



# Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act New York City Local Plan: Elements Relevant to Title II Programs

August 2017

The following is a portion of the New York City Workforce Development Board (WDB) Local Plan related to the provision of adult education services.

## VISION AND GOALS

Provide a description of the LWDB's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, specifically addressing how to improve access to activities leading to a recognized post-secondary credential, as well as other strategies for serving out-of-school youth and adults who have low literacy skills, are English Language Learners, or lack a high school diploma or the equivalent.

### System Vision

In 2014 the City of New York announced a career pathways vision for workforce development in the report: "[Career Pathways: One City Working Together.](#)"

Career Pathways is a guiding strategy and framework describing how elements of the City's workforce system should align and connect to one another – supporting individuals along progressive levels of education and training that lead to stable employment offering family-supporting wages. The city's vision of career pathways contains three central pillars:

- **Building Skills Employers Seek:** Shifting away from the former priority of placing as many people into jobs as quickly as possible, workforce programs now focus on connecting New Yorkers to quality jobs with family-supporting wages and career advancement potential. To ensure that its training investments are closely aligned with employer needs, the City is creating strong industry partnerships that provide robust feedback loops with companies in priority sectors of New York's economy.
- **Improving Job Quality:** The City is acting to support New Yorkers in lower-wage jobs through initiatives that reward worker-friendly business practices such as consistent scheduling, access to commuter benefits and financial empowerment services. In addition to providing stability for workers, these common-sense practices support the bottom line for employers by lowering turnover costs and helping to ensure better-trained workers.
- **Increasing System and Policy Coordination:** The City is committed to better aligning its workforce and economic development initiatives, utilizing local legislation and administrative policies as key levers to promote career pathway development and implementation. Workforce programs should also function as a coherent system by using system-wide common metrics, shared definitions and data tracking tools, and applying a unified approach to employer and jobseeker customers.

### Alignment with the City's Vision of Adult Education

The City views "skill building" in very broad terms as the development of English speaking skills, academic skills (literacy level, progress towards a High School Equivalency), or occupational

skills. Ultimately, programs should help ensure that their customers have the right skills and experience sought by employers.

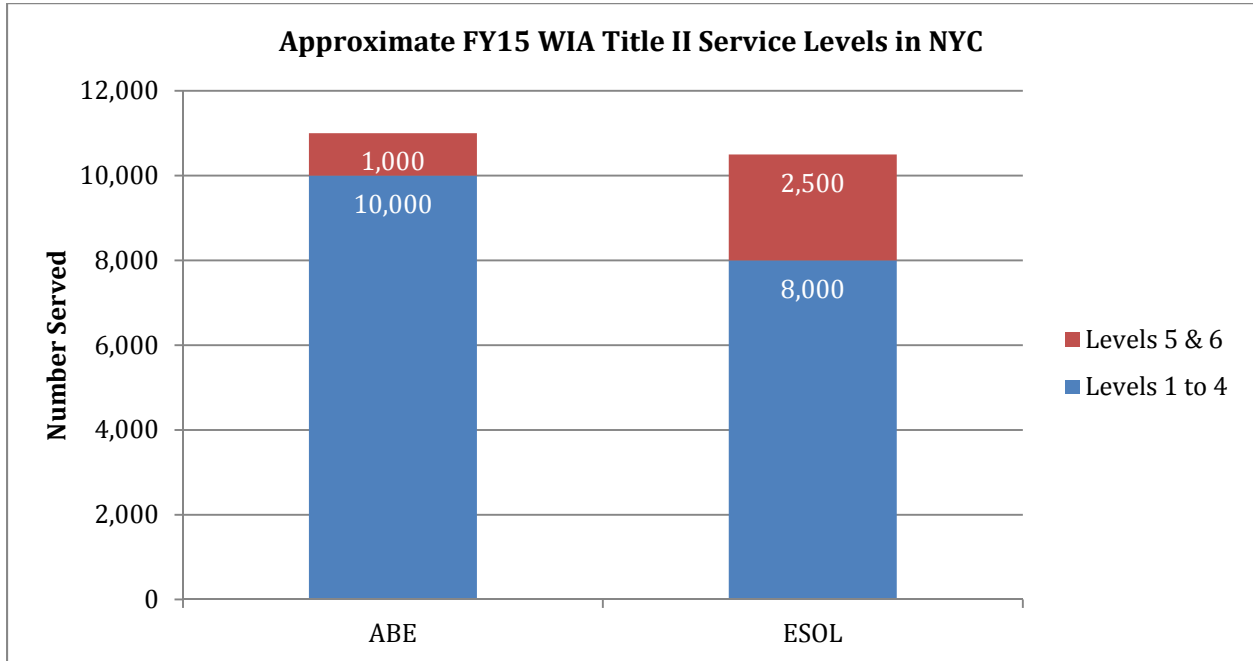
A. The City expects that all adult education programs would do the following:

1. Help students identify a **long-term career goal**, the key **steps** required to achieve that goal, and the immediate **next step** on their career pathway, which could include:
  - a higher level adult education program;
  - a training program;
  - college enrollment; or
  - a job

Programs should strongly emphasize participants' advancement along a career pathway, both in messaging and in coaching for participants.

