

On-Ramps to Career Pathways in Rhode Island

Rhode Island will re-organize a portion of the workforce system across state agencies and implement a set of tools and practices that create effective on-ramps to specific career pathways to improve employment, wage and retention outcomes for low-skilled and long-term unemployed job seekers; improve the pool of work-ready candidates for employers, and improve the efficiency of the system.

1. Description of the Problem or Issue

Problem Statement: Rhode Island faces difficult realities: 1) the 2nd highest unemployment rate in the nation (10.9% in January 2012); 2) shrinking state and federal workforce resources; 3) a skills gap that limits workers' employment options; and 4) a workforce system more responsive to the funding stream requirements than to the needs of job seekers and employers. The state needs innovation now to address this convergence of funding shortfalls, employer and job seeker needs, and a difficult economy. On-Ramps to Career Pathways builds upon important ground work built across state agencies that primes Rhode Island to achieve the systems changes needed to improve the state's capacity to address high unemployment, the skills gap, and to continue meeting labor market needs despite shrinking resources.

The problems facing Rhode Island's workforce system mirror those of many other states and localities: 1) RI lacks a coordinated approach for utilizing funds to strategically support its economic re-growth by creating a qualified and competitive workforce. The workforce service delivery system is fragmented with multiple programs in multiple agencies driven by the funding requirements rather than by customer need. Training, education, career choices and employment are often dictated by where a person enters the system. There is no one picture of Rhode Island's workforce system that either consumers or businesses can easily understand and access; employers do not understand how the workforce system benefits them.

2) A service delivery system that lacks consistency of foundational services and tools that help customers to on-ramp to employment and careers: a) there are numerous work readiness trainings, yet employers persistently cite the lack of work readiness; b) work experience programs exist but are limited

and lack coordination and standards; c) career planning is available but not well organized; d) wrap-around cross-agency supportive services critical to employment are inconsistent and fragmented; and e) services are centralized at one-stops, limiting access for those with transportation and other challenges.

3) A service delivery system that is short-term despite evidence that longer-term horizons are needed for workers to achieve economic stability. Most customers experience the workforce system as a one-time event, rather than as a set of services that help them move along a career pathway. The system lacks linkages along a skills/literacy continuum, including among the one-stops, the adult literacy system, the career and technical education system, and higher education. There is no centralized system for customers to access information on careers pathways and related programs, services and funding. Shrinking workforce funds compound the problem, limiting the number of customers that can be effectively served.

4) An operating environment ready for change constrained by a lack of change-related capacity. State agencies worked together for the past two years to create the first-ever snapshot of workforce funding across the state and discussions on system-wide improvement have begun. Yet implementing changes across agencies has been constrained by already overstretched staff which must first focus on compliance, reporting, and ensuring the integrity of their operations.

Evidence Base for the Problem

1. Fragmentation of the Workforce Delivery System: There are numerous state entities providing training, education, and workforce services for over 60,000 youth and adults, operating over 100 programs. The development of the state's now-annual Unified Expenditure Report (UER) in 2010, detailing every workforce funding stream and program in the state, illuminates this fragmentation. The UER includes funding levels, populations served, eligibility requirements, and outcomes, but cannot account for co-enrolled individuals, making it difficult to know exactly how many are served by the system. The UER has catalyzed a cross-agency understanding of the extent of the fragmentation and the need for change.

Data and policy barriers exacerbate the problem. Programs have different funding cycles and timeframes (some of which are state-determined); are tied to the requirements of the particular federal or state funding streams; and have different eligibility and outcomes reporting requirements. For example, while reporting employment outcomes the Department of Labor and Training (WIA Title I, Wagner Peyser, Trade, and others) uses DOL's performance measures, TANF outcomes focus on work participation rates, and the community college doesn't report employment outcomes. It is difficult to gauge the overall impact of public investments, to know where there is duplication of effort, or to assess the return to the public on those investments. Eligibility policies limit collaboration, with WIA requiring the most rigorous documentation that to date has limited cross-agency collaboration.

In 2011 a report evaluating the implementation of one-year ARRA funded contextualized training programs in RI confirmed the fragmentation, including silos between the one-stops and community organizations, and policy and data challenges limiting a more seamless system. Finally, there is both duplication of effort and gaps in service delivery because of the lack of strategic focus. For example, the state has over 20 Certified Nursing Assistant training programs funded by 4 state agencies while other areas of employment growth have little to no training. In addition, depending upon where individuals enter, they encounter different education and training options. There are different access points for WIA Title I, WIA Title II, WIA Youth, TANF, SNAP E&T, and higher education, further evidencing the fragmentation.

2. Uncoordinated foundational on-ramp tools and supportive services: In repeated discussions and surveys with employers, the lack of a work ready workforce is a consistent theme and top priority. In a 2011 Washington County survey of employers, employers cited reliability, work ethic, problem-solving, attitude, and taking initiative as the top skills lacking in applicants. Two recent reports from RI industry associations in information technology and hospitality note "soft skills" as the most critical gap in job seekers. Employers note that if the workforce system can produce a job-ready candidate, they can and are willing to train them in hard job skills.

There are not enough on-ramps to employment for low-skilled customers, including TANF and those in Title II programs. Universal services at the one-stops are more easily used by higher-skilled individuals, who are used to self-navigation, and the training services are typically also for higher skilled individuals who have the literacy requirements for ITA trainings. In 2011, 83% of customers entered WIA Title I with a high school diploma or higher, while only 6% were limited English speakers and 16% had less than a high school diploma. Support services are accessed based more on individual staff knowledge of resources than a system of resources and referrals; there is no centralized referral system.

