

## **Workforce Recommendation 1**

**(See Career Pathways Attachment and Organization Change Paper.)**

**Overarching theme:** There are no simple answers to the many issues related to workforce development. The many issues are related and interconnected—and should be addressed together. This would include developing marketing, coordination, and implementation strategies among all service providers to assure that existing resources are used most effectively and located conveniently for consumers. This would include the development of a database of all available workforce resources and comprehensive service centers.

**RECOMMENDATION 1: Develop a comprehensive workforce strategy to address the emerging workforce needs of Athens and the surrounding counties. (“Emerging workforce refers to young people such as k-12 students. It is also refers to our future workforce)**

Strategies for this comprehensive plan would include:

- Develop a Job Readiness Educational (vocational) track beginning in middle school through high school. Job Readiness and business skills will comprise at least one half of the academic day beginning in middle school. Athens Technical College, Clarke County School System and employers in Athens will help develop and implement this comprehensive educational program.
- Develop a comprehensive Job Readiness / Career Skills track beginning in middle school through high school. Job Readiness and business skills would comprise at least one half of the academic day beginning at the middle school level. Athens Technical College, Department of Labor, Clarke County School System, and employers would help develop and implement this comprehensive educational program. The Career Pathways Program would be examined as a potential model. ([http://www.workforcestrategy.org/publications/WSC\\_pathways8.17.06.pdf](http://www.workforcestrategy.org/publications/WSC_pathways8.17.06.pdf))
- Develop marketing, coordination, and implementation strategies among all partners and service providers to assure that existing resources are used most effectively and located conveniently for consumers. This would include the development of a database of all available workforce resources.
- Expand student enrollment for dual track curriculum focus.
- Assure that all middle and high school students with and without disabilities are required to participate in some Job Readiness / Career Skills activities including soft skills instruction.
- Ensure that youth apprenticeship, work based learning and academic internship programs are accessible to students without transportation.
- Develop systems for ensuring that high school teachers outside of special education refer students to the Department of Labor Division of Rehabilitation Services (Voc Rehab)
- Utilize a standards based assessment to evaluate students’ progress in developing soft skills.
- Expand programs like Empowered Youth Program and Performance Learning Center.
- Develop formal internships where businesses bring on trainees with and without disabilities and train them on the job
- Provide Saturday/evening programs
- Continue to support the development of Agro-science labs in the school district and the support the development of biotechnology labs in high schools.
- Visit the Seven Centers of Innovation to identify ways to prepare our students for high-skilled, technologically advanced careers.
- Explore the new Georgia’s Work Ready Certificate Program and determine plausibility of implementing in Clarke County.

## Career Pathways<sup>1</sup>: A Possible Workforce Development Strategy

The Workforce Committee recommends developing and implementing a **comprehensive career development strategy** to support current and future workforce needs. *What would such a comprehensive strategy look like and how would it be implemented?*

“Career pathways” describes one particular framework or approach by which regions can better align publicly supported systems and programs to build a workforce customized to meet the needs of local labor markets. A career pathway is a series of connected education and training programs and support services that enables individuals to secure employment within a specific industry or occupational sector, and to advance over time to successively higher levels of education and employment within that sector. Each step on a career pathway is designed explicitly to prepare the participant for the next level of employment and education.

- A career pathways program in the Athens area would target local/regional jobs in high demand occupations that also pay living wages.
- A career pathways program would be a collaborative effort undertaken by a host of stakeholders representing workforce, education, and social services.
- A career pathways program cannot be purchased “off the shelf.” Its form and content will depend on the industries targeted, the requirements for employment and advancement in those industries, and the existing education and training infrastructure.
- Building a career pathway is a process of adapting existing programs and services and adding new ones to enable people to advance to successively higher levels of education and employment in the target sector.

