

Southwestern Area
Workforce Development Board



**Career Pathways Plan
PY 2019**

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Executive Summary

The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board continues the process of improving its service delivery model to support economic development through workforce development. A key pillar to this process is the career pathways system and how employers are directly in developing solutions to their workforce needs within their industry.

This career pathways plan was developed in consideration of the U.S. Department of Labor Career Pathways Toolkit: An Enhanced Guide and Workbook for System Development and the sector partnership strategies model that is being implemented throughout New Mexico. The toolkit provides the teams with a variety of tools to use to strengthen its processes and the development of career pathways. It calls for the alignment of cross-agency planning, performance, and strategies resulting in a skilled and ready workforce.

A two-pronged approach describes how the traditional roundtable and the sector partnership strategies models will be used in PY19. The sector partnership strategies model will first be used with the healthcare and education industries. In future program years, the other priority industries of the board will also use the sector partnership strategy model.

As described in the plan, the building of cross-agency partnerships will help organize partners to be an integral part of the process that leads to the engagement of businesses within their respective industries. This group is referred to as the Core Team. The Core Team consisting of businesses, workforce development, economic development, and education all working together to develop training programs that meet the needs of the employers. The Core Team also works together developing the career pathway information that will be used within the workforce centers and system. The braiding of programs and services also leads to the search for additional funding and other resources to support the training needs of the industry. The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board will also work with the Core Team to align policies and programs that will improve services. The leadership team will measure change and report its conclusions to business, its partners, the Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board and the Chief Elected Officials on a quarterly basis.

To truly change the economy, those involved in the career pathways systems must align their strategies and resources to build upon traditional approaches that result in more effective programs. By implementing the career pathways plan, our local economy becomes stronger as education, workforce development and industry connect to address the workforce readiness of the region.

Introduction to Career Pathways

This plan has been created to support the workforce system and local leaders in the Southwestern area of New Mexico. It outlines the process of the career pathways system: who is involved; what is produced; and how change is measured and reported to benefit employers within industries, job seekers, and youth. This plan underscores the participation of business leaders through industry meetings, needs assessments, measuring, and reporting process. The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board has chosen to use a model provided by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), The Career Pathways Toolkit, that is organized around the Six Key Elements of Career Pathways (Appendix A).

What are Career Pathways?

According to the information in the Toolkit,

Career pathways are the new way of doing business and they operate at two levels—a system level and an individual program level. At the systems level, career pathways development is a broad approach for serving populations that may experience significant barriers to employment and can substantially alter the way the workforce system delivers its services and its relationship with partner organizations and stakeholders. Career pathways programs offer a clear sequence, or path, of education course and/or training credential aligned with employ-validated work readiness standards and competencies (Introduction p.6).

What is the Relationship Between Career Pathways and Sector Strategies?

Career Pathways are complementary to Sector Strategies. Using the Industry Demand for Skills, Sector Strategies are used to identify industry requirements. Then the sector strategy information is used to develop career pathways to provide educational options (Toolkit p.8). The work with industries is ongoing so Career Pathways are continually being updated based on new information from the particular industry sector.

Career Pathways and Sector Strategy Partnerships are new to the New Mexico public workforce system. In the SAWDB's contract with the State of New Mexico, two industries must be identified to use the sector strategy partnership model during PY19. The SAWDB Planning Committee has chosen Healthcare and Education as the two industries for sector partnership strategies. The partners may also opt to join existing roundtable discussions or convenings within the region. The benefits are that time and resources do not have to be expensed to invent a "new wheel" and businesses leaders do not have to attend multiple meetings to discuss similar meeting topics – minimizing employer fatigue.