3. Short-term focus on employment: The system is not organized to promote economic stability for families or meet business needs. Rhode Island's workforce system has been mainly structured for rapid attachment to the workforce, in part due to the limitations of funding and federal mandates for rapid employment, resulting in average wages of \$30,000 (DLT 2011 quarterly reports). Yet rapid attachment without work-ready skills and an avenue to higher level jobs limits job seekers' ability to secure a job with an economically sustainable wage, estimated at over \$50,000 for a family of four (Economic Progress Institute, 2012). In spring 2011, RI employers reported 10,475 job vacancies, with 35% requiring at least an Associates Degree and 38% requiring a high school diploma (DLT LMI, 2011). For RI's most vulnerable populations, including low-literacy and immigrants, the short term structure of the system prevents individuals from moving away from needing state and federal supports towards economic stability. This is compounded by decreasing public resources over the past decade and especially with the end of ARRA funding, limiting the public system's capacity to provide the kinds of training and education that can effectively address these long-term needs.

2. Description of the Project: Strategic Approach and Logic Model

Goals and Outcomes: Rhode Island's On-Ramps Initiative aligns with the three impact goals of the Workforce Innovation Fund, and will achieve better results for job seekers and employers; greater efficiency in the system, and significantly stronger cooperation across agencies. On-Ramps knits together a

set of practices, systems changes, and programs that Rhode Island is uniquely able to achieve because of its size, infrastructure, relationships, and because of significant groundwork laid over the last two years.

On-Ramps focuses on integrating funding and revising policies to support career pathways that: 1) are supported by braided funding, uniform performance measures and integrated supportive services across multiple state agencies and funding streams; (*Impact goal 3*); 2) include more systematic on-ramp tools that will result in better access and faster customer throughput and faster job placement (*Impact goals 1 and 2*); and 3) are transparent, and through the program pilot offer a new way to organize workforce services in Rhode Island that results in better results and greater efficiency of the system (*Impact goals 1 and 2*).

The On-Ramp project begins from a base of significant groundwork laid over the last two years, including:

- The Unified Expenditure Report (UER), detailing funding amounts, timeframes, and eligibility requirements for all workforce programs in the state;
- Strong relationships and agreement across state agencies at the leadership and operational levels on the urgency for systems change built through the UER report, and other cross-agency tables;
- Work by the GWB's Career Pathways Task Force on two career pathways maps – one industry-specific in health care, and one occupation-specific in information technology;
- Research by GWB consultants detailing the policies and regulations governing each federal and state funding stream for workforce in which barriers and issues are identified; and
- A newly awarded Trade Adjustment grant for the Community College of Rhode Island which is focused on changing programs within the community college to support career pathways.

On-Ramps' work is organized under two main project goals, with their related outcomes:

Goal One: Create systems change by braiding funding, using uniform performance measures and pursuing policy changes that will: 1) support career pathways along a low- to high-skilled continuum which aligns

training, education and employment services and programs; and 2) create transparent and easily accessible pathways and integrates supportive services.

Outcomes and Impacts for Goal One:

- Funding and program changes that result in more investment in a career pathways systems approach.
- Increased number of career pathways mapped and transparent to job seekers and employers; more partnerships established across the system; supportive services mapped across the system.
- Improved ability of state agencies to evaluate impact of public investments; shifts in resources towards quality programs; better targeting of resources based on customer and employer need.
- Increased number of customers receiving support services leading to higher employment retention.

Goal Two: Pilot the systems change through a re-design of a portion of the one-stop system and systematize on-ramps to those pathways (both *locational on-ramps*, including decentralized services; and *program on-ramps*, including work readiness, experiential work and career coaching).

Outcomes and Impacts for Goal Two:

- More low-literacy and low-skilled customers receive higher intensity services at the one-stops;
- Increased program and job retention; increased movement along career pathways in select industries through promotions or wage gains;
- Faster throughput of customers including faster time to hiring;
- Increased cost effectiveness of services by demonstrating higher wage gains and faster through-put for those in on-ramps and career pathways for public funds invested;
- Increased customer and employer satisfaction;
- Employers report increase in: 1) work ready candidates; 2) hiring more people from one-stops through the on-ramps and career pathways pilot; 3) increase in employers offering work experience; and 4) increase in private sector investment in training and tuition supports.

Strategy and Logic Model

On-Ramps Theory of Change: Reorganization of a portion of RI's workforce system to create effective locational and programmatic on-ramps to career pathways programs, with a particular focus on implementation at one-stop career centers, will help vulnerable populations, including low-skilled, low-literacy residents, and long-term unemployed workers, access career pathways that will help them develop skills in demand by industry. On-ramps to pathways with private sector training investment will enable the public workforce system to support workers in bridging the skills gap even in the face of shrinking resources. This will help participants in the workforce development system achieve better and faster employment outcomes and increase the satisfaction of employers with the public workforce system. As part of re-organization, braiding of funding streams and policy changes to support on-ramps and pathways and creating common impact measures across state agencies will result in using funding strategically to support RI job seekers, workers, and businesses.

RI will use the one-stop system to test this theory of change. If the hypotheses are correct, and both using career pathways to organize workforce activities and using a set of on-ramp tools results in better outcomes and a more efficient use of resources, than the approach will be adapted by not only the remaining one-stops centers, but also by other agencies and community organizations in RI. The results of this three-year project will also provide critical spillover, linkages and information to inform strengthening the state's K-12 work on career readiness, although it is not the focus of this application.

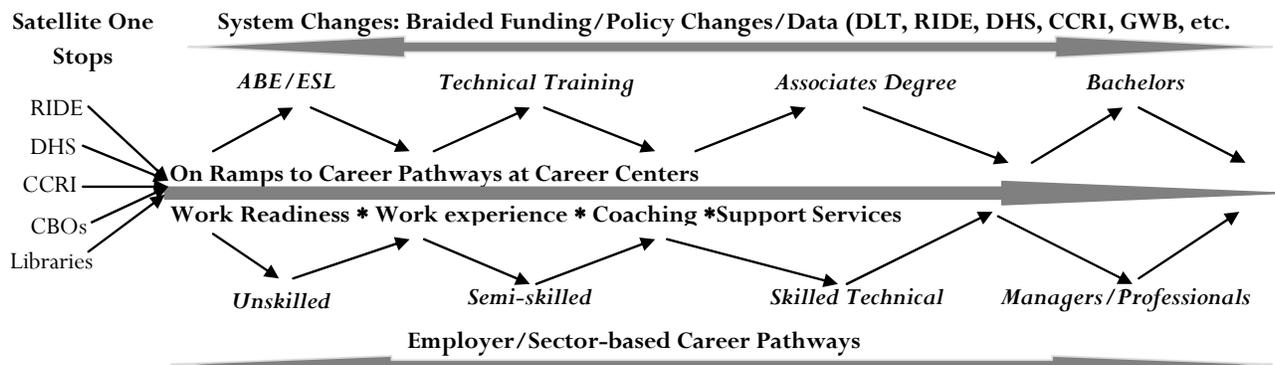
Strategy and Program Design: Rather than creating a stand-alone career pathways program, On-Ramps approach seeks to identify existing programs and funding streams, align them along pathways, and create systems to knit them together for a sustainable career pathways system. RI's strategy is two-tiered:

