Career Pathways System Overview

An Introduction to the Career Pathway System

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), enacted on July 22, 2014 requires cross-system alignment; education and training that is focused on the needs of high-demand industry sectors and occupations; regional collaborations focused on the skill needs of regional economies; and the establishment of career pathways systems that make it easier for all employment seekers to attain the education, skills and credentials needed for family-supporting jobs and careers. Career pathways programs offer a clear sequence, or pathway, of educational coursework (including English language acquisition) and/or training credentials aligned with employer-validated work readiness standards and competencies along with appropriate support services.

Benefits of Career Pathways

Career pathways can offer employment seekers, as well as current workers desiring to advance their employment status, an efficient and customer-centered approach to training and education by connecting, often through co-enrollment, the necessary adult basic education, occupational training, postsecondary education, career and academic advising, and support services for them to prepare for, obtain, and progress in a career (USDOE).

Career pathways help employment seekers and incumbent workers think about their employment in terms of careers and career advancement, and not just about obtaining a single job. Career pathways provide people in low-wage jobs or with few skills the opportunity to obtain better jobs. Pathways increase participant motivation as they: can gain a clearer understanding of how the pathway leads them from one employment opportunity to the next; understand the estimated timelines for completion; experience success as they progress and meet benchmarks; and receive guidance and tools to help make informed decisions about their next steps.

Flexibility of Career Pathways

Although the model shows sequential steps toward goal attainment, participant progress is not always linear. An important element of career pathways is the inclusion of multiple points of entry and exit. Depending on prior education, skills, and/or work experience, the pathway may be entered at various points. Likewise, personal situations, the need for immediate employment, or even a change in the career goal may lead someone to exit the pathway. As part of supporting participants, it should be made clear how they can reenter the pathway.

NOTE: The list of resources, requirements and employment opportunities for each pathway is not comprehensive. They are included as starting points and they can be built upon and adapted to the specific career goals of each participant.

