occupations within a specific career cluster.

The contextualized curriculum integrates basic reading, math, and language skills with industry/occupation knowledge and has academic and career outcomes along a clearly identified career pathway. It exposes students to career information, skills, and knowledge required by a range of occupational options within a career cluster. The contextualized curriculum bridges the gap between the initial skills of individuals and what they need to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and career-path employment and teaches basic skills within the context of a career pathway. Interactive teaching and learning is key to effectively delivering a contextualized curriculum.

Research in cognitive science indicates that adults learn basic skills faster and more effectively when they are taught in the context of preparation for employment or some other meaningful activity.[19] A contextualized curriculum is effective for a bridge program because it recognizes that adults learn better when the context is a career that they want to pursue. This is particularly true of adults who have struggled in previous learning settings, where they may have wondered, "Why do I need to know this? How does it relate to the real world?"

This chapter describes how to develop and implement a contextualized curriculum that fits the needs of a specific bridge program.

HOW TO CONTEXTUALIZE A CURRICULUM

- Know the key characteristics of an occupationally contextualized curriculum
- Develop a contextualized curriculum
- Implement a contextualized curriculum
- Continuously improve the contextualized curriculum

Know The Key Characteristics Of An Occupationally Contextualized Curriculum

A contextualized curriculum integrates basic reading, math, and language skills with industry/occupation knowledge. The contextualized curriculum has a number of widely agreed-upon key features:

- It teaches basic skills within a specific occupational context, e.g., healthcare or manufacturing
- It uses authentic workplace materials and situations as teaching tools (e.g., technical manuals, actual equipment, and computer applications)
- It incorporates interactive teaching and learning, characterized by project-based learning, team work, and problem-solving in a real-world context
- It teaches behavioral and technical skills that will help students in the workplace
- It is developed collaboratively, with input from basic skills and occupational instructors, curriculum writers, and industry experts
- The teacher is a learning coach who recognizes, respects, and applies the experiences that adults bring with them into the classroom

The bridge program course content must impart the knowledge and skills common for CTE programs and entry-level occupations within a specific career cluster (e.g., Health Science, Manufacturing, Information Technology, etc.).

> The cluster-level knowledge and skill set is built on a common core required for career success in the multiple occupations included in the cluster. This shared core consists of: academic foundations; communication; problem-solving and critical thinking; information technology applications; systems; safety, health, and environment; leadership and teamwork; ethics and legal responsibilities; employability and career development; and technical skills.[20]

The ICCB has developed, in consultation with community colleges and industry partners, the Cluster Foundational Skills for nine of the 16 career clusters.[21] These types of skills should be incorporated into the bridge program curriculum at the appropriate level. For instance, a field trip to a hospital can be preceded by a review of anti-infection procedures and followed by a discussion of how these were implemented onsite.

Develop A Contextualized Curriculum

The basic steps to developing a contextualized curriculum are:

1. Assemble the curriculum development team based on the desired type of bridge program and career cluster. (The decision should be based on national, state, and local labor market demand, as discussed in Chapter Two).
2. Determine the materials already in place, and the expertise needed to develop the bridge program content and materials.
3. Review the bridge program's position in the career pathway and identify the next steps in education and employment, including how to integrate career development into the bridge program design.
4. Focus the curriculum on getting students to the next rung of the career pathway academically and occupationally.
5. Gather detailed information from instructors, existing courses, employers, and others to inform the curriculum design.
6. Consider the target population's capacity in terms of language, literacy level, and skills. Also consider the range of levels to include in the class.
7. Plan for the instructor to use interactive teaching to deliver the contextualized curriculum.

Assemble the curriculum development team

It is critical to have the right people on the curriculum development team from the start. This team should be broader than just curriculum writers, composed of people who can help assure the curriculum reflects the bridge program's overall goals. The teams should at a minimum include three essential positions:

- Someone at a leadership level, such as a dean or program director
- Instructors with knowledge of basic skills teaching
- People with occupation and industry expertise and familiarity with CTE courses that connect to the bridge program

It is also important to have career development and support services representatives on the team. Where two or more organizations are partnering, at least one person from each organization should be included. For instance, an adult education curriculum development team might include:

- The adult education director
- One or more adult education instructors
- One or more community partners
- An instructor from the targeted occupational program
- Career development and support services experts

They should have knowledge of the CTE courses that are the next step or designed for concurrent enrollment.

Review the bridge program's career pathway and identify the next steps

The curriculum development team should revisit the identified career pathway of the bridge program and fine tune its connections to the next level in education and employment. The bridge program's goal is for students to succeed in the for-credit career program they are enrolled in, transition to postsecondary occupational programs, and to secure employment or advance on their job.

But the design of the curriculum will vary depending on the level that the curriculum targets. For instance, if students are at the sixth to eighth grade level, it will generally take more than one course to achieve this goal. This is also the time to examine whether and how the curriculum connects to specific steps on a career ladder; whether it is possible to integrate certificates or credentials into the curriculum, co-enrollment like the Integrated Career and Academic Prep System (ICAPs model), or use a paired courses model used by some CTE/developmental education bridge programs; and how to incorporate preparation for any test required for entry into the next educational level. At this point career development should also be integrated into the bridge program design (how to do this is described in Chapter Six).

Base the curriculum on getting students to the next rung of the career pathway

The fundamental purpose of a bridge program is to help students advance along an educational and career pathway. Contextualizing curricula enables students to integrate academic and occupational knowledge and advance more quickly. Therefore, curriculum development integrates academic and occupational knowledge. Academic knowledge, such as basic reading, writing, and math, is contextualized within an occupational field or sometimes within career exploration of a number of related fields. The process of developing this type of curriculum is new to many organizations.

Determine the best structure for the program, including course intensity, duration, and scheduling

The bridge program must be of sufficient intensity and duration to enable students to ultimately transition to credit-bearing courses and programs within one of the career clusters. The structure may vary to fit the needs of the target population, partner organizations, and career cluster. Examples of program structure include:

- A single course (for students at higher reading and math levels) that prepares students to move directly into credit-bearing courses, with the aim of eliminating the need for remediation. This would include adult education courses for those at higher literacy levels, i.e., above ninth grade. Students may choose to work prior to entering college.
- A series of courses in which students first complete a lower-level bridge course that prepares them to enter a noncredit or credit occupational course or program that leads to an entry-level job. In the latter, the student can "stop out" for needed work and income and return to a higher-level bridge course without having to repeat content.
- A contextualized basic skills course (involving math and/or English) linked with a course in a credit-based occupational program. This may be structured through co-enrollment (in the new ICAPs model) or in a program that pairs a developmental education course with a CTE program for students that need to strengthen their basic skills. Lake Land College's Automotive Bridge Program is an example of the latter. The contextualized basic skills course is offered concurrently with the entry-level CTE program for students who need to improve their basic skills to succeed in the CTE course program.

Determine whether to build on an existing curriculum or start from scratch

Many successful bridge programs begin by modifying an existing curriculum.[22] ICCB has developed curricula in healthcare and manufacturing that may be adapted to fit program circumstances and the preferences of instructors.[23] As an alternative, some programs write the curriculum from scratch, basing it on a thorough understanding of the knowledge and skills needed to move bridge program students from their current level to the next level. Use of another organization's curriculum may be helpful, but it will generally need to be modified to fit the bridge program's unique partnerships and student population.

Gather detailed information to inform the curriculum design

Basic skills like reading, writing, and math will be taught in a particular occupational context, so detailed information is needed from basic skills instructors and occupational and industry experts. Also, because the curriculum must creatively use authentic workplace materials to combine the teaching of reading and math concepts with essential workplace skills, external advisors should identify and develop these materials. Effective ways of gathering the needed information include:

- Visits to classes and examination of textbooks for the next educational level. For example, one adult education instructor "audited" the automotive class at his community college, and wrote daily adult education bridge program class lessons based on what he learned. At another college, the ESL bridge program instructor incorporated the math competencies required in the occupational certificate program and mathematical terms typically used on tests into the vocabulary covered in the bridge program.
- Interviews with students and instructors at the next curriculum level to identify the key skills that pose stumbling blocks for students. For example, the Health Information Technology faculty at one community college identified reading speed and grammar as student weaknesses in noncredit certificates like Medical Coding, so he worked with the adult education instructor to develop a bridge curriculum to address these deficiencies. In another example, adult education faculty reviewed college-level writing samples to determine the writing skills needed for success.
- Visits to employers to observe workplace skills in action, discover why these skills are important, learn about industry credentials that existing workers may be lacking, and obtain authentic materials to integrate into the curriculum. Further, building ongoing relationships with employers can lead to opportunities for field trips, classroom speakers, job shadowing, internships, and job placement.
- Review of credentialing or gateway course requirements to determine how they may be included in the curriculum. For example, Instituto del Progreso Latino and Humboldt Park Vocational Center's manufacturing bridge program curriculum includes the knowledge and skills needed to obtain the first level of credential developed by the National Institute for Metalworking Skills, which is recognized by many manufacturing employers.[24] Also, several adult education bridge programs found that making a CPR certificate attainable mid-course is an advantage, as it provides students with tangible proof that they are making step-by-step progress towards attaining their goals.[25] The Pui Tak Center bridge program teaches students how to take the COMPASS test to prepare for community college. Students practice in class, in workshops, and some go as a group to take the COMPASS test.[26]
- Instructor and employer review of the curriculum and modification during the course if it is not meeting student needs. Programs can consult with employer advisory committees associated with partners, such as CTE programs, a CBO, or an industry association, or one formed specifically for the bridge program, along with instructors who teach at the next level to ensure the curriculum is on target. Programs need to continually evaluate what is and is not working, and adjust accordingly. For example, instructors in a manufacturing bridge program identified the lack of computer access and literacy as a critical barrier to student success and employability. Consequently, computer literacy was integrated into the curriculum to help students to complete resumes and search the Internet.[27]

Consider the target population's capacity and range of levels to include in the class

A contextualized curriculum needs to meet the students where they are in terms of skill levels and challenge them to acquire new competencies. This applies to both basic and occupational or technical skills. The curriculum writers

should be familiar with the target population and with the technical skills needed for entry level and beyond in the career pathway.

There is no single right answer as to how wide the literacy range of students in a class should be. Some programs have found that two grade levels is right, so that students can move at approximately the same pace. Other programs successfully include students over a broader range and use computers for self-paced study or peer tutors, which helps the tutor as well as the tutored to improve skills.

Some programs have lowered their entrance requirements when most students who wanted to enroll in the class did not meet them. In those cases, the programs put more emphasis on student motivation, as determined by an intake interview or teacher recommendations. Others have kept their entrance requirements, finding lower-level students unable to move to the next level in the given time. The important point is the need to be flexible and systematically review what works.

Plan for the instructor to use interactive teaching

The approach to teaching has a critical impact on student learning. For a bridge program to succeed in its goal of advancing students academically and occupationally, the instructors must actively and consistently use interactive teaching so that students take part in and contribute to the learning process. Interactive teaching stimulates acquisition of knowledge and development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills.[28]

For instance, an important bridge program goal may be for students to learn to think strategically. The instructor in a contextualized curriculum will help students learn to function in a workplace on a team where the biggest challenge is often figuring out how to define a problem. This means that the teacher should not lay out all the steps needed to reach a solution to a problem. The instructor should rather help the students gain self-confidence and the habit of thinking though problem-solving for themselves.

As one experienced contextualized curriculum instructor explained, "Ask the questions the way an employer would ask them." To help students learn this skill, the instructor cannot be the repository of all knowledge; students need to interact with each other rather than through the teacher. The instructor's role is to encourage this interaction, helping students draw on their own experience to problem-solve.[29]

Interactive teaching strategies include project-based learning, problem-solving, working in teams, classroom visits by professionals in the field or occupational faculty, student presentations, and field trips. Even classroom set-up is important: a tiered lecture environment is not as conducive to interactive learning as chairs set in a circle or in groups. A Math for Pharmacy Technicians course, for example, teaches key concepts by including conversions between several measurement systems, reconstituting liquid medications, and calculating medications for different age groups. In Central States SER's bridge program, students learn literacy and math in the context of calculating pulse and blood pressure rates and using basic medical and medicine terms and concepts in working with simulated patient models.

Traditional versus nontraditional instructional characteristics are contrasted in **Figure 12: From Traditional to Nontraditional Instruction**.

Instructors, even those experienced in interactive methods, will benefit from ongoing professional development. This includes regular meetings to discuss what works and to develop ideas to address problems. Staff may also conduct peer monitoring to observe teaching and give feedback. Formal training may include a range of topics, from better understanding and generating course content to staying current with industry trends to exploring how to teach in a contextualized manner.

Figure 12: From Traditional to Nontraditional Instruction

Traditional	Nontraditional
Teacher led	Student exploration
Separate subjects	Interdisciplinary projects
Memorization	Creativity
External motivation (grades)	Intrinsic motivation (students trying to exceed standards that they set)
Grouped by age	Grouped by readiness
Whole-class learning	Independent study opportunities
Individual competition	Cooperation
Dependent	Interdependent
Autocratic rules	Rules set by all participants
Drudgery	Enjoyment
School as separate from real life	School integrated into the community
Treating all students equally	Creating an individualized program that recognizes different learning styles and learning speeds

Source: Colin Rose and Malcolm J. Nicholl, "Accelerated Learning for the 21ST Century: The Six-Step Plan to Unlock your Master-Mind." Delacorte Press, Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing, New York, 1997.

Other options include bringing in external speakers on various topics, paying instructors to attend external professional development, offering observations of "traditional" instructors teaching "nontraditional" students, providing feedback about instruction, and supporting faculty observations and feedback about each other's practice.[30] It is crucial that professional development is built into the overall structure of the bridge program and that instructors are compensated in some manner for their time. ICCB's Adult Education Department offers specific training in bridge program development through the Illinois Service Network and ICCB is creating a CTE/ developmental education professional development network that will include bridge programs.

Implement A Contextualized Curriculum

A bridge program classroom should be a lively place, with plenty of interaction among instructors and students, students and students, and students and other staff and guests. Keeping this in mind, there are a number of options for specific delivery methods for a bridge program.

Team teaching

Team teaching requires both a basic skills instructor (generally from adult education or developmental education) and an occupational/technical instructor together in the classroom for all or a substantial portion of the instructional time. This is more costly than a single instructor, but existing team-taught bridge programs are designed to draw on multiple funding streams. An added benefit to co-teaching is that it builds collaboration among the participating faculty members into the program.[31]

Bridge programs structure team teaching in a number of ways. Both instructors may be present in the classroom at all times, trading roles depending on the day's lesson (one teacher delivering instruction, the other circulating in the class or in other ways providing additional support), or the overlap may be partial, such as half the time the two instructors are present and the other half only one is present. Several Illinois adult education bridge programs use team teaching in a variety of ways: a college instructor in a particular occupational field team teaching with an adult education instructor; an ESL and GED instructor in the classroom simultaneously; and using three teachers to teach three different subjects, with the components meshed together to form the bridge program instruction.[32]

However, not every bridge program has the resources for team teaching. A contextualized curriculum may also be taught successfully using an individual instructor or a team of instructors teaching separate classes. For example, in Black Hawk College's transportation, distribution, and logistics bridge program, two experienced ESL and GED instructors each taught separate classes, but the shared purpose of both classes was to prepare students to enter the same certificate program.[33] In a CTE/developmental education bridge program at Waubaunsee College, the English instructor has primary teaching responsibility and the technical instructor teaches just the specific points that require technical expertise.

Cohorts

A cohort of students taking a given set of classes as a group may be structured so that the classes take place at the same time or as a series of classes, moving from a lower to a higher level. Cohorts can be a primary factor in individual development, program completion, and skills gains. Daley College, for example, has found that students quickly form bonds with their peers around their learning and personal and career goals, developing a strong community. Its bridge program director believes that students keep each other motivated during tough times, value the opportunity to see that others have similar issues, backgrounds, and aspirations, and get beyond first impressions. Cohorts can be encouraged early in the program by asking students to share their goals, fears, and backgrounds, and then strengthened over time through group projects and activities. There are a variety of ways to sustain cohorts of those moving from a bridge program to a credit program with a broader group of students. For example, a cohort of bridge program graduates could form a weekly study group that might be assisted by a basic skills instructor, or may keep in contact with the transition coordinator.

Use of technology

Increasingly, employers are requiring computer skills even for entry-level positions. In addition, employers and educational institutions are using computerized vehicles for assessments and job applications. The GED test is expected to be offered solely in a computerized format starting in January 2014. In many bridge programs, students are unfamiliar with computers and nearly all lack the computer skills they will need. Bridge programs need to introduce technology at a level and intensity appropriate for students' literacy levels and continue to increase student skills as they progress, otherwise lower-level students may be intimidated and unable to keep up. On the other hand, computer use is motivating to students at higher basic skill levels; this motivation can be leveraged to boost technology use for bridge programs serving that target population.[34]

Illinois bridge programs use computers in various ways, depending on the level of the students. The use of computers enhances the basic skills of students and expands their computer literacy skills. For example, in the College of Lake County Adult Education Health Care Bridge Program, which serves students who score 7.9 and above on the TABE test, students use the Internet to explore healthcare careers and to search and apply for jobs online, and they become proficient in the use of computers for documentation, emailing, and preparing resumes and cover letters.[35]

In Rock Valley College's Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics Bridge Program, which serves students with reading levels between 6.0 and 8.9 and ESL students at the intermediate level or above, online activities are combined with other instructional methods, including hands-on equipment training and group projects, and technology is consciously incorporated into daily instruction.[36]

Distance learning

For bridge programs serving students with sufficient computer skills, distance learning may be an option. Distance learning or education is a process to provide access to learning when the source of information and the learners are separated by time and distance, or both. Distance learning courses that require a physical onsite presence for any reason (such as lab time, face-to-face instruction, and taking examinations) are referred to as hybrid or blended courses of study. In these, class content may be delivered completely or partially in a Web-based format and students may submit assignments online. This approach can be useful for adults with varying work schedules, for parents, for others with major time constraints, and for organizations whose target population is spread over a large geographic area.

For example, Southwestern Illinois College delivers its Health Sciences Prep as a hybrid course. Students use the college's Blackboard online learning system as the platform; complete career development assignments by linking to Web resources like the federal Occupational Handbook, O*NET, and the college's Discover and Career Cruising programs; and complete and submit assignments like practice tests using the Blackboard system. The college provides live support for computer use and learning outside of class, including in their Success Center and library.

While computer learning is important, recent research shows poorer outcomes for lower-skilled students in distance learning, so bridge programs should only use a hybrid approach, and not exclusively distance learning.[37]

Continuously Improve The Contextualized Curriculum

The leadership team needs to continually evaluate how well the curriculum is working to ensure the bridge program achieves its goals. This is particularly important the first few times the bridge program is offered, when the curriculum (as well as other aspects of the bridge program) may need adjustment to better meet the needs of the students.

Assessing student progress is important for curriculum evaluation.[38] Chapter 4 addresses the use of standardized tests such as the TABE and COMPASS. In addition, bridge programs need to develop competency-based assessments, which can range from multiple-choice tests to more complex project-based or problem-based assessments. Assessments made during the bridge program can lead to in-course adjustments.

Bridge programs should connect with employers periodically to determine whether graduates they employ are meeting their expectations, or if there are areas that need improvements. This will also ensure that the bridge

program stays abreast of changing industry demands and conditions. The program can obtain feedback from an employer advisory group, by visiting employers directly, or both. Some bridge programs have used this outreach to decide not to offer a particular bridge program again, because industry demand had changed; outreach to (and from) other employers led them to offer a bridge program in an entirely different career cluster.

Developing and implementing a bridge program contextualized curriculum is a dynamic process that requires staying on top of and responding to what is happening, both inside and outside the classroom. The contextualized curriculum cannot be developed just once and delivered as-is from the first time forward; rather, it is an ongoing process of implementation, evaluation, and revision. This makes it challenging, but is key to success. **Worksheet 5: Curriculum Checklist** is a helpful tool in determining if a curriculum is occupationally contextualized.

DISTANCE LEARNING RESOURCES

- **i-Pathways** (formerly GED-i): A Web-based instructional tool designed for use at a distance or as a part of classroom instruction
- **Career and Academic Readiness System**: Supports instruction and enhances reading, math, and writing skills beyond developmental education
- **Illinois workNet**: Free online resources that specialize in reading, math, and language

Worksheet 5: Curriculum Checklist

You know you have developed a contextualized curriculum when:

- ☑ The curriculum has a clearly defined role (function) in a career pathway that includes discrete academic and occupational steps.
- ☑ The curriculum development process included input from "all the right people." These are: _____ . (This should be a cross-section that includes representatives of the relevant academic and CTE levels and departments, the target industry, and career development, at a minimum.)
- ☑ The curriculum has clear learning goals and objectives that encompass both academic and occupational knowledge and content.
- ☑ The curriculum developers and instructors are committed to the bridge program vision and believe in the ability of the students to achieve it.
- ☑ The curriculum developers and instructors work together in the development and implementation process.
- ☑ There is a process in place to modify the curriculum during the course, if necessary, and the entire team knows how this process works.
- ☑ The instructors have created delivery methods that embody interactive learning that are regularly monitored to ensure the students are engaged in active learning.
- ☑ The instructors engage in professional development.
- ☑ The curriculum incorporates authentic workplace materials and uses them to teach literacy or other skills.
- ☑ The curriculum is written at a level that is appropriate for the target population.
- ☑ The students are actively engaged in the learning process (as demonstrated by class interaction, class projects, evaluations, direct observation by other professionals, etc.).
- ☑ There is a process in place for continuous improvement of the curriculum that involves the curriculum writing team and period feedback by the leadership team.

Make it Relevant: Working Practices

Pui Tak Healthcare Integrated ESL Bridge Program

At the Pui Tak Center, "We decided to develop a bridge curriculum entirely from scratch to ensure that it would meet the needs of the community, target population, and instructors," explained Nicky Chan, Adult ESL Program Administrator. Pui Tak formed a curriculum design team — "our dream team" — of staff and experts who understand the culture, aspirations, and skills of the target population and the healthcare field. The dream team included the ESL instructor (who is also a doctor), the basic skills instructor, the bridge program coordinator, experts in curriculum development and instruction, and a student.

