

**RHODE ISLAND
ON-RAMP SYSTEM TO CAREER PATHWAYS
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

This MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING among partners is hereby made and entered into by the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT), the Rhode Island Governor’s Jobs Cabinet, the Governor’s Workforce Board – RI (GWB), Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston (LWIB), Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island (LWIB), the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), the Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS), the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI), the Rhode Island Department of Corrections (DOC) and related employer and industry partners.

Parties to this memorandum include 10 state and local public entities, 9 employer or industry associations, and 2 other partners.

A. BACKGROUND & PURPOSE:

The U.S. Department of Labor has issued a solicitation for grant applications, the “Workforce Innovation Fund.” The goal of the Workforce Innovation Fund is to create new processes, systems, and policies that increase effectiveness and efficiencies in the public workforce system, particularly for vulnerable populations and the long-term unemployed.

The Department of Labor and Training, in collaboration with the two workforce investment boards for Rhode Island and with key other state agencies and employer groups, are submitting an application for funding. Resources will be used to reorganize a portion of workforce system to create effective on-ramps to career pathways programs, with a particular focus on an implementation model using the established One-Stop Career Centers. The On-Ramp Career Pathways Initiative will target vulnerable populations, including long-term unemployed workers, as well as individuals with low-literacy or low-level skills, including the formerly incarcerated and those preparing to be released back to the community from prison. Through developing career pathways in 3-4 industries, braiding funding streams, and creating systems that on-ramp workers to those pathways, Rhode Island expects to achieve better and faster employment outcomes for its customers and to increase the satisfaction of Rhode Island’s businesses and industry with the public workforce system.

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to declare a mutual interest to participate as a partner in this On-Ramp application, establish core partnership principles, and identify the roles, responsibilities and resources for each stakeholder in the partnership.

B. STATEMENT OF VISION:

All parties to this agreement are committed to the vision that the On-Ramp Career Pathways Initiative will create interagency agreements that will allow for more seamless and effective provision of services, with a focus on the One-Stop Career Centers but inclusive of Rhode Island’s public and private workforce systems. The program’s goal is to shift resources, adjust policy and funding toward a career pathways system with key on-ramp services and processes

that will increase the rapidity of labor force attachment, provide residents with the tools and resources to move along a career pathway and that improve the economic success of unemployed residents.

In pursuit of this vision, and building upon significant groundwork already laid by the partnerships in the state, we will work to create career pathways and braid related funding streams; conduct business process analysis and re-design of a portion of career centers to deliver services and resources through a career pathways model and, to consolidate a range of on-ramp programming for easier access and better outcomes, including career coaching, work readiness standards and the alignment of a range of experiential learning opportunities along career pathways. These systems changes, both at the state and local levels, will enable residents and businesses to more easily access and utilize the services and tools of the public workforce system so that they can better achieve their goals.

C. PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES:

As partners, we acknowledge and agree to operate under certain conditions. We will:

- commit to a shared vision (articulated above) for the On-Ramps Career Pathways Initiative;
- operate under a set of core values that emphasizes trust, respect, and inclusiveness;
- promote effective communication strategies and feedback loops within the partnership;
- use performance management standards that demonstrate partners' accountability;
- expect partners to take ownership for delivering outcomes for which they are responsible;
- build an atmosphere of shared learning and share in each other's work; and,
- celebrate and publicize success and actively address persistent barriers.

D. ON-RAMPS GOVERNANCE:

a. The On-Ramps Career Pathways Initiative will be overseen by the Governor's Jobs Cabinet with direct administration and implementation responsibility assigned to the Director of the Department of Labor and Training. The Director of the Department of Labor and Training will lead the operational governance structure, a Project Implementation Team comprised of agency directors or their expert designees.

b. All signatories to this letter will participate on the On-Ramps Career Pathways Implementation Team.

c. The purpose of the Governor's Jobs Cabinet is to provide top level governmental leadership in the creation of policy and program change within its respective state agencies and support the development of the career pathways system and its related on-ramps.

d. The purpose of the Implementation Team will be to operationalize the On-Ramps Initiative within and across state and local agencies; to identify and implement needed policy changes; to identify potential areas for braiding and realignment of funding resources in support of career pathways; to manage resources and staff independently and efficiently in support of the initiative goals; and to ensure that the newly developed system is responsive to that agency's participants.

e. The Implementation Team will not have any legal standing in the On-Ramps Career Pathways Initiative; legal standing will reside with the Director of the Department of Labor and Training.

E. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTIES:

Public Agencies (Department of Labor and Training, Governor’s Workforce Board, Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston, Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island, Rhode Island Department of Education, Rhode Island Department of Human Services, Community College of Rhode Island)

1. The Public Agencies that are party to this Memorandum of Understanding shall:

- a. serve on the Implementation Team, which will meet at least monthly. Members of the Implementation Team will be at a management level within their state agencies to ensure that policy changes and funding considerations can be implemented;
- b. provide fiscal oversight, management and tracking of the work related to their agency, including managing staff related to the Initiative, and fiscal and administrative oversight of funds;
- c. identify needed policy changes to align a portion of programs and funding along career pathways; seek needed waivers from their respective state or federal agencies; and seek legislative changes as needed;
- d. identify the metrics used for each funding stream within their agency and work with the Implementation Team to create a common set of metrics across agencies that can more accurately evaluate the impact of programming;
- e. identify the issues related to creating a data reporting process across state agencies and work to resolve those issues, including privacy and interagency data sharing issues whenever practicable;
- f. identify the needs of each agency’s populations and ensure that those needs are represented in the final design of the career pathways work, including the supportive services needs for vulnerable populations and the long-term unemployed;
- g. inventory all existing work readiness curriculum across state agencies and its subcontractors and work towards establishing a work readiness standard that is meaningful to employers, individuals and community organizations;
- h. train relevant staff in the new career pathways systems;
- i. identify work experience programs and opportunities related to career pathways and work to embed those opportunities within the pathways;
- j. work with the local One-Stop Career Centers to embed state programs related to workforce development within the career pathways systems at the One-Stop Career Centers; and
- k. work with the evaluator for the project and respond to request for information, both qualitative and quantitative.

STATE AGENCY PARTNER AGREEMENTS

1. The Governor’s Jobs Cabinet shall:

- a. provide leadership across state agencies in implementing systems changes to accomplish the goals of the On-Ramp Initiative;

- b. review progress towards achieving those goals on a regular basis; and
- c. provide high-level problem-solving to ensure that cross-agency issues are addressed in a manner suitable for the agencies, the Initiative, job seekers and employers.

2. The Department of Labor and Training shall:

Through the State Workforce Investment Office:

- a. apply for funding from the Department of Labor and operate as the administrative and fiscal agent for the Initiative;
- b. coordinate and manage all activities within the grant and coordinate with partnering agencies to ensure that a career pathways system with critical on-ramp tools and processes is developed in Rhode Island. This shall include:
 - i. Hiring a project director to manage the programmatic and systems change portions of the work;
 - ii. Assigning staff to oversee funds disbursement, subcontracting, and reporting on financing and data outcomes to the Department of Labor;
 - iii. Convening and leading the Implementation Team, developing minutes, maintaining communications across partners and ensuring that work is proceeding in a timely manner to implement the work plan and achieve the desired outcomes;
 - iv. Providing oversight of the work by the various agencies and stakeholders; identify issues as they emerge and work to resolve them; and,
- c. identify waivers, legislative action, or other policy-related change mechanisms for Workforce Investment Act Title I funds needed to implement the new system; pursue the appropriate avenue for policy change and secure the needed approval;
- d. provide fiscal and administrative oversight to the grant, including reporting to the Department of Labor, managing budgets, and ensuring procurement requirements are met for contracting;
- e. lead and coordinate the development of the work readiness standards in cooperation with the Department of Education and the other members of the Implementation Team;
- f. procure and supervise the evaluation of the project and all additional consulting activities; and
- g. identify the best means to create a dashboard of metrics to evaluate the impact of implementing a new career pathways system at the One-Stop Career Centers coordinate with other agencies on the development of the dashboard and how metrics from other agencies will be incorporated in that dashboard.

Through the Executive Office of DLT:

- a. supervise the state workforce investment office in the implementation of the work;
- b. convene the Governor's Jobs Cabinet to report on the work of this grant on a regular basis;
- c. work with the Legislature as needed to change policies in order to implement the program; and
- d. identify the Unemployment Insurance policies or procedures that require change to support the project and its goals; seek needed policy changes through waivers, legislation, or policy directives.

Through the Division of Workforce Development Services:

- a. hire a project manager to supervise the work of the One-Stop Career Centers in conducting the business process redesign to develop the pilot career pathways approaches within the One-Stop Career Centers;
- b. work in conjunction with the One-Stop Career Centers to implement the pilot career on-ramps system;
- c. work in conjunction with the Business Workforce Center to assist in the recruiting of employers for new experiential work activities; and
- d. in coordination with the LWIB's, manage the staffing changes, space requirements, technology changes, training and coaching, and other activities that will be embedded at the One-Stop Career Centers.

