



# PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS IN ACTION

## CASE STUDY HIGHLIGHTS

The *Pathways to Success* Toolkit captures real-world implementation across diverse communities. Through collaboration among education providers, workforce boards, employers, community organizations, and philanthropic partners, these case studies demonstrate how locally driven strategies can expand talent development, remove barriers, and create clear pathways to thriving-wage careers.

Each example reflects the five core strategies of the *Pathways to Success* framework.

### **STRATEGY 1: ALIGNING SHARED GOALS FOR SUCCESS BUILDING SHARED VISION AND PARTNERSHIP ALIGNMENT**

#### **CASE STUDY: STRATEGIC PHILANTHROPY AT METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE (MCC)**

MCC strategically collaborates with public, private, and philanthropic partners to braid funding streams, align initiatives, and ensure long-term sustainability of regional workforce development efforts. These collaborations are grounded in shared goals around economic mobility and innovation.

Philanthropic organizations provide flexible, mission-aligned investments that complement public funding and catalyze high-impact initiatives. MCC works closely with Heartland Workforce Solutions and other community-based partners to coordinate services, share labor market data, and align training with employer demand.

**KEY TAKEAWAY:** Rather than operate in silos, MCC and its partners co-develop funding strategies, guided by program fit, institutional capacity, and long-term regional goals.

## STRATEGY 2: LEVERAGING RESOURCES AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### EXPAND PROGRAM REACH BY REMOVING BARRIERS

#### CASE STUDY: MCC'S \$10 MILLION BRAIDED FUNDING INITIATIVE

MCC transformed a small, data-driven pilot program into a \$10 million regional workforce initiative using braided funding and strategic partnerships. Federal grants, COVID recovery funds, workforce support grants, philanthropic contributions, and employer partnerships were aligned to support its workforce development goals.

The initiative anchored its work in the ACT® WorkKeys® National Career Readiness Certificate™ (NCRC®), aligning skill assessment with employer demand and unlocking additional funding opportunities.

Outcomes Included:

- 2,670 individuals earned Basic Computer Certification and 4,900+ WorkKeys NCRCs issued across Douglas County and surrounding areas.
- Multiple stackable credential pathways have been developed in healthcare, IT, and skilled trades.
- Expanded access to underserved populations through targeted outreach and support.

**KEY TAKEAWAY:** Data (qualitative and quantitative) and flexibility are key, with braided funding strategies based on institutional strengths and community needs.

#### CASE STUDY: CREATIVE COLLABORATION IN ACTION — COLLEGE OF SOUTHERN NEVADA (CSN)

CSN implemented a braided funding model by aligning WIOA Title I, SNAP E&T, employer contributions, state and federal funds, and community partnerships. Through a unified intake and referral system, CSN screened students for multiple funding sources simultaneously and provided access to tuition and support services to more than 3,000 learners.

Outcomes Included:

- 35% increase in credential program enrollment.
- Engagement with more than 15 employer partners.
- 22% improvement in retention and completion rates in targeted programs.

**KEY TAKEAWAY:** Braided funding enables institutions to coordinate support around the student rather than the grant program.

## STRATEGY 3: CREATING TAILORED EDUCATION TRAINING PROGRAMS & INTEGRATED EDUCATION AND TRAINING (IET) PROGRAMS

### TRANSFORMING TRAINING INTO CAREER PATHWAYS

#### CASE STUDY: NEBRASKA MANUFACTURING TIER 1 CERTIFICATION

MCC led the development of the Nebraska Manufacturing Alliance Credentials Level 1 initiative in partnership with manufacturing employers, the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce, and peer institutions. The partnership ensured that the certification was both industry-informed and scalable across institutions.

The credential offers progressive skill development, wage growth, and expanded job responsibilities with clear pathways for long-term advancement.

**KEY TAKEAWAY:** Co-designed training programs present a powerful initiative that can address local workforce gaps and strengthen talent pipelines.

#### **CASE STUDY: DIALYSIS IET PROGRAM AT CSN**

CSN's Dialysis IET program supports adult learners, particularly English language learners and immigrants, seeking entry into high-demand healthcare careers, providing a pathway to stackable credentials and employment opportunities.

Learners earn stackable credentials, including Dialysis Patient Care Technician Certificate, Mental Health First Aid, CPR, and the WorkKeys NCRC.

Outcomes Included:

- Nearly all students in the program earn four to five credentials, secure full-time roles in dialysis clinics, and transition from non-credit to credit-bearing programs.

**KEY TAKEAWAY:** Integrating foundational academic instruction with technical training and workforce readiness provides a pathway to stackable credentials and employment opportunities.

## **STRATEGY 4: EXPANDING COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT REACHING NEW AUDIENCES THROUGH TRUST AND DATA**

#### **CASE STUDY: BUILDING BRIDGES THROUGH COLLABORATIVE OUTREACH IN CLARK COUNTY, NEVADA**

Using census tract data, CSN identified high-need ZIP codes and partnered with trusted community organizations to expand access to education and workforce programs. Community voice mapping helped identify influential local leaders who could serve as ambassadors for the programs.

Outcomes Included:

- A 22% increase in enrollment from targeted ZIP codes over two semesters.
- Stronger referral pipelines from community-based organizations and workforce boards.
- Increased visibility of adult education and workforce training programs among families who had never previously engaged with the college system.

**KEY TAKEAWAY:** Build trust locally through familiar and respected community figures, use data, and celebrate learners' successes publicly.

#### **CASE STUDY: TRANSFORMING OPPORTUNITY THROUGH WORKFORCE READINESS IN OMAHA**

MCC transformed Douglas County into an ACT® Work Ready Community® (WRC®) by adopting a framework centered on the WorkKeys NCRC. This initiative was designed to address systemic barriers to employment and education, with data-informed outreach and strategic partnerships

Outcomes Included:

- The WorkKeys NCRC framework stimulated economic growth by aligning training with employer needs and certifying job readiness.
- Outreach in Opportunity Zones led to a measurable increase in enrollment.
- MCC's inclusive graduation events and cultural programming fostered a sense of belonging and pride among students and their families.

**KEY TAKEAWAY:** Data drives access to education, celebration builds momentum, and partnerships multiply the program's impact.

**STRATEGY 5:  
ENHANCING CAREER  
PATHWAYS WITH  
INTEGRATED  
SUPPORT SERVICES  
BUILDING LEARNER-  
CENTERED SYSTEMS  
FOR SUCCESS**

**CASE STUDY: EXPANDING COLLEGE CREDIT PATHWAYS THROUGH THE WORKKEYS NCRC**

Through leadership and collaboration, CSN and Chippewa Valley Technical College have promoted use of the WorkKeys NCRC as a tool for awarding college credit through the American Council on Education (ACE) Credit Recommendation Service. The initiative is rooted in the philosophy of Prior Learning Credit (PLC), which evaluates non-traditional learning (such as workplace training and certifications, such as the WorkKeys NCRC) for academic credit.

Outcomes Included:

- A moderate-to-strong positive correlation between WorkKeys NCRC scores and first-year college GPA.
- Employers benefit from a credential that signals job readiness and foundational competencies.
- Students, particularly adult learners and underserved populations, gain faster and more affordable access to degrees and credentials.

**KEY TAKEAWAY:** Cross-sector collaboration can unlock new pathways for learners and strengthen the talent pipeline for the modern workforce.

**DEVELOPED IN  
COLLABORATION WITH  
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE AND THE COLLEGE  
OF SOUTHERN NEVADA.**



***TOGETHER, WE CAN BUILD PATHWAYS TO  
SUCCESS THAT TRULY WORK — FOR EVERYONE.***

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