

How-To Guide for Using Career Pathway Maps

The purpose of this guide is to empower students to use career pathway maps to set goals, record milestones and track progress along a career path. Some adult learners may need assistance with developing a career pathway map, others may be able to do this on their own. For additional assistance with career pathway mapping, please contact the Workforce Development System Liaison Project.

Step 1: Self-Assess

- Encourage students to reflect on their interests, skills, and values.
- Provide tools like interest inventories or skill assessments from websites such as [O*NET OnLine®](#) or [CareerOneStop](#).
- Explore [Workforce Preparation Skills](#) and identify personal strengths.

Step 2: Research Options

- Share resources about high-demand careers and local industries. Use labor force statistics from [Center for Workforce Information and Analysis \(CWIA\)](#). Some specific documents students can access for regional information within CWIA would be [County Population & Labor Force Statistics Dashboard](#) and [Industry Clusters](#).
- Discuss pathways within sectors (e.g., Health Care, Building and Construction, Advanced Manufacturing).
- Explain the value of stackable credentials and lifelong learning.

Step 3: Map Out the Journey

- **Starting Point:** Identify their current status (e.g., education level, work experience).
- **Short-Term Goals:** Specify immediate steps, like obtaining a high school equivalency diploma, completing credential translation and/or evaluation for foreign credentials, entering postsecondary education, or enrolling in a training program.
- **Long-Term Goals:** Define ultimate career aspirations.
- **Milestones:** Plot key achievements needed to progress, such as certifications or internships.

Step 4: Identify Resources and Support

- Help students locate available resources, such as:
 - Financial aid.
 - Tutoring or mentorship programs.
 - Childcare or transportation assistance.
 - Apprenticeship opportunities.
- Support students in identifying strategies to help students achieve their goals.

Step 5: Action Plan

- Develop a clear, actionable plan with timelines.
- Assign accountability by identifying who will support each step (e.g., instructors, counselors, family members).

Student Support Coordinators can:

- Support students set goals and identify next steps.
- Explain the variety of occupations available within industry clusters.
- Work with students to research different jobs available with an employer.
- Explain the process of obtaining new employment.
- Identify partners that can provide credential translation and evaluation. [Supporting Language Learners with Career Planning](#)
- Assist in locating potential training providers for upskilling or training.

Instructors can:

- Work with local partners to identify knowledge and skills required for entry level jobs.
- Connect academic skills to a variety of entry level jobs in an industry.
- Create a classroom activity where students match and order education requirements to occupations beginning at entry level.
- Explain the importance of networking and interpersonal relationships needed to move along a career path.
- Connect the academic skills taught in the classroom to the occupations on student career pathway maps.
- Explain the transference of skills and knowledge from one occupation to another.

Students can:

- Complete pathway maps of their own past jobs and compare and contrast skills, knowledge, and tasks among those jobs.
- Complete pathway maps of occupations held by family members.
- Use a [blank career map](#) to plan next-step options, then compare and contrast the effort involved in moving along different paths.
- Explore and record on the map the educational requirements and certifications needed to move along a career path.
- Identify all relevant information needed to make a decision about pursuing a particular career path (e.g., salary, certification, OJT, openings, job growth).
- Complete the map while listening to a guest speaker, performing a job shadow, or watching an occupational video.
- Examine sample industry cluster maps for your local area.