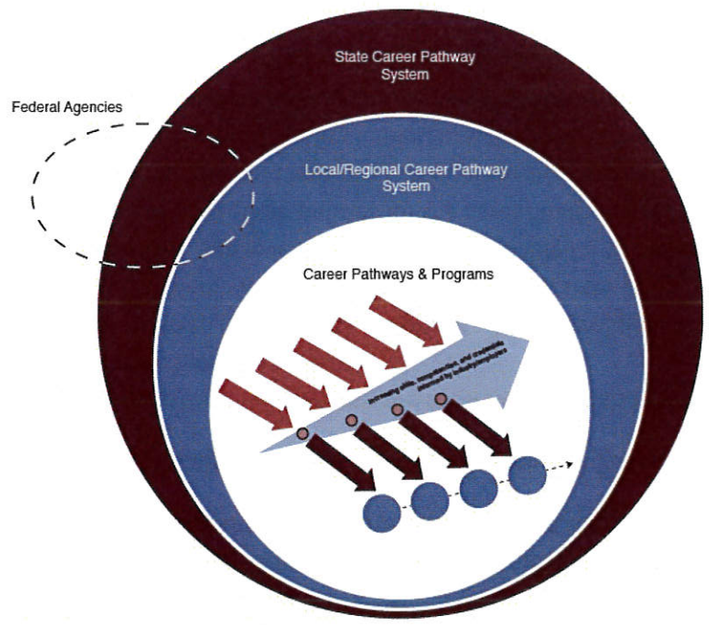
Alliance for Quality Career Pathways
a project of CLASP

ALLIANCE FOR QUALITY CAREER PATHWAYS LOCAL/REGIONAL SYSTEM AND METRICS SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

Background

The goal of the Alliance for Quality Career Pathways is to help states and local/regional partnerships strengthen their career pathway systems in order to help individuals in need access and succeed in education, training, and career pathway employment and to fill critical skill shortages for employers and regions.

Career pathways and programs need the support of state and local **career pathway system-level partnerships**. This figure provides a visual representation of the relationship between state career pathway systems, local/regional career pathway systems, and career pathways and programs.



The Alliance for Quality Career Pathways Framework 1.0 includes criteria, indicators, and participant metrics for what constitutes quality career pathways and systems. This SYSTEM self-assessment tool focuses on criteria and indicators for local/regional career pathways and systems. Separate self-assessment tools are provided for state systems and career pathway participant metrics.

Criteria for Quality Local/Regional Career Pathway Systems

1. **Commit to a Shared Vision and Strategy:** Local/regional partners—in conjunction with state partners—are committed to a shared vision of industry sector-based career pathways for youth and adults and to a strategy for building, scaling, and dynamically sustaining a local/regional career pathway system.
2. **Engage Employers and Integrate Sector Strategy Principles:** Local/regional partners engage multiple employers, business associations, and labor unions in the local/regional career pathway system and follow sector strategy principles including being demand-driven; employers are partners, not simply customers, of the career pathway system.
3. **Collaborate to Make Resources Available:** Each system partner identifies, prioritizes, and leverages resources available for the career pathway system, pathways, and programs.
4. **Implement Supportive Local/Regional Policies:** Local/regional partners implement supportive policies for the career pathway system, pathways, and programs.
5. **Use Data and Shared Measures**: Local/regional partners use data to assess, demonstrate, and improve career pathway participant outcomes.
6. **Implement and Integrate Evidence-Based Best Practices and Processes:** Local/regional partners implement practices and processes to provide the essential features and functions in quality career pathways and programs. Partners measure success and engage in a continuous improvement process to develop and integrate evidence-based practices and processes that optimize career pathway participant success.

Local/Regional System Self-Assessment Tool Purpose and Uses

In Phase II of the Alliance for Quality Career Pathways (mid-2014 through the end of 2015), career pathway partnerships should use this Self-Assessment Tool to drive a continuous improvement process for their career pathway systems. Additionally, this tool can be helpful in implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA), which becomes effective July 2, 2015. WIOA encourages state and local workforce boards to develop career pathway strategies by making it a permissible activity under all parts of the Act, including the newly reinstated state discretionary funds under Title I. The Alliance self-assessment process can support the unified planning process across workforce, adult education, and vocational rehabilitation programs required by WIOA.

After completing the tool, partners will submit it to the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP). The evidence and documentation your partnership provides in the **Meeting the Indicator** column will build a comprehensive database of career pathway and system practices for the Alliance. The **Strategic Planning** notes are only for your partnerships' use in your continuous improvement efforts.