2. Be **contextualized** to maximize student engagement: contextualization can be to a theme, project, or economic sector and should be related to the primary next step of a given class. "Primary" next step means the next step that the largest number of individuals in a class are pursuing.
3. Ensure students **understand, are prepared for, and are connected to their immediate next step**. Programs should be designed around the primary next step of a given class, incorporating links to that next step throughout the program. Examples include: incorporate relevant content and exercises into the curriculum, hold site visits (to high level adult education programs, to colleges, to employers, etc.), or invite guest speakers into the class. Finally, programs should ensure they have strong connections to the primary next step: either within their own organization to a higher level adult education class or training program if one exists, or relationships with outside organizations, including higher level adult education programs, training programs, colleges, or employers. Programs should identify any external partners before a program begins.
4. Demonstrate **good performance** or a **demonstrated ability** to design and implement successful programs. Key performance measures would include skill gains, individuals successfully progressing to their immediate next step, and employment.
5. Focus as a system on getting *more* students to **completion**. As the chart below illustrates, the vast majority of individuals served annually in New York City through Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) were in low levels. Although there is clearly an enormous need to serve individuals with low

literacy and English proficiency levels, the City would like to increase the proportion of individuals served at levels 5 and 6. Individuals close to attaining a High School Equivalency or ESOL level 6 will likely be able to apply their new skill level immediately to their next step. Some adult education providers will need to offer more advanced classes through their programs. Other providers may continue to target lower level students, but will need to strengthen their connections with other programs offering advanced classes and ensure more students make that next step transition successfully.



B. The City expects that **integrated education and training programs** would be aligned with the City’s definition of **bridge programs**.

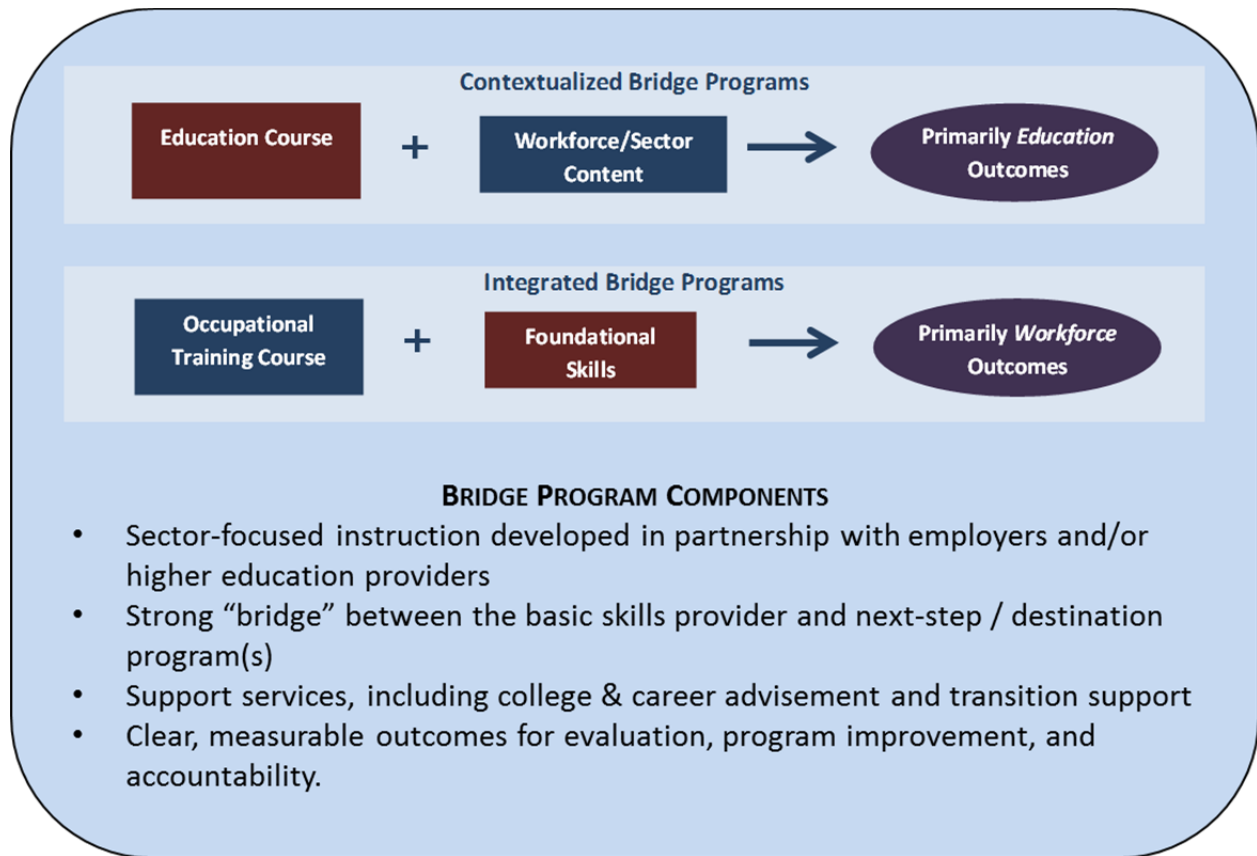
Bridge programs prepare individuals with low educational attainment and limited skills for entry into a higher education level, occupational skills training, or career-track jobs – building the competencies necessary for work and education alongside career and supportive services. Bridge programs contextualize programming to specific industry sectors and have established relationships with partners (occupational skills training, education, and/or specific sector employment) who inform program design and serve as the primary “next step” destination for program participants.

