

# INTRODUCTION

## Purpose of this Manual

A comprehensive career pathway should include aligned coursework and training, involvement in work-based learning, and strategic career development. Many institutions have well-developed plans for offering coursework and some delineate work-based learning across a continuum; however, few have reviewed their career development offerings.

This manual was developed to aid frontline staff who provide career counselling. As referenced by the University of Texas at Dallas (<https://www.utdallas.edu/career/model/>), a thorough career counselling process is a continuous cycle of assessing self, exploring options, developing skills, marketing self, and performing job skills.

Consider that a person may be a lifelong job seeker or desire continuous advancement. An optimum time to reflect on future employment plans is in middle school (commonly grades 6-8) where students explore options and devise plans to reach employment and lifestyle goals. High school is a time to refine employment options, re-evaluate plans, and adjust goals. After high school, the learner may enter the workforce, training programs, the military, community colleges or universities. During this phase of continued education, the learner is preparing for employment primarily through theoretical and direct skill acquisition. Supporting the lifelong learner, adult workforce development programs aid job seekers as they move through the “on and off ramps” of life. Throughout a lifetime, the learner can utilize resources from multiple agencies and institutions, and the career development cycle occurs continuously.

Since the agencies and institutions mentioned above share common purposes, how do they avoid duplication of services? What tools ensure services are age appropriate? Who evaluates the comprehensiveness of these services?

This manual provides necessary components for comprehensive career guidance. Each component is divided by age-appropriate strategies and lists resources to advance opportunities.



The manual is written in “lesson plan” format for ease of delivery. While the first edition of this manual lists ten fundamental lessons, we encourage each agency or institution to evaluate their programs and create additional lessons, as needed.