They collected information by:

- Reviewing existing curricula and course materials to learn about innovative approaches, best practices, and what works best in what circumstances.
- Interviewing representatives of Malcolm X College's healthcare program, with a focus on the CNA program, about their requirements for entrance, school work, attendance, successful completion, foundational terms and concepts, culture, student services, etc.
- Interviewing students at Pui Tak to understand their goals, learning styles, and needs.
- Interviewing healthcare employers to learn about required basic, technical, and workplace skills, key concepts, and minimum knowledge for certified nursing aide, e.g., administrative codes, and trends in hiring and in the workplace.

They defined the primary goal of the bridge program as a passing grade on the COMPASS test, which is required for entrance into Malcolm X's CNA program. Based on the skill range of the target population, they designed the bridge program to increase proficiency in English speaking, listening, reading, and writing, and career and workplace skills. The next step was to set measurable goals for proficiencies in listening, reading, writing, practical math, medical terminology, and test taking.

Lessons cover everyday healthcare such as grooming and hygiene, as well as basic information about key nursing activities and skills, e.g., blood pressure and pulse, and how to take measurements.

The instructional model emphasizes active learning. Each lesson has a short introductory lecture, observation, and discussion. In a format called "Ask the Doc" students watch video vignettes and the instructor may intermittently stop the video to ask questions such as "What should the nurse assistant do? Why?" and "Are there any words you do not understand?"

Small roundtables of two to three students have both a listening and a medical component. These involve "probing and personalization" to strengthen English language skills and their understanding of healthcare provider behaviors. These small groups also focus on helping students to see themselves in a healthcare profession. Instructors share pictures of people in different settings and ask students to talk about how the picture relates to family or a work situation focusing on a specific theme, e.g. honesty, trust worthiness, etc. This leads to a discussion of them in relation to healthcare professions and situations they might confront in the workplace.

Roundtable discussions are reinforced by field trips in the third term to a nursing home or hospital and Malcolm X College. Students attend lectures by college instructors and employers and attend workshops focused on the healthcare industry in Chicago.

In addition, regular workshops on taking computerized tests, especially the COMPASS, builds student experience and confidence, and tracks progress. Malcolm X helped Pui Tak create sample readings. Students practice test taking in the computer lab.

Pui Tak is currently working on instructor development to increase ability to teach the curriculum and expand the number of instructors. Mr. Chan added, "We will review the curriculum over the next two years to identify strengths and weaknesses. We also want to add career pathways linkages like health informatics to broaden opportunities and student interest, particularly among the males."

Elgin Community College Adult Education Health Care Bridge Program

At Elgin Community College (ECC), Adult Education bridge program students begin to understand the common types of healthcare settings, like hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, ambulatory care, and home health, while learning basic skills. They learn workplace readiness skills, such as communication, problem-solving, time management, and professionalism. They explore ECC's healthcare programs, learn the entrance requirements, and design an individual academic and career path for their short-term and long-term goals.

To develop the curriculum, Peggy Heinrich, Dean of Adult Education, explained, "It's really important to ***not*** develop the bridge curriculum solely within Adult Education — we don't have enough occupational knowledge. And it's equally important ***not*** to outsource it. We tried that, and it was a bad idea! The external person wasn't familiar with our programming and we didn't like the product. A nursing retention specialist who works with at-risk students in healthcare, one of our long-term adjunct faculty, and someone from Workforce Transitions who had a lot of insight ended up developing what we use now. That was such a strong, positive model that we used it to develop our Early Childhood Education bridge program, too."

In curriculum delivery, Dean Heinrich explained, "Students find that the field trips to employer partners and tours of ECC healthcare program facilities are by far the most beneficial, eye-opening experience of the bridge program. We will never offer a program that doesn't have this component. Getting students to a site can be a nightmare organizationally, but it is essential for students to see it from inside out, so they know whether they even want to work in the healthcare field and what kind of facility they would want to work in."

CTE Reading-Study Skills for Automotive Technology/Mechanic and John Deere Tech

Lake Land College's bridge program focuses on developing students' reading comprehension and critical and logical thinking skills so they can advance in the transportation, distribution, and logistics sector.

To develop the bridge program's contextualized developmental education curriculum, Lake Land College considered the end goal — to prepare students to successfully complete an Associate of Applied Science Degree and to transfer to a senior institution. But before students can pursue credit-bearing coursework, they have to be at the eleventh grade reading level, so the contextualized curriculum aims to both improve reading comprehension skills and expose students to career information that will further them along the career pathway. It also has students work on study, listening, and speaking skills to prepare them for employment.

A team of curriculum developers — the developmental education instructor, the CTE reading instructor, and the John Deere career instructor — modified a developmental education course for students preparing for the workplace in the transportation, distribution, and logistics sector. They used the performance measures of the highest level of developmental education course and integrated elements related to both automotive and John Deere-specific

technology. Information about the history of John Deere and skills relevant to the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation qualifications for Automotive Services Excellence certification were integrated into the coursework. The new course also took advantage of authentic John Deere learning materials to provide a real world context.

Lake Land found that developing a contextualized curriculum presents "a huge learning curve and a number of important considerations — from classroom sizes and space requirements to faculty load restrictions to the course approval process. It requires passion and dedication to see it through successfully," explained Diana Glosser, Lake Land College Director of Perkins Programs.

Lake Land College continuously improves upon the curriculum. First, the reading instructor provides professional development courses with adjunct faculty to teach the importance of a contextualized curriculum and how it fits into the developmental education program as a whole. These professional development sessions cover teaching style, the curriculum, student needs, and garner faculty support and buy-in for the bridge program. Second, the College continually refines the curriculum throughout each semester. For example, in the first semester the course was offered, the reading instructor attended several CTE classes to provide feedback. Third, Lake Land College encourages communication among instructors. While the bridge program does not use a team teaching model, instructors make an effort to exchange course information so that they can reinforce each other's content and ensure students are receiving a comprehensive view of the career field. Finally, the bridge course provides support out of the classroom through a mentorship program. By pairing students with mentors, students have access to working professionals and can learn about their work experience.

Lake Land College is currently gathering data on its bridge program to determine two important elements of future curriculum development: 1) if there is a need for a contextualized math component and 2) if the contextualized curriculum has, in fact, proven to be more successful with the target population than the traditional developmental education program. Anecdotally, Lake Land College has found its contextualized curriculum to be more effective for students pursuing careers in the automotive and manufacturing industries. However, once data is formally collected and analyzed, Lake Land College will consider what future curriculum development is needed to keep this bridge program relevant and viable.

CHAPTER SIX

Launch a Career: Providing Career Development Services

BASICS

Career development is an essential component of a bridge program because it helps students improve their access to good jobs, careers, and economic advancement. Career development does this by helping students understand career choices and employment opportunities, and build personal skills for pursuing chosen careers. Career development also improves academic achievement, educational motivation, and self-esteem.[39]

By linking career development to academic and technical learning, students can see where they are currently in a career pathway, how they will use program lessons in a work setting, and how to use their education and prior experience to advance in the labor market. It serves to clarify the focus and purpose of their training. Career development activities within a bridge program focus on exploring career options, gaining an understanding of employment steps in chosen careers, and developing concrete individual career plans.

This chapter reviews the elements of a comprehensive career development process and includes information about career development resources and activities, and provides tips for working with partners.

HOW TO PROVIDE CAREER DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

- Know and address the career development needs of adults in a bridge program
- Apply the most effective career development activities
- Work with partners to provide the essential components of career development

Know And Address The Career Development Needs Of Adults In A Bridge Program

Career development is a core element of a bridge program because adults interested in bridge programs are seeking better employment but have little understanding of preparing for a longer-term career that suits them. They need to expand their:

- Self-image and confidence that they can be successful in school and skilled jobs and that they can advance in the workplace over time
- Knowledge and information about the career options available to them and the education and employment steps within those options
- Information and skills to make choices, identify and pursue education and employment opportunities, and to assess their positions and needs over the life of their careers

Career development is an ongoing process. Rapid changes in the labor market require continuous reflection and skills updating for all workers. But career exploration, a component of career development, is especially critical for students with limited work experience.[40] It is important for these students to explore options that combine interest, aptitude, skills, and access to opportunity at the outset of training and education. By helping them to gain skills in career exploration, planning, and implementation, bridge programs give students the ability and motivation to select and build on educational and employment experiences that lead to ongoing improvement or advancement. These programs are successful because they integrate career development with credential-based education.

What do bridge program students need?

Generally, bridge program students will differ in how they arrived at their education and career goals and understanding of their options. Often, role models within their families and communities and what their peers are pursuing provide the framework for their choices. They may have enrolled in the bridge program for a

range of reasons, such as referrals by a case manager, direct exposure to a profession, or because they work in entry-level jobs in the industry and want to move up. A few may have participated in a comprehensive career exploration process that helped them decide.

Students have differing views of their transition to a college program — or to being a college student. This difference is perhaps greatest between students in adult education or workforce development bridge programs and those who are in CTE and developmental education bridge programs. In many cases, adult education bridge program students will initially seek a GED as a foundation for getting a better job without thinking that college is possible for them. For these students, the transition to college-level courses involves changes in roles, relationships, habits, and assumptions. Career development activities should help them see themselves as college students and reduce their fear of making the transition.

Developmental education and CTE bridge program students, on the other hand, already have an interest in college and have the requisite high school diploma to enter community college. But similar to adult education students, they will have varying levels of understanding of what they want to do as a job or career. Although they may have applied to a specific technical program, they may not know the career pathway they would like to follow.

Career exploration for bridge program students should recognize the students' life experience and build upon the unique elements that have shaped them to this point.[41] Individuals should increase their understanding of the obstacles, barriers, images, and other impediments they face related to a particular demographic group, such as women, race, ethnicity, or neighborhood, that affect their career assumptions.[42]

Apply The Most Effective Career Development Activities

The content and level of specificity of career information will depend on the type and level of bridge program, the needs and experiences of the students, and the next steps in the pathway. Questions that help define the type of career development to offer include:

- What is the literacy level of the bridge program?
- What is the career cluster and what are the pathways that are covered?
- What are the next education and employment steps in the pathway?
- What educational programs are offered at the community college?
- What entry-level workplace behaviors are lacking?
- Is there a need for job search and placement assistance?

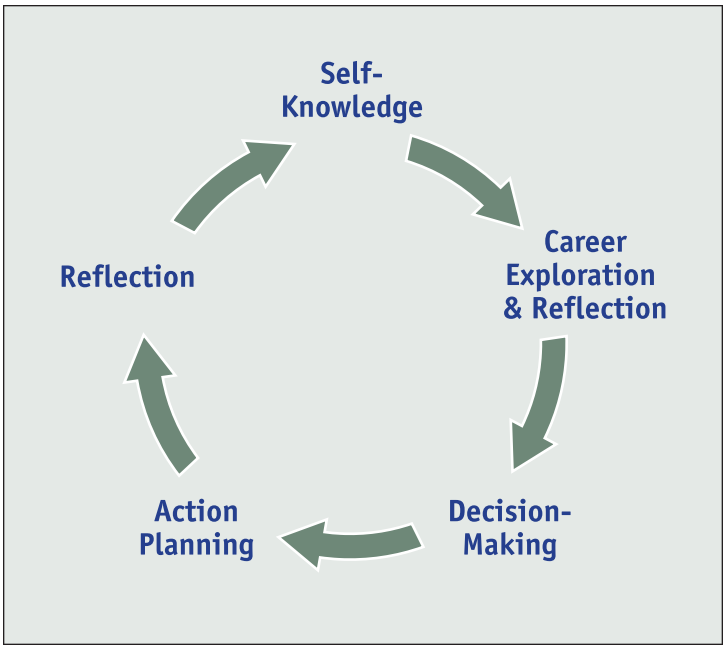
A lower literacy level (sixth to eighth grade) manufacturing bridge program, for example, would cast career exploration within the context of the manufacturing career cluster and provide opportunities for students to investigate a range of pathways and occupations and to tour local employers and technical training programs. However, it may not be appropriate to include work experience or internships at this level because of the minimum literacy knowledge of terminology used in the actual workplace.

Higher-level courses (ninth grade literacy and above) would focus more specifically on the pathways and occupations within the programs of study offered by partnering colleges. Internships and work experience would be appropriate, particularly when students are eligible for and prepared to take industry credential exams. Typically, career exploration activities narrow and deepen investigation at higher levels of an educational pathway, moving from a broader focus on a cluster or industry and narrowing to a few pathways and finally to a specific set of occupations. Similarly, decision-making and planning will become more concrete and immediate at higher levels.

As shown in **Figure 13: The Career Planning Cycle**, a comprehensive approach contains five interrelated components, including: 1) self-knowledge, 2) career exploration and exposure, 3) decision-making, 4) action planning, and 5) reflection.

The Career Planning Cycle

Figure 13: The Career Planning Cycle



Self-Knowledge (or Individual Development): One of the most important outcomes of career development is for students to embrace a personal vision of entering and succeeding in a postsecondary technical program and a career. This will often require a new self-image. Career planning therefore begins with a focus on the individual to help students understand the difference between a job and a career, and to develop the confidence in their ability to pursue a career that they desire and can succeed in.

Activities guide participants through self-assessment exercises that help them profile their values, interests, experiences, skills, aptitudes, and needs. These exercises will help them recognize that they already have assets for building a career and that they have real choices that can maximize these assets and take account of their circumstances.

A common tool used to determine this aspect of "self" is the Strong Interest Inventory, which is often combined with the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Perhaps the most famous interest inventory is Holland's typology of personality characteristics, the RIASEC model.[43] Other assessments help individuals determine and prioritize values, recognize life roles, and see how developmental stages impact career decisions.

There are specific instruments associated with each aspect of "self" and there are integrated inventories, often computer-based, that combine most or all the aspects in a consolidated form. Many inventory tools can be found on the Internet, for example, Women Employed's Career Coach, My Illinois workNet, My Skills Interest, Illinois Job Seekers Guide, and Career Cruising.[44] Students planning to enter bridge programs with the goal of pursuing college-credit programs should also be assessed for college readiness.

In-depth orientations, lasting one to three days, that are part of the enrollment process or occur prior to the beginning of class are an effective method of introducing students early in the program to the career cluster, the industry, types of occupations, and educational steps, and give them an opportunity to see themselves as a professional in the field. These orientations serve both to screen students who decide that the career is not right for them and to catalyze the visioning process in which students change their self-image to incorporate education and a career.

Creating a career vision and deepening self-knowledge are enhanced with use of self-assessment tools, interest inventories, and written assignments such as preparing personal diaries, writing about their approaches to working in specific jobs, and reflections on the occupations they viewed during a field trip. Black Hawk College asks student to state their career goals early in the program. They modify these goals as they progress through the activities and collect information about what it takes to enter the career, listing things like further education, certifications, degrees, etc. The information collected in this "career in progress" is used to make career decisions later.

Career Exploration and Exposure: Although bridge programs are marketed with an occupational focus, some participants enroll without fully examining what the career entails.

Following self-assessment, students should begin to explore the details of career clusters, pathways, and occupations that suit their personal interests, values, personalities, skills, etc. This includes activities that build knowledge about:

- Occupations and jobs of interest within the career cluster
- Career pathways including skills requirements, qualifications, education, credentials at each stage, wages, and income
- Industries and labor market information related to the occupation, including projected openings
- The work environment and the requisite attitudes and skills for success, including a day in the life of workers in the career
- Local employers and types of jobs
- Education and training options in the community
- The dynamic nature and demands of the workplace

It is also important to make students aware of the fact that a workplace may be more racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse than they are used to. They will need activities and information to increase their competency and confidence in navigating these environments. Again, field trips and internships are invaluable in giving students a realistic view of what is possible, what to expect, and roles that they might play.

Activities completed in this phase help assure that bridge program students have reliable and accurate information. At the outset, students should understand that use of concrete information is essential to making effective choices and plans. Instructors may provide forms for students to capture and present the information. Bridge programs like Black Hawk College's instruct students to do a general scan and select five career pathways that they want to look at in-depth. Research typically involves Web research, use of YouTube and videos, presentations by people in the field, and interviews with people in the careers.

Some colleges offer a dedicated day or short course where students are given most of their career development content. For example, at Parkland College, adult education staff have developed a pre-bridge program course that is offered to students interested in their Health Science bridge program.

Career exploration can be targeted broadly to many occupations within a career cluster, or more narrowly to an individual career pathway. A bridge program with a wide focus at the career cluster level, such as a health science bridge program, should include exploration of the occupations that fall under the five distinct pathways within the Health Science Career Cluster. By exploring multiple career options within an occupational cluster or an industry, adults can make informed education and career choices based on their immediate needs, interests, transferable skills, and educational and personal requirements.

A bridge program with a more narrow focus, such as a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) bridge program, should at a minimum include career exploration within the nursing profession, informing students of the range of occupations and stackable credentials along the nursing career ladder, their associated educational requirements and programs of study, and labor market information.

Exposure to the work environment and employees in the field, such as field trips, discussions with employees, and internships, provides a concrete and practical window into the occupations in the career cluster and the range of career options. Further, it gives students an opportunity to see themselves in a specific position, the activities they would undertake, and their potential colleagues. Black Hawk College found that taking people out to actual job sites generated a lot of enthusiasm because students were exposed to things they did not think about, especially the full range of healthcare occupations beyond patient care.

Because selecting colleges is so integral to career planning, it is also helpful to ask students to research training and education programs that provide the next step in their training (e.g., at a community college, industry association, workforce development organization, or proprietary school). They can compare information on entrance requirements, costs, program length, schedules, financial assistance, connections to jobs, etc., to determine what is best for them.

Students should become familiar with the college environment and expectations, what campuses look like, available services, schedules, and the culture of occupational and professional programs. This is important for students with little exposure to college and who are intimidated or uncertain about the prospect of attending. Tours of the campus and relevant occupational programs, faculty presentations, and opportunities to talk with students and graduates with similar backgrounds increases confidence and motivation. When combined with student success workshops, they can reduce the time it takes to adjust to college.

Decision-making: The decision-making element of the career planning process shows students how to link career pathway information and self-knowledge. Students should determine which career pathways are best for them by reviewing what they like and do not like about the choices. This will include:

- The characteristics of work in the career, e.g., work settings or amount of interaction with customers or co-workers
- The time and cost of getting the necessary education and credentials, wages, and advancement steps
- The relationship of the requirements to students' current and expected circumstances, including ages of children, finances, need to work while in school, and other personal circumstances

Assisting students in learning to determine how the skills they possess can be transferred to a new occupation and improving their ability to make good career decisions should occur as early as possible in the bridge program. In some cases students may decide that the career cluster or pathway is not for them, but the information and career exploration skills that they gain can viewed as a positive outcome. In fact, Lewis and Clark Community College asks students to explore five occupations, including one that is not on their preferred list, because it will provide a contrast to help validate their choices and they learn about other areas that could be of interest in the future.

Assignments may include preparation of an outline to structure examination of the key factors that characterize students' career and occupational options, such as job tasks, career pathway steps, wages, working environments, education and training requirements, and fit with personal interests, skills, and needs.

Action Planning: Once students determine the career pathway and occupation they wish to pursue, they are ready to set educational and employment goals and develop a concrete plan of action, but choices can be overwhelming. With assistance, students should design individual career plans that include:

- Education and training steps (including application process, time frame, etc.)
- Work experience (internships, volunteering)
- Certifications
- Target entry-level occupations
- Targets for part-time work while in school (as appropriate)
- Sequential advancement to better jobs and what it will take
- Solutions to individual barriers (transportation, childcare, balancing work/home/school)

Worksheet 6: My Career Development Plan may be used by instructors and advisors to help students chart concrete steps that they will take.

The culmination of the career development process is student preparation for the next step in the career pathway, including learning to look for a job in their field or apply to college, complete an application, prepare resumes and portfolios, write essays, and practice interviewing. Students should be encouraged to research companies, compare

Worksheet 6: My Career Development Plan

This worksheet may be used as part of a class assignment or as an advising tool.

I. Career Exploration

1. Career Pathway _____ Industry _____ Occupation _____

   - Entry-level job(s) _____ Required Skills/Education/Experience _____ Wages _____
   - Next level job(s) _____ Required Skills/Education/Experience _____ Wages _____
   - 10-year job goal(s) _____ Required Skills/Education/Experience _____ Wages _____

2. What types of employers are projected to need employees in this occupation? _____

   _____

3. What is the projected demand for employees in the industry and occupation in this area in the next 1-3 years? High ____ Medium ____ Low ____

4. What are the required certifications? How do you prepare for the certification exam? _____

   _____

   _____

5. What are the options for acquiring the experience for the entry-level job. For example, current or previous jobs, a new part-time job, volunteering, school projects, etc.? What works best for you? _____

   _____

6. For each option above, what types of programs meet the education/training requirements? Who offers the programs? _____

   _____

   _____

7. What are the entry requirements? What will it take for you to qualify? _____

   _____

8. What is the program length? What is the estimated cost for tuition, books, and supplies? _____

   _____

   - What types of financial aid and other support services are available? _____

     _____

   - Will you have problems getting to and from the program? _____

Worksheet 6 (Continued)

II. Decision-Making

1. What is most suitable career path or occupation for you to pursue? _____

2. How well do the options suit you in terms of:

- Achieving your long-term goal — High ____ Medium ____ Low ____
- Your interest in the type of work and industry — High ____ Medium ____ Low ____
- Your needs for income in the short and mid-term — High ____ Medium ____ Low ____
- Cost of education/training _____ Is it affordable? _____ Affordable with assistance? _____ Too expensive? _____
- Program length — High ____ Medium ____ Low ____
- Compatibility with meeting household responsibilities — High ____ Medium ____ Low ____

III. Action Plan

Occupation/Career Goal: _____

Next Education and Training Steps:

Application process, with dates _____

_____

Application assistance needs _____

Need for financial assistance and steps _____

_____

Need for transportation or other services, such as childcare and options to pursue _____

Next Employment Steps:

Employment objectives in the short-term:

- Full- or part-time _____
- Potential employers _____

_____

- Application requirements and process, e.g., online application, recommendations, portfolio, and interview _____

_____

- Desire for job search assistance services (such as resume preparation). Where is this available? _____
- Need for transportation or other services, e.g., childcare while at work _____

posted salaries and benefits, and otherwise explore the job opportunities. Inviting representatives from colleges or employers to participate in mock interviews and review resumes and portfolios shows students what to expect, provides experience, and builds confidence.

