

2025-2026

CAREER PATHWAYS BASELINE ASSESSMENT



PART I | STATE ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN



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In 2024, the Florida College Access Network (FCAN) prepared *Career Pathways Literature Review: A Review of Emerging Trends and Best Practices*, which analyzed key components of career pathways, effective practices, and emerging national trends.

Building on this foundation, FCAN partnered with TSG Advisors to conduct a baseline assessment of Florida’s career pathways landscape. Guided by the literature review, this document is organized around the core elements identified in the brief and offers a state-level scan to inform future industry-specific and regional analyses.

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BACKGROUND

CAREER PATHWAYS

Career pathways are a systematic approach to workforce development that links educational programs directly to employment opportunities. They provide structured routes for students to advance in their careers and education concurrently, integrating academic rigor, industry-relevant learning, work-based experiences, and targeted support services. Designed to meet the needs of both learners and employers, career pathways are accessible to a broad range of individuals, including youth and adults facing employment barriers.

COMPONENTS

- 1 Designed around current and future workforce needs.
- 2 Coordination across K-12, postsecondary, and workforce.
- 3 Hands-on experiences like internships and apprenticeships.
- 4 Wraparound services to help all learners succeed.
- 5 Continuous use of data to improve outcomes.
- 6 Flexible, progressive qualifications that support lifelong learning.

Florida's career pathways landscape cannot be fully understood without considering the impact of the REACH Act. As the centerpiece of the state's efforts to align education with workforce needs, the REACH Act builds on earlier reforms set in motion by Executive Order 19-31 and solidified through House Bill (HB) 1507.

These efforts reflect a deliberate shift toward a more unified, data-driven approach to career education—one that prioritizes credential value, labor market alignment, and cross-sector collaboration. Together, these policy mechanisms have redefined how Florida designs, delivers, and evaluates career pathways, with the REACH Act serving as the framework that ties it all together.

DELIVERABLE 1 | BASELINE ASSESSMENT

This deliverable will establish a strong foundation for launching and scaling Communities of Practice (CoPs). It includes an environmental scan to identify resources and gaps, stakeholder mapping, KPI development, and communication strategies to ensure alignment and engagement.

DESIGN PLAN FOR BASELINE ASSESSMENT

To meet this deliverable, the work will be divided into three parts to establish a strong foundation for considering career pathways CoPs.

1

This part, **Part I**, provides a state-level overview of career pathways, organized by key elements from the literature review.

2

Part II will consist of an industry-specific inventory and regional environmental scan to highlight local approaches, promising practices, and existing gaps.

3

Part III will offer recommendations for key performance indicators (KPIs) to support ongoing evaluation and alignment.

Together, these components will form the final baseline assessment and support FCAN as it considers developing a strategy for career pathways CoPs, guiding stakeholder engagement, resource coordination, and future planning.

FRAMEWORK OF KEY CAREER PATHWAYS ELEMENTS

Using the key elements outlined in the literature review, this scan offers a statewide perspective designed to guide future industry and regional assessments.



STACKABLE CREDENTIALS

How can Florida build a credential ecosystem that supports seamless progression across institutions and sectors? How can micro-credentials and badges strengthen career pathways?



COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

How can support services be tailored to meet the unique needs of different regions and student populations? How should we measure their impact on long-term career success and economic mobility?



MULTIPLE ON- AND OFF-RAMPS

What if Florida's credentialing ecosystem provided multiple on-ramps and off-ramps, enabling individuals to navigate their journeys with greater agility while meeting the state's evolving workforce demands?



WORK-BASED LEARNING

How can work-based learning align with academics and grow in complexity over time? How can Florida use tools like virtual reality to expand access in remote or under-resourced areas?



DATA-INFORMED DECISION MAKING

How can Florida use labor market data, student outcomes, and skills gap analysis to guide decisions? How should predictive analytics data shape career pathways policy and practice?



CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION

What structures and incentives can strengthen collaboration among K-12, higher ed, employers, and community partners?

STACKABLE CREDENTIALS

STATE CTE PATHWAYS

Florida's state-supported career and technical education (CTE) system is delivered by school districts and the 28 Florida College System (FCS) institutions. School districts offer CTE at the secondary level and postsecondary clock-hour programs through technical colleges, while FCS institutions provide certificates, associate degrees, and workforce bachelor's degrees. Together, they offer multiple pathways aligned with workforce needs, leading to industry-recognized credentials and career advancement.

MIDDLE SCHOOL CAREER EXPLORATORY COURSES

- Introduce students to the value of CTE.
- Provide early exposure to careers in Florida's 17 career clusters.
- Build a foundation for future participation in secondary CTE.

SECONDARY CTE

- Prepare students for high-demand, high-skill, and middle-to-high wage jobs.
- Offer sequenced courses that build academic, technical, and employability skills.
- Serve as pathways to postsecondary education and credentials.
- Include opportunities for dual enrollment, work-based learning, capstone projects, and industry certification.

POSTSECONDARY CTE

- Address workforce needs by preparing students for in-demand careers.
- Provide academic, technical, and employability skills aligned with industry.
- Support stackable credentials and clear career pathways.
- Offer acceleration options such as dual enrollment, credit for work experience, and industry certifications.

SECONDARY CAREER PATHWAYS

CAREER-THEMED COURSES

A career-themed course is a class or sequence of classes that leads to a CAPE industry certification or college credit. These courses are designed to prepare students for high-skill, high-demand careers through rigorous academics and industry-aligned training. Districts must offer at least two career-themed courses, and all secondary schools are encouraged to provide at least one. Students completing certifications are offered opportunities to earn postsecondary credit when the associated courses are aligned with an approved workforce program.



CAPE CAREER ACADEMIES

A CAPE career academy is a school-based program that combines a rigorous academic curriculum with industry-focused training aligned to local workforce needs. Students earn a standard high school diploma, an industry certification, and may receive postsecondary credit through articulation agreements. Academies emphasize strong work habits, hands-on learning, and real-world relevance, and often include partnerships with colleges, employers, and industry.



CAREER DUAL ENROLLMENT/EARLY COLLEGE

Career dual enrollment allows students in grades 6–12 to take college credit or technical courses that lead to industry-recognized certifications. Offered through partnerships with FCS institutions and technical colleges, these programs help students enter high-skill, high-wage careers faster, with no cost for tuition, registration, or lab fees. Early college programs, also offered in partnership with local school districts and FCS institutions, allow high school students to enroll full-time in college courses and earn credit toward an associate degree through a structured, accelerated pathway.



FLORIDA'S CAREER CLUSTERS

Florida's CTE system is built around 17 career clusters that align education with workforce needs. The table below displays the number of programs across key delivery formats: middle school courses, secondary courses, and postsecondary credentials, including career certificates (CCs), college credit certificates (CCCs), and associate in science (AS) degrees.

