



City and County Playbook

Unlocking Career Success



This playbook provides ways in which City and County Leaders and their teams can blur the lines between high school, postsecondary education, and the workforce. City and County Leaders can play a significant role to Raise the Bar for student success by developing an *education-to-workforce system* that focuses on Unlocking Career Success.

Step 1

Establish Unified Vision

Step 2

Cultivate Partnerships

Step 3

Streamline Resources

Step 4

Align Policy and Practice

Establish a unified vision

The City and County Leader's vision can serve as an animating force to bring together multiple partners and distinct priorities to improve the lives of youth. Several cities, counties, and municipalities have developed goals that link educators, employers, community-based organizations, and others as equal partners in attaining a unified vision. When establishing a unified vision for career-connected learning, consider how to:



Support a city/county/municipal-wide effort by bringing together leadership from P-12, postsecondary, and workforce systems, and leveraging federal, state, and local resources to create the foundation for short- and long-term strategies that produce talent at scale and improve community and economic development.



Codify the roles and responsibilities of different agencies and organizations as part of a cross-cutting management team or working group to ensure that each partner is responsible for leading specific actions and to create both individual and shared accountability.



Commit to equity as a driving factor by expanding access to and support for career-connected learning opportunities for individuals of all backgrounds, especially those from underserved populations, supporting student transition across different types of education and training, and embedding student and community voice and leadership.

Tools to establish a unified vision:

Create Cross-Cutting Initiatives

Fund and launch initiatives that streamline career pathway programs across P-12, postsecondary education, and the workforce system. In Illinois, the Chicago Roadmap is a collaboration between Chicago Public Schools, City Colleges of Chicago, and philanthropy to support students on their path to college and career. In Michigan, Detroit at Work, a program that provides information on in-demand career pathways and training programs that are aligned to jobs in growing career sectors. In Douglas County, Nebraska, the ARPA-funded Career Forward program provides supplemental financial support, books and training tools, transportation, career coaching and more. Career Forward collaborates closely with Omaha Housing Authority, Urban League, and local shelters to build supportive career pathways for low-income individuals experiencing complex barriers to education.

Establish College and Career Readiness Goals

Washington, DC, has established a citywide college and career readiness goal through collaboration with local educational agencies. Raise DC is a collective impact initiative that brings together public and private partners to support citywide goals for improving youth education and workforce outcomes. In Virginia, the Fairfax County Chairman's Task Force on Equity and Opportunity established specific recommendations to meet the goal of fostering cradle to career success.



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Tools to establish a unified vision (continued):

Amplify the Needs of Youth and Employers

In 2023 many local leaders highlighted youth, education, and pathways in their 2023 state of the county addresses or similar public engagements. In California, the [workforce development board serving Sacramento County](#) recruits youth and young adults to provide a “Youth Voice” to ensure that the youth of Sacramento are adequately represented when decisions are made that will impact young residents in the community.



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Cultivate partnerships to support career-connected learning

Youth career pathway programs often span P-12, postsecondary, and workforce systems, requiring coordination amongst government and partnerships with employers and community facing organizations. Several cities, counties, and municipalities have created intermediary organizations, public and private partnerships, or cross-agency teams to support youth career pathways. When cultivating partnerships, consider how to:



Support intermediary organizations that can build the capacity of local education agencies and postsecondary institutions to engage employers and community-based organizations to scale work-based learning opportunities, create or expand youth apprenticeship programs, and support student career navigation and coaching.



Leverage community partners including community-based organizations, non-profits, local philanthropic groups, and others to support system innovation, build and scale relationships with the community and with employers, and to support braided funding models that better connect with private, philanthropic, and corporate funders.



Elevate employer engagement to ensure that education and training programs reflect and respond to employer needs, support industry groups or associations to help employers to scale apprenticeship and work-based learning programs, and that employers help to develop and shape local policies that support career pathways.

Ways to cultivate partnerships:

Leverage the Workforce System

Local workforce development boards and councils can support talent development pipelines. In California, Oakland's Workforce Development Board contracts with youth-serving organizations to identify summer worksites and recruits youth for work-based learning opportunities. In North Carolina, Charlotte Works, which is a council of public and private workforce development providers, helps employers access diverse talent pipelines. In Maryland, Worksource Montgomery, Inc. is working with local partners to place trained Career Coaches in every public and special middle and high school throughout the county.

Expand Education Partnerships

Create structured opportunities for P-12 and postsecondary partnership. In Wisconsin, M³ (M-Cubed) is collaboration between Milwaukee Public Schools, Milwaukee Area Technical College, and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee designed to promote an effective K-16 pipeline and provide higher levels of education and workforce readiness for individuals to meet the needs of Milwaukee employees. In Nebraska, Douglas County's Heartland Work Ready Community assembles a consortium of over 320 community partners, businesses, K-12, and post-secondary education providers and



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Ways to cultivate partnerships (continued):

Expand Education Partnerships

public institutions that collaborate on grant applications and building career pathways. In New York, Saratoga County is using [WIOA Incumbent Worker Training](#) funds to upskill EMTs to paramedics and meet a local workforce need. The county also operates an EMT career pathway program for youth taking the first step toward a medical career (in collaboration with Hudson Valley Community College, Town of Clifton Park, Clifton Park-Halfmoon EMS, and Shenendehowa High School).

Create and Expand Intermediary Organizations

In Massachusetts, the [Boston Private Industry Council](#) (Boston PIC) serves as an intermediary supporting school and industry connections while also running a summer internship program. In Texas, the [Dallas Regional Chamber](#) supports activities from early education through workforce development. In Oregon, [Connected Lane](#) County collaborates with local school districts, institutions of higher education, the local workforce board, and industry innovators to provide underrepresented Lane County youth with vital experiences.