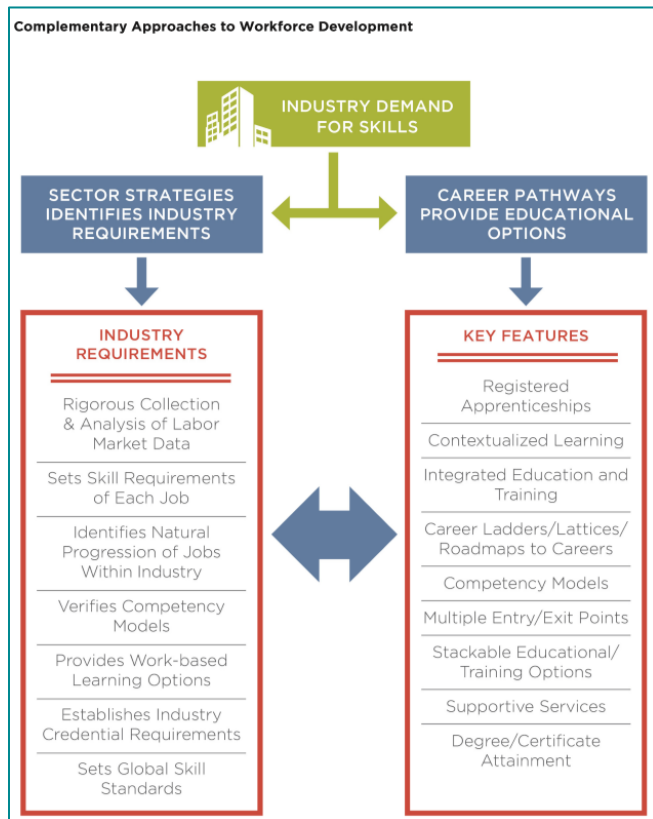
The State Administrative Entity of the NM Department of Workforce Solutions has contracted with a trainer to assist the four local workforce boards in New Mexico with the deployment of the sector strategy model.

This sector approach is different than the traditional industry partnership model that has been used with the Board's priority industries in the past. The traditional model uses an Employer Needs Guide (Attachment B) to engage employers and to open discussions. This guide seeks to learn about the

industry needs for entry, technical, and supervisory positions. Under this approach, each industry

partnership will have a business leader as its chair and have a process to sustain and grow the partnership.

The advantage of the traditional approach is that Career Pathways could be developed quickly for the eight Priority Industries selected by the board in 2018. However, the traditional industry partnership model may only be used as an interim approach during PY2019. This approach may allow for the development of career pathways more quickly, but those career pathways would not be informed by any sector strategies work and would, therefore, need to be revisited. According to the Toolkit, in order for the career pathways to reflect the needs of local and regional businesses and industries, the sector strategies work should occur first. (Toolkit: Complementary Approaches to Workforce Development, p. 8.)



A Two-pronged Approach

In order to satisfy the SAWDB’s contract with the State of New Mexico to identify two industries for the sector strategy partnership model during PY19 and to quickly develop Career Pathways for the Priority Industries, a two-pronged approach should be attempted. First, use the traditional approach to produce the initial Career Pathways for the eight Priority Industries. Then, use the sector partnership strategy approach from the Toolkit to revisit and update the Healthcare and Education Career Pathways.

Initial Career Pathways

In November 2019, the partners will convene to identify its leadership team (Team) and begin their work on developing the Career Pathways for the eight Priority Industries. A Leadership Team (WIOA Project Manager [Lead], SAWDB Chair [or his appointed representative], WIOA Administrator, and One Stop Operator) will identify entry points, recruitment strategies, career ladders, and lattices. Industry leaders will be involved in the design process of the career pathways system.

Based on this information, the leadership team will develop and disseminate info sheets for each industry throughout the region. Partners and educational providers will be encouraged to post a link to the career pathways webpage and provide hardcopy info sheets to the public and their staff. The

leadership team will provide a quarterly webcast on the career pathway system and info sheets to the public and other stakeholders.

Sector Partnership Strategies (Toolkit)

After developing the Initial Career Strategies, developing and disseminating information, and training service providers, work can then begin on using the Toolkit to develop the Sector approach for Education and Healthcare. Fortunately, the Toolkit integrates sector strategies and career pathways. In addition, the final section of the Toolkit is the ETA Sector Strategies Technical Assistance Initiative, which is a Guide for Action for Sector Partnerships, so the Toolkit could easily be used to develop Sector Partnerships in the Healthcare and Education sectors.

The focus is to organize the program partners identified by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (Act) across the region. The region consists of the following seven counties in Southwestern New Mexico: Catron, Doña Ana, Grant, Hidalgo, Luna, Sierra, and Socorro.