Reflection: As students progress through the bridge program they should be refining their vision of what they would like to do while they are building confidence in their abilities and their foundation of information. It is important for them to continually integrate new information, experiences, and changes in their own circumstances into their assignments and to reflect on the implications for decision-making and next steps. This can be practiced by asking students to reflect on what they learn in a tour of a workplace, in an interview with a professional, or from an announcement that a new company is locating in the community and to articulate the implications in writing, class discussions, or presentations.

Reflection should be an ongoing process that continues throughout the students' careers. They should be aware that they will need to be able to examine their positions on a regular basis to anticipate and respond to life changes. An effective method is to ask students to regularly review and update the goal statements they completed at the beginning of the course as they learn more about themselves, the career, and the labor market. Similarly, they can use their final plan (Worksheet 6) as a working guide that they revise and change throughout their careers.

Advisors

The role of advisors or coaches varies. Traditionally, they provide guidance in getting, using, and interpreting information. More recently, programs such as Central States SER have been shifting to a coaching model that gives students primary responsibility for career exploration early on and serves to ask and answer questions to help shape the process, but gives students experience and confidence in being self-directed.

Work Readiness Skills

Building workplace readiness skills deepens the relevancy of career development activities and the ability of students to transition to jobs in their field. It is particularly important where a high portion of students have little experience in the workplace. Skills include being on time, attendance, communication, how to dress, how to problem-solve, teamwork, and following instructions. Learning activities should be contextualized within the targeted cluster and pathway, and may include role playing and discussions with employers and be integrated into expectations and performance reviews for the bridge program. Many programs embed this in the design of the program and curriculum by, for example, limiting absences or late arrivals (or prohibiting them altogether), giving assignments to teams, and role playing within an occupational context.

Work With Partners To Provide The Essential Components Of Career Development

The career development component of the bridge program will be most successful if the individual or team delivering the services has experience and knowledge about the career planning process, the range of career clusters, pathways, and occupations that are the subject of the program, and job search skills.

Many programs will need to involve one or more partners to secure the needed expertise and resources. Figure 14: Career Development Services and Expertise lists types of organizations that have relevant resources, expertise, and experience.

The role of partners will differ depending on the extent to which career development is covered in the contextualized curriculum and the level of knowledge and expertise of the instructors. Programs that integrate a career planning model into the curriculum may need expertise in guiding students through a broader range of career information resources, preparing resumes, gathering information about local employers and job vacancies, and finding internships. Adult education bridge programs may look to various departments at community colleges, community-based organizations that have experience with the target population, and employer associations.

Figure 14: Career Development Services and Expertise

Organization	Service/Expertise
CTE Divisions at Community Colleges Business and Industry Centers Employment Offices Libraries Industry Advisory Counsels	▪ Career inventories and counseling ▪ Job search skills, resume preparation, mock interviews ▪ College tours ▪ College success skills ▪ Career pathway information
Community-Based Organizations	▪ Employer connections ▪ Resume preparation, job searches, and interview skills ▪ Management of internships and work experience ▪ Case managers and coaches ▪ Employment specialists ▪ Industry advisory counsels ▪ WIA services
Employers and Industry and Professional Associations	▪ Tours ▪ Mentors ▪ Speakers ▪ Internships ▪ Labor market information ▪ Information about certifications ▪ Mock interviews ▪ Portfolio reviews ▪ Job shadowing ▪ Labor market information
Illinois One Stop Career Centers and Employment Centers	▪ Labor market information ▪ Job listings ▪ Job search workshops
Illinois workNet	▪ Assessments related to interests, skills, and employability

Community Colleges

Career experts may be found in career planning and employment offices at community colleges. They can assist bridge program providers in choosing activities and inventories, visit bridge program classes to provide information directly to the students, invite students to the career center, and help students prepare resumes, cover letters and practice interview skills.

Instructors in CTE programs or in business and industry centers can make presentations about the educational requirements and opportunities in the field, provide information about the college's program, lead tours of facilities, and access their business advisory committee.

College libraries may have substantial information on a range of career clusters and occupations, as well as staff who can provide assistance.

Community-Based Organizations

CBOs that provide workforce development and employment services have substantial expertise in helping clients with career exposure and planning activities, securing and managing internships, coordinating job shadowing and mock interviews, building workplace readiness, and providing job search assistance.

One Stop Career Centers

Established under the Workforce Investment Act, these Centers offer career exploration and counseling, resume preparation and job search skills workshops, job listings, and job search assistance. Customers can visit a Center in person or connect through the Internet.

As bridge program designers determine the tools and resources to provide to students, it is important to recognize that comprehensive career exploration and guidance is a mix of activities, information, skill development, and inventories that assess multiple characteristics. Career information should come from a variety of reliable and up-to-date sources, and personal guidance should be available from professionals who understand the individuals' specific needs and possess the skills to provide the best advice.

INFORMATION RESOURCES IN ILLINOIS

Illinois workNet: Workforce development centers offer resources like Illinois workNet, a Web-based portal including career planning tools, assessments, and job search functions. Illinois workNet be accessed through the Internet at www.illinoisworknet.com and at one of the Illinois workNet Centers, which offer clients a comprehensive resource to help prepare for jobs and learn about career pathways, trends in job growth, wage rates, and other industry-specific information. Some of these Centers are found on the community college campus, making access to them convenient for college-based bridge programs. Students can set up a free workNet account by registering at **www.illinoisworknet.com/vos_portal/residents/en/home/setup_account_all.htm**.

STEM Learning Exchanges: Illinois is developing STEM Learning Exchanges to support capacity building and scaling up programs of study by forming collaborative, public-private statewide networks in nine career clusters: Health Science; Agriculture; Information Technology; Finance; Architecture & Construction; Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics; Manufacturing; Research & Development; and Energy. They will connect a network of educational institutions and related partners, including museums, federal laboratories, after school programs, and community-based organizations, with employers, industry associations, labor organizations, and workforce development systems. As conceived, the Exchanges will have resources to support bridge programs, including e-learning and assessment resources, internships, work-based learning opportunities, professional development, tools and resources for implementing personalized education plans and transitions to postsecondary academic and training programs, access to classroom and laboratory space and equipment, and support for students to work in collaborative teams addressing real-world interdisciplinary problems.[45]

Launch a Career: Working Practices

Health Sciences Prep

Southwestern Illinois College (SWIC)'s Health Sciences Prep prepares students interested in a healthcare profession and who are underprepared in reading, writing, and/or math. The bridge program exposes students to detailed career information about occupations in three main Health Science career pathways: Therapeutic Services, Health Informatics, and Diagnostic Services. They learn about the programs of study and specific occupations associated with each pathway, including options for healthcare programs that are not available at SWIC. Included in the curriculum is a four-page career pathway brochure that provides information on occupations in each of the pathways, such as average starting salary, prerequisites, cost, program length, application prerequisites, schedule, and enrollment requirements.

For instance, in the Therapeutic pathway, students learn that nurse assistant and first responder are two academic programs with no prerequisites, whereas EMT, massage therapy, and medical assistant require that they be eligible for English 101 and Math 94. They learn that the AAS degree programs have biology requirements and a higher math level; these include paramedic, nursing education, physical therapist assistant, and respiratory care.

"We ask at the beginning of the bridge program about each student's interests. The instructor stresses that healthcare is a system where you work as a team, and you need to know what every member of the team is doing. Therefore, in the bridge program you will learn about all team members and their roles," explained Julie Muertz, Dean of Health Sciences and Homeland Security.

Students also learn about the personal characteristics needed to succeed within a particular pathway. For instance, there is a lot of patient contact in Therapeutics, whereas in Diagnostics there is much less, and none at all in Health Information Technology. Dean Muertz added, "So students who want to work with people and can't get into nursing learn about other Therapeutic careers they might like."

On the first day of class, the career coach takes students to SWIC's Career Center. Students submitted their resumes using Blackboard as the platform and linked to the college website, the Occupational Handbook and O*NET, and the college's Discover and Career Cruising programs. They also meet with the coach periodically during the class. Career development is an ongoing discussion, with students talking about and comparing the professions all the way through the class. At the end, they meet with the coach to make their plan for the next application period, including what classes they need and the order in which to take them.

Through field trips students also learn about various healthcare settings and about the healthcare team. For instance, students are given the scenario of a person hit by a car for the hospital field trip. The hospital visit follows the route of the patient, starting in the ER, then going to the nursing floor and talking about the role of phlebotomy and other services, then visiting the Radiology, Physical Therapy, Dietary, and Health Info Technology departments. In every area, a hospital staff person talks with the students about their job.

William Rainey Harper College Health Care Bridge Program

"In our bridge program," Diana Cincinello, Professor, Academic Enrichment and Language Studies Division, explained, "The primary goals of career development are to have students see they have choices, how they can plan, what they can do to move closer to goals, be realistic about what's needed, and to identify specific steps. We want them to see how they fit and how they can bring their strengths to achieving their goals."

Students define their career goals in the first week of the program. The process starts during the general orientation when they use the SMART goals sheet, which is simple and brief. Students research their initial career preferences using YouTube, O*NET, and Occupational Outlook. They can also take advantage of Harper's contract with Discovery Education, which offers "streaming university" — a library of short streaming videos about various health-related occupations.

Career activities are integrated into the bridge course. Professor Cincinello explained, "We started by looking at the programs in the college that are the next step in education and the career development resources that are already here. The CNA program has a hospital and Medical Office Administration has an area to visit. The clinicals are all held at Harper's Simulation Medical Center, which is used by many of our programs, including Nursing, Practical Nursing, Emergency Medical Services, Medical Office Administration, Dietetics, Radiology, Cardiac Tech, and Ultrasound. This provides the experience of responding to the challenges of complex patient care and promotes communication while in a simulated hospital environment.

Students look at entry requirements, wages, employers, etc., and report back to the class either individually or in groups. Throughout the course they add detail about the careers, reflect on strengths and weaknesses, and make new decisions. The instructor encourages reflection after presentations, field trips, and completing assignments to help students refine or change goals to fit their new understanding about themselves or the careers.

Students are encouraged to go to the career center if they are still uncertain about what they want to do. A representative from the career center participates in the course, but the project director would like to expand their partnership further. "Our partnership with career faculty helps to increase student confidence. In addition, by doing their own research, students start to feel comfortable with the area they choose," explained Professor Cincinello.

Healthcare Careers Bridge Program

Central States SER's approach to career development focuses on how students set career goals and how to reach them. SER's recently adopted career development practice is grounded in a "coaching model." Through a grant from Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)/Chicago for the Center for Working Families initiative, SER sent several staff to five full days of training in coaching techniques. They also provide "in-service day" training and conference calls.

Bridge students engage in a five part career development process:

Part 1: Upon entering the bridge program, students complete a written Individual Employment Plan (IEP, also required by Chicago Department of Family and Support Services for its WIA employment programs). They update the plan every three months throughout the program, and more often if they meet or change a goal. They follow this plan throughout the bridge program and into the BNA and/or LPN program.

Part 2: All students are assigned to a career coach who reviews student plans with them to make sure they understand the requirements for different educational programs, such as length of time, costs, licenses, etc., and possible jobs and other options for the students based on interests, aptitudes, and personal circumstances. They use a career map to help guide the discussion.

Part 3: Students participate in coaching designed to empower the student in setting and achieving goals. The coach works with students in the career planning process, helps where appropriate, and holds them accountable for pursuing and meeting each goal set in the plan. This begins before students start to prepare resumes and applications for their next training and education steps.

Part 4: Students engage in group training on using computers in career development, resume preparation, and job search.

Part 5: Students participate in workshops to prepare them for job searches and work readiness.

Employers are involved throughout career development by making presentations, providing internships, and participating in mock interviews. Michelle Rafferty, Director of Development, explained the key to success as "having staff who are informed about the industry both in regards to nursing and allied health careers so they give students reliable information, and making sure staff act as strong coaches who motivate students and build their confidence in driving their own careers."

CHAPTER SEVEN

Support Students: Providing Transition Services

BASICS

Many bridge program students come to programs with life circumstances that make it difficult to complete education or training programs. They have low basic skills and low incomes. Many of them work and have family responsibilities and barriers to learning, such as lack of confidence, low self-esteem, and poor study skills. Transition services — often called support services — address these issues.

These services make it possible for students to stay in school and transition to credit-bearing or occupational programs and employment. They provide students with the information and assistance they need to successfully navigate the process of moving from adult education or remedial coursework to credit or occupational programs. Designation of a service coordinator, who can build relationships with students and help them identify and access the needed supports, is an important component of a service strategy.

Although transition services are critical to program and student success, they are often the hardest component to coordinate and support. Funding sources can be disjointed and service delivery is often spread across multiple organizations.

This chapter is a guide to planning and delivering effective transition services. It suggests methods for identifying the target population's needs, how to meet these needs using both internal and external resources, and ways that the program can deliver transition services.

HOW TO PROVIDE TRANSITION SERVICES

- Know what services students need
- Identify services the partnership will offer and those that external organizations will offer
- Deliver transition services effectively

Know What Services Students Need

Many factors affect priorities and strategies for delivering transition services, including student characteristics, geography, infrastructure, and program type. Student needs may:

- Relate to school and coursework, such as adjusting to school, dealing with learning styles or difficulties, building confidence and self-esteem, improving basic skills, or navigating college processes and services
- Be financial, where students need assistance meeting basic needs (food, shelter, and healthcare), finding employment that will support them while they are in school, or paying for or locating transportation
- Have to do with family, and how to balance work, household responsibilities, and school, or how to get reliable, affordable childcare
- Relate to adjusting to the next level of education or employment
- Be about finding employment in their field

Some students will need financial, academic, or personal supports, such as case management, emergency financial assistance for car repairs or healthcare, temporary housing, income supports, and assistance in finding work. Nearly all adult education students will need an introduction to what to expect when they transition to college, including the application process, financial aid, and a tour of campus facilities.

In addition, students in different program types have different requirements. For instance, if an employer is paying for or contributing to the training program costs for its incumbent workforce, financial aid might not be needed, while childcare could be a priority. Or support services in this case might focus on academic issues, providing advising, tutoring, study skills, coaching, and learning communities (most likely composed of co-workers) at the worksite.

Taking the time to determine the needs of the target population must be part of bridge program planning. Some common methods for determining these needs are focus groups or interviews with students, interviews with partners, counselors, and instructors, and/or using tools or surveys that help assess services and student use of these services.

Focus groups or interviews help bridge program designers identify the primary barriers to student success, their immediate and long-term service needs, and ways to direct services to achieve better outcomes. Focus groups with students considering or accepted to the bridge program can explore their daily responsibilities, their resources, and their expectations of college or job training. Figure 15: Sample Focus Group or Interview Questions provides sample questions for focus groups or interviews.

The information gathered in student interviews, focus groups, or through other means can be used to prioritize student needs and Worksheet 7: Service Planning can be used to record the transition services and available providers.

Identify Services The Partnership Will Offer And Those That External Organizations Will Offer

The leadership team should identify the priority services that the partnership can provide and those that they will have to seek externally. The team should:

- Inventory the partners' internal resources
- Determine which services are available to bridge program students and whether some services that are not currently available can made available
- Identify gaps
- Identify external services with the capacity, expertise, and resources to fill the gaps

Inventory Internal Resources

Program partners will have differing expertise, resources, and capacities to provide transition services to bridge program students. Community-based organizations may have deep knowledge about specific populations and experience providing case management and accessing more in-depth or professional external services, e.g., substance abuse counseling or help with domestic violence. They may also have different divisions for employment services, income support, and training.

Community colleges are expert in providing education and offer a broad range of student services through different departments, e.g., counseling, financial aid, tutoring, computer labs, childcare, and work-study. However, they may have inadequate resources and community connections to provide the tailored individual assistance that most bridge program students require to access these services.

TYPES OF TRANSITION SERVICES OFFERED BY PROGRAMS IN ILLINOIS

Academic
- Advising
- Tutoring
- Study Skills

Support
- Case manager/Transition coordinator
- Transportation
- Childcare (during class or emergency)
- Problem-solving, motivation, encouragement, planning, and accessing services

Financial
- Tuition, fees, and supplies
- Income supports
- Emergency assistance (housing, car repair, etc.)

Employment
- Internships
- Resume preparation and interviewing
- Job search and placement

Figure 15: Sample Focus Group or Interview Questions

Select focus group participants based on the population that the bridge program will target, including people in "feeder" classes at a community college, incumbent workers who want to advance, and people who come to community or workforce organizations seeking job training. A focus group of eight to 12 participants should take about one and a half to two hours, and members of the leadership team should observe the group. The facilitator should have some facilitation experience.

Part 1: Individual Support

Understanding participants' goals for seeking education will help program staff reinforce these goals, determine whether those close to the participants are supportive, and what types of support they will need.

- What are your top three reasons for returning to school? Do you have any concerns or questions about going to school? Do close family members, friends, or employers support your decision? Why or why not?
- When was the last time you attended school or a training program? What helped you most to be successful? Why did you leave? What would have helped you stay in school then? What do you think might help you be successful in school now?
- Will you need to work part- or full-time to pay bills? Will you be able to change your work shift or stop working to attend classes or internships?
- Will you need help paying for childcare, books, food, transportation, basic living expenses, or housing? Are there other financial issues (loans, owing money, other) that would keep you from attending or completing the program?
- How will you get to and from class? Are there any obstacles?
- Do you have any other challenges that may impact your attendance and performance?

Part 2: Entering College and Career Path Employment

This section will help staff determine potential candidates' experience and perception of going to college and building a career, and what types of support they will need.

- Would you like to attend college? Why?
- Have you attempted to go to college before? What happened?
- What would most help you do this? What would have to be in place for you to enter college?
- What are your employment goals? How did you identify these goals? Are you satisfied with these goals? Why or why not?
- How have you searched for jobs in the past? What was most effective? What assistance would be helpful?

Part 3: Expectations of Training/Education

This section will help programs identify potential students' concerns about being in school, and the types of help they may need.

- What do you think it will be like to be in a training/education program? What excites you most?
- What are your worries and concerns?
- What do you think will be most difficult?
- What types of support would help you be successful?

Part 4: Responsibilities

This section is designed to get an accurate picture of the daily responsibilities of potential students, what they are balancing, and the extent of the support system they will need to succeed.

- Think about your daily routine. What time does it start? What does it take to get everyone out of the house? What time do you get home in the evening? What needs to get done?
- Think about the responsibilities you have toward other people — perhaps children, parents, or a partner. What are your day care arrangements during the day or evening? What happens if a member of your household gets sick or needs to go to the doctor?
- What kinds of things throw your day off? Do you have a network of friends and family to help out? What does your network look like?
- Think about your obligations for work and family, and your network of support, what is the best time for you to attend class — morning, mid day, afternoon or evening? What is the worst time?

Communities vary in the supports available to low-income individuals, and the leadership team will need to be familiar with the resources in their community. Bridge program planners should start with an inventory of the services already available within partner institutions. **Worksheet 7: Service Planning** provides an outline for listing the anticipated needs and recording the transition services available through the partner organizations.

Wherever the services are offered, the staff may not have experience with the target population and are often not familiar with the goals or methods of bridge programs, so they may need an orientation. They should also become involved in ongoing planning. In addition, bridge program planners should develop regular feedback mechanisms to monitor the results of referrals, service quality, capacity, and need for improvement.

Note that some services may be inaccessible because bridge program students may not meet eligibility requirements, services may be provided at times that are not useful to bridge program students (for example, childcare provided during the day when classes are at night), or they may be provided in ways that are too hard to access (for example, written applications for services may be onerous). When assessing the availability of services, partners will have to explore — and potentially mitigate — these factors.[46]

Identify and Fill Gaps

After identifying all the services currently available from the bridge program partners and comparing them to the priority service needs, it will be easy to identify the gaps in service. The partnership will likely need to reach out to external organizations to meet some of the priority needs. For example, William Rainey Harper College's bridge program worked with the College's Women's Center and tapped relationships with multiple local organizations to provide domestic violence counseling and housing services.

The local United Way, city and state agencies, and organizations in the community may help identify potential partners and sources of funding.[47] Uncovering students' essential needs and ways to meet them is a process requiring time, flexibility, creativity, and practice that will evolve over time.

Deliver Transition Services Effectively

The next step is to develop a transition services delivery plan that will specify who delivers what services and how they will deliver them as seamlessly as possible. Guiding principles for the plan include:

- *Engage Students Early.* Students need a high level of consistent, personalized service early in the program or even before it starts. This is usually provided by a proactive, dedicated staff member (transition coordinator, case manager, or advisor) who helps them find and access needed services and eventually transition to the next level of education or work. Students will need complete information about the available services during their earliest contacts with the program, as well as when needs arise during the program.
- *Coordinate the Team.* The instructional team, transition services team, and administrators need strong working relationships, with regular formal meetings and ongoing communication to ensure students' needs are identified and addressed before they become a threat to program completion.
- *Build on Strengths.* Support staff, such as transition coordinators and instructors, must help students identify and build on personal strengths and identify family or friends who can help provide a support system. Staff should help develop students' ability to define their challenges, understand that they are not alone, learn how to ask for assistance, and develop solutions.
- *Instill a Program-wide Commitment to Student Success.* All team members must see student success as a core part of their job. It may facilitate mutual support and encouragement that often arises among students. This commitment is evident in policies, practices, professional development, and resource allocation.
- *Integrate Transition Services into Program Delivery.* To the extent possible, transition services should be a part of classroom and career development components of the program.

Worksheet 7: Service Planning

List the services that partner institutions already offer. Note gaps between priority needs and services and then fill in gaps with service providers from outside the partnership.