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Streamline resources and initiatives

Topline outcomes and progress measurement help to identify where resources are needed and create momentum. They can also help ensure partners remain committed to the overarching vision. Several cities, counties, and municipalities connect spending plans with outcome measurement and performance routines encouraging collaboration and transparency. When streamlining resources and initiatives, consider how to:



Support students' secondary to postsecondary transitions which can include helping to facilitate partnerships between local education agencies, community & technical colleges, and local workforce development boards, who can be leveraged to coordinate in- and out-of-school youth programs and services to support student transition.



Create a fiscal strategy and braid financial resources¹ to leverage existing federal, state, and local funds across the P-12, postsecondary, and workforce systems to create and scale career pathways, provide wrap-around and transition services to youth, and to stage future budget requests and philanthropic or private sector grant development.



Create public accountability by ensuring agency and partner roles and responsibilities are visible, aligned to the local vision, and are embedded within other governing documents that are specific to the organization, like annual plans and reports, local education and workforce plans, or other public-facing materials.

Options to streamline resources:

Review Strategies and Resources

Community landscape analyses can inform current and future resource allocation, the expansion of career pathway programs, and how to better leverage the community. In Arizona, Maricopa County's Workforce2You pilot program brings Medical Billing and Coding and Medical Administrative Assistant accelerated training programs in a cohort model to 3 rural communities—Queen Creek, Wickenburg, and Gila Bend—that experience distance and financial barriers to accessing workforce development resources.

Coordinate Data and Information

City, county, or municipal wide data systems can be leveraged to share and amplify labor market information and needs across the education and workforce systems. In Maryland, Prince George's County maintains an Economic Dashboard featuring employment, education, and income data across the county.

Create New Funding Streams

In California, the Long Beach Mayor's Fund for Education, was established as a non-profit organization to support collaboration amongst community, civic, and education partners to help address the most pressing needs facing Long Beach area students and their families.



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Options to streamline resources (continued):

Leverage Federal Funds

In Wisconsin, Milwaukee's Skillful Transitions Project outlines the city's plans to use \$3 million of American Rescue Plan funding to support paid work-based learning opportunities for students. In Arizona, Maricopa County is expanding the reach of flexible ARPA funds by enrolling ARPA-funded Route to Relief students at Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD) schools in WIOA. A partnership between Maricopa County, MCCCD and the City of Phoenix Route to Relief provides assistance for tuition, books, training, and career navigation, as well as up to 6 months of a \$1,000-\$1,500 stipend. By dually enrolling these students in WIOA, this flexible funding can stretch further.

¹ Braiding funds means coordinating two or more funding sources to support the total cost of a service or activity while separately tracking and reporting on each source of funding. Cost-allocation methods are required to ensure that each funding source is charged its fair share. See Urban Institute (2022), Local Work-force System Guide. Retrieved from: <https://workforce.urban.org/node/57.html>.



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This playbook provides ways in which Mayors and Municipal Leaders and their teams can blur the lines between high school, postsecondary education, and the workforce. Mayors and Municipal Leaders can play a significant role to Raise the Bar for student success by developing an *education-to-workforce* system that focuses on Unlocking Career Success.

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Align policy and practice

Local leaders can establish policy via mayoral order, their work with city, county, or municipal officials, budget authority and spending orders, oversight of local agencies, and administrative policy or procedures supporting implementation of federal, state, or locally funded programs. Several cities, counties, and municipalities developed model policies to manage implementation. When aligning policy and practice, consider how to:



Build strategic partnerships as part of the local vision, which can include partnerships across local education agencies, community & technical colleges, and local workforce boards to expand the four keys to Unlocking Career Success including dual or concurrent enrollment, work-based learning, industry credentials, and student advisement.



Lead by example through direct employer engagement and leadership of local agencies, which have hiring needs and can be leveraged to create innovative human resource policies, like skills-based hiring models, and to develop paid work-based learning opportunities, internships, and registered apprenticeship programs for youth.



Link education and economic development by understanding and preparing for both the short- and long-term economic needs of your city, county, or municipality and developing career pathways² that span P-12, registered apprenticeships, community and technical colleges, four-year institutions, the military, and workforce systems.

Opportunities to align policies and practice:

Partner with Business and Industry

Identify areas of focus that are important to the community and its employers. In Hawaii, the City and County of Honolulu has built sector partnerships in 3 in-demand industries -- engineering, health care, and IT. These industry-led, community-supported collaboratives work to develop new training models and hiring practices that connect young people to local jobs. In Delaware, Wilmington's Future Builder's Program supports youth who are disconnected from school and creates opportunities for youth to access jobs in the construction industry along with other supportive services and related training. In Tennessee, Nashville's FUSE Corps fellow program is a national non-profit organization that works alongside government and community partners to design projects, recruit the right talent, and embed executive fellows to help accelerate the project.

Create Aligned Management Structures

Add capacity through new organizational structures to address education-to-workforce pipelines. In Arizona, the Phoenix Youth and Education Office is a new office designed to build connections between city services, community resources, and public schools. In Washington, D.C., the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education is an executive-level position with the explicit mission to focus on the educational continuum from birth to age 24, overseeing P-12 education, postsecondary education, workforce development, employment services, libraries, and parks and recreation.



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Opportunities to align policies and practice (continued):

Create Aligned Management Structures

In Maryland, the Baltimore County Office of Educational Partnership collaborates and coordinates services across the county's various early childhood programs, the Baltimore County Public School system, higher education institutions, workforce development and personal growth pathways, and educational programs embedded in recreation and senior centers.

²Section 3(7) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) defines a “career pathway” as a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that, among other things, aligns with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the state or regional economy involved. For the full WIOA definition, please refer to <https://cte.ed.gov/initiatives/career-pathways-systems>.



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