CLASP will use the information provided in the **Meeting the Indicator** column to write a series of policy briefs highlighting themes for building and strengthening career pathway systems. These briefs will bring your partnership's collective voice to the national conversation. Topics for the policy briefs will be thematic (e.g., responding to demand, engaging employers, braiding funds, or using data and shared measures), and will be determined in conjunction with Alliance partners and funders. They will include challenges and policy recommendations as appropriate (any state or local/regional partnership information will be included only with permission from the partnership contact person). CLASP will **not** compare state or local/regional partnerships based on their self-assessments or share assessment results outside the AQCP team or, as needed, CLASP consultants assisting with the briefs. Please submit your partnership's completed Self-Assessment Tool to CLASP at careerpathways@clasp.org by the date agreed upon with CLASP.

Using this Tool

This assessment tool is designed to help your career pathway partnership assess its progress toward developing a comprehensive, high-quality Career Pathway System. Your partnership will assess its current status on **every indicator** under each of the 5 criterion. Indicator lists include standard indicators for established systems, as well as additional indicators for enhanced systems (*in italics*).

The self-assessment scale is based on the following definitions:

1. **No Action**: This indicator is not in discussion and no action has been taken. (This may be most appropriate for the *Additional Indicators for Enhanced Systems*.)

2. **Planning/Emerging**: This indicator is being discussed and is beginning to emerge in our partnership.

3. **Capacity Building:** This indicator has emerged in our partnership and we are building our capacity to implement it in full.

4. **Implementation:** This indicator is being fully implemented in our partnership.

5. **Sustained**: This indicator is part of "regular business" for our partnership and will be sustained.

This self-assessment should be completed by, at a minimum, the administrators from the core partner systems in your career pathway/system. If possible, follow the instructions below to complete this self-assessment as a group. You may also adapt the process to complete it via webinar, or have individuals complete the assessment separately and submit it to one person for synthesis. The completed assessment should reflect the consensus of your entire partnership.

Instructions

1. Prior to the meeting, have each team member individually rate your partnership's progress on each indicator using the 1-5 scale above.
2. As a group, discuss individual team members' responses to each indicator, especially where there are differences of opinion on progress.
3. Reach a consensus on the team's progress on the indicator. Have a recorder keep track of this on a master Self-Assessment Tool.
4. Provide evidence of how your partnership demonstrates this indicator, including documentation when possible in a link or attachment.
5. Use the **Strategic Planning** column to note discussion on action steps to further address this indicator.
6. **Submit Worksheet A** in the appendix along with your Pathway Descriptions to the State Career Pathway partnership in your state and communicate with them about the application of the career pathway metrics. Your mapping and pathway descriptions will be an important input into the state's metrics self-assessment of its readiness to support the calculation of career pathway metrics for specific career pathways and pathway participants.
7. Return the completed form and all documentation to CLASP at careerpathways@clasp.org by the date in Fall 2014 agreed to with CLASP.

Additional Optional Questions in this Self-Assessment Version Only

In addition to the Alliance for Quality Career Pathways, CLASP is engaged in two other career pathway initiatives. The first is collecting information on career pathways that include a two-generation approach, which brings together stakeholders focused only on children or only on parents to modify or create new policies that address the needs of both. The second is researching how career pathway partnerships may be engaging in efforts to improve job quality (e.g.. improving wages or encouraging employers to provide reliable schedules and paid sick leave). For more information on two-generation approaches, read CLASP's brief, *Thriving Children, Successful Parents: A Two-Generation Approach to Policy*. A summary of the two-generation brief is available here. For more information on job quality, click here.

As your partnership completes this self-assessment tool, please note by the relevant indicators (under **Meeting the Indicator**) whether your partnership is engaging in two-generation and/or job quality efforts. For example:

- Are early education or child care system partners included in your state career pathway partnership? (criterion 1)
- Does your partnership's shared definition of a career pathway approach include a two-generation approach or aspects of job quality (e.g., improved wages; paid sick days; paid family and medical leave; stable, predictable, and/or flexible schedules to help workers meet obligations to family, schooling, or second jobs; or employer-provided health, retirement, and other benefits)? (criterion 1)
- Does your engagement with employers include working with them to improve the quality of jobs, as well as providing opportunities for career advancement? (criterion 2)
- Does your partnership include early education/child care policies or job quality policies in your policy improvement efforts for career pathways? (criterion 4)
- Does your partnership include data or metrics on early education/child care or job quality in your efforts? (criterion 5)

We have inserted three asterisks (***) by the indicators for which these questions may be most relevant. CLASP does not expect that your partnership is doing any or all of these things, but we are interested in learning more if they are part of your work. Thank you for your assistance in these learning efforts.

