



Developing NCWorks Certified Career Pathways



NCWorks

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Career Pathways

A woman wearing a yellow hard hat and a high-visibility safety vest is shown in profile, looking through the eyepiece of a yellow surveying instrument mounted on a tripod. The background is a blurred outdoor setting. The entire image has a green color overlay.

Developing NCWorks Certified Career Pathways

NCWorks Certified Career Pathways demonstrate that local teams have the tools and resources to create education and workforce strategies that prepare individuals to fill in-demand and high wage positions within their region.

Local teams consist of education, workforce development and industry partners whose goal is to match worker training to employer need in a region.

Pathway submissions should incorporate the eight best practice criteria established by the NCWorks Commission. Meeting these best practices ensures that a pathway has the necessary courses, work-based learning opportunities and employer engagement in place for students and adults to gain the skills and education to excel in high demand industry sectors now and throughout their careers.

Demonstration of the eight best practices are the crux of success in certifying a pathway. This guide is designed to provide a number of tips and pitfalls to avoid when assembling applications.

The Application Format

- » Pathway applications should be **organized according to the best practices in numerical order**. This will help applications receive quick and efficient review.
- » Introduce each criterion with a **brief section overview (two to three paragraphs)**.
- » The pathway application should **tell a story (from data driven to evaluation)** of how each of the criteria has been met.
- » **Pathway work is an ongoing process**. The NCWorks Commission certifies both existing and new pathways. Pathway elements may change and grow but a strong foundation must be in place. Use language that demonstrates what you are doing presently.
- » **Applications should include page numbers** to make for easy review and reference. There is never a need to submit duplicates of documents, graphics or data. Instead, refer back to the exhibits by page number.
- » **Include original tables or visuals in your application**. These could convey course material, data and pathway structure. Use visuals to make information concise and more easily understood.



Employers & Partners

- Certified pathways should be collaborative and driven by employers. Applications should demonstrate how industry contributes meaningfully to the pathway by suggesting course material, providing work-based learning opportunities and hiring enrollees who exit the pathway. Industry should be engaged at all levels of the discussion during the development and implementation of career pathways.
- Pathway applications that demonstrate a handful of heavily invested employers are valued over numerous companies that haven't contributed in meaningful ways.
- Employers should always be brought to the table at the earliest stage of pathway development.
- Employers should show commitment to work-based learning opportunities, hiring and career awareness for enrollees on all levels of the career: youth, young adults and mid-senior career workers.
- Include chambers of commerce, county economic development and planning agencies in pathway development to maximize regional support.
- Minimize generic letters of support from employers or industry leaders. Personal letters of industry and employer engagement are encouraged.
- Include a brief description and an agenda of meetings with your partners. Meetings with all partners should be cohesive and contain a clearly defined outcome.

Enrollees

- Certified pathways must include points of entry for adult and dislocated workers. Pathways should be designed so that enrollees at all career and education levels are able to enter and exit the pathway.
- Demonstrate how enrollees move through the pathway. Pathways should be like stepping stones: the steps an enrollee should take on a pathway should be clearly outlined. The use of graphics here is strongly encouraged.

Articulation & Coordination

- It is not necessary to include the NC Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (CAA) in the application but please reference the CAA if it is an element in your pathway. However, include any local articulation agreements among secondary schools, community colleges and universities if they are unique within your region.

Data

- Career Pathways are regionally based, therefore data supporting your team's pathway work should be collected on a regional basis. Exhaustive reports on national data isn't as useful as up to date and comprehensive state and local data. Make sure anytime you include data that you summarize its purpose within the application.
- Include baseline data in the evaluation section of your application. Demonstrate your starting point and explain how your region will increase and improve those metrics.



Evaluation

Outline target goals in the evaluation section of the pathway application. This can include: continuous improvement on current measures of students enrolled in courses on your pathway, the number of enrollees hired by local employers, the number of enrollees who successfully complete a pathway or the number of enrollees involved in work-based learning opportunities.

Utilize your prosperity zone's Career Pathway Facilitators to address concerns pertaining to the eight criteria.

For additional information contact:

or visit [nccertifiedcareerpathways.com](https://www.nccertifiedcareerpathways.com)