The core team for each industry will be drawn from cross-agency partners and employers in the region:

- 1) WIOA Project Manager (Lead)
- 2) SAWDB Chair
- 3) WIOA Administrator
- 4) One Stop Operator Manager
- 5) Employers
- 6) Core program partners
 - a. WIOA Adult program
 - b. WIOA Dislocated Worker program
 - c. WIOA Youth program
 - d. WIOA Wagner-Peyser program
 - e. WIOA Adult Education Services program
 - f. WIOA Vocational Rehabilitation program
- 7) Education (K-12 and higher education)
- 8) Economic Development
- 9) Community based organizations

The Team will use the process described in the Six Key Elements in the Toolbox to create their shared vision, mission, and strategies for the two chosen industries—Healthcare and Education. The Leadership team should begin with the Six Key Elements Readiness Assessment (Toolkit, p. 10) and the Next Steps Action Planning Tool (Toolkit, p.16). “The flexible action-planning tool . . . can help the team carry out prioritized actions steps identified in the Six Key Elements Readiness Assessment. It may help the team decide which key element to concentrate on first (Toolkit, p. 17).

The goal for this work is to obtain Optimal Alignment. When Optimal Alignment is achieved, the following statements will describe the work of the SAWDB region.

Leadership vision and strategy is operational. System focuses on targeted sector strategy,

engages employers, and reflects clear pathways education components. State-level policies support long-term sustainability with federal and/or state funding plan. Metrics and outcomes reflect evidence-based evaluation processes and continuous improvement” (Toolkit, p. 11).

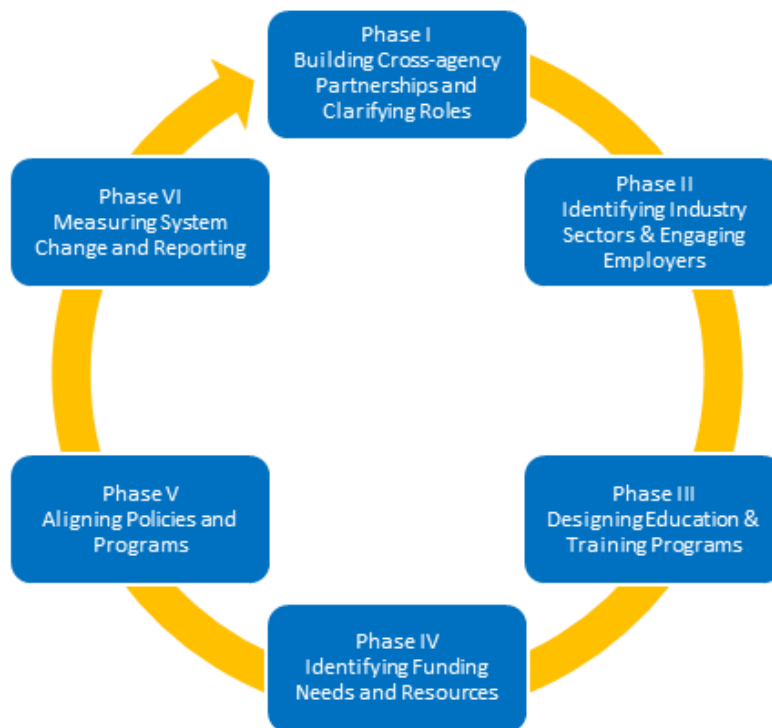
Using the Toolkit

Six Key Elements of Career Pathways

Career pathways are developed through collaboration of partners and industry, who gather and analyze information to help customers make informed career choices. A key goal is to engage workforce partners, businesses, and education to form a team that work together to meet the workforce needs of the industry through workforce development.

The six elements are a guide for the following:

1. Building cross-agency partnerships and clarifying roles within the workforce system
2. Identifying industry sectors and engaging employers
3. Designing education and training programs to meeting the needs of employers
4. Identifying funding needs and sources
5. Aligning policies and programs
6. Measuring system change and performance



Phase I: Building Cross-Agency Partnerships and Clarifying Roles

Key Element Components:

- Engage cross-agency partners and employers.
- Establish a shared vision, mission, and set of goals.
- Define the roles and responsibilities of all partners.
- Develop a work plan and/or Memorandum of Understanding for the partnership.

Organizing the Partners and Clarifying their Roles

In this phase of the process, the focus is to organize the program partners identified by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (Act) across the region. The region consists of the following seven counties in Southwestern New Mexico: Catron; Doña Ana; Grant; Hidalgo; Luna; Sierra; and Socorro. The public workforce system's structure under the Act intends to braid a variety of partners' resources and specialties into one system to coordinate services to customers.