3. The Governor's Workforce Board shall:

- a. through its Governor-appointed Career Pathways Task Force, complete maps of career pathways in 3-4 industries, identify the training and education programs aligned along the pathways; identify gaps in programs and trainings and recommend changes to on-ramp programs;
- b. hire staff or consultants to implement the work;
- c. oversee the development of the career pathways on-line resource tool;
- d. coordinate with employers and industry partners to gain feedback on the career pathways system, seek approval of the work readiness standards, identify experiential work opportunities, and promote the new system and its tools; and
- e. work with employers and industry partners to identify and align funding streams along the career pathways; identify needed policy changes to create a seamless set of programs supported by multiple agency funding sources; assist partners in determining the most effective means for creating policy change.

4. Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston and the Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island, in conjunction with and with oversight by the Department of Labor and Training, shall each:

- a. as a member of the Implementation Team, liaison with DLT, GWB, DHS, RIDE, employer partners and community based organizations (CBO's) to manage the On-Ramp Career Pathways initiative within the context of their respective Local Workforce Investment Areas;
- b. identify required policy changes and facilitate development of revised policies and procedures within each respective Local Workforce Investment Area;
- c. contract with the DLT for the provision of On-Ramp Career Pathways initiative services within the Local Workforce Investment Areas' designated comprehensive One-Stop Center and coordinate with DLT system modifications, staffing, training and other changes necessary for program delivery;
- d. coordinate with DLT the On-Ramp Career Pathways initiative marketing and outreach efforts within the respective Local Workforce Investment Areas;

- e. manage program performance accountability standards and outcomes through monitoring of the On-Ramp Career Pathways Initiative within the respective Local Workforce Investment Areas' designated comprehensive One-Stop Career Center;
- f. assist in the development of work-readiness standards and experiential work opportunities in conjunction with local area employers and implement a standardized training platform as part of the On-Ramp Initiative;
- g. identify range of existing work experience activities and gaps. Work with DLT – Business Workforce Center and statewide Youth Workforce Development Services System to develop additional opportunities;
- h. work with Local Workforce Investment Area and state agency fiscal staffs to identify areas for braiding funding and cost savings;
- i. ensure maintenance, accuracy and the integrity of program and fiscal data, records, demographics and other documentation required for grant management and reporting. Assist in the provision of training as necessary to Local Workforce Investment Area staff;
- j. coordinate with DLT and CBO's to streamline case management, supportive services and career coaching including implementation of virtual tools;
- k. develop and present both written and oral reports on the progress of initiatives to Executive Directors, Board of Directors and Committees;
- l. cooperate with evaluators to ensure the successful review and study of the On-Ramp Initiative; and
- m. cooperate with and assist DLT staff on business process redesign within the context of the Local Workforce Investment Area's comprehensive One-Stop Career Center; including the development and implementation of career pathways on-ramp tools including the experiential work system, career coaching and work-readiness standards.

5. The Rhode Island Department of Education shall:

- a. hire a project manager to oversee policy and program work related to the grant;
- b. work with the Department of Labor and Training on the development of the work readiness standards and ensure their relevance and pilot utilization within the state's K-12, vocational technical, and adult education communities;
- c. collaborate and support training on the work readiness standards within the public agencies that are party to this agreement as well as community organizations involved in workforce development; and
- d. identify the WIA Title II and state adult education policies or procedures that require change to support the project and its goals; seek needed policy changes through waivers, legislation, or policy directives.

6. The Department of Human Services shall:

- a. hire a project manager to oversee policy and program work related to the grant;
- b. manage the development of the supportive services maps that will align to the career pathways maps, including identifying needed systems and supports; and
- c. identify the TANF, SNAP, Medicaid, and child care policies or procedures that require change to support the project and its goals; seek needed policy changes through waivers, legislation, or policy directives.

7. The Community College of Rhode Island shall:

- a. bring the resources and knowledge developed through its Trade Adjustment Act Career Pathways grant to this grant, including the health care and information technology career pathways courses and supports being developed;
- b. work with the partners to integrate its career pathways work in the community college into the statewide career pathways initiative of this grant, including locating a career coach funded by the Trade Adjustment Act Career Pathways grant in the One-Stops Career Centers; coordinating coaching work; and referral work to ensure participants are placed along the pathway at appropriate levels; and
- c. identify the state or federal community college policies or procedures that require change to support the project and its goals; seek needed policy changes through waivers, legislation, or policy directives.

8. The Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals shall:

- a. identify the behavioral health supports that can be utilized to support the career pathways pilot;
- b. work with the partners to bring those supports to the One-Stops Career Centers, either through direct staffing support or through creating on-line resources connections; and
- c. work with DHS to identify overlaps in case management and to increase coordination across case managers to improve outcomes.

9. The Department of Corrections shall:

- a. seek to train relevant staff in the use of the career pathways system;
- b. promote the work readiness training for current and former prisoners; and
- c. identify ex-offender issues related to the career pathways and participate with the On-Ramp Initiative's Implementation Team to identify solutions to removing barriers to entry onto those career pathways for ex-offenders.