	Middle	Secondary	Post-secondary
Agriculture, Food, & Natural Resources Agritechnology, animal and plant science, food processing, and environmental science.	9	18	CC: 5 AS: 9 CCC: 13
Architecture & Construction Designing, planning, building, and maintaining the built environment.	4	14	CC: 16 AS: 6 CCC: 7
Arts, A/V Technology, & Communication Multimedia production, broadcasting, journalism, and telecommunications.	9	16	CC: 18 AS: 14 CCC: 34
Business Management & Administration Planning, organizing, and managing business operations in every sector of the economy.	11	13	CC: 8 AS: 8 CCC: 20
Education & Training Teaching, administration, and educational support services to improve public education.	4	3	CC: 5 AS: 6 CCC: 8
Energy Planning, management, generation, transmission, and distribution of various energy sources.	3	3	CC: 5 AS: 3 CCC: 4
Engineering & Technology Education Foundational skills in problem-solving and engineering design using math, science, and technology.	4	18	CC: 0 AS: 0 CCC: 0
Finance Banking, insurance, investment planning, and financial management across industries.	3	3	CC: 7 AS: 3 CCC: 5

FLORIDA'S CAREER CLUSTERS

	Middle	Secondary	Post-secondary
Government & Public Administration Governance, planning, public management, security, and regulatory services.	3	3	CC: 1 AS: 1 CCC: 2
Health Science Training in medical assisting, patient care, biomedical sciences, and nursing support services.	6	16	CC: 26 AS: 25 CCC: 16
Hospitality & Tourism Restaurant, lodging, travel, tourism, recreation, and amusement services.	4	5	CC: 7 AS: 6 CCC: 21
Human Services Counseling, family and community support, and consumer services.	7	10	CC: 5 AS: 2 CCC: 7
Information Technology Design, development, and management of computer systems and software.	10	25	CC: 20 AS: 14 CCC: 34
Law, Public Safety, & Security Law enforcement, legal services, emergency response, fire management, and security.	3	4	CC: 19 AS: 6 CCC: 7
Manufacturing Production, process development, repair, logistics, and quality control of goods.	3	6	CC: 28 AS: 10 CCC: 33
Marketing, Sales, & Service Marketing management, sales, merchandising, and public relations.	5	8	CC: 4 AS: 2 CCC: 5
Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics Planning and managing movement of goods and people by air, land, and sea.	3	12	CC: 28 AS: 11 CCC: 23

CREDENTIAL TYPES

DEGREE CREDENTIALS | ISSUED BY POSTSECONDARY

Associate in Science or Associate in Applied Science (AS/AAS) Degree | Two-year college credit program that prepares students for jobs requiring a technical degree.

Bachelor's Degree | Four-year college credit program that prepares students for occupations requiring a bachelor's degree.

NON-DEGREE CREDENTIALS | ISSUED BY POSTSECONDARY

Advanced Technical Certificate (ATC) | Short-term college credit program that provides advanced instruction for individuals who already hold a degree.

Applied Technology Diploma (ATD) | Short-term college credit or clock hour program that prepares students for entry into a specific occupation through technical instruction.

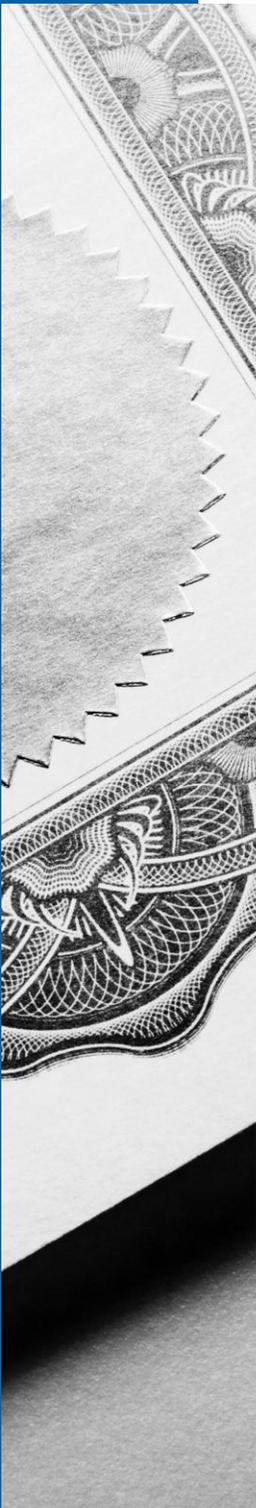
Career Certificate | Short-term clock hour program that prepares students for entry into employment through technical instruction.

College Credit Certificate (CCC) | Short-term college credit program that prepares students for employment in fields requiring some college credit but less than an associate degree.

NON-DEGREE CREDENTIALS | ISSUED BY OTHER ENTITY

Apprenticeship Certificate of Completion | Credential issued by the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) upon successful completion of the technical and academic standards required for the registered apprenticeship occupation.

Industry Certification | A credential recognized by business and industry that verifies a person's knowledge and skills in a specific field or occupation, typically awarded by a third-party organization or governing board.



CPALMS

CPalms, Florida’s official platform for academic standards and instructional resources, includes nearly 1,000 CTE programs. This resource unifies the state’s CTE system by centralizing resources like certifications, credentials, articulated credits, and lesson plans.

STATEWIDE COURSE NUMBERING

Florida’s Statewide Course Numbering System ensures consistent course credit across colleges and universities, supporting smooth transfer and reducing credit loss. It also includes CTE courses, helping students move efficiently through education and into the workforce.

ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS

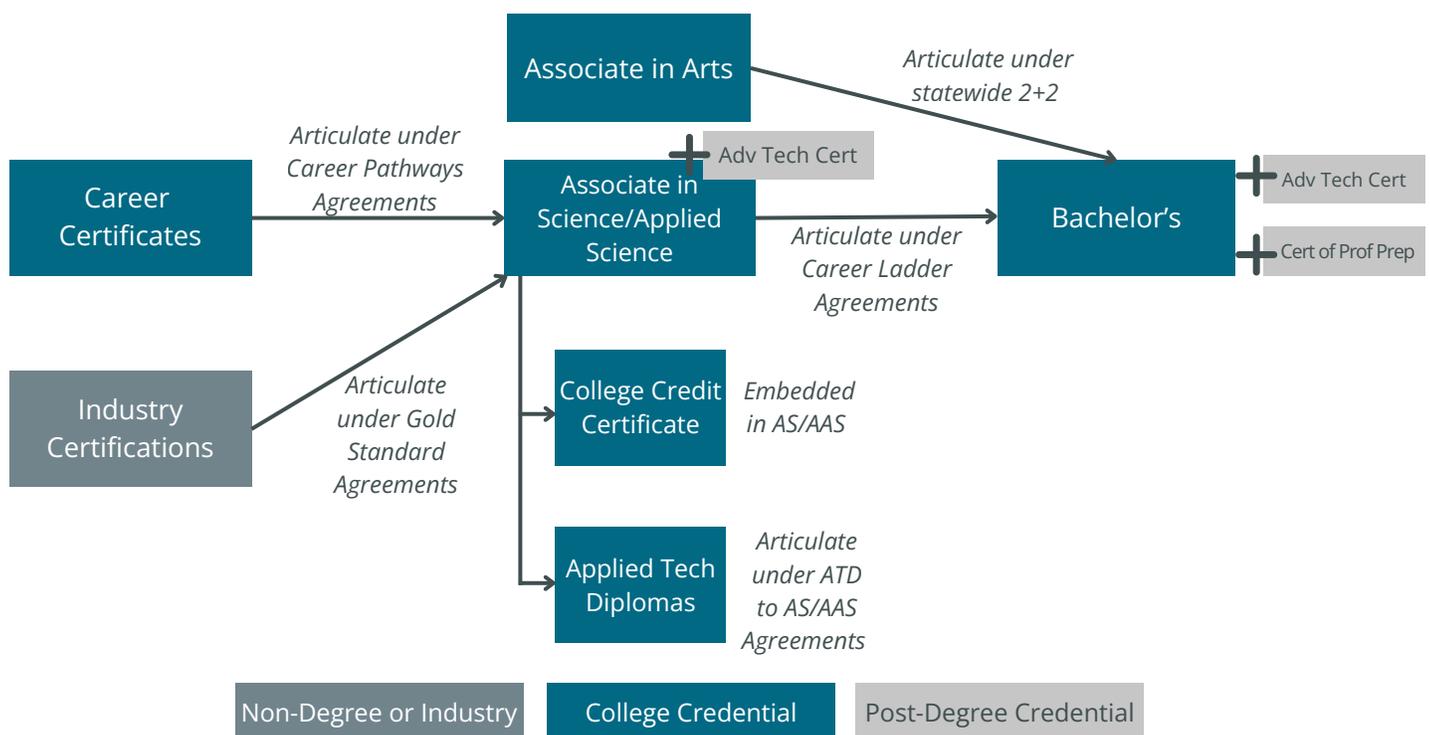
Florida has a strong stackable credential system that allows learners to move from short-term training to advanced degrees and into high-demand careers. Statewide articulation agreements guarantee a minimum number of college credits for students transitioning between programs, ensuring that specific credentials count toward a degree. Individual institutions may also recognize additional ways to award credit or support transfer beyond these statewide guarantees.

Career Pathways Agreements | Career certificate to AS/AAS degree

Gold Standard Articulation Agreements | Industry certification to AS/AAS degree

Career Ladder Agreements | AS/AAS degree to BS/BAS degree

Applied Technology Diploma Agreements | ATD to AS/AAS degree



TYPES OF STACKING

Stacking credentials can take several forms, depending on a learner's goals and the structure of available programs. These stacking models offer flexible, learner-centered routes to employment and advancement.



Vertical stacking follows a linear path, allowing students to move from a certificate to an associate and then a bachelor's degree (e.g., certificate → associate → bachelor's).



Horizontal stacking combines multiple related credentials to qualify for a specific job (e.g., CompTIA + Microsoft + Cisco = IT Systems Administrator).



Value-added stacking adds specialized credentials to existing degrees for targeted roles (e.g., bachelor's degree + Education Preparation Institute = credentialed to teach).

MICROCREDENTIALS AND DIGITAL BADGES

The Florida General Education Digital Badge program started in Fall 2022. State law now requires all public colleges and universities in Florida to award students a digital badge upon completion of certain general education courses. The first badge is Fundamentals of Written Communication. Students earn it by getting a grade of "C" or higher in ENC 1101 (English Composition I) or in a more advanced writing course that builds on ENC 1101.



CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING

In Florida, credit for prior learning—also known as prior learning assessment—allows students to earn credit or clock hours for knowledge and skills acquired outside traditional classroom settings. This can include experiences from military service, work, independent study, or non-credit instruction.

State policy guarantees credit for certain military training and roles listed in the Military Experience Equivalency List. Florida also recognizes law enforcement and corrections training, awarding credit for college-level instruction completed while serving in these fields.

COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

Florida provides wide-ranging support for students through middle school career planning, CTE graduation pathways, and advising, alongside postsecondary initiatives and strategies that connect students to educational programs statewide, ensuring seamless guidance and access to resources.

SERVICES THROUGH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Middle School Courses | Florida middle school students complete a personalized career and education planning course that includes research-based assessments, emphasizes entrepreneurship and employability skills, and results in an academic and career plan.

Xello | Interactive career planning system that helps students from elementary through high school discover their interests, set career goals, and map out educational pathways to achieve them.

CTE Pathway | High school students can earn a standard diploma by meeting GPA and assessment requirements and completing 18 credits, including 2 in CTE and 1.5 in electives or work-based learning programs.

FloridaShines | Comprehensive, state-funded platform designed to support Florida's secondary students by providing free tools for career exploration, academic planning, college research, and financial aid guidance.

Florida Virtual Campus (FLVC) | State-funded centralized, shared services organization that provides library, distance learning, IT/networking support, and FloridaShines to public colleges and universities in Florida.

DEEPER DIVE: XELLO

Xello is Florida's official K-12 career planning and work-based learning platform, offering engaging, age-appropriate tools. It is available in Spanish and other languages to support all learners.

Key features include:

- **Career assessments & exploration:** Access career profiles, labor market data, and education options.
- **Goal setting:** Plan courses, set goals, and manage college applications.
- **Work-based learning:** Build resumes & portfolios, and apply for local opportunities.
- **Readiness lessons:** Interactive lessons to build college and career skills.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Florida's financial assistance programs play a vital role in supporting career pathways by helping students access and complete education and training aligned with in-demand occupations. Through a combination of lottery- and state-funded financial aid, Florida reduces financial barriers for learners pursuing credentials of value.

MERIT-BASED

- **Bright Futures Scholarship:** For Florida high school graduates with high academic achievement. While Florida Academic Scholars and Florida Medallion Scholars are not specific to career pathways, there are two Bright Futures programs that are:
 - **Gold Seal Vocational Scholars:** Pays portion per credit hour for students in an AS degree or technical certificate. High school students must take at least three credits in a CTE program and meet GPA, test score, and volunteer/work hour requirements.
 - **Gold Seal CAPE Scholars:** Pays portion per credit hour of a career education or certificate program (AS degree or technical certificate.) High school students must earn a minimum of five articulated postsecondary credit hours through CAPE and meet the volunteer and work hour requirements. Upon completion of an associate degree, scholars may receive an award for a maximum of 60 credit hours towards a bachelor's.

WORKFORCE SHORTAGES

- **Open Door Grant:** For students in short-term CTE programs leading to a credential on the Master Credentials List (MCL).
- **Minority Teacher Education Scholarship:** For minority students pursuing teaching careers.
- **Florida Work Experience Program:** Offers work experience to complement education and career goals.
- **Florida First Responder Scholarship:** For students in EMT, paramedic, firefighter, or law enforcement training.