1) Systems re-alignment along career pathways at the state level. Through identifying career pathways, funding streams, and programs, and then by addressing policy and program barriers that limit cross-agency collaboration, RI will create 3-4 industry and occupational based pathways with funding and programs

aligned along a continuum. The adult literacy, skills training, career and technical, bridge programming, and community college and higher education systems will all be integrated and linked along the pathways and strategic gaps will be identified and filled. Braided funding and client participation from multiple agencies is expected; creation of a multi-agency data dashboard will be a key step towards data integration.

2) Creating on-ramps to career pathways in two of Rhode Island's four one-stops. On-Ramps will implement two main strategies: 1) The career centers will re-organize a portion of their operations to provide career pathways services for customers. This will require changes in how staff are organized, understanding the regulations and processes under the newly braided funding streams, training staff on career pathways, and creating stronger employer ties for those pathways. It will also require interagency agreements and cross-agency training on referrals and how the linkages are operationalized; and 2) RI will also create locational and programmatic on-ramps for 1,000 customers. Locational on-ramps will include providing some one-stop services at satellite sites (libraries, community organizations, other state agencies); programmatic on-ramps include a work readiness and work experience module, career coaching, and supportive services.

Below is a graphic representation of the proposed system re-design for the state that will be piloted in the two career centers:



From this two-tiered systems change and program design, RI will be able to test whether a) on-ramps to career pathways create better employment and retention outcomes than general on-ramps; b) organizing the system around career pathways produces better outcomes; and c) using on-ramp services overall is more effective than no on-ramp services. Following is On-Ramps' logic model.

Inputs	Activities	Interim Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
Goal One: Shift resources and adjust policy, funding and programs to create career pathways				
Create new transparent career pathways maps with aligned funding streams Career Pathways Task Force maps; CCRI TAAACT initiative Adult ed & training programs, community colleges; private sector UE Report; regulatory research State agency leadership	Create and validate career pathways maps with employers Implement solutions to funding and program gaps; Identify and secure policy changes Develop a web-based career pathways tool	3-4 career pathways maps Plan for creating intentional linkages along career pathways service providers Interagency agreements for aligned and braided funding Policy agenda and action plan across state agencies Implementation of a web-based tool	Transparent, institutionalized career pathways w/trainings, funding and linkages Increased # of career pathways available and increase # of partnerships Funding streams integrated and aligned along pathways; re-alignment of a portion of RI workforce dollars.	Reduced training duplication Increase in funds invested in career pathways Improved targeting of resources across the system
Create uniform performance measures Existing data collection and reporting systems across agencies and funding streams	Map current reporting and performance outcomes Identify common performance measures Develop a data dashboard	Uniform performance measures established; new interim measures developed Data dashboard created and used.	Use of measurements to evaluate workforce system performance Realignment of funding towards “what works”	Better targeting of resources based on need.
Integrate supportive services State and community supportive services (public benefits, child support	Create maps of services; identify gaps Implement plan for integrating into career pathways; implement	Aligned services locationally and along career pathways Guide to supportive services Technology system that	Transparent and targeted resource plan. Increased number of people connected to services. More ability to target	Increase in employment retention Increase in program retention

Inputs	Activities	Interim Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
programs, etc.)	technology solutions.	provides faster access to information and referrals.	resources where they are needed	
Goal 2: Re-design a portion of career centers to provide locational and programmatic on-ramp systems to career pathways				
<p>Re-design two one-stops towards on-ramps & pathways</p> <p>Career center staff</p> <p>Career coaching/virtual coaching/career portfolio models/tools; including WaytogoRI and EmployRI</p> <p>Existing client referral processes and locations; new satellite locations</p>	<p>Business process re-design at one stops; ID links between satellites and one-stops; improve referral processes for target population</p> <p>Develop career coaching strategies; launch online career portfolio tool</p> <p>Train public/private workforce staff on re-design and new tools</p>	<p>Re-organization of two one-stops to facilitate career pathways pilot</p> <p>User-friendly career coaching</p> <p>Trained staff across state agencies and career centers</p> <p>Plan for using technology to enhance client career planning and progress.</p>	<p>More efficient and transparent processes</p> <p>Better information for clients</p> <p>Better linkages between clients and programs.</p> <p>Increased access to coaching clients have updatable career plan</p> <p># people on career pathway # people receiving coaching # people with career plan</p>	<p>Increase in low-lit/low skilled customers receiving services</p> <p>Higher wages and retention</p> <p>Increased customer and employer satisfaction.</p> <p>Faster throughput of customers</p> <p>Increased cost effectiveness of services</p>
<p>Pilot integrated work readiness and work experience on-ramps</p> <p>Work readiness standards, trainings, and models</p> <p>Existing internship, OJT, apprenticeship, etc. work experience programs</p> <p>Employer commitment to increase work experiences</p>	<p>Create work readiness standards and training modules with employers</p> <p>Align & expand work experiences along career pathways</p> <p>Develop/pilot on ramp program with integrated work readiness/experience</p> <p>Train staff in work readiness</p>	<p>Employer-vetted work readiness competencies</p> <p>Work readiness trainings integrated with work experiences piloted in career centers</p> <p>New employers engaged in experiential learning/training activities</p>	<p>More people are work ready</p> <p>Increase in number of people participating in experiential work</p> <p># people with work readiness credential # people in experiential work # people entering career pathways</p> <p>More employers access work experience</p>	<p>Employers report higher satisfaction with clients participating in pilot</p> <p>People in pilot program have faster rate of hiring</p> <p>Increase in workers receiving private sector training/tuition</p>

Evidence Base for Strategy

On-Ramps is applying for Project Type A. The proposed project and related evaluation design will test the hypotheses that organizing workforce services through a targeted on-ramps system to career pathways results in better outcomes for customers and employers, creates greater system efficiencies and incentivizes greater private training investments. The evidence for the effectiveness of the individual strategies is strong yet preliminary, and is primarily found in the outcomes reported by programs. However, there is not one program or initiative evaluated that combines career pathways, on-ramp tools, career centers, and multi-agency funding; nor that takes the approach of documenting the impact of a new public sector approach on private training investments.