Career Pathways Roadmap

1 Intake & Assessment

2 Recommend Options

3 Select Pathway

4 Set Employment Goals

5 Develop Plan
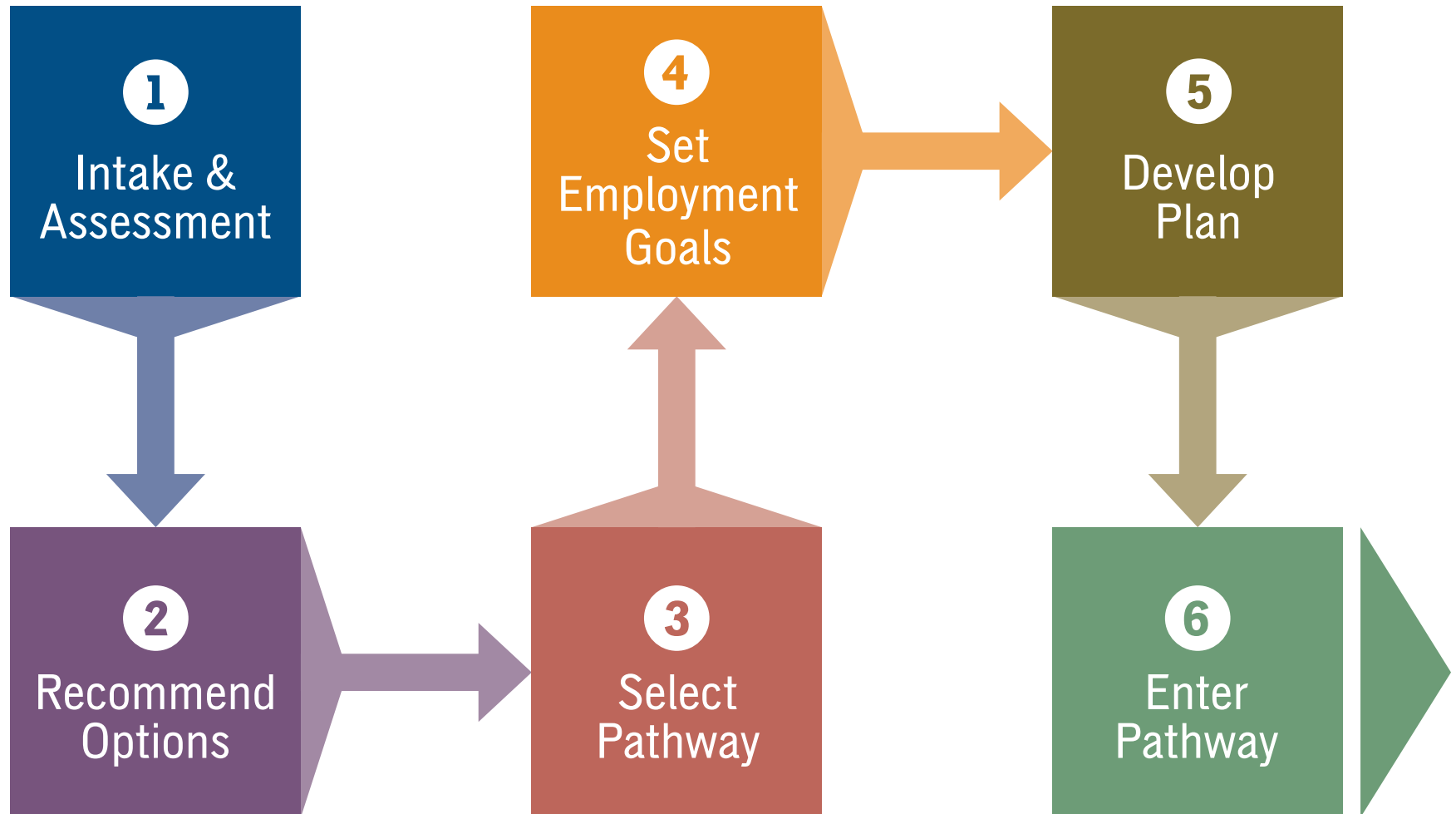
6 Enter Pathway

Career Pathways Process

1 **Intake & Assessment**

Typically occurs at a Workforce Solutions or Adult Education location.

Assessment of skills and needs (high school completion, foundational academics, work readiness, support services and English language acquisition)

Initial identification of career interests and alignment check with existing skills/experience

Unskilled jobs may be necessary while participants progress on their career pathway. While immediate employment may not require any special training or degrees, workers should possess/demonstrate the following work readiness skills:
- Ability to learn on the job
- Ability to follow directions/instructions
- Patience
- Positive attitude.

If other skills and training are needed for workers to obtain an unskilled job, this should be included in their development plan. Job types include custodians, fast food workers, housekeepers, furniture movers, retail workers, *etc*.

2 **Recommendations**

Results of the assessments and career interest survey are used to develop a short list of recommended career pathway options that are likely to be successful. The list, along with detailed information about the pathway options are then reviewed and discussed with the participant.

3 **Pathway Selection**

Based on feedback shared in the recommendation phase, participant makes a pathway selection.

4 **Employment Goals**

The agency works with the participant to develop immediate, mid-term, and long-term employment goals which align with current levels of education/experience and the planned milestones.

5 **Plan Development**

After pathway selection, the agency works with the participant to develop an education and training plan which includes an overall timeline, as well as the timeframe for key milestones.