COMMUNITY PARTNER AGREEMENTS

1. The Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, Rhode Island Chapter, shall:

- a. participate in the development of work readiness standards and engage partner colleges and universities in adopting them; and
- b. through their Bridge Program, identify and promote experiential learning opportunities and coordinate with On-Ramp Career Pathways Initiative in the expansion of those opportunities.

2. The United Way of Rhode Island shall:

- a. advise and provide expertise to the On-Ramp Career Pathway Initiative's leadership structure and Implementation Team; and
- b. take into consideration the workforce system and career pathway analysis produced by the Rhode Island On-Ramp to Career Pathways Initiative when designing its annual investment strategies and priorities.

3. The Rhode Island Foundation shall:

- a. advise and provide expertise to the On-Ramp Career Pathway Initiative’s leadership structure and Implementation Team; and
- b. take into consideration the workforce system and career pathway analysis produced by the Rhode Island On-Ramp to Career Pathways Initiative when designing its annual investment strategies and priorities.

EMPLOYER PARTNER AGREEMENTS

The Employer partners to this agreement are the officially designated industry partnerships that represent large numbers of employers in Rhode Island:

- 1. The Hospitality Association of Rhode Island (Hospitality and Tourism)
- 2. The Hospital Association of Rhode Island (Health Care)
- 3. Healthcentric Advisors (Health Care)
- 4. Stepping Up/United Nurses & Allied Professionals RI Hospital, Health Education Trust (Health Care)
- 5. The Tech Collective (IT and Biotechnology)
- 6. The Rhode Island Marine Trades Association (Marine Trades)
- 7. The Providence Plan (Construction)
- 8. Southeastern New England Defense Industry Alliance (Defense)

The Employer Partners shall:

- a. collaborate with the Employer Committee of the Governor’s Workforce Board;
- b. provide input, review, and provide approval of the Work Readiness standards; promote the use of these standards;
- c. identify new experiential learning opportunities that will facilitate the on-ramping of unemployed workers to paid work. These experiential opportunities may include unpaid internships, unpaid work experience, apprenticeship approaches, on-the-job training, or other similar mechanisms that enable workers to experience the requirements of the work place while offering employers the opportunity to assess potential or new workers for their skills and fit within a company;
- d. work with the Department of Labor and Training to minimize administrative paperwork that discourages employers from participating in a range of work experience activities, including on-the-job training and unpaid internships;
- e. review the career pathways maps and programs and provide input on their design;
- f. Promote the recruitment, training and hiring of qualified candidates for employment that emerge from on-ramps and career pathways work in relevant industries; and
- g. participate in relevant evaluation activities.

Charles J. Fogarty
Director, RI Department of Labor and Training
The Governor's Jobs Cabinet

Charles J. Fogarty, Director
RI Department of Labor and Training

Constance A. Howes
President and Chief Executive Officer
The Governor's Workforce Board

Janet Raymond, Chair
Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston

Steven Kitchin, Chair
Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island

Deborah A. Gist, Commissioner
RI Department of Education

Sandra M. Powell, Director
RI Department of Human Services

Raymond DiPasquale, President
Community College of Rhode Island

Graig Stenning, Director
RI Department of Behavioral Healthcare,
Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals

Ashbel T. Wall II, Director
RI Department of Corrections

Andrew Cortes, Director
The Providence Plan - Building Futures
Governor's Workforce Board
Construction Industry Partnership

Daniel P. Egan, President
Association of Independent Colleges and
Universities, Rhode Island Chapter

Neil Steinberg, President & CEO
The Rhode Island Foundation

Anthony Maione, President & CEO
The United Way of Rhode Island

Kathie Shields, Executive Director
Tech Collective Workforce Development Fund
IT & Bioscience
Governor's Workforce Board
Biotechnology & IT Industry Partnership

Ruth Ricciarelli, Executive Director
Center for Health Professionals
Hospital Association of Rhode Island
Governor's Workforce Board
Health Care Industry Partnership

Gail Patry, Sr. Director of Long Term Care
Healthcentric Advisors
Governor's Workforce Board
Health Care Industry Partnership

Alme Brissette, Executive Director
United Nurses & Allied Professionals (UNAP) RI
Hospital, Healthcare Education Trust
Governor's Workforce Board
Health Care Industry Partnership

Wendy Mackle, Chief Executive Officer
RI Marine Trades Association
Governor's Workforce Board
Marine Trades Industry Partnership

Timothy J. DelGuidice, Chair, SENEDIA
Southeastern NE Defense Industry Alliance
Governor's Workforce Board
Defense Industry Partnership

Dale J. Venturini, President/CEO
RI Hospitality Education Foundation
Governor's Workforce Board
Hospitality and Tourism Industry Partnership