

MARYLAND CAREER PATHWAYS

Maryland was one of nine (9) states and two (2) tribal areas asked by the US Department of Labor to participate in a Career Pathways Local Implementation Planning Grant. This one year planning grant was for a total of \$60,000 with the grant period to begin July 1, 2010, but was extended to September 30, 2011. We were asked to identify one local Workforce Investment Board Area to design a plan and implementation strategy for Career Pathways The Upper Shore WIB was selected for the following reasons: 1) their history of innovation; 2) the rural nature of the region; 3) Chesapeake College only recently became the grant recipient for all adult education programs in all 5 counties the College serves; and 4) the unique partnership between the WIB and the College.

Maryland's approach was to develop the following two (2) teams: a Travel (or Planning) Team and a Home (or Policy) Team. The Travel Team membership was identified by the LWIB Director and represented all the interested parties and stakeholders in the region along with key leadership from DLLR's Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning. The Home Team membership included the Maryland Workforce Corporation (MWC), Annie E Casey, Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF), state agencies and others that could help identify financial resources, align programs, change practices and policies at the State level when necessary to support Career Pathways. Two joint meetings of the Travel and Home Team were held to brief both groups on the purpose of the effort and to provide an update on progress, create alignment of policies and build support for the Career Pathways approach.

The Travel Team was provided with a coach to guide the process and received technical assistance when the team attended two (2) institutes at the US Department of Labor. The institute provided focused time for the team to develop its plan, access to subject matter experts, facilitators, and note takers. In addition to attending the institutes, the team met monthly and formed two (2) sub-committees: Program Planning and Labor Shed Analysis, to drive those critical components of the process.

The Upper Shore WIB, in coordination with Chesapeake College, has completed their implementation plan which includes several key components:

- Use of labor shed information to identify industry needs and career pathway options and ensure a real pathway out of poverty.
- Infusion of career development in the adult education and English as a Second Language programs;
- Explored the potential for building bridge programs from one segment of study to the next, to ensure success transition along the pathway.
- Engaged key industry leaders in the designed programs of study identification of industry certifications, and assistance in placement in work experience, work study and/or placement into employment.
- Worked to develop true partnerships between adult education, workforce and the community colleges to address all aspects of the development of the Career Pathways approach.
- Infused career development and working now to infuse financial literacy into existing curriculum; provide focus on next step after program completion; and raise expectations for completers to enter higher education and/or training.

- Seeking additional support to identify the next possible career pathway option in another industry, designed to address workforce shortage areas while providing an additional option for training designed to be a pathway out of poverty.
- Designed and ran a pilot program for the implementation of a Career Pathways program. This Pilot focused on recruitment of English Language Learners into a special CNA program. Of the 9 students enrolled, 7 are scheduled to complete with graduation to be held on November 29th. The two students who were on the borderline earned a 79 and a 78 on their final exams; an 80 was necessary to pass. They were not able to participate in the clinical experience because of their scores. However, the College did agree to "scholarship" the two non-completers to take another CNA course at no additional cost after receiving additional language instruction. It seems the students know the material very well, but their language issues were the barrier to successful completion. It is ironic that these two are already in the health field. One is the doctor from the Dominican Republic who is working a minimum wage job dispensing medications and the other is Iranian and just got a job as a Pharmacy Technician.

With the no cost extension of the Career Pathways Local Implementation Planning Grant, DLLR's Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning was able to host the Maryland Career Pathways Summit held on September 23, 2011. The Summit was attended by 250 people representing adult education providers, community college representatives, local Workforce Investment Board Directors and Chairs, local Department of Social Services Directors, and others within the workforce system from across the state.

The purpose of the Summit was to create statewide awareness of the National Career Pathways movement and an understanding of the six (6) key elements in the development of Career Pathways in Maryland; describe critical components and required partnerships to the implementation of the Career Pathways approach; discuss Best Practices and provide an opportunity for discussion on the challenges and benefits of the implementation of Career Pathways. The intent is to provide detail on DLLR's approach to the implementation of Career Pathways and its impact on the way DWDAL will do business in the future.

While this Summit not only served as the culmination event for the purposes of the US Department of Labor's Local Implementation Planning Grant, it also marks the beginning of statewide implementation of Career Pathways and will likely change the way the Division responds to grant salutations and distributes funding in the future. Planning now for local implementation of Career Pathways will better position local areas as requests for proposals for US DOL Innovation Grants are announced. All attendees were provided with a toolkit on DOL's process and details on each of the six (6) key elements with detailed instructions on each element. Periodic updates will be provided to all attendees as DWDAL moves forward in the implementation of Career Pathways.