TARGETED POPULATIONS

- **Florida Student Assistance Grant:** For undergraduates with financial need.
- **First Generation Matching Grant:** For students whose parents did not go to college.
- **GATE Scholarship Program:** For high school dropouts pursuing adult education and career education concurrently.
- **Florida Farmworker Student Scholarship:** For farmworkers and their children.
- **José Martí Scholarship:** For students of Hispanic origin.
- **Mary McLeod Bethune Scholarship:** For students with financial need attending one of Florida's four historically Black colleges or universities.

SERVICES FOR ADULTS THROUGH AGENCIES AND BOARDS

Florida offers a range of workforce development services to help residents enhance their skills and secure employment. These efforts are supported by a strong network of WIOA core partners. By working together, these organizations help ensure that workforce, education, and training programs are connected and accessible across Florida.

Hope Florida | Community-based, statewide initiative that connects residents in need with local community organizations through "Hope Navigators" to promote economic self-sufficiency and reduce reliance on traditional government welfare programs.

Career Centers | Located throughout Florida via local workforce development boards in the CareerSource Florida network, offering services and technology to individuals seeking employment, particularly those with disabilities and experiencing barriers. Centers also serve businesses by providing access to qualified talent, customized training resources, and deploying on-site or virtual support through industry-aligned business services teams, mobile units, and strategic partnerships with economic development organizations.

Employ Florida | Website launched in 2005, offering online workforce services and a virtual career center for businesses and job seekers. Gives businesses access to resumes, hiring resources, training information, and state and local labor market data. It provides job seekers with position listings, job matching, and resume-building services.

DEEPER DIVE: FLORIDA READY TO WORK

Florida Ready to Work, created by Florida law and administered by FloridaCommerce, offers online training designed to build essential workplace skills that are relevant across a wide range of industries. The program is self-paced and accessible anytime, anywhere from a computer or tablet. Participants can earn career readiness credentials in soft skills, digital skills, and academic employability skills.



SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

To support special populations, Florida offers a variety of targeted strategies within its CTE programs. **Applied Academics for Adult Education** provides academic support and skill development for students enrolled in postsecondary CTE programs.

At the secondary level, CTE program standards can be modified to ensure students with disabilities have equal access. Flexible instructional models are available for students with significant cognitive disabilities, including programs such as **Vocational Employability Skills for Youth, Career Education Services for Students with Disabilities**, and both **Specialized Career Education Basic and Advanced programs** at the postsecondary level.

The Center for Students with Unique Abilities (CSUA) expands access to **inclusive postsecondary opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities**. Supporting Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Programs (FPCTPs), CSUA provides funding, oversight, and technical assistance to ensure students gain meaningful academic, social, and employment experiences that promote independence and career success.

SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Florida continues to advance inclusive workforce strategies that connect individuals with disabilities to meaningful employment. The **CareerSource Florida** network supports access through tools like the Abilities Work web portal and help desk, which link job seekers with disabilities to employers and resources via **Vocational Rehabilitation**. The Florida **Division of Blind Services** (FDBS) ensures high-quality services by requiring certified Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs).

Additional statewide initiatives offer **coordinated support for employment, training, and recovery**. These efforts demonstrate Florida's strong commitment to equitable workforce participation and service quality.



MULTIPLE ON- AND OFF-RAMPS

EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS

Career education in Florida is delivered through a wide range of secondary and postsecondary providers, but extends beyond traditional systems. Florida's workforce network also includes community-based organizations, apprenticeship sponsors, and employer-led training programs. Collectively, these providers broaden access to education, support upskilling and reskilling, and connect individuals with in-demand employment opportunities.

SECONDARY

- Public schools
- Charter schools
- Private schools
- Florida Virtual Campus

POSTSECONDARY

- Technical centers (school districts)
- Florida College System institutions
- Private institutions
- State universities

ADULT EDUCATION (ADULT HIGH SCHOOL/GED® PREP)

- Secondary and postsecondary
- Community-based organizations
- Corrections

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Secondary and postsecondary
- Training organizations
- Employers
- Apprenticeship sponsors



FLORIDA WINS

To advance Florida’s “no wrong door” approach—ensuring residents can access education and workforce training without navigating multiple agencies—the state launched the **FL WINS (Workforce Integrated Networking Systems)** initiative.

FL WINS improves service accessibility and strengthens statewide accountability by connecting systems and enabling integrated data sharing. Through this centralized opportunity portal, Floridians can access a wide range of state, federal, and local resources, regardless of where they first engage with the workforce system.

Floridians can visit the FL WINS website to explore available resources and services. By creating an account and sharing basic information about their goals and situation, users can search for services and programs offered by partner agencies, submit an intake form, and get connected to job and career counseling, workforce training, and disability assistive services.



GET THERE AND FUTURE OF WORK CAMPAIGN

Launched by FDOE, the Florida Chamber of Commerce, and CareerSource Florida, this initiative raises awareness of high-wage, in-demand careers and supports talent pipeline development. Using the Xello virtual platform, it helps students explore:

- **Industry Specific Career Pathways** | Descriptions of different career pathways and related programs of study in the 17 career clusters.
- **Adult Education** | Information about enrolling in Adult Basic Education, Adult High School, GED[®] preparation, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs.
- **Future of Work Florida** | Career pathway resources for students, parents, educators, and businesses, including a career pathway quiz, map, and readiness guide.
- **XploreFLED** | Designed for students outside of Florida to enroll in select online workforce education courses at Florida College System institutions.

WORK-BASED LEARNING

DEFINITION

“The term ‘work-based learning opportunity’ means an interaction with industry or community professionals that occurs in a workplace setting, to the extent possible, or a simulated environment at an educational institution that allows firsthand experience with tasks required in a given career field, is aligned with curriculum and instruction, and is provided in partnership with an educational institution.”

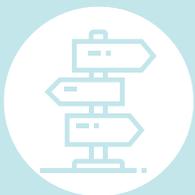
– Section 446.0915, Florida Statutes

CRITERIA

Work-based learning opportunities should:

- Be developmentally appropriate.
- Identify learning objectives for the term of experience.
- Explore multiple aspects of an industry.
- Develop workplace skills and competencies.
- Assess performance.
- Provide opportunities for work-based reflection.
- Link to next steps in career planning and preparation in a student’s chosen career pathway.
- Be provided in an equal and fair manner.
- Be documented and reported in compliance with state and federal labor laws.

CONTINUUM



Career Exploration

Activities that raise awareness of various careers and help students identify interests. Examples: career fairs, interest inventories, etc.



Career Exposure

Introduces students to industries and occupations without full WBL. Examples: job shadowing, mentoring, company tours, etc.



Career Engagement

Entry-level work-based learning that builds foundational skills. Examples: service learning, capstone projects, virtual simulations, etc.



Career Experience

In-depth, occupation-specific work-based learning that builds job-ready skills. Examples: OJT, clinicals, apprenticeships, etc.

DEEPER DIVE: TYPES OF CAREER EXPERIENCE

Clinical/Practicum | Supervised, structured experiences where students apply career-related skills to meet program or credentialing requirements.

On-the-Job Training | Paid career preparation combining structured work experience with classroom instruction, coordinated by educators and employers.