As part of developing a career pathways process, the partners will provide input based on their individual experiences. This type of input is essential to understanding each other's roles and how they can better serve customers with the board's priority industries. The Act requires that each local workforce board, like the SAWDB, have set of core program and other required partners who bring their special skills and resources to the table to better serve the needs of each individual or employer. Their role of the partners is to develop a pipeline for skilled workers through training opportunities that meet the workforce needs of businesses.

The administrative entity and one-stop operator of the Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board will lead in the initial phase of forming the leadership team.

WIOA Core Program Partners

The core program partners work in collaboration in various areas of the public workforce system. Working together as part of the career pathways process provides the system with a variety of perspectives that enhance the quality of services to employers, job seekers, and youth.

The core programs consist of:

- 1) WIOA Title I – Adult Program (funding by the SAWDB)
- 2) WIOA Title I – Dislocated Worker Program (funded by the SAWDB)
- 3) WIOA Title I – Youth Program (funded by the SAWDB)
- 4) WIOA Title II – Adult Education Services (funded by the NM Department of Higher Education)
- 5) WIOA Title III – Wagner-Peyser Employment Program (funded by NM Department of Workforce Solutions)
- 6) WIOA Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation Program (funded by the NM Department of Education)

WIOA Additional Partners

The Code of Federal Register, 20 CFR § 678.400, as listed below, identify the additional partners who have a role in the public workforce system. Like the core programs under the Act, these partners specialize in providing employment or education to specific populations within our communities. Their rolls are essential to addressing the unique and diverse needs of those within our workforce system.

- 1) The Senior Community Service Employment Program authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056et seq.);
- 2) Career and technical education programs at the postsecondary level authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301et seq.);
- 3) Trade Adjustment Assistance activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271et seq.);
- 4) Jobs for Veterans State Grants programs authorized under chapter 41 of title 38, U.S.C.;
- 5) Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (42 U.S.C. 9901et seq.);
- 6) Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development;
- 7) Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws (in accordance with applicable Federal law);
- 8) Programs authorized under sec. 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532); and
- 9) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) authorized under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601et seq.), unless exempted by the Governor under § 678.405(b).

In addition to the core and additional partners under WIOA, K-12 education providers are additional partner that have an important role in the process. The region has over 20 public school districts and numerous private schools that will be invited to convene and participate in both the sector partnership strategy process and industry roundtable discussions. Having K-12 education providers provides a sound balance and adds value to the workforce system.

Community based organizations and government agencies that are not WIOA or K-12 partners should also be invited to partner depending on the value that they can bring to the workforce system. Such partners are valuable as they can potentially fill gaps in the delivery of wrap-around services for individuals or their families.

Phase II - Identifying Industry Sectors & Engaging Employers

Key Element Components:

- Conduct labor market analysis to target high demand and growing industries
- Survey and engage key industry leaders from targeted industries and sector partnerships.
- Clarify the role of employers in the development and operation of programs.
- Identify existing training systems within industry as well as the natural progression and/or mobility (career ladders/lattices)

- Identify the skill competencies and associated training needs
- Sustain and expand business partnerships.

Priority Industries

This identification of industry sectors was completed in 2018 with the modification to the SAWDB’s four-year plan. The SAWDB’s priority industries are:

- Aerospace
- Agricultural
- Education
- Health care
- Logistic and warehousing
- Manufacturing
- Mining
- Hospitality and tourism

In addition to the priority industries, other industries that are emerging in the region can also be engaged to develop sector strategy partnerships or through industry roundtables discussions. The leadership team will make this determination on a case-by-case basis.

Self-assessment

In **December of 2019**, the Leadership Team (Team) will conduct a self-assessment using a career pathways tool (View Attachment A). The self-assessment gauges how the workforce system in the Southwestern area of New Mexico if it is a high-performing sector-focused organization. Based on the results of the self-assessment, the Leadership Team and develop strategies to improve its performance.

In addition, the Team will begin reviewing labor market information for the career pathways that will also be used for the modification of the 2020 Four-year plan by analyzing labor market information and identifying high-demand industries with family sustaining wages. The labor market analysis for the career pathway will also be used for the four-year plan to support the targeted high demand industries. The labor market information will be drawn from the Bureau Labor Statistic and LASER to search for industry projections and occupations in demand, as well as industry concentrations within the region.

