



Career Advising Through Career Pathways

Successful Strategies from ECWDB

PART 2: NCWorks Certified Career Pathways

8 Best Practice Criteria for NCWorks Certified Career Pathways

These best practices ensure that a pathway has the necessary courses, work-based learning opportunities and employer engagement in place for participants to gain the skills and education to excel in high demand industry sectors.

1. **Demand-Driven and Data-Informed:** Create Pathways that meet documented needs within the region. Utilize data from verified state, regional and local sources to determine shortages and opportunities for economic growth.
2. **Employer Engagement:** Employers lead the development of pathways by identifying needs within industry sectors and knowledge and skills needed to address gaps. Employers provide essential input into careers, curricula and courses along pathways that will meet local and regional workforce demands.
3. **Collaborative:** Develop partnerships with all levels of secondary and postsecondary education, the workforce community, local government officials and community leaders to ensure buy-in. Effective teams will be those that provide students a consistent, committed message along each career pathway.
4. **Career Awareness:** Make students aware of career pathways, educational requirements and work-based learning opportunities. Career awareness requires knowledgeable system staff advising students and job seekers on the multiple opportunities along a high-growth pathway.
5. **Articulation and Coordination:** Provide opportunities for students to obtain knowledge, skills and credentials efficiently. Maximize use of articulation agreements to encourage coordination of educational offerings. Encourage obtainment of stackable credentials to reduce duplication and foster a streamlined progression along the career pathway.
6. **Work-based Learning:** Provide opportunities for students to incorporate work-based learning into their programs of study. Recruit the business community to lead in the development and implementation of work-based learning opportunities.
7. **Contain Multiple Points of Entry and Exit:** Be flexible and creative in providing opportunities for students to enter and exit career pathways. Pathways must be designed to easily allow individuals to enter and exit at different points without duplicating credit or effort.
8. **Evaluation:** Develop a plan for assessment that defines success, measures progress toward goals, investigates outcomes and points to opportunities for improvement.



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Benefits of NCWorks Certified Career Pathways

NCWorks Certified Career Pathways demonstrate that North Carolina has the tools, talent and resources to fill in-demand, high wage positions. These pathways provide a tremendous benefit to the workforce system, businesses, program participants, and communities.

Workforce Development

- Each region is required to have two certified pathways.
- Validates the efforts and services provided.
- Increases positive impressions.

Business

- Signals that a region has the tools to train a workforce to meet their needs.
- Shows that growing their company in NC is good financial decision.
- Puts them in the driver seat to develop worker training.

Participants

- Assurance that they are getting a high quality education to prepare them for employment and upward mobility.
- Increases likelihood of quickly finding sustainable employment.

Communities

- Stimulates the economy by creating more jobs in high wage occupations.
- Enhances awareness of services
- Economic growth improves the quality of life for everyone.

Learn about certified pathways in your area. Click on the map to see pathway sectors in your region, then click to see local Workforce Boards and counties for those sectors.



Online Resources

Produced by the NCWorks Training Center:
[Career Advising— Career Pathways](#)

NC Certified Pathways Website:
[NCWorks Certified Career Pathways](#)

Frequently Asked Questions:
[NCWorks Certified Career Pathways FAQ](#)