

## What Are Career Pathways?

**Career pathways offer a clear sequence of education and training courses and credentials that are built around:**

- **Sector Strategies** aligned with the skill needs of industry sectors important to state and regional economies, where employers are actively engaged in determining skill requirements for employment and career progression in high-demand occupations.
- **Stackable Educational/Training Options** that include secondary, adult, and postsecondary education and training that is arranged or “chunked” in a non-duplicative progression of courses, clearly articulating one level of instruction to the next. They provide opportunities to earn postsecondary credits and postsecondary credentials that have labor market value.
- **Contextualized Learning** focused on curricula and instructional strategies that make work a central context for learning and help students attain work-readiness skills.
- **Accelerated/Integrated Education and Training** combining adult education with postsecondary technical training, giving credit for prior learning, and adopting other strategies that accelerate educational and career advancement of participants.
- **Industry-recognized Credentials** leading to the attainment of industry-recognized degrees or credentials that have value in the labor market.
- **Multiple Entry and Exit Points** enabling workers of varying education and skill levels to enter or advance in a specific sector or occupational field.
- **Intensive Wraparound Services** incorporating academic and career counseling and wraparound support services (particularly at points of transition), and the development of individual career plans.
- **Designs for Working Learners** to meet the needs of adults and nontraditional students who often need to combine work and study, providing child care services and accommodating work schedules with flexible and non-semester-based scheduling, alternative class times and locations, and innovative uses of technology.

**Source:** “The Promise of Career Pathways Systems Change: What Role Should Workforce Investment Systems Play? What Benefits Will Results?” Mary Gardner Claggett & Ray Uhalde, Jobs For the Future, December 2011.