

# United States Federal Agency Career Pathways Resources and Tools

## U.S. Department of Agriculture

- The Department of Agriculture awarded \$200 million to support the development and evaluation of 10 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (**SNAP**) Employment and Training (**E&T**) **2014 Farm Bill Pilot Projects** designed to test innovative strategies that help SNAP recipients gain skills and find work that leads to economic self-sufficiency. Projects in California (Fresno), Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington state are testing a range of promising approaches, including career pathways, integrated education and training, subsidized employment, and intensive case management, to help SNAP work registrants gain the skills and education that can lead to good jobs and a reduced need for SNAP. The pilot projects will be rigorously evaluated by an independent evaluator and will operate for up to three years.
- The Department of Agriculture **established a SNAP Office of Employment and Training** to focus attention and resources on the priority of helping SNAP participants gain the skills and education they need to find and retain employment. This new office administers the SNAP E&T program and provides guidance and technical assistance on how to maximize the use of available federal E&T funding and how to leverage third-party resources to build high-quality, job-driven E&T programs, and it will be releasing the first-ever employment-focused reporting requirements for SNAP E&T programs.
- The Department of Agriculture sent a [letter](#) from Under Secretary Kevin Concannon to the Commissioners of State SNAP agencies urging them to incorporate job-driven elements into their SNAP E&T programs. SNAP E&T programs are highly flexible and can be used to support career pathways programs for very low-skilled SNAP recipients who often have multiple barriers to success. The letter asked States to expand the reach of their SNAP E&T programs by forging partnerships with other State and local agencies, community-based organizations, and employers to fully use available funding from Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) that can provide a 50 percent reimbursement for allowable training activities for SNAP recipients under the SNAP E&T program. The letter made clear that FNS is available to provide technical assistance and partner-focused coordination in support of State efforts.
- The Department of Agriculture developed a two-year project, **SNAP to Skills**, through which FNS will develop tools and resources to help all States expand and enhance their SNAP E&T programs, with an emphasis on skills-based training programs, including career pathways and career pathway bridge programs. The project will also provide direct technical assistance to 10 selected States from leading subject-matter experts in SNAP E&T, workforce development, career pathways, and adult education. States selected to receive enhanced technical assistance will form an interagency team to develop an E&T plan, work with **SNAP to Skills** contractors on a monthly basis, and attend regular convening of all states.

## U.S. Department of Defense

- The U.S. Department of Defense is promoting civilian job training for its transitioning Service members through its ***DoD SkillBridge*** initiative, which allows transitioning Service members to participate in job skills and employment training, including apprenticeships and internships, up to six months prior to their separation from the military. See <http://www.dodskillbridge.com/>.

## U.S. Department of Education

- The U.S. Department of Education (ED) released ***The Evolution and Potential of Career Pathways*** that provides a framework for organizing and formally aligning the education, workforce, and supportive services needed by a wide range of individuals to attain the credentials required for family-supporting careers. This paper looks back nearly 30 years to examine prior initiatives that over time have contributed to the development of today's career pathways framework and initiatives. See: [http://s3.amazonaws.com/PCRN/docs/Evolution\\_of\\_Career\\_Pathways\\_092315.pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/PCRN/docs/Evolution_of_Career_Pathways_092315.pdf)
- The U.S. Departments of Education, Labor, and Energy have all partnered to support the **Career Pathways Exchange**, which is a free information service that consolidates and distributes career pathways-related resources, events, and information from Federal and State agencies and partner organizations. The Exchange streamlines information from multiple outlets to facilitate a deeper national dialogue on career pathways systems development and implementation.  
See: <https://lincs.ed.gov/programs/movingpathways/career-pathways-exchange>
- ED has developed a website that helps promote the integration of educational instruction and workforce development which benefits employers, today's workers, and workers of tomorrow. It does this by introducing employers and educators to the value of partnering by describing best practices and success stories. The website also showcases evidence-based tools that contain academic and practical solutions for building partnerships, sustaining collaborations, and creating career pathways. See: <http://lincs.ed.gov/employers>
- ED created and manages a virtual professional learning space for adult educators and stakeholders called the Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS) Community. Launched in September 2012, the LINCS Community has nearly 9,000 members from across the nation. Members create personal profiles and join groups of interest to engage in discussions focused on critical topics to the field of adult education. Moderators, who facilitate conversation, share relevant resources, and coordinate special episodic events such as guest discussions or expert-led webinars, support topical groups. See: <https://community.lincs.ed.gov>
- ED's five-year **Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities (CPID)** project initiated in FY 2016 in Georgia, Kentucky, Nebraska, and Virginia will develop and implement collaborative models demonstrating promising practices and postsecondary