Service Need	Priority Need?	Providers	Services	Notes
Overall: Transition Coordinator				
Academic: Advising Tutoring, Study Skills, Coaching, Financial Aid				
Individual: Transportation, Childcare, Other				
Employment: Internships, Job Search				
Other				

Transition services delivery plans should be developed from the vantage point of the bridge program students, taking into consideration their first encounter with the bridge program and services, how they will access the transition services, and how those services might change as students progress through the bridge program and along the career pathway. There is also value in working with the next level of education and work to assure that graduates have assistance in adjusting to their new environment.

Transition Coordination

Transition coordination is the system for ensuring that the team will do whatever possible to assist students in solving their problems. The system involves tapping internal and external relationships to meet these needs. A transition coordinator, who may be called a case manager, coach, or advisor, is important to the success of this system.[48]

This dedicated staff person is needed to shepherd students through the offerings of multiple departments and agencies. Critical to this role is establishing a relationship with each student. The coordinator helps students to develop and implement the transition services plan, serves as the liaison between students and instructors, counselors, and other key staff, and connects students to local resources. Often their most important functions are to encourage students, help them maintain motivation and self-confidence, and help build skills in solving problems and balancing responsibilities, etc. They should be available on weekends and in the evenings, especially to accommodate employed students.

Transition coordinators participate in classes and are in constant communication with program faculty, staff, and students, so that the bridge program provides proactive rather than reactive transition services. The transition coordinator brings services into orientation sessions and the classroom. They connect students to career advising, admissions, financial aid, academic advising, transportation assistance, food pantries, shelters, and domestic violence counseling.

If a program lacks the resources to hire a new, full-time transition coordinator, it may be able to reassign an existing staff person with the appropriate skills, knowledge, and understanding of the student population, or start with a part-time position. Some bridge programs have devised ways of establishing such a position by pooling discretionary funds, having instructors or counselors take on additional responsibilities, or restructuring jobs. Transition coordination is an eligible use of adult education funding and may be supported with WIA funds.

Internal and External Partnerships

To provide all the needed transition services, new relationships with internal and external partners should be formed. Service agreements should be developed to clearly delineate responsibilities and roles. All involved should, at a minimum, know:

- When they are expected to be in contact with students and in what venues
- What specific services they are to provide, in what ways, and within what time frames
- With whom they are expected to communicate and coordinate (such as the transition coordinator or instructor)

In addition, staff should have access to a referral source listing resources for additional services. An initial staff orientation and team-building during the program are important tools in providing timely transition services to students.

Communication

The bridge program should include both formal and informal mechanisms of communication among the transition coordinator, instructors, and leadership team to talk about individual and collective student needs and how to meet them. For example, transition services should be an agenda item for every partnership meeting.

Informally, partners may think about how office placement and other factors can facilitate this type of communication. For example, one bridge program noted that putting the transition coordinator's office next to the instructor's office turned out to be key to staying on top of students needs. Instituto del Progreso Latino holds formal team meetings once a week and student progress is always on the agenda. Frequent informal communication is important to share indicators of problems, such as absences, tardiness, not turning in homework, and declining performance. Whether during formal or informal settings, team discussions about individual issues should result in immediate follow-up with the student by the appropriate person.

Employment and Internships

Ongoing connections with employers in the targeted industry will be critical for programs that offer internships and work experience, and for target populations who plan to work after completing the class and certification exams. Staff will need to identify internship and employment opportunities, prepare students for interviews and placement, follow up with students in the workplace, and secure employer feedback.

CBOs often have dedicated staff who provide these functions, through an employer advisory council or industry association. For example, an employment specialist at Central States SER works with an advisory council of hospitals and long-term care facilities, Instituto del Progreso Latino's program staff work closely with the Metropolitan Chicago Healthcare Council and their members to place graduates and define requirements and hiring stipulations, and the Lake Land College career and technical transportation program works directly with John Deere and other automotive repair companies to provide employment opportunities.

In addition, a program staff person may be dedicated to work with incumbent employees and their employers to broker advancement training throughout the local employment and training system. The staff person may maintain connections with graduates to notify them of advancement options within their field and available financial assistance.

Support Students: Working Practices

Lewis and Clark Community College
Bridge to Health Sciences

"Our transition services are provided by a trained counselor, who is the 'gold standard' of service at Lewis and Clark Community College," explained Val Harris, Director of Adult Education. The counselor divides her time between general services for all adult education students and individual counseling for all bridge program students.

Counseling for bridge program students starts with individual meetings to determine individual needs and barriers. Each student prepares a transition plan for support services and advancement to the next step in education. The counselor helps students solve challenges to program completion that relate to childcare, finances, transportation, and family or relationships. The college can provide transportation funds and childcare for a fee. In addition, bridge program students are eligible for the college's emergency loan fund (e.g., for car repairs), which is administered by the counselor. The counselor also refers students to an extensive network of community services to meet needs for emergency financial aid, temporary housing, etc.

During the program, the counselor helps students identify the next steps in education, arrange for the GED test, and where appropriate, complete financial aid forms. Instructors help students access and effectively use the college's tutoring centers for writing and math.

The counselor uses formal and informal activities to monitor progress and identify student needs that may emerge during the program, and provides ongoing support. She reaches out to students weekly and participates in regular staff meetings, where time is devoted to discuss individual student needs. She also maintains contact through her role as a substitute instructor in career development. Students may make appointment during "free Mondays" when classes are not held.

"The counselor is the go-to person for individual student issues and the glue that integrates all activities," explained Ms. Harris. She is proud of "adult education's reputation for being an innovative and proactive provider of transition services."

William Rainey Harper College
Health Care Bridge Program

Harper College's bridge program transition services evolved over time, as the program formed partnerships, figured out creative use of funds and staffing, and examined effective practices.

Initially, the leadership team, which included three instructors (one was co-chair of the department) and the dean, listed common barriers and services that would be needed for students to succeed in their bridge program based on their experience with the target population. They asked the healthcare faculty for additional insights about their students' needs, and reasons others did not qualify for or enroll in the credit program. The team then approached the library's student success coordinator, college counseling office, and outside partner, Jewish Vocational Services (JVS), to help design and offer a service menu to meet student needs.

The transition coordinator position, initially approved as a part-time trial for six months, started with an instructor who dedicated three hours a week. Based on her effectiveness, the program was able to increase the position to 20-25 hours a week, which enables use of a case management approach with each individual.

The transition coordinator first connects with students when they apply to the bridge program, monitors their progress, encourages them to "stick with it," helps them determine when they are ready for college, and serves on the case management team. Support services are provided by a case management team comprised of the team instructor, the transition coordinator, a college counselor, JVS, and the student. The college counselor interviews all bridge students at enrollment and maintains contact throughout the program regarding their needs, helps solve problems and makes referrals for specific services to JVS social workers. JVS helps with emergency issues, such as the need for part-time employment, car insurance, medical issues, health, housing, childcare, clothing, etc.

Diana Cincinello, Professor of Academic Enrichment and Language Studies, believes, "The most effective component of the transition services menu is the connection with JVS and social services. The College just isn't equipped to help with these types of personal issues. We are better with tutoring, financial aid, and college advising, which are integral to our mission."

Academic services are provided by Resources for Learning, housed at the College's library. The Student Success grant allowed them to hire adult education adjunct instructors as tutors. In addition, toward the end of bridge class, the tutors provide information about college programs in the students' field, the application and registration process, and financial assistance, and help them complete the applications. In this way, the students have much of the paperwork for their next educational step done when they complete the program.

The bridge program uses Perkins funds to offer financial assistance. When students complete the bridge program, they receive a three-credit hour tuition waiver.

The College will continue to analyze data and results to determine the most effective structure for the transition coordinator. Professor Cincinello added, "For example, should it be a full-time permanent position or is the current arrangement sufficient?"

CHAPTER EIGHT

Leverage Resources: Funding Bridge Programs

BASICS

Developing and delivering a bridge program over time will require funding from a variety of funding streams. These include federal, state, local, and private sources. Because there is no dedicated source of funding for bridge programs in Illinois, program partners should prepare a strategy for identifying, accessing, and managing the necessary funding streams. This strategy and the number and type of funding sources may change over time as the program matures and activities are added.

There are a number of steps to developing a funding strategy, including estimating program development and delivery costs, exploring funds that partners currently access along with other potential funding sources, preparing a detailed budget, and securing gap funding. This chapter focuses on funding for the three core components of bridge programs: contextualized instruction, career development, and transition services.

HOW TO FUND A BRIDGE PROGRAM

- Determine the costs of developing and delivering a bridge program
- Identify sources of funds for the three main components of a bridge program
- Leverage and seamlessly use funding and resources

Determine The Costs Of Developing And Delivering A Bridge Program

The first step in preparing a funding plan is to develop preliminary cost estimates for the key elements of the program and to identify sources of funds for these elements. This will help partners determine how to allocate financial responsibility for the different program elements. The estimates should include all the costs of the program, with institutional resources indicated as revenue.

Figure 16: Bridge Program Cost Components provides a list of likely expenses. These are divided into program development and start-up, which might be incurred one time at the beginning of the program, and the ongoing costs that are expected to continue throughout program delivery.

Figure 16: Bridge Program Cost Components

Program Development and Start-up

- Staff recruitment and professional development
- Partnership development
- Program design and curriculum development
- Equipment, technology, and software

Ongoing Costs

- Facilities
- Student recruitment
- Student assessment
- Instruction and supplies
- Tutoring
- Transition coordination
- Career and academic advising
- Field trips
- Paid work experience (including internships)
- Student tuition and fees
- Support services
- Job development and placement
- Project management
- Fundraising and communications
- Administration
- Other

Bridge program designers can customize the list to fit the specific program design and estimate the costs for each item or combination of items listed. These estimated costs will help in preparing a budget that can be shown to funders. Each organization may have its own approach to this task.

The process of estimating costs involves thinking through what resources and services each of the partners have in-house that can be used without raising new funds and determining service and funding gaps. Although some existing resources and services do not require new funds, they do cost money and should still be included in the budget, as they may not always be available and the contribution of those resources may be useful in leveraging additional funds, such as the portion of an instructor's time for transition coordination activities or facilities charged to a division.

Some items may be classified as *direct* — those associated specifically to program design and delivery, and *indirect or overhead* activities — human resources, finance, data, and publicity that are performed by organization staff, or facilities and equipment (Internet services, computers) that are supported by organizations. Specific funding streams have their own definitions of what is included in these categories, and will often define what their funds can be used for and what proportion (e.g., the percent of funds that can be used for overhead).

Using Worksheet 8: Identifying Resource Needs and Potential Funding Streams, record the resources that the partners have, whether they have the resources in-house or externally. This will help to identify the activities that require additional or new resources.

Worksheet 8 will help partners identify existing funds, the need for new funds, and what funds partners may access. Options for getting new funds include redirecting existing funding sources, requesting organizational funding for design and start-up costs, applying for new public funding, and seeking private corporate or philanthropic grants. Teams should optimize resources as much as possible, for example, by saving the most flexible sources for those activities that are the most difficult to fund. Typically, foundation funds or block grant funding are more flexible than programs with strict eligibility requirements for either participants or activities. However, local private funders often award smaller amounts than public funding streams.

Once the team explores the full range of resources, it can revisit how to allocate the partners' existing and potential resources, and decide what resources to seek and who should take the lead in pursuing the funds.

Identify Sources Of Funds For The Three Main Components Of A Bridge Program

The next step in developing a funding strategy is to explore the resources that may be tapped to fill the funding gaps. Figure 17: The Federal and State Funding Stream Checklist shows the types of bridge program activities that may be supported by the different federal and state sources.

The guidelines and funding levels for the sources specify the eligible organization type, target populations, activities, and communities, along with definitions, application processes, etc. Current information about each should be tracked and carefully reviewed to determine their actual potential for specific bridge programs.

There are many existing resources that can be used and combined to pay for bridge programs. These include:

- Public funding streams that support continuing workforce, education, training, and support services. For the most part, these are federal funds that are allocated to states, local governments, or other entities on a multi-year basis (depending on the federal budget), including Adult Education, Career and Technical Education, Workforce Investment Act, and TANF.
- Public program funding that provides funding for specific initiatives, often on a competitive basis, to develop new approaches, systems, and policies. Although funds may be granted for a couple of years, they are typically not continuing and are not available to all organizations. Examples include competitive Workforce Investment Act or Trade Adjustment Act initiatives, and pilots or demonstration projects sponsored by the ICCB.
- Private resources from employers, foundations, and other local organizations. Funds may be used for a wider range of activities and can fill gaps left by other sources. These activities may include program transition coordination and services, tuition and fees, emergency financial assistance, and internships.

Worksheet 8: Identifying Resource Needs and Potential Funding Streams

Estimate the costs of developing and delivering the bridge program, the resources and services that are currently available or can be accessed by partners, amount of required funding, and gaps and potential sources of funds to fill the gaps. All partners should help to complete the worksheet.

Activity	Estimated Cost	Existing Resources ($)	Existing Services	Funding Gaps	Potential Funding	Partner Responsible
Program Development and Start-up						
Staff recruitment and professional development						
Partnership development						
Program/curriculum design						
Equipment and software						
Ongoing Costs						
Facilities						
Student assessment						
Instruction						
Supplies						
Tutoring						
Transition coordination						
Career and academic advising						
Field trips						
Paid work experience (including internships)						
Tuition and fees (for students)						
Support services						
Project management						
Fundraising and communications						
Administration						
Other						

Figure 17: Federal and State Funding Streams Checklist

The three lists here show the types of bridge activities that may be supported by the different federal and state sources. Guidelines and funding levels for these sources must be explored thoroughly to determine eligible applicants, populations, activities, qualifying communities, definitions, application processes, etc.

Bridge Program Development and Delivery	Identify Sectors, Employers, and Skills	Develop and Manage Partnerships	Provide Professional Development	Develop Contextualized Curriculum	Student Intake and Assessment	Program Infrastructure (Facilities, Equipment, Materials, and Supplies)	Instruction (Salaries and Benefits)	Program Administration	Monitor and Track Program Outcomes
WIA Title I	✔	✔			✔			✔	✔
WIA Title II (Adult Ed)		✔	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔
WIA incentive Funds	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Perkins	✔	✔	✔			✔	✔	✔	✔
TANF	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
SNAP E&T	✔							✔	
DOL and DOE Discretionary Competitive Grants	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
JTED							✔	✔	✔
ETIP							✔	✔	

Bridge Program Career Development	Career Exploration	Career Planning	Career Advising	Internships	Job Shadowing and Job Site Visits	On-the-Job Training	Job Search and Placement
Federal Work-Study				✔		✔	
WIA Title I	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
WIA Title II (Adult Ed)	✔	✔	✔				
WIA Incentive Funds	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Perkins	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔
CSBG	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
CDBG	✔	✔	✔			✔	✔
TANF	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
SNAP E&T	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
DOL and DOE Discretionary Grants	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
JTED							✔

Bridge Program Transition Services	Academic Advising	Tutoring, Study Skills, and Coaching	Peer Support (Including Learning Community)	Support Services	Case Management	Transition Coordinator	Tuition and Fees	Books and Supplies	Income Support
WIA Title I				✔	✔		✔	✔	✔
WIA Title II (Adult Ed)		✔	✔					✔	
WIA Incentive Funds	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Perkins	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	
CSBG		✔	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔	
CDBG		✔	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔	
TANF	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
SNAP E&T	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	
DOL and DOE Discretionary Grants	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Pell				✔			✔	✔	✔
JTED				✔	✔		✔	✔	
ETIP							✔	✔	

State and Federal Funding Streams for Bridge Programs

Illinois has revised three state policies related to its allocations of three federal funding streams — Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (Adult Education), the Perkins Act, and WIA — to support bridge programs that meet the Illinois bridge definition requirements. The policy changes allow providers to use existing funding streams to support bridge program development and implementation. They do not add funds or create special set asides.

The ICCB allocates **Adult Education** funds to approximately 97 programs on a formula basis. In October 2009, the ICCB Adult Education Division issued guidance for use of the funds for development and implementation of bridge programs to encourage the use of Adult Education resources for bridge programs.[49]

ICCB also provides guidance to programs on the classification and approval of courses. Organizations may use their funding allocation to create curricula contextualized to occupational pathways, to support instruction in the basic skills and English language components of a bridge program, and to provide tutoring, coaching, professional development, administration, public relations, and data collection. Adult education programs are provided at no charge to adults who lack a high school diploma or GED or are unable to speak, read, or write English.[50]

The **Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006** supports secondary and postsecondary programs that build the academic, career, and technical skills of young people and adults. Perkins funds can be used by recipient institutions to develop career and technical education programs and curricula, upgrade or adapt instructional equipment, provide professional development opportunities to instructors, and provide mentoring and support services, including direct assistance in some cases. The Perkins legislation specifically excludes funding of remedial prerequisite courses. Perkins funds are allocated by formula to states and then flow to secondary and postsecondary institutions.

The majority of Perkins funding is distributed through Title I of Perkins IV. Career and Technical Education/ Developmental Education bridge programs combine developmental academics (reading, writing, math, and/or science) with career and technical education (CTE) related to employment and workplace requirements, and connect with a postsecondary CTE program of study. Programs may consist of one or more courses or modules offered in a traditional on-campus full-semester format, an intensified/accelerated format, online, or hybrid formats.

The target population includes students who are admitted into community college but are academically underprepared for college-level reading, writing, and/or math. They include high school graduates, GED holders, and low-skilled adults who are underprepared for college-level work. Funds can be used to develop CTE programs and curricula, including a multi-year sequence of courses, develop programs for special populations, provide mentoring and support services, upgrade or adapt equipment, and professional development.[51]

Annual appropriations for state grants have been just over $1 billion. The Illinois Board of Higher Education administers Title I and ICCB administers Title II (for adults) in Illinois.[52]

The **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** provides funding for the development of affordable and suitable housing in urban areas, economic development activities, and expansion of economic opportunities for low- and moderate-income individuals. CDBG funds are very flexible and can be used for a wide range of bridge program and bridge program-related activities, e.g., program design and development, instructional costs, tuition, and support services. CDBG funds are allocated by formula to states and designated communities and annual appropriations are about $4.4 billion.

The **Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)** provides core funding to local agencies to reduce poverty, revitalize low-income communities, and move low-income families toward self-sufficiency. Because CSBG funds are extremely flexible, they are used to fill gaps in funding left by other programs and are frequently used to assist people in emergency situations. CSBG formula funds are allocated through states to local community action agencies and

annual appropriations have been roughly $700 million nationwide. CSBG funds can be used to support job training, literacy and GED preparation courses, computer training, scholarships, on-the-job support, and emergency services. These funds are particularly useful in rural areas.[53]

The **Employer Training Investment Program (ETIP)**, administered by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), supports Illinois workers' efforts to upgrade their skills in order to remain current in new technologies and business practices. Grants may be awarded to individual businesses, intermediary organizations operating multi-company training projects, and original equipment manufacturers sponsoring multi-company training projects for employees of their Illinois supplier companies. Illinois companies that are retraining/upgrading the job-related skills of their existing full-time workforce may be eligible for ETIP grants. Grants may be awarded to individual companies, as well as to intermediary organizations offering training to meet the common training needs of multiple companies.[54]

The **Federal Work-Study (FWS)** program pays for up to 50% of a financially eligible student's wages for part-time employment at a for-profit organization, up to 90% at private nonprofit or government agency if it would not otherwise be able to afford the student worker, and up to 75% at other entities. Funds are allocated by formula to institutions. Annual appropriations for the program have remained steady over the past few years at just under $1 billion. These funds may be structured to provide work experience and internships.[55]

Job Training and Economic Development Program (JTED), administered by DCEO, provides grants to CBOs that work with small local businesses to develop basic and technical skills curricula, train low-wage workers and unemployed low-income individuals wanting to enter the workforce, and assist with ongoing support. CBOs can partner with a local business to provide training for low-wage, low-skilled workers and unemployed, disadvantaged people.[56]

Introduced in 1961, the **Monetary Award Program (MAP)** provides need-based grants to Illinois undergraduates. It is the largest of Illinois' need-based grant and scholarship programs. MAP grants can be used by eligible adults to cover tuition and mandatory fees, even for one or two courses per semester. MAP amounts are based on financial need and vary according to individual circumstances. Students apply for MAP automatically when they complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form in Illinois. The maximum available is determined by the State of Illinois. MAP funds are limited, so students should apply as soon as they decide to attend college.[57]

The **Pell Grant** program is the largest federal grant program supporting postsecondary education and training for low-income students. It distributes need-based awards through postsecondary institutions to help students with the costs of attendance, including tuition, fees, housing, food, supplies, transportation, and childcare. Pell Grants are targeted to lower-income students enrolled in programs that result in a certificate or degree and can cover up to a year of remedial coursework, as long as the student has been admitted to an eligible program and the remedial work is required by the program. The maximum Pell Grant award for a full-time student per year was $5,550 in 2010-2011 and students may be enrolled in programs for up to 12 semesters. To be eligible, students must have a high school diploma or a GED.[58]

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T, formerly Food Stamp Employment and Training) funds can be used to support a range of education, training, employment, and related services for SNAP recipients who meet income and asset eligibility requirements and are assigned to a SNAP E&T program activity.

There are two types of funding available to states: 1) a limited allotment made up entirely of federal funds, and 2) 50% reimbursement with federal funds for non-federal spending on program activities. Key services include job search, work experience, education and training, and job retention services for up to 90 days after a participant finds a job. SNAP E&T funds are allocated by formula to states and annual federal funding has been roughly $400 million in recent years.[59]

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a block grant providing flexible funding to states to support a wide range of activities for low-income parents consistent with the purposes stated in the law. Eligible individuals may use their TANF funds to pay for tuition, support services, fees, transportation, etc. Illinois may use its TANF allocation to fund creation and operation of bridge programs for a group of eligible individuals or to fund services, e.g., case management for eligible students enrolled in a bridge program (even if there are other students who are not eligible for TANF-funded services).[60] TANF funds are allocated by formula to states and annual block grant funding has been fixed at $16.5 billion.[61]

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) provides benefits and services to workers who qualify for the program after losing their jobs as a result of import competition or relocation of production or services to an overseas country. TAA services can include extended income support, training, allowances for job search and relocation, employment and case management services, wage subsidies for older workers, and health coverage tax credits as a subsidy for health insurance premiums.[62]

DCEO created a policy under the **Workforce Investment Act (Title I)** to allow bridge programs in key industry sectors — agriculture, healthcare, information technology, manufacturing, and transportation, distribution, and logistics — and "green" industries to be counted toward the state's requirement that 40% of LWIA's adult and dislocated worker expenditures must be for training.[63] Funds may be made available through Individual Training Accounts (ITA) or to fund training courses.