On-Ramps' logic model is rooted in past experience and understanding of the constraints for the RI public workforce system in improving outcomes and meeting the needs of job seekers. Specifically, the workforce system lacks the funding to provide enough skills training and education to bridge the skills gap in Rhode Island, where 1/2 of new employment will require an Associate's Degree and yet 25% of low-income working families lack a high school diploma and 52% lack any postsecondary education (Amer. Community Survey data, 2009). At the same time, employers represent the majority of training investments. The American Society for Training and Development estimates that U.S. employers spent \$134 billion on employee learning and development in 2007, far outstripping public system investments. (Mt Auburn Assoc, Ec. Devel. and Workforce Systems: Briefing Paper for Surdna Foundation 2010).

On-Ramp's logic model and assumptions connect these two realities – if the public workforce system can centrally organize and invest its resources strategically to create on-ramps to career pathways in an organized and coordinated strategy, job seekers and low-wage workers will both gain immediate employment faster and access to training, tuition resources, and advancement opportunities through private investment. By re-organizing the one-stops, expanding locational access, and investing in a suite of coordinated on-ramp and ongoing support tools with some evidence of success – a range of work experience programs, work readiness standards, and coaching – RI will create an efficient package of

services that results in faster and higher wage employment and that reaches the long-term unemployed and lower literacy/skilled customers. By creating the career pathways systems to make career opportunities and related training transparent and providing coaching, the workforce system will focus employment in areas of growth with career potential. By braiding funding and creating common measures, the system will increase in efficiency, be able to evaluate its impacts more effectively and make future investment decisions based on results.

The overall project design is informed by the successful work of Shifting Gears in five states to use four key strategies to achieve systems change: the use of data, engaging the field, pursuing policy change, and strategic communications. On-Ramps specific strategy and logic model is based on experience in RI and initial evidence nationally that this set of approaches yields efficiencies and better outcomes:

Career Pathways/Sector Evidence: Stepping Up, a career pathway program in several RI hospitals has worked with almost 500 participants and has a hiring rate of 69% with an unpaid internship component and 70% of incumbent workers are retained in their career pathways programmatic work. Initial evidence nationally includes: 1) New York City's Transportation Career Center (TCC) participants were found to be 3.5 times as likely to be placed in jobs as their counterparts in the comparison group of participants in a non-sector based career center (Westat and Metis Associates, 2010). TCC participants had higher placement rates, higher hourly wages, more weekly hours worked, and more services than other participants. A quasi-experimental study of Capital Idea, a health care career pathways program in Texas, revealed that employment impacts were 10 percentage points higher for Capital Idea participants (77.9%) than those in the regular workforce system (67.3%) (Ray Marshall Center, Local Investments in Workforce Development Eval. Update #2, Jan 2010). Studies from the Boston SkillWorks industry-based partnership programs found higher job retention rates (some programs above 80%) for formerly unemployed participants than in comparable initiatives and high satisfaction among employers. (See www.skill-works.org/resources-evaluation-reports.php). This evidence informed the strategy to centrally organize resources, policies, data and programs around career pathways at a state level.

Evidence for on-ramp tools is more preliminary and is the primary reason RI is applying in Project Type A:

Work Experience: The decision to incorporate work experience in the suite of on-ramp tools proposed stems from early evidence that work experience, especially for entry level and long-term unemployed workers, will help RI achieve the desired outcomes. Local evidence from the RI's Stepping Up program shows that an internship approach for its community pipeline program is critical to hiring and retention success. In DOL's High Growth Job training Initiative, a significant number of sites provided work experience activities and targeted entry level or disconnected workers; all five sites showed small to modest improvements in employment and earnings from the two years prior to entering into the program to the time of measurement (Implementation and Early Training Outcomes of the High Growth Job Training Initiative: Final Report, Eyster, 2010). Georgia Works' unemployed workers receive benefits while working at employer sites for up to 8 weeks; state officials report that 25% of companies hire their work experience participants and 60% are employed in a job three months after completion of the program.

Work readiness: RI's focus on work readiness standards is rooted in USDOL's competency models and pyramid, (www.careeronestop.org/competencymodel/pyramid_definition.aspx), which delineates the exact competencies RI employers have cited that job seekers lack; RI assumes that by focusing public investments in the foundational area of the pyramid, workers will be able to access higher levels through employers. Preliminary evidence also comes from the Columbia Green County WIB in New York State, where employers send new employees to a work readiness module and certificate for a modest cost. Miller (2009) found that employers' average retention rates grew from 45% to 90% for those receiving a work readiness certificate (completing 12 hours of training).

Career Coaching: In Oakland, CA, customers of self-services were less likely to have positive outcomes on measures such as entering employment, than those receiving staff-assisted services. (Findings from a Study of One-Stop Services: A Case Study Approach, Final Report." Social Policy Research Associates, 2009).

Taken together, this set of preliminary but promising evidence of the use of a range of on-ramp tools to a strongly evidenced sector-based career pathways approach provides RI with the confidence that by integrating these tools into a bundled package, RI will achieve better outcomes and efficiencies.