strategies in the use of career pathways that assist individuals with disabilities to attain credentials that lead to competitive integrated employment in high-demand occupations. Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies in these States will align project activities with labor market trends and establish partnerships with employers and organizations such as secondary and postsecondary educational institutions, American Job Centers, workforce training providers, social and human service organizations, and other Federal career pathways initiatives to implement strategies, accommodations, and comprehensive support systems enabling individuals with disabilities to gain access to new or existing career pathways,. The labor force participation gap between individuals with disabilities (31.1 percent) and individuals without disabilities (75.7 percent) was an important consideration in the development of the CPID project.

### **U.S. Department of Energy**

- The first installment of the Quadrennial Energy Review (QER) examines the modernization of our Nation's energy infrastructure to promote economic competitiveness, energy security and environmental responsibility, and is focused on energy transmission, storage, and distribution (TS&D), the networks of pipelines, wires, storage, waterways, railroads, and other facilities that form the backbone of our energy system. The QER estimates 1.5 million new jobs to be created in the energy sector by 2030. In response, the QER recommends an interagency effort to focus on career pathways and workforce readiness in the energy sector to provide opportunities for disadvantaged communities to access energy careers.
- The Department of Energy's SunShot Initiative in the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy is supporting this growing solar workforce with training programs, professional development and career building. The online and interactive Solar Career Map can be used to explore 40 jobs across four industry sectors and identify more than 60 routes to advancement between them. Additional opportunities for progress and promotion can be found within any given occupation on the map, and multi-sector pathways reinforce the idea of lifelong learning and the natural evolution of skills and interests. <http://irecsolarcareermap.org/>
- The Department of Energy Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy's SunShot Initiative has also created the **Solar Instructor Training Network (SITN)** in 2009 to address the critical need for high-quality, local, accessible training in solar energy system design, installation, sales, and inspection. The program has increased the number the number of qualified solar photovoltaic (PV) instructors at the community college level, developed solar training for building and electrical inspectors, and created a comprehensive system lining training and credentialing for the solar workforce across residential, commercial, and utility-scale PV installation activities. The courses train future solar workers for jobs as PV installers, PV technical sales, building inspectors of rooftop PV systems, and other solar-related career occupations. <http://energy.gov/eere/sunshot/solar-instructor-training-network>

- The Department of Energy Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy also manages the *Solar Ready Vets* program, an initiative that connects our nation's skilled veterans to the solar energy industry, preparing them for careers as solar photovoltaic (PV) system installers, sales representatives system inspectors, and other solar-related occupations. Solar Ready Vets is enabled by the U.S. Department of Defense's SkillBridge initiative, which allows exiting military personnel to pursue civilian job training, employment skills training, apprenticeships, and internships up to six months prior to their separation.
- In 2014, the U.S. Department of Energy, in conjunction with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), created a Wind Career Map to connect employers with individuals interested in wind energy career opportunities. Based on data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistic, the Wind Career Map is divided into categories of project development; component manufacturing; construction; operations; and education, training, and research. Information such as wages, experience expectations, and educational requirements is available for each mapped occupation. The Wind Career Map also provides a pathway that shows how an employee in one job can move to a different part of the wind industry and possible route to advancement for people at all stages of their careers. The Wind Career Map was developed by a working group of experts including industry representatives, educators, government agencies, and wind energy scientist, convened by NREL. <http://energy.gov/eere/wind/wind-career-map>.
- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) skills are required to be competitive in the global race for energy development, to create and maintain a healthy economy, and foster innovation and excellence. The Department of Energy has many programs, internships, scholarships, and research opportunities focused on developing the next generation of STEM professionals. <http://energy.gov/STEM>
- The Department of Energy Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) conducts a range of education and workforce development activities to support the market deployment of new technologies by focusing on identification and standardization of critical workforce skills as well as engaging and inspiring the future clean energy workforce. At the Education and Workforce web portal, information is available about Clean Energy Jobs and Career Planning (**<http://energy.gov/eere/education/clean-energy-jobs-and-career-planning>**) as well as education and professional development content. <http://www.energy.gov/education>
- To encourage training and career planning in energy and manufacturing across the U.S. at various community colleges and universities, the Department of Energy maintains an online database and interactive map of Federal workforce investments in energy and advanced manufacturing. <http://energy.gov/eere/education/federal-energy-and-manufacturing-workforce-training-programs>
- The Department of Energy Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy operate the Explore Clean Energy Careers Portal which provides information on a variety of renewable energy, energy efficiency, advanced manufacturing and sustainable

