

# GREATER CINCINNATI **WORKFORCE NETWORK**

## **AN INTRODUCTION TO CAREER PATHWAYS**

### ***Building Pathways of Educational and Career Advancement***

The Greater Cincinnati region is currently facing a dual workforce challenge: our employers are struggling to meet their need for a skilled workforce, and far too many of our residents have insufficient skills and preparation to enter, advance and succeed in the labor market. “Career pathways” is a strategy that has demonstrated success both locally and nationally in closing skills gaps in targeted industries. Career pathways is a partnership that connects education and training programs and support services that enable individuals to secure employment within a specific industry, and to advance over time to successively higher levels of education and employment in that industry. **The dual goal of career pathways is to create both: 1) avenues of advancement for current workers, jobseekers and future labor market entrants; and 2) a supply of qualified workers for local employers.**

## **KEY FEATURES**

### **Target Priority Sectors and Occupations**

Career pathways target industries that are important to the regional economy, projected to grow and add jobs in the near future, provide opportunities for advancement, and have significant shortages in key skilled occupations.

### **Led by Employers**

Employers lead the process of developing career pathways to meet their projected demand for qualified workers.

### **Reduce Barriers to Employment and Advancement**

Career pathways integrate “wrap-around” support services, including career assessment and counseling, case management, child care, transportation, financial aid, soft skills training, and job placement.

### **Seamless Educational Pathways**

Career pathways develop clear linkages between developmental education, certificate and training programs, and academic degree programs, and easy articulation of credits across institutions and “stackable” certificates to enable students to progress seamlessly from one level to the next.

### **Focus on Institutional and Systemic Change**

The career pathways process aims to transform institutions involved in education, workforce preparation and social services in ways that improve their capacity individually and collectively to respond to the needs of local residents and employers.

## **PARTNERS & ROLES**

### **Employers**

Identify occupational shortages; articulate training needs and design curriculum; recruit incumbent employees; and lead the overall process.

### **Educational Institutions (Including Adult Basic & Literacy Education, Career & Technical Education, Community Colleges, and Universities)**

Conduct student assessment; provide developmental education, GED training, certificate and degree programs; design innovative curriculum with employer input; and align core aspects of the institution to support education and career mobility for their students.

### **Social Service Providers**

Provide “wrap-around” support services to students to reduce barriers to employment and advancement; refer clients into the pathway; assist with recruitment of un/under-employed individuals in the community; and provide job readiness and soft skills training.

### **Workforce Investment Boards**

Assist with recruitment of un/under-employed individuals through One Stop Centers; and provide financial support for worker training.

### **Public and Private Funders**

Provide flexible funding to support career pathways planning, management, and technical assistance.

## **BENEFITS**

- **For Employers:** Access to qualified workers; improved retention; reduced turnover and vacancy rates; increased productivity; and assistance with managing the workforce and education resources that are available to employers.
- **For Workers:** Access to job opportunities; assistance with career and educational advancement; increased wages; and increased educational attainment.
- **For Educational Institutions:** Increased enrollment, completion and job placement outcomes; and curriculum that responds to employer needs.
- **For Social Service Providers:** Help clients access education and career opportunities.
- **For the Community:** Increased educational attainment; lower poverty rates; improved ability to attract and retain employers.

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## CAREER PATHWAYS "PROOF OF CONCEPT"

### *The Health Careers Collaborative of Greater Cincinnati*

The Health Careers Collaborative of Greater Cincinnati is a pilot career pathway that was developed by a partnership of local health care employers, educators, the workforce investment system, and community agencies. The goal of the partnership is to alleviate occupational shortages in healthcare while providing career opportunities for low-wage incumbent workers and un/under-employed individuals in the community.

### MANAGING PARTNERS

- Children's Hospital
- The Health Alliance
- Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development
- Cincinnati State Technical and Community College

### COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Dress for Success
- Mercy Neighborhood Ministries
- Super Jobs One Stop Center
- Greater Cincinnati Health Council

### KEY ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

- Employer-driven process
- Tuition pre-payment for incumbent employees
- Funding for developmental education, as well as for-credit certificate and degree programs
- Convenient class locations and schedules for working students
- Flexible work hours to allow employees to attend classes
- Funding for capital and operations for training facilities
- Supportive services to assist with transportation, child care, and job coaching
- Job readiness and soft skill training for entry workers
- Innovative curriculum that is responsive to employer needs
- Transferable credits and articulation between educational institutions
- Multiple entry and exits points along pathway

### OUTCOMES TO DATE

(As of August 2008)

#### Entry-Level Workers

- 140 un/under-employed individuals completed certificate programs
- 88% completion rate
- 82% job placement rate
- \$12.15/hr average wage; 88% with fringe benefits

#### Incumbent Workers

- 110+ associate's degree students
- 3.25 average GPA (2.75 comparison)
- 85% retention rate (30% comparison)
- Advance from a \$12/hr job to a \$22/hr career

