

## Chapter 2: Identifying Local Workforce Development Programs

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*Developed in partnership with the Urban Institute Income and Benefits Policy Center.*

- Define the workforce development system;
- Identify opportunities for education, skill development, and employment provided through the workforce development system; and,
- Understand how to locate and connect with local workforce systems.

### What is a Workforce Development System?

A local workforce development system includes all of the organizations and activities that prepare people for employment, help them secure employment and advance in their careers, and work to build a skilled workforce to support employers and local or regional economies (for detailed information visit the Urban Institute’s [Guide to Local Workforce Systems](#)). These systems provide a variety of opportunities for adults and eligible youth (ages 14-24) to prepare for education, increase their skills, train for specific occupations, and enter employment. Such opportunities extend beyond earning a “traditional” academic college degree to enter a career path.

Workforce development programs include [career and technical education](#) (CTE), [not-for-college-credit \(noncredit\) certificate programs](#), [career readiness training](#), [adult education programs](#), [classes for English language learners](#), and services that help people get and keep good jobs. These programs and services can be divided into three main categories:

- 1) programs for people with limited education or formal work experience,
- 2) postsecondary education programs; and
- 3) employment services.

This section includes examples of programs and services, organizations that often provide those programs and services, and innovative approaches or “strategies” to look out for within each of these categories.

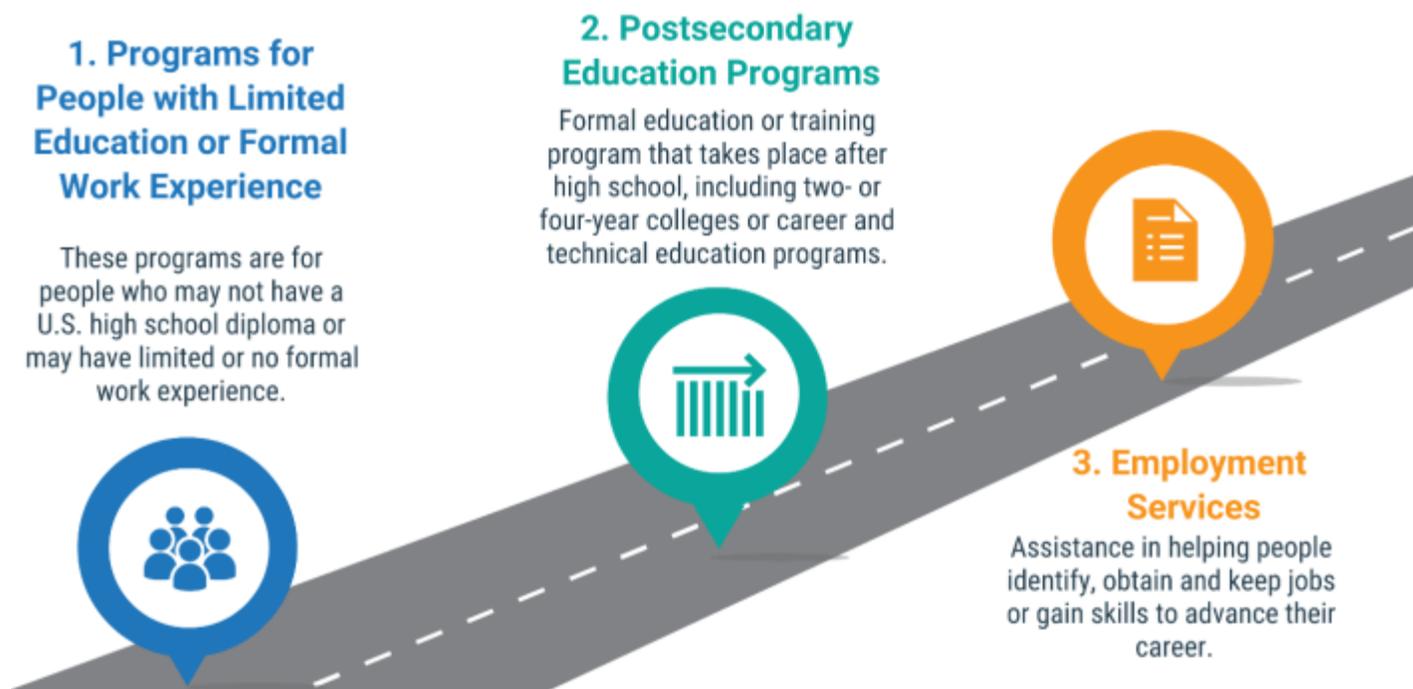


Figure 1: A brief overview of the skill levels needed for each type of workforce development program.