Career Pathway System Objectives

The career pathway partners will have key tasks that are measurable indicators of the progress within the region. The Toolkit provides 20 key elements of a high-performing sector-focused workforce system.

High-performing Sector-focused Workforce System

The following are a list of the areas for assessment from the Employment Training Administration (ETA) Sector Technical Assistance Initiative Sector Strategies Organizational Self-Assessment tool (Attachment A):

Data-Informed Decision Making

Is your organization/partnership using rigorous data to make decisions about target industries and education and training investments?

- 1) Understanding of the region's most important industry sector(s) through use of rigorous economic, industry and labor market data collection and analysis.
- 2) Process in place to identify specific skill needs, level of demand, and area education and training program gaps within target industry sector(s)
- 3) Provision of data that is understandable and shared across partners to enable joint, collaborative decision-making

Industry Engagement

How broad and deep is the involvement of targeted industry sector(s) employers in designing and delivering programs and services?

- 1) Regional influence to bring key industry leaders to the table and understand the needs of their businesses
- 2) Industry as a strategic partner in designing and executing services and programs
- 3) Capability to take on the sector partnership intermediary role if required

Sector-Based Service Delivery

How effectively are you and your partners facilitating the development and delivery of workforce opportunities that are responsive to the needs of an entire targeted industry?

- 1) Capability to fill the industry's near-term workforce needs
- 2) Capability to meet the industry's longer-term pipeline needs across a range of skill levels
- 3) Ability to overcome barriers for lower-wage workers in order to facilitate employment and career advancement within the targeted sector(s)
- 4) Experience with and capability to develop effective, employer-validated career pathways in support of the target sector(s)
- 5) Experience with and capability to design and implement, with employers, work-based learning models in targeted sector(s)
- 6) Partnerships with the right regional organizations to deliver comprehensive solutions in response to target industry sector(s) needs—while minimizing the duplication of services
- 7) Willingness and ability to respond to non-workforce needs directly related to the industry's economic development or growth opportunities

Sustainability & Continuous Improvement

Is your organization able to measure sector strategy outcomes and sustain sector work overtime?

- 1) Ability to “build the buzz” about the value of sector partnerships as a means to continuously secure stakeholder buy-in
- 2) Sector partnership measures of success identified and tracked with continuous improvement processes built in
- 3) Sustainable funding source(s) to establish and expand sector partnerships

Organizational Capacity & Alignment

Does your organization have the personnel, policies, vision, and resources in place to support sector strategy outcomes?

- 1) Organizational commitment to bring partners to a shared vision
- 2) Organizational culture that promotes a demand-driven approach within a sectors framework
- 3) Organizational structure (administrative policy, committee structure) that supports industry engagement within a sectors framework
- 4) Staff have expertise about current target industries and have opportunities to hone knowledge as targets change”

Roundtables

In **January of 2020**, the Team will conduct industry round table discussions with businesses and industry leaders from the areas of Workforce and Education to inventory of training systems and career ladders and lattices, and to identify skill competencies. In this process, the Team will not only learn about the industry’s needs, but their interests in other areas of the workforce system.

Phase III - Designing Education & Training Programs

Key Element Components

- Identify and engage education and training partners.
- Identify target populations, entry points, and recruitment strategies. Review, develop, or modify competency models with employers and develop and validate career ladders/lattices.
- Analyze the State’s and region’s education and training resources and response capability.
- Research and promote work-based learning opportunities within business and industry.
- Develop integrated, accelerated, contextualized learning strategies.
- Provide flexible delivery methods.
- Provide career services, case management, and comprehensive support services. Provide employment assistance and retention services.

Benefits of Existing Partnership with Education

The benefit of having education partners for various industries in the sector partnership strategies and career pathways process is that they will be involved in understanding the needs of the industry and be a part of designing the solution that will fill the skill gaps of individuals. In 2000, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) included a workforce system that established relationships between workforce boards and education. The reauthorization of WIA, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), continued the same framework to assist job seekers with training. Accordingly, the SAWDB has established relationship with various eligible training providers within the its public workforce systems and in **January 2020** the Core Team will work with cross-agency partners and employers from Healthcare and Education to develop new or modify existing educational programs to bridge the workforce gaps within the industries.

