



Pathways to Careers

Pathways to Careers is a pioneering partnership comprised of businesses, educational institutions, government agencies, nonprofit organizations and labor to build educational pathways to middle-wage jobs.

The long-term objective of Pathways to Careers is to create a world-class system of professional education and training that allows all working or unemployed adults, regardless of income, to obtain the skills necessary to fill the jobs openings in demand by our employers. Over the next three years, Pathways to Careers will reach 1,500 students and double student completion rates within four sectors: Healthcare; Manufacturing and Industrial Skills; International Trade, Transportation and Logistics; and Business Information Technology.

Background

The Seattle Community College District (SCCD) is the largest community college district in Washington, with over 50,000 students attending three comprehensive colleges, Seattle Central, North Seattle and South Seattle Community Colleges, a technical institute, Seattle Vocational Institute, and four training centers. Open access provides educational opportunities for many low-income, low-skilled, and first generation students, with more than 50% being students of color, 28% receiving need-based financial aid and over 60% of the students working while attending college. While SCCD plays a vital role in preparing the city's workforce, only half of the students who enroll receive degrees or certificates of completion, due to variety of complex issues facing the student and the institution. SCCD is working to achieve transformative change that assures that the community college system delivers on its mission to serve its students through significant improvements in completion rates.

The City of Seattle has over 133,000 working-age residents who are living in households at less than 200% of federal poverty level. The majority of these individuals, many of whom are also working, have less than an Associates degree. These individuals are increasingly unable to compete in a more competitive and skilled labor market, or participate in growing the region's economy. Now, more than ever, education and training beyond high school is the gateway for good paying jobs for struggling individuals and families.

Achieving the symbiotic goals of economic equity and education reform calls for new model of education, industry and government collaboration. Pathways to Careers aims to create a citywide coalition that leverages community resources toward the goal of significantly increasing credential completion by low-income or low-skilled workers preparing for

high-demand jobs in Manufacturing and Industrial Skills; International Trade, Transportation and Logistics; Business Information Technology; and Healthcare.

The Initiative

As a collaborative-driven completion initiative, *Pathways to Careers* seeks to create system reform at all levels that will result in both scale of implementation and sustainability of success rates. To reach significant improvement in program completion for targeted sector jobs, change will need to occur at all stages along the student pathway from recruitment, to program completion, to career.



While we are starting this work in four sector pathways, our long-term objective is to apply the innovations and lessons learned across all professional and technical programs offered by SCCD.

Achieving the ambitious goals of Pathways to Careers will require partnerships across government, education, community organizations, labor and business. Over the next year, we will be focusing on broadening this multi-party effort by:

- **Establishing a *Pathways to Careers* Advisory Group**, comprised of business, education, funders, and other stakeholders to provide oversight, sustain action and impact.
- **Improving Integration of Community-Based Social Supports** into the menu of services available to students to address non-academic needs and resources.
- **Communicating our Initiative and Success.** The College District has been selected as an Opportunity Nation project, a national initiative to “Recapture the American Dream” sponsored by *Time Magazine* and the Ford Foundation.
- **Establishing a District-Wide Student Tracking System** to monitor student retention, acceleration, progression, credential completion and career attachment for Pathways to Careers students.
- **Reaching out to Industry** to ensure curriculum relevance and build connections to internships and jobs.

To learn more about Pathways to Careers or learn about ways you can connect with this work, please contact:

Rebecca Hartzler, Director, Pathways to Careers Initiative, 206.934.3050, Rebecca.Hartzler@seattlecolleges.edu