## 1. PROGRAMS FOR PEOPLE WITH LIMITED EDUCATION OR FORMAL WORK EXPERIENCE

Some survivors may not have a U.S. high school diploma or may have limited or no formal work experience. Programs that can help these survivors prepare for postsecondary education and the workplace include career readiness or soft skills training, adult basic education for reading and math, and English language courses. **Career readiness training** provides instruction in nontechnical skills that are critical for success in employment, such as teamwork, critical thinking, conflict resolution, time management, and communication—all personal work skills are repeatedly mentioned as critical in employer surveys.<sup>1</sup> Career readiness training may also include assistance with job searches, resume development, and interviewing skills. Foundational reading and math skills may also be a part of some career readiness training programs.

**Adult education** teaches adult learners the foundational skills needed to succeed in an education or job training program. Depending on the target population served by the program and their specific needs, adult education can involve different types of instruction:

- basic instruction in math, reading, writing, or other subjects;
- preparation to earn a high school equivalency credential for those without a high school diploma; and,

- English language instruction for those who need to improve their language skills to succeed in job training and the workforce.

## STRATEGIES

Some providers of programs and services for individuals with limited education or formal work experience may integrate career readiness, adult education, or English language learning into technical skills training to support student success and accelerate learning. This is sometimes referred to as “[integrated basic education and skills training](#)” or **I-BEST**. Additionally, some providers may allow concurrent adult education and technical training so that individuals who do not meet required reading and math testing levels for a particular job program or who do not have a high school credential can work on those skills at the same time they are learning occupational skills. This allows students to complete training programs more quickly, as opposed to having to complete prerequisite education prior to enrolling in a CTE program or other occupational training, which can take years.

## PROVIDERS

Service providers that help individuals with limited education or formal work experience develop foundational skills include publicly-funded workforce system organizations known as [American Job Centers \(AJCs\)](#) that deliver [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\)](#) programs as well as programs such as the [Veteran Readiness and Employment \(VR&E\)](#) program. Education and training providers and other service providers in your local community can also offer job and career readiness training programs in addition to adult education or English language courses that help meet the unique needs of job seekers. Organizations that provide programs and services for people with limited education or work experience include:

- American Job Centers (AJCs)
- Community and technical colleges, and
- Community-based organizations (CBOs)

See [Table A. Identifying Local Education and Training Programs](#), for more information about each type of provider.

## 2. POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

“**Postsecondary education**” generally refers any formal education or training program that takes place after high school. Perhaps the most well-known types are academic two- and four- year degree programs, such as Associate or Bachelors of Art or Science degrees. However, many postsecondary education programs focus on CTE to help students gain skills for specific occupations or industries, such as advanced manufacturing, information technology (IT), or health care.

While some **CTE programs** award college credit and can be linked to Associate's, Bachelor's, or graduate degree programs, others are noncredit programs that award specific industry-recognized credentials or accreditations. Additionally, both for-credit and noncredit CTE programs may offer certificates that can be obtained in less than two years (the amount of college credit time it usually takes to earn an Associate's degree). These certificates provide proof of the attainment of a specific set of knowledge and skills that can translate into being hired by a particular employer or for a particular position.

## STRATEGIES

Postsecondary education providers use a variety of strategies to help "**adult learners**" enter and complete education and training programs and enter jobs with family-sustaining wages. Strategies for serving adult learners include the use of "**navigators**," coaches, or advisors to provide individual-level support to students, as well as "**accelerated learning**" approaches to allow students to complete programs more quickly than in traditional, for-credit programs.

Navigators are dedicated staff that help students plan out and achieve their education, training, and career goals. Navigator duties may include all or a combination of the following:

- Assessing student interests, strengths, and needs;
- Advising on classes to take;
- Providing personal support;
- Helping with resume development and interview preparation;
- Helping students access academic support services; and,
- Regularly communicating one-on-one with students to make sure they are doing okay, have everything they need, and continue to meet program expectations.