3. Work Plan and Project Management

Work Plan: The work plan will be operationalized through five state and local agencies that oversee a range of funding streams: 1) Department of Labor and Training (DLT): WIA Title I, Unemployment Insurance, Job Development Fund (state), Wagner Peyser, Trade Adjustment, Apprenticeships; also the umbrella entity under which the State Workforce Investment Office and the Governor’s Workforce Board (GWB) fall; 2) The one-stop systems including the local workforce boards (LWIBs); 3) Department of Education (RIDE): WIA Title II, Perkins Career and Technical; 4) Department of Human Services: (DHS) TANF, SNAP E&T and a range of support services; and 5) Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI): Pell, Trade Adjustment, state higher education funds.

Outputs, Key Tasks, <i>Implementers</i> (Assumes July 1, 2012 start up)		Start/ End Dates	Milestones/ Outcomes
Project Start-up		July-Oct.	
Leadership			Leadership team established
Leadership team designated and starts meeting bi-weekly, <i>DLT, GWB</i> ,		7/12	
Governor’s Jobs Cabinet approves 3 year work plan, <i>DLT</i>		8/12	Employer committee established
Employer committee of GWB oversight established, <i>DLT</i>		9/12	
Sub agency work plans w/milestones and responsibilities completed (<i>DLT/DHS/RIDE/CCRI/DOC</i>)		9/12	
Evaluator			Evaluator Secured
RFP finalized and released (<i>DLT</i>)		7/12	
Evaluator selected; contract negotiated (<i>DLT</i>)		10/12	
Staffing and subcontracts			Project Staff hired
Start-up Project Consultant hired (<i>DLT</i>)		7/12	Sub-agency agreements finalized
Project Director hired (<i>DLT</i>)		9/12	
Finalize partnering sub-agency contracts (<i>DLT, DHS, RIDE, GWB</i>)		9/12	
Sub-agency hires completed (<i>DHS, RIDE, GWB</i>)		10/12	
Communications			Communications mechanisms launched
Strategy established (<i>DLT</i>)		7/12	
Project web site launched and first e-news distributed (<i>DLT</i>)		9/12	
Career Pathways			
Funding	Funding streams to align identified	8/12	Funding braided along

	Agreement on alignment along pathways Interagency agreements executed Gaps identified and filled <i>(DLT/DHS/RIDE/CCRI/other agencies)</i>	2/13 5/13 12/13	pathways
Policies	Policy barriers to braiding identified Local administrative policy changes secured State policy changes secured Federal changes secured <i>(DLT/DHS/RIDE/CCRI/other agencies)</i>	9/12 12/12 3/13 3/13	Policy changes secured at local, state and federal levels
Career Maps and System	Finalize 2 career pathways maps with funding/programs/services and linkages (<i>GWB</i>) Finalize additional 1-2 maps (<i>GWB</i>) New partnerships/linkages established	3/13 12/13 12/14	Career pathways system launched
Web Tool	Web tool launched (<i>GWB</i>)	6/13	Web tool operational
Uniform Measurement System			
System	Map reporting measures/requirements Establish uniform measures Uniform measures part of interagency agreements <i>(DLT/DHS/RIDE/CCRI/other agencies)</i>	9/12 11/12 5/13	Uniform measures used across agencies
Dashboard	Research, develop, and agree on data dashboard Web based dashboard developed Use of dashboard in Unified Expend. Report and future funding decisions Evaluation of Dashboard <i>(DLT/DHS/RIDE/CCRI/other agencies)</i>	12/12 4/13 11/13 4/14	Dashboard informs funding decisions
Supportive Services			
Alignment of services on pathways	Map of services in state (<i>DHS</i>) Services aligned on pathway; built into web-based pathways tool (<i>DHS, GWB</i>) User friendly guide created (<i>DHS</i>)	1/13 5/13	Transparent supportive services system along career pathways
Re-design of One Stops for On-Ramps to Career Pathways			
Business process redesign	Procure business process contract (<i>DLT</i>) Select career centers and staff (<i>DLT, LWIBs</i>) Finish business process redesign (<i>DLT, LWIBs</i>) One-stops reorganized (space, staffing, etc.) (<i>LWIBS</i>)	11/12 12/12 4/13 6/13	Business process redesign completed; one-stops reorganized Satellite locations established
Technology	Finalize technology scope (<i>coaching</i>) <i>LWIBs</i> Procure contractor (<i>LWIBs</i>) Launch technology; staff are trained (<i>LWIBs</i>)	12/12 2/13 6/13	Virtual coaching and career management technology in place
Work Readiness Standards	Research best practices/standards Competencies agreed upon by employers Work readiness standards established Aligned curriculum and modules completed Training of staff completed Standards transferred to K-12 system <i>(RIDE, DLT)</i>	9/12 12/12 2/13 5/13 6/13 6/14	Statewide work readiness standards established

Work Experience	Existing offerings and gaps identified New employers engaged System of expanded work experience programming along career pathways in place (LWIBs, DLT)	10/13 2/13 6/13	Work experience system created and aligned with career pathways
Launch of on-ramps to career pathways Pilot	Intake begins; work experience/ work readiness/coaching launched: Total of 1500 (includes comparison group) Placements on pathways Retention in jobs Movement along career pathways (LWIBs, DLT, CCRI, DHS, RIDE)	8/13 10/13 1/14	500 by 2/13; 500 by 9/13; 500 by 3/14 Faster throughput of customers Higher wage gains Movement along caerer pathways
Data collection	Data collection and survey instruments established Data collection system complete and launched First year pilot data collected and analyzed Employer data including private investment collected Cost efficiencies measured (LWIBs, DLT, DHS, RIDE, CCRI)	1/13 5/13	Cost savings measured; efficiencies measured;

Cost alignment with work plan: Costs are reasonable and focused in three areas: 1) Staffing to support managing the project; internal work at state agencies to align their systems, costs, and structures towards the on-ramp career pathways system and that will result in braided funding streams. Each agency is charged with this realignment plus discrete project tasks, spreading the work and the buy-in across agencies and utilizing the specific expertise of those agencies; 2) Consultants that will be procured for tasks requiring specific expertise, such as the business process re-design and training of staff in the new competencies; and 3) Technology to be procured, for the dashboard, the web-based career pathways and coaching systems, and the work-readiness system.