Internship | Time-limited, structured training that provides real-world work experience; may be paid or unpaid, and can include short-term micro-internships.

Pre-Apprenticeship Programs | Help individuals build foundational skills for entry into registered apprenticeships through hands-on training, career counseling, and credential attainment.

Registered Apprenticeships | Employer-led, earn-while-you-learn programs combining paid on-the-job training with related instruction. Lead to industry-recognized credentials.

WBL FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS AND YOUTH

Florida law does not require work-based learning for high school graduation or middle school promotion, but recent legislation has expanded opportunities.

CTE Graduation Pathway Option | Florida Statutes allow students to earn a standard diploma through a CTE pathway that includes work-based learning and requires only 18 credits.

Elective Credit for CTSO Participation | Students in grades 6-12 can earn one elective credit by completing 135 documented hours of CTSO activities outside class time.

Florida Bright Futures Scholarship | Students may qualify for the Gold Seal Vocational or CAPE Scholars awards by completing 30 volunteer hours or 100 hours of paid work.

WBL Coordination System (Xello) | Xello is a free statewide platform for career planning and work-based learning, offering tools for students and educators to track progress and connect with employers.

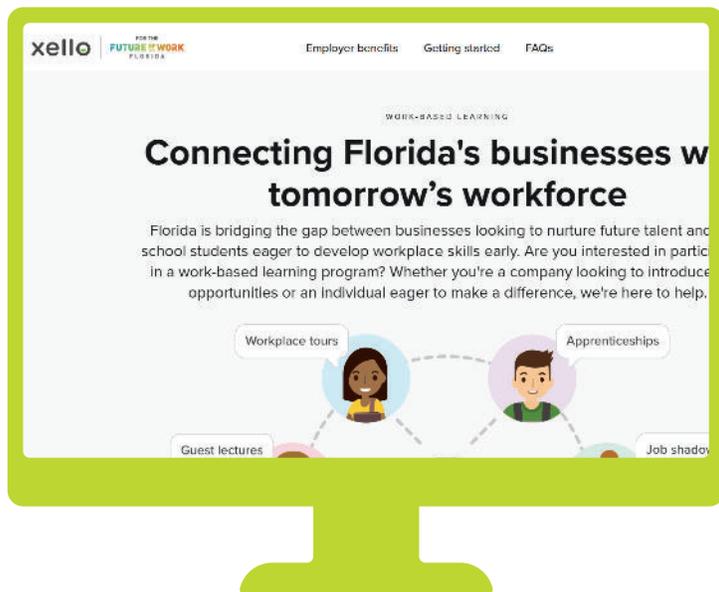
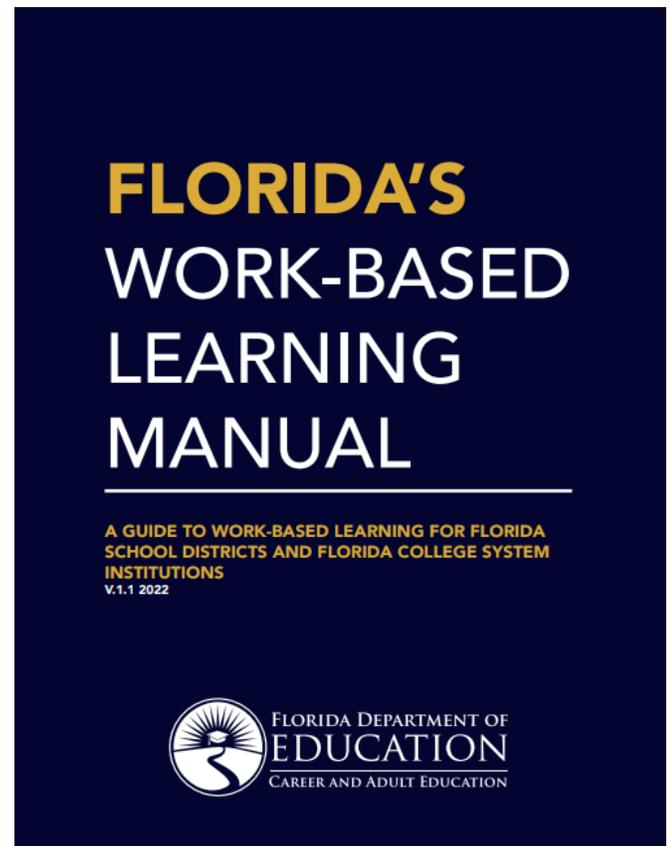
WIOA Work-Based Learning | The WIOA Youth program supports students ages 14-21 with paid or unpaid work-based learning opportunities such as internships, apprenticeships, and summer jobs.

FLORIDA'S WBL MANUAL

The Division of Career and Adult Education has developed numerous resources to support work-based learning and advance CTE in Florida.

One of those resources, **Florida's Work-Based Learning Manual**, is a statewide guide that helps educators, administrators, and employers design and manage high-quality work-based learning programs aligned with educational standards and workforce needs.

It outlines essential components, including a quality framework, safety protocols, collaborative planning, career preparation, and clearly defined roles, to ensure effective and student-centered implementation.



FLORIDA'S STATEWIDE WORK-BASED LEARNING NETWORK

Florida's **Work-Based Learning Network**, under the Future of Work Florida initiative, connects schools and businesses to **expand CTE** through hands-on learning such as internships, mentorships, and job shadowing.

Through a partnership with Xello, **employers can interact with K-12 students**, promote career pathways, support workforce development, and access guidance to design meaningful, work-based learning experiences.

This initiative **strengthens connections between education and industry** while preparing students for high-demand careers.

WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA) TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADULTS

In addition to WBL opportunities offered through Florida's education systems, the state's workforce system also provides access to WBL experiences, expanding opportunities for skill development and career exploration.

On-the-Job Training (OJT) | Participants are hired by an employer and receive training while working. Employers can be reimbursed up to 75% of wages during the training period. OJT is tailored to the skills needed for the job and aims to lead to permanent employment.

Customized Training | Training designed to meet the specific needs of an employer or group of employers. Employers must commit to hiring or retaining individuals and cover a significant share of the training cost. This is often used for newly hired or underemployed individuals.

Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) | Supports current employees in gaining new skills to retain employment or prevent layoffs. Employers contribute to the cost based on company size. IWT is not for new hires and does not require individuals to meet WIOA eligibility unless enrolled in the program.

EMPLOYER INCENTIVES FOR WBL

Florida incentivizes businesses to offer WBL through reimbursements and tax incentives that support employer participation in hands-on training opportunities.

Workers' Compensation Reimbursement | Employers, including school districts and colleges, can request reimbursement for workers' comp premiums paid for students in work-based learning during the prior fiscal year.

Experiential Learning Tax Credit | From 2022–2025, businesses can claim a \$2,000 tax credit per apprentice, preapprentice, or intern (up to 5 annually, max \$10,000). Credits can carry forward for up to two years.