transportation careers including job creation drivers, class or training resources, industry workforce needs, and future career outlooks. <http://energy.gov/eere/education/explore-clean-energy-careers>

- The Department of Energy also coordinates with the Department of Labor and Defense, the Veterans Administration, utility trade associations, and labor union on the Utility Industry Workforce Initiative whose mission is to facilitate the transition of service members, veterans, and their spouses into careers in the utility industry.

### **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**

- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released ***Career Pathways: Catalog of Toolkits***, which is an online directory of free resources available for planning a career pathways initiative. Toolkits were selected for the catalog because they provide clear actions steps for developing career pathway systems across agencies and employers. See: <https://cptoolkitcatalog.peerta.acf.hhs.gov/>.
- The ***Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG)*** program administered by HHS makes resources available, including evaluation reports and technical assistance publications. The evaluation is examining program implementation, systems change resulting from HPOG programs, and outcomes and impacts for participants. Evaluation reports are shared as data becomes available and analyses are completed. To access the released evaluation reports, see: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/evaluation-portfolio-for-the-health-profession-opportunity-grants-hpog>. Technical assistance publications address a wide range of issues including partnering with TANF agencies and developing Registered Apprenticeship programs. See: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/programs/hpog>.
- HHS' ***Pathways for Advancing Careers and Education (PACE)*** project seeks to refine, evaluate, and promote knowledge building about career pathway models and programs. PACE is a rigorous evaluation of nine innovative programs across the country aimed at helping adults obtain jobs providing good wages and benefits and ultimately move up the economic ladder. The PACE project released a report that provides an overview of career pathways, describes the basic model, and offers a framework for evaluating career pathways programs; see: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/resource/career-pathways-as-a-framework-for-program-design-and-evaluation-a-working>. To access other PACE evaluation reports and resources, see: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/pathways-for-advancing-careers-and-education>, and <http://www.career-pathways.org/>

### **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development**

- **Department of Housing and Urban Development** has a Jobs Plus Pilot program in partnership with the Department of Labor (DOL). The purpose of the Jobs Plus Pilot

program is to develop locally-based, job-driven approaches to increase earnings and advance employment outcomes through work readiness, employer linkages, job placement, educational advancement technology skills, and financial literacy for residents of public housing. Each of the Jobs Plus Public Housing Authority (PHA) grantees has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with their local DOL-funded One-Stop-Career Center. The place-based Jobs Plus Pilot program addresses poverty among public housing residents by incentivizing and enabling employment through income disregards for working families, and a set of services designed to support work including employer linkages, job placement and counseling, educational advancement and financial counseling. Ideally, these incentives will saturate the target developments, building a culture of work and making working families the norm. Awards were made to nine PHAs in both FY 2014 and FY 2015.