Bridge programs using WIA resources may be designed as:

- A single course (for students at higher reading and math levels) that leads to credit-bearing courses
- A series of courses, starting with a lower-level bridge course that leads to a noncredit occupational course or program that leads to an entry-level job

Eligible providers include ICCB-approved and funded adult education programs, developmental credit or noncredit department(s) of a community college, and community-based organizations or other types of providers that offer noncredit workforce training. Programs may be offered by a single entity or by a partnership. WIA funds can be used for:[64]

- Curriculum development, instruction, and supplies[65]
- Career development, including career exploration, work experience, internships, work-study, resume preparation, and job search
- Incumbent worker training programs
- Transition services for WIA participants, such as recruitment and assessment, case management, transition coordination, transportation, childcare, needs-related payments, supplies, uniforms, and certifications
- Individual training and education costs such as tuition, fees, books, and supplies through Individual Training Accounts

WIA Title I authorizes the largest federal funding source for workforce development and provides funding for One Stop Career Centers in which individuals and employers can access a range of employment and training services. This is the largest funding stream to help adults develop basic skills, English language competency, and problem-solving that can open doors to career pathway programs.

The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (**WIA Title II**) funds adult education and English language services to help adults who lack a high school credential or who function below college level to develop basic skills, obtain a GED and pursue postsecondary education, career pathways, and employment. Federal adult education funds can be used to create curricula that are contextualized to occupational pathways, support instruction in the basic skills and English language components of a bridge program, and provide tutoring and coaching. These funds are allocated by formula to states and annual appropriations have been about $600 million.[66]

Local Resources

Local governments may fund bridge programs and related costs with local resources, including general revenue, Tax Increment Financing, and special initiatives and projects related to transportation, housing, economic and community development, etc. Local civic organizations and associations, such as the Rotary Club or United Way, may also contribute funds for specific purposes, e.g., scholarships and equipment.

National, Regional, and Local Foundations

National foundations offer an important source of funds for innovative approaches and program elements and their grants have been instrumental in the development of the bridge program model, building capacity, evaluation, and policy change. They identify priorities and goals for their investments and generally do not award funds for ongoing program operations. They should be considered for upfront or one-time expenses, such as program development, initial implementation, convening of program partners and other stakeholders, evaluation, technical assistance, and tools such as literacy testing and computer software. Local foundations award grants within specific geographic areas within their defined program priorities. Generally the funding guidelines for foundations allow the broadest flexibility in use of funds.

Employers and Labor Unions

Employer partners often contribute to programs. These contributions can take the form of in-kind or non-cash donations such as assistance with curriculum development, loaning employees to help teach or present to the class, lending classroom space, providing company tours for students, allowing employees to be shadowed by students, and lending or donating equipment. They may contribute directly to the program and provide tuition assistance or release time for incumbent workers.

Leverage And Seamlessly Use Funding And Resources

The following three steps will help program designers in considering which funding streams to explore.

Use Existing Funding Streams Innovatively

It is often possible for programs to redirect existing funding sources to support bridge program activities. Program initiators should reach out to existing funders or those who manage the funds within their institutions to demonstrate how bridge programs relate to the goals of the funding stream and how the bridge program approach could help meet or exceed goals or solve problems, such as low retention rates or large numbers of students who need to repeat courses.

Lake Land College asks other departments to help bridge program initiators solve funding gaps. For example, they asked the counseling department, which may receive a different funding stream, how to best offer academic and career advising services and together they worked out a plan that involved leveraging resources and services from that department. Elgin Community College applied for an institutional grant of $5,000 to support bridge program design.

Community-based organizations that want to provide comprehensive services seek support for eligible bridge program students from in-house services. For example, Instituto del Progreso Latino uses its WIA allocation to fund fees and employment services for bridge students. Finally, bridge program initiators may seek support from their organizations for development and start-up costs for curriculum development, program design, and equipment purchases.

Explore Public Funding Options

The growth in interest and experience with bridge programs in Illinois and nationally has been accompanied by incorporation of bridge programs as an eligible activity in a range of public funding sources at the federal, state,

and local levels. These funds may be allocated through formula funding or awarded competitively for specific initiatives related to industries or occupations. Programs should:

1. Identify the public funding sources that can be used for bridge program components
2. Explore the allocation process — are they competitive grants?
3. Find out if a program partner is a current recipient of those funds
4. If so, can these resources be used for a bridge program component? If not, is one of the partners an eligible recipient?

In all cases, it is important to investigate the eligibility requirements related to applicants, activities, and who can be served. These requirements and conditions often change.

Find Private Sector Contributions and Foundation and Corporate Giving Programs

Foundations and corporate giving have the greatest flexibility and can be used to fill in the funding gaps left by public resources. Foundations, however, often do not provide multi-year operational funds. It is therefore advisable to consider these funds for program development and initial implementation, or one-time costs, such as partnership development or employer engagement.

Employers also provide flexible funding and in-kind services. While developing those relationships, the leadership team can think about resources that they can contribute, such as direct financial contributions, internships, curriculum development, equipment, and supplies. They may also write support letters for public and private grant proposals.

Guidelines should be reviewed carefully before applying to ensure the funding is allowable and a good fit for the program. Public funding streams come with many different requirements, including:

- Types of eligible organizations: community college, nonprofit organization
- Targeted populations: low-skilled, low-wage individuals, single parents, public assistance recipients, public housing residents, veterans
- Geography: rural areas, high poverty concentrations
- Industry: specific sectors
- Uses of funds: instruction, transition services, tuition, books, fees
- Maximum: amount per individual
- Time frame

OTHER RESOURCES

The Center for Law and Social Policy has developed a comprehensive toolkit to help organizations explore a full range of federal public resources for use in bridge programs. *Funding Career Pathways and Career Pathway Bridges: A Federal Policy Toolkit for States,* Revised Edition, October 2010. **www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications/files/FundingCareerPathwaysFederalPolicyToolkitforStates.pdf**

A discussion of funding strategies and examples of programs using blended resources can be found in *The Price of Persistence: How Nonprofit – Community College Partnerships Manage and Blend Diverse Funding Streams,* The Aspen Institute Workforce Strategies Initiative, February 2011. **www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/price-persistence-how-nonprofit-community-college-partnerships-manage-blend-diverse-fun**

Leverage Resources: Working Practices

Healthcare Careers Bridge Program

Central States SER, in partnership with Richard J. Daley College, offers a healthcare bridge program that has accessed a range of public and private funding resources through various avenues. These sources help support different populations and different bridge components. Examples include:

- An 18-month grant from ICCB to participate in a bridge program pilot paid for program design, transition services, and delivery.
- Three 18-month grants through the Partnership for New Communities' Opportunity Chicago initiative to provide a bridge program for residents of the Chicago Housing Authority. Pays for program management, delivery, career coaching, job placement services, and supportive services.
- Individual Training Accounts for WIA-eligible adults, used primarily for tuition.
- Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (WIA funds) for program management, career coaching, job placement, supportive services, and associated operating costs.
- A five-year U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Health Professions Opportunity Grant via Workforce Board of Metropolitan Chicago for TANF- and WIA-eligible adults. Pays for program management, career coaching, instruction, job placement, supportive services, and associated operating costs.
- A one-time grant through the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity through the Governor's "Training for Tomorrow" initiative.

SER uses the cost allocation method of budgeting and some administrative costs are covered by grant funds. However, many grants only support direct services, making administration and overhead difficult to fund. Michelle Rafferty, Director of Development, explained, "fundraising, management, and reporting is a significant cost area. It takes a lot of time to prepare, negotiate, and manage budgets, comply with contracts, prepare reports, and find resources to make a program sustainable. Finding full support for these functions is an ongoing challenge for most nonprofits."

SER identifies potential funding opportunities through networking, information sent by national, state, and local listserves, and professional and organizational contacts, such as SER National, U.S. Department of Labor, the Chicago Workforce Investment Council, and the Chicago Jobs Council. In many cases, they hear of opportunities from previous funders, e.g., the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Development, Opportunity Chicago, and local foundations. Ms. Rafferty added, "Our biggest challenge is securing funding for operations, paid internships, and assistance for students who have low-wage jobs and cannot qualify for other forms of financial aid for tuition costs."

The primary sources of sustainable funds used by SER's partner, Richard J. Daley College, are from adult education. But periodically Daley College applies for grants to improve and expand the bridge program and student transition initiatives. The two organizations manage their own funds separately, which is possible because the funding sources pay for clearly distinct bridge program components. However, this does not preclude close communication and coordination in program delivery.

Lewis and Clark Community College
Bridge to Health Sciences

"Our ability to sustain funding for our bridge program is due to our creativity in using existing funds, monitoring new funding opportunities, and our flexibility in tapping a variety of existing and new funds," explained Val Harris, Director of Adult Education.

Lewis and Clark's Adult Education Department provides the core funding for the bridge program. It works well when combined with developmental education funds, another major institutionalized funding stream. Adult Education requirements stipulate that it has to provide at least 51% of the cost of instructing the course to be able to claim adult education students. "This means that in order to use both funding sources, we have to recruit for Adult Education and Developmental Education students to achieve the correct balance," explained Ms. Harris.

In the most recent bridge program offering (which includes four courses), the college paid for the math instructor's time and adult education paid for the other three adult education instructors. Resources for transition services, the counselor, and extra materials varies, depending on what is available.

The counselor's time and services are paid for through a combination of Lewis and Clark's adult education allocation, Family Education Program funds from the Secretary of State, the Truants' Alternative and Optional Education program from the Illinois Board of Education, the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education through the college, and other miscellaneous small grants. Ms. Harris reported, "The key to our sustainability is being able to use both adult education and college funds and therefore strategic recruitment."

CHAPTER NINE

Examine Effectiveness: Assessing Bridge Program Progress and Outcomes

BASICS

Collecting and using data to measure progress and results is essential for designing, implementing, and assessing the success of bridge programs. Bridge program providers, partners, and other stakeholders who are committed to continuously improving results for students need to select, define, and use specific measures of student progress and outcomes. They need to collect the data related to each of the measures, e.g., key student characteristics and program activities. Partners must agree on the most important outcomes, how these are measured, and the processes for collecting and analyzing the data.

This will enable a bridge program to:

- Track the effectiveness of program components
- Assess the overall success of the program
- Continuously improve the program
- Prepare comprehensive reports to funders, partners, and other stakeholders that make the case for sustainability and expansion
- Market and expand the program among the target population
- Inform and cultivate stakeholders and partners

This chapter explains how to assess the success of a bridge program, how to determine key data for collection, the methods of collection and analysis, and challenges bridge programs may encounter in collecting and using this information.

HOW TO ASSESS PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES

- Define success
- Determine what data to collect, how to collect it, and how to analyze it
- Access data and beware of challenges
- Use the data

Define Success

To develop an overall approach to assessing a program, bridge program designers must start by deciding what it means for the bridge program to be a success. This will depend on the program type, goals, target population, funders, etc. Examples of success include specific gains in skills, completions, and transitions to the next level of education, employment, and wages. The measures of success for bridge programs are often calculated in terms of percentages, which allow for comparison to other programs, as well as the ability to articulate and monitor program outcomes over time. For example, bridge program teams often demonstrate the percent of enrollees who complete the program and transition to credit programs as compared to traditional programs for comparable populations. It is important to then determine what data to collect based on the requirements of funders, the organizations involved, and the stated purpose of the program.

While data collection and analysis is vital, it is not always possible to collect everything needed. It is important to identify what data is essential — especially in regards to reporting to funders and stakeholders and what systems and resources are in place to collect and analyze data — and then prioritize. Programs can start with the essentials and expand data collection and analysis over time. However, this needs to be done before program start, so that program implementers can collect the necessary data during the program.

Initial steps to development an assessment plan include:

- Organize the data collection and analysis team to include partners and people with access to data and knowledge about its potential uses
- Discuss the goals of using data and the strategies to acquire the data
- Discuss the questions that the team would like to be able to answer
- Reach a consensus on the desired outcomes to be assessed
- Reach a consensus on the data that needs to be collected for each outcome and the sources that will be accessed for each data element
- Develop a strategy for accessing the data and analyzing it
- Develop a strategy for how the data will be used to improve the bridge program outcomes and other student transitions outcomes

To measure progress and outcomes for bridge program participants, tracking and analysis methods must be integrated into the program design. Key components are:

- Collecting participant data at program start (intake), interim points, at exit, and post-program
- Having a way to store and process this information
- Having a clear understanding of indicators of success for the short-term and longer-term
- Integrating all these activities into bridge program job descriptions so that they get done

Determine What Data To Collect, How To Collect It, And How To Analyze It

The leadership team should form a consensus on the questions that its members will attempt to answer, and use these questions to help guide their data collection and analysis. Data collected for the bridge program should focus on what is needed to answer these questions. In general, this should include measurable aspects of student characteristics, student progress within the bridge program, student educational outcomes following the bridge program, and student employment outcomes.

Student characteristics

Bridge programs should document key student population characteristics, including demographics and barriers to education and employment. The selection of the specific characteristics to track will depend on the population served by the program, the interests of the program designers in future targeting opportunities, and the interest of the funders.

Examples of key student population characteristics include:

- Percent with a high school diploma or GED at program enrollment
- Percent with limited English speaking or writing skills at program enrollment
- Percent with low math skills and/or literacy levels at program enrollment
- Percent from underrepresented groups (e.g., gender nontraditional, age nontraditional, racial or ethnic minority)

Student progress within the bridge program

Bridge program designers will also want to measure key aspects of student progress (milestones) while enrolled in the bridge program. The measures to use will depend on the bridge program objectives, the educational setting of the bridge program (such as whether it is adult education or developmental education), and any additional funder requirements.

Examples of measures of student progress include:

- Percent meeting an attendance standard. This could be defined as being in attendance for a certain percent of the total hours of instruction.
- Percent meeting with a college advisor during the bridge program, or completing other appropriate college exploration steps. This would require a mechanism to track college advisor meetings for individual students.
- Percent completing the bridge course (or percent completing each course in a multi-course bridge program).
- Percent of adult education students advancing at least one Educational Functioning Level.[67]
- Percent of developmental education students obtaining a passing grade in the bridge program.
- Percent attaining the intended reading, writing, or mathematics levels (or gain targets) based on assessments conducted pre- and post-program. This measure requires setting gain targets for the program, and pre- and post-program testing.

Student educational outcomes following the bridge program

Bridge program leaders should establish specific, measurable student outcomes. There are many possible outcomes for bridge program students. Some are more immediate, such as advancement to credit-bearing postsecondary coursework, and others are longer-term, such as completion of a postsecondary certificate or degree program. The choice of which measures to include will depend on the bridge program objectives, the educational setting of the bridge program (adult education, developmental education, etc.), and any additional funder requirements. Another important consideration for selecting which outcomes to measure is the program resources available for following students after completion of the bridge program.

These student educational outcomes should be analyzed for students who complete a bridge program, but they can also be identified for all students who begin a bridge program. Some measures could be calculated for students entering a postsecondary program.

Program designers should decide in advance how to define the group to be included in the pool of students used for calculating the bridge completion rate and other outcome measures. For instance, the program may set a date after which all students in the class are counted as enrolled. Program designers should also decide what constitutes a successful transition, as there may be many variations in what students transition to after a class.

Examples of measurable student outcomes for bridge program completers include:[68]

- Percent enrolling in one or more credit-bearing postsecondary courses
- Percent enrolling in one or more college-level academic courses within a postsecondary program of study (such as a required college-level math course within a radiography technician program)
- Percent returning for the second term of a multi-term postsecondary program
- Percent of students obtaining a credential (if this is goal of the bridge program)
- Percent attaining 12 college credits that count toward degrees and certificates
- Percent attaining credit-bearing certificates or degrees

Student employment outcomes

Bridge programs should attempt to track some employment outcomes for students, although it can be difficult to track post-program student progress because students generally do not stay in touch with the program once completed. Employment outcomes include whether or not the student is working immediately following the program (placement), whether or how long the student continues to work (retention), and the earnings of the student.

It also may be possible to document whether the student is employed in an occupation or industry related to the training program, at least at program exit. Gathering this data on employment outcomes directly from students can be very difficult or unreliable, so many programs opt for the use of Unemployment Insurance (UI) quarterly earnings data to measure these employment outcomes. This may be accessed for those who are enrolled in the WIA system through workforce boards that have a data sharing agreement.

Examples of measurable employment outcomes include:

- Percent of completers obtaining employment. This could be tracked through data collection at program completion or defined as the presence of Unemployment Insurance covered earnings data for the student in the quarter following the quarter the student completed (or exited) the program.
- Percent of completers obtaining employment in an industry or occupation related to the bridge program. This could also be tracked through data collection at program completion or by using the UI wage data, because the UI data includes the industry code for the employer. Calculating this measure requires a decision up front about the industry categories that will be treated as related to the bridge program.
- Percent of completers retaining employment. This could be documented by post-program contact initiated by program staff at three- or six-month intervals post-program or be defined as the presence of UI covered earnings in the second and third quarters following the quarter the student completed (or exited) the program.
- Average earnings (or earnings gain) for completers who have obtained employment. This also could be documented by post-program contact or can be calculated for completers who have UI covered earnings in one or more of the quarters following the quarter the student completed (or exited) the program. The average earnings measure is simply an average across these post-program quarters, for all the students with earnings. The earnings gain is more complicated to produce, but provides more useful information on the impact of the program. It is calculated for each student by subtracting the earnings for two quarters prior to entering the postsecondary program from the earnings for two quarters following the quarter the student completed (or exited) the program. This average gain for all students is computed from these individual values.

The UI data system is the most systematic and reliable data source of employment information. However, due to confidentiality, there are restrictions on its use, which are established by the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES). DCEO maintains a data sharing agreement with IDES for UI data access. With this agreement, DCEO and local workforce and affiliate staff can access UI data from IDES for all Illinois workforce program participants. Under the agreement, workforce boards can provide participant UI wage data to organizations that have signed a subcontractor agreement, which covers workforce program use of UI data. IDES establishes agreements with other state organizations, such as ICCB, to provide access to UI data for this program. As part of that agreement, subcontractor agreements need to be made with all of the bridge program's partner organizations in order to provide them with access to the UI data for their bridge program participants.[69]

Producing these measures will require data to be collected about the students participating in the bridge program. This will include both baseline demographic data identifying the students, as shown in **Figure 18: Baseline Data to Collect**, and program-level data, course-level data, credential attainment data, and employment data, as shown in **Figure 19: Outcome Data to Collect**.

Access Data And Beware Of Challenges

Many funding programs require data collection for specific reporting requirements. This is both an advantage and a challenge, as it means the bridge programs will have quite a bit of useful data, but typically this will not include overall data on student transitions, including transitions across educational systems.[70]

Accessing data normally collected by the program

Much of the data needed is already collected and reported via data systems administered by one or more of the following programs: Adult Education and Family Literacy, Workforce Investment Act Title I, and Perkins. In addition, community colleges and community-based organizations collect additional information that is not reported to the state data systems.

Figure 18: Baseline Data to Collect

Each of these characteristics requires the following additional data to be collected: student record identifier, college or other provider, and a means to identify the appropriate group of students to include in the outcome measure.

Student Characteristics	Data to Collect
Percent of students who did not have a high school diploma or GED at program enrollment	Prior education level
Percent of students with limited English speaking or writing skills at program enrollment	Adult education assessment test scores (pre-), or college placement assessment scores (pre-)
Percent of students with low math and/or literacy skills at program enrollment	
Percent of students from underrepresented groups (e.g., gender nontraditional, age nontraditional, racial or ethnic minority)	Age at entry, gender, Hispanic/Latino/Latina, race
Percent of students who receive need based financial aid	Financial aid by type, e.g., Pell Grants and MAP

Accessing data on students from state agency sources

The availability of student data from a state system depends on three considerations:

- Is the student's bridge program or related service being paid for in whole or part by the state program? If so, the student will probably have a record on the state system.
- Has the student's record been created (or updated)? Some systems require entry of data soon after a student is enrolled or exits the program. Other systems are based on an annual record submission.
- Can the student data be obtained? This will require a data sharing agreement among the partners to share records for common students, and agreement on who will serve as a repository for this information, and what will be done with the information.

Collecting data directly from students

Some data will not be collected via any of the state systems, nor will it be collected by the college or provider's own internal system. In this case, special data collection procedures will be needed, along with securing the cooperation of students, instructors, and others in gathering the data. For programs with relatively few students, the most straightforward means to collect this information might be simple surveys (paper data collection instruments) and spreadsheet software for recording the data in student record form. For larger programs it may save time to invest in a database application customized to capture each of the data elements.

Ensuring student confidentiality and compliance with FERPA

The bridge program leadership team should ensure that the process for collecting, sharing, and using data it collects on students is fully compliant with the requirements of the Federal Educational Right and Privacy Act (FERPA).[71]

Worksheet 9: Data and Sources provides a tool for the bridge program leadership team to use to help decide what data to collect and what data sources to use.

This worksheet helps to identify the data that is collected for Adult Education, the Workforce Investment Act, and Perkins funding training programs and students. In addition, there is space to record data collected locally, such

Figure 19: Outcome Data to Collect

Student progress within the bridge program – Each of these outcomes requires the following additional data to be collected: course name, course code to identify students enrolled in the bridge program.