Accelerated learning can help adult learners who face barriers to completing traditional college or job training programs. For example, two- and four-year academic programs may take too long to complete and may not be focused on specific occupational skills that lead to obtaining a job. Additionally, they may require prerequisite coursework for individuals who do not meet a certain standardized testing level for reading or math. Accelerated learning approaches include:

- Integrating adult education with technical skills training, rather than requiring students to enroll in separate classes for each or reach a certain level in math and reading before enrolling in occupational training;
- Separating class content into manageable chunks or "modules" within a course or program to be completed at the student's own pace;

- Allowing students to complete modules online so that they don't always have to go to the provider's campus; and
- Using "prior learning assessments" and other policies to award credit for knowledge gained outside of U.S. education and training programs, such as knowledge gained through work experience, the military, or schooling in a different country.

## PROVIDERS

Organizations that provide CTE, noncredit, or short-term postsecondary education programs include:

- Public community and technical colleges
- Privately-owned technical schools and community colleges
- Community-based organizations (CBOs)
- Business associations
- Unions and trade organizations
- Employers

See [\*Table A, Identifying Local Education and Training Programs\*](#), for more information about each type of provider.

## 3. EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Employment services include a variety of activities that help people identify, obtain and keep jobs, or advance in the job sector in which they already work. Key types of employment services include the following:

- Helping individuals learn about different occupations;
- Assistance with applying for jobs and other activities associated with becoming employed; and,
- Continuing to assist individuals once they have entered employment to make sure the job is retained and that there is an opportunity to advance.

## STRATEGIES

Employment service providers use or facilitate a variety of strategies to help people obtain and retain good jobs. These include career exploration, job development, and job coaching.

**Career exploration** helps individuals learn about various occupations, what those jobs entail, and how they fit with that person's interests and skills. It can also involve helping people understand which occupations are currently in demand in their local

area. **Job development** involves an employment service provider identifying or creating job opportunities for the students or clients they serve. Job developers may work with listings of job openings that are publicly available or provided by a program or agency, join employer networks or business associations to find out about opportunities, cold call potential employer partners, or rely on existing employer relationships to find out about opportunities.

**Job coaching** is a job retention strategy that helps workers keep their jobs. Job coaches meet regularly with clients to provide guidance, advice, and personal support, as well as to make sure workers stay on track with job expectations and personal work performance goals.

## PROVIDERS

The most well-known providers of employment services are part of what can be referred to as the “**public workforce system.**” The public workforce system is the major publicly-funded arm of local workforce systems and can be described as a network of federal, state, and local government-funded agencies and programs that provide services to workers, job seekers, and employers to support economic growth and develop the skills and talents of the workforce. Organizations in the public workforce system that provide publicly funded employment services include:

- American Job Centers (AJCs)
- Job Corp
- **Workforce Development Boards (WDBs)**
- federal state and local government agencies

See [Table A, Identifying Local Education and Training Programs](#), for more information about each type of provider.

## Identifying Local Education and Training Programs

**Table A. Identifying Local Education and Training Programs**

Service and Training Providers	Definition	Service and Program Directories
<i>The Public Workforce System</i>		
American Job Centers	A “one-stop” for public workforce system employment services in local communities to help people identify, obtain and	<a href="#">CareerOneStop website</a> <a href="#">American Job Center finder</a>

	keep jobs or advance in their existing careers.	
Job Corps	Largest nationwide free residential career training program in high-growth industries, for disadvantaged youth ages 16 through 24.	<a href="#"><u>Job Corps</u></a>
Workforce Development Boards	Administrative and advisory organizations that oversee strategy and the provision of public workforce system services (including those provided by AJCs) at the local level.	<a href="#"><u>Workforce Development Board Finder</u></a>
State Government Agencies, including State Workforce Agencies, Adult Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies	Government organizations that oversee workforce development boards, adult education activities, and services for individuals with disabilities. Service directories often include an online listing of publicly funded education and training providers in the state.	<a href="#"><u>State Offices of Adult Education</u></a> <a href="#"><u>State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies</u></a>
<b><i>Education Training Providers</i></b>		
Including public, community, and privately-owned technical colleges and trade schools/unions	Organizations that provide education coursework and/or training applicable to a wide range of jobseekers and skill levels.	<a href="#"><u>U.S. Department of Education College Scorecard</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Find a Trade School Near You</u></a>
<b><i>Employer-based Training</i></b>		
Apprenticeships, incumbent worker training programs and customized training programs	Activities hosted by an employer where an individual is learning skills on the job.	<a href="#"><u>Apprenticeship.GOV</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Apprenticeship Finder</u></a>

