

Mass Workforce Issuance

Workforce Issuance No. 14-41

☐ Policy ☒ Information

To: Chief Elected Officials
Workforce Investment Board Chairs
Workforce Investment Board Directors
Title I Administrators
Career Center Directors
Title I Fiscal Officers
DCS Operations Managers

cc: WIA State Partners

From: Alice Sweeney, Director
Department of Career Services

Date: May 13, 2014

Subject: **RFI on Adoption of Career Pathways Approaches for the Delivery of Education, Training, Employment and Human Services**

Purpose: To notify Local Workforce Investment Boards, One-Stop Career Center Operators and other local workforce investment partners of a Request for Information (RFI) on the Adoption of Career Pathways Approaches for the Delivery of Education, Training, Employment and Human Services as outlined in the [Federal Register](#) dated April 23, 2014

Background: Through this Request for Information (RFI), the Departments of Education (ED), Health and Human Services (HHS), and Labor (DOL) (the Departments) seek to further support the development of high-quality career pathways systems by jointly soliciting information and recommendations from a broad array of stakeholders in the public and private sectors, as well as in State, regional, tribal, and local areas. The Departments will analyze the career pathways information collected from the RFI to:

(1) Inform and coordinate policy development, strategic investments, and technical assistance activities; and

(2) improve coordination of Federal policy development with investments at the State, tribal and local levels.

Career pathways systems represent a promising strategy for meeting the skills challenge by offering distinct but complementary workforce, education, and support services that are aligned with the needs of business and industry.

While the Departments' understanding will be further strengthened by research and experience, what they have learned to date from investments in this area, in addition to States' efforts in career pathways, leads them to believe that essential components of a career pathways system should include the following:

- Alignment of systems: secondary, postsecondary and workforce development;
- Rigorous, sequential, connected, and efficient coursework that connects basic education and skills training and integrates education and training;
- Multiple entry and exit points;
- Comprehensive support services, such as career counseling, childcare, and transportation;
- Financial supports or flexibility to accommodate the demands of the labor market in order to allow individuals to meet their ongoing financial needs and obligations;
- Active engagement of business in targeted industry sectors that aligns with the skill needs of industries important to the local, regional, and/or State economies;
- Appropriate curriculum and instructional strategies that make work a central context for learning and work readiness skills;
- Credit for prior learning and the adoption of other strategies that accelerate the educational and career advancement of the participant;
- Organized services to meet the particular needs of adults, including accommodating work schedules with flexible and non-semester-based scheduling, alternative class times and locations, and the innovative use of technology;
- A focus on secondary and postsecondary industry-recognized credentials, sector-specific employment, and advancement over time in education and employment within that sector; and
- A collaborative partnership among workforce, education, human service agencies, business and other community stakeholders to manage the system.

Career pathways systems have demonstrated promise for meeting the distinct but complementary goals of a number of Federal agencies, including the DOL goals for increasing credential attainment rates and helping individuals secure good jobs at family-sustainable wages, ED's goal of increasing college success and career-readiness, and HHS's goal of supporting family self-sufficiency and stability. Thus, this RFI builds on efforts across the Federal government to better coordinate investments in human capital and economic development while reducing waste and duplication.

This RFI marks the first time that the Departments are jointly collecting and analyzing information, a process that is believed to yield important insights on:

- (1) The challenges to aligning diverse funding streams, programs, and stakeholders; and
- (2) efforts to serve low-income youth and adults, low-skilled youth and adults, out-of-school youth, individuals with disabilities, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program (TANF) recipients, tribal communities, English learners, immigrants, rural populations, veterans, currently and formerly incarcerated individuals, dislocated workers, and trade-affected workers.

Action

Required: Practitioners, policy makers, funders, business and industry associations, and researchers are invited to provide information, including those who are, or those who work in Business, Education or Workforce Development. **Responses must be received by June 9, 2014.**

Federal eRulemaking Portal: To submit your comments electronically, go to www.regulations.gov. Information on using Regulations.gov, including instructions for accessing agency documents, submitting comments, and viewing the docket, is available on the site under “Are you new to the site?”

”Show citation box U.S. Mail, Commercial Delivery, or Hand Delivery: If you mail or deliver your comments, address them to Alicia Bolton, U.S. Department of Education, 550 12th Street SW., Room 11108, Potomac Center Plaza (PCP), Washington, DC 20202.

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