



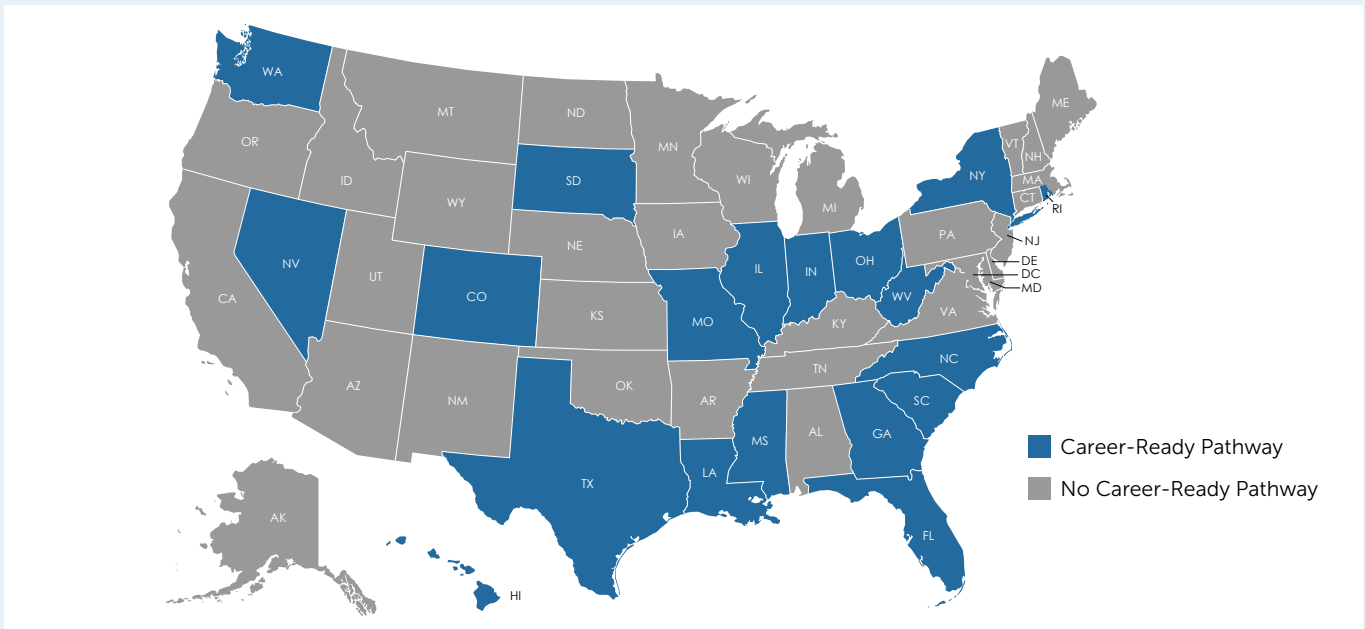
## Preparing High School Students for Careers Career-Ready High School Graduation Pathways

Increasingly, states are creating opportunities for students to tailor their high school experience to their interests and future goals by offering different **graduation pathways**. A graduation pathway is a collection of courses, experiences, assessments, and other requirements that culminate with a high school diploma. A graduation pathway includes the standard high school diploma and the endorsements, seals, more advanced diplomas, and other options offered on top of that diploma. For example, North Carolina students can earn optional endorsements with their diploma recognizing career readiness, college readiness, or distinguished academic scholarship.

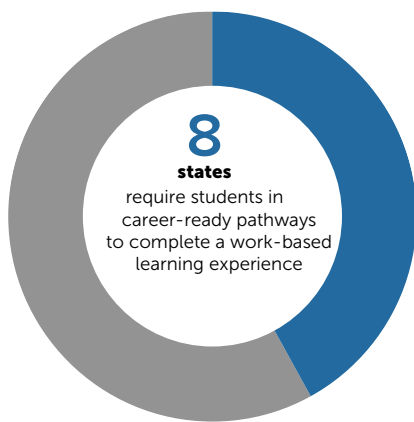
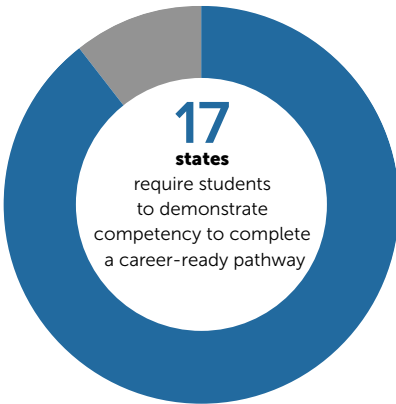
Meanwhile, Louisiana students choose a TOPS University diploma (aligned with college readiness) or a Jump Start TOPS Technical diploma (aligned with career readiness).

**Nineteen states currently offer a graduation pathway designed to prepare students for careers and recognize career readiness.** Some of these states offer a pathway specific to completion of a career and technical education (CTE) program (e.g., a pathway for CTE concentrators), while others offer recognition of students' career-ready skills that does not require them to enroll in or complete a CTE program.

### Career-Ready Graduation Pathways in States



## Key Requirements in States' Career-Ready Graduation Pathways



Career-ready graduation pathways vary from state to state in terms of how, or whether, students' learning and acquisition of career-ready skills and knowledge is evaluated beyond merely completing required coursework.

**Seventeen of the nineteen states with a career-ready graduation pathway require students to demonstrate competency to complete the pathway:** Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, and Washington. The states typically measure competency with a career-related standardized assessment, such as ACT WorkKeys®, the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), or an industry-recognized credentialing exam, although a few states use more innovative, performance-based assessments.

**Eight of the nineteen states with a career-ready graduation pathway require students to complete a work-based learning experience or a workplace internship:** Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Missouri, New York, Rhode Island, and Washington. Some of the remaining states require some type of experience to demonstrate career-ready skills, but they do not require a formal work-based learning experience. Those that do have work-based learning requirements have different ways of evaluating their quality and value—and some states do not evaluate them at all.

## Indiana: Career-Ready Expectations for All Students

Indiana is unique among states. All high school students—not just those in CTE programs—must demonstrate employability skills to graduate. In 2017, a state panel charged with creating new graduation guidelines recommended replacing the high school exit exam with a **graduation pathways requirement**. Under the new guidelines, students must meet academic credit requirements to earn a diploma, but also demonstrate employability skills and postsecondary-ready competencies from a menu of potential graduation pathways. Students may demonstrate employability skills by completing a project-based learning experience, a service-based learning experience, or a work-based learning experience. Students may demonstrate postsecondary-ready competencies by earning an academic or technical honors diploma, meeting benchmarks on college admissions tests, earning a qualifying score on the ASVAB, passing multiple advanced courses (like Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or dual credit), passing multiple CTE courses within a program of study, earning a state- or industry-recognized credential, completing a federally recognized apprenticeship, and other similar options.



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