Information on Your Career Pathway Partnership

Name of Partnership	
Location (city/region, state)	
Names, agencies and email addresses of those participating in this self-assessment process	
Primary Contact Name/email/phone	
Other Information	

Criteria & Indicators for a Quality System		Meeting the Indicator	Strategic Planning
Criterion 1: Local/regional partners—in conjunction with state partners—are committed to a shared vision of industry sector based career pathways for youth and adults and to a strategy for building, scaling, and dynamically sustaining a local/regional career pathway system.			
Indicators 1.1 – 1.3 Indicators for Established Systems 1.4 – 1.6 *Additional Indicators for Enhanced Systems*	**Indicate** your partnership's current level (1-5)	**Provide** an example of how your partnership meets this indicator. If possible, attach or link to documents that demonstrate evidence. Note any special considerations or context that affects your partnership's ability to meet this indicator.	**Note** action steps for continuous improvement. (for partnership use only)
1.1. The local/regional career pathway system is built and maintained by public, private, and nonprofit partners at the local/regional level that support the essential features and functions in quality career pathways and programs (See Framework p. 18 for examples of partners; See Framework p. 12-15 for features and functions).***			
1.2. System partners adopt a shared local/regional strategy and formally commit their organizations to carrying out specific roles and responsibilities and to communicating and coordinating with each other to support the career pathway system.***			
1.3. System partners adopt a shared definition of career pathways and key related concepts and embed them into their own strategic plans/goals and into new and existing policies to support career pathways.***			
*1.4 System partners engage in visible and consistent messaging to show support for and to promote the career pathway approach and system.****			
*1.5 System partners link to and leverage other existing related initiatives.****			

1.6 *System partners communicate lessons learned from local/regional implementation of career pathways to state and federal partners in order to inform federal strategies and investments.*			

Criteria and Indicators for a Quality System	Meeting the Indicator		Strategic Planning
Criterion 2: Engage Employers and Integrate Sector Strategy Principles. Local/regional partners engage multiple employers, business associations, and labor unions in the local/regional career pathway system and follow sector strategy principles including being demand driven, employers are partners, not simply customers, of the career pathway system.			
Indicators 2.1 – 2.4 Indicators for Established Systems 2.5 *Additional Indicator for Enhanced Systems*	**Indicate** your partnership's current level (1-5)	**Provide** an example of how your partnership demonstrates the indicator. If possible, attach or link to documents that provide evidence.	**Note** action steps for continuous improvement.
2.1. Multiple employers, business associations and/or labor partners jointly develop and participate in the career pathway system (See Framework p. 22 for employer participation examples).			
2.2. Employer, business associations, and/or labor partners make a demonstrated investment – of time, money, in-kind support, etc. – in building, scaling, and dynamically sustaining the career pathway system.			
2.3 System partners use labor market intelligence on current and future industry sector demand to inform the development and ongoing relevance of career pathways.			
2.4 System partners integrate the following key principles of sector strategies into the career pathway system: *** a. Focus on regional, in-demand sectors or cross-sector occupations based on analysis of labor market intelligence. b. Focus on "dual customers" – both the worker/job seeker and the employer workforce needs. c. Focus on system and credential alignment. d. Focus on workforce solutions for a consortium of employers within an industry sector or cross-sector occupation, i.e. an industry or sector partnership.			

2.5 *Employers and labor partners support participant involvement and progression in career pathways through their policies and practices to retain, reward, and advance employees.****			
Criteria and Indicators for a Quality System		**Meeting the Indicator**	**Strategic Planning**
Criterion 3: Collaborate to Make Resources Available: Each system partner identifies, prioritizes, and leverages resources available for the career pathway system, pathways, and programs.			
Indicators 3.1 – 3.4 Indicators for Established Systems 3.5 *Additional Indicator for Enhanced Systems*	**Indicate** your partnership's current level (1-5)	**Provide** an example of how your partnership meets this indicator. If possible, attach or link to documents that demonstrate evidence. Note any special considerations or context that affects your partnership's ability to meet this indicator.	**Note** action steps for continuous improvement. (for partnership use only)
3.1. The local/regional career pathway system is convened and supported by designated staff; partners ensure adequate human and technology capacity as well as professional development.			
3.2. System partners make available the necessary resources, tools, infrastructure, and time to support practitioners in providing the essential features and functions of career pathways and programs (See Framework p. 12-15 for features and functions).***			
3.3. System partners leverage and coordinate *existing* federal, state, and/or private/philanthropic resources to support the local/regional career pathway system, pathways, and programs. ***			
3.4 System partners leverage and coordinate *new* federal, state, and/or private/philanthropic resources to support the local/regional career pathway system, pathways, and programs.***			
3.5 *System partners adopt a joint funding strategy to build, scale, and dynamically sustain the local/regional career pathway system, pathways, and programs.* ***			