### **U.S. Department of Labor**

- The **Career Pathways Community of Practice** helps workforce development leaders, practitioners, and policymakers expand state and local career pathways efforts currently underway or being planned. The CoP will enhance your knowledge, skills, and expertise in building effective career pathways systems. By participating in the CoP, you will be able to: Explore promising strategies that have been working for others and might be easily replicable in your area; Access training modules and toolkits designed to help support your efforts; Easily stay up-to-date with the latest information on live training, webinars, and events; and Learn from your state and local peers who are successfully implementing career pathways. To access the site, visit <https://careerpathways.workforcegps.org/>.
- The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) released *Career Pathways Toolkit: A Guide for System Development* (2015) to provide the workforce system with a framework, resources, and tools for States and local partners to develop, implement, and sustain career pathways systems and programs. See [https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEN/TEN\\_17-15\\_Attachment\\_Acc.pdf](https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEN/TEN_17-15_Attachment_Acc.pdf).
- The **Competency Model Clearinghouse** is designed to inform the workforce investment system about the value of competency models, their development, and use. In response to changing workforce skill needs, the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration and industry partners have collaborated to develop and maintain dynamic models of the foundational and technical competencies that are necessary in economically vital industries and sectors of the American economy. The goal of the Industry Competency Model Initiative is to promote an understanding of the skill sets and competencies that are essential to educate and train a globally competitive workforce. It does this by providing competency models for key industry sectors. There are currently 26 models in industries as diverse as the economy itself, including transportation, hospitality, cybersecurity, and engineering, to name just a few. See <http://www.careeronestop.org/CompetencyModel/>.



## **U.S. Department of Transportation**

- The Department of Transportation released ***Strengthening Skills Training Across the Transportation Industry*** (2014) projects the employment and skill needs of the transportation industry over the next 10 years, and, in so doing, highlights the future growth areas and employment “hot spots” in transportation by industry subsectors, occupations, career areas, and geographic areas. It also emphasizes the need for skills training and career pathways across the transportation industry. See: [https://s3.amazonaws.com/PCRN/docs/Strengthening\\_Skills\\_Training\\_and\\_Career\\_Pathways\\_Across\\_Transportation\\_Industry\\_Data\\_Report\\_091115.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/PCRN/docs/Strengthening_Skills_Training_and_Career_Pathways_Across_Transportation_Industry_Data_Report_091115.pdf)

## **U.S. Department of Social Security Administration**

- The Department of Social Security Administration (SSA) is working to advance the ***Ticket To Work (TTW)*** program’s impact to support disabled employees’ re-entry into the workforce and to identify early its beneficiaries who will transition from benefits or transform to adult benefit status. SSA is actively compiling the data of its existing population of youth projected to emerge from benefits eligibility by age 18. Identifying those youth in transition will enable SSA to assist them with training, educational programs, and internship/apprenticeship opportunities at SSA and with our partner agencies. These are bridges for individuals who will no longer receive SSA benefits.
- SSA partners with the U.S Department of Veterans Affairs through its ***Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program*** (VREP) to assist the service-disabled veterans to prepare for, obtain, and maintain suitable employment that supports veterans in their effort to live independently. See: <http://www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/>
- SSA’s ***Volunteer Internship Program (VIP)*** is available nationwide and permits students enrolled in recognized educational institutions to gain meaningful work experience and academic course credits through unpaid internships. The work assignment may be in exchange for academic credit(s) based on the educational institution’s requirements. The student receives on-the-job training in order to perform his/her work assignment. Many of the skills and techniques acquired through the VIP allow the student to be more competitive when seeking permanent employment.
- SSA’s ***College Awareness through Career Exploration (CACE)*** program is a partnership between University of Maryland at College Park and the Maryland Institute for Minority Achievement and Urban Education in collaboration with Baltimore City Public Schools. CACE’s central goals are the improvement of minority achievement, the elimination of the achievement gap, and the improvement and reform of urban education. SSA is a regular participant of the program and hosts students on an ongoing basis. See: <http://www.education.umd.edu/MIMAUE/features/projects/CACE>
- ***The White House Generation Indigenous Youth Challenge Program*** coordinates with SSA to enable SSA to connect its beneficiaries in the Native American Community to existing programs assisting youth into work, training, and educational opportunities. This

focused initiative assists youth ages 14 to 24 years old. Included in that population are those who receive SSA benefits who may also be eligible for programs to lead them to work experiences and careers in SSA.

### **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**

- SSA partners with the U.S Department of Veterans Affairs through its ***Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program*** (VREP) to assist the service-disabled veterans to prepare for, obtain, and maintain suitable employment that supports veterans in their effort to live independently. See: <http://www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/>)