DATA-INFORMED DECISION MAKING

MASTER CREDENTIALS LIST

The REACH Act mandated the creation of a Credentials Review Committee, which defined credentials of value, developed a framework of quality, and identified both degree and non-degree credentials to inform Florida's Master Credentials List (MCL). The MCL includes all credentials available in the state that align with in-demand occupations offering middle- to high-wage employment.

To meet the framework of quality, a credential must:

- Be aligned with in-demand occupations as identified through current labor market information, ensuring relevance to Florida's economy.
- Lead to middle-to-high-wage employment, meeting or exceeding wage benchmarks set at the state and regional levels.
- Demonstrate value within a career pathway, either by stacking toward higher-level credentials or articulating into degree programs, thereby supporting lifelong learning and upward mobility.

EDUCATION & TRAINING PROVIDERS

Credentials may qualify for state and federal funding. Providers must align programs with the MCL to access these funds, making the list critical for program approval and sustainability.

EMPLOYERS & INDUSTRY

The MCL ensures training programs align with industry needs. Credentials on the list reflect employer-validated skills, helping businesses find qualified workers and fill talent gaps.

STUDENTS & JOB SEEKERS

Students benefit from knowing the credential leads to high-demand, high-wage jobs. MCL-listed credentials often qualify for financial aid and are part of stackable career pathways, increasing employment and advancement opportunities.

POLICYMAKERS

The MCL helps direct public funds to high-value credentials, supporting workforce goals and economic development. It provides a consistent framework for planning and performance funding.

FLORIDA INSIGHT DASHBOARD

The Florida Insight Dashboard, developed by the Florida Department of Commerce (FloridaCommerce), is a centralized platform that provides access to labor market, economic, and demographic data to support workforce planning and policy decisions. Designed with a user-friendly interface, the dashboard features dynamic visualizations that allow users to explore employment trends, wages, industry growth, unemployment rates, and labor force participation. Users can filter data by region, industry, occupation, or time period, making it a valuable tool for localized analysis.



DATA FOR JOBSEEKERS

Access tools such as Employment Projections and the Florida Online Job Demand Tool to explore future job trends and real-time job openings. The Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics program provides annual wage and employment data by occupation and region.



DATA FOR EMPLOYERS

Use industry employment estimates and wage data from state and federal sources to guide hiring decisions. The Employer Database, Skills Gap Report, and Employment Projections help identify talent needs by region and industry.



DATA FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Regional planning is supported through the Skills Gap Report, Florida Online Job Demand Tool, and Labor Shed Reports. Additional tools such as the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, and Disability Unemployment Statistics offer broader context.

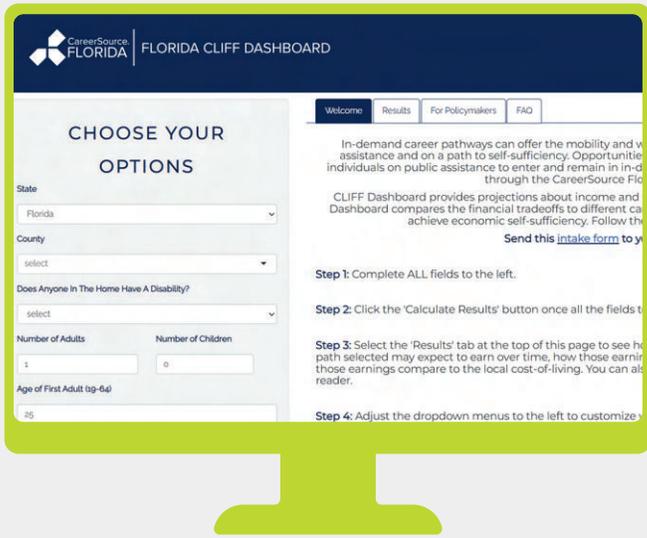


DATA ON POSTSECONDARY EMPLOYMENT

The Public Higher Education Outcomes Tool helps evaluate graduate earnings, and State Colleges Employment Projections support planning for college workforce programs.

LABOR MARKET ESTIMATING CONFERENCE

The REACH Act established a new Labor Market Estimating Conference (LMEC) that develops official information with respect to real-time supply and demand in Florida’s statewide, regional, and local labor markets. All state agencies are required not only to provide the LMEC with any required data but also to utilize the information developed for any decision-making that requires labor market information.



CAREER LADDER IDENTIFIER AND FINANCIAL FORECASTER (CLIFF)

CareerSource Florida and the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta developed the Florida CLIFF Dashboard. This informational tool enables one-stop center staff to help Floridians visualize how returning to work or upskilling to a higher-paying occupation may impact their future earnings and public benefits as their household progresses toward self-sufficiency.

FLORIDA EDUCATION AND TRAINING PLACEMENT INFORMATION PROGRAM

FETPIP, managed by the FDOE, is a key tool for evaluating the effectiveness of postsecondary and workforce programs. It tracks outcomes for nearly 600 groups, including participants in WIOA, TANF, SNAP, adult education, apprenticeship, and more. Using data from wage records, military and federal databases, education rosters, and public assistance records, FETPIP provides local workforce boards with detailed, longitudinal insights on employment and training outcomes.

LOCAL TARGETED OCCUPATIONS LIST

Annually, local CareerSource boards create their local targeted occupations list (LTOL). A LTOL is a list of occupations that are in demand based on high growth and/or high wages in the local area. Each board can use FloridaCommerce’s demand occupations list and other resources to develop its LTOL.



COMPREHENSIVE LOCAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT (CLNA)

Florida's Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) process is a key component of Perkins V implementation, requiring each local recipient of federal CTE funds to evaluate how well its programs meet the needs of students, employers, and communities. Conducted every two years, the CLNA process ensures data-driven decision-making by examining student performance, labor market alignment, program quality and access, and professional development.



MYFLORIDAFUTURE

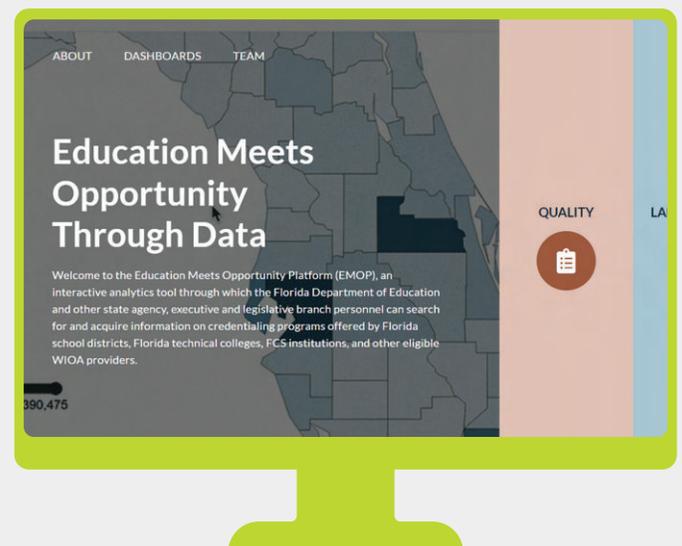
MyFloridaFuture is an interactive tool from the State University System of Florida that helps students and families make informed college decisions. It offers data on graduate earnings, employment outcomes, and student debt across Florida's 12 public universities, allowing users to compare programs and understand the return on investment for different degrees.

