



MIDWEST TRANSPORTATION WORKFORCE CENTER

Glossary of Workforce Development Terms

Apprenticeship Programs: Programs that offer on-the-job training and mentoring that are linked to training and job proficiency. Apprenticeships should provide organized instruction designed to provide knowledge on technical subjects related to their trade.

Apprenticeship Certificate: An award certifying the completion of an apprenticeship program. Apprenticeship Certificates are issued by the U.S. Department of Labor or a state apprenticeship agency. The apprenticeship system offers two types of credentials: 1) certificate of completion of an apprenticeship program, and 2) interim credentials.

Career and Technical Education (CTE): Also known as Professional Technical Education (PTE) or Vocational Education (VOC ED). Organized, educational activities that offer a sequence of courses that provide individuals with technical skill proficiency, an industry-recognized credential, a certificate, or an associate degree.

Career Clusters: A group of occupations and broad industries based on common knowledge and skills.

Career Pathways: Career pathway programs are clear sequences of coursework and credentials that help individuals of varying skill levels earn credentials valued by employers, enter rewarding careers in in-demand and emerging industries and occupations, and advance to increasingly higher levels of education and employment. It is a framework for weaving together adult education, training, and college programs that are currently separated into silos and connecting those services to employers' workforce needs.

Certification/Personnel Certification: A certification indicates that the individual has acquired the necessary knowledge, skills, and sometimes personal attributes (based on a formal study) to perform a specific occupation or skill. Personnel Certifications are granted by non-governmental agencies (usually associations and companies) and are intended to set professional standards for qualifications.

Fast-Track Programs: Also referred to as Accelerated Programs. The time commitment of traditional courses can pose a barrier for working non-traditional learners. Fast-track programs are designed to take less time than traditional courses, thereby addressing the barrier. Courses can be presented in less time than conventional courses or can be an intensive, presented over a condensed period of time.

High-demand Occupations: Occupations having more than the median number of total (growth plus replacement) openings for statewide or a particular region.

High-skill Occupations: Occupations requiring postsecondary training or higher. Also occupations requiring long-term on-the-job training or related work experience.

High-wage Occupations: Occupations paying more than the industry median wage for the state or a particular region.

Industry Clusters: Geographic concentrations of interconnected companies and institutions that have some type of systemic relationship that complimentary within a region.



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Industry sectors: Refers to industries organized according to the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes or North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) classification schemes.

Industry-recognized credentials: Credentials that “are either developed or endorsed by a nationally-recognized industry association or organization and are sought or accepted by companies within the industry sector for purposes of hiring or recruitment.” Having credentials be industry-recognized ensures potential employers that holders of the credential have the core competencies needed by employers for industry jobs.

Portable Credential: A credential that is “recognized and accepted as verifying the qualifications of an individual in other settings—either in other geographic areas, at other educational institutions, or by other industries or employing companies.” This gives value to all technical and career courses and makes the pathway easier to navigate. A portable credential is especially beneficial to low-skilled learners who will have to navigate multiple education systems (ESL, ABE, Prof. Technical) to achieve college level, industry credential.

Stackable Credential: Refers to a credential that “is part of a sequence of credentials that can be accumulated over time to build up an individual’s qualifications.... Typically, stackable credentials help individuals move up a career ladder or along a career pathway to different and potentially higher-paying jobs.” Stackable credentials produce faster results for the student and the employer because students do not have to waste time by only taking academic courses before beginning any technical courses. The stacked design also facilitates navigating a career pathway since aggregating credentials will build to a degree.

Source: *Career Pathways Toolkit: Six Elements for Success*. U.S Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, 2011. <https://lincs.ed.gov/professional-development/resource-collections/profile-556>.