Criteria and Indicators for a Quality System	Meeting the Indicator		Strategic Planning
Criterion 4: Implement Supportive Local/Regional Policies. Local/regional partners implement supportive policies for the career pathway system, pathways, and programs.			
Indicators 4.1 – 4.3 Indicators for Established Systems 4.4 – 4.5 *Additional Indicators for Enhanced Systems*	**Indicate** your partnership's current level (1-5)	**Provide** an example of how your partnership meets this indicator. If possible, attach or link to documents that demonstrate evidence. Note any special considerations or context that affects your partnership's ability to meet this indicator.	**Note** action steps for continuous improvement. (for partnership use only)
4.1. System partners provide clear and consistent guidance on cross-system alignment and the allowable use of resources to support career pathways.***			
4.2. System partners adjust *existing* local/regional and institutional policies and internal structures to remove barriers and to facilitate the successful development and implementation of the essential features and functions of career pathways. Policy categories include those related to the following: Access to and student success in career pathway programs, alignment, and non-duplication; Quality and labor market value of education, training, and credentials; Funding and resources; Academic and career navigation; Support services; Data and performance measures (See Framework p. 20).***			
4.3. System partners adopt and implement *new* local/regional and institutional policies and internal structures that support the successful development and implementation of the essential features and functions of career pathways.***			
4.4. *System partners – in conjunction with state partners – adopt a shared policy agenda to build, scale, and dynamically sustain the state and local/regional career pathway systems.* ***			
4.5. *System partners – in conjunction with state partners as appropriate – pursue legislative policy reforms to support state and local/regional career pathway systems.* ***			

Criteria and Indicators for a Quality System		Meeting the Indicator	Strategic Planning
Criterion 5: Use Data and Shared Measures: Local/regional partners use data to assess, demonstrate, and improve career pathway participant outcomes (See Framework p.26 for AQCP Metrics).			
Indicators 5.1 – 5.2 Indicators for Established Systems 5.3 – 5.6 *Additional Indicators for Enhanced Systems*	**Indicate** your partnership's current level (1-5)	**Provide** an example of how your partnership meets this indicator. If possible, attach or link to documents that demonstrate evidence. Note any special considerations or context that affects your partnership's ability to meet this indicator.	**Note** action steps for continuous improvement. (for partnership use only)
5.1. System partners – in conjunction with state partners – develop their capacity and provide data to support the use of longitudinal data at the local/regional levels for development and implementation of state and local/regional career pathway systems. This includes, as appropriate, data collected by community-based career pathway programs as well as educational institutions.			
5.2. System partners – in conjunction with state partners as appropriate – develop a plan to evaluate how well the local/regional career pathway system is performing and to support continuous improvement efforts. The evaluation plan includes input from all local/regional system partners and constituents.			
5.3. *System partners – in conjunction with state partners – produce cross-agency data and publish reports on career pathway participants' progress and success in earning credentials and achieving labor market outcomes using a consistent set of shared measures. Results are presented in terms of progress and success along the career pathways, not by federal program/funding silos. Information is provided to system partners, policymakers, local/regional level partners, and participants/potential participants.* See Framework p.26 for AQCP metrics.			
5.4. *System partners use a set of shared interim and outcome measures to drive continuous improvement of processes and practices relevant to career pathways.* See Framework p.26 for AQCP metrics.			

