

WIOA Adult Education & Career Pathways Work Group
June 12, 2015

Attendees: Attendees: Patricia Tyler, Mary Sloat, Raiana Mearns , Elizabeth Sinnes, Bruce England, Michelle Frazier, Helen Coupe, Bayo Adetunji, Jeff Trice, Shannon Millington, Marina Solovey and Jeanne-Marie Holly By phone: Alice Wirth, Ellen Payne, Sue Page, Monica Talley, Erin Roth

The meeting opened at 10:00 am with opening remarks and a recap of the May 29th meeting by Patricia Tyler. The workgroup discussed challenges to career pathways planning raised during the 5/29/15 presentation by Dan McDermott and Patty Silver, including, limited funding due to budget cuts, high demand/low wage occupations, low literacy levels, not in the labor force, conflicting partner polices, expectations, reporting requirements, and performance measures, WIOA approved training provider list, inability to track outcomes, achieving true collaboration, (not just signatures), identifying appropriate programs.

Using the Career Pathways Readiness Assessment Tool, Patricia Tyler reviewed the six key elements and asked workgroup members to identify other challenges (see handouts).

Challenges to Career Pathway Planning:

Identify sector or Industry and Engaging Employers

Businesses are critical partners and must be included in career pathways discussions. It is important that they help build the process. Getting them to them to the planning table can be a challenge.

Designing Programs

The program design will take time to plan curriculum, recruiting participants, and identifying the right training. Additional planning time is required for curriculum design. Prescreening applicants is also a critical piece. Different areas of expertise need to come together for the program to be successful. Multiple training providers involved in the process, some providers may not be approved by MHEC, though they are good providers. Some policy changes are needed to make this work.

Identifying Funding Needs and Sources

This is a huge challenge. The “unknowns” make it difficult to plan. Funds would need to be committed in advance. Differences in eligibility criteria may raise questions about who may be served with different funding streams.

Planning issues

Businesses haven't typically made a contribution to training except for incumbent workers. Who is responsible for funding occupational training? The locals have to define implementation strategies.

Aligning Policies and Programs

Allowable uses of funding vary; policy differences across state agencies and WIB's; and credit/non-credit articulation issues. Most career pathways programs are non-credit. There is no clear pathway from non-credit to credit bearing programs.

Measure Systems Change and Evaluate Performance

Different tests/assessments may be used by WIBs and adult education providers. It would help if we used the same measures.

Adult education has never been required to measure effectiveness in serving the business community. There are concerns about how this outcome will be reported.

All sectors will be measured on academic skills gain.

Patricia Tyler noted that WIOA has done away with incentives; sanctions are in place for poor performance.

Alignment can be challenging as increasing literacy skills takes time and WIBs are encouraged to adopt a "rapid response" approach. Policy changes at the federal level might be needed for this to work.

WIOA Proposed Regulations and Comment Period:

Patricia Tyler led a discussion on the WIOA proposed regulations. Members were encouraged to provide comment on the proposed regulations before July 15th, the end of the comment period. The group reviewed some of the comments submitted by the National Council of State Adult Education Directors on Title I, Title II and the Joint Rule. (These points are covered in the handouts sent out on 6/11/15).

Additional discussion included the following:

- The challenge of keeping someone engaged in continuing along a career pathway beyond the first step.
- Clarifications on the definition of "exit",
- The role of distance learning in adult education

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm. The next meeting will be held on July 10, 2015 at MDOT.