Costs for operating the career pathways pilot and the related on-ramp tools will come from the braided funding streams across multiple agencies and are estimated at \$1 million. There are no direct operational costs to the grant; all costs are related to creating systems change to achieve the goals.

Readiness to begin: The start-up work plan demonstrates that procurement timelines and main start-up tasks have been accounted for and carefully considered. Using a start-up consultant to manage the work within a month of the grant award will greatly facilitate the start-up of the project, and DLT has determined

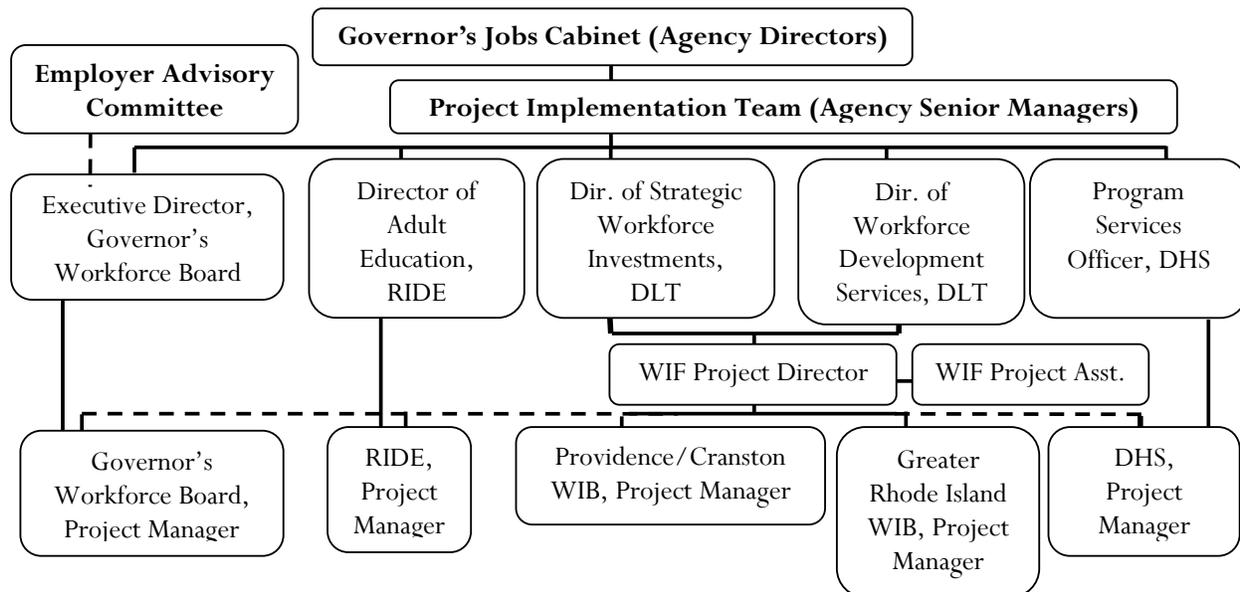
its ability to contract with a consultant on that timeline. State agencies have agreed to the four month start-up timeline and checked their internal processes to ensure the team can meet the deadlines.

Project Management:

Key Personnel qualifications: New staff will be hired for this project. Key personnel qualifications are:

1. Project Coordinator: (DLT): Knowledge of Rhode Island’s workforce system; demonstrated ability to lead across state agencies to achieve cross-agency collaboration; ability to manage complex work plans and meet deadlines; ability to manage work across agencies; strong communication skills; attention to detail; experience in managing evaluations.
2. Project Managers (DLT, GWB, RIDE, DHS): knowledge of respective agencies; ability to collaborate across agencies; strong project management skills, strong communications and influence skills; ability to map work plans and meet deadlines; attention to detail.
3. Project Manager (LWIBS): demonstrated ability to lead and complete an organizational change process; knowledge of one-stop systems; experience managing pilot implementations.
4. Administrative staff (DLT): Past experience managing data and grants reporting, organization skills.
5. Senior Business Officer (DLT): Past experience managing federal grants reporting; attention to detail.

Organizational structure: On-Ramps’ structure ensures accountability and collaboration across partners:



Third party independent evaluator: DLT will competitively procure an independent evaluator for this project by: 1) identifying up to 5 evaluation firms with experience in one or more of the focuses of this application and with experience in conducting DOL evaluations; 2) develop an RFP in the first month after grant award that has broad parameters for the evaluation and leaves open the approach to evaluation in order to seek the best structure; 3) the leadership team will interview at least three evaluation firms; 4) select the evaluation firm in consultation with DOL. Once selected, On-Ramps will work with the evaluator and with DOL to develop a plan for a formative evaluation that a) has adequate rigor to test the hypothesis and program model, including use of a comparison group; b) identifies data points and the processes for the evaluator to access data; c) identifies the qualitative process evaluation work plan; and d) has a staffing plan that will result in a robust evaluation.

Past experience and capacity related to Technical Assistance and Evaluation coordinators. All the state agencies have experience receiving technical assistance and working with evaluators. As the lead agency, DLT's experience includes the recent evaluation of the Shared Youth Vision Pilot, a cross-agency case management project for at-risk youth that involved control groups and an independent evaluator; and work with a third party evaluator to assess the impact of improved data collection systems in youth work. In addition, DLT has benefitted from work with the School & Main Institute, a national organization that provided technical assistance on case management systems. DHS has received extensive technical assistance and is being independently evaluated in its Ford Foundation sponsored access to benefits initiative.

Using Data during the grant period

On-Ramps will use data throughout the grant period to manage and monitor grant activities. The formative evaluation approach enables RI to use the evaluation to inform the ongoing work; the evaluation and data points will be used to support learning and continuous improvement as follows:

Quantitative data: Within the first six months data points and a structure for gathering data through a data dashboard will be determined; baseline data collection will begin in the second two quarters to test RI's

ability to gather the data. The data will be reviewed quarterly once established to assess the progress of the grant and make adjustments to the new systems as needed. Data will be reviewed by the leadership team and career pathways staff at the one-stops; quarterly meetings where the data is reviewed by all stakeholders and discussions on where improvements are needed will be critical to making mid-course corrections.