5.5 *System partners use analysis of career pathway data on interim and outcomes measures to implement their own or recommend state and/or federal policy changes to support career pathway systems.*			
5.6 *System partners – in conjunction with state partners as appropriate – adopt, secure funding for, and implement a plan to evaluate how well the local/regional career pathway system is performing and to support continuous improvement efforts. The evaluation plan includes input from all local/regional system partners and constituents.*			

STOP: Criterion 6 asks for aggregated information across all of your partnerships' career pathways. We recommend that you complete the table immediately below for each of your career pathways and then complete Criterion 6. *Note: This information, along with **Worksheet A: Mapping AQCP Metrics to Career Pathways** below prepared by your partnership (see Appendix) will be used by the State Career Pathway partnership to support its assessment of readiness to calculate the AQCP metrics for career pathways in the state.*

Information on Your Career Pathways – Complete one chart for each pathway (which could include one or more linked and aligned programs). This table can be copied and saved as a separate table for each career pathway and attached to your completed Local/Regional System Self-Assessment Tool.

Name of Partnership:	
Career Pathway Name:	
List the Partners Involved in this Pathway:	
Industry or Occupational Focus of Career Pathway:	*Describe the industry or occupational focus of the career pathway.*
Target Population(s) e.g., WIA Adult; WIA Youth; TANF Recipients; ABE Participants; 2-generation focus (helping families at 100% of poverty or below); Low-wage workers; Veterans	*Describe the target populations that are the focus of the career pathway.*
Starting Skill Level: e.g., Adult secondary education.	*Describe the beginning skill level for the career pathway.*
Ending Credential: e.g., Associate Degree in Nursing.	*Describe the ending credential that can be obtained by participants in the career pathway.*
Define how this program provides the **3 features** of quality career pathways (see Alliance Framework p. 12-13)	
Well-connected and transparent education, training, credentialing, and support service offerings (Indicator 6.1)	*List the required courses or other instruction/training provided in the career pathway, including any required activities or services to be provided.*
Multiple entry points including for those with limited education, English, skills and work experiences (i.e., bridges) (Indicator 6.2)	*List each of the entry points for the career pathway, beginning with the starting skill level entry point. What education or skill level is required at each entry point? What events trigger entry?*
Multiple exit points at successively higher levels leading to family supporting employment and aligned with subsequent entry points (Indicator 6.3)	*List each of the exit points for the career pathway, culminating in the ending credential in the pathway. What credential(s) is obtained at each exit point, if applicable? What events trigger exit?*
Define how this program provides the **4 essential functions** in quality career pathways and programs (see Alliance Framework p. 14-15)	
Participant-focused education and training (Indicator 6.4)	*Describe how the education and training provided through the pathway is participant-focused.*
Consistent and non-duplicative assessments of	*Describe the assessment process for participant's education, skills and assets/needs.*

Name of Partnership:	
Career Pathway Name:	
List the Partners Involved in this Pathway:	
participants' education, skills, and assets/needs (Indicator 6.5)	
Support services and career navigation assistance (Indicators 6.7, 6.8, 6.9)	*Describe the academic advising, support services, career navigation assistance, and personal skill development and supports available through the career pathway.*
Employment services and work experiences (Indicators 6.10, 6.11)	*Describe the employment services and work experiences available through the career pathway.*

Criteria and Indicators for a Quality System		Meeting the Indicator	Strategic Planning
Criterion 6: Implement and Integrate Evidence-Based Practices and Processes: Local/regional partners implement practices and processes to provide the essential features and functions in quality career pathways and programs. Partners measure success and engage in a continuous improvement process to develop and integrate a set of evidence-based practices and processes that optimize career pathway participant success (See Framework p. 12-15 for more on features and functions).			
Indicators 6.1 – 6.11 Indicators for Established Systems (6.1 - 6.3 Features; 6.4 – 6.11 Functions)	**Indicate** your partnership's current level (1-5)	**Provide** an example of how your partnership meets this indicator. If possible, attach or link to documents that demonstrate evidence. Note any special considerations or context that affects your partnership's ability to meet this indicator.	**Note** action steps for continuous improvement. (for partnership use only)
6.1. Each career pathway includes and measures the effectiveness of ***well-connected and transparent education, training, credential, and support service offerings*** (that may be delivered through multiple linked and aligned programs).			
6.2. Each career pathway has ***multiple entry points*** and evidence that they enable well-prepared participants, as well as targeted populations with limited education, skills, English, and work experiences, to successfully enter the career pathway (targeted populations served by career pathways may include adult education or other lower-skilled adult students, English language learners, offenders or ex-offenders, high school students, disconnected or "opportunity" youth, some former military personnel, un- or underemployed adults or others.)			
6.3. Each career pathway has ***multiple exit points*** with proven labor market value at successively higher levels leading to self- or family-supporting employment and aligned with subsequent entry points.			
6.4. Each career pathway program provides ***participant-focused education and training***.			
6.5. Each career pathway program provides consistent and non-duplicative (across partners) ***assessment of participants' education, skills, and competencies.***			

