








Minnesota Career Pathways Network

The new federal law that governs adult basic education, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), codifies the definition of a career pathway program and offers many opportunities for alignment with partners to build career pathway systems. Ideally, **partners work together to build career pathway programs containing the six core elements below.**

MINNESOTA ADULT BASIC EDUCATION COMPREHENSIVE CAREER PATHWAY CORE ELEMENTS

WIOA* CAREER PATHWAY DEFINITION

| CORE ELEMENT | COMPONENTS | KEY QUESTIONS |
|--|---|---|
|  PATHWAY PARTNERSHIP | Partnership formation, leadership, vision, governance, funding | Who comes together to implement the career pathway, and what resources do they bring to bear? |
|  PATHWAY SECTOR | Industry sector focus, employer engagement, occupational targets, skill shortage context | What need in the regional/state economy is the career pathway intended to address? |
|  PATHWAY DESIGN | Starting skill levels, stackable credentials, course/credential sequencing, curriculum design, multiple entry/exit points, alignment across settings | Who is the pathway intended to serve and how will it do so? What is the pathway from a participant perspective? |
|  PATHWAY INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY | Participant-focused, evidence-based practices, contextualized instruction, concurrent remediation, dual enrollment, competency-based education, work-based learning, integrated education and training. | What specific instructional innovations will be implemented in the pathway to improve results? |
|  PATHWAY PARTICIPANT SUPPORTS | Participant assessment, career navigation, supportive services, intrusive advising, case coordination, referral | How will the pathway address the non-curricular needs of participants to improve results? |
|  PATHWAY MEASUREMENT | Identifying pathways in shared data, appropriate metric selection, shared measurement and accountability, continuous improvement, closing achievement gaps | How will we define success for the pathway, and how will we assemble the data to determine success? |

(7) CAREER PATHWAY.—The term “career pathway” means a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that

(A) aligns with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the State or regional economy involved;

(B) prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options, including apprenticeships registered under the [National Apprenticeship Act]

(C) includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual’s education and career goals;

(D) includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;

(E) organizes education, training, and other services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable;

(F) enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and at least 1 recognized postsecondary credential; and

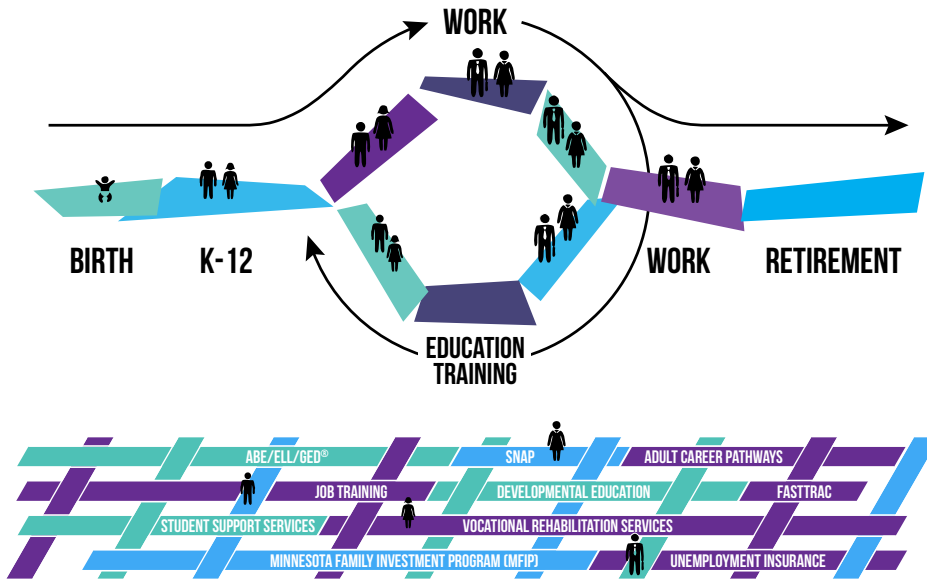
(G) helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster

*Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Pub.L. No. 113-128

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WHERE DOES ADULT BASIC EDUCATION "FIT" IN THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM?