Qualitative/process data. Data will be used as follows: a) the leadership team will review progress towards milestones monthly, and serve as the barrier-busting committee to facilitate movement within state agencies. This will include data that indicates policy or regulatory issues to address; data from the business process analysis that may elevate staffing, policy, legal, or other issues related to implementing the on-ramp program within the one-stops; and feedback from employers on the project design. The leadership team will evaluate its joint work quarterly in achieving its goals and make course corrections as needed.

b) The leadership team will review semi-annual reports from the evaluator to evaluate its progress, both quantitatively and qualitatively and use them for continuous improvement.

On-time submission of program and financial reports: All program and financial reports are as a matter of course submitted accurately and on time to USDOL, including quarterly and annual WIASRD performance reports and 9130 financial reports for WIA; DOL Region 1 staff have no findings or areas of concern regarding reporting. Over the years DLT has systematically refined and improved grant oversight practices to ensure timely completion of activities. These practices include: training sessions with new grantees to explain reporting responsibilities; regular communication with sub-recipients and grantees to ensure expenditures and activities are on track; providing technical assistance on a consistent basis and management review of data to be included on quarterly reports prior to submission.

4. Strategic Leadership

Strategic Relationships and Leadership Buy-In: On-Ramps will engage a robust set of partners as evidenced by the required **Memorandum of Understanding**. As a small state, Rhode Island is uniquely

positioned to successfully bring state and local stakeholders together towards its goals; long working relationships across stakeholders enable Rhode Island to achieve systems change in the two key focus areas.

Public Agencies: Top-level leadership will come through Governor Chafee's Jobs Cabinet, comprised of all the agency heads for workforce programming in the state. Operationally, On-Ramps engages every major public agency involved in workforce development, including the Department of Labor and Training, the Governor's Workforce Board, the State Workforce Investment Office, the two Local Workforce Investment Boards, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Education, the Community College of Rhode Island, the Department of Behavioral Health and Hospitals, and the Department of Corrections. Each agency is committing to bring staff resources, re-align their programming and a portion of funding towards the on-ramp and career pathways systems, to train their staff in the new processes and systems; to seek policy changes and waivers where needed, and to participate in the evaluation.

Employers and Trade Associations: On-Ramps engaged employers as part of the grant planning process; their input was critical to the development of the on-ramps system to career pathways. During grant implementation, RI will engage a number of industry and trade associations, including: the Hospital Association of Rhode Island, the Tech Collective, the Marine Trades Association, and the Rhode Island Hospitality Association. As noted in the MOU, these industry/trade associations have agreed to: 1) provide input and feedback to the work readiness standards; 2) provide input on the career pathways maps and programs and include employer-based offerings; 3) identify new work experience opportunities; and 4) participate in the evaluation. The employers and trade associations will provide the feedback regularly through the Governor's Workforce Board's Employer Advisory Committee. The Committee is newly formed and the work to create employer-responsive on-ramps and career pathways systems builds on the GWB's existing strategy and is an excellent and energetic focal point for its first three years.

Educational Institutions and Human Services Agencies: In addition to the community college, the Independent Association of Colleges and Universities will bring its expertise and programs to the career

pathways work. Through the Department of Education, On-Ramps will engage the technical education system, and expects to translate the on-ramps and career pathways pilot to the K-12 system by the end of year 3. Over 50 human service agencies attended grant related brainstorming/feedback session; all expressed interest and a willingness to engage in On-Ramps. While not MOU signatories because of the volume of agencies, they are long-time partners in providing education, training and employment services.

Coordination mechanisms will include:

Leadership team: The leadership team includes the public agencies responsible for coordinating the grant and higher education; the team will meet at least monthly and be led by the Project Director. Oversight of the project by the Governor's Jobs Cabinet and the Director of the Department of Labor and Training will ensure that the project has the necessary leadership and priority for the state.

Employers: As noted above the Governor's Workforce Board's Employer Committee will be the main feedback and input mechanism from employers. This will include gathering input on the work readiness standards and career pathways, identifying new work experiences (in coordination with the LWIBs), and regularly reviewing metrics with employers to assess program effectiveness.

Human Service agencies: DHS will take the lead in coordinating agencies related to supportive service programs, including aligning the programs along career pathways and convening the regional case management forums. The LWIBs will coordinate with agencies related to education, employment and training on work readiness and career pathways components. The leadership team will convene human service agencies for feedback, project improvement, and agency integration discussions.

Strategic Communications: On-Ramps will use a multi-tiered leadership and communications system that will be ongoing, with the goals of both communicating information about the grant, getting feedback, and building stakeholder buy-in to the systems change work.

Internally: On-Ramps will deploy the following strategies: 1) The Governor's Jobs Cabinet, led by Governor Chafee and including the directors of most of the relevant agencies, will set the overall priority

for the program statewide. The Cabinet will communicate the purposes, goals and outcomes for the project at the outset to all state agencies and personnel; 2) Agency directors and LWIBs will work within their respective agencies to communicate the work of the grant through briefings at staff meetings and providing forums for regular communications; 3) There will be a central web-based project management site such as Base Camp for posting documents, following the work plan and deliverables, and creating centralized communications.

Externally: DLT will: 1) post information related to the grant on the Department of Labor and Training's Web Site; 2) provide a short bi-monthly briefing on the project's progress that will be posted on the web site and sent to all project stakeholders as well as others interested in the effort; 3) use existing forums (GWB Employer Committee, RIDE Adult Education Advisory Committee, LWIB boards, etc.) to discuss progress and gain feedback; and 4) hold annual progress report and feedback sessions with a range of stakeholders to discuss progress, gain input and feedback, and identify areas for improvement.