Outcomes	Data to Collect
Percent of students meeting an attendance standard for the bridge course	Bridge program hours attended
Percent of students meeting with a college advisor during the bridge course or completing other appropriate college exploration steps	Student meeting(s) with career advisor, career coach, or transition coordinator
Percent of students completing the bridge course (or the percent completing each course in a multi-course bridge program)	Course completion, bridge program completion
Percent of adult education students advancing at least one educational level	Adult education assessment test scores (pre- and post-)
Percent of developmental education students obtaining a passing grade in the bridge course	Course grade
Percent of students attaining the intended reading, writing, or math levels (or gain targets) based on assessments conducted pre- and post-program	Adult education assessment test scores (post-), or college placement assessment scores (post-)
Percent of students obtaining a certificate	Certificate name and type (industry, education)

Student educational outcomes following the bridge program – Each of these outcomes requires the following additional data to be collected: course name, course code to identify students enrolled in a postsecondary program.

Outcomes	Data to Collect
Percent of students enrolling in one or more credit-bearing postsecondary course(s)	CIP code, credit or noncredit, course hours, enrollment date (or term)
Percent of students enrolling in one or more college-level academic course(s) within a postsecondary program of study	CIP code, course hours, enrollment date or term
Percent of students obtaining at least 12 credits of college-level academic courses within a postsecondary program of study	Course grade
Percent of students completing a postsecondary program and obtaining a credential	Credential name, credential type (certificate, degree), credential date granted

Student employment outcomes following the bridge program – Each of these outcomes (other than placement occupation) requires the ability to match the student's social security number with UI covered wage data obtained from IDES.

Outcomes	Data to Collect
Percent of postsecondary completers obtaining employment	Post-program earnings (quarter following program completion or exit)
Percent of postsecondary completers obtaining employment in an industry or occupation related to the postsecondary program	Placement occupation
Percent of postsecondary completers retaining employment.	Post-program earnings (second and third quarters following program completion or exit)
Average earnings gain for postsecondary completers obtaining employment	Pre-program earnings, post-program earnings

Worksheet 9: Data and Sources

Student Data Type	Potential Data Sources			Other Data Sources		Will this element be collected? If so, how, by whom?
	Adult Education	Workforce Investment Act	Perkins MIS[72]	Local Data	Partner Data	
STUDENT IDENTIFYING DATA						
Name	X	X	X			
SSN	X	X	X			
College or other program provider name	X	X	X			
STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC DATA						
Age at entry/birth date	X	X	X			
Gender	X	X	X			
Hispanic/Latino/Latina	X	X	X			
Race	X	X	X			
Single head of household	X	X	X			
Financial aid status (applied, qualified, receiving)			X			
Prior education level	X	X	X			
Family income level		X				
Size of household, number of children under 18 (optional)		X				
Current enrollment status	X	X	X			
Employment status, number of hours working per week	X	X	X			
STUDENT PROGRAM-LEVEL DATA						
Adult education assessment test scores (e.g., TABE, Best Plus, Best Literacy, CASAS) (pre- and post-)	X	X	X			
College placement assessment scores (e.g., COMPASS) (pre- and post- if possible)	X					
Bridge program hours attended	X		X			
Bridge program completion	X		X			
Student meeting with career advisor, career coach, or transition coordinator						
Student receipt of transition services by type (advising, counseling, tutoring, support services, financial aid)						
STUDENT COURSE-LEVEL DATA						
Course name	X		X			
CIP code	X		X			
Credit or noncredit	X		X			
Course hours	X		X			
Enrollment date (or term)	X		X			
Course completion	X		X			
Course grade			X			
STUDENT COMPLETION AND CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT						
Credential name		X	X			
Credential type (certificate, degree)		X	X			
Credential date granted		X	X			
STUDENT EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS						
Pre-program wage		X	X			
Pre-program earnings (from UI covered earnings database)		X	X			
Placement occupation		X	X			
Hours per week of placement job		X	X			
Post-program earnings (from UI covered earnings database)		X	X			

as data collected by community-based organizations for its private funders, a community college, or by cities for CDBG funded programs. The final column is to record whether the information will be collected for the bridge program, how, and by whom.

Use The Data

Bridge program data can be used for both continuous improvement and for outcome reporting. A continuous improvement process provides an overall structure for the work of the bridge leadership team, and helps keep the team focused on student results. In addition, a structured process should provide the team with a method for identifying and implementing program improvements. Finally, a continuous improvement process can provide a means of broadening the scope of the bridge partnership by engaging additional stakeholders in efforts to improve student results generally.

To ensure a structured continuous improvement process, partners should:

- Involve all of the bridge program partners and providers. Identify and reach out to additional stakeholders, such as major employers, community organizations, and others.
- Provide a structured method for reviewing data on student progress and outcomes.
- Include a focus on the results for different segments of the target population.
- Facilitate discussion about the processes that the partners use to serve these students and how they could be improved.
- Support the development of organizational policy changes and other plans to address these improvements.
- Encourage the team to reflect on what has been learned in order to set the stage for further improvements.

Reviewing performance results

The leadership team should begin with a review of how the bridge program is doing in terms of student transition results and related outcomes. To do this, the team will need to assemble whatever data is already available on the results for similar students and similar programs.

In addition, the team may need to develop additional results information by making a request for adult education provider results, developmental education course results, or WIA outcomes. Outcome data collected for a comparable group of students makes it possible to show whether the bridge program is more effective in serving this type of student than other programs. It will be easier to collect data on a comparison group from the beginning of the program than to try to identify one after the fact.

Setting expectations

Once the team has produced data on its baseline performance, it will be ready to think about setting goals for the bridge program. This involves answering questions such as: What do we want to accomplish through the bridge program? What measures will we use to gauge success? At what levels of performance will we consider the program successful?

Preparing to collect and use data

Assessing the bridge program depends on the ability of the leadership team to collect and use data on student characteristics and outcomes. This will require decisions on what information to collect and a strategy for collecting it. It may require data sharing agreements in order to access information that is gathered by one or more of the partners, and the team will need to create procedures for obtaining any information that is not currently being collected.

Assessing results of the bridge program

After implementation of the bridge program, the leadership team should assess its impact on students. This is where the leadership team will use the data and other information gathered during implementation to help determine whether or not the bridge program achieved its goals, and what, if any, changes need to be made to improve the program in the future.

The main steps for assessing the program include:

1. Compare results to goals. What did we say we would do? How did we do? Are we reaching our own goals? On what measures did we fall short? Where did we exceed our goals?
2. Assessing program components. What were rates of attendance, participation in group projects, completion of assignments, etc.? What individual and career development services did they receive? What can be learned about the reasons for success or failure?
3. Benchmarking. What can we learn from the results obtained by other bridge programs? How do we compare with other programs, not just on results, but also on whom we served? What were the key components of the program, and what strategies did we adopt to support student progress?
4. Impacts. What impact have we had on addressing the overall problems facing low-skilled students in completing postsecondary instruction and obtaining a marketable credential? How have our efforts affected the results of our funding sources, e.g., WIA Title I, Perkins, and Adult Education?
5. Ideas for improvement. What should be changed about the program in the future? How will these changes address aspects of the program or results of the program that were less successful than expected?

Practice Example: Local Workforce Investment Act Title I

WIA Title I has a rigorous performance management system, especially for participants served with adult or dislocated worker funds. The system includes measures of employment, employment retention, and earnings. Relatively high goals are set, and failure to meet these goals can lead to significant sanctions on the Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIAs).

LWIAs must set a reasonable performance expectation for any training contract prior to its initiation. This should be done on an individual project basis if at all possible. Attempting to impose identical goals on all contracts will tend to discourage the use of these contracts for any situation involving hard-to-serve clients. Since lower-skilled students are the focus of bridge programs, contracts which incorporate support for bridge programs will by definition be reaching a harder to serve clientele.

Some of the factors to consider when setting performance expectations for a training contract are:

- Employability of the targeted population, including basic skill levels, educational levels and prior work experience. Contracts that serve lower-skilled students may or may not have lower outcomes than other contracts.
- Career targets of the training program, including job opportunities for the occupation(s) for which students are prepared, and earnings experience of students in the targeted occupation.
- Likelihood of successful completion, including the duration of the training required prior to entry into employment, number of discrete steps, and the nature of support mechanisms that students will have along the way. Longer duration programs tend to carry a greater risk of students leaving the program prior to its completion. Programs that provide support services and access to a transition coordinator or other staff person to assist students can increase the likelihood that students will complete.

To the extent possible, the LWIA should compare the proposed training program to past results for programs serving similar clients, similar occupations, and similar educational settings.

More information on setting WIA Title I performance goals for bridge programs can be found in the bridge technical assistance guide published by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. **http://www.illinoisworknet.com/NR/rdonlyres/35333577-2136-4F43-AC27-6E85E2DB7837/0/Bridge_Programs_Technical_Assistance_Guide_Final_91709.pdf**

Examine Effectiveness: Working Practices

Healthcare Careers Bridge Program

Central States SER collects a specific set of information on all students — much of it is required by its funders:

- Demographic (age, gender, income, household, and ethnicity)
- Education (GED, degrees, credentials, and literacy assessment scores)
- Public assistance
- Performance in program (post-program test performance on state board exams and course/training program completion)
- Educational transitions (transition from CNA to credit courses is tracked through transcripts and grades are recorded)
- Employment (occupation, job title, employer name, wages, start/end dates)

All student information is entered in an internal database and the required data systems for each funder. It is used in reporting to funders, demonstrating demand for the program and its successes, identifying trends, and to inform continuous improvement.

For example, student enrollment information over time indicated that many students completing the bridge and BNA programs and continuing to pre-requisites for an LPN program were required to take remedial (i.e., noncredit) courses in math and English. This indicated that students need a second, higher level bridge program to better prepare for the LPN program, so Daley College and SER have recently launched this new program component.

Information collected has also helped to inform the curriculum. For example, a review of performance in college has led to more focus on writing, and a review of GED pass rates has prompted an exploration of how to better prepare students for the exam.

Pre-Health Care Bridge Program

As an adult education program, Black Hawk College's bridge program collects the information required by the National Reporting System (NRS) system and the college. This includes demographics, such as name, address, phone number, date of birth, race, ethnicity, age, and gender, and performance measures, such as daily attendance, program completions, and pre- and post-test results. In addition, bridge program staff examine outcomes related to the bridge program's completion requirements, such as test results and grades.

Program staff use several measures as indicators of success. First is completion of the bridge program, because with its more robust content and requirements the bridge program is more difficult to complete than comparable levels of adult education. Other measures of success are enrollment in a postsecondary class and completion of the class with a grade of C or better. Glenda Nicke, Dean of Adult and Continuing Education, explained why they set what may seem to be rather modest measures of success. "We knew that few graduates are able to successfully complete the first semester of an occupational program with a full load, but are successful with one course, so we use enrollment in a CTE program and completion of at least one credit course as the other two measures of success. Once they experience success, they have the confidence to enroll in more classes if their work and life schedules allow."

For continuous improvement, the leadership team looks at mastery of occupational or career material, student feedback (based on focus groups, course evaluations, and grades), and instructor observation. Ms. Nicke believes,

"We need to continuously review what works and what doesn't, and to do more of what works best. We are making our bridge data part of our ongoing discussions in our ABE/GED division to explore what we can learn from the bridge experience."

Right now, the biggest data challenge is collecting transition information. This has to be collected manually, because individual students may be in three data systems (NRS, the Banner system, and ISBE). However, Ms. Nicke looks forward to using a new system the College is purchasing that will allow them to track all students through the different course levels just by pulling up a student's name. In the meantime, the goal is to enter information for all bridge program students in the Banner system to enable some electronic tracking. Ms. Nicke added, "The new system will allow sharing of information about individuals, which will help the advisor recently designated to help students with transitions."

CHAPTER TEN

Make it Last: Sustaining a Bridge Program

BASICS

The sustainability of bridge programs should be considered early in their development. Most bridge programs start with seed money to test strategies, an idea, or a concept. However, to continue to offer these programs, it is imperative to look beyond their initial development.

Sustaining bridge programs beyond the initial delivery or pilot requires a conscious effort to make ongoing improvements, maintain or broaden funding, modify or expand the career pathway, and embed bridge programs in the partner institutions' policies, practices, and systems over the long term.

The initial efforts to sustain the bridge program will focus on achieving program and student outcomes, documenting the effectiveness of the bridge program approach, and securing funding for continuing program delivery. In subsequent phases, it entails learning from experience, improving program design, and determining whether and how to increase the size and scope of programming. This could mean expanding the bridge program to the next higher or lower level in the career pathway or to another occupation within the sector, or even other sectors. A longer-term goal would be to make bridge programs a standard item on the menu of services that program partners offer to low-skilled adults who want to advance in their education and careers.

This chapter focuses on considerations for continuing, improving, and expanding an existing bridge program, and on strategies for institutionalizing bridge programs in an organization and partnership.

HOW TO SUSTAIN A BRIDGE PROGRAM

- Assess effectiveness, identify improvements, and determine whether it should be expanded
- Sustain or expand the bridge program within the institution and partnership
- Promote organizational and policy changes that will provide long-term support

Assess Effectiveness, Identify Improvements, And Determine Whether It Should Be Expanded

The first step in assessing a bridge program is to examine its results in relation to the program plan and anticipated outcomes, including outreach to the target population, enrollment, learning gains, completion, transition to the next phase of training and education, employment, attainment of credentials or occupational certifications, and wage gains. Chapter Nine details how to do this. In making a case for sustainability, these results should be compared with those for similar courses and populations.

The next step is to analyze the effectiveness of the key elements and strategies of the bridge program and outline strengths and areas for improvement. The leadership team can use **Worksheet 10: Assessing Strengths and Weakness** as a guide for examining program elements. Discussion of both the positive and negative outcomes of each critical program element is important in assessing what needs to be improved, maintained, expanded, or changed.

In considering whether to expand the bridge program to reach additional population groups, serve more employers, or broaden the career pathway, the leadership team should revisit the program design questions to see if anything should be changed. The questions presented in **Figure 20: Should the Program Expand?** will help the leadership team consider whether and how to expand the bridge program or add a related industry or career cluster. If the partners answer yes to one or more of the expansion opportunities, they will need to assess what it will take to expand and whether they have the capacity to do it.

Worksheet 10: Assessing Strengths and Weaknesses

Program Component	Strengths	Weaknesses
Leadership Team and Partners		
1. Are the right partners at the table?		
2. Did the leadership team and other program partners share a common understanding of program goals and the bridge approach?		
3. Did each partner deliver a high quality of service?		
4. Were students able to easily navigate among the partners' services?		
5. Did partners communicate regularly about students and issues in program delivery?		
6. Were management systems in place and clear to all?		
Target Industry and Pathway		
1. Have labor market demands in the industry and career cluster remained strong?		
2. Is the career pathway clear to students and instructors?		
3. Do instructors have adequate expertise and knowledge of the industry and career cluster?		
4. Have employers participated in meaningful ways?		
Target Population		
1. Did outreach and marketing reach the target population?		
2. Did the marketing information clearly describe the unique program elements, requirements, and benefits of the bridge program for the target population?		
3. Did the bridge program design meet the needs and interests of participants?		
4. Was the schedule and location convenient to the target population?		
5. Did enrollment meet goals?		
Assessment		
1. Did the intake assessment tools accurately and consistently gauge student literacy levels, capacity, and motivation to succeed in the bridge program?		
2. Did student skills and interests fit with the bridge program?		
3. Did the intake assessment tools provide an understanding of student learning needs, individual barriers, and interests?		

Worksheet 10 (Continued)

Program Component	Strengths	Weaknesses
Contextualized Curriculum		
1. Were industry knowledge and technical, occupational, and basic skills instruction integrated and coordinated?		
2. Did learning goals align with the next level of education, for-credit college programs and employment?		
3. Did instructors use applied lessons and simulations?		
4. Did instructors and staff have sufficient understanding of the target population and course content? Were they able to use the bridge program approach?		
5. Was professional development provided to instructors?		
Career Development		
1. Was career information accessible, accurate, and used by the students?		
2. Did students have opportunities to tour industries and meet professionals in the career pathway?		
3. Was advising accessible and effective?		
4. Did students prepare career plans that will be useful as they move to the next level?		
Transition Services		
1. Were students fully aware of transition services when they registered?		
2. Were the services available and accessible from the time of enrollment?		
3. Were the services relevant to student needs?		
4. Was the transition coordinator, coach, or advisor available to students when they needed assistance and at key points in the program?		
5. Were there any student needs that were not met?		
Funding		
1. Did the resources meet the needs of the bridge program, students, and staff?		
2. Did the bridge program meet the terms and conditions of the funding streams?		
3. Will the funding streams be available in the future?		
4. What were the key gaps in funding?		
5. Are there new funding opportunities?		
Data and Measurement		
1. Did the partnership capture the information needed to assess progress and identify and solve problems?		
2. Did the partnership have sufficient information and capacity to analyze and document outcomes?		
3. What were the gaps in information? Will the team be able to fill those gaps?		

Figure 20: Should the Program Expand?

Expansion Opportunities	Considerations
Expand the capacity of the existing bridge program to serve more students	▪ Is there additional demand from employers and students?
Expand the capacity of the current bridge program or add a lower level course for those who do not meet the entrance requirements for the bridge program	▪ Is there additional demand from employers and students? ▪ Were there applicants who did not qualify for the bridge program? ▪ Have partners identified a need to serve their clients in this way? ▪ Did students at the lower levels of literacy accepted into the current program have difficulty in the course or have relatively low completion levels? ▪ Is there student demand at a lower level of literacy with the targeted career cluster?
Add a higher level bridge program	▪ Do bridge program graduates need additional preparation to succeed at the next level? ▪ Are there students at the next level who need to strengthen their basic skills to succeed?
▪ Add a pathway connection to a related occupation or program of study (for example, add a connection to health informatics technology from a healthcare bridge program) ▪ Add a bridge program in a different industry and career cluster	▪ Is there a labor market demand for employees in the occupation? ▪ Are there sustainable wage jobs with career pathways? ▪ Does a CTE program in a high demand occupation need additional students? ▪ Have instructors at the next level indicated interest?

Sustain Or Expand The Bridge Program Within The Institution And Partnership

Sustaining and expanding the bridge program beyond the initial phases involves a proactive strategy of formal and informal activities, including communicating program effectiveness, engaging additional internal and external partners, securing resources, and building organizational support.

Funding for the bridge program, related activities, and transition services comes from a variety of sources. While reviewing the initial bridge program offering, it is important to consider the resources used and to determine what will be available in subsequent offerings, any gaps, and the need for additional support. Chapter Eight outlines a broad range of funding streams. The questions in Figure 21: Funding Questions will help in assessing ongoing resource needs.

In the longer term, the leadership team should cultivate a network of relationships with potential funders in the public and private sectors and with colleagues who track local, state, and national funding opportunities. This will involve identification of organizations with funding priorities and policies relevant to bridge programs, meetings with appropriate staff, and joining (and monitoring) targeted list serves. Periodically, it is important to make funders

Figure 21: Funding Questions

- Will the same funding sources be available for subsequent courses and at what level?
- Were there gaps in the initial budget? For example, was the cost of a transition coordinator covered? Do students need financial assistance?
- How can expanding the partnership or extending the bridge program to new industries, career clusters, or populations enable access to additional funding sources?
- What program or policy changes may be needed to address the funding gaps and challenges or to access additional funding sources? Are these changes possible?
- What other resources might be available? What are the steps and timelines for accessing them? Which are most feasible to access?
- Who should be involved in identifying and accessing the needed funds?

aware of the bridge program efforts and successes, and foster relationships that will inform the program about opportunities. A proactive strategy to attract multi-year funding is most effective after establishing a solid foundation with a bridge program that already demonstrates results.

Ultimately, for bridge programs to be sustainable over time, they need support from the executives of the partnering organizations, decision-making bodies such as workforce boards or a faculty senate, and key stakeholders. The leadership team will need a plan for ongoing communications and advocacy to build internal and external support, including dedicating resources, facilitating new partnerships, and promoting the bridge program approach for low-skilled adults.

Ongoing communication about the bridge program's progress and outcomes is critical. This can be through informal conversations with other instructors, department heads, and staff within the organization, and through formal presentations at regular staff, organizational, or board meetings, or at professional workshops.

For example, Lake Land College's developmental education bridge program director noticed that discussions among instructors about the high level of motivation and attendance of students attracted the attention of other college faculty. When they were able to show student literacy gains and their success in the career programs, faculty started asking about the bridge program method. This type of communication was supplemented by discussions at faculty meetings about how a bridge program could be a solution for the high number of students coming in to the campus who need developmental education and discussions with the college president.

It is helpful to prepare a core set of information points to help make the case for the bridge program. The following should be included and periodically updated:

- Program basics and impact on participants
- Program effectiveness using examples, student profiles, and faculty feedback
- Data showing better outcomes for students in completion, learning gains, transition to credit programs, employment, etc. (shows impact)
- Student and employer praise
- A list of resources leveraged from different systems
- Description of how the bridge strategy and outcomes support larger goals for the organizations involved, target population, and the state

To engage key stakeholders in support for the bridge program it will be important to:

- Show executives at the organization how bridge programs benefit both the institution and its constituents, such as increasing credential gains, reducing the time students spend in developmental education courses, increasing adult education transfers to college-credit programs, and increasing credentials and wages for WIA recipients.
- Engage other parts of the organization in a conversation about how the bridge program approach can work in their areas or solicit their advice. This may include speaking with division chairs in other programs of study at a community college or director of an ESL program at a CBO.
- Make presentations to decision-making bodies, including the college faculty senate, department chairs, the Local Workforce Investment Area, and Area Planning Councils about the bridge program approach and outcomes compared to other programs, and how the approach connects to broader policy goals.
- Present at conferences, such as associations of colleagues and workforce conferences in the region, at the state level, and nationally.
- Engage employer associations that can help in championing the program, recruiting employees, and recruiting other employers.
- Build community support, for example, by inviting community leaders to a breakfast to hear about the program basics, impacts, and to meet students, graduates, and employers.