CTE AUDIT

FDOE conducts an annual CTE Program Quality Audit to assess how well CTE programs align with workforce needs and prepare students for high-demand, high-wage careers. The audit analyzes student outcomes such as graduation, certification, enrollment, and employment, with findings published in an annual report. This process guides decisions on program improvement, expansion, or phase-out and supports data-driven planning by districts, colleges, and other stakeholders.

EDUCATION MEETS OPPORTUNITY

Established under the REACH Act, the Education Meets Opportunity Platform (EMOP) is an interactive analytics tool that supports strategic decision-making by state leaders aiming to expand and improve education and workforce training opportunities. The EMOP dashboard allows state agency staff and the executive and legislative branches to access information on credentialing programs.



CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION

APPRENTICE FLORIDA

Florida's apprenticeship expansion strategy emphasizes strong cross-sector collaboration. Through partnerships among CareerSource Florida, FloridaCommerce, the FDOE Office of Apprenticeship, local CareerSource boards, and industry intermediaries, the state launched Apprentice Florida to promote and grow registered apprenticeships. Local workforce boards now designate apprenticeship navigators.

REACH ACT

The REACH Act promotes greater collaboration among businesses, educators, and state agencies to create a more integrated, customer-focused approach to workforce development. The Act established the REACH Office within the Executive Office of the Governor to align key partners such as CareerSource Florida, local workforce boards, FloridaCommerce, FDOE, and the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

EDUCATION AND INDUSTRY CONSORTIUMS

Established under Senate Bill 240 (2023), also known as the REACH Act 2.0, the Education and Industry Consortium is a collaborative initiative coordinated by CareerSource Florida. Each local workforce development board must convene a consortium of education and business representatives within its service area. These groups meet quarterly to assess workforce needs, identify training gaps, review educational programs, and approve credentials for the MCL.

SECTOR STRATEGIES

Sector strategies are regional, industry-driven approaches that align public and private resources to meet the talent needs of employers while expanding opportunities for job seekers. Central to this approach are sector partnerships—collaborative efforts led by employers in critical industry clusters and supported by workforce, education, economic development, and community organizations. These partnerships are recognized as effective mechanisms for improving workforce outcomes and regional competitiveness.

FUNDING DRIVERS

WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA)

WIOA funding is administered by FloridaCommerce and distributed to local CareerSource boards. These funds support job seekers through career services, training, and support programs, and help employers find skilled workers. WIOA covers four core areas: adult and dislocated worker services, youth programs, adult education and literacy, and vocational rehabilitation. Through funding from the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of WIOA, FDOE awards grants to school districts, state colleges, and the Florida Department of Corrections (FDC) to provide adult education and literacy activities.



CARL D. PERKINS ACT GRANTS

The Perkins program serves as the primary federal funding investment for CTE at both the secondary and postsecondary levels. This funding is distributed to school districts and FCS institutions through annual entitlement grants as well as competitive grants to support CTE programs of study and career pathways. Florida's 2024-2028 Perkins V State Plan details Florida's vision for CTE. Local agencies are required to conduct a CLNA every two years that serves as the basis for Perkins grant application development and decision making.



FLORIDA JOB GROWTH GRANTS

The Florida Job Growth Grant program provides funding for workforce education initiatives. Proposals are evaluated by FloridaCommerce, with final selections made by the governor based on how well they address local workforce needs. Examples of awarded Florida Job Growth grants include \$3.6 million for FinTech training at Florida State College at Jacksonville, \$4.8 million for aircraft mechanic programs at Miami Dade College, and \$4.1 million for robotics and semiconductor training at Valencia College.



INCENTIVES FOR EDUCATION

In recent years, Florida has introduced a range of targeted incentives to strengthen the alignment between education and workforce needs. These efforts aim to accelerate student progression through career pathways, expand access to high-demand fields, and support institutions in delivering programs that lead to meaningful employment outcomes.

CAPE FUNDING

Rewards school districts and Florida College System institutions when students earn industry certifications listed on the MCL.

PIPELINE FUND

Offers performance-based incentives to colleges and universities that graduate nursing students, helping to address critical shortages in Florida's healthcare workforce.

WORK FLORIDA

Provides targeted funding to colleges to expand or enhance workforce education programs, support partnerships with industry, and improve career readiness and job placement.

PROGRAMS OF STRATEGIC EMPHASIS

Provides funding incentives and strategic support to align programs at state universities with economic priorities in fields like STEM, health, and education.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The Florida Legislature offers targeted grant programs to expand CTE, boost student enrollment and completion, and lower training costs.

- **Graduation Alternative to Traditional Education (GATE) Program** | Supports implementation and covers student tuition and enrollment costs.
- **Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) Fund** | Promotes nursing education partnerships and funds scholarships, faculty, and equipment.
- **Workforce Development Capitalization Incentive Grant (CAP)** | Funds the creation or expansion of secondary CTE and career dual enrollment programs.
- **Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant (PCOG) Program** | Supports development and expansion of registered apprenticeships and preapprenticeships.

INNOVATIVE MODELS AND EMERGING TRENDS

GUIDED PATHWAYS MODEL

The literature review referenced California's guided pathways model. In Florida, the Florida Student Success Center leads this work through the Florida Pathways Institute, which supports state colleges in implementing guided pathways.

REGIONAL CAREER PATHWAYS

The literature review highlighted Wisconsin's Regional Career Pathways (RCP) initiative. In Florida, some districts have developed career pathways through their Comprehensive Local Needs Assessments (CLNA) and Perkins funding. While Florida has established "regional career pathways agreements", they are not as comprehensive as Wisconsin's model.

ATTAINMENT INITIATIVE

The literature review highlighted Tennessee's "Drive to 55" attainment initiative. In response to similar workforce needs, Florida launched the "SAIL to 60" Initiative in 2019, aiming for 60% of working-age adults to earn a high-value credential by 2030.

YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP

The literature review referenced Colorado's youth apprenticeship system. Similarly, Florida offers strong preapprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities, with school boards, state colleges, and universities helping deliver technical instruction.

FASTFORWARD

The literature review highlighted Virginia's FastForward program, which provides short-term workforce credentials for in-demand jobs. In a similar effort, Florida established the Open Door program through HB 1507 (2021) to help students access high-value, short-term training.

DEEPER DIVE: WISCONSIN'S REGIONAL CAREER PATHWAYS

Wisconsin's Regional Career Pathways (RCP) initiative connects academic and career planning with real-world experiences and credentials to support student transitions and meet workforce needs. Key features include:

- **Regional Collaboration:** Local employers, schools, colleges, and workforce partners work together to design pathways based on regional labor market needs.
- **Aligned Student Experiences:** Students complete career-focused coursework, earn dual credit and industry credentials, join CTSOs, and participate in work-based learning.
- **High-Demand Sectors:** Pathways specifically target growing fields by region like healthcare, IT, manufacturing, and education.
- **Access:** The program expands career opportunities for rural and underserved students through targeted support and federal funding.

INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC PATHWAY INNOVATIONS

STATEWIDE TARGETED INDUSTRY SECTORS

Industry Sector	WIOA Priority	Perkins V Priority
Advanced Manufacturing	✓	✓
Architecture and Construction	✓	✓
Aviation/Aerospace	✓	
Energy		✓
Engineering and Technology		✓
Entrepreneurship		✓
Fintech & Corporate Headquarters	✓	
Healthcare and Life Sciences	✓	✓
Information Technology	✓	✓
Trade and Logistics	✓	✓
Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics	✓	✓

Below are examples of promising industry sector practices supporting career pathways in Florida; these will be further explored in Part II of the environmental scan.

- **Florida Advanced Technological Education Center (FLATE):** a National Science Foundation Center of Excellence, in partnership with FloridaMakes, provides manufacturing advanced technical education best practices and resources across Florida.
- **Florida High Tech Corridor:** 23-county super region for high-tech industry in central Florida anchored by University of Central Florida, University of South Florida, and University of Florida to align opportunities and resources in academia, industry and economic development.
- **Florida Semiconductor Institute:** statewide hub at University of Florida for research, development, educational training, and workforce initiatives in semiconductor technologies.

FLORIDA CAREER PATHWAYS STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

FLORIDA CAREER PATHWAYS ECOSYSTEM

Career pathways systems are centered on the participant—whether a learner, job seeker, worker, or career changer—ensuring they have clear, supported routes to achieve education and employment goals. These systems rely on cross-sector collaboration to align education, training, and support services with labor market needs. Each partner plays a distinct role in building and sustaining these pathways.

EDUCATION SYSTEM

K-12 systems, adult education programs, community colleges, and universities provide academic & technical education.

FUNDING

Investments from federal, state, and local governments, philanthropy, private industry, and other contributors.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS & SERVICE PROVIDERS

Reduce barriers to participation by offering wraparound supports (e.g., case management, housing, transportation).



WORKFORCE SYSTEM

Workforce boards, public agencies, and training providers offer career guidance, job placement, and industry-aligned training.

BUSINESS/INDUSTRY

Shape pathways by identifying skill needs, validating credentials, and supporting curriculum and work-based learning.

EMPLOYERS

Hire pathway participants, offer on-the-job training, and provide feedback on program effectiveness.

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Provide policy leadership and system coordination through state and local workforce, economic development, and human services agencies.



LEARNER/PARTICIPANT

Youth/Young Adults

- Secondary students
- Dual enrolled students
- Youth WIOA participant
- High school dropout
- Recent high school graduate

Adults (18+)

- Students in adult ed, IET programs, or ESOL
- Students in postsecondary
- Former drop-out
- Apprentice
- Individual receiving training from provider or employer

Other Populations

- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals with employment barriers (e.g., justice-involved)
- Dislocated or Incumbent workers



EDUCATION SYSTEM

Secondary

- Public schools
- Charter schools
- Private schools
- Home education
- Florida Virtual School
- Education consortia like NEFEC

Postsecondary: Public

- School district technical colleges (48 colleges)
- Florida College System institutions (28 colleges)
- State universities (12 universities)

Postsecondary: Private

- Independent Colleges & Universities of Florida (30 universities)
- Commission for Independent Education (300+ schools & colleges)



WORKFORCE SYSTEM

- CareerSource Florida
- Local CareerSource Boards (21 boards)
- CareerSource One-Stop Centers
- Career Centers (~100)
- Regional Planning Areas

- Eligible training providers such as third-party training providers, registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs, or community-based providers

- Employ Florida
- Florida Ready to Work
- Credentials Review Committee



BUSINESS/INDUSTRY

- Florida Chamber of Commerce
- Local chambers
- SelectFlorida (formerly Enterprise Florida)
- Florida Council of 100

- Florida Economic Development Council
- Associated Industries of Florida

- Sector-specific councils and alliances (e.g., FloridaMakes)
- Place-bound councils and alliances (e.g., Florida High Tech Corridor)



EMPLOYERS

Private Sector

- Small, mid-size, and large businesses across sectors (e.g., Lockheed Martin, Florida Power & Light, HCA Florida Healthcare)
- Entrepreneurs and startups

Public Sector

- State agencies
- Local governments
- Public education districts and institutions
- U.S. Armed Forces
- Public utilities and transportation

Nonprofits

- Community-based organizations
- Social service agencies (e.g., Goodwill Industries)
- Faith-based organizations
- Charitable foundations



GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

- REACH Office
- FloridaCommerce
- FDOE
 - Career & Adult Education
 - Blind Services
 - Vocational Rehabilitation

- DCF
- FDC
- Florida Department of Health (DOH)
- Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)

- Local economic development agencies
- Municipal and county governments
- School district superintendents and boards



COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

- Nonprofits and community-based organizations that offer job training, mentoring, and wraparound services such as transportation and child care

- Youth-serving programs e.g., Take Stock in Children and Boys & Girls Clubs
- College access networks like FCAN and local college access networks (LCANs)
- Libraries and literacy coalitions

- Reentry programs supporting formerly incarcerated individuals and immigrant and refugee organizations



FUNDERS

- Federal government
- Florida Legislature (General Appropriations Act)

- FDOE
- FloridaCommerce
- Local governments

- Statewide and regional foundations
- Community foundations
- Corporate foundations
- Impact investors

APPENDIX

STATUTORY AND RULE REFERENCES

FLORIDA STATUTES

- s. 220.198 – Experiential learning tax credit program
- s. 446.54, F.S. – Reimbursement for workers' compensation insurance premiums
- s. 1003.491(5), F.S. – Florida Career and Professional Education Act
- s. 1003.493, F.S. – Career and professional academies and career-themed courses
- s. 1004.013, F.S. – SAIL to 60 Initiative
- s. 1004.933, F.S. – Graduation Alternative to Traditional Education (GATE) Program
- s. 1008.44, F.S. – CAPE Industry Certification Funding List
- s. 1009.25, F.S. – Fee exemptions for apprentices enrolled at public institutions
- s. 1009.895, F.S. – Open Door Grant Program
- s. 1009.8962, F.S. – Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) Fund
- s. 1011.802, F.S. – Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant Program

FLORIDA ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

- Rule 6A-6.0200, F.A.C. – Graduation Alternative to Traditional Education Program
- Rule 6A-10.0342, F.A.C. – Career and Technical Education Program Quality Audit
- Rule 6A-10.0352, F.A.C. – Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) Fund
- Rule 6A-14.030, F.A.C. – Postsecondary Instructional Unit Definitions and Awards in Florida College System Institutions
- Rule 6A-20.045, F.A.C. – Open Door Grant Program
- Rule 6A-20.046, F.A.C. – Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant Program
- Rule 6A-23.0042, F.A.C. – Work-Based Learning Requirements

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