6.6. Each career pathway program provides consistent and non-duplicative ***assessment of participants' support service assets and needs***. ***			
6.7. Each career pathway program provides ***academic advising and supports*** that keep participants engaged as they move along the career pathway.			
6.8. Each career pathway program provides ***career navigation assistance***.			
6.9. Each career pathway program provides ***personal skill development and supports*** for participants assessed to need them.***			
6.10. Each career pathway program provides ***employment services*** for participants.			
6.11. Each career pathway program provides ***work experiences*** for participants.			

Return the completed form and all documentation to CLASP at careerpathways@clasp.org by the date in Fall 2014 agreed to with CLASP. Thank you!

Appendix

Mapping AQCP Metrics to Career Pathways

Instructions: Local/Regional Career Pathway partnerships should also complete Worksheet A: Mapping AQCP Metrics to Career Pathways below. The purpose of this worksheet is to assess the applicability of each of the AQCP career pathway participant metrics to the career pathways being implemented by the partnership. Completing this mapping exercise is in partial fulfillment of Quality Criterion 5 for Local/Regional Career Pathway systems: **Use Data and Shared Measures:** Local/regional partners use data to assess, demonstrate, and improve career pathway participant outcomes (see Framework p.26 for AQCP Metrics). Completing this worksheet entails the following steps:

1. Review the career pathway descriptions that you prepared as part of your response to **Criterion 6** in the Self-Assessment Tool **(Career Pathway Descriptions)**. Consider the specific entry points to the career pathway, educational/skill levels associated with each entry point, primary instruction that occurs along the pathway, the credentials available at each exit point, and other features of the pathways.

2. Consider which of the AQCP career pathway metrics apply to each career pathway, which are appropriate for accountability purposes, and which are appropriate for continuous improvement purposes. Not all metrics are appropriate for all pathways, since pathways differ in terms of their starting skill levels, ending credentials, industry focus (or lack thereof), and targeted populations. Indicate just the metrics that are applicable to each career pathway.

3. Discuss these results and consider what metrics have overall applicability to the career pathways being implemented by your local/regional partnership. What metrics will you need to be able to calculate to provide overall accountability and support for continuous improvement of your pathway results? Use **Worksheet A** to record these results for your partnership.

4. Submit Worksheet A along with your Pathway Descriptions to the State Career Pathway partnership in your state and communicate with them about the application of the career pathway metrics. Your mapping and pathway descriptions will be an important input into the state's self-assessment of its readiness to support the calculation of career pathway metrics for specific career pathways and pathway participants.

Worksheet A: Mapping AQCP Metrics to Career Pathways

Instructions: Indicate with an "X" which of the AQCP career pathway metrics is relevant and applicable to the career pathways being implemented by the local/regional partnership. This is meant to capture what is applicable collectively.

Local/Regional Partnership:	**Contact person:**

Career Pathway Metric *(Please refer to the framework document for metric definitions)*	**General Applicability:** This metric makes sense for career pathways given the starting skill levels, ending credentials, industry focus and target populations served.	**Accountability:** This metric is appropriate for accountability purposes for career pathways.	**Continuous Improvement:** This metric is appropriate for tracking improvement in pathway results over time.
A. Interim Education and Training Outcomes			
A.1. Educational level gains			
A.2. High school diploma or equivalency attainment			
A.3. Developmental/remedial education completion			
A.4. College-level pathway course completion			
A.5 College-level math or English course completion			
A.6. Retention in pathway coursework			
A.7. Pathway credit accumulation 1 (12 semester hours)			
A.8. Pathway credit accumulation 2 (24 semester hours)			
A.9. Earnings progression			
B. Pathway education and training outcomes			
B.1. Pathway license, industry certification or apprenticeship certificate attainment			
B.2. Pathway certificate attainment			
B.3. Pathway Associate degree attainment			
B.4. Pathway Associate degree attainment or transfer to a 2 or 4 year institution			
C. Labor market outcomes			
***C.1**. Initial employment*			
***C.2**. Employment in targeted industry sector*			
***C.3**. Subsequent employment retention*			
***C.4**. Initial earnings*			
***C.5**. Earnings change*			
***C.6**. Subsequent earnings*			

Email your completed Self-Assessment Tool and supporting documentation to careerpathways@clasp.org. Thank you!

CLASP/AQCP