

Workforce Recommendation 2

(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 2: Develop a comprehensive workforce strategy to address the current workforce needs of Athens and the surrounding communities.

Strategies for this comprehensive plan would include

- Develop a comprehensive Job Readiness / Career Skills strategy to address current workforce needs. This would include a determination as to the current gaps in our workforce system.
- Athens Technical College, Clarke County School System, Athens Chamber of Commerce, Employers, Department of Labor, and other potential partners would help develop and implement this comprehensive educational program based on our current workforce needs. The Career Pathways Program would be examined as a potential model.
(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.
- Ensure that the Chamber of Commerce and Athens Clarke County develop a proactive role in industrial land development/infrastructure development to recruit and retain new and existing business.
- Develop a program (or mechanism/process) to bridge gaps between current employer needs and existing programs. Quick Start is an example of such a program.
- Apprenticeship programs should be developed for construction (including women) and other trades.
- Maintain a registry or central place for those seeking day labor to find workers.
- Define needs of potential new biotech employers and deploy that information immediately to all training resources.
- Develop an effective collaborative to connect employers and job seekers.
- Develop/expand workforce mentoring opportunities including bringing unemployed and underemployed people to employers using ministers/mentors to work with them during their first year of employment.
- Provide information / technical assistance to employers on how to legally sponsor immigrant workers and on how to handle new immigration laws.
- Provide information / technical assistance to employers on hiring ex-offenders
- Develop formal internships where businesses bring on trainees with and without disabilities and train them on the job.
- Expand and coordinate comprehensive family literacy programs and opportunities in the school district, in and out of the workplace that also address the child care, transportation and family service needs of participants.
- Provide economic incentives to employers to hire local job seekers and to participate in this workforce development plan.
- Provide Saturday/evening programs

- Develop strategies to increase the educational attainment of low literacy level / income individuals employed fulltime and / or holding more than one job
- Ensure that the PPA works collaboratively with the CCSD / Chamber of Commerce Workforce and Education Committee
- Visit the Seven Centers of Innovation to identify ways to prepare the current workforce for high-skilled, technologically advanced careers.
- Explore the new Georgia’s Work Ready Certificate Program and determine plausibility of implementing in Clarke County.

Career Pathways¹: 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.

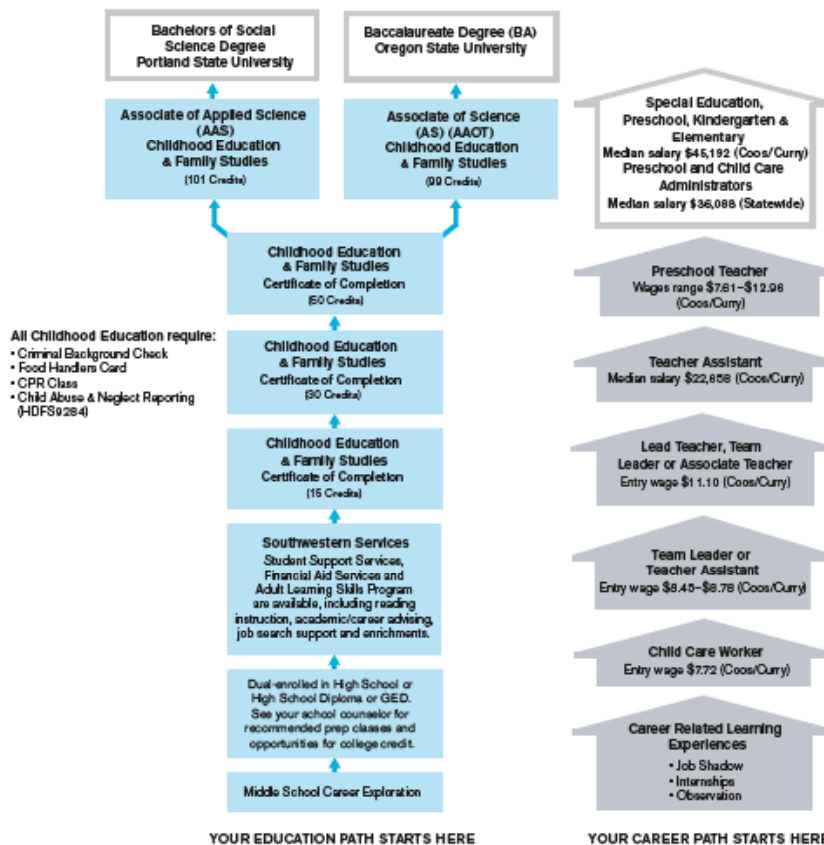
- A career pathways program in the Athens area would target local/regional jobs in high demand occupations that also pay living wages.
- A career pathways program would be a collaborative effort undertaken by a host of stakeholders representing workforce, education, and social services.
- A career pathways 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.

¹ 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.

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.

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



All Childhood Education require:
 • Criminal Background Check
 • Food Handlers Card
 • CPR Class
 • Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting (HDFS0284)

²Example 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.

² From *The Career Pathways How-To Guide* Page 18. www.workforcestrategy.org

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

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION WORKSHEET

**List the Learning(s) that this recommendation is addressing
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 current 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 round tables

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

What are best practices from other communities?

Business roundtables

Who/how many are under employed

What is the gap \$/skills

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

Economic development committee

Education committee

Transportation

Childcare

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

This about Momentum building.

Perception change – Build a permanent change in mind-set for those who are struggling- where there are resources available, take advantage of them. Build a permanent change mind-set on the part of current businesses – Be proactive in providing opportunities. Trust in the ability of the workforce in the Clarke Co. area. Internships/Mentoring/OJT etc.

We should continue looking for ways to get the momentum started one notch at a time. Our goal should be to build on this change in perception on the part of business and government officials that has come about due to the PPA initiative.

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

Forces that support (please list):

Local and State governmental officials
Local business owners
Local workforce – current and emerging

Forces that oppose (please list):

Local and State governmental officials, Local business owners