



Workforce Development Glossary

The workforce development field is filled with confusing industry jargon. Use Advocacy & Communication Solutions' Workforce Development Glossary to help make sense of the most-often used terms in the field.

| Term | What it means |
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| American Job Center/ Career Services Center | A physical place with a wide range of services for job seekers to help them find available jobs, programs to build their skills, or connect them to other resources to find and secure employment. They operate in partnership between the state's local workforce and education agencies to provide training and professional development services for the state's workforce development system. Their names vary and are sometimes called one-stops or <State>Works Centers (such as MichiganWorks or NCWorks) or something else entirely (careerlink or career center or jobconnect or joblink, etc.). |
| Career pathway | A career pathway is a series of connected education, training programs, work experience, and student support services that enable individuals to secure a job or advance in an in-demand industry or occupation. <i>Why they matter:</i> Career Pathways help to ensure that workers are trained in the skills employers say they require, and provide opportunities for workers to advance in the industry. This creates more satisfied employees and healthier industries, which improves regional economies. (Maher & Maher) |
| Career vs. job seeker | Often used interchangeably, to describe someone who is looking for a job or career, these terms have different connotations. Job is often used for any type of employment that may or may not be part of a career pathway. Career is a series of positions that helps the seeker look forward to a long-term goal or job. Not every job is part of someone's career. Either is OK to use, but be mindful of which one is best for your purpose. |
| Incumbent worker training | Incumbent worker training is designed to meet the special needs of an employer or group of employers by assisting employees in obtaining new skills in order to prevent a layoff. |
| In-demand occupations | Occupations are the kind of work a person does to make a living. In-demand occupations are those with a high number of available positions (as shown through job postings and/or labor market data) and are within an in-demand industry sector that has a significant impact on the local, regional, or state economy. |

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|--|---|
| In-demand industry sector | An industry sector is a group of companies that share a similar business type. For example, all establishments that manufacture automobiles are in the same industry. A given industry, or even a particular establishment in that industry, might have employees in dozens of occupations. An in-demand industry sector has significant impact on the local, regional or state economy and contributes to the growth or stability of other supporting businesses. |
| Job coaching | An activity for a jobseeker to work individually with a mentor or coach to develop the ability and capabilities to perform a specific job. |
| Job matching | Job matching is the process of matching the right person to the right job. It requires understanding the job and the person who is being considered. |
| Job placement services | Job placement is the term used to describe the process by which educational institutions, social service agencies, military branches, employment agencies, and recruiters help their students, soldiers, and clients find work. |
| On the job training | Teaching employees a new skill or behavior at the place of work while he or she is doing the job. |
| Opportunity youth | Sometimes called “disconnected youth”, this term is used to describe youth aged 16–24 who are not in school and not working. |
| Sector or industry partnerships | The term industry and sector are often used interchangeably, although a sector refers to a large segment of the economy, while industry describes more specific set of companies. An economy can be broken down into industries or sectors (i.e. biotechnology, agriculture, finance, or health care), which can describe nearly all of the business activity in that economy. Sector or industry partnerships are regional partnerships driven by employer’s workforce needs that include companies from the same industry or sector, workforce development, education and training, economic development, and community organizations that focus on a set of priority issues. Those priority issues, called sector strategies are “goals, plans of action, policies, and service delivery strategies developed and continuously re-examined by sector partnerships to meet the ongoing and changing needs of employers within that sector.” (Maher & Maher) |
| Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) | The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is the federal law that empowers states to train its workforce and guides how the workforce boards and agencies connect job seekers to employers. |
| Workforce Development Boards | A local or state workforce development board represents the community’s employment needs; directs federal, state, and local funding; and provides planning and oversight to the programs that help both jobseekers and employers be economically successful. |
| Workforce development system | A system of programs or initiatives based on the available jobs in the region that enable individuals to acquire skills and knowledge, access support services, and connect to employment opportunities, and help businesses find and retain skilled workers they need. |