Phase IV - Identifying Funding Needs and Resources

Key Element Components

- Identify the costs associated with system and program development and operations.
- Identify sources of funding available from partner agencies and related public and private resources and secure funding.
- Develop long-term sustainability plan with state or local partners.

In January 2020, the Team will explore how it will braid its funding, measure performance, and establish a strategy for the long-term sustainability of newly funded projects.

Braided Funding

A key step that the Team will examine is it funding needs for future services related to program development cost and participant costs. The Team will identify its existing sources of funding and how it can best braid them to meet its needs and how it will deliver services more effectively and efficiently.

Beyond the existing sources of funding, the Team will explore addition sources of funding, both public and private. Private organizations provide start-up funding for new concept ideas that help special populations. The advantage to having an existing partnership with so many organizations is the ability to be more competitive in the application process for funding. This consortium model typically leads to higher points of a proposal during the evaluation process and results in an award.

Measuring the Return on Investment

The partners in the public workforce system measure their performance at different levels, one being after the participant exits the program. WIOA Title I service providers examine whether a participant was employed after the second quarter and fourth quarter after exit. It also measures the median earnings of the participants after exit. By taking median earning of the number of individuals in the measure, a computation can be made relative to annual earnings over the cost of the training. Taking this measure on an annual basis can establish a barometer of how the public workforce system is performing year to year.

Long-term Sustainability for New Projects

A major area of consideration when applying for new project funds, whether public or private, is how will the project be sustained beyond the start-up period? Funding is typically the main issue for sustainability. An advantage to the Team is having access to a consortium of partners that can set aside and commit funds from their respective organizations to support the project beyond the start-up period. This places the SAWDB in a good position for the sustainability for future projects with its partners.

Phase V - Aligning Policies and Programs

Key Element Components

- Identify state and local policies necessary to implement career pathways systems.
- Identify and pursue needed reforms in state and local policy.
- Implement statutory and administrative procedures to facilitate cross-agency collaboration.

Strategies for Aligning Policies and Programs

The SAWDB has and is now more geared to consider the effects of its policies with workforce partners. One example is the supportive service policy that helps those in training programs pay for transportation, childcare, and medical costs that are barriers to education or training.

In **February 2020**, the Team will work with the administrative policy committee to examine the SAWDB's and partners' policies for policies changes that can improve the service delivery model and career pathways for customers. The Team will examine how it can promote better program alignment among the partners in the workforce system and how it will measure the outcomes.

High schools, community colleges, and other post-secondary schools are an important part of this examination for alignment. This holistic view involves a cross-section of partner who are all involved and have an important role in the career pathways process.

The Team will produce a report no later than **February 29, 2020** with its recommendations.

Phase VI - Measuring System Change and Reporting

Key Element Components

- Define desired system program, and participant outcomes.
- Identify the data needed to measure system, program, and participant outcomes.
- Implement a process to collect, store, track, share, and analyze data.
- Design and implement a plan for reporting system and program outcomes.

Measuring system change is an important part of examining how a program is improving its services. In respect the career pathway system, the Team will identify the desired outcomes for participants and the overall system. It will identify what type of data will be collected and analyzed to establish conclusions and how it will report this information to the partnering programs and SAWDB.

Measuring Change

Quarterly Basis

On a quarterly basis, the leadership team will submit a report called, Career Pathways Quarterly Brief that summarizes the career pathway activities and progress of the quarter. The first report will be for the period of October through December and published on February 1, 2020. Subsequent reports will be on:

Period	Publication Date
January 1 – March 31, 2020	May 1, 2020
April 1 – June 30, 2020	August 1, 2020
July 1 – September 30, 2020	December 1, 2020

Biannual Basis

On a biannual basis, the leadership team will measure the overall system change of each industry by comparing baseline workforce data to current data. The leadership team will, at a minimum, measure and report on changes on:

- 1) Funding resources
- 2) Activities and services
- 3) Outputs
- 4) Outcomes
- 5) Impacts

In this process, the leadership team will involve its partners and employers who are willing to assist in measuring change. The leadership team will at a minimum submit its report to the following bodies:

- 1) Businesses/Employers
- 2) Workforce partners
- 3) Education (Higher Education and K-12)
- 4) Economic development
- 5) Local elected officials and local government managers
- 6) Cabinet Secretary of the NM Department of Workforce Solutions