Life's pathway extends from birth to retirement, with periods of education/training and work along the way. Most of us need to stay on that pathway in order to achieve economic security. But people can stop moving forward or even "fall off" the pathway at any point and for a variety of reasons.

A "safety net" of programs is intended to catch people when they fall and help place them back on the pathway. For adults, the "safety net" is made up of public assistance programs, workforce development programs, and education programs, such as Adult Basic Education. All of these programs have the goal of helping people move forward by entering work, gaining skills, and moving into career pathway employment.

NEW PARTNERSHIPS CAN HELP TO INCREASE SKILLS AND BUILD LIFE ASSETS

People can be described along a scale of life assets and in terms of educational ability.

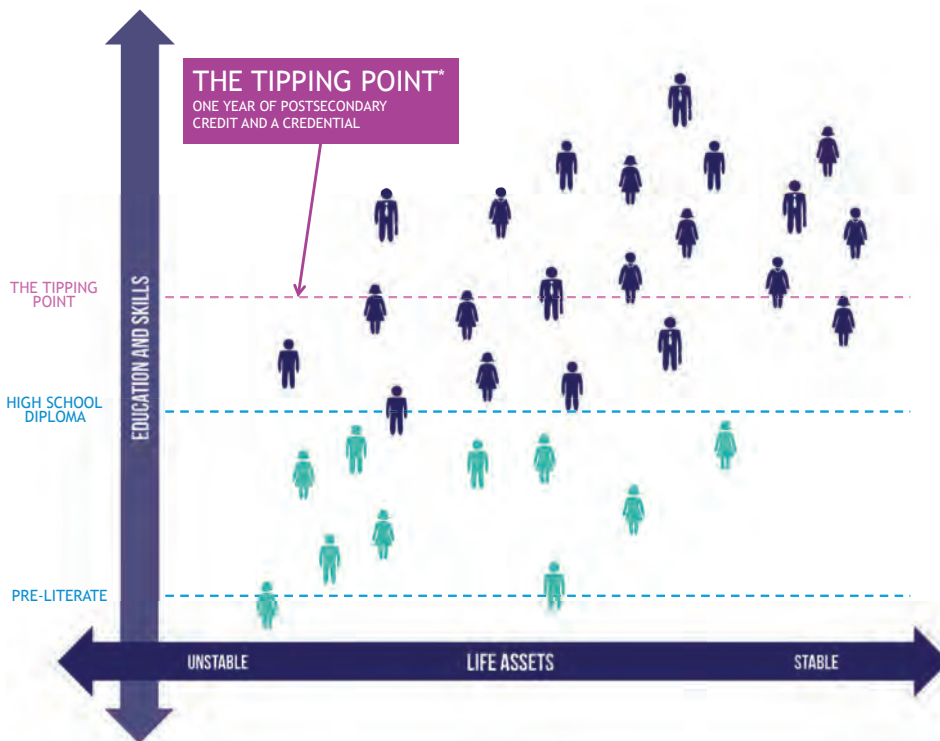
People with stable assets may have secure housing, working cars, no debt, no dependents, and consistent employment. On the other hand, many ABE participants have unstable assets and lack those advantages.

From its beginning, adult basic education has focused on raising people's literacy skills to the basic level required for successful participation in the workforce. In the 1960s and 1970s that was the equivalent of 8th-grade; in more recent decades that was a high school diploma or high school equivalency.

As the economy changes, so do the educational requirements for quality work. Primarily as a result of the Washington "Tipping Point" study*, adult basic education programs increasingly recognize a year of post-secondary education and training and an industry recognized credential as the minimum level necessary for lower-skill adults' successful participation in the workforce.

To empower people to reach the "Tipping Point," adult basic education programs need to form new partnerships and adopt new programs models. The most successful model has proven to be "career pathway" programs.

Career pathway programs combine education and training with support services that increase stability and build life assets. Together, greater skills and improved stability help participants progress to higher and higher levels of employment—to a career.



*Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. "Building Pathways to Success for Low-Skill Adult Students: Lessons for Community College Policy and Practice from a Longitudinal Student Tracking Study (The "Tipping Point" Research)."

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