Integration into Formula-Funded Activities: On-Ramp's plan for continuing the work after the grant period is embedded in the design of the project -- by changing policies and shifting funds across state agencies to align with on-ramps and career pathways at the One-Stops during the grant, the project is setting the stage for continuing those systems after the grant. Formula-funded activities will be integrated into the on-ramps and career pathways efforts through the grant period. We anticipate that WIA Title I, Title II, TANF, SNAP Employment and Training, Job Development Funds (state), TAA, Wagner Peyser, and Carl Perkins funds will all be used to support the pilot. RI also anticipates that a major portion of the work will be in identifying the policy issues related to braiding the funding streams for the on-ramps and the career pathways. In addition to funding realignment, some of the policy changes RI expects include: a realignment of timeframes for service delivery; aligning and streamlining eligibility and documentation processes; and one-stop organizational policy changes in how services are organized and provided to customers and businesses.

5. Performance Accountability Framework: Data Collection and Reporting

On-Ramps will operationalize its performance accountability framework through: 1) a common set of dashboard metrics and related definitions across state agencies for the key metrics (demographics, literacy levels, public assistance receipt, training, employment, retention, cost structures); 2) use and adaptation of EmployRI, the Dept of Labor and Training's MIS system, for capturing the quantitative metrics for this dashboard; and 3) training staff across agencies in the collection of metrics to standardize the process.

Measures

On-Ramps will capture at least one *new interim measure*, that of tracking progress along a career pathway as a measure of career movement. This will include using wage, credential, promotion, and related data on an individual level to track that progress. It is anticipated that other interim measures will emerge as RI works with the evaluator to identify the most relevant metrics for the project.

Cost savings will be demonstrated through measuring the costs of individual services across the multiple funding streams, and then correlating them with the outcomes in terms of employment, retention, and wages. From that, RI expects to have a cost per outcome equation that will determine the cost savings. The efficiency measure will take into account the impact of investment for the *level* of outcome, not just for the cost/outcome, because RI expects more intensive services for harder to serve populations. Given the long-term nature of career pathways work, RI may also seek to develop interim cost savings/efficiencies measures. On-Ramps will also measure decrease in public benefit receipt because of increased wages and estimate increased state revenues as a further impact and as part of a larger cost-benefit analysis to the state.

Costs for the pilot systems change program will be compared with costs for individuals not in the pilot program in order to hold relatively constant the effects of the economy and labor market on outcomes (and therefore the costs needed to achieve those outcomes).

Data Collection and Reporting: Data collection will occur through several state systems:

- Employ RI: the main MIS system for the Department of Labor and Training, EmployRI is used for WIA Title I, Wagner Peyser, and Trade.
- CALIS: the Department of Education’s MIS system, tracking WIA Title II and Perkins
- InRhodes: The Department of Human Services’s MIS system, tracking TANF, RI Works, SNAP Employment and Training, child care, Medicaid, and other support services

Following are the main data elements to be collected (new/expanded elements are italicized):

Outcome	Key Data Elements	Tool/System
Systems Change		
Increased number of career pathways mapped and transparent to customers and employers; more partnerships established across the system.	<i>Evidence of career pathways Count of partnerships Presence of a web-based career pathways tool</i>	Documents, DLT web site
Funding streams integrated, used and aligned along career pathways; re-alignment of workforce dollars.	<i>Presence of funding streams that are integrated and aligned</i>	State agency budgets Foundation budgets
Increase in funds invested in career pathways	Dollars spent in each program <i>Comparison of funding invested in career pathways as a % of total workforce investment before, during and at the end of the project period.</i>	State agency budgets and plans FY2012-FY2015
Improved targeting of resources/reduced duplication/realignment of funding towards what works	Costs of training/educ. Programs <i>Cost/person for outcomes Changes in investments and costs/person; costs/outcome</i>	State agency budgets and plans FY2012-2015; agency MIS systems and data related to services cost/participant
Use of uniform performance measures across state agencies	Existing performance measurements and changed measurements; use of dashboard	State agency MIS systems Agency meeting minutes
Supportive services resource plan for career pathways	Evidence of plan and alignment	Web career pathways tool; related manual; user guide
Individual Outcomes		
Higher completion of programs	Program completion rates	EmployRI, CALIS, InRhodes
Increased number of people who are connected to needed services	<i># receiving one or more support services</i>	Employ RI, CALIS, InRhodes
Increased retention in jobs for those receiving multiple support services	Employment retention; services used post-employment	Employ RI; UI Wage Data
Reduction in case mgt/coaching hours per client	<i>Coaching hours/customer</i>	Employ RI, CALIS
Customers have a career plan and can identify steps to move forward.	<i>Evidence of career plan Evidence of resume</i>	EmployRI

Outcome	Key Data Elements	Tool/System
Virtual coaching services have same impact as in-person for less cost	# customers using virtual coaching; cost per customer and outcome	On-line coaching/career tool; Employ RI
Increased customer satisfaction	Services and outcomes satisfaction	Survey at one-stops
Higher employer satisfaction	Services and outcomes satisfaction	Employer satisfaction survey
Higher wages	Wage/hour; number of hours worked/week	EmployRI, UI Wage Data
Demonstrated movement along pathway	Wage increases, add'l trainings and courses, new job	Employ RI
People in experiential activities have faster or higher rate of hiring	Time from program completion to hiring; # hired	EmployRI
More employers access and use experiential programs and report increase in work ready candidates	# of employers using work exper. and work readiness; employer satisfaction	EmployRI Employer satisfaction survey
Increase in workers receiving private sector training/tuition	\$s invested by employers in career pathways placements	Employer survey

Leading Indicators of success will include: time to employment, employment and wages, and short-term retention. Later indicators will include the cost per outcome, long-term retention, and career progression.

Level of detail: On-Ramps will easily show progress in quarterly reports, particularly with the leading indicators, with employment, wages, and retention data starting in the fifth quarter.

MIS System: EmployRI will be able to capture the new data elements; RI has budgeted for changes to EmployRI with its current vendor. Those data elements will be determined within the first six months of On-Ramps, as the cross-agency team identifies the common measures for capturing data across the systems.

Use of quarterly data reports: The leadership team will review the quarterly data reports, as well as progress reports from the evaluator, to assess the effectiveness and thoroughness of the measurement system as well as for program performance and adjustments. The quarterly data reports will serve as an ongoing assessment tool towards evaluating progress towards Rhode Island's final goals.