Bridge programs pair educational instruction and workforce development services using one of two approaches:

- **Contextualized Bridge Programs** teach foundational skills (ESOL, literacy and numeracy instruction) against the backdrop of a sector-specific context. This sector focus and content serve as an engagement technique that grounds coursework in workforce applications, and

importantly complements career counseling services to support participants in exploring occupations in the given sector throughout the duration of the program.

- **Integrated Bridge Programs** incorporate foundational skills (ESOL, literacy and numeracy instruction) into an occupation-specific training or certification course. This integration supports individuals learning basic education skills that complement other occupation-specific hard skills, supporting individuals to succeed in the training program and subsequent employment.



## COORDINATION BETWEEN TITLE I AND TITLE II

Provide a description of how the LWDB will expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services provided through the NYS One-Stop Career Center system for Title II participants with barriers to employment.

Workforce1 is the local New York City brand for one-stop career centers, also known as American Job Centers. Workforce1 Career Centers provide employers with a strong resource to

connect to local talent. They also prepare and connect qualified candidates to job opportunities in New York City through:

- Resume and interviewing workshops that support the development of job search skills;
- Training to acquire skills in growing fields; and
- Opportunities to connect to employers with open positions.

The Workforce1 system maintains an extensive network of Community Partners – organizations throughout the City that refer individuals to Workforce1 for employment services or to which Workforce1 refers customers for other services. To expand access to Title II participants with barriers to employment, Workforce1 staff will ensure that targeted Title II adult education programs become Community Partners or remind existing partners of the opportunities for cross-referral.

## CAREER PATHWAYS AND CO-ENROLLMENT

Identify how the LWDB will facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment in academic and training programs.

As previously stated, the City of New York has adopted career pathways as a guiding strategy and framework for all workforce development programs and policies.

Co-enrollment means helping individuals receive services from both Title II adult education programs and – simultaneously or sequentially – from Title I employment programs. Referrals and co-enrollments should help customers seamlessly access the services and resources they need from the right partners in the workforce system. Ultimately, the goal is to help customers prepare for and connect to a good job.

As stated in the previous section, the Community Partners program is an appropriate vehicle for co-enrolling individuals in adult education and employment services. Workforce1 staff will work with adult education providers to determine the best timing for providing information about available services and for making referrals to one another.

## LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

Provide a description of how the LWDB will “support the strategy identified in the State Plan and work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs, including those authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act to support service alignment.”

The City’s Career Pathways vision complements priorities articulated in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the New York State Plan<sup>1</sup> to:

- Help jobseekers and workers access the education, training, and support services they need to enter or advance in the labor market;
- Improve the relevance of workforce investment and education;
- Improve the structure and delivery of services in the system;
- Increase the prosperity of jobseekers, workers, and employers and the global competitiveness of the U.S.

In 2016, the NYC LWDB convened representatives of the core WIOA programs<sup>2</sup> to develop a joint strategic vision for providing New Yorkers with opportunities to access career pathways.

This vision shifts away from a “work first” approach and instead towards one that invests substantially in helping New Yorkers develop their skills and obtain jobs aligned with their career goals and interests. Partners agreed to work collaboratively to ensure programs:

- a. **Align to employers’ needs**, including conferrals of credentials where applicable;
- b. **Align to participants’ needs** (foundational skills, supportive services, etc.);
- c. Ensure that the right number of candidates are prepared at the right times for the right positions – in other words, **prepare the right quantity of supply in line with anticipated labor market demand**;
- d. Invest in **services targeting a wide variety of skill levels** -- including individuals with varying degrees of English, reading, and math proficiency; and
- e. **Continuously improve** their approaches to skill building, in part by learning from one another, from applying evidenced-based practices, and through strategic advice from industry experts.

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<sup>1</sup> Reference the New York State Workforce Investment Board 2016 Strategic Plan at: <https://labor.ny.gov/workforce/swib/swibplan.shtm>

<sup>2</sup> Title I (Department of Small Business Services; Department. of Youth and Community Development), Title II (NY State Education Department), Title III (New York State Department of Labor), Title IV (ACCES-VR)