<b><i>Business and Industry Groups</i></b>		
Including Chambers of Commerce	A group of businesses or employers who collaborate to promote business interests and sometimes broader community interests in a local area or state.	<a href="#"><u>Chamber of Commerce Directory</u></a>
<b><i>Community and Faith-Based Organizations</i></b>		
Non-profit, community-based, and faith-based organizations that provide services locally	In a workforce system context, an organization that offers training, employment, or support services to people who need assistance to succeed in employment.	<a href="#"><u>211</u></a>

## PUBLIC WORKFORCE SYSTEM: SERVICE PROVIDERS

Survivors may be eligible to access publicly funded job training and employment services (funded through WIOA) by visiting their local AJC or through local [workforce development board \(WDB\)](#) initiatives.

### AMERICAN JOB CENTERS

[American Job Centers](#) are considered the “front lines” of the public workforce system, due to their role working directly with individuals who need to be matched with services. Through the designation of the required AJC partnerships established by WIOA, partners must provide access to their services and activities through the AJC. WIOA allows three options for partners to provide these services at the AJCs, which include co-location, meaning information about education and training opportunities, job search assistance, social services, and employment supports are all available in one place.

The best way to learn more about local programs available and their eligibility requirements is by contacting a staff member at the local AJC. They help connect unemployed and underemployed people, individuals with personal challenges to work, and workers seeking career advancement with training programs designed to meet the job seeker’s needs. AJC staff may also be able to provide victim services agencies with a presentation about available resources in the area or offer tutorials about how to apply in-person or online for services.

## WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION



The CareerOne Stop website has a convenient tool, called the [American Job Center Finder](#), to find the closest American Job Center. This tool is a quick way to identify information about local public training services and programming.

## JOB CORPS

[Job Corps](#) is the largest residential career training program in the country. There are 121 Job Corps centers, with locations in all 50 states and Puerto Rico. Job Corps offers career technical training in high-growth industries, including advanced manufacturing, automotive and machine repair, construction, finance and business, healthcare, homeland security, hospitality, information technology, renewable resources and energy, and transportation.

Students can earn a high school diploma or the equivalent, or college credits through Job Corps. Job Corps graduates either enter the workforce or an apprenticeship, go on to higher education, or join the military. After students complete the program, Job Corps offers transitional support services, such as help finding employment, housing, and transportation. Job Corps is tuition-free to eligible young people ages 16 through 24, and provides housing, meals, basic medical care, a living allowance, hands-on training, and preparation for a career, for up to three years. Victims of severe human trafficking do not have to prove low income to be eligible.

## WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION



If you, or someone you know or are assisting, would like to learn more about the program, fill out and submit the [online interest form](#) on the [Job Corps website](#) and an admissions counselor will reach out to help start the application process.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS

When building partnerships with the local workforce system, it may also be helpful to connect with members of the local WDB. WDBs contract with community- and faith-based organizations to create and staff information sessions about available services and host local events.

## WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION



The [Career OneStop website](#) “Find Your Local Workforce Board” tool can be used to find local workforce board representatives or explore local training and career development opportunities. It allows users to search by location and provides contact information for the local board. Often, these websites include a calendar which displays a list of regional events for jobseekers.

## VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCIES

Local vocational rehabilitation offices support individuals with disabilities by providing customized training and job development support to clients and educating employers about disability awareness.

### WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION



The Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion has a directory of state vocational rehabilitation offices at <https://askearn.org/state-vocational-rehabilitation-agencies/>.

## STATE LABOR OFFICES

Employers use state labor office websites to post job opportunities and recruit candidates who post their resumes online. These offices maintain an “**Eligible Training Provider List**” that users can search to identify state-approved local training and education providers for individuals receiving workforce development funds.<sup>2</sup> A directory of eligible training programs can be found online [here](#).

### WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION



Contact information and websites for the state labor office can be accessed [here](#).

## EDUCATION AND JOB TRAINING PROVIDERS

### COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES

In addition to more traditional four-year colleges of higher education that are available, there are a variety of community and technical college initiatives that many states and local areas offer to help get people back on track to advance in their education career goals and reconnect with the workforce.

### WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION



To find local public, nonprofit, and private for-profit colleges, visit the [U.S. Department of Education College Scorecard](#). The scorecard allows users to search for programs that offer fields of study of interest to them, search for certificate, Associate's degrees, and Bachelor's programs, and understand key statistics including graduation rates and average annual cost of attendance. The local AJC is also a great source of information because colleges often partner with them to recruit students into their programs.

## TRADE SCHOOLS AND UNIONS

Trade schools and unions also provide the opportunity for individuals to earn a diploma or trade certificate in programs in a specific industry (such as manufacturing or information technology). Program length can range from eight weeks to two years. These programs culminate in a certification rather than a degree, and may be a good option for someone who knows what industry they are interested in and is looking to advance their skills quickly.

## WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION



To find more information about local trade schools, resource aggregation sites like [trade-schools.net](#) allow users to search by program and location (including online programs) and provide more information about what types of training is available from trade schools.

## EMPLOYER-BASED TRAINING PROGRAMS

[Employer-based training programs](#) are one way to develop work experience and professional skills outside of a traditional education context. On-the-job training programs have been proven to have strong impacts for participants.

There are two types of employer-based training programs that may be available to your clients that are registered apprenticeships and customized training programs: a apprenticeship and customized training.

- A registered **apprenticeship** is an arrangement with an employer that includes a paid-work component and an educational or instructional component. Apprentices work and train under a contract or written training agreement with an employer and are paid while they are trainees. Apprentices work side-by-side with full-time employees contributing to projects, and there

is an expectation that the apprentice will work as a full-time employee after successfully completing training.

- **Customized training** describes training that is developed by a local provider (such as a community college) and designed to meet the needs of a specific employer (or a group of employers). In exchange for the development hiring individuals upon successful completion of the training, the employer pays a significant portion of the cost of training.

These types of programs can be beneficial low-cost or no-cost options for clients seeking work-based learning experience.

## WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION



The U.S. Department of Labor maintains a list of employer program sponsors at [apprenticeship.gov](https://www.apprenticeship.gov) that helps individuals identify apprenticeship opportunities near them. A list of local office of apprenticeship can be found [here](#).

Customized training programs are often offered in partnership with local community colleges. If your client is enrolled at a local college and interested in breaking into an industry, they can ask about available customized training programs.

## COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS (CBOS)

Every local area has a network of [community-based organizations](#) that provide services to individuals in need, ranging from mental health and counseling services to work readiness and job training programs. Many local areas have directories of community-based organizations that allow an individual to filter through information and resources available online. These types of service directories allow for a more targeted search for locally available services.

## WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION



211 is an easy-to-remember and universally recognizable number for callers looking for essential health and human services in the United States, which enables a critical connection between individuals and families in need and the appropriate community-based organizations and government agencies in their area. This includes information available by phone about crisis and emergency services (including emergency shelters) that is accessible for anyone who may not have reliable access to the internet.

## BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY GROUPS

Finally, business and industry organizations, including the local chamber of commerce, are an important part of the local workforce development system. Participating in the chamber's advocacy events and partnering with these entities to advocate for policy change are ways to elevate awareness among business leaders about issues that affect your clients in the workplace.

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### Glossary of Terms

### Continue to Chapter 3

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[1] Klaeyesen and Rider. 2014. "Employer Perspectives on Soft Skills." Washington State Human Resources Council. <https://wastatecouncil.shrm.org/sites/wastatecouncil.shrm.org/files/Soft%20Skill%20Survey%20Rpt%20-%20Sum%20of%20Findings%20-%20031615.pdf>.

[2] These funds are known as Individual Training Accounts, or ITAs. For more information on ITAs, see: [https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL/TEGL\\_19-16\\_acc.pdf](https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL/TEGL_19-16_acc.pdf)