Governor’s Office of Workforce Transformation’s Definition of “Career Pathway Systems” in the 2014-2015 WIA Incentive Grant, including USDOL 6-Element Graphic:

Career Pathway Systems

In addition to those key strategies, there is a focus on the development of career pathway systems to meet Ohio’s occupational demand. Career pathway systems offer a more efficient and customer-centered approach to workforce development because they structure intentional connections among adult basic education, occupational training, and postsecondary education programs to meet the needs of both adult learners and employers. Career pathway-oriented workforce development has the goal of increasing individuals’ educational and skills attainment and improving their employment outcomes while meeting the needs of local employers and growing sectors and industries.

Career pathway programs offer a clear sequence of education coursework and/or training credentials aligned with employer-validated work readiness standards and competencies. This systems approach makes it easier for people to earn industry-recognized credentials (through more flexible avenues and opportunities for relevant education and training) and to attain marketable skills so they can more easily find work in growing careers. These comprehensive education and training systems are particularly suited to meet the needs of working learners and non-traditional students.
WIOA Title I “Career Pathway” Definition:

CAREER PATHWAY — The term “career pathway” means a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that—

(A) aligns with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the State or regional economy involved;
(B) prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options, including apprenticeships registered under the Act of August 16, 1937 (commonly known as the “National Apprenticeship Act”; 50 Stat. 664, chapter 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.) (referred to individually in this Act as an “apprenticeship”, except in section 171);
(C) includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual’s education and career goals;
(D) includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
(E) organizes education, training, and other services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable;
(F) enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and at least 1 recognized postsecondary credential; and
(G) helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

Carl D. Perkins Act of 2006 legislation definition of “Programs of Study-Career Pathways”:

Career Clusters and Programs of Study
The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV) envisions that all students will achieve challenging academic and technical standards and be prepared for high-skill, high-wage, or high-demand occupations in current or emerging professions in the 21st century global economy. To this end, Perkins IV requires states to offer “career and technical programs of study” that comprise academic, career, and technical content that prepares students to make successful transitions to postsecondary education and the workplace. Under
Perkins IV, local education agencies and postsecondary institutions must offer at least one program of study that:

- Incorporates secondary education and postsecondary education elements;
- Includes coherent and rigorous content aligned with challenging academic standards and relevant career and technical content in a coordinated, non-duplicative progression of courses that align secondary to postsecondary education;
- May include opportunity for secondary education students to gain postsecondary education credits through dual or concurrent enrollment programs or other means; and
- Leads to an industry-recognized credential or certificate at the postsecondary level or an associate or baccalaureate degree.

States may develop and implement career and technical programs of study in one or more of 16 career clusters that are recognized by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) and the National Association for State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc). The 16 career clusters are occupational categories with industry-validated knowledge and skills statements that define what students need to know and be able to do in order to realize success in a chosen field. Within each of the clusters, programs of study (also called “career pathways”) have been developed, which outline sequences of academic, career, and technical courses and training that begin as early as ninth grade and lead to progressively higher levels of education and higher-skilled positions in specific industries or occupations.

Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 – Ability to Benefit Career Pathway Program eligibility criteria:

(2) ELIGIBLE CAREER PATHWAY PROGRAM —

In this subsection, the term ‘eligible career pathway program’ means a program that—

(A) concurrently enrolls participants in connected adult education and eligible postsecondary programs;

(B) provides counseling and supportive services to identify and attain academic and career goals;

(C) provides structured course sequences that—

(i) are articulated and contextualized; and

(ii) allow students to advance to higher levels of education and employment.
(D) provides opportunities for acceleration to attain recognized postsecondary credentials, including degrees, industry relevant certifications, and certificates of completion of apprenticeship programs;

(E) is organized to meet the needs of adults;

(F) is aligned with the education and skill needs of the regional economy; and

(G) has been developed and implemented in collaboration with partners in business, workforce development, and economic development.

(2) The amendment made by paragraph (1) shall take effect as if such amendment was enacted on June 30, 2014, and shall apply to students who are enrolled or who first enroll in an eligible program of study on or after July 1, 2014.