

ARKANSAS CAREER PATHWAYS INITIATIVE

The Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) has sought to coordinate publicly funded education with social services, workforce and economic development programs to produce a better-trained workforce and promote economic growth to address the state's economic challenges.

“Career pathways” or “CPI” are terms to describe a series of connected education and training programs and support services that enable individuals to secure employment within a specific industry or occupational sector and to advance over time to successively higher levels of education and employment in that sector. Each step on a career pathway is designed explicitly to prepare workers and students for the next level of employment and education.

Using the career pathways framework, the workforce system seeks to:

- target jobs in industries of importance to local economies;
- create avenues of advancement for current workers, job seekers, and future labor market entrants;
- improve the supply of qualified workers for employers.

Community colleges play a key role in career pathways. The career pathways framework promotes systemic reform for community colleges—providing a model that better aligns their various mission areas of workforce development, academic credentialing, transfer preparation, and remediation with the needs of area employers. Pathways commonly feature community colleges working in partnership with other educational entities, workforce and economic development agencies, employer and labor groups, and social service providers to ensure that investments in education and training pay off for the region's economic vitality.

Students entering into adult literacy or college remedial coursework are better able to advance to and succeed later with college-level programs, and participating students can more readily earn postsecondary credentials and make progress toward a career. Incumbent workers are provided training opportunities that help increase their skills and subsequent wages. CPI, which began serving clients in fall 2005, seeks to improve the earnings through postsecondary education attainment of Arkansas' low-income “TANF-eligible” adults by enabling them to work in industries of regional importance. Administered by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) with funding from the Department of Workforce Services (DWS), ADHE/CPI provides an opportunity for 25 campuses to develop Career Pathways Initiatives.

The objectives for CPI include: 1) enhancing existing programs and services to help low-income parents gain workplace skills leading to economic self-sufficiency and reduced reliance on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); 2) providing employers in key industries in Arkansas with skilled workers. The initiative accomplishes these objectives by enabling upward educational and career mobility in targeted career fields for low-wage individuals.

This focus represents a shift from traditional programs in Arkansas, which have typically aimed to reduce TANF rolls by moving recipients into low wage, entry-level jobs that provide little opportunity for career development. CPI's goals for program participants are to provide educational opportunities that lead to skilled jobs, with pay sufficient enough for the worker to forego most, if not all, public assistance. Specifically that means:

- Increased enrollment in college-level certificate and associate degree programs;
- Increased attainment of college-level certificates and associate degrees
- Increased job attainment and job retention in key industries
- Increased TEA enrollments participating in state Work Participation Rate (WPR)*
- Increased short-term training programs at CPI sites, based on local employer demand

Who is eligible to participate?

Students who are current or former recipients of Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA), SNAP, ARKids, or Medicaid, or those earning 250 percent of the federal poverty level or less. Individuals must be an adult caretaker, parent or relative of a child living in the home under the age of 21 (FY16 MOA). DWS requested that campuses focus on enrolling Current TEA, who participate in the state Work Participation Rate (or WPR, refers to the work performance measure that states must meet) and develop and deliver short-term training programs that emphasize local employer need. Additionally, the

initiative seeks to improve the level of engagement among educators and employers to generate work opportunities for students and serve the workforce needs of the private sector.

Career Pathways Initiative students attained a total of 3,637 certificates/degrees during the 2016 program year. They are broken down as follows:

GED - General Educational Development (Educational and testing services designed to provide a high school equivalency credential.) **21 Completed**

EMP - Employability Certificate (Basic skills training to low-skill clients. Addresses computer literacy and soft skills for workplace environments.) **1387 Completed**

CC - Certificate of Completion (Any certificate less than the 7-hour minimum required for a CP. CNA, Material Handling, OSHA are examples.) **560 Completed**

CP - Certificate of Proficiency (7–18 semester credit hours) **533 Completed**

TC - Technical Certificate (24–42 credit hours) **527 Completed**

AS - Associate Degree (60-72 semester credit hours) **574 Completed**

INT - Internship (i.e. Plumbing, electrical, welding) **35 Completed**

CPI Employment Summary Report For 4/1/2017 – 6/30/2017

Institution	Employed at time of Application	Unemployed at time of Application	Total Reporting Employment Status	Employed After Completing Award
ANC	73	103	176	88
ASUB	10	103	113	33
ASUMH	68	22	90	12
ASUMS	50	40	90	24
ASUN	3	60	63	8
ATUO	59	43	102	19
BRTC	32	40	72	15
CCCUA	28	36	64	10
COTO	52	81	133	23
EACC	26	26	52	5
NAC	74	89	163	35
NPC	2	106	108	35
NWACC	50	84	134	16
OZC	93	41	134	29
PCCUA	57	114	171	22
SACC	43	41	84	12
SAUT	43	27	70	12
SEAC	49	69	118	33
UACCB	69	56	125	3
UACCH	94	75	169	23
UACCM	55	52	107	17
UACCRM	38	38	76	38
UAMC	26	44	70	17
UAMM	71	38	109	39
UA-PTC	61	48	109	57
All institutions	1226	1476	2702	625