Promote Organizational And Policy Changes That Will Provide Long-term Support

Over the long term, bridge programs will only be sustainable if they become part of the organization's normal practice of education, training, support services, and workforce development. This happens through a methodical process of identifying and prioritizing the needed institutional policies to encourage and support bridge programming, and working to make needed changes.

Figure 22: Overcoming Barriers to Expanding Bridge Programs identifies examples of organizational barriers and problems that can limit expansion and success of bridge programs and presents examples of responses.

Partners need to identify key barriers to sustaining bridge programs in their organizations, make the administration aware of the issues, and involve stakeholders in conversations about potential solutions. For example, an organization could:

- Extend all of its support services to adult education students
- Ensure that bridge programs are described in organizational materials, websites, and orientations
- Include bridge program development and management in position descriptions of appropriate personnel
- Adopt goals for the number of bridge programs, student enrollment, and transitions
- Include a line item for bridge programs in the organizational budget

Partners can build internal and external support by demonstrating how the bridge program can further achieve organizational goals or community economic or employment goals. In community colleges, for example, bridge programs can further goals for completion of adult or developmental education programs, transitions to credit-based career and technical education programs, and acquisition of credentials.

Community-based and workforce development organizations will want to link bridge program outcomes to their goals, e.g., for education, employment, and wage gains. Similarly, industry and community leaders will be interested in seeing how the bridge program can support efforts to fill critical skills shortages and reduce the area's unemployment rate.

Figure 22: Overcoming Barriers to Expanding Bridge Programs

Problems	Ways to Address Problems
Eligibility for noncredit bridge students for college services, access to the computer lab, etc.	▪ Issue all students in an ID card that enables eligibility
Limited visibility of the program	▪ Include information about the bridge program on the organization's website and materials and include in regular organizational orientations
Limited access to regular funding for planning, transition services coordination, management, etc.	▪ Identify part-time positions that may be combined ▪ Include bridge program functions in position descriptions ▪ Include bridge programs as a line item in the organization's budget
Limitations on instructor availability, team teaching, scheduling, etc.	▪ Orient and work with faculty representatives and the union ▪ Meet with departments well in advance of the program start dates to identify priority schedule and facilities needs
Tuition for credit-based programs	▪ Adopt an incentive program that will cover tuition for a specific number of credit hours for graduates of bridge programs ▪ Provide credit for a portion of the bridge program ▪ Work with students before they complete the program to prepare financial aid applications for the next step
Limitations on the number of times a student can take entrance exams	▪ Identify which are state and which are institutional requirements and meet with key staff to see what can be modified
Limited use of WIA funds	▪ Meet with representatives of the LWIA to determine the types of training they will approve

ILLINOIS' EFFORTS TO SUSTAIN AND EXPAND BRIDGE PROGRAMS

The early results of Illinois initiatives to explore different approaches to bridge program design indicates the effectiveness of the strategy for providing low-skilled adults access to postsecondary education and career path employment. Illinois is continuing to explore, expand, and sustain use of the bridge program strategy for improving the economic self-sufficiency of low-income adults and a highly skilled workforce that meets the needs of Illinois' employers. Bridge program providers should monitor and take advantage of the state's continuing and emerging activities designed to expand use of the bridge program strategy, build professional capacity, and explore new models. Key state initiatives include:

- Accelerating Opportunity (AO): Illinois was recently awarded a three-year, $1.6 million grant to support efforts to offer contextualized adult education programs that provide a postsecondary college credit-bearing "stackable" credential. These credentials may be transferred for credit to programs at the next level in a career

pathway. Focus will be on the ICAPs model, which involves co-enrollment in adult education and CTE courses, team teaching, and college credit. The target population includes adults in high intermediate basic education through adult secondary education (grade level 6 and above) and English language learners in high intermediate ESL (NRS level 5 and above). This approach will offer another bridge program model that directly links to occupational credentials and college credit.[73]

- **Performance-Based Funding**: In 2011, the Illinois General Assembly passed performance-based funding though Public Act 97-0320, which focuses on increasing student completion of college courses, certificates, and degrees. It recommends tracking community college remedial students who advance to college-level work and adult education students who advance to remedial or college-level courses. This funding will take effect in Illinois in fiscal year 2013. Bridge programs will need to collect data for the metrics that are adopted.
- **Redesign of Developmental Education**: ICCB's redesign of the state's developmental education effort will more closely align developmental education courses with programs of study; modularize course content to better address the specific needs of individual students and use common core standards; increase the integration of curriculum through co-enrollment in developmental-level courses with college-level courses; increase use of contextualized instruction; expand targeted wrap-around support services; and provide comprehensive high quality professional development.
- **Common Core State Standards and College Readiness Standards**: Adult Education is in the process of aligning adult learning standards with the common core standards that have been adopted by the ICCB, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), and the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) as part of a strategic plan. This will more closely link adult education and college and career readiness.[74]
- **Illinois Pathways**: Supported by a partnership between the State of Illinois' education and economic development agencies and funded through Race to the Top, Illinois Pathways is a new STEM education initiative designed to support college and career readiness for all students. As part of the initiative, Illinois is developing STEM programs of study to serve as models for aligning programs across P-20 education institutions, including bridge programs. In addition, Illinois Pathways supports new statewide, public-private partnerships known as STEM Learning Exchanges that coordinate sector-based activities among networks of education partners, businesses, industry associations, labor organizations, and others to support local program of study implementation through coordinating planning and investment; aggregating curriculum and career guidance resources; supporting work-based learning and professional development opportunities; and reviewing talent pipeline performance.[75]
- **Longitudinal Data System**: In July 2009, Illinois Governor Quinn signed into law the P-20 Longitudinal Education Data System Act (Public Act 96-0107) establishing the authority, requirements, and framework for a system that links data in all four state educational agencies — the ISBE, the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC), the ICCB, and the IBHE. Initial focus areas have included a statewide transcript system, linking teacher and student data, linking education and workforce data with the Illinois Department of Employment Security and Illinois DCEO, expanding early childhood data with the Illinois Department of Human Services, and developing standard reports. This longitudinal data system should be useful for those tasked with developing, implementing, or improving bridge programs by providing access to data that provides a wide variety of information on student transitions and outcomes.[76]

Make it Last: Working Practices

Carreras en Salud

Instituto del Progreso Latino's Vice President of Education and Programs, Dr. Ricardo Estrada, explained their approach to sustainability, "Carreras en Salud has strategically expanded both vertically (on the top and bottom of the pathway) and horizontally (providing new track options) as a way to stay viable and relevant." To build and sustain the Carreras bridge program over time, Instituto has worked hard to systematically demonstrate and communicate its success to funders, prospective students, and employers by using a multi-pronged approach.

Data Collection and Evaluation: "By building our own data collection system, with support from the Aspen Institute, we can now capture student data at program start (enrollees), during the program (retention and progress), and beyond (graduation, licensing and certification, and placement)," explained Dr. Estrada. "This enables us to show results to funders and prospective students — highlighting its 85% retention rate and 100% job placement rate to distinguish itself from traditional programs.

Forming and Leveraging Partnerships: Instituto strategically partners with community-based organizations, a community college, and private healthcare organizations. For example, Association House provides case management, and Instituto works with nonprofits like the National Council of La Raza in accessing a broader range of funding streams. The bridge program partnership with the Metropolitan Chicago Healthcare Council opens access to a network of 49 hospitals that provide employment and internship opportunities, feedback on curriculum, support for funding requests, and up-to-date information in how to meet employers' needs.

Conferences and Awards: Presentations about Carreras at local and national conferences helps build the program's profile among funders, healthcare professionals, and workforce development specialists. This has helped earn several important awards, including the Family Strengthening Award from the National Council of La Raza and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and Program of the Year from the Illinois Council for Continuing and Higher Education.

Marketing: Instituto's marketing plan features outcomes, collaborations, and awards. It includes professionally printed brochures and opportunities for media and industry representatives to attend program events (like graduations). Instituto also implements a student satisfaction survey and encourages satisfied students to share their experiences with family, friends, and coworkers.

Public and Multi-Year Funding: Longer-term public funding is critical to Carreras' sustainability. Sources have included WIA, the Illinois Department of Human Services, the Aspen Institute, and the U.S. Department of Education. While these grants entail additional data collection and evaluation, they provide important funding security. Instituto also seeks support for a variety of funding areas, including adult and family literacy, as a way to continue to promote the program to new funders and community partners.

Expansion: Instituto has expanded vertically by adding a fourth grade level at the bottom of the pathway, while also adding a new level at the top so that students completing the LPN can connect to an RN program. The program has experienced horizontal expansion, too, through the addition of a new track whereby students who have completed the Pre-CNA Bridge can choose between nursing and health informatics career pathways. These expansions are a product of careful planning, with a thorough assessment of student and market needs.

Dr. Estrada believes, "It is critical that our community, stakeholders, partners, and funders all know about our approach and outcomes for the graduates of each level program level. We must be able to provide solid information to engage them in supporting our continued evolution and growth."

CTE Reading-Study Skills for Automotive Technology/Mechanic and John Deere Tech

Lake Land College is working on multiple fronts to expand and sustain its bridge programming: professional development, communications, expansion into other career clusters, and personalized recruitment. The development of the bridge built on Lake Land's involvement in Pathways to Results, a pilot initiative designed to increase transition rates for underperforming populations from high school to college.

The leadership team is expanding professional development opportunities to build expertise in instruction, using a contextualized curriculum, career development, and counseling. As the team leader reported, "Our developmental reading and writing instructor works with individual developmental education faculty on contextualized teaching and with the CTE instructors on developing a contextualized curriculum." Other team members work with career development and advising faculty. "Our vision is to combine one-on-one efforts with a special in-service day."

To promote communications with other college departments and divisions, "We find opportunities to talk about why we decided to develop the bridge approach and present research that backs up what we are saying, how we do it, and the benefits. For example, in faculty meetings, we have discussed how bridge programs address the specific needs of the large number of CTE students coming in unprepared who need at least one level of remedial reading. We use data on retention, performance, completion, and transition to show the bridge program has better outcomes than traditional programs. For example, 13 out of 14 students completed the bridge program with a C or higher, but only 75% of students in the non-contextualized get a C or higher. Faculty also report on the participation and enthusiasm of their bridge program students. Word is spreading informally."

On expansion to other career clusters, Ms. Glosser explained, "The ability to use the vocational skills reimbursement rate provides a carrot for expanding the bridge program. Soon after we started talking about the progress we were seeing in the Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics program, several division and program chairs inquired about how the program worked. With our assistance, eight contextualized reading courses that are program- and pathway-specific have been developed and will be offered in the fall semester of 2011: Cosmetology, Information Technology, General Business, and a combination of Welding and Power Plant Technology."

To promote program recruitment, division chairs and instructors directly contact students who have placed into developmental reading courses to tell them about the opportunity, benefits to them, and how to enroll.

Administration at Lake Land College strongly supports the bridge program approach. "They see the enthusiasm from the faculty and students, and the initial results. They have become more than just supporters — they are becoming advocates. This is because we saw a problem and got the right people together to solve it," explained Ms. Glosser.

Lake Land continues to develop its bridge program model and continues to find ways to integrate the approach into its systems. The project lead explained that, "Based on the success of contextualized reading, we will look at math. In the longer term, we want to conceptualize a process to eliminate the stigma associated with developmental education and adult education by classifying everyone as a student. Bridge programs would be an option for everyone who needs basic skills as a way to achieve their goals. This would allow greater success faster."

Program Summaries

The programs used in this manual to demonstrate working practices were selected to demonstrate a diversity of programs by type and region, to illustrate key points in the chapters, and to show varied planning and implementation approaches to bridge programming. The Illinois Community College Board and stakeholders recommended a pool of programs and the authors asked these programs what they believed to be their strongest practices. Information was gathered by researching existing program profiles and in-depth interviews with program staff. The program summaries in this section provide a snapshot of the programs profiled throughout this manual.

Program Name:	**Career and Technical Education Reading-Study Skills for Automotive Technology/Mechanic and John Deere Tech**
Lead Organization:	Lake Land College, Mattoon, Central Illinois
Type of Organization:	Community College
Departments:	Developmental Education, Technology, and Agriculture
Key Internal Partners:	Adult Education Learning Assistance Center Math, Reading, English, Career, and Technical Education Perkins Programs Special Projects Workforce Development
Key External Partners:	Industry employers, including John Deere, dealerships, repair shops, agriculture, power, logistics Local WIA Board
College Credit:	Counts as an alternative to Developmental English and 2.5 credits for graduation, and can also count as a credit toward an Associate of Applied Science
Literacy Level:	Less than 11.0 English, no math requirement
Career Cluster:	Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics
Career Pathway:	Facility and Mobile Equipment Maintenance
Occupations:	Automotive Technology, Automotive Mechanic, and John Deere Technician
Target Population:	Students who want to matriculate into Automotive or John Deere CTE programs but place into developmental education reading; many students are WIA-funded
Program Description:	Focuses on improving students' reading comprehension and critical and logical thinking skills. Students work on study, listening, and speaking skills. Upon completion, students have an individualized career plan and are prepared to enter Lake Land College's John Deere Agriculture Technology or Automotive Technology AAS degree programs. These programs link to a Bachelor of Science where Lake Land has an articulation agreement. It also prepares students for the Automotive Service Excellence certificate administered by the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation and the Service Advisor certificate.
Funding Sources:	Adult Education department staff time Illinois Community College Board Developmental Education/CTE Demonstration Grant In-kind administrative support
Years of Operation:	2010 to present
Program Contact:	Diana Glosser, Director of Perkins Programs, 217-234-5372, dglosser@lakeland.cc.il.us Ron Sanderson, Coordinator of Special Programs, 217-234-5558, rsanders@lakeland.cc.il.us

Program Name:	**Carreras en Salud**
Lead Organization:	Instituto del Progreso Latino, Chicago, Illinois
Type of Organization:	Community-based Organization
Key Partners:	Association House of Chicago Humboldt Park Vocational Education Center of Wilbur Wright College Metropolitan Chicago Healthcare Council National Council of La Raza
Employer Partners:	Casa Central Chicago Department of Health Erie Family Health Center Hispanic Nurses Association Lakeshore Health Center Mercy Hospital and Medical Center St. Elizabeth Hospital St. Joseph Home of Chicago Swedish Covenant Hospital
College Credit:	None
Literacy Level:	Less than 6.0 English and math for the lowest level bridge
Career Cluster:	Health Science
Career Pathway:	Therapeutic Services
Occupations:	Certified Nursing Assistant, EKG Technical and Phlebotomy Technician, Licensed Practical Nurse
Target Population:	Has GED or high school diploma, 25 years of age or older, returning to school, first language is Spanish, family income is at or below poverty level, head of household with dependent children, has a full-time low-paying job, is a public aid recipient, single parent, and/or first generation college student
Program Eligibility:	Sixth grade literacy, interest in healthcare, motivated
Program Description:	Prepares Latino adults with limited academic and English skills for college-level courses. It prepares students for a CNA program and connects to a pathway that leads to an LPN and RN.
Schedule:	8 hours per week for 16 weeks
Funding Sources:	Chicago Community Trust Chicago Mayor's Office of Workforce Development Chicago Tribune Foundation Employer tuition reimbursement Illinois Community College Board Illinois Critical Skills Shortage Initiative Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity The Joyce Foundation Lloyd A. Fry Foundation Local Initiative Support Corporation WIA Title I Grant or Contract
Years of Operation:	2005 to present
Contact Person:	Dr. Ricardo Estrada, Vice President of Education and Programs, 773-772-7170, ricardo@idpl.org

Program Name:	**Elgin Community College Adult Education Health Care Bridge Program**
Lead Organization:	Elgin Community College, Elgin, Northeastern Illinois
Type of Organization:	Community College
Department:	Adult Education
Key Partners:	Kane County Department of Employment and Education Provena St. Joseph Hospital Rosewood Nursing Home School District U-46 Sherman Hospital Workforce Investment Board of Northern Cook County YWCA Elgin
College Credit:	None
Literacy Level:	ASE (9.0 on TABE Reading) or High-Intermediate to Advanced ESL
Career Cluster:	Health Science
Career Pathway:	Therapeutic Services, Biotechnology Research and Development
Target Population:	Students enrolled in the GED program and Intermediate and Advanced ESL students who have an interest in the healthcare professions
Program Description:	Equips Adult Education students with a basic understanding of healthcare settings, such as hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, ambulatory care, and home health through field trips. Participants learn communication skills, problem-solving, time management, workplace behaviors, entrance requirements for each healthcare program, and vocabulary. Students design an individual academic and career path toward their short-term and long-term goals. They may transition to Elgin Community College health programs in Clinical Laboratory, EMT-Paramedic, Histo-Technology, Nursing, Physical Therapist Assistant, Surgical Technology, Dental Assistant, Health and Wellness Management, Massage Therapy, Phlebotomy, or Radiography. Students are required to co-enroll in an additional ASE or ESL course in order to participate in the bridge program.
Schedule:	3 hours per week for 12 weeks
Funding Sources:	College funds for faculty salary and benefits College funds for transition coordinator Illinois Community College Board Adult Education funds TANF grant for unemployment services coordinator
Years of Operation:	2010 to present
Program Contact:	Peggy Heinrich, Dean of Adult Education, 847-214-6911, heinrich@elgin.edu

Program Name:	**Health Sciences Prep**
Lead Organization:	Southwestern Illinois College, Belleville, Southwestern Illinois
Type of Organization:	Community College
Department:	Health Sciences
Key Internal Partners:	Career Technology Education Developmental Education
Key External Partners:	St. Elizabeth's Hospital
College Credit:	One credit toward a degree in Health Science if students pass the medical terminology test; credit for developmental reading if they pass the reading component, and credit for developmental writing if they pass the writing component of the course
Literacy Level:	7.0 to 9.0 English based on COMPASS
Career Cluster:	Health Science
Career Pathway:	Any Health Science program
Occupations:	Therapeutic Services: Nurse Assistant, First Responder, Emergency Medical Technician, Massage Therapy, Medical Assistant, Paramedic, Nursing Education, Physical Therapist Assistant, Respiratory Care; Health Informatics: Ward Clerk, Medical Billing and Coding, Health Information Technology; Diagnostic Services: Phlebotomy, Medical Laboratory Technology, Radiologic Technology
Target Population:	Students interested in healthcare careers who are underprepared based on initial assessment scores in reading and writing or who lack the general program requirements for admission
Program Description:	Prepares students for healthcare careers through a Web-enhanced course. Students learn medical terminology, basic structure and function of the body systems, organs, tissues, and cells, and use health science scenarios and case studies to reinforce learning. Students also learn about healthcare settings and the healthcare team, and gain basic familiarity with healthcare reimbursement. Upon completion, students will also have CPR, First Aid, and OSHA (Universal Precaution) certifications, along with improved skills in reading, writing, and math. Students can transition to programs in Therapeutic Services, Health Informatics, and Diagnostics.
Schedule:	8 hours per week for 16 weeks
Funding Sources:	Illinois Community College Board Computer Technology Education Illinois Community College Board CTE/Developmental Education Demonstration Grant
Years of Operation:	2011 to present
Program Contact:	Julie Muertz, Dean of Health Sciences and Homeland Security, 618-222-5298, julie.muertz@swic.edu

Program Name:	**Lewis and Clark Community College Bridge to Health Sciences**
Lead Organization:	Lewis and Clark Community College, Godfrey, Edwardsville, and East Alton, Southwestern, Illinois
Type of Organization:	Community College
Department:	Adult Education
Key Internal Partners:	Health Sciences Mathematics
Key External Partners:	Health Sciences Advisory Committee
College Credit:	Completers do not have to take Lewis and Clark college placement exam for math, reading, or English, and students may earn college credit to meet the course requirement for medical math
Literacy Level:	9.0 to 12.0 literacy on the TABE
Career Cluster:	Health Science
Career Pathway:	Therapeutic Services
Program of Study/ Specific Occupations:	Prepares students to enter the College's Health Sciences Division, which includes Nursing, Nursing Assistant, Dental Hygiene, Dental Assisting, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Therapeutic Massage, Para Medicine, and Exercise Science programs
Target Population:	Primarily students enrolled in Adult Secondary Education (grade 9.0 and above), but students in ABE (grades 6.0 to 8.9) may be considered
Program Description:	Prepares students to meet the entrance requirements for Health Science programs. The contextualized curriculum integrates basic reading, math, medical terminology, language skills, and career development within the health science framework. Completers increase their literacy levels, prepare for or attain a GED, and begin college credit in four courses without having to take a college placement exam to enter the College's Health Science program.
Schedule:	15 hours per week for 16 weeks
Funding Sources:	Adult Education Grant for program design, initial implementation, and ongoing course funding Illinois Community College Board Bridge Grant Illinois Community College Board Adult Education funds Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Grant Student Success Funding
Years of Operation:	2010 to present
Program Contact:	Valorie Harris, Director of Adult Education, 618-468-4100, vharris@lc.edu Vicki Hinkle, Assistant Director of Adult Education, 618-468-4145, vhinkle@lc.edu

Program Name:	**Pre-Health Care Bridge Program**
Lead Organization:	Black Hawk College, Moline, Northwest Illinois
Type of Organization:	Community College
Department:	Adult Education
Key Internal Partners:	Academic ESL Adult Education Career Advising Allied Health Career Development Center Early School Leaver Transitions Education Department
Key External Partners:	Genesis Healthcare Systems Retired Senior Volunteer Program
College Credit:	None
Literacy Level:	6.0 to 7.9 and 8.0 to 10.0 English
Career Cluster:	Health Science
Career Pathway:	Therapeutic Services, Support Services, Health Informatics, Diagnostic Services
Program of Study/ Specific Occupations:	Leads to postsecondary programs in CNA, Phlebotomy Technician, Dialysis Technician
Target Population:	Adult Secondary Education and ESL students (Intermediate level and above)
Program Description:	Helps Adult Education and ESL students complete a GED and/or ESL classes, explore Health Science careers, enter employment in healthcare, and/or transition to a credit program in Allied Health, Nursing, or a noncredit program such as Phlebotomy, Dialysis Technician, or Pharmacy Technician.
Schedule:	20 hours per week, 6 weeks for ESL and 1 week for GED students
Funding Sources:	Illinois Community College Board Adult Education Grants
Years of Operation:	2011 to present
Program Contact:	Diane Fall, Director of Adult Education, 309-796-8240, falld@bhc.edu

Program Name: **SER Healthcare Careers Bridge Program**

Lead Organization: Central States SER, Chicago, Illinois

Type of Organization: Community-based Organization

Key Partners:
Richard J. Daley College Adult Education and Continuing Education Departments
Arturo Velasquez Institute, Richard J. Daley College
Wilbur Wright College (holds slots for LPN students)
Malcolm X College (offers multiple allied health programs)
Family Works (for Chicago Housing Authority residents)
DHS/TANF (referral partner)
Employer Advisory Board Committee: Unity Hospice, Vitas Hospice, St. Rita, A Touch of Grace Hospice, Alden Manor, Norwegian Hospital, and Healthcare Plus
Mt. Sinai Hospital
St. Anthony Hospital
Advocate Hospital
Rush Medical University Center

College Credit: Students earn one credit when they enter a more advanced credit program after completing the SER Healthcare Careers bridge and Basic Nursing Assistant programs, which prepare graduates to become a CNA

Literacy Level: 6.0 to 8.9 level in English and/or math

Career Cluster: Health Science

Career Pathway: Therapeutic Services, Support Services, and Diagnostic Services

Occupations: CNA, Patient Care Technician, Licensed Practical Nurse, Registered Nurse, with some Health Information Technology and Sterile Processing Technology.

