

Workforce Development and Education Glossary

As policymakers navigate the important task of connecting education to work, defining the elements in the education-to-workforce pipeline ensures clarity and consistency among the assortment of entities and individuals involved in workforce development. This glossary provides high-level definitions of common terms in this pipeline.



Experiential Learning

Learning through experiences, making meaning through doing.

- **Work-based learning:** sustained interactions with industry or community professionals in real workplace settings or in simulated environments at an educational institution that fosters in-depth, firsthand engagement with tasks required in a given career field and aligned to curriculum and instruction.
- **Apprenticeship:** a career pathway allowing individuals to obtain paid work experience, classroom instruction and a nationally recognized credential. In addition, a [Registered Apprenticeship](#) is a proven model of apprenticeship that is validated by the U.S. Department of Labor or state apprenticeship agency.
- **Youth apprenticeship:** apprenticeship programs for high school students combining academic and technical classroom instruction with work experience through a Registered Apprenticeship Program.
- **Pre-apprenticeship:** a program or set of strategies designed to prepare individuals for entry into a Registered Apprenticeship Program or other job opportunities.
- **Career exploration:** activities that deepen individuals' understanding of a career and some of its specific job functions.



Workforce Systems

Interconnected entities, information and learning programs contributing to a system for workforce development activities.

- **Workforce development system:** an aligned system within a state charged with developing and administering workforce development activities.
- **Workforce board/council:** a group established by statute or executive order that is appointed by the governor to carry out the functions in section (d) of the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#).
- **Career and technical education:** organized educational activities offering a sequence of courses providing technical skills and training for further education and careers in current or emerging professions.
- **Intermediary organization:** organizations that bring together key players within workforce development pathways. They play an important role in developing, organizing, and mobilizing college and career pathways.
- **Labor market information:** all quantitative or qualitative data and analysis related to employment and the workforce.



Training

Outputs that confer skills or knowledge required for entrance and upward mobility in the workforce.

- **Industry credential:** a credential that is sought or accepted by employers within the industry or sector involved as a recognized, preferred or required credential for recruitment, screening, hiring, retention or advancement purposes. It may be endorsed by a nationally recognized trade association or organization representing a significant part of the industry or sector.
- **Certificate/certification:** an award an individual earns to show specific skills or knowledge acquired in an occupation, industry or technology.
- **Postsecondary degree:** an award conferred for the completion of a program or course of study, culminating in an associate, bachelor's or graduate-level title, over multiple years at postsecondary education institutions.
- **Stackable credential:** part of a sequence of credentials accumulated over time to build an individual's qualifications and help them move along a career pathway or up a career ladder to different and potentially higher-paying jobs.
- **Upskill:** opportunities to enhance skills within an individual's current career field.
- **Reskill:** acquire skills in new areas or a new career field.

Definitions adapted from a mix of government and nonprofit sources.