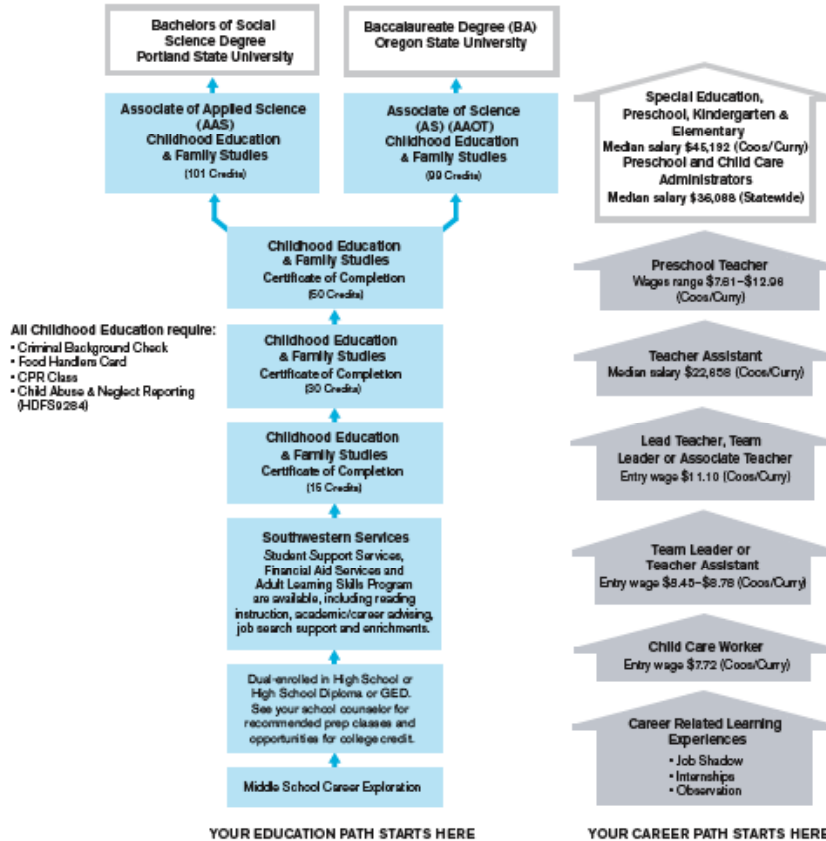
### Key Features of Career Pathways

- Target jobs in industries of importance to the local economy
- Create avenues of advancement for current workers, jobseekers and new and future labor market entrants.
- Increase supply of qualified workers for local employers in the target industries.

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<sup>1</sup> This information about career pathways was adapted from the report, *Working Together: Aligning State Systems and Policies for Individual and Regional Prosperity* (December 2006) Page 34. Produced by the Workforce Strategy Center [www.workforcestrategy.org](http://www.workforcestrategy.org).

**FIGURE 4: SOUTHWESTERN OREGON COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
PATHWAYS TO ADVANCEMENT: CHILDHOOD EDUCATION & FAMILY EDUCATION  
COOS BAY, OR**



## <sup>2</sup>Example Career Pathway

### **Implementing a Career Pathways Program: Key Steps**

The Workforce Strategy Center recommends the following five-stage process for building career pathways. Key strategies are followed by a sampling of tasks that would be undertaken as part of implementing the strategy.

#### **Gap Analysis: Target industries and jobs that will support individual advancement and regional growth.**

- Analyze current and projected supply and demand for labor in the region, identifying industries offering jobs with family-supporting wages and opportunities for advancement.
- Assess the strengths and weaknesses of existing education and workforce development services for the target sectors and identify gaps where needs are currently unmet.

#### **Career Pathways Planning: Form a partnership to develop a career pathways plan**

- Organize partners, including education and training providers and workforce, economic development and social service entities, to develop the plan.
- Involve employers in mapping the structure of jobs, job requirements and advancement pathways in the target industry sectors.
- Develop a stakeholder engagement and communications plan to build broad based support for the career pathways vision and goals.

#### **Implementation: Coordinate the work of the partners**

- Establish memoranda of understanding specifying the roles, commitments and contributions of each partner, including employers.
- Coordinate the work of the partners, including program development, marketing and recruitment, delivery of programs and support services, job development and outcomes tracking.

#### **Continuous Improvement: Evaluate and continuously improve career pathways programs and services**

- Conduct regular in-process reviews of program performance.
- Track the employment and further education outcomes of participants at each level.
- Make adjustments based on evidence of program effectiveness and impacts.

#### **Expansion: Expand the pathways process to involve other partners, populations of participants and sectors**

- Apply the pathways model to additional populations or geographic areas, expanding the partnership to include other organizations as needed.

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<sup>2</sup> From *The Career Pathways How-To Guide* Page 18. [www.workforcestrategy.org](http://www.workforcestrategy.org)

- Replicate the pathways process in other industry sectors of importance to the local economy.

## COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION WORKSHEET

**WRITE THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION (limit focus to one subject or action item, more than one recommendation may be needed to address a particular learning ):**

Develop a comprehensive workforce strategy to address the emerging workforce needs of Athens and the surrounding communities.

**Identify any research, or other kinds of information that was used to craft this recommendation.** (add additional sheets as necessary)

PPA meetings

Business roundtables

**Identify additional research or information that could help clarify this committee recommendation. List potential sources if possible.**

What is CTE doing today--what programs?

What are best practices from other communities?

Business roundtables

BOE policy

GA code

Funding for vocational/dual--how money is spent

**Indicate people or groups that we need to talk to help clarify this committee recommendation. List any recommended locations.**

Lynn Johns, CTE, Labor Department, Jerry Barrow, Athens Tech, Lewis Holloway, Jose Boza

**What kind of action or resources would be necessary to implement the recommendation?**

- Develop a Job Readiness Educational (vocational) track beginning in middle school through high school. Job Readiness and business skills will comprise at least one half of the academic day beginning in middle school. Athens Technical College, Clarke County School System and employers in Athens will help develop and implement this comprehensive educational program.
- Expand student enrollment for dual track curriculum focus.
- Assure that all middle and high school students are required to participate in some Job Readiness activities including soft skills instruction.
- Expand/Replicate programs like Empowered Youth Program and Performance Learning Center.
- Develop formal internships where businesses bring on trainees and train them on the job
- Saturday programs/evening programs

**Indicate what forces and influences are likely to occur that will support or oppose implementation.**

***Forces that support (please list):***

Superintendent, Board of Education, employers

***Forces that oppose (please list):***

Funding agencies, Superintendent, Board of Education, local and state, Employers, ESOL and disabled populations get forgotten, Transportation, Prior involvement with criminal law