Target Population: Low-skilled, low-income adults, Chicago Housing Authority residents, WIA and TANF eligible, with or without a high school diploma, with strong interest in the healthcare field

Program Description: Using a contextualized literacy training model, intensive case management, and hands-on experience with partners Daley College and the Arturo Velasquez Institute, this program helps participants gain basic skills and technical knowledge of the healthcare environment and the roles in healthcare organizations, while working on job readiness skills. Students research healthcare occupations and explore long-term career goals and pathways, such as the transition from Patient Care Technician to LPN to RN. Upon completion, students will have increased their literacy level and prepared for or attained a GED, and be prepared to attain an industry certificate or license, take a college placement examination, find employment in healthcare, and/or transition to more advanced training at the college level.

Schedule: 30 hours per week for 16 weeks to complete the bridge and BNA programs

Funding Sources: Chicago Department of Family and Support Services
Partnership for New Communities' Opportunity Chicago initiative
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services via Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago
Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's Training for Tomorrow initiative

Years of Operation: 2007 to present

Program Contact: Lorne Green, Manager of Healthcare Workforce Programs, 773-542-9030 x1283, lgreen@centralstatesser.org

Program Name: **William Rainey Harper College Health Care Bridge Program**

Lead Organization: William Rainey Harper College, Palatine, Northwestern Suburban Chicago, Illinois

Type of Organization: Community College

Departments: Academic Enrichment and Language Studies Division, which includes Adult Education ABE/GED and ESL Literacy, Developmental Education, and Academic ESL

Key Internal Partners:
Access and Disability Services
Admissions Outreach
Career Center
Center for Multicultural Learning
Center for New Students and Orientation
English as a Second Language
Healthcare Careers
Information Technology
Marketing Services
Office of Student Financial Assistance
Tutoring Center

Key External Partners:
District 512 Area Planning Council
Workforce Investment Board

College Credit: None

Literacy Level: 6.0 to 12.9 and above reading based on the TABE test or 50 to 76 reading based on the COMPASS test and 16 correct on TABE 7/8 math assessment

Career Cluster: Health Science

Career Pathway: Therapeutic Services, Diagnostic Services, and Support Services

Occupations: CNA, Phlebotomy, Emergency Medical Technician, Medical Office Administration

Target Population: ABE and ASE students who are studying for the GED exam or have recently attained their GED but demonstrate lower than postsecondary level skills

Program Description: Integrates mathematics, literature, writing, social studies, and science with healthcare-related content. Participants learn medical vocabulary and college readiness and engage in employment skills and career development activities. The course runs parallel with the College's GED test preparation. Completers increase their literacy levels, are prepared for or attain a GED, and transition to college-credit healthcare career classes.

Schedule: 3.5 hours per week for 16 weeks

Funding Sources:
Adult Education (regular and bridge grant)
College Education funds/Student Success Grant (Center for Multicultural Learning)
Perkins II
WIA support for some students

Years of Operation: 2010 to present

Program Contact: Diana Cincinello, Academic Enrichment and Language Studies (AELS), Associate Professor, 847-925-6596, dcincine@harpercollege.edu

A Guide to Terms and Abbreviations Used in this Manual

Adult Ed	Adult Education programming or funding
CBO	Community-based organization
CASAS	Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System
COMPASS	Computer-Adaptive Placement Assessment and Support System
CTE	Career and Technical Education
DCEO	Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
Dev ED	Developmental Education
DHS	Illinois Department of Human Services
ESL	English as a Second Language
GED	General Education Diploma
ICCB	Illinois Community College Board
ISBE	Illinois State Board of Education
IBHE	Illinois Board of Higher Education
LPN	Licensed Practical Nurse
LWIB	Local Workforce Investment Board
LWIA	Local Workforce Investment Area
NRS	National Reporting System
POS	Program of Study
RN	Registered Nurse
TABE	Test of Adult Basic Education
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
VESL	Vocational English as a Second Language
WIA	Workforce Investment Act
WIB	Workforce Investment Board

Many of the terms used in planning and delivering bridge programs are staples of workforce development, training, and education. Yet they are defined and used differently by different groups, e.g., vocational education providers, workforce development providers, community colleges, employers, and employer associations. In this handbook, the terms basic to bridge programs and pathways in Illinois education and workforce development policy are used as defined below.

Adult Education: Programs receiving funds through the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of 1998. Adult Ed includes ESL and GED preparation and basic skills courses for adults without high school diplomas.

Basic Skills: Fundamental skills such as reading, comprehension, writing, math, and English.

Bridge Program Leadership Team: Members include those who are responsible for developing, managing, and delivering a bridge program and have defined responsibilities and goals.

Career and Technical Education: Primarily funded by the federal Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006 (Perkins IV), CTE programs are intended to provide students with the academic and technical skills necessary to succeed in the 21st century knowledge- and skills-based economy.

Career Clusters: Groups of occupations and industries that have a common set of foundational skills and knowledge. There are 16 nationally recognized clusters with multiple Career Pathways within each Cluster.

Career Ladder: A set of occupations that are linked together by common or complementary skills. These linkages provide workers with opportunities to advance and expand recruitment opportunities for employers.

Career Pathways: Multi-year programs of academic and technical study. In each pathway, the outcomes standards for each level of training align with the requirements of education at the next level and beyond, and may result in state- or employer-recognized credentials.

Developmental Education: Developmental education (sometimes called remedial education) consists of courses in math, communication, and reading to help students place into college level math, communication, and English courses.

English as a Second Language: Programs and classes for persons who lack proficiency in the English language. Classes assist non-native English speakers in improving speaking, listening, reading, writing, and math skills.

Industry: Groups of businesses or organizations with similar activities, products, or services.

Industry Certification: A credential based on standards set by employers in a particular industry or by skilled workers in a given occupation.

Occupations: Specific collections of job functions, skills, education, and training within a career pathway. Occupations may be linked to specific industries, such as physician's assistant in healthcare, or cut across industries, such as accountants.

Occupational Certificate: A credential earned by completing a training program for a specific industry or career. Programs vary in length from one to more than four semesters of full-time study. They are generally state-recognized and thus carry college credit, although this credit does not necessarily transfer to a college degree program.

Occupationally Contextualized Curriculum: Integrates basic reading, math, and language skills with industry/occupation knowledge and has academic and career outcomes along a clearly identified career pathway.

One Stop Career Centers: Created by WIA to provide employers, job seekers, and workers with access to resources for employment and training in a single location.

Partner or Bridge Program Partner: Organizations and specific departments and divisions within organizations that have a defined role in delivering a bridge program.

Programs of Study: Sequences of courses that incorporate a progression of secondary and postsecondary elements that include both academic and career and technical education content. They include opportunities to earn college credit (dual credit) in high school, an industry-recognized credential or certificate at the secondary/postsecondary level, and an associate's or bachelor's degree.

Sector: Types of employers that are grouped by their primary products and include multiple industries. For example, the manufacturing sector includes several industries, e.g., automotive, electronics, and plastics industries. The service sector includes the finance, hospitality, and education industries. The North American Industry Classification System defines the industry groupings.

Vocational English as a Second Language: Programs that teach basic literacy skills to non-native English-speaking students in the context of preparing them for work in a specific occupation.

Workforce Investment Boards: Advisory committees established under WIA whose purpose is to set policy and direction for implementation of the workforce investment system and to foster cooperation between the government and the private sector to meet the workforce preparation needs of employers and workers.

Endnotes

[1] The Workforce Alliance, "Illinois' Forgotten Middle-Skills Jobs: 2009," (Washington, DC: Skills2Compete-Illinois campaign, 2009).

[2] 2010 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

[3] Illinois Community College Board, Annual Enrollment and Completion (A1) Records Table A-21 (2012).

[4] ICCB-approved adult education providers currently include community-based organizations, community colleges, regional offices of education, public school districts, the Illinois Department of Corrections, and a university.

[5] All information can be accessed at the One Stop Career Centers and on the Illinois workNet portal: www.illinoisworknet.com.

[6] For a sample MOU, see: www.idpl.org/images/publicationsPDFs/Instituto2010_HowToBuildBridgePrograms%20final.pdf, p. 47, accessed May 14, 2012.

[7] Adapted from Women Employed, Chicago Jobs Council, and UIC Great Cities Institute, "Bridges to Careers for Low-Skilled Adults," Women Employed, 2005, 33.

[8] Natasha A. Jankowski, Catherine L. Kirby, Debra D. Bragg, Jason C. Taylor, and Kathleen M. Oertle, "Illinois' Career Cluster Model," (Champaign, IL: Illinois Community College Board by Office of Community College Research and Leadership at University of Illinois, 2009).

[9] "Labor Market Information – ABCs," Illinois workNet, www.illinoisworknet.com/vos_portal/Industry/en/Home/lmi/lmi_abc.htm, accessed January 29, 2012; Career One-Stop, www.careeronestop.org, accessed January 29, 2012.

[10] Additional workforce information can be found at the Illinois Workforce Info Center: www.ides.illinois.gov/page.aspx?item=61, accessed May 14, 2012.

[11] www.onetcenter.org; www.careeronestop.org/competencymodel/, accessed May 14, 2012.

[12] "Making the Case for Change," www.shifting-gears.org/making-the-case-for-change/58-making-the-case-for-change.html, accessed May 14, 2012.

[13] J. L. Taylor and T. Harmon, "Bridge Programs in Illinois: Results of the 2010 Illinois Bridge Status Survey," (Champaign, IL: Illinois Community College Board by Office of Community College Research and Leadership, University of Illinois, 2010). The results from this report show "larger proportions of respondents perceive recruitment via a personal visit or presentation to be more successful than recruitment via a flyer or brochure," although the latter method is used more frequently (p. 9). The single most successful recruitment method, identified by 80% of bridge programs that used it, is a personal visit or presentation to current students in the target population (i.e., specific classes) (p. 10).

[14] To include promos or do outreach using Illinois workNet, become a workforce or education partner at: www.illinoisworknet.com/vos_portal/advisors/en/public/Become_workNet_Partner.htm, accessed May 14, 2012.

[15] A calendar of training is also available at: www.illinoisworknet.com/vos_portal/advisors/en/Home; The Work Readiness Program Guide to using Illinois' work readiness assessments is available on the Frequently Requested Document page (under Print Materials) at: (www.illinoisworknet.com/vos_portal/advisors/en/admin/become_a_partner/112108-Resources_Frequently_Used), accessed May 14, 2012.

[16] Available at: www.illinoisworknet.com/vos_portal/advisors/en/Resources/AssistingIndividuals/NOCTI21postAssessment.htm, accessed May 14, 2012.

[17] WorkKeys is used for the highest levels of ABE or ASE. A new version designed for those at lower levels is being developed. Information at: www.act.org/workkeys/assess/, accessed May 14, 2012.

[18] See: www.nrsonline.org/reference/index.html?chapter=2&section=1&topic=1&subtopic=4, accessed May 14, 2012.

[19] Thomas G. Sticht, "The Military Experience and Workplace Literacy: A Review and Synthesis for Policy and Practice," (Philadelphia, PA: National Center on Adult Literacy, 1995); W. Norton Grubb, "Learning to Work: The Case for Reintegrating Job Training and Education," (New York: Russell Sage, 1996).

[20] Natasha Jankowski, Catherine Kirby, Jason Tyler, and Debra Bragg, "An Introduction to Illinois CTE Programs of Study," (Springfield: Illinois Community College Board by Office of Community College Research and Leadership, 2008, 13).

[21] For example, Academic and Communication foundational skills for the Health Science Cluster: http://occrl.illinois.edu/files/Projects/pos/Brochures/Health%20Fan%20Brochure.pdf, accessed May 14, 2012.

[22] Excellence in Adult Education website: www.excellenceinadulted.com, accessed May 14, 2012.

[23] The Illinois Community College Board posts curriculum models for bridge programs that organizations may use or modify for use to develop their bridge programs, accessed May 14, 2012.

[24] Illinois Community College Board, *Bridge Information Guide*, (Springfield: Illinois Community College Board, 2010, 7).

[25] Ibid, 14.

[26] Ibid, 12.

[27] Ibid, 15.

[28] Edson Pacheco Paladini and Fabricia Goncalves de Carvalho, "Active and Interactive Learning Processes: A General Model Using an Expert Systems Approach," *International Journal of Education and Information Technologies*, 2 (2008): 138-148.

[29] Steve Hinds, notes taken at "Bridge Instruction in Illinois: Past, Present and Future," Shifting Gears Illinois, June 14, 2011.

[30] Jobs for the Future, "The Breaking Through Practice Guide," (Boston, MA: Jobs for the Future, 2010).

[31] CLASP, "Funding Career Pathways and Career Pathway Bridges: A Federal Policy Toolkit for States," October 2010, p. 25.

[32] Illinois Community College Board, *Bridge Information Guide*, 15.

[33] Ibid, 10.

[34] Dr. Ricardo Estrada and Tom DuBois, "How to Build Bridge Programs that Fit into a Career Pathway," (Chicago, IL: Instituto del Progreso Latino, 2010, 31); Assessments for computer proficiency can be found at www.illinoisworknet.com/vos_portal/residents/en/Education/ComputerSkills/, accessed May 14, 2012.

[35] Office of Community College Research and Leadership Adult Education, "Bridge Programs in Illinois: Project Profiles," (Champaign, IL: Illinois Community College Board by Office of Community College Research and Leadership, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2011, 7).

[36] Ibid, 19.

[37] Shanna Smith Jaggars, "Online Learning: Does It Help Low-Income and Underprepared Students?" Working Paper No. 26, Assessment of Evidence Series, (New York: Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University, January 2011).

[38] Estrada, "How to Build Bridge Programs" covers this extensively.

[39] J. Mark Williams, Debra D. Bragg, and Julia Panke Makela, "Comprehensive Career Development for Illinois: Findings and Recommendations of the Illinois Career Development Task Force," (Champaign, IL: Office of Community College Research and Leadership, University of Illinois, 2008).

[40] Women Employed, 2005.

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[42] Edwin L. Herr, "Toward the Convergence of Career Theory and Practice: Mythology, Issues, and Possibilities," in *Handbook of Career Counseling Theory and Practice*, ed. M. Savickas and W. B. Walsh (Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black, 1996), 391.

[43] www20.csueastbay.edu/academic/academic-support/aace/major-exploration/riasec.html, accessed May 14, 2012.

[44] www.illinoisworknet.com/vos_portal/residents/en/Home/MyIllinoisWorkNet/MySkillsInterest.htm; www.careercruising.com/; http://il.jobseekersguide.org/node/18, accessed May 14, 2012.

[45] More information about the STEM Learning Exchanges can be found at: http://occrl.illinois.edu/Newsletter/2011/spring/6, accessed May 14, 2012.

[46] A useful guide for bridge program planners who want to do a full assessment of their existing transition services is the Self-Assessment Tool-Kit: www.womenemployed.org/fileadmin/templates/docs/CCP_Self-Assessment_Toolkit.pdf, accessed May 14, 2012.

[47] More resources on this can be found at: www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications/files/FundingCareerPathwaysFederalPolicyToolkitforStates.pdf, accessed May 14, 2012.

[48] Illinois' Shifting Gears pilot demonstration evaluation shows that a transition coordinator – an individual with the responsibility for providing bridge program students with the transition services they need – is key to the successful delivery of services, and therefore to the success of bridge programs. Debra Bragg, Timothy Harmon, Catherine Kirby, and Sujung Kim, "Initial Results of Illinois' Shifting Gears Pilot Demonstration Evaluation," (Champaign, IL: Illinois Community College Board by Office of Community College Research and Leadership, University of Illinois, 2009).

[49] www.iccb.org/adulted.html, accessed May 14, 2012.

[50] Taylor, "Bridge Programs in Illinois;" The specific requirements, policies, and procedures are outlined in the Illinois Community College Board Adult Education and Family Literacy Provider Manual: www.iccb.org/pdf/adulted/publications_reports/ProviderManual2009.pdf, accessed May 14, 2012.

[51] Complete information about the funding process and reimbursement funding levels can be found on the ICCB website at www.iccb.org under the Program Approval Manual and Generic Course List links.

[52] "Carl Perkins Act," Education Employment System #330, www.efe.k12.il.us/carl-perkins-act.htm, accessed January 29, 2012.

[53] "Community Services Black Grant Program," Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, www.commerce.state.il.us/dceo/Bureaus/Community_Development/Low+Income+Support/CSGB.htm, accessed January 29, 2012.

[54] "Employer Training Investment Program, Illinois workNet, www.illinoisworknet.com/vos_portal/business/en/Find_Talent/ETIP/, accessed January 29, 2012.

[55] "Work-Study Programs," College Illinois!, www.collegeillinois.org/students/during-college/types-of-financial-aid/work-study-programs.html, accessed January 29, 2012.

[56] "Job Training and Economic Development," Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, www.commerce.state.il.us/dceo/Bureaus/Workforce_Development/Employers/JTED.htm, accessed January 29, 2012; also see Greg Schrock and Davis Jenkins, "Partnerships for Job Training and Economic Development, An Evaluation of Illinois' JTED Program," (Chicago: Chicago Jobs Council, 2006).

[57] "Students and Parents," College Illinois!, www.collegezone.com/studentzone/416_891.htm#Award_Amount, accessed January 29, 2012.

[58] "Federal Pell Grant," Federal Student Aid, http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/PellGrants.jsp?tab=funding, accessed January 29, 2012.

[59] "SNAP Employment and Training Program-PHS 4538," Illinois Department of Human Services, www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=32292, accessed January 29, 2012.

[60] CLASP, "Funding Career Pathways and Career Pathway Bridges," (Washington, DC: CLASP, 2010), www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications/files/FundingCareerPathwaysFederalPolicyToolkitforStates.pdf, accessed January 29, 2012.

[61] More information can be found at www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=38464, accessed January 29, 2012.

[62] "Trade Adjustment and Assistance," U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration, www.doleta.gov/tradeact/, accessed January 29, 2012.

[63] WIA Policy Letter 09-ARRA-03: Training Programs Supported by Recovery Act Funds; WIA Policy Letter 07-PL-40: Training Expenditure Requirement.

[64] "Using WIA Title I to Support Bridge Programs: A Technical Assistance Guide" details how WIA can be used to support bridge activities, requirements, and examples of how the WIA funds can be used. www.illinoisworknet.com/NR/rdonlyres/35333577-2136-4F43-AC27-6E85E2DB7837/0/Bridge_Programs_Technical_Assistance_Guide_Final_91709.pdf, accessed May 14, 2012.

[65] Although WIA formula funds are not used for curriculum development, other WIA funds, such as incentive funds, may be used for this.

[66] "Guidance for Implementing the Adult Education Family Literacy Act," U.S. Department of Education, www2.ed.gov/policy/adulted/guid/qa.html, accessed January 29, 2012.

[67] Educational Functioning Levels are used as part of the National Reporting System for the Adult Education and Family Literacy program (WIA Title II).

[68] The leadership team may also want to incorporate measures from Ryan Reyna, "Complete to Compete: Common College Completion Metrics," (NGA Center for Best Practices, National Governor's Association, 2010).

[69] The DCEO/IDES workforce program agreement and subcontractor agreement covering UI data access can be obtained through DCEO (Workforce Information Systems and Reporting, 217-558-2458) or IDES (Information Services Division, 312-793-9181).

[70] In Illinois, a comprehensive data system that will be capable of tracking such cross-system transitions, the Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS), is under development. Local bridge program leaders will need to collect additional data and put in place arrangements to share data among partners.

[71] FERPA provides that, "Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):

- School officials with legitimate educational interest
- Other schools to which a student is transferring
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school
- Accrediting organizations
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law"

The third and fifth of these exceptions would apply for the bridge program leadership team's use of the data. The FERPA regulations provide specific procedures for the use, storage, and subsequent destruction of records obtained for program evaluation purposes. United States Department of Education (2011). Safeguarding Student Privacy.

[72] The "X"s indicate employment measure. The information is captured for Perkins students through a data match with IDES wage records. The data is in aggregate form and not at the individual level. Course information is at the student level for many courses but not all.

[73] The grant is part of Accelerating Opportunity: A Breaking Through Initiative, which is supported by a partnership of five of the nation's leading philanthropies.

[74] "The New Illinois Learning Standards Incorporating the Common Core," Illinois State Board of Education, www.isbe.net/common_core/default.htm, accessed January 29, 2012.

[75] More information can be found at www.illinoisworknet.com/ilpathways, accessed May 21, 2012.

[76] Illinois received over $22 million in U.S. Department of Education funding to implement this system between 2009 and 2013, starting with K-12 student information systems and moving to postsecondary education and linkages to workforce data.

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