6 **Pathway Engagement**
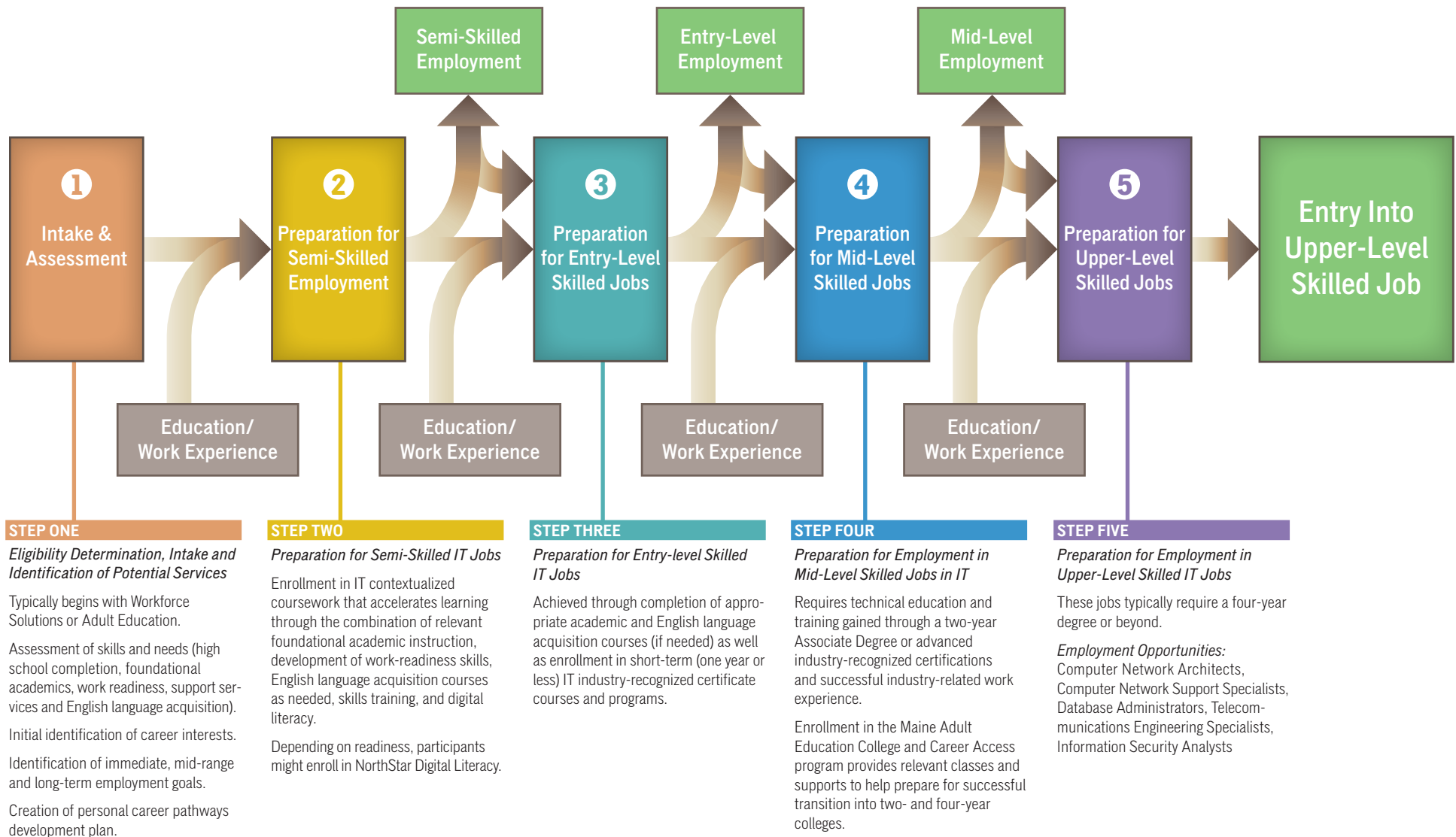
The participant begins their career pathway journey with regular check-ins and guidance from the agency. As progress is made along the pathway, the agency guides the participant to improved employment opportunities as those milestones are achieved. The agency also works with the participant to make any needed adjustments to the plan along the way to help ensure the success of the participant.

Information Technology (IT) Career Pathway

There are many areas of employment in the field of IT, including careers in computer infrastructure, IT security, gaming systems, quality assurance, and web design. Depending on the ultimate career goal, appropriate education and skills may be gained through the earning of industry recognized credentials (including micro-credentials), associate, bachelor's and advanced degrees, and on-the-job training.

Semi-Skilled Employment

Entry-Level Employment

Mid-Level Employment

❶ Intake & Assessment

❷ Preparation for Semi-Skilled Employment

❸ Preparation for Entry-Level Skilled Jobs

❹ Preparation for Mid-Level Skilled Jobs

❺ Preparation for Upper-Level Skilled Jobs

Entry Into Upper-Level Skilled Job

Education/Work Experience

Education/Work Experience

Education/Work Experience

Education/Work Experience

STEP ONE

Eligibility Determination, Intake and Identification of Potential Services

Typically begins with Workforce Solutions or Adult Education.

Assessment of skills and needs (high school completion, foundational academics, work readiness, support services and English language acquisition).

Initial identification of career interests.

Identification of immediate, mid-range and long-term employment goals.

Creation of personal career pathways development plan.

STEP TWO

Preparation for Semi-Skilled IT Jobs

Enrollment in IT contextualized coursework that accelerates learning through the combination of relevant foundational academic instruction, development of work-readiness skills, English language acquisition courses as needed, skills training, and digital literacy.

Depending on readiness, participants might enroll in NorthStar Digital Literacy.

STEP THREE

Preparation for Entry-level Skilled IT Jobs

Achieved through completion of appropriate academic and English language acquisition courses (if needed) as well as enrollment in short-term (one year or less) IT industry-recognized certificate courses and programs.

STEP FOUR

Preparation for Employment in Mid-Level Skilled Jobs in IT

Requires technical education and training gained through a two-year Associate Degree or advanced industry-recognized certifications and successful industry-related work experience.

Enrollment in the Maine Adult Education College and Career Access program provides relevant classes and supports to help prepare for successful transition into two- and four-year colleges.

STEP FIVE

Preparation for Employment in Upper-Level Skilled IT Jobs

These jobs typically require a four-year degree or beyond.

Employment Opportunities:
Computer Network Architects, Computer Network Support Specialists, Database Administrators, Telecommunications Engineering Specialists, Information Security Analysts

Information Technology (IT) Career Pathway Resources

STEP ONE

Initial Eligibility Determination, Intake and Identification of Potential Services

Typically begins with Workforce Solutions or Adult Education.

Assessment of skills and needs (high school completion, foundational academics, work readiness, support services, English language acquisition, and digital literacy).

Depending on readiness, participants might enroll in NorthStar Digital Literacy.

Initial identification of career interests, as well as aptitudes, and potential for success in that field (World of Work Inventory or similar vocational assessment), including O*NET Online.

Identification of immediate, mid-range and long-term employment goals.

Personal career pathways development plan.

Create an account with Maine JobLink

> **NOTE: The list of resources, requirements and employment opportunities for this pathway is not comprehensive. They are included as starting points and they can be built upon and adapted to the specific career goals of the participant.**

STEP TWO

Preparation for Semi-Skilled IT Jobs

Enrollment in Information Technology contextualized coursework that accelerates learning through the combination of relevant foundational academic instruction, English language acquisition courses if needed, work readiness, and skills training.

Depending on readiness, participants might enroll in basic computer courses.

Requirements for Employment:
High school completion, appropriate level of English language proficiency.

Additional skills may include retail experience, basic computer proficiency, and/or customer service experience.

Employment Opportunities:
Semi-skilled IT jobs may include assistant to a computer set-up technician, working with computer repair (either self-taught or as an assistant), office helper with Microsoft experience.

Average Salary:
$15–17/hour

STEP THREE

Preparation for Entry-level Skilled IT jobs

Achieved through completion of appropriate academic and English language acquisition courses if needed, as well as enrollment in short-term (one year or less) IT industry-recognized certificate courses and programs.

Click the links below for details:
- *Central Maine Community College:* CompTIA+, CompTIA Security, Computer Information Specialist+
- *Eastern Maine Community College:* Computer Repair Technology, Coding
- *York County Community College:* Networked Systems Technology

  Help Desk and User Support
- *Maine Department of Education:* Maine Adult Education College and Career Access program
- Computer Support Specialist Micro-Credential

Requirements for Employment:
Relevant credentials listed above.

Employment Opportunities:
Help Desk and User Support, Technical Support, Hardware Repair

Average Salary:
$18–23/hour

STEP FOUR

Preparation for Employment in Mid-Level Skilled Jobs in IT

Requires technical education and training gained through a two-year associate degree or advanced industry recognized certifications and successful industry-related work experience.

Enrollment in the Maine Adult Education College and Career Access program program provides relevant classes and supports to help prepare for a successful transition into two- and four-years colleges.

Click the links below for details:
- Central Maine Community College
- Eastern Maine Community College
- Southern Maine Community College
- Washington County Community College
- York County Community College IT
- Computer Support Specialist Micro-Credential

Requirements for Employment:
Associate Degree
Industry-Recognized Credential

Employment Opportunities:
IT Support Specialist, Search Engine Optimization Specialist, Computer Technician, IT Consultant

Average Salary:
$57,000–68,000/year

STEP FIVE

Preparation for Employment in Upper-Level Skilled IT Jobs

Typically requires a four-year degree or beyond.

Click the links below for details:
- University of Maine Augusta Computer Information Systems (CIS) Bachelor Degree
- University of Southern Maine IT Bachelor Degree
- Southern New Hampshire University
- University of Maine

Employment Opportunities:
Computer Network Architects, Computer Network Support Specialists, Database Administrators, Telecommunications Engineering Specialists, Information Security Analysts, IT Security